

## Diet and exercise

To maintain your health and reduce your falls risk, good nutrition and suitable exercise are important.

- Ask your doctor, nurse or physiotherapist about what is suitable for your condition.
- Gently mobilise as soon as you are able.
- You will be advised when you are safe to walk independently.

## High falls risk patients

A number of strategies will be implemented if you are identified as being at high risk of falling. These strategies alert staff to your risk level to ensure you are provided with maximum support and safety.

### These may include:

- A physiotherapy mobility assessment
- High falls risk nurse alert
- Notification at bedside
- A pair of non-slip socks
- Review of your medication/s.

## GRIP socks / TED stockings with grip soles

Our high falls risk patients may be offered a pair of GRIP socks, to further help reduce their risk of falling. If you are assessed as suitable for them, we encourage you to wear these at all times.

**Note: Grip socks are not suitable for all patients.**

## Back at home

Preventing falls is important at home as well, so before you go home you may be referred to follow-up services to ensure your home environment is safe.

There are also programs which teach you skills for safety in the home.

For your additional safety please discuss strategies for prevention of falls at home with your family / carer prior to discharge.

Please ask for help if you feel you need it. We can teach you ways to reduce your risk of falling.



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# Keeping a step ahead of falls

Patient information



## Did you know...

In Australia, 38% of all hospital patient incidents involve a fall. It has been estimated that one third of people over 65 years and half of people over 80 years of age suffer at least one fall per year.

We would like to reduce the number of falls that occur at our facility. To achieve this we have a **Falls Prevention Program**.

Some patients are at higher risk of falling than others.

Please let us know if you have had any falls, or if you are concerned about having a fall whilst in our hospital or at home. We can organise a referral to our allied health team (eg. Physiotherapist) for an assessment.

**Most importantly, if staff recommend you need assistance or supervision when moving around, please ask them for assistance and wait until they come to help you.**

**On admission to your room you will be shown how to use your nurse call bell. It is there for your safety so please use it if you require assistance.**

## Handy hints to avoid falls in hospital

### Unfamiliar surrounds

- Make sure you know the layout of your room and bathroom.
- Take care if you are walking around at night. A small night light can be turned on at your request.
- Ensure that a **call bell** is within your reach at all times, and please use it!
- If you have spectacles, only wear your distance ones when walking. Take special care if wearing bi- or multi-focal lenses.
- Let staff know if you feel unwell or unsteady on your feet. Do not attempt to walk.
- Take your time when getting up from sitting. Pause a minute before you start to walk.
- If getting up from a lying down position, sit on the edge of the bed for a few minutes.
- Move your ankles up and down to get the blood flowing.
- Use your walking aid appropriately.
- Push yourself up from bed or chair. Don't pull yourself up.

### Visiting the bathroom

Many falls occur in the bathroom, therefore ensure you use your **call bell** and wait for assistance.

Please try not to wait until the last minute to use your call bell if you need assistance to go to the bathroom and never rush.

### Flooring

#### Watch those floors!

Many of our rooms and corridors have linoleum or similar covering which can be slippery, especially when wet.

#### Therefore, when out of bed:

- Ensure you have footwear that fits securely and has flat, non-slip soles.
- Minimise the use of talcum powder as this causes slippery surfaces.

### Confusion

Unfortunately, a side-effect of some illnesses or surgery can be confusion. If you are confused, you are at high risk of falling. Always use your **call bell** and wait for assistance.

Family and carers can assist hospital staff by alerting them if they notice a change in their relative's mental state.

### Medications

Some pain-relieving drugs and other medications, or even a change in dose, can make you feel dizzy or unsteady on your feet.

Please use your **call bell** to advise nursing staff if this happens to you. Do not attempt to walk.

### When you are walking

- Take your time when turning around. Counting your steps can help you pace yourself.
- If you have a walking aid, ensure it is in good condition. Keep it within easy reach and use it appropriately.
- Always use your walking aid. DO NOT rely on furniture for support as it may topple.
- Always use your **call bell** and wait for assistance if instructed.

### Clothing / footwear

Tripping on loose or full-length clothing, including dressing gowns and pyjamas, can also cause a fall. Slippers and other footwear should fit securely and have flat, non-slip soles.

If you are required to wear **compression stockings**, you should always wear non-slip footwear over the stockings when walking around, unless they have a grip sole.

