


MRN: Patient Name: (Patient Label)
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TOP 10 SAFETY TIPS TO PREVENT FALLS AT DISCHARGE

Maintaining your safety is important to us at UCLA and we have done our best to prevent falls and/or injury from occurring during your stay with us. Now that you are ready to leave the hospital, we want you to remain as safe as possible during your recovery period. Many patients are at an increased risk for falls when they first return home from the hospital. This is due to weakness, de-conditioning, and decreased mobility that results from recovery from illness or surgery. Yet many of these falls are avoidable. These quick tips can help you prevent falls at your initial discharge home from the hospital. A more detailed **Home Safety Checklist** is also available for your use; if you would like a copy, please ask your nurse, doctor or therapist.

- 1) **Put your pride aside-ask for help!** Enlist the help of family and friends at your initial discharge home. It is advisable to have supervision at all times until you feel well enough to be home alone. Have a way of calling for assistance (such as ringing a bell). If you drop something on the floor, have help to pick it up (or leave it there until you do).
- 2) **Just say “no” to CLUTTER!** Keep all walkways entering the house and inside your home **free of clutter**. Leave plenty of room for you to walk around and in-between furniture, especially if you are using a walker.
- 3) **Don’t trip yourself up!** Remove all cords from walkways. Remove all throw rugs or secure them with double stick tape. Avoid pants or skirts with long hems that you can trip on; as well as loose fitting shoes or slippers (shoes with laces or Velcro are more secure).
- 4) **And don’t slip yourself up!** Use a rubber mat or self-stick strips in the tub/shower, and a bath mat to step onto when you get out. Use grab bars in the bathroom when possible. Have help getting into and out of the shower. Do not walk in socks on slick floors, such as tile or wood. Have help cleaning up spills as soon as they occur.
- 5) **Light the way**  Make sure your home and pathways are well lit. Use nightlights in frequently used rooms and hallways. Keep a flashlight handy in case of power outage.
- 6) **Take your time, pace yourself.** Think before you act! Change positions slowly, and make sure you are steady before starting to walk. Spread out your activities, do not rush, and take breaks when fatigued. Perform tasks seated when possible to conserve energy.
- 7) **Be aware-stay alert!** Walk carefully, as rushing can put you off balance. Always look where you are walking to make sure there is nothing you can trip on. Avoid distractions, pets or small children underfoot, or walking alone when fatigued.
- 8) **Hold on and stay strong.** Keep up your walking and use an assistive device (such as a cane or walker) as instructed by your therapist. Have assistance at all times until you feel confident walking alone. Also, perform your exercises as instructed by your therapist.
- 9) **Plan ahead.** Keep your glasses at hand and wear them even for small tasks. Carry a cordless or cell phone on you at all times. Avoid waiting until the last minute to use the bathroom. Have frequently used items set out in easy reach. Eat meals at regular times.
- 10) **Eat, drink, and be merry!** Dehydration, poor food intake, and lack of sleep can make you weaker and less alert, increasing your risk of falling. Adequate fluids, proper nutrition, and good quality sleep can help.

Be safe and live life well!!!