

# Fall Prevention

No matter why you are in the hospital, the last thing you want to do is fall while you're there and run the risk of greater injury. That's why hospitals make it a practice to look at every patient to decide if they might be at risk of falling...

*"Fall precautions are not just for the elderly. It's for everybody. Every person needs to be assessed for their risk to fall."*

*"Because we are in bed longer than we're supposed to be and maybe we're accustomed to. We are on medications that are different. We might be unsteady. We're in a different environment."*

Tanya Lord knows something about preventing falls in the hospital...not just as someone whose job is helping patients, but as a patient herself...

*"I did get up and get into the bathroom and realized I couldn't get out."*

*"When you need help use your call button and ask for it. We are never going to think you're a bother. You're the purpose for our being here."*

*"It's a bigger burden for them if you fall."*

If a hospital determines that you might be at risk of falling for any reason, they will make sure that everyone who cares for you is aware of that...

*"They may put a special armband on you. They may put special signs outside the room or inside the room. There may be electronic notifications. So, there will be many ways that a falls risk can be identified because the purpose is to ensure your safety."*

Being able to get up and move around is a very important part of your healing. But the risk of falling is great, with as many as 1 in 5 patients falling during their time in the hospital. That's why the hospital may do several things to help ensure your safety when you're out of bed...

*"So you may be given special shoes or little some footies that have a rubber on the bottom. That just helps make sure that your footing is a little bit more secure. You'll also perhaps have items that are used such as a gait belt. That might be a special belt that goes around your waist that someone will hold onto to make sure that you are provided with that little bit of extra stability."*

There are also several things you, as a patient, can do to prevent falls:

Again, use your call button. When it's time to get up, make sure your bed is in the lowest position, closest to the floor. Use handrails to keep you steady, and most important; take it slow.

Medical experts say being a little more careful is good advice for anyone in the hospital, even some who might surprise you...

*"They may be young and relatively healthy but they're in for a surgery say, you know, a simple surgery, but they're getting medication, you know, to treat their pain and it makes them more, more prone to falls."*

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Another possible fall risk? New moms...

*“Many pregnant women after they deliver are sleep deprived. Their body is healing their mind may not be on themselves. They've got somebody else they're looking for.”*

IV poles, catheters and other medical equipment can also increase the risk of tripping. Again, take your time. Don't rush it...

*“I think it's kind of ironic that in some cases patients who want to rush things may end up making their recovery even longer than it would have been otherwise if they fall. And so, taking it a little slower may in the end mean getting to the finish line quicker than you would have otherwise.”*