

## Nursing and Organisational Development Directorate

# Preventing falls in hospital

This leaflet is to tell you how we try to prevent patient falls, and what you and your visitors can do to help.

Sometimes patients experience a fall while in hospital. This may be because of a sudden change in health, disorientation due to unfamiliar surroundings, the effect of new medication, or mobility and balance problems.

Unfortunately accidents can happen at any time, but we will do our very best to minimise this risk, respecting your freedom to move around and your wishes at all times. We hope the information below will assist you, your relatives and carers to reduce the chance of a fall while you are in hospital. However, if you have any questions, don't be afraid to ask us for help.

### Our advice to patients

- If you have a fear of falling please let the nursing staff know.
- Listen to the advice from the therapists and nursing staff.
- Use the nurse call bell for assistance if you feel weak, unsteady or dizzy.
- Keep everything you need within easy reach.
- Ensure you have your glasses, hearing aids and dentures.
- Bring any walking aids from home.
- Use any walking aids given to you by the physiotherapists.
- Wear non-slip well fitting slippers or shoes.
- If you wish to wear bed socks we advise the use of ones with grips on the soles.
- To help prevent you tripping, wear clothes that are not too long or too loose.
- Report any problems such as spills, trailing wires or cables to staff.
- Ask your relatives or carers to take items home to reduce bedside clutter.
- Be careful when standing up or getting out of bed, take your time.
- Don't use hospital furniture for support as it may not be stable enough.

### Our advice to visitors

- Please replace anything that you have moved during your visit.
- Inform nursing staff before you leave and ensure that the patient realises you are leaving.
- Ensure the patient has well fitting non slip footwear and clothing that is not too loose or long.
- Discuss any falls prevention and walking aids that the patient uses at home with nursing staff and bring them in if needed.
- Ensure the patient has their glasses, hearing aids and dentures with them.
- Tell us if the patient has had any previous falls.
- Minimise clutter by taking unnecessary items home.

## Looking after patients who may be at risk of falling

Although falls cannot always be prevented, we assess all adult patients on admission to reduce the chance of them having a fall.

If you or your relative is assessed as being at risk of a fall, these are some of the steps we may take to minimise this risk;

- Moving the patient's bed to a more suitable position on the ward.
- Using bedrails to stop a patient from rolling or sliding out of bed.
- Using an ultra low bed [which is lower to floor level] when bedrails are not suitable. Sometimes a padded mat or mattress will be placed on the floor next to the ultra low bed.
- Carefully monitoring the patient, which may be continuous or at set periods of time.
- Using other falls prevention aids as directed by the nursing staff.

## Please remember

The measures detailed in this leaflet are designed to minimise the risk of patients falling whilst in hospital. However we cannot restrain patients or deprive them of their liberty and we will always adhere to patients' wishes, or act in their best interests if they are unable to express their wishes.

Some patients will still fall even if we have done all the things mentioned in this leaflet, being in hospital does not mean we can prevent falls. However, by working in partnership with patients, their relatives and carers we aim to minimise the risk of falls.

## Further information

If you have any further concerns regarding falls please ask the staff to contact the Falls Prevention Co-ordinator on ext 4403 or call direct on 01223 274403.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem Informacji Pacjenta (Patient Information) pod numerem telefonu: 01223 216032 lub pod adresem [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Portuguese

Se precisar desta informação noutra língua, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio, por favor peça ao departamento que contacte a secção de Informação aos Doentes (Patient Information) pelo telefone 01223 216032 ou através do e-mail [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Arabic

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، بالأحرف الكبيرة أو بشكل شريط صوتي، يمكنك أن تطلب من القسم الاتصال بمعلومات المريض على الرقم: 01223216032 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني: [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Cantonese

如您需以另一語言版本、特大字體或錄音形式索取本資料，請要求部門聯絡病人諮詢服務：電話 01223 216032，電郵地址 [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Turkish

Eğer bu bilgileri başka bir dilde veya büyük baskılı veya sesli olarak isterseniz, lütfen bulunduğunuz bölümdeki görevlilere söyleyin Hasta Bilgilendirme servisini arasınlar: 01223 216032 veya [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر زبان میں، بڑے الفاظ میں یا آڈیو طریقہ سے درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس شعبہ سے پیشینٹ انفارمیشن سے ذیل کے ذریعہ رابطہ کرنے کی درخواست کریں: [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) یا 01223 216032

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও রেকর্ডিং পোতে চান তাহলে 'প্যাশেন্ট ইনফরমেশন' এর সঙ্গে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করে বা [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য ডিপার্টমেন্টটিতে অনুরোধ জানান।

### Document history

Authors	Debra Quartermaine
Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ <a href="http://www.cuh.org.uk">www.cuh.org.uk</a>
Contact number	01223 274403
Publish/Review date	March 2010/March 2013
File name	Preventing_falls_in_hospital
Version number/Ref	1/PIN2600