

Our falls prevention program helps create a safe environment during your hospital stay.

Falls Prevention Program

At Northwestern Memorial Hospital, we want to work with you and your family to put a plan into place to make your hospital stay as safe as possible. Our Falls Prevention Program is used to:

- Identify patients at risk for falls.
- Take steps to safeguard against falls.

The first step involves a patient's falls risk assessment. To do this, the nurse will ask you a few questions:

- What medicines are you taking (some may increase your risk of falls)?
- Do you use any sleep aids?
- Do you wake up often at night?
- Do you need to go to the bathroom often (or with little notice-urgency)?
- Are you unsteady on your feet or have any dizziness?
- Do you need help walking or use a cane/walker?

It is important to tell your nurse about any other physical limits.

Other factors may also put you at greater risk for injury if you fall. These include:

- Increased age.
- Low blood counts.
- Osteopenia.
- Use of "blood thinning" medicines at home.

Your doctor or nurse will talk with you about these risks. Then, certain safeguards are put into place.

Patients and families play a key role in preventing falls. This includes having:

- Your room free of clutter.
- Needed items within reach; including your call light.

It is also important to know:

- How to use the call light.
- Your activity guidelines and when you should have help to get out of bed.
- Who should help you. Can a visitor or should a member of your health care team?

Other things you can do include:

- Wearing slippers with non-skid soles when walking.
- Asking for help before getting out of bed if you feel weak, dizzy, or light-headed.
- Using the call light in the bathroom if you need help getting back into bed.
- Telling staff about any spills on the floors.
- Asking questions about ways to keep you safe.

At Home

You can help prevent falls after you leave the hospital by:

- Learning more about your medications and how they interact. Some medicines can make you drowsy or light-headed, which may lead to falls.
- Having your vision checked and using prescribed glasses/lenses. Impaired sight can increase your chance of falling.
- Taking steps to make living areas safer. Remove tripping hazards and use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors. Consider grab bars next to the toilet or in the tub and handrails on the stairs.
- Talking with your doctor about an exercise program to improve your strength, coordination and flexibility.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center. This state-of-the-art health library is located on the 3rd floor of the Galter Pavilion. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Center by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312-926-3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312-926-3112, TDD/TTY 312-944-2358 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312-926-1920, TDD/TTY 312-695-3661.

Developed by: Falls Prevention Task Force

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