



## AVOIDING FALLS: STAYING SAFE IN THE HOSPITAL

At McLaren Northern Michigan, we want you to recover quickly, and we are always happy to know when our patients are feeling better and gaining strength. During your hospital stay, you might feel well enough to get out of bed on your own, but before you do, please read these important tips to ensure your personal safety.

# PREVENTING A FALL

IN THE HOSPITAL



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## STAYING SAFE

At McLaren Northern Michigan, it is our goal to provide a safe environment for our patients. This includes identifying patients who may be at risk for falling.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- All patients are at risk for falls when in the hospital due to many factors including certain medical conditions, new medications, unfamiliar surroundings, and attachment to equipment.
- Falling increases your risk for injury.
- Falling may cause a severe injury if you have a history of osteoporosis, bleeding disorder, or are on blood thinners such as Coumadin or Plavix.

## WORKING TOGETHER

- When you are admitted, you will be asked if you have had a fall in the last three months and if you have difficulty with walking or balance.
- Your nurse will discuss with you and your family how to improve your safety and prevent a fall.
- If needed, walking aids will be provided for you to use.

## REDUCE THE RISK OF A FALL

You may help reduce the risk of a fall while in the hospital by following these guidelines:

- Use the call light to ask for assistance when getting up.
- Wear shoes or non-skid slippers.
- Use only stationary objects to steady yourself. *Do not use IV poles, tray tables, wheelchairs, doors, or other objects that can move.*
- Stand up slowly to avoid unsteadiness.
- If you wear glasses or hearing aids, use them.
- Keep important objects within reach, including your call button.
- Use handrails and grab bars.
- Remind staff to keep pathways free of clutter.

## FALLS OFTEN HAPPEN ON THE WAY TO THE BATHROOM

- Always call for help to get to the bathroom or use the commode.
- Keep your call button within reach. Use the pull cord in the bathroom for assistance getting off the toilet. Use grab bars in the bathroom.

## BE AWARE OF COMMON RISKS FOR FALLS

- Previous Falls – Please let staff know if you have fallen in the past few months.
- Illness or Infection may make you unsteady or weak. Being in the hospital can cause confusion and memory problems. Talk to staff about your concerns.
- Medication – A change in medication can make you drowsy. Ask about medication side effects.
- Environment – The hospital is not familiar to you. Always call for help to get to the bathroom, sit in a chair, or go for a walk.
- Equipment – In the hospital, you may be attached to equipment as part of your care. This can limit your ability to move safely. Call for assistance to get up or walk.

## HOW CAN FAMILY HELP?

If you feel your family member is at risk of falling, please take the following precautions:

- Notify a staff member of your concern.
- Remind your loved one to use the call light for assistance getting up.
- Notify a nurse before leaving the bedside.