



A lifetime of specialist care

Royal Brompton & Harefield **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Slips, trips and falls: preventing falls in hospital

A guide for patients and carers





---

## Table of contents

Understanding falls	3
Having a falls risk assessment	3
Having an overall plan for avoiding falls	4
If a fall occurs while you are in hospital	4
Top tips to minimise your risk of falling	5
Tips for your family and friends	7

*This leaflet gives you general information about reducing the risk of slips, trips and falls in hospital. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions.*

The risk of falling increases as you get older, but can be avoided. Patients in hospital recovering from an illness or surgery may be at a higher risk of having a fall.

There are some simple things to do that will reduce your risk of falling and of being injured.

## Understanding falls

Falling and the fear of falling can make you lose confidence in doing your daily activities. Most falls do not cause serious injury. However, a fall can cause a broken bone that may be difficult to recover from and make you nervous about going out.


## Having a falls risk assessment

All patients admitted to our hospitals have a falls risk assessment. If you have had a fall at home or have experienced problems with your balance and walking, please tell your ward nurse who will complete an assessment with you and create a care plan.

The assessment will help us work out what is making you more likely to fall.

The assessment may include:

- Checking your walking, balance, mobility and muscle weakness.
- Checking your medication, as some medicines may make you feel dizzy or drowsy.
- Checking you have your spectacles / hearing aids / walking aids, if you require them, and they are close at hand at all times.
- Checking whether you have appropriate footwear. The nurses will supply you with a pair of non-slip socks but having some well-fitting, non-slip slippers with you is the best option.
- Discussing any fall or falls you have had, especially in the previous year.



---

Staff may also talk to you about taking extra care so that your risk of a fall is as low as possible. This includes things like ensuring the call bell is within reach and you know

how to use it, keeping your personal items close by, or placing you in the area on the ward closest to the bathroom. Please discuss any concerns you have with your ward nurse.

## Having an overall plan for avoiding falls

You and your health professional will agree on an individual care plan for you, to help reduce your risk of falling. Your plan may include:

- Requesting a check of your home for hazards and helping to put right any problems identified e.g. advising you to get any rugs or loose carpet nailed down or removed.
- Planning some exercises to help with your strength and balance.
- Getting your medicines reviewed to ensure they are having the desired effect on your health.
- Referring you, via your GP, to a local falls clinic for further assessment after discharge from hospital. We will talk to you about this.

## If a fall occurs while you are in hospital

You will receive emergency treatment appropriate to your needs. You will be referred to a doctor for a medical review, a physiotherapist will assess your mobility and a pharmacist will review your medication. An occupational therapist may assess your home situation.

If you are at risk of having a fall, your health professional will talk to you and your family members or carers about how to minimise the risk of having a fall.

## Top tips to minimise your risk of falling



Use the call bell when you need help. Ask the nursing staff to place the call bell and any personal items within easy reach.

Ask the nursing staff for help going to and from the bathroom. This is very important if you are unsteady on your feet.



Use the emergency cord in the bathroom for assistance. A member of the nursing team may stay close to the bathroom. This may not seem private but may prevent a fall while you are in the bathroom.

Make sure chairs are at the best height for you to get into and out of comfortably.





Wear non-slip, well-fitting footwear whilst you are walking or moving around the ward.



If you wear spectacles and/or hearing aids, please put these on before walking.



If you have walking aids, such as a walking frame or stick, please use these to assist you when walking.



Be aware of any trip hazards, such as cords and trolleys.



Drink plenty of water.

If you take any medication that causes you to be drowsy, please take your time getting out of the bed or chair. You may need to sit at the edge of the bed or chair for a while before standing up.

Please tell the nurse if you have any concerns about falling.

## Tips for your family and friends

Please let the hospital staff know if you have any concerns about your family member / friend falling, or if any falls have occurred at home. Patient safety is important and we need the assistance of family and friends to understand the patient's situation.

- Consider staying with the patient if they are confused or at a high risk of falling.
- Remind the patient to ask for help when getting up if they feel dizzy or need help when getting up or walking.
- Make sure the call bell, personal items and walking aids are within easy reach when you leave.
- Let the hospital staff know early if you have any concerns about the patient's home set-up.

---

If you have concerns about any aspect of the service you have received in hospital and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call PALS on:

- Royal Brompton Hospital – 020 7349 7715
- Harefield Hospital – 01895 826 572

You can also email [pals@rbht.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@rbht.nhs.uk). This is a confidential service.

Royal Brompton Hospital  
Sydney Street  
London  
SW3 6NP  
tel: 020 7352 8121  
textphone: (18001) 020 7352 8121

Harefield Hospital  
Hill End Road  
Harefield  
Middlesex  
UB9 6JH  
tel: 01895 823 737  
textphone: (18001) 01895 823 737

Website: [www.rbht.nhs.uk](http://www.rbht.nhs.uk)

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على ترجمة فورية لمضمون هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية، يرجى منك الاتصال بأحد مستخدمينا بجناح المصلحة التي يتم فيها استشفائك. أحد موظفينا سيسعى لترتيب إجراءات الترجمة وإتمامها في الوقت المناسب لك.

Brosurteki bilginin Türkçe tercemesi için tedavi görüyor olduğunuz bölüme bas vurunuz. Bölüm personeli tercemenin gerçekleşmesini en kısa zamanda ayarlayacaktır.

