Intermountain® Healthcare

Prevent a Fall in the Hospital

Who's at risk to fall in the hospital?

Everyone is more likely to fall in the hospital than at home. This is true no matter your age and no matter how you feel. The stress of being in the hospital raises your fall risk because you are in an unfamiliar place with a lot of equipment and people you don't know.

In addition, you are more likely to fall while in the hospital if you:

- Have fallen before
- Take medicine that makes you sleepy, dizzy, uncoordinated, or weak
- Have an injury, illness, or condition can make you:
  - Feel dizzy, weak, or clumsy
  - Confused or disoriented
  - Have seizures or movements you can't control
  - Have an urgent need to use the bathroom
  - Have problems seeing, hearing, or feeling things
- Use equipment that makes it harder to move around, such as:
  - Crutches, a walker, or a wheelchair
  - Drains, tubes, and monitors
  - IV pumps or tubing

The more of these that apply to you, the higher your risk of falling.

> **Tell a care team member right away if you fall while in the hospital.**

What do I need to do next?

1. Learn why you may be at risk for falling while in the hospital.

2. Tell your care team if you have fallen at any time in the past 3 months.

3. Use the "how to prevent a fall" checklist on **page 2**.

4. Share this information with friends and family who visit you.

Why are hospital falls risky?

In the hospital, even a small fall can cause serious bleeding or injury. Medicines you are taking can cause you to bleed more than normal, and injuries from falling can be more severe.

Your care team's top priority is to keep you safe and help you heal. They will:

- Assess your risk for a fall and, if needed, help you get out of bed and move around.
- Keep your walker or crutches, glasses, slippers, and other needed items within reach of your bed.
- Make sure you know how to safely use your walker or crutches.
- Keep your room well lit and free of cords or clutter you could trip over.

> **If you are at risk for falls,** use the call button every time you need to get out of bed.

FALL RISK

How to prevent a fall

Your care team will do their best to prevent a fall, but they can't do it alone. You need to help. Here are things you can do to help prevent a fall.

When in bed:

☐ **Make sure you know** where the nurse call light is.

☐ **Keep the bed rails up** if your nurse has put them up.

☐ **Ask for help** every time. Never hesitate to call your nurse for help getting up.

When getting up:

☐ **Call for your nurse the first time you get out of bed.** Even if your nurse says you can get up on your own later, ask for help the first time.

☐ **Don't get out of bed on your own** unless your nurse says you can.

☐ **Always wear non-skid socks** or other well-fitting footwear. The hospital floor can be slippery!

☐ **Use your glasses, cane, or walker**, if you have them. If you can't reach them without getting up, ask your nurse to bring them closer to you.

☐ **Stand and hold the bed rail** to steady yourself before moving.

When friends and family visit:

☐ **Share this fact sheet** with them.

☐ **Tell them to call a nurse to help you out of bed**. Friends or family members should not help an adult patient walk.

☐ **Remind them to not touch safety devices**, such as bed alarms or bed rails.

? QUESTIONS *Questions for my care team*

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