



Falls

northlondonhospice.org

Slips, trips and falls are common in people with mobility problems, those who may be confused or have other medical problems such as failing eyesight or changes to their general condition due to their illness or medication.

Being in the Inpatient Unit at North London Hospice may be an unfamiliar experience, creating anxieties and worries which can also increase the risk of falling. Our staff can show you around the hospice to ease some of these anxieties and are available to assist you when you want to stand, move around your room or the building.

The safety of all our patients is a priority and we will try to make you as safe as possible while you are in our care.

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How we can help to prevent a fall

We will:

- Assess your risk of falling when moving about or getting out of bed. We will ask you about any history of falling or fear of falling
- Give you a Care Plan which details how hospice staff will work with you to reduce your risk of falling
- Provide recommendations to help reduce your risk of falling, for example, suggesting you ask for assistance when getting up or recommending you remove ill-fitting footwear
- Involve you and your carer in every step of your care
- Work with you to help you to retain your independence
- Provide walking aids as appropriate
- Place call bells and other items within easy reach
- Position the bed in the lowest position
- If necessary, move you to a room that enables closer observation (subject to availability).

How you can help to prevent a fall

- Let a member of staff know if you have slipped, tripped or fallen within the last 6 months
- Let us know if you usually use a mobility aid
- Tell staff how they can assist you, for example, by helping you to the bathroom, positioning furniture in the best place for you, making sure what you need is in reach
- Use the call bell whenever you need assistance, for example, when getting out of your chair or bed
- Wear non-slip footwear whenever you are moving about. If you do not have appropriate footwear, barefoot is safer than wearing socks
- Always use your walking aids and keep them within reach
- Tell staff of any changes you feel in your condition, such as dizziness

Advice for relatives, carers and friends

You can help the patient by:

- Ensuring call bells, bed tables and other items are in reach of the patient before you leave
- Asking staff to replace bed rails, if lowered during visiting
- Telling staff of any changes that may affect the patient's safety, for example, disorientation

Bedrails

Bedrails are a security device to reduce the risk of patients rolling or falling from their bed.

They can:

- Prevent patients falling out of bed due to their illness, treatment or medication
- Provide a sense of safety for the patient, thus reducing anxiety
- Reduce the risk of falling if the patient changes their position in bed

If a patient is confused they may try to climb over a bedrail leading to a more serious fall



What are the risks of using bedrails?

- If a patient is confused they may try to climb over a bedrail leading to a more serious fall
- If a patient is independent, bedrails may be seen as a form of restraint
- If a patient is very restless in bed, their limbs are at risk of becoming trapped between the mattress and bedrail. Padded bedrail covers (bumpers) may be used to reduce this risk.

Independent patients will be discouraged from using bedrails as they may limit movement and freedom. However, some patients may wish to use them at night to provide a feeling of safety in what may be an unfamiliar environment.

Bedrails will only be used after a full assessment to ensure the risk to the patient is as low as possible. This decision will be discussed with each patient and their carer and continued use of bedrails will be reviewed regularly.

If a patient, relative or carer is unhappy about the use of bedrails at any time, please speak to a member of staff. We will highlight the risks as a result of not using bedrails. Details of this discussion and any alternative preventative actions taken will be recorded in the patient's records and a Bedrails Risk Assessment Form completed.

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We are always looking at ways to improve the quality of care that we provide.

- Details of all falls are recorded, reported and reviewed
- Care Plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that we are providing the best quality of care and taking appropriate steps to minimise the risk of falling
- We may ask for feedback on the care we provide

Our Vision

The Best of Life, At the End of Life, for Everyone

North London Hospice cares for patients with a life-limiting illness and supports their families, friends, and carers too. We care for patients in the communities of Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey and in our Inpatient Unit in Finchley. The hospice was established in 1984 as the UK's first multi-faith hospice and each year we care for over 3,500 patients.

We are an independent charity and provide all our care, free of charge.

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