

Staying safe from falls in hospital



ACT
Government

**Canberra Health
Services**

Why might I fall in hospital?

Some people can fall or are at risk of falling in hospital. Making sure you don't fall is very important to us. This handout will help you understand how you can reduce your risk of falling.

You may fall because you:

- have problems with your balance
- don't have enough muscle strength
- haven't been moving much
- are in a rush
- are in a new place
- are wearing unsafe or slippery footwear
- are in pain
- are taking medicines that may make you feel dizzy
- may be going for a test, procedure or operation (you may receive medicines that make you sleepy or unsteady)
- have problems with your eyesight or your vision has changed
- don't have enough light to see well
- don't feel well
- have problems with your hearing
- may not have had enough to drink.
- are not using your walking aid correctly, e.g. your brakes are not on.

You may be at greater risk of harm from a fall and will need to take extra care if:

- you are taking certain medicines
- you have a blood condition which reduces blood clotting
- you have low bone density.

What will happen while I am in hospital?

During your hospital stay, a team of people will be looking after you. This team will include doctors and nurses, and may include other staff like physiotherapists.

When you are in hospital, we will work out whether you have a risk of falling, and how high that risk is.

If you are at high risk of falling, we:

- will talk with you and your family or carers about this and work together to make a plan to keep you safe from falls
- will work out if you need supervision, or to call for assistance from staff to do things like get out of bed, walk to the bathroom or around the ward
- will work out if you are safer with your bed rails up or down
- will watch to see how you are recovering and make a plan to help you stay safe once you leave hospital
- may place a sign above your bed so staff know that you may need help moving around
- may ask other health care workers to help us work out how likely you are to fall. They might look at how you walk, your balance and if you need any equipment to help you.



falls risk sign

How can I help?

What you can do:

- Get to know your new surroundings. We will make sure you know where the bathroom is and how to use your call bell for help.
- Talk to your nurse or doctor about your care and any concerns you may have.
- Let staff know if you are feeling unwell, dizzy or unsteady on your feet.
- Take your time when getting up from sitting or lying down.
- If you need a walking aid, please use it whenever you walk.
- Ask your doctor or nurse how much you should be drinking each day.
- Always wear comfortable footwear with non-slip soles. Do not walk wearing only socks on your feet.

What your family or carers can do:

- If you have forgotten something you need like your glasses, hearing aids or walking aids, ask your family or carers to bring them to the hospital for you. If you don't have someone who can do this for you, please let us know. We may be able to make other arrangements during your stay.
- Your family or carers can bring a current list of all medicines you are taking (if you didn't have it when you came to hospital).

What happens when I go home?

Talk to your health care team about your condition and any concerns you have before leaving hospital.

There are services in the community that may help you prevent a fall or help if you have had a fall, such as:

- Falls and Falls Injury Prevention Program
- exercise programs at local gyms and pools
- community centres
- walking groups
- senior citizen clubs.

While you are in hospital, your health care team can help you work out which services will meet your needs.



Useful contacts:

- Falls and Falls Injury Prevention Program
Community Health Intake (CHI)
Phone: 02 5124 9977
Website: canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/falls
- My Aged Care
Phone: 1800 200 422
Website: myagedcare.gov.au
- Contenance Foundation of Australia
Phone: 1800 330 066
Website: contenance.org.au

Your general practitioner (GP) may also help with advice and referral to services after your hospital stay.

Acknowledgement of Country



Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this region.



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