

Preventing Patient Falls during a Hospital Stay:

A Patient & Family guide to maintaining safety of your loved one

What is a Fall?

A fall is an unplanned drop to the floor with or without injury.

Why are We Concerned about Falls?

- Approximately 30% of falls lead to minor injuries such as scrapes and bruises.
- Approximately 15% of falls lead to serious injuries such as bone fractures, brain injury and even death.
- Falls lead to longer hospital stays and may cause an admission to a long term care facility.

What are the Risk Factors?

You are at increased risk for falling if you have any of the following:

- Previous fall within the past 12 months
- Confusion, decreased mental alertness or altered memory
- Frequent urination and bowel movements
- Dizziness, change in balance
- Numbness or weakness in legs

Your environment may also increase the risk for having a fall. Clutter, unfamiliar surroundings and medical equipment such as IV poles and pumps may cause a fall.

In addition, certain medication may also increase the risk for falls.

Common Medications that Contribute to Falls:

- Blood Pressure Medications
- Diuretics (such as Lasix®)
- Antihistamines (such as Benadryl®)
- Sleep Aids
- Antidepressants
- Anti-seizure Medications
- Steroids

- Pain Medications
- Anti-Nausea Medications
- Chemotherapy
- Other Central Nervous System drugs (such as: Neurontin®, Lyrica®)

What can I Do to Prevent Falls?

- Be aware of how you are feeling from day to day and report to your nurse symptoms such as confusion, dizziness, changes in balance, etc.
- If you have **any of the risk factors listed above**, please use your call light to ask for help when getting out of bed
- Keep the area, especially the path to the bathroom clear of clutter
- Change positions slowly and sit at the edge of bed briefly prior to standing
- Use the bathroom call light if you need help

The ABC's of Fall Prevention

- **A**sk for help: Call the nurse or nurse aide if you want to get up.
- **B**e aware of your body: Do you feel dizzy or weak?
- **C**autious: Is there enough light? Are you wearing slip-resistant hospital socks?
- **D**anger: Do not use unsteady items such as a bedside table or IV pole, to get up.

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