

Reducing Patient Falls Advice Leaflet for Patients, Relatives and Carers



The Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals Trust is working hard to reduce the number of patient falls that occur in Hospital. International research shows that each year many thousands of people fall whilst they are in Hospital.

We want to work in partnership with you to reduce patient falls.

Factors contributing to the risk of falls:

- Ageing process
- Poor mobility
- Confusion and agitation
- Continence problems
- History of falls
- Medical condition
- Poor vision or hearing
- Poor nutritional status
- Emotional distress or depression
- Medication known to affect balance or perception
- Some combinations of medications
- Lack of exercise
- Environmental hazards (steps, stairs, spillages, fluids etc.)

It can also be because they are in an unfamiliar environment and cannot use their usual strategies for keeping safe.

If you are a patient

Remember hospital is not as familiar as home, so you may need extra help when mobilizing.

Please help us to help you.

- Always wear well-fitting lightweight shoes or slippers when mobilizing. Ask a family member or friend to bring these in for you.
- Ask a friend, carer or family member to bring in your hearing aids, glasses and any walking aids you normally use.
- If it is difficult to get items brought in from home, please let the nurse who is looking after you know.
- Please ask a member of staff if you would like to be shown the bathroom facilities to familiarize yourself with the environment.
- Tell the nurse if you feel unsure about moving around, especially in the bathroom or wash area.

- Please do not hesitate to use the nurse call bell if you feel concerned about mobilizing.
- Be careful when standing up or getting out of bed, please take your time.
- Be aware that hospital furniture, for example bed tables and lockers are on wheels and move easily.

Please remember to keep your personal items within easy reach.

If you are a relative, carer, friend or visitor

Please help us to help our patients

- Let us know about any previous falls the patient may have had.
- Avoid moving furniture when you visit. If you use visitor chairs, please put them away as you leave.
- Try to take away any unnecessary belongings or bags to reduce clutter at the bedside.
- Ensure the patient knows you are leaving at the end of your visit and place the call bell by the patient as you leave.

If a patient is at an increased risk of falling, we may need to:

- Assess the risk of them hurting themselves following a fall.
- Move the patient's bed within the ward so they can be seen more easily.
- Invite you to support the care of your relative or friend.
- Consider the use of safety sides.
- Consider alternative bed positioning or the use of a lowered bed.
- Consider increased supervision by nursing staff.

Unfortunately, some patients may still fall even if we have tried all the things mentioned in this leaflet. Being in hospital does not mean we can completely prevent falls, but we are committed as a Trust to reducing the number of falls and any injuries that may occur as a result.

Further information:

Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk 0800 678 1602

Royal Osteoporosis Society: www.theros.org.uk 0808 800 0035