

Preventing Falls in Hospital and at Home

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Falls are one of the most common accidents among hospitalized patients and the elderly. Falling may result in abrasions, contusions, bruises, or hematomas. And in severe cases, it can lead to fractures, concussions, or even coma. With correct knowledge of fall prevention, the occurrence of falls can be reduced.

■ High-risk patients for falling

- Taking medications that affect consciousness or activity (e.g., diuretics, painkillers, laxatives, sedatives, sleeping pills, cardiovascular drugs, muscle relaxants, etc.)
- Undergoing intravenous infusion
- During post-surgery recovery

- Aged over 65
 - Having a history of previous falls
 - Experiencing an unstable gait
 - Suffering from anemia or orthostatic hypotension (blood pressure drops and dizziness upon posture changes)
 - Malnourished, weak, or feeling dizzy
 - Having visual impairments (e.g., severe myopia, presbyopia)
 - Experiencing consciousness disorders (e.g., disorientation, agitation, confusion)
 - Having sleep disturbances
 - Suffering from limb dysfunction
- **Prevention at hospital bedsides**
- After surgery, or when taking sleeping pills, feeling dizzy, or experiencing unstable blood pressure, patients should sit by the bedside briefly before standing up. Only get out of bed with assistance from family members or nurses if feeling comfortable.

- When a patient needs assistance and no family member is nearby, immediately use the nursing call to notify a nurse.
- When a patient leaves bed (including going to the restroom or bathing), family members should accompany with them closely to provide immediate support if needed.
- If the patient is agitated, restless, or unconscious, raise the bed rails and call for medical staff assistance.
- Always keep the bed at a height where the patient's feet can touch the ground and raise the bed rails. Lower the rails before the patient gets out of bed to prevent them from climbing over.
- Caregivers must fulfill patients' physiological needs (e.g., drinking water, using the restroom) before leaving.
- Inform nurses when caregivers leave the patient.
- Use walking aids as needed.

■ Fall prevention in hospital restrooms

- If weak, unable to stand, or prone to dizziness, avoid getting out of bed and use a bedpan or urinal instead.
- Always use the restroom before sleeping.
- Use walking aids.
- Caregivers should accompany and assist patients during restroom activities.
- In case of emergencies while using the restroom, use the nursing call to notify a nurse.
- Assist in pushing IV poles and replace malfunctioning wheels as needed.
- Immediately notify the nurse if the floor is wet to prevent slipping.
- Store items in cabinets to maintain a clear pathway.
- Wear appropriate clothes and anti-slip shoes. Avoid going barefoot or wearing only socks.
- Keep the room well-lit unless specific medical needs require dimmer lighting.

- If unable to stand, carefully assist the patient to sit on the floor to minimize injury from falling.

■ Home fall prevention methods:

- Ensure adequate lighting, reduce glare, and keep passageways lit at night.
- Keep floors dry and clear of clutter. Ensure pathways are unobstructed, hide or secure extension cords, and avoid using slippery rugs. Mark uneven floor surfaces with clear colors.
- Use non-slip floors and install handrails in staircases and bathrooms.
- Opt for sturdy furniture that doesn't move or slide. Avoid beds and chairs that are too soft, too high, or too low.
- Place frequently used items (e.g., glasses, cups) within easy reach.
- Move slowly when changing positions and use handrails to prevent dizziness or instability.
- Maintain regular exercise to improve flexibility and endurance of the musculoskeletal system.

- Engage in joint mobility exercises, keep warm, and prevent joint stiffness.
- Use sturdy walkers or canes and ensure correct usage. Don't avoid them due to embarrassment or inconvenience.
- Avoid taking medication without a doctor's guidance.
- Wear waterproof, non-slip shoes with rubber soles and deep grooves.
- **Handling falls at home:**
 - First, assess the patient's head, consciousness, and limb appearance and function.
 - Perform initial wound care if needed and seek medical attention if necessary.
 - In severe cases like unconsciousness, heavy bleeding, or fractures, immediately call an ambulance.
 - Seek help from others and avoid trying to lift or support the patient alone to prevent secondary injuries.

If there are specific sections you'd like me to elaborate further on, feel free to ask!

Should you have any inquiries related to fall prevention, please contact our staff anytime.

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We will be more than happy to assist you.

Sincerely, Cathay General Hospital.

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