

# Calvary Community Care Independence in Hospital

Falls and Injury Prevention - How not to fall for it



If your admission to hospital is planned, you will receive an admissions pack prior to admission.

This flyer has information about hospital requirements for your hospital stay.

However, you may also be at greater risk of falling in the unfamiliar environment of a hospital. You may feel dizzy, or weaker and less steady than you expected, when you get up to walk after illness, or an operation, and therefore also be at greater risk of falling.

## Be sure to also take these things to hospital with you

- walking aid, glasses and hearing aid/s if you use them (remember spare batteries for your hearing aid)
- comfortable clothing that is not too long, too loose or too tight (it doesn't have to be nightwear if you are up and about)
- a torch
- comfortable well fitting, flat, non-slip shoes, slippers (not thongs) or non-slip socks

## During your hospital stay

- become familiar with your surroundings
- have a nurse show you how to use your bed controls, how to use the call bell and turn on/off the lights
- ask staff for help if you are unsure about anything
- keep the call bell, your glasses, footwear and walking aid in easy reach.
- if allowed, try to move around and do what you can for yourself so that you keep up your strength

- order the food you like from the daily menu requests. Should your preferences be unavailable, speak to the kitchen or nursing staff about other food items you would prefer. Family and friends could also bring in food more suitable for you (advise staff if this occurs).
- good nutrition will also keep up your strength.

### Walking around in hospital

Staff may ask you, initially, to call for a nurse, or at least have another person with you, both when you get out of bed, and for walking. This is for reasons of your health and safety, in the short term, while you are recovering; not because they think you are incapable either mentally or physically.

#### Before you get up:

If you have been asked to call for assistance or you feel unsteady, use the call bell and wait until staff come. You may find that staff do not come immediately as they may be busy with other patients, therefore do not wait until the last minute to call them (e.g. in the case of needing the toilet).

#### Before you walk:

- get your balance before moving away from the bed or chair and let staff know if you feel unsteady
- put on your shoes, well-fitting slippers or non-slip socks so you don't slip
- wear your distance glasses if you have them. If wearing bifocals or multifocals, take extra care, particularly on stairs.
- ensure you have your walking aid (if you use one) for balance, rather than using the furniture or walls
- wear your hearing aid
- know where you will be walking and ensure there is a clear pathway to your destination - watch for spills or objects in the way, and tell staff about them
- if leaving the ward please tell staff so they know where (both for your safety and in case they need you for any reason)

### Prevent dizziness

Try to prevent by not making any sudden moves. Take your time to slowly go from a lying to a sitting position, and then from a sitting to a standing position. Before getting out of bed, or up from a chair, sit on the side for a few minutes until the dizziness disappears.

### If you are allowed

- drink plenty of fluid such as water
- keep your feet moving while you are sitting and while in bed
- sit out of bed at least a few times a day to let your body get used to being upright
- instead of lying flat all the time, raise the headrest and knee support to put you in a more seated position if you are spending long periods of time in bed. Change position often if able.

### If you do fall

Keep calm and call for help. Either call out, or use the call bell next to your bed. There is also a call bell in the bathroom.

## Who can help?

**CCC Service Centre** can organise support worker visits before during and after your hospital stay.

### References

**SA Falls and Fall Injury Prevention Fact Sheet 5**  
*'Keeping Safe and Independent in Hospital'*

<http://bit.ly/2ny1EbL>

**See the website of the hospital that you're attending**

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**Need support? Calvary Community Care can support safe, independent living at home with a variety of services and expert advice. Call 1300 66 00 22 for more information.**