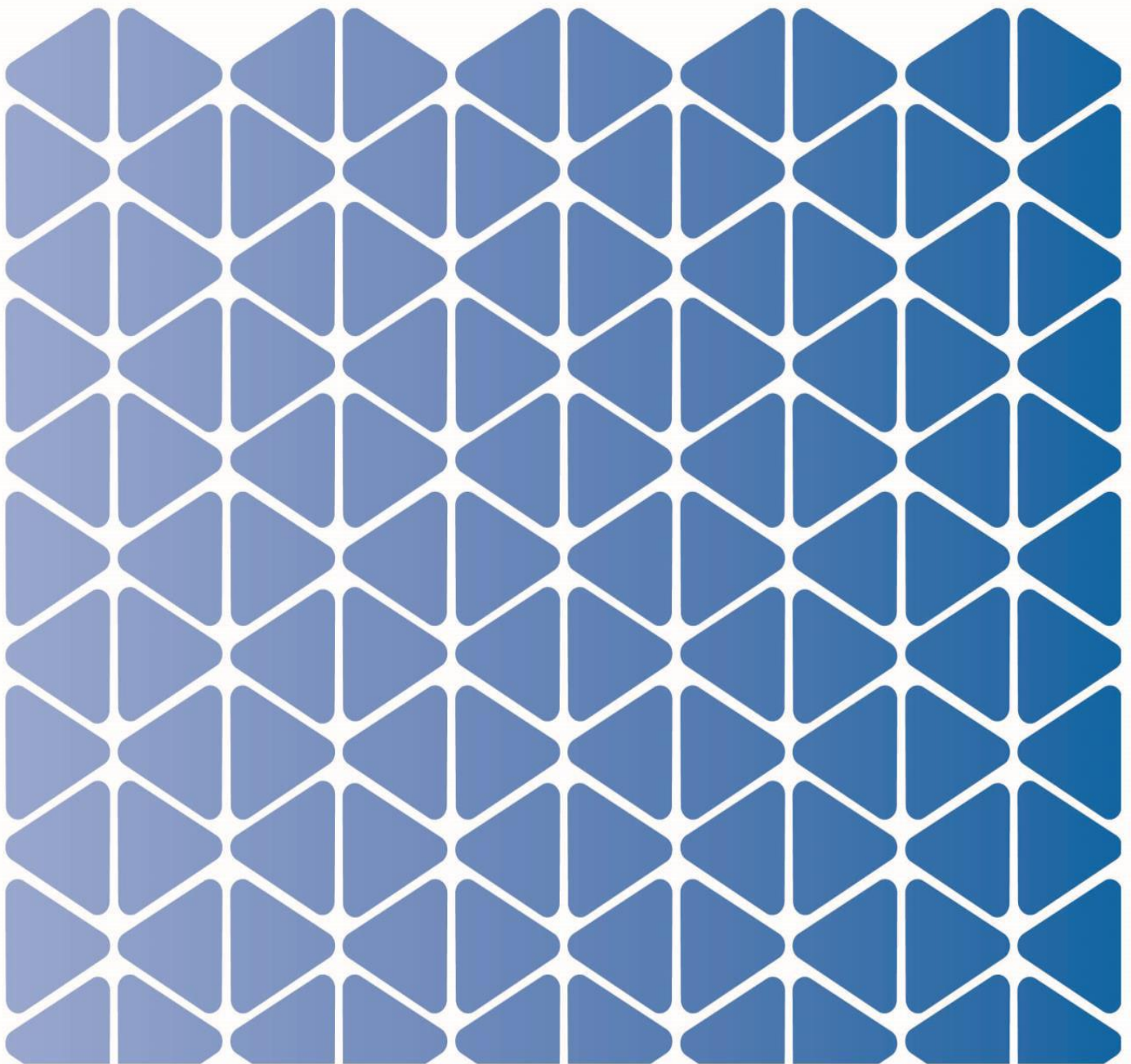


PATIENT INFORMATION

**FALLS RISK REDUCTION IN
HOSPITAL**

Who is at risk?

Falls can happen at any age but they are more common as we get older.

National guidance suggests that those at a greater risk of falling in hospital are:

- Aged 65 and over
- Aged 50-64 with underlying conditions judged to increase their risk of falls e.g. Parkinson's disease, stroke and dementia
- Admitted following a fall

What increases my risk of falls?

- History of falls
- Fear of falling
- Prolonged bed rest
- Symptoms of postural hypotension
- Cognitive impairment
- Certain/multiple medications
- Mobility/balance/sensory impairment
- Inadequate footwear/foot care
- Visual impairment
- Continence impairment
- Specific conditions such as frailty, Parkinson's disease, stroke, osteoarthritis etc.

What increases my risk of injury?

- Conditions such as osteoporosis, metastatic bone disease etc.
- Long term steroid use
- Previous fractures
- Use of anticoagulants such as warfarin

It is not possible to prevent all falls in hospital however, we can work together to reduce the chances of this happening.

What can I do?



Tell the staff looking after you if you have fallen in the last year, are worried about falling or have a history of falls.



Use your call bell if you need help to move, in particular, if you need help going to the toilet.



Make sure you have your glasses with you and ensure they are clean and used as prescribed.



Use your usual walking aid unless otherwise specified by a member of staff. Get washed and dressed into your own clothes and keep active throughout your stay.



When getting up:

- Sit upright for a few moments on the edge of the bed before standing
- Get up slowly and make sure you feel steady before walking



Do some simple leg exercises before getting up from the bed or chair:

- Move feet up and down at the ankle.
- Clench and unclench hands
- Cross and uncross legs
- Stretch arms and legs (limbering exercises)
- Once standing, squat, march or raise up and down on tiptoes



If you feel dizzy- stop, sit/lie down and let a member of staff know.



Drink regularly and eat well.



Be familiar with your bedside environment. Ask for clutter to be removed if your path isn't clear.



Make sure your shoes or slippers fit well, grip well and cannot fall off.



Take care in the bathroom and toilet. Ask for help if you need assistance.

What will the hospital do?



You will receive a falls risk assessment to identify any factors that may increase your risk of falls in hospital. Falls preventative measures will be put in place to reduce any risks identified.



Explain how to use your call bell and ensure it is within reach.



Assess your vision if you are having difficult seeing and ensure your glasses and personal belongings are within reach.



Review your medications and change them if required/appropriate to do so.



Assess your mobility and function; you may be referred to physiotherapy/occupational therapy.



Complete a lying and standing blood pressure to identify postural hypotension (a drop in blood pressure on standing).



Assess for cognitive impairment such as dementia/delirium (confusion) and put supportive measures in place if identified.



Ensure toileting is offered at intervals to suit your continence requirements.



Ensure you have and are wearing appropriate footwear.



Ensure the environment is clean, safe and clutter free.

What can others do (family/friends/carers)?

- Inform staff if you think your relative/friend is at risk of falling
- Bring in personal belongings such as, glasses, usual walking aid, appropriate clothing and adequate footwear
- Ensure the bed side environment is kept clean, safe and clutter free

Do I require bed rails?

On admission, you will receive a bed rails risk assessment to identify whether you require the use of bed rails. Bed rails can be useful for some patients but for others they can create a barrier to independence and increase the risk of falling from a greater height when climbed over.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm (excluding Bank Holidays). Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.