

# Reducing your risk of falling during a hospital stay

Harm Free Care Team

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Information for Patients, Families & Carers

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## Introduction

Falls and fractures are a common and serious health problem faced by older people. People age 65 and older have the highest risk of falling. 1 in 3 of people age 65 and over have a risk of falling. 1 in 2 of people age 80 and over fall at least once a year.

Falling can cause you distress, pain, bone breaks, fractures, loss of confidence, loss of independence and mortality.

We cannot always stop falls in hospitals. But we do a multifactorial fall risk assessment. This is to see your risk of falling and to reduce, improve and manage your hospital stay. We look at your:

- falls history
- medication review,
- vision and hearing concerns,
- ability to move around and balance stability,
- other health problems (such as continence issues)

These assessments help us decide how best to support your needs. It tells us what you can do while you are in hospital to reduce your risk of falls.

You, your carer and your family can use this leaflet to lower the chance of you falling when at the hospital.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What can I do to stop myself from falling?

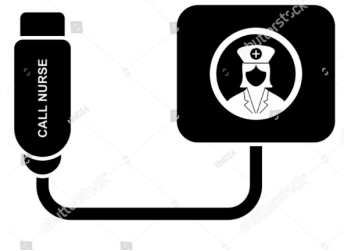
We will ask you lots of questions about your history and health concern when you arrive. This can be very overwhelming. Please be patient with us. Your care is our priority and we will put every effort in place to reduce your risk of falling.



**Tell your nurse or doctor** if you have had any falls in the past year. Tell them about any dizziness, problems with your vision or hearing that may make your chances of falling higher.

## Use the call bell

Use the call bell at every bed side and in toilets. You must use the call bell when you need help. We will show you how to use it.



## Move around

We will encourage you to sit out of bed to maintain your strength, balance, independence and mobility. This will be within 24 hours of your hospital stay or as soon as you are stable to do so. **Deconditioning** is when there is a decline in your physical function of your body. This is because of physical inactivity, bed rest and or your ill health.

## Wear your hearing aid and glasses

We advise you to bring your hearing aids with extra batteries and glasses to the hospital. This is to make sure they are in good working condition. This will help to communicate better at the hospital.

If we have any concerns about your poor vision or hearing, we may advise you to make an appointment to have an eye or hearing test after leaving hospital.



## Use walking aids

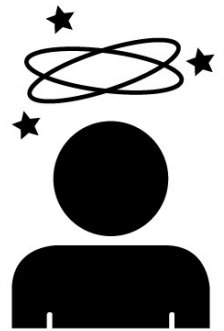
If you use or have any walking aids, please let us know if you have one with you. This is because these can often go missing. We will label them with your details or have them returned home. We can offer a mobility aid whilst you are in hospital.

Never lean on hospital furniture (bedside table) or use them to help you walk. They can be unsteady and move unexpectedly if it has wheels.



## Feeling dizzy or lightheaded?

You must stop and sit down if you start to feel dizzy or lightheaded. This could be a symptom of a blood pressure change. If this does happen let the staff know. We always check lying and standing blood pressure to see if the fall may be related to a blood pressure drop.



## Have ear problems?

Any problems with ears can affect your balance and raise your risk of falls. If you notice changes in your hearing are affecting your day to day life, see your GP after you leave hospital. Problems like an ear infection or a build up of wax can easily be treated.

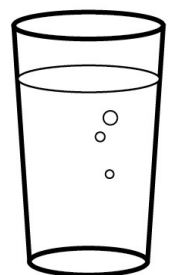
## Eat for energy

Keep an eye on your appetite whilst in hospital. Getting enough energy is important in keeping up your strength and preventing falls. You may not always feel like eating. It is better to eat something such as small snacks during the day. Make sure you eat and drink, unless you have been advised not to by a member of staff.



## Drink plenty of fluids

If you do not drink enough it is likely you will start to feel lightheaded and risk dehydration. Try to drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids each day. Try to choose de-cafeinated drinks to reduce your risk of dehydration and urinary urgency.



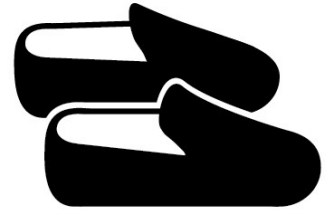
## Taking too many medications

Being on multiple medications can raise the risk of falling. If you are on **5 or more** medications, please make sure that your GP has confirmed that all medication including regular supplements are required. Medications can make you feel faint, dizzy or lightheaded and may affect how you usually feel. Let your GP or the doctor at the hospital know if you have any side effects like these when taking your medication.



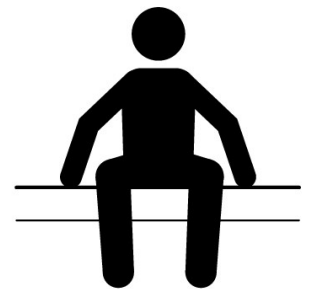
## Wear the right shoes

Bring your shoes or slippers to hospital. Make sure they fit well. Make sure they have a good grip and cannot fall off. If you do not have suitable foot wear with you, we will offer you non-slip socks. Please remember not to walk bare footed whilst in hospital. **Do not walk in surgical stockings.**



## When getting up from bed:

- Sit upright for a few minutes on the edge of your bed before standing up fully.
- Get up slowly and make sure you feel steady before walking. Use a your walking aid for support.
- Make sure any dizziness is gone before you try to move.
- Sit out in chair at least daily or at meal times.



## Keep your space tidy

Get to know your bedside space. Ask for clutter to be moved from your bedside or put in a locker. Make sure walking paths are clear. Ask for items you do not need to be taken home.



## Toileting

Talk to staff if you have concerns with needing the toilet. We would have done an assessment and made a care plan to support you with regular toileting. We will maintain your privacy and dignity as much as possible. If you have a catheter, make sure it is not on the floor while walking to prevent you from tripping. Always ask staff for support to secure it.



## Taking care in the bathroom

Take care in the toilet and bathroom. Make sure you can reach the call bells. If you are high risk of falls you will be monitored closely. The member of staff may ask to stay with you to reduce your chances of falling.



## Exercises to strengthen your legs

You can do these exercises from a chair to help strengthen your legs. It will also lower your risk of falling.

Always begin all exercises sitting in a sturdy chair. Sit forward away from the back of the chair:



### Chair marching

1. Lift your knees up one at a time and swing your arms.
2. Do this for 30 seconds, then rest for 30 seconds.
3. Repeat 3 times.



### Ankle movements

1. Bring your toes up towards you, leaving your heels on the floor.
2. Then lower your toes and lift your heels up off the floor.
3. Do this for 30 seconds, then rest for 30 seconds.
4. Repeat 3 times.



### Leg extension

1. Slowly lift your right leg out straight, bringing your toes up towards you.
2. Hold for 5 seconds, and then lower.
3. Repeat on each leg. Only do 1 leg at a time.

Level 1: 5 times each leg.

Level 2: 10 times each leg.

Level 3: 15 times each leg.



## Sit to stand (with walking aid)

1. Sit at the front edge of the chair with your feet and knees apart. Your toes should be pointing forwards and feet pulled back slightly.
2. Lean forward and stand up. Stretch up tall with a walking frame to support in front of you, as needed.
3. Make sure the backs of your legs are against the chair. Then slowly lower yourself into the chair without flopping back down.

Level 1: 5 times in a row pushing with your arms.

Level 2: 10 times in a row pushing with your arms.

Level 3: 15 times in a row without using your arms.

## More information

Making sure you do not fall after discharge from hospital is important.

- Age UK give advice on strength and balance exercises to prevent falls. You can call on **0116 299 2233**.
- The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland leaflet on preventing falls:  
[www.leicspart.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/U0775-Preventing-Falls-leaflet-Update-04.pdf](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/U0775-Preventing-Falls-leaflet-Update-04.pdf)

## Contact details

For more information on how to reduce falls in hospital, call the Falls Safety Team or Harm Free Care Team on 0116 258 5384.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)