

# Preventing falls while in hospital



**Not falling while you're in the hospital is very important to maintain your health. Here are some tips on how to move safely with the help of your healthcare team.**

## Why take precautions?

You might be thinking that if you don't move, you're in no danger of falling. But moving is essential for your health, because that's what will help you:

- recover more quickly
- maintain your autonomy
- facilitate your return home



The following tips will also be very useful when you're at home.

## Who's at risk?

Certain factors increase the risk of falling:

- Having had a fall in the past year.
- Having trouble walking or keeping your balance.
- Having poor vision.
- Needing to go to the bathroom often.
- Being confused or feeling frail because of treatments.

- Your blood pressure falling when you stand up.
- Being restricted by equipment hooked up to you (for I.V. fluids, for example)

Falls happen mainly in patients over 75 years old. That's why it's important to take extra precautions with age.

## How can I prevent falling?

Follow this advice carefully.

### Talk with your care team

- > Tell us:
  - if you have ever fallen or if you have a balance problem (by looking for the cause of this problem, it's sometimes possible to find a solution)
  - if you have irregular sleep and activity schedules
  - if you use a cane or other technical aid
  - if there is anything that helps you avoid falling
  - if you notice water or objects on the floor



Don't hesitate to ring the call bell if you can't reach an object, if you're not sure whether you can walk, or if you can't put on your slippers. Being afraid to disturb the staff can lead to falling!

- > Fear of falling, feeling embarrassed by it, and wanting to hide it are all normal. Try talking about it with your care team.
- > If you overcome your fear of falling, you'll be better able to do your activities. Don't hesitate to ask your care team for advice. It's very important.
- > Take part in walking programs with the care team. This will reduce the risk of falling.



- > If you haven't received it, ask for the fact sheet [\*Staying active in the hospital - To recover, keep moving!\*](#)

### Have good shoes

Wear closed slippers or shoes with non-skid soles.

### Be careful of your vision

- > Wear your glasses from the moment you wake up.
- > At night, if the night light isn't bright enough for you to see clearly, use the button on your call bell to light up the room.



- > Discuss your vision problems with the care team.

### Take care when going to the bathroom

- > To get there, always use your walker or your cane. Wait a minute or two at the side of your bed to be very stable before standing up.
- > Avoid using incontinence briefs as much as possible. Not wearing them forces you to get up, and this maintains your strength. Also, go to the bathroom regularly to avoid having to get up too quickly for an urgent need.
- > Ask for a commode beside your bed if:
  - you know you may need to urinate urgently
  - you have diarrhea

### Pay attention to the side effects of your treatment

If you have any dizziness caused by your treatments, or if you feel weak:

- > Get up from your bed or chair slowly.
- > Wait a minute before walking, and sit back down if the dizziness continues.
- Keep the care team informed about your symptoms.

## Look after your health

Keeping your body healthy will help you to recover and to avoid falls.

- > Eat all 3 meals provided every day. You can look over the menu and adapt it, as needed, with the care team.
- > Drink water, especially during the day. Drink less in the evening to avoid having to get up in the night to urinate.
- > Ask for advice on how to exercise, or ask to meet with a physiotherapist.

### Advice for family caregivers

- Tell us if the patient is at risk for falls.
- Notify us if you find the patient confused or really changed.
- Check that the room is clear, that the call bell is always within the patient's reach, and that personal belongings are not piling up for no reason.

## Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

Your care team is available to answer your questions. Depending on your needs, you could also receive support from physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

If needed, a request can be sent to your CLSC on your return home. They will help to make your home safer.



## USEFUL RESOURCES

### Resources for your return home:

#### Medical alert service:

These services provide quick access to help, 24 hours a day, using a portable call button. The CHUM Foundation has a partner for affordable rates. Ask your care team about this.

**Program to prevent falls and fractures among seniors living at home: STAND UP!** Program. Register through the CLSC.

> [santemontreal.qc.ca](http://santemontreal.qc.ca)

Click on English → Public → Support and services → Fall prevention: STAND UP!

#### For more information on this topic:

> [santemontreal.qc.ca](http://santemontreal.qc.ca)

Click on English → In the search box, type "seniors fall prevention"

#### Support for family caregivers of seniors:

> [lappui.org](http://lappui.org)

> 1 855 852-7784

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website

[chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)

*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal  
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Questions

Write down any questions you want to ask your care team so you don't forget anything.



Lined area for writing questions



Observations - Comments

Write down observations you feel are important: your symptoms, treatments, follow-up, energy level, spirit, etc.



Lined area for writing observations and comments



Upcoming appointments

Lined area for writing upcoming appointments

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