The prevention and management of slips, trips and falls

Delivering the best in care

UHB is a no smoking Trust

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm
Information for patients, relatives and carers

The information in this leaflet forms part of the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust Falls Prevention Programme.

Introduction

This leaflet explains how we try to prevent slips, trips and falls in University Hospitals Birmingham.

There are a number of factors that can contribute to the risk of falls, these include:

- Ageing process (over 65 increases risk)
- Poor mobility
- Confusion and agitation
- Continence problems
- History of falls
- Medical conditions
- Poor vision or hearing
- Poor nutritional status and lack of fluids
- Emotional distress and depression
- Medications that can effect balance
- Unsuitable footwear
- Lack of exercise
- Environmental hazards such as spillages, mats, stairs, electrical leads
At UHB our aim is to reduce the incidence of falls by:

- Working together in partnership with patients relatives and carers to promote safety
- Using assessments to identify patients who are at risk of falls on admission to hospital
- Offering advice in simple and practical ways
- Providing a rapid response to hazards that are brought to our attention
- Ensuring that the wards and departments environment is as safe as possible

As patients you can help to reduce the risk of falling by:

- Letting us know if you have fallen before or are unsteady on your feet
- Making staff aware when you feel anxious or have lost confidence when moving around
- Calling the bell to ask for assistance to move around the ward. Remember failure to call may result in a fall
- Taking care when standing or getting out of bed and take your time when moving around
- Not using hospital furniture such as bedside tables to lean on when getting up as these can often move
- Wearing suitable grip footwear at all times. Avoid wearing socks or stockings
- Listening to the advice given by doctors, nurses and physiotherapists
Assessments for the use of walking aids will be carried out by the physiotherapists.

**Remember**

- The hospital is not a familiar place to you as home **be careful**
- Keep your belongings and personal items within easy reach
- Inform a member of staff of any concerns you may have
- Raise awareness to any hazards, spillages etc
- Drink regularly
- Be open and honest regarding the circumstances of the fall

We will endeavour to discuss any concerns you may have.

Staff conduct Care Rounds which means you will be seen at regular times throughout the day and night. Please inform staff of any needs or concerns you have.

If a patient is at high risk of falling there are various options available to help prevent a fall. For example:

- Put the bed in a more visible area or position
- Use of a different bed high low bed or the enterprise bed these are beds that go lower to the floor
- Beds rails if appropriate there are good and bad risks, assessments will decide who is suitable and who is not
- Consider bone health (osteoporosis) a condition where the bones become fragile
What happens if you fall?

If you fall in hospital the following will happen.

You will be assessed by the medical and nursing team to identify how best to move you from the floor or area where you have fallen and the Trust’s post-falls management plan will be put in place.

The medical team will assess you for any injuries this may involve further tests such as X-rays, scans and ECGs and nursing staff will check your blood pressure, pulse and pupil reaction if required.

We will review your care plan, which may identify further falls risk reduction interventions, or change elements of your care to prevent you falling again.

We will complete an incident report with all details of the fall and will inform your family or carers at the earliest available opportunity according to the severity of the fall.

Following a serious injury from a fall we will investigate what happened to ensure staff have followed the Trust’s falls guidelines. We endeavour to learn from serious events to prevent future harm to patients.

What measures are in place to ensure my safety?

- Guidelines for staff to follow if a patient is identified as being at risk of a fall whilst in hospital
- Staff training programmes
- Care rounds to ensure that you as patients are seen regularly and receive quality care
- A dedicated falls specialist team to investigate the reason for the patient falling and provide advice

Unfortunately, some patients may still fall following these prevention interventions. Being in hospital does not mean we can completely prevent falls, but as a Trust we are committed to
reducing the number of falls and injuries that occur as a result. We need your assistance to reduce any preventable risks that may contribute to you falling.

If you would like to speak to a member of the falls prevention team, please contact:

0121 371 4409 ext: 14409

Patient experience and advisory service
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2GW

Telephone: 0121 371 3280
The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston
Birmingham, B15 2GW
Telephone: 0121 627 2000