

Preventing a Fall in Hospital

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, FAMILY AND CARERS



Maitland

Private Hospital



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Causes of falls in hospital

Your safety is our priority. A fall while in hospital could cause an injury leading to a longer hospital stay and reduce your confidence and independence.

There are many reasons that you could be at risk of falling in the hospital, including:

- being unwell and in an unfamiliar place
- poor balance and mobility reducing your safety when walking
- poorly fitting clothing and footwear
- urgent need for toileting
- poor eyesight
- medications causing dizziness or drowsiness.



Tips for preventing a fall in hospital



Communicate with staff

Let the staff know if you are concerned about falling or feel unsafe when moving around. Please inform staff if you have poor balance or have recently fallen, need help with things like showering and dressing, need to use the toilet urgently or feel dizzy or unwell.



Use the call bell

Make sure you can reach it easily and call early if you need assistance. Please wait for staff to assist, particularly if this has been recommended for you.

Use safety equipment provided in bathrooms

Stay seated when showering and use rails/armrests when sitting on and standing from the toilet or chair. Have a staff member stay with you for safety and assist you if needed. When requesting assistance, remain seated, use the call bell and wait for a staff member to arrive.



Use your walking aid

Use your walking aid both in and outside your room and keep it within easy reach.



Take your time

Move slowly when walking or getting up from lying or sitting. Use the equipment provided and ask for assistance if needed.

Wear safe footwear and clothing

Make sure skirts and trousers are not longer than ankle length and avoid clothes with floppy pockets and sleeves to avoid tripping and catching. Wear supportive, well-fitting shoes, slippers or non-slip socks. Avoid scuffs, thongs or surgical stockings/socks without a non-slip sole.



Wear your glasses

Keep your glasses clean and within reach.

Turn on the light

Using the button on the call bell before you get out of bed at night. Always turn on the light when in the bathroom.



Family, carers and visitors

We are aware many family members and carers provide help to patients in their home. It is important to be aware, however, that there may be additional risks related to the hospital environment or with the patient being unwell or injured that could change how assistance is given.

If you would like to continue providing help while the patient is in hospital, please speak with a member of the healthcare team, such as a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist for guidance.

You can also help by:

- notifying staff if you notice a change in the patient's condition
- making sure the call bell and patient's personal items are within easy reach
- reminding the patient to call for help before getting up
- informing the nurse before you leave if the patient is experiencing any confusion.



Following a fall in hospital

After a fall in hospital:

- staff will meet with you and your family/carer to find out the cause of your fall and complete a repeat assessment of your risk of having another fall
- changes will be made to your care to improve your safety
- a doctor review will be organised
- a review by one or more members of the allied health team (such as a physiotherapist or occupational therapist) will be organised
- a referral for ongoing therapy with a private therapist or our day rehabilitation program can be arranged if it is required.

After discharge from hospital

A fall can be serious and may lead to a loss of confidence and independence. To minimise the effect of your fall and to reduce your risk of falling again, please let a staff member know if you would like to discuss this information in more detail.

Please promptly seek medical attention if any of the following symptoms begin soon after you discharge from hospital:

- a headache that worsens or doesn't go away
- feeling faint or dizzy
- feeling more sleepy, restless, agitated, or confused
- changes in your behaviour
- blurred vision, slurred speech or saying things that don't make sense
- nausea and/or vomiting
- increased pain
- inability to move part of your body or worsening clumsiness or unsteadiness.



Next steps

Things to discuss at your next appointment with your GP:

- exercises to reduce falls
- improving your mobility
- management of chronic health conditions
- your medications that may increase your risk of falling
- your bone health
- if you need additional vitamin D
- any vision problems you are experiencing
- any foot pain or problems
- referral to the hospital's day rehabilitation program for improving your strength, balance and endurance.

If you are experiencing ongoing difficulties call 4933 8400 for more information.





If you have any questions that require an urgent response please contact the hospital directly on (02) 4933 8400.

In an emergency or life threatening situation you must go to your local Emergency Department for appropriate treatment.



175 Chisholm Road, East Maitland NSW 2323
T: 02 4933 8400 / maitlandprivatehospital.com.au