



Stay Safe During and After Hospital

Reduce the Risk of Falling Whilst in Hospital and at Home

We want your stay to be safe

Falls are a significant cause of harm to older people, and an unfamiliar hospital environment can increase the risk of falls.

Here are a few steps you can take to help prevent falls and make your stay in hospital as safe and comfortable as possible.

While in hospital

Staff will:

- assess your risk of falling
- provide you with information about preventing falls
- put a care plan in place for you
- keep your surroundings as safe as possible

You or your carer can help by:

- asking about your risk factors for falling
- bringing glasses, hearing aids and any equipment you normally use
- placing the call bell within reach and using it to call for help
- being careful in wet areas
- standing up slowly to reduce dizziness
- using a walking aid if needed
- wearing sensible footwear with good support
- calling for staff to help when moving
- tell staff if you feel dizzy, lightheaded when standing or walking

You may be at risk of falling if you:

- have problems with walking and balance
- are taking medicines
- feel confused or unsettled
- have problems with your eyesight
- have a health issue such as diabetes

If you do have a fall in hospital

Do not try to get up by yourself and do not rely on your friends, family or carer to help you.

Always call for help from staff

Staff will try to find out what contributed to your fall to reduce the risk of falling again.

Before you leave hospital

Talk to your doctor, nurse or therapy staff about ways to reduce your risk of falling. You may be referred to follow-up services (e.g. a physiotherapist) for ongoing support.

It is important you know what your medicines are for before you leave hospital. Some medications can increase your risk of falling. A doctor or pharmacist can give you more information about the medicines you are taking and how to get them regularly checked.

Staying independent at home – preventing falls

There are a few simple things that you and your carer can do to prevent falls after leaving hospital.

These include:

Be active

- It is important to slowly build up to a level suited to your needs. If you have any concerns talk to your GP before you start any new activity.
- Work on building your balance, strength, and flexibility to reduce your risk of falling. If you have concerns speak to a physiotherapist.

Identify, remove and report hazards

- Check your home for hazards and make changes that may be needed for a safer home. Speak to an Occupational Therapist for advice if required.
- Use walking aids that have been **prescribed to you**, including short-term aids if you are recovering from surgery or an injury.

Manage your medications

- Some medicines can cause side effects such as making you feel dizzy or unsteady on your feet. This may make you more prone to a fall.
- Talk with your pharmacist and GP, who will review your medicines in case a change is required.

Manage your health

- Get regular check-ups with your GP. Ask questions about how you should be managing any conditions.

Note for carers, family and friends

You can play an important role in preventing falls. Please read this brochure and note:

- Always ask staff before moving your friend or relative in case there are specific instructions from the doctor or physiotherapist
- Call the staff if you notice any new confusion or unsteadiness
- If your friend or relative has a fall or is afraid of falling, it is important for them to talk to their GP as help is available.

Specific Information for me

If you do have a fall, discuss it with your GP so you can take steps to reduce your risk of falling again.

For more advice

If you want more advice on how to stay independent and on your feet, speak to your health professional, GP, or pharmacist or contact the following

Stay On Your Feet WA[®]:

www.stayonyourfeet.com.au

