

Keeping Your Child Safe

Fall Prevention at SickKids

Working together is the best way to keep your child safe.
Please read the important information below.

PREVENTING FALLS AT SICKKIDS

Parents, staff and patients need to work together to prevent falls in hospital. Falls can happen whether your child is on an inpatient unit or visiting a busy clinic. Please read this pamphlet carefully to learn about the many things you can do to help keep your child safe from falls. If your child is old enough, please talk to her about this information.

FAST FACTS ABOUT FALLS

- Most falls in children's hospitals happen when children are with a parent or family member, not when they are alone.
- Many falls happen in bathrooms or from out of bed.
- Medication use, a new environment, and your child's medical condition may make her more likely to fall while in hospital.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING FALLS IN HOSPITAL

Patient tips:

- Wear non-skid slippers or shoes when walking.
- If you're feeling weak or dizzy:
 - Use the call bell when you need to get out of bed
 - Ask for help using the toilet
- Get up slowly from a lying or sitting position and sit at the side of the bed for a few minutes **before** you get up.
- If you have crutches or a walker use them when getting up or walking around.
- Watch out for any tubing or lines that may make you trip.
- Do not lean on objects with wheels, like your bedside table or IV pole.

PARENT AND FAMILY MEMBER TIPS:

- Ensure your child is safe in bed:
 - If your child is under 2 years of age make sure she sleeps in a crib. Ask for a crib dome if you know your child is a climber.
 - Raise the bed side rails completely, even when you are sitting at the bedside.
 - Make sure side rails are locked in place.
 - Keep your child's bed in the lowest position.
- Do not allow your child to climb or stand on furniture anywhere in the hospital.
- Make sure your child is wearing well-fitting pyjamas when walking in hallways.
- Tell a staff member if your child has just fallen or if your child has a history of falling.
- Tell a staff member about any spills or wet areas on the floor so that they can be cleaned up quickly.
- Go with your child to the bathroom if she is feeling unsteady.
- Pay special attention to your child when she is recovering from an anesthetic or following a procedure (like having blood taken).

SPEAKING UP TO PREVENT FALLS

It is important that you tell your health-care team if you think your child might be at risk of falling. Tell your team if your child is feeling weak or dizzy. If your child is old enough, teach her to do the same. Your health-care team will tell you if they are concerned about your child's risk of falling and will work with you on strategies to prevent falls from happening.

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CREATING A SAFE SPACE TO PREVENT FALLS

SickKids is a busy place with lots of people and equipment to care for your child. You can help keep our environment safe and clutter-free by bringing only essential items with you to the hospital and organizing them so that they leave a clear path for others to walk. If possible, try to limit the number of family members coming to a clinic appointment.

SPEAK UP AND ASK QUESTIONS. TALK TO YOUR HEALTH-CARE TEAM

- You know your child best. Speak up if you feel something's not right or you have concerns about your child's care.
- Give your health-care team an up-to-date description of your child's health.
- Tell us about any treatments or surgeries by any other health-care professionals, including naturopaths or herbalists.
- Tell us about your child's special physical, emotional or equipment needs or about any special aids like glasses or hearing aids.
- Share unique things about your child with caregivers that may be important for your child's overall care (e.g. if they dislike loud noises or bright lights).
- Tell us if there are any changes in your child's condition that concern you. You may notice things the health-care team doesn't.

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