

FALL PREVENTION: WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

TRANSCRIPT

Coming home from the hospital can be both exciting and stressful, especially if you still feel a little unsteady or weak on your feet. But even though you have left the hospital, you are still in the care of your doctor.

Your healthcare provider is also an important resource while recovering. Follow all of the discharge instructions you were given when you left the hospital carefully, including movement restrictions, when to take your medications and how to properly use any medical devices you may need. As well as helping your recovery, these instructions can help you avoid falls.

If you have any questions about your discharge instructions, don't be afraid to ask your healthcare provider. He is there to help.

Take all of your medications exactly as prescribed. Some may need to be taken with food to prevent side effects.

Contact your healthcare provider if you notice any unusual or excessive side effects caused by any of the medications you are prescribed, including: weakness, dizziness, nausea or upset stomach, or fever. As well as indicating a possible complication, these side effects can increase your risk for falling – something you are trying to prevent.

Your healthcare provider may need to change your medications, or the times or the amounts you take, in order to reduce your side effects. Do not stop taking your medications unless your healthcare provider tells you to.

Take care to follow any physical activity restrictions in your discharge plan. Do not do too much too soon. Your body is still recovering and healing. If there are activities you think you are ready for, contact your healthcare provider and ask if these activities will increase your risk of falling.

Your discharge plan may restrict you from driving. Wait until your doctor says you are strong and steady enough to get behind the wheel of a car.

And finally, make sure you schedule a follow-up appointment with your healthcare provider. Depending on the cause of your recovery, and when your follow-up appointment is scheduled, you may need help getting to and from the appointment.

If you are not allowed to drive yet, get a friend or family member to take you. Be careful getting in and out of the car and while walking up and down any stairs.