

Fall Prevention in the Hospital and at Home

You are at risk for falling while you are in the hospital and after you return home. If you are injured in the hospital, you might have to stay longer. Falls at home may require you to go back to the hospital. There are steps you can take to avoid falls both in the hospital and at home.



Supplement to video GN-64

IN THE HOSPITAL

▶ **Why are you at risk of falling?**

- You are in unfamiliar surroundings.
- New or changed medications and anesthesia may cause you to be unsteady, confused or light-headed.
- You may be injured.

▶ **How is your hospital room equipped for safety?**

- Your bed can adjust to the height appropriate for you to get safely in and out of bed, with and without assistance.
- Emergency call buttons are located by your bed and in your bathroom.
- Dim lighting helps you to see at night.
- Handrails are located in your bathroom and in the hallway.

▶ **How do the hospital staff members help prevent you from falling?**

- A “fall risk” sign will be posted outside your hospital room door.
- Your wristband will identify you as a patient at risk for falling.
- Staff members will help you to sit up, get out of bed, get to the bathroom, and walk safely in your room and the hallway.
- When you are steady, your healthcare team members will show you how to sit up and move about safely on your own.

▶ **What can you do to prevent falling in the hospital?**

- Place frequently used items within a safe reaching distance from your bed.
- If you need help reaching for something, sitting up, getting to the bathroom or walking, **ask for help.**

AT HOME

If you are scheduled to go to the hospital, try to prepare your house for your return before you go. If your hospitalization was unplanned, ask a friend or family member to make some changes before you get home.

Check the appropriate box when each change is made:

▶ Prepare Your Living Space

- Keep throw rugs, electrical cords or wire and other tripping hazards (such as small pets) out of the area. Tack down any loose carpeting.
- Keep a phone by you at all times.
- Wear your glasses, if you have them.
- Place nightlights in your living area, bedroom, bathroom and hallways and use a flashlight to help you see where you are walking if you get up at night.
- If you are restricted from bending or lifting, keep your clothes at a height between your waist and your shoulders for easy access.
- Wear comfortable shoes or socks with tread.
- Make sure all handrails are secure.
- If possible, create a temporary living space on one floor, so you don't have to walk up steps.

▶ Prepare your kitchen.

- Stock your pantry. Cook and freeze meals.
- If you will be restricted from bending or lifting, put your dishes and food at a height between your waist and your shoulders for easy access.

▶ Add safety features in your bathroom.

- Install handrails near the toilet and in the shower.
- A chair and a handheld showerhead might help you rest while showering.
- Using the toilet may be easier with the help of a personal urinal, commode chair or toilet seat riser.

▶ Ask for help from friends and family.

- You may need someone to drive you to your appointment, to help you get in and out of the car and help you walk safely.
- If you live alone, ask someone to call you regularly.

Remember: Call your doctor if you experience weakness, dizziness, nausea or upset stomach, or develop a fever.

Provider's Name _____ **Phone Number** _____