



## Falls Prevention

Falls prevention is a key component of the STEGH safety strategy as falls put you at risk for serious injury. Physical changes, health conditions, medication use and other factors such as your footwear or items in your environment may increase your risk for falls. Throughout your stay at STEGH your level of falls risk will be assessed, beginning on admission. If you are at risk for falls, we will ask you to wear a purple bracelet.



We will also place a purple falling star above your bed to remind everyone who comes in contact with you that you are at risk for falls.

If, unfortunately you do fall, we will do a new falls risk assessment so we can adopt new strategies to reduce the risk of future falls. If you have fallen before, you may be at greater risk for falls. Please tell us about any past falls and what contributed to that fall. Your safety matters to us!

**Some additional strategies to assist in reducing your risk for falls include:**

### **Don't be afraid to ask for help getting up and moving around**

- ❖ Take your time getting up from bed or a chair.
- ❖ Don't get up too quickly. Take a pause or a break if you feel tired while walking.
- ❖ Use the call bell to get assistance from your nurse.
- ❖ Set realistic expectations for yourself and don't push yourself beyond your limits.



### **If you use assistive devices don't forget to use them for support.**

- ❖ Always keep your assistive devices within arm's reach and where they are visible to you as a reminder. These include walkers, canes and wheelchairs.
- ❖ Put the brakes on the wheelchair, put up the foot rests when getting in and out of the wheelchair.



**Make sure your walker is on a flat surface with the brakes on so that it doesn't move.**

- ❖ Remember to wear your glasses, hearing aids or other assistive devices and don't be afraid to ask for assistance.
- ❖ Do not use the bedside table for support when standing. These tables have wheels and will move.

### **Always wear proper footwear.**

- ❖ Proper footwear such as well-fitting slippers or shoes that have a closed back and a non-skid sole will reduce your risk for falls. Walking barefoot or wearing only socks increases your risk for falls.
- ❖ Have proper footwear available to you during your stay with us and wear clothing that does not present trip hazards such as having ill fitting clothing.

### **Remove items from the floor to create a clear path.**

- ❖ Always remember to remove items such as soiled clothing, socks, sheets, blankets or pillows that may have fallen off of the bed as these will become trip hazards and present a potential for falls.
- ❖ Always look around your environment and assess it for potential hazards and take immediate action to resolve any issues that you identify as this will keep you safe.

**If you spill something on the floor,  
please let your nurse know  
immediately so that we can clean it up.**



### **Proper nutrition will also help prevent falls**

- ❖ Proper nutrition is key in preventing falls. In addition to proper nutrition you also should drink enough water and participate in programs that provide strengthening and prevent functional decline. For more information ask your nurse for a copy of our “Nutrition and Falls” information sheet.
- ❖ Talk to your nurse about nutrition and therapy programs that will help you maintain your health and well-being and exercise for strength and balance.
- ❖ Speak to the Clinical Nutrition program about developing a plan individualized to your needs.
- ❖ Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists can also work with you to develop an individualized plan.

### **Secure cords and items that become trip hazards**

- ❖ If you brought items to the hospital with you such as a radio, laptop computer or cell phone with charger, please make sure that the cords are secure and do not present a trip hazard to either you or the staff.
- ❖ Do not place purses, parcels or other items on the floor as you may get up, trip and fall.
- ❖ Keep objects within your range of vision so that you are aware of any and all trip hazards within your environment.



### **Medications can contribute to falls**

- ❖ Some medications may cause you to become dizzy, unsteady on your feet, or make you drowsy or unsteady when standing up. If you have not taken a medication before, you can ask your nurse for information about the side effects. There can be many causes for weakness and dizziness and if you are experiencing these symptoms please talk to your nurse.

## Proper lighting

- ❖ A well lit room can prevent falls. Turn on the lights when you are going to get up and make sure that you do not attempt to move around in the dark. You can use the call bell to call your nurse for assistance in getting up, in turning on the lights and providing you with assistance.

## If you fall....

If you feel unsteady or like you are going to fall, try and lower or slide yourself down to the floor. Don't be afraid to yell for help. A nurse will want to respond and assess you before getting you up. Please report any type of fall to your nurse so a new falls risk assessment can be completed.



**Physical activity can go a long way in preventing falls, so don't let the fear of falling keep you from being active in the future.**

Talk to your nurse about the events that contributed to your fall and ask for assistance in developing strategies to prevent them in the future. If you have questions about falls prevention please talk to your STEGH health care team.

