SA Falls and Fall Injury Prevention

Information for consumers

KEEPING SAFE AND INDEPENDENT IN HOSPITAL

Hospitals are unfamiliar places, and this can be a challenge when you are also unwell or injured. You might feel dizzy or weaker than you expect, and not steady when you get up. You may be at risk of falling.

Staff want to keep you safe and to avoid falls, but we need your help.

What can you do?

Bring these things to hospital:

- walking aid, glasses and hearing aid/s if you use them
- comfortable clothing that is not too long, or too loose or tight
- shoes that are comfortable, well fitting, flat and non-slip.

During your hospital stay

- Become familiar with the surroundings.
- Get to know your bed controls, and how to use the call bell.
- Ask staff for help if you are unsure about anything.
- Keep the call bell, your glasses, footwear and walking aid within easy reach and use them.
- If allowed, try to move around and do what you can for yourself, to keep up your strength and circulation.

Walking around the hospital

Staff may ask you to have a nurse or other person with you when you get out of bed, and for walking around.

Before you get up:

- please use the call bell and wait until staff come – this is important if you have been asked to call for assistance before getting up, or you feel unsteady
- put on your shoes or slippers or non-slip socks
- put on your distance glasses if you have them – if wearing bifocals or multifocals, take extra care, particularly on stairs.

While getting up and walking:

- get your balance before moving away from the bed or chair
- use a walking aid for balance, rather than the furniture or walls
- watch for spills on the floor or objects in the way, and tell staff about them
- let staff know if you feel unsteady.

Avoid dizziness

Take your time to slowly get up from lying to sitting and then sitting to standing.

If you are allowed:

- drink plenty of fluid such as water
- keep your feet moving around while you are sitting or lying in bed
- sit out of bed to let your body get used to being upright
- if you spend long periods of time in bed, raise the headrest and knee support to put you in a more seated position, rather than lying flat and change positions often.

If you do fall, keep calm and call out for help.

Preventing falls will help you stay as independent as possible.

For more information

Please contact your local health service for more information and visit sahealth.sa.gov.au/falls

This document has been reviewed and endorsed by SA Health PwC&CAG* for consumers and the community – March 2015

*SA Health Partnering with Consumers and Community Advisory

Safety and Quality Unit
Department for Health and Wellbeing
Phone: 08 8226 2567
Email: Health.DHWClinicalGovernanceEnquiries@sa.gov.au
Website: Safety and Quality | SA Health
Date published: March 2026

CC BY NC ND

Government of South Australia
SA Health