

PATIENT INFORMATION



Prevention of Falls in Hospitals

Advice for elderly patients,
their families and carers

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Dear patient,

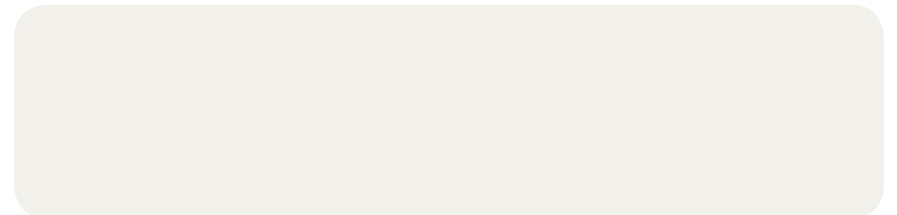
Falling is common for elderly patients and can have serious consequences. They frequently involve pain, injuries, fear of falling again and a feeling of insecurity. Your safety is important to us!

In this brochure you will find out how you can contribute to preventing falls in hospitals.

We are pleased to assist you in case you need our support during your stay in hospital.

Please read the following information and contact us if you have any questions.

We wish you a speedy recovery!



Tell us about you

*What should we know about you?
In any case, please inform us about
the following:*

- Falls which occurred during the past twelve months prior to your hospital stay as well as their cause.
- Problems with getting up and walking.
- Vestibular disorders, vertigo, pain and fear of falling.
- Vision and hearing impairment.
- Aids which you need for walking.



- Visits to the toilet at night.
- Difficulties with getting dressed and undressed (stockings, shoes, trousers, etc.).
- Medications which you currently take (also herbal drugs) including their respective dosages.
- Please remember – a new and unfamiliar environment increases the risk of falls.

We are pleased to help you.

Become active

What can you do to prevent falls?

- Please accept help until you feel familiar with the new environment.
- Please use the alarm/call system if you need our support – at any time.
- DO NOT USE hospital furniture (e.g. bed table or infusion stand) to help you walk - most are on wheels and may move unexpectedly.
- Please memorise where the light switch (near the bed) is located and switch it on if you have to get up in the dark.
- To prevent dizziness, sit up slowly before standing up and remain seated on the edge of the bed for a moment.
- Please use the handles and handrails in the rooms and corridors.
- Always wear non-slip, closed footwear and have it positioned close at hand.
- Please use your usual walking aids (e.g. walking stick, rollator) and have it close at hand before you start walking.
- Please wear your hearing aid and your glasses. You can reduce your risk of falling if you have good vision and hear well.
- Please ask for personal assistance if you have to go to unfamiliar environments, e.g. examination rooms.

- Please make sure that you drink regularly during the day to improve your blood circulation.
- Physical activity is important: It trains your movement, your muscles and your sense of balance. If your state of health allows you to do so, get up and move around during your hospital stay.
- Avoid too much physical activity. You might be poorly (or weak) due to your illness and it might take some time to recover.
- Before you take any new medication, please ask about the side effects. In case of examinations, please ask how this procedure could affect you.
- After surgery or a larger examination, please only get up for the first time with assistance from the nursing staff.

Ask for help

In which cases should I ask for help?

- Have the call system/alarm explained to you so that you feel confident in using it.
- Have your bed adjusted to a convenient height.
- In case you are afraid of falling out of bed, please ask for a bed safety rail to be fixed to one side of your bed.
- If you need further aids, e.g. an elevated toilet seat, please ask the nursing staff.

- Please also ask your **relatives/visitors** for assistance and let them help you.
- Please ask the staff at your ward (professional caregivers, health professionals, physiotherapists) to show you how you can train your **abilities on your own**. They will be pleased to help you.



Be careful

What should I pay attention to in my environment?

- Avoid walking on wet and uneven surfaces. You might slip.
- Be aware of 'trip hazards', e.g. the doorstep between the room and the bathroom.
- Allow for more time when visiting the toilet and set off a little earlier than usual. The toilets might be further away than at home.

Please report falls

In case you had a fall:

- Catch somebody's attention by using the alarm/call system or calling for help so we can assist you immediately.
- Always inform the nursing staff about such an event – even if you consider the fall to be harmless.

In case you have further questions, please contact the team at your ward.

Provide information

Jointly preventing falls

Please inform the hospital staff

- if liquid has been spilled or if items have been dropped onto the floor as these can be fall hazards.
- if the light or the alarm/call system does not work.
- about uneven parts of the floor.

We wish you a safe stay.

This brochure and further publications – **Facts and Comments** as well as **Checklist for Hospital Staff – Prevention of Falls** were issued by the Working Group ‚Ältere Patienten im Krankenhaus‘ (Elderly Patients in Hospitals) of the German Coalition for Patient Safety (GCPS.) All information leaflets can be obtained at our head office.

The German Coalition for Patient Safety acknowledges the support from the Federal Ministry of Health in promoting this project.



AKTIONSBÜNDNIS
PATIENTENSICHERHEIT

Published by:

Aktionsbündnis Patientensicherheit e.V.

Am Zirkus 2,

10117 Berlin info@aps-ev.de

2nd edition, July 2014

DOI: 10.21960/201709/E

Photos:

Fotolia - GordonGrand (S. 1), Alexander Raths (S. 5), Sandor Kacs (S.10)
APS - Peter Bender (S. 2)

Gefördert durch:



aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

