

## What Else Can I Do?

- See your eye doctor once a year.
- Take good care of your feet and have them examined if you have pain or difficulty walking.
- Talk to your doctor about any side effects you may have with your medicines. Some side effects may contribute to falls.
- See your doctor if you have dizzy spells.
- A cane or walker will provide extra stability when walking and may help to avoid a fall.
- When getting out of bed, sit on the side of the bed for a few minutes before standing up. Your blood pressure takes some time to adjust when you sit or stand up. If you move too quickly, you can become dizzy and this increases your chances of falling.
- Tell your doctor if you fall—medical evaluation can help!

### Douglas County Hospital

111 17th Avenue East  
Alexandria, MN 56308

Phone: 320-762-1511  
Web: [www.dchospital.com](http://www.dchospital.com)

# Call *Before* You Fall

A Guide to Fall Prevention



# Fall Prevention Information

Douglas County Hospital is committed to patient safety which includes fall prevention. During your stay at Douglas County Hospital, the staff will be continually assessing your risk for falls based on your medical condition and risk factors.

Falls can occur frequently and are a major cause of disability and death in the elderly. Thirty percent of individuals over 65 years of age fall annually. Injuries from falls can range from minor bruising to life threatening trauma. Head injuries and fractures of the long bones are often the most life threatening.

## Where Do Falls Occur?

- 60% occur at home
- 30% occur in community
- 10% occur in institutions

## Risk Factors for Falls:

- Greater than 65 years of age and ages 1-4 years
- History of past falls
- Blood thinner medications
- Taking multiple medications for various medical conditions
- Acute illness or surgery
- Poor hearing and vision
- Use of aids such as canes, walkers, etc.

## To Prevent Falls During Your Hospitalization:

- Wear shoes or non-skid slippers every time you get out of bed.
- Call your nurse if you feel dizzy, weak, lightheaded or if you have fallen. Don't get up by yourself.
- Ask for help to go to the bathroom. Make sure the path to the bathroom is clear.
- Use only unmoving objects to help steady yourself. Don't use your IV pole, tray table, wheelchair or other objects that can move.
- Use the handrails in the bathroom and hallway.
- If you wear glasses or hearing aids, use them.
- Keep important items within reach. This includes your call button.

## To Prevent Falls at Home:

### Lighting:

- Make sure that you have good, bright lighting in your home. Use night-lights in your bedroom, hall and bathroom.
- Keep flashlight available.

### Rugs:

- Make sure rugs are firmly fastened to the floor or use nonskid backing. Remove scatter rugs.

### Electrical Cords:

- Move electrical cords so they are not lying on the floor in walking areas.

### Bathroom:

- Put handrails in your bathroom for bath, shower, and toilet use.
- Use a raised toilet seat
- Place nonskid strips in tub.

### Stairs/stairwells:

- Always use handrails for support. Be sure the stairs are well lit.
- Remove clutter from stairs.

### Kitchen:

- Store items within easy reach. Avoid using stepstools or stepladders.
- Wipe spills immediately.

### Footwear:

- Wear shoes with firm non-skid, non-friction soles.
- Avoid wear loose-fitting slippers.

### Phone:

- Keep phone within easy reach.