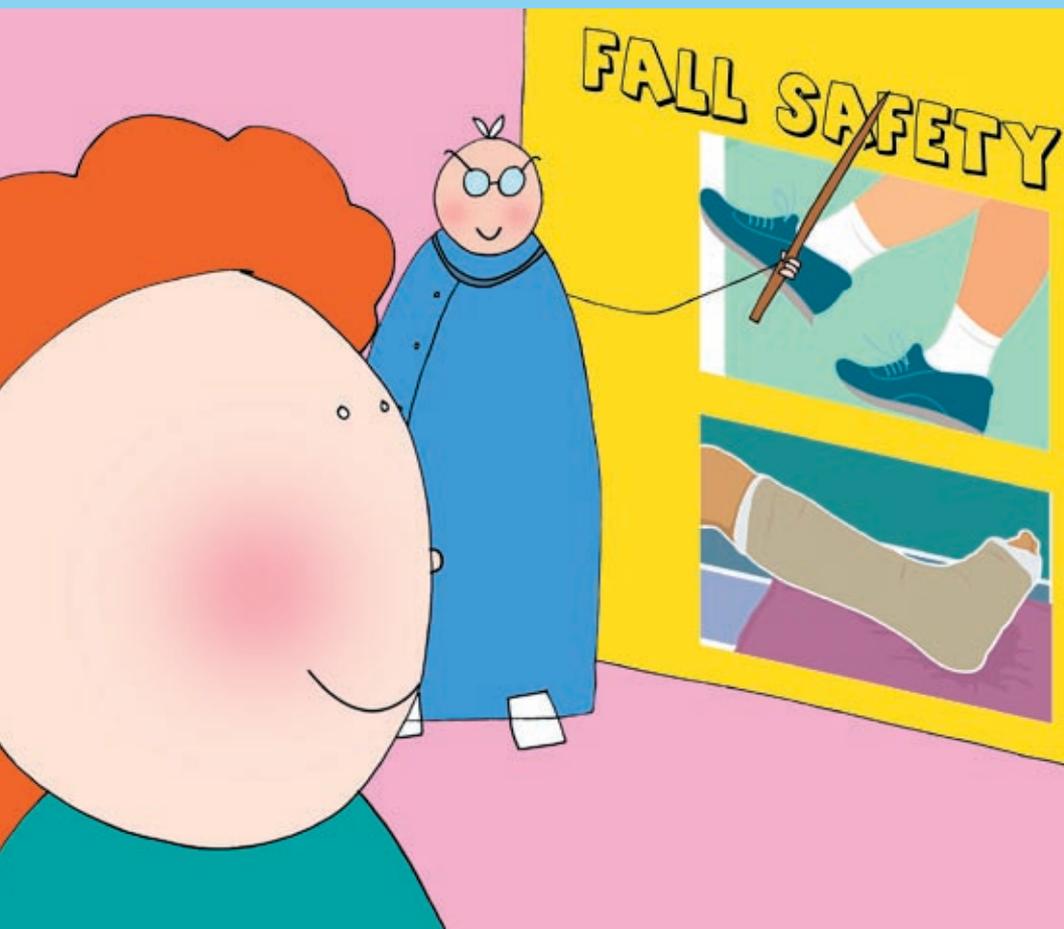


# Keeping you from Falling

Don't let a fall be your last trip!



## FALLS ARE A SERIOUS PROBLEM.

Falls can happen anytime and anyplace to people of any age. Most falls happen to people age 65 years and older and can lead to serious injuries. You can fall walking across a cluttered living room floor, in a slippery bathroom, or while standing on a stool reaching into a cabinet.

### ? **Where do falls happen?**

Most falls happen at home but sometimes falls can happen while you are in the hospital.

### ? **Why do falls happen?**

- Many falls happen because of hazards such as slippery or wet surfaces, poor lighting, the wrong kind of shoes, and cluttered walkways in a home.
- Most broken bones are related to everyday activities such as walking up stairs, going to the bathroom or working in the kitchen.

**Falls are accidents...YOU CAN PREVENT FALLS!**

# WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF

The hospital staff will do everything they can to make your hospital stay safe. You can help by following the tips below.

## Prevent falls at the hospital. Be sure to...

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- Use the **3 side rails** to keep you from falling out of bed. You may not think you need them, but put them up just to be safe.
  - Use your **nurse call button**- when you have to go to the bathroom or want to move to a chair, use the call button, and call your nurse for help.
  - Make sure your **nurse knows when you are alone** in your room.
  - Keep **all the things you need close by**, such as the nurse call light/bell, water, tissue, and phone.
  - If you can, have a **friend or family member** stay with you.
  - When your friends leave, ask them to **leave your hospital door open** so that the nurse can see you and make sure you are safe.
  - Wear **non-skid socks**. Regular shoes and socks are very slippery on hospital floors.

When you go home, use this checklist to make sure your house is safe. These tips are easy and they don't cost a lot of money.

## PREVENT FALLS AT HOME

### Stairs

- Make sure your stairs are not too dark.
- Keep your steps clear of items.
- When going up or down the stairs, use the handrails.

### Bathroom

- Keep a night-light on in the bathroom.
- Use bathroom rugs with nonskid backing.
- Place a rubber mat or nonskid strips on the bathtub/shower floor.
- Use a long-handle shower hose.
- Before you step out of the tub, make sure the bathroom floor is not wet and slippery.
- Leave the bathroom door unlocked, so it can be opened from both sides.
- Put grab bars in the tub. Do not use the soap dish or towel bar to pull yourself up.

### Bedroom

- Remove throw rugs, extension cords, and other items from the floor. Install a bedroom night-light.
- Use a normal-height bed. Before you get out of bed, sit on the edge for a minute to make sure you are not dizzy.



## **Kitchen**

- Avoid climbing and reaching to high shelves. Move the things you use a lot to a lower shelf so that you can reach them.
- Use a stable step stool with handrails.
- Store items at counter level.
- Clean up spills as soon as they happen and don't wax your floors.

## **Living Area**

- Arrange furniture so that you have an open walk way between rooms.
- Remove low tables, footrests and other items from the pathway.
- Keep electrical and telephone cords out of the pathway.

## **Shoes**

- Wear low-heeled shoes with non-skid soles.
- Keep your shoe-laces tied.
- Avoid shoes with thick heavy soles.

## **IF YOU DO FALL, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

- Don't panic. Take a deep breath, assess the situation and determine if you are hurt.
- Slide or crawl along the floor to the nearest couch or chair and try to get up.
- If you can't get up, call for help.
- If you are alone, crawl slowly to the telephone and call 911 or relatives.

✓ **Here are some medical tips that can help lower your chances of falling:**

- Every year get a physical and eye exam from your doctor. Have your doctor check for heart and blood pressure problems.
- Eat foods that are high in calcium and vitamin D like low-fat milk and ready-to-eat cereals. These foods help keep your bones strong.
- Get some exercise every day. This will help your balance and coordination.
- Keep an up-to-date list of the medicines you take and give it to all of your doctors.
- Know the side effects of your medicines.
- Make sure all of your medicines are clearly labeled and stored in a well-lit area according to instructions.
- Take medicines on schedule with a full glass of water, unless you are told otherwise.

**REMEMBER...**

**Falls are accidents—  
YOU CAN PREVENT FALLS!**

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