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Tel: 0191 223 2545

Reducing your chances of falling whilst in hospital

Patient Information Leaflet

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Introduction

This leaflet gives help and advice about how you can reduce your chances of falling whilst in hospital.

If you have any questions please speak to a member of staff who will be happy to give answers to you about your care.

How you can reduce your chances of falling in hospital

- ✓ Tell a member of staff if you have had a fall especially if it occurred recently.
- ✓ If you suffer with dizziness take extra time and care when moving from lying to sitting, or sitting to standing and when bending down or reaching up.
- ✓ Sit upright for a few moments at the edge of your bed to get your balance before standing up.
- ✓ Be careful of equipment that may be in your way. Remove any clutter / obstacles around your bed or chair to reduce the risk of a trip.
- ✓ **Do not use** any furniture to lean on or to help you walk - most hospital furniture is on wheels and may move unexpectedly.
- ✓ Switch on lights or report any poor lighting that makes your vision difficult.
- ✓ A yellow sign or cone will alert you to wet flooring. Report and avoid wet flooring until it has dried. Beware of glare from wet floors or on a sunny day as this may affect your ability to see affecting your balance.

- ✓ Make sure you wear your hearing aid and glasses, which should be working, clean and worn as prescribed. (If you wear bifocals or varifocals be extra careful when looking down, negotiating steps, stairs and uneven surfaces).
- ✓ Please wear your shoes or slippers but make sure that they are close fitting especially around the back. Do not wear just socks as you may slip.
- ✓ If you have painful or swollen feet or ankles tell a member of staff. A bigger pair of footwear may be required and medication prescribed to reduce swelling.
- ✓ Take care if you have long or loose night clothing especially if the material is shiny and slippy. And make sure you do not trip over loose bedding.
- ✓ Make sure your walking aid is close at hand. Make sure you feel safe and balanced before you start to walk using it correctly as advised by the Physiotherapist, and take your time.
- ✓ Have assistance from a staff member to move and walk if this is advised. Use the call bell to get help.
- ✓ If you need to use the toilet often at night tell the nurse. A commode next to your bed may be provided.
- ✓ If you usually have help dressing tell the nurse.
- ✓ Follow general health and wellbeing advice, eating a balanced diet and make sure you have enough to drink.
- ✓ To improve your circulation, muscle strength and reduce joint stiffness, do some simple leg exercises before getting up from your bed or chair (see below).

Leg Exercises in Sitting

- **Slowly lift your foot and circle your ankle.**
Aim for six circles with each foot.
- **Slowly lift your leg out in front straightening your knee.**
Hold for a few seconds. Aim for six with each leg.
- **Slowly lift your knee up towards your chest and down again.**
Aim for six lifts with each leg.

Don't be worried about asking staff for help or assistance.

We are here to help.