



Sussex Community
NHS Foundation Trust

Falls prevention in community hospitals

Information for patients and carers





How to use this guide

Many people feel unsteady when they are unwell and this can mean they are at greater risk of having a fall.

Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust takes falls very seriously, and tries to make every effort to reduce your risk of falling. It is not possible to prevent falls completely, but we can work together to reduce the chances of falls happening.

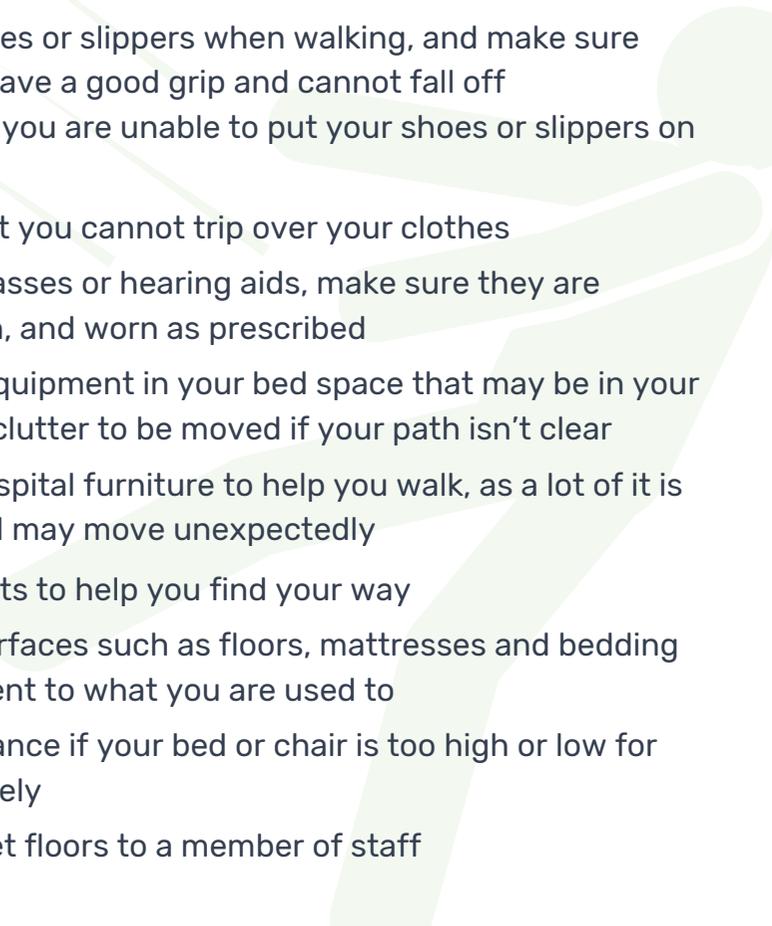
This guide is designed to provide you and your carers with information about the actions you can take to reduce your risk of falling.

Always tell our staff if you:

- Have fallen in the last year
- Feel dizzy
- Have palpitations
- Have pain or difficulty passing urine
- Feel muddled or not your normal self
- Are worried about falling



How you can reduce your chances of falling whilst in hospital

- Use the call bell if you need help to move, especially if you need help going to the toilet
 - Take your time when getting out of bed or a chair - sitting on the bed for a few seconds before moving can help reduce dizziness
 - Ask for a walking aid if you feel you need one
 - Make sure you have your walking aid close at hand, and ask a member of staff if you are unsure about using it
 - Wear your shoes or slippers when walking, and make sure they fit well, have a good grip and cannot fall off
 - Ask for help if you are unable to put your shoes or slippers on yourself
 - Make sure that you cannot trip over your clothes
 - If you wear glasses or hearing aids, make sure they are working, clean, and worn as prescribed
 - Be aware of equipment in your bed space that may be in your way - ask for clutter to be moved if your path isn't clear
 - Do not use hospital furniture to help you walk, as a lot of it is on wheels and may move unexpectedly
 - Switch on lights to help you find your way
 - Remember surfaces such as floors, mattresses and bedding may be different to what you are used to
 - Ask for assistance if your bed or chair is too high or low for you to use safely
 - Report any wet floors to a member of staff
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Try some simple exercises before standing up

It is common to experience dizziness after standing up from a lying or sitting position. These simple exercises can be done in your chair or bed to boost your circulation before you change position.

In bed, lying on your back with your legs straight:

- Rotate your ankles in small circles ten times
- Point and relax your toes ten times
- Clench your buttocks together and hold for five seconds
- Repeat ten times

Sitting tall in your chair:

- March your legs on the spot at a steady pace for one minute
- Lift one leg to straighten your knee and hold for five seconds before lowering back to the floor
- Repeat with the other leg
- Complete three times on each leg





**Keep the bed space
clear of obstacles**



How you can help – advice for visitors

If you are a relative, friend or carer you can help the patients and staff by:

- Sharing information on any previous falls the patient has had
- Informing staff of any spills, trailing wires or obstacles
- Bringing in well-fitting clothes and supportive shoes
- Bringing in walking aids, glasses and hearing aids that may have been left at home

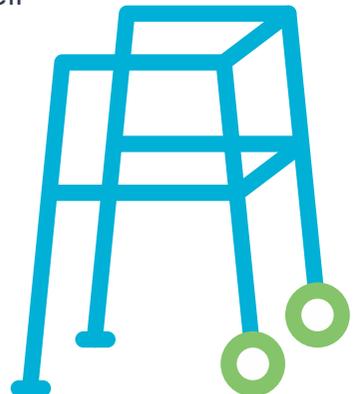


You should make staff aware if the patient:

- Has memory problems
- Is confused and not their normal self
- Is suffering from dizziness
- Has sight or hearing problems

Before leaving the ward, visitors can help the patient and staff by:

- Ensuring the bed space is free of obstacles
- Placing the patient's walking aid, call bell and glasses within their reach
- Taking any unnecessary belongings and bags home



Contact us



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The Trust is working with patients, staff and carers to ensure we all “Think Falls” and take action to prevent falls and fractures.

Get the best from your NHS

Our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) can help patients, families and carers with questions, comments or concerns about NHS services.

If you need advice about our services, facilities or staff, or would like to make a comment, please contact PALS at:



**PALS, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust,
Brighton General Hospital, Elm Grove, Brighton BN2 3EW**



01273 242292



sc-tr.pals@nhs.net

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