

# Falls Prevention in Hospital: Advice for Patients and Relatives



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**This leaflet is designed to inform you of the factors which may increase your risk of falling, what we do in the hospital to try and prevent falls, and what both you and your relatives/friends/carers can do to reduce the risk.**

Falls can cause physical injuries, varying from cuts and bruises to broken bones.

They can cause loss of confidence and may result in a longer hospital stay. Falling can happen to anybody but there also a variety of reasons why your risk of falling may be increased.

When in hospital we carry out a falls risk assessment for all patients over 65 or those whose medical condition may increase their risk of falling.

## **Here are some of the reasons why you may fall in hospital**

- Previous history of falls, please tell your nurse or doctor if you have previously fallen.
- Certain medical conditions may increase your risk, either by affecting your balance or reducing your blood pressure.
- Disorientation in an unfamiliar environment
- Continence problems.
- Reduced mobility due to pain or weakness
- Dehydration.
- There are a variety of medications which can increase your risk of falling due to the side effects caused.
- Environmental hazards, e.g. wires or clutter around the bed space.
- Poor vision.

**At University Hospitals Plymouth we aim to reduce the incidence of falls by identifying and minimising risk factors associated with falls. If we feel that a patient is at a particularly high risk we may feel it is necessary to:**

- Move their bed to a position where it is more easily observed.
- Use bedrails.
- Utilise equipment that may help reduce the risk such as sensor mats or a bed which sits very low to the ground.
- Monitor them more closely which could include continuous observation.
- Review medications which increase your risk.

## **Advice for patients**

- Tell the nurse looking after you if you have fallen in the last year or are afraid of falling.
- Take your time when first getting up after a period of rest; this can be a time when many falls occur.
- Please use your call bell to seek assistance with mobility, particularly if you have been advised to do so or feel dizzy, weak or unsteady.
- Ask your nurse about your risk of falls and if any of your medications put you at a greater risk.
- Wear supportive, well-fitting shoes or slippers. If you don't have footwear we will provide you with non-slip socks.
- Use any walking aids you have been advised to
- If needed, wear your glasses; ask if you need help to clean them.
- It is important to drink enough fluids (unless otherwise advised by our staff), as being dehydrated can cause you to fall.
- If you are on blood thinning medication and have been advised that you are at risk of falling please take extra care when mobilising and ask for supervision/help if needed. Although the medication is essential to your treatment a fall whilst on this medication increases your risk of harm.

## **Advice to relatives and friends**

- Please inform staff of any previous falls or concerns you have about the patient falling
- If possible minimise clutter around the bed space by taking home personal items/bags that are not required
- When you leave, place the nurse call bell within reach of the patient

Unfortunately some patients will still fall despite preventative measures being in place however, we are committed to reducing falls in hospital.

Further information regarding falls prevention can be found at:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/prevention/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/prevention/)

You may also find these national charities a useful source of information and support.

Age UK

[www.ageuk.org](http://www.ageuk.org)

Tel: 0800 055 6112

National osteoporosis society

tel:08088000035

<https://nos.org.uk/>

**Your notes:**



**This leaflet is available in large print  
and other formats and languages.  
Contact: Administrator  
Tel: 01752 432693**

Date issued: September 2018  
For review: September 2020  
Ref: C-362/AJ/ward/falls prevention advice for patients and relatives