

# Fall safety for children in hospital

## Patient Information

Child Health Services

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## Introduction

Falls are the most common cause of accidents in every age group. As babies and children become more mobile, falls, trips and bumps become more likely.

In the same way you keep your child safe at home, we make every effort to keep your child safe in hospital. Half of the falls that occur in hospital, happen when a parent is present and this is why we need your help to promote fall safety in hospitals.

## Aims

Just like the home environment, all children are at risk of falling in hospital. Adolescents (age 10 to 16 years) and toddlers (age 1 to 2 years) are most at risk of falling. Some children have a higher risk than others due to their medical diagnosis.

The hospital environment is unfamiliar to your child and it may take some time for them to feel comfortable in their new surroundings.

Hospitalisation causes stress and anxiety for many parents and sometimes the safety precautions that we routinely take at home can be overlooked in an unfamiliar environment.

## Risks

Falls cannot always be prevented. However, by assessing the risks we can identify children who will require extra safety measures. Nursing staff will assess your child's risk of falling each day they are in hospital. This may change as your child's health alters. If your child is identified as a high risk of falling, your nurse will develop a management plan with you to ensure you are aware of the extra safety measures required.

## How can you help?

There are many ways you can help promote fall safety in hospital:

- Help your child become familiar with their new environment, show them where the toilet is and show them how to use their nurse call button so they can tell the nurse when you are not there.
- Provide non slip footwear/slippers for your child while they are in hospital.
- Maintain physical contact with your baby when cot sides are down or when bathing.
- Put cot sides or bed rails up when leaving your baby's/child's bedside, even for short periods of time.
- Help your child walk to the toilet when appropriate.
- Inform nursing staff when you are leaving your child's room.
- Never leave your child unattended in the parent's beds.
- Ensure the nurse call button is within your child's reach when you leave the bedside.
- Keep floors clear of clutter such as toys and other belongings.

- Be aware of wet floors – areas such as the kitchens and bathrooms are prone to spills. If you notice any wet areas please inform staff immediately.
- Be sure to use safety belts when using wheelchairs, highchairs, prams and infant seats.
- If your baby is in an incubator, make sure the portholes/sides are securely fastened and the doors are closed when you are not directly attending to your baby.
- Place necessary items that your child may need, such as walking frames, drinking water and phones within reach if you are leaving.
- If your child has been given new medication, check with the nurse before getting them out of bed.
- Nurses will provide your child with the most appropriate bed for their age whilst in hospital. All patients aged 2 years and under will be cared for in a cot, children older than 2 years will be cared for in a bed and bed rails can be used when necessary.
- If your child has been given crutches, a walking frame, wheelchair or other equipment to help them move around, ensure they are using these items as they have been shown.

### **What to do if a fall occurs**

If a fall occurs, whether a patient or visitor, you should inform nursing staff immediately. They will make the area safe and attend to the person who has fallen. Patients will be checked by the ward doctor and nursing staff will complete an “incident form” to report the fall. This report will help to prevent recurrences by identifying and removing any risks.

### **Key points to remember**

- Help your child become familiar with their new hospital environment.
- Maintain physical contact with your baby when the cot sides are down.
- Put cot sides or bed rails up when you are leaving your baby’s/child’s bedside.
- Inform nursing staff when you are leaving your child’s room.

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



[https://www.wrightingtonhospital.org.uk/media/downloads/sdm\\_information\\_leaflet.pdf](https://www.wrightingtonhospital.org.uk/media/downloads/sdm_information_leaflet.pdf)

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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: [wwl.nhs.uk](http://wwl.nhs.uk)

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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