

### Your Care Instructions

When you are in the hospital, your risk of falling may be higher than normal. Your medicines may make you dizzy, or you may be weak and confused from illness, surgery or treatments. This could make it hard to get out of bed, and things like crutches, bandages, casts or braces can affect how well you can walk.

If you and your family know that you have a risk of falling, you can plan ahead. Talk to doctors and nurses about helping you avoid falls. Ask your doctor if working with a physiotherapist or occupational therapist would help you prevent a fall. Don't be afraid to ask for help, even with small things. If you or a family member or friend sees something that is not safe, tell the hospital staff.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

### How can you help prevent a fall?

#### Things you can do

- When you go to the hospital, bring non-skid socks, slippers or shoes that stay on your feet.
- If you use a walker or cane at home, bring it with you, or ask the hospital to provide one during your stay.
- Ask your doctor or nurse if your treatments or medicines will increase your risk of a fall. Some hospitals will check your risk when you are admitted to the hospital.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if medicines make you dizzy, weak or light-headed. If you feel this way, do not try to get up on your own — call the nurse for help.
- If you are on crutches or have other problems that make it hard to walk, call the nurse for help getting out of bed. Do not try to do it on your own until you feel sure you are able.
- When you get out of bed, sit up first and count to 10 before you stand up.
- If you wear eyeglasses, put them on before you get out of bed.
- If you need help getting to the washroom, call the nurse before you have an urgent need to go. If you get fluids through a vein (IV), you may need to go to the washroom more often.

## Things the hospital should do

- Your phone, the nurses call light/button and anything you need to help you walk should be close to you.
- Your bed should be low enough so that you don't have problems getting out of bed. The wheels on your bed should be locked so the bed can't move.
- Your nurse or doctor will tell you what you can safely do and how often you need to get up and move around.
- Your room should not have any wet or slippery areas. There should be nothing in the way of going to the washroom or hallway.
- Your room should have good lighting. Make sure there is a night-light in your washroom.

## When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor or nurse call line if:

- You need more information about preventing falls while you are in the hospital.
- You are interested in programs to increase your strength, improve your balance and prevent falls after you leave the hospital.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

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