

# Falls prevention



We are committed to assisting our patients in avoiding and minimising the risk of falls.

## How serious are falls?

About one in three people over the age of 65 and approximately 50 per cent of people over 80 years of age have a fall at least once a year. Falls account for four per cent of all hospital admissions in these age groups. We aim to provide safety measures that reduce the number of falls for patients in our care.

## Risk assessment

On your admission a falls risk assessment will be completed to see if you are at risk of a fall. If you are rated as being a high falls risk, a bedside alert label will be utilised to notify your caregivers that falls prevention strategies are required to ensure your safety during your stay with us.

The doctor, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists will discuss strategies with you that may assist you in avoiding a fall.

## What causes a fall?

There are often many risk factors that can contribute to falls. These can include:

- Being in an unfamiliar environment
- Your general health
- Poor balance and mobility
- Poor eyesight
- Medications
- Incontinence
- Unsafe footwear
- Poor hydration or poor diet
- Age

## How can you reduce your risk of falling?

- Familiarise yourself with your room layout and placement of the furniture.
- Ensure your call bell is within reach.
- Call for assistance if you are feeling unwell, unsteady, or unsafe.
- Take your time when getting up from sitting or lying down.
- When it is suggested by medical staff or caregivers that you require assistance or supervision when moving, ensure that you use your call bell to call for assistance and wait for them to arrive.
- Ensure that you use your walking aids and that they are always in reach. Ask for assistance if required.
- Always wear your glasses or contacts when walking.
- Ensure your shoes and slippers fit well. Avoid wearing loose fitting shoes.
- Ensure that your clothing is an appropriate length—avoid long nightdresses and dressing gowns.
- Your doctor may require you to wear pressure stockings, these can cause you to slip. To avoid this risk, please remember to wear footwear over the stockings.

## Visiting or caring for someone who is at risk of falling

- The patient's bedside boards should advise you of your friend or relative's fall status and mobility assistance requirements.
- Make sure all areas are clean and not cluttered.
- Make sure that all items that may be required throughout the day and the call bell are always within reach.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting.
- Spend time with your relative or friend—particularly those with additional medical conditions such as



dementia. These patients can sometimes be impulsive or get up without asking for assistance.

- Before you leave the room check if your relative or friend needs to go to the bathroom. If they are unable to take themselves or you are unsure if they are capable of going on their own, please seek assistance.
- Some patients may require being nursed in a high low bed, which is a bed that is often lowered to the ground. This is to assist with preventing falls and injuries. Please ensure the bed is in the low position before you finish your visit and ask for assistance if required.

#### Home support services on discharge

Your local council may offer home and maintenance services to assist you in your daily living to maintain independence and assist in fall prevention.

They can fit handrails, ramps and other safety equipment.

Please discuss this with your nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist who can also assist with balance and mobility/aids in fall prevention strategies.

#### Council information:

[www.casey.vic.gov.au](http://www.casey.vic.gov.au)

Phone : 9705 5444

[www.cardinia.vic.gov.au](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 59 415 454

[www.frankston.vic.gov.au](http://www.frankston.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 322 322

[www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 229 229

[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 5662 9200

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