

PATIENT SAFETY: PREVENTING FALLS

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While you are in the hospital, you may be excited to get up and get moving. After all, taking a walk may bring you one step closer to going home. While that may be true, while you recover it's important you do all you can to prevent falls and injuries from falling.

If, when you are admitted, the hospital staff feel you may be at risk for falling, they will give you a fall risk wristband. Wear this at all times. It alerts any healthcare providers that you may need extra help getting from place to place.

Depending on why you are in the hospital, you may find it difficult to get in and out of bed. Avoid falls by asking someone to help you. Or, if you feel you can do it on your own, ask about ways to make getting in and out of bed easier for you.

"Would you like to get up into the bathroom?"

"Yes, please."

"Okay."

You may need a nurse or family member to help you get to the restroom. That's okay. It's better to ask for help than to fall and hurt yourself.

In the restroom, use the handrails. They are there for your support and will help you avoid any mishaps. If you need any assistance while in the restroom, use the nurse call button. There is one located in every restroom. Don't hesitate to use it if you need to.

Before you make your way to the restroom, for your safety, make sure the floor is dry. And wear shoes or socks with treads so your feet can grip the floor, giving you added support. This can help you avoid slips and falls.

"Hello, Mr. Whitehead."

"Hello."

"Are you ready to go for a walk?"

"Yes, I am."

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While you are recovering, your healthcare provider may recommend you take short walks to get your body up and moving. It is normal to be a little worried about taking those first steps outside the comfort of your room. The good news is that many of the measures you take to stay safe in your own room can also help you stay safe as you travel through the hallways and around the hospital.

Use the handrails in the hallways for support, or your healthcare provider may recommend you use a walker to give you any added support you may need as you recover and heal. Wear shoes or socks with treads to avoid slipping.

Have family members, friends or caregivers go with you until you feel comfortable going on your own. They can help support you and give you someone to talk to at the same time.

If you are walking with any machines or an IV line, take extra care. They will add weight for you to pull along and the cords can get tangled. If you have difficulty, ask a hospital staff member for help.

And finally, don't go further than you feel comfortable. If you need to stop and rest, go ahead. Remember, you still have to get back to your room.

"Again, use the call bell. Ask for help. If you get up and you're a little unsteady on your feet, you're not used to that ... if you have assistance there to help you walk, then you're not gonna hurt yourself or tear something that you're not supposed to."