

Patient information

Reducing falls in hospital

Advice for patients, relatives and carers

Reducing falls in hospital

Falls are very common; 1 in 3 people over 65 will have a fall each year. Falls can cause serious injury, but there are many things that can be done to reduce the risks.

The aim of this leaflet is to highlight the risk factors thereby minimizing your chance of falling whilst in hospital.

Our staff will assess your risk factors and create an individualized management plan according to your needs.

These are some of the things that you can also do to help.

General health problems, medication and dizziness or fainting

- **You can:** Inform us if you are having any dizzy spells when standing and of any recent changes to your general health.
- **Family/friends can:** Provide more information about the patient's health or dizzy spells and inform us of any specific concerns. You may be asked to bring in patient's medication.
- **The hospital staff will:** Review your medication during your stay in hospital and carry out appropriate medical investigations. Monitor your blood pressures for any changes relating to falls.

Footwear

- **You can:** Wear non-slip, well-fitting slippers/shoes. Inform staff if you have poor

foot health.

- **Family/friends can:** Bring in the patients well-fitting slippers/shoes as soon as possible.
- **The hospital staff will:** Ensure that you wear your own shoes/slippers. Provide you with temporary slippers if required. Refer you to professional staff for advice on foot health.

Environment

- **You can:** Remember the hospital is not as familiar to you as your home. Try to keep your bed-space uncluttered. Keep the things that you use regularly within reach.
- **Family/friends can:** Help to maintain a clutter free environment. Return the bed-space to how you found it upon arrival.
- **The hospital staff will:** Endeavour to maintain a safe environment.

Nutrition and fluid intake

- **You can:** Eat regular meals and avoid missing meals. Unless advised otherwise, try to drink at least 8 cups/1 litre of fluid, preferably water, a day.
- **Family/friends can:** Encourage the patient to eat and drink. Liaise with the nursing staff about bringing in snacks for the patient. Please inform staff if there has been a recent significant weight loss or loss in appetite.
- **The hospital staff will:** Refer you to dietetics as appropriate. We may keep a food and fluid diary and, if required, offer specific menus and monitor your weight.

Mobility, strength and balance problems, fear of falling and your falls history

- **You can:** Inform a nurse if you normally use a walking aid. **Do not** try to use furniture instead. If you are afraid of falling, or have previously fallen, then please

inform the nurse. Always remember to use the call bell system before getting up if you have been asked to do so by staff.

- **Family/friends can:** Inform staff of patient's falls history and bring in any walking aids the patient normally uses. Leave the call bell within reach of the patient when leaving.
- **The hospital staff will:** Provide therapy input (physiotherapy and occupational therapy) on the ward and arrange follow up at home if appropriate.

Memory problems, confusion and difficulty understanding

- **You can:** Try to remember to use the call bell system which is next to your bed.
- **Family/friends can:** Inform nursing staff if you have noticed a change in the patient's memory or understanding. Make sure the patient knows that you are leaving at the end of visiting time.
- **The hospital staff will:** Utilise patient mobility alert systems as appropriate. We may move the bed into the most suitable position. We may use an ultra-low bed, bed rails or place a mattress next to the bed.

Visual and hearing impairments

- **You can:** Wear your glasses and hearing aids. Avoid walking in the dark on your own if you struggle with your mobility or night vision.
- **Family/friends can:** Bring in the patient's glasses and hearing aids.
- **The hospital staff will:** Encourage you to wear glasses and hearing aids when mobilising. Advise you to have regular eye and hearing checks.

Incontinence

- **You can:** Inform us if you normally need to use the toilet frequently or urgently. If you need support using the toilet please try to give us as much warning as possible. Let staff know if you normally use a bottle.

- **Family/friends can:** Provide more information about the patient's normal continence if it is relevant.
- **The hospital staff will:** Assist you to the toilet as quickly as possible after you have asked. Refer you to a community continence specialist if required at home.

Finally, please listen to the advice of the staff and please do not hesitate to use your call bell if you require assistance.

Please note: This advice will not eliminate your risk of falling entirely. However we will strive to minimise the risk of falls by working in partnership with you and your visitors in the hospital.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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