

Falls Prevention

Patient Information



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You



**ST VINCENT'S
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**
SYDNEY

CONDUCTED BY THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA

Be careful – don't fall.

Are you at risk of falling?

During your admission the nurses will ask you for information, document your history and complete a falls risk assessment.

The information from your history will assist the health care team to manage your safety during your hospital stay.

Patients in hospital have a greater risk of falling because of the changes in their medical or surgical condition.

The risk of falling increases with:

- those aged over 65 years
- confusion
- previous falls
- prolonged illness and inactivity
- surgical procedures
- drips and drains
- poor balance and strength
- poor hearing and eyesight
- the effects of some medications

After the operation

The post-operative period is associated with a high risk of falling. This is often due to the effects of pain medications which may affect balance and judgement. Patients may also have to deal with attached 'drips and drains' and calf compressors on their legs that assist with preventing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT).

Post-operative patients will require assistance with the drips and drains when mobilisation begins. Patients may also feel dizzy or drowsy.

Confusion or delirium may also occur. A family member may wish to stay with you during this period following discussions with the nursing staff.

Patients will need help from the physiotherapists, nurses and patient care orderlies (PCOs), to get out of bed and walk after surgery.

Red Dot system ●●●●

The nurse will place one to four red dots on the slide plate above your bed. The Red Dots indicate your falls and mobility risk to all your healthcare team and how much assistance you need to safely mobilise.

The red dots are changed as required:

- Assist patient as required
- ● Needs assistance of 1 to ambulate
- ● ● Needs assistance of 2 to ambulate
- ● ● ● Bed Rest

Helpful hints to prevent falls

The Hospital is an unfamiliar environment.

Most falls occur when patients try to get out of bed on their own to go to the bathroom.

Be careful

- always keep the nurse call bell close to you
- call bells are also located in the bathroom
- ask for help when getting out of bed, especially at night
- always use your walking aid
- non-skid footwear is best

Take your time

You may be weak or dizzy when moving from lying to sitting or from sitting to standing,

- take a good breath
- sit for a little while if you've been lying down
- your feet should touch the floor when you're sitting on the side of the bed
- move your ankles up and down to get your blood circulating
- stand for a moment before walking
- use a walking aid if you have one
- use the nurse call bell if you think that you require assistance

Remember, your responsibilities are to consider:

- using the nurse call bell
- asking for assistance when getting out of bed
- asking for help to the bathroom at night
- using your walking aid
- keeping your glasses by the bedside
- keeping your hearing aid in a safe place

Acknowledgement:

1. Royal Adelaide Hospital, RAH Falls Prevention Working Group
2. Patient Safety Handbook. Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.
3. SESIAHS NSW Health



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