Surgical Care Affiliates

FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM
Patient and Family Information and Education

FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM GOALS:
- To provide our patients care in the safest possible environment.
- To increase the independence of our patients while making effort to reducing the risk of falls.
- To create an environment that will prevent serious injuries from falls that might occur during the course of a patient’s stay
- To treat all patients with dignity and respect their rights as a patient.

PATIENTS WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS MAY BE PRONE TO FALLING:
- History of falls
- Change in medication or multiple medications
- Vision problems
- Weakness
- Periods of confusion
- Poor balance

On admission, all patients will be evaluated for risk of falling. All patients will be provided with a safe environment. Family and caregivers will be notified of special safety needs.

Patients at risk of falling will be identified and signage will be posted to alert staff. 

*Note: Facilities should customize this section to be consistent with their internal protocol.*

Patients and their families need to work together with the staff in the Fall Prevention Program. We will assist patients by teaching safe transfers and movement and by alerting patients to some common problems they may experience.

Please feel free to discuss with the nursing staff any questions you may have about SCA’s Fall Prevention Program and/or your individualized safety program.

WHEELCHAIR SAFETY:
These basic tips will help prevent falls and tipping over in a wheelchair. Your therapist or nurse will instruct you in additional wheelchair techniques.

Bending or Reaching For Objects from the Wheelchair:
- Position wheelchair within reach of object.
- Position front casters forward.
- Lock both brakes.
- Do not scoot forward in your seat without assistance. If you cannot reach an object, move wheelchair toward the object rather than reaching.
- Never shift weight toward the object you are reaching.
- DO NOT lean over back of seat.
- Reach only as far as your arm will extend without shifting body.

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Using the wheelchair on inclined surfaces:
- Do NOT propel yourself on an inclined surface alone before you have been checked for safety by someone.
- When going downhill, maintain control by keeping hands on the wheels to slow forward progression.

IMPORTANT TIPS TO REMEMBER FOR PREVENTING FALLS WHILE IN THE CENTER:
- Ring the call bell for assistance. Do not get up alone. Your nurse will determine if it is safe for you to move around independently.
- Tell your doctor or nurse of any episodes of dizziness or lightheadedness.
- Pause for a few seconds when changing positions, such as lying to sitting or sitting to standing. This allows your body to adjust to the change.
- Call for help if you are unsteady when moving from bed to chair or chair to bed, walking, getting to the toilet or retrieving hard to reach items. It is OK to ask for help to transfer. Your family should not attempt to transfer you without instruction.
- Avoid bending to pick up items. Ask for help.
- Proper, nonskid footwear is a must, no walking or transferring in socks.
- Keep your pathway free of clutter.
- Cooperate with the staff as they implement, and reinforce safety measures.
- Inform your nurse if you feel weak, dizzy or unsteady.
- Use the safety belt while in your wheelchair.
- Make sure your wheelchair is locked and that the foot pedals are up before moving in or out of it.
- Place personal items such as phone and glasses within reach while in bed or sitting up.
- Notify the staff if there is a spill on the floor.
- Let the nursing station know if you are leaving the unit for any reason except your scheduled therapy or outside doctor’s appointments. This allows us to monitor your health care needs better.
- Ask your visitors to help you with the above safety measures.

WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO TO HELP:
If your family member is identified at high risk for falling, please do the following:

- Notify a staff member when you are leaving after visiting a high fall risk patient.
- Make sure that the call light, telephone and necessity items are within the patient’s reach.
- Help staff maintain a safe environment by eliminating clutter and notifying staff of any concerns you have.
- Do not assist in transferring a family member unless cleared by the staff.
- Participate in family education sessions offered by the therapists or nursing staff.

- When going uphill, do NOT lean backward in the chair, as the chair is more apt to tip backward.

When in doubt, request help from nurses or therapists. Fall Prevention is everyone’s responsibility!