

# Prevent a Fall: *Pediatric Patients*

## Who's at risk for a fall in the hospital?

EVERYONE is more likely to fall in the hospital than at home. This includes children of all ages — and it's true even for patients who have only a small problem or procedure, or who feel just fine.

There are several reasons for this. **How many apply to your child?**

- Your child is in an unfamiliar place, with people she doesn't know
- Your child has fallen before
- Your child is an infant or toddler still developing strength and coordination, still learning to get around
- Your child is taking medication that causes numbness or weakness, or makes him sleepy, dizzy, or clumsy
- Your child's injury, illness, or condition makes her...
  - dizzy, weak, or uncoordinated
  - confused or disoriented
  - have seizures or movements she can't control
  - have an urgent need to get to the bathroom
  - have trouble seeing, hearing, or feeling things
- Your child is using equipment that makes moving around more complicated, for example:
  - crutches, a walker or a wheelchair
  - drains, tubes, and monitors
  - IV pumps or tubing

**Even if you checked just one factor above, your child faces a risk of falling.** The more boxes you checked, the higher the risk.



Preventing falls is a team effort.  
Parents, patients, and caregivers can all play a part.

## Why are falls such a concern?

A priority for your child's healthcare team is to keep patients safe and help them heal. For this reason alone, your care team wants to prevent a fall.

Another reason for concern is that in the hospital, even a small fall can cause serious bleeding or injury. This may be due to the stress of being in the hospital, or because of a medication that may make you bleed more than normal.

For these reasons, your care team takes steps to prevent falls. These include assessing each patient's risk for a fall and helping patients get out of bed and move around.

## What can YOU do to help prevent a fall?

Your nurses and doctors will do their best to prevent a fall — but they can't do it alone. See the next page for actions you can take to protect your child from falling in the hospital.

## FALL PREVENTION CHECKLIST

Mark all the actions you can take to help prevent a fall.

### In the bed or crib...

- Never turn your back when changing your child's diapers. Your child can roll off the bed.
- Keep the side rails up, **always**.
- Make sure the nurse call light is within easy reach and that your child knows how to use it.
- If you're holding your baby or young child in your arms or lap, stay alert. If you begin to feel drowsy, return her to the bed or crib.
- Keep your child's crutches or wheelchair handy, too.

### Around the room...

- Keep the floor clutter-free. Make sure cords and tubes and other equipment are out of the way.
- Don't let your child or other children jump or play on the bed or other hospital furniture.
- Keep the room well lit. (At night, use a nightlight.)

### Getting up...

- Don't let your child get out of bed on his own unless the doctor or nurse says it's okay.
- Call the nurse for help the first time. Even if your nurse says your child can get out of bed on her own later (or that you can help your child yourself), get help the first time.
- Stay "hands on." Keep your hand on your child the entire time he is getting in and out of the bed or a chair.
- Stick together. Parents, don't leave your children unattended — they can fall out of chairs, wagons, or wheelchairs as well as out of their beds.

### In the bathroom...

- Stay with your child while he is using the bathroom. (Safety is more important than privacy.)

### Out of bed...

- Always use non-skid socks and slippers. The hospital floor can be slippery!
- Walk with your child. Steady and support her as she goes along.



In the bed or crib — keep the side rails up, always.



Out of the bed — stick together. Don't leave a child unattended in a chair or wagon, and help him walk in the room or hallway.