

Information for patients and carers

While some falls cause no injury, others can cause serious harm and result in fearing further falls, making it difficult for you to remain independent.

Causes which can contribute to falls include:

- Poor vision
- Poor balance
- Unfamiliar surroundings
- Obstacles hindering usual walkways
- Unsuitable footwear
- Incontinence
- Some medications

Simple ways to reduce your risk of falling

- Ensure walking aids are in good condition and use them rather than walls or furniture for support.
- If you **use spectacles** make sure you are wearing “distance” and not reading glasses when walking.
- If you have **new bifocal or multifocal glasses**, take time to become familiar with the change to your vision.
- Ensure clothing is not too long and shoes are well fitting, low-heeled, non-slip and comfortable.
- Become familiar with your surroundings and remove any obstacles or clutter from walkways
- Arrange with your GP to have an occupational therapist visit to advise on small changes or equipment that could help you to move around the house safely.
- Check with your doctor about your medications, their side effects and if they could increase your risk of falls.

Getting up from a chair or the bed

- To move from lying down to standing, it helps to sit up for a minute or two on the bed first before standing up
- Move your feet and ankle up and down “to get the blood flowing”
- Push off the bed, rather than pulling yourself up
- Have your walking aid within easy reach
- Wait for a further minute or two before you walk

When you are walking

- Take your time, especially when turning around.
- Always use your walking aid, not the walls or furniture.

Falls statistics from QLD Health (2007-08)

Most falls occurred at home during the cooler months

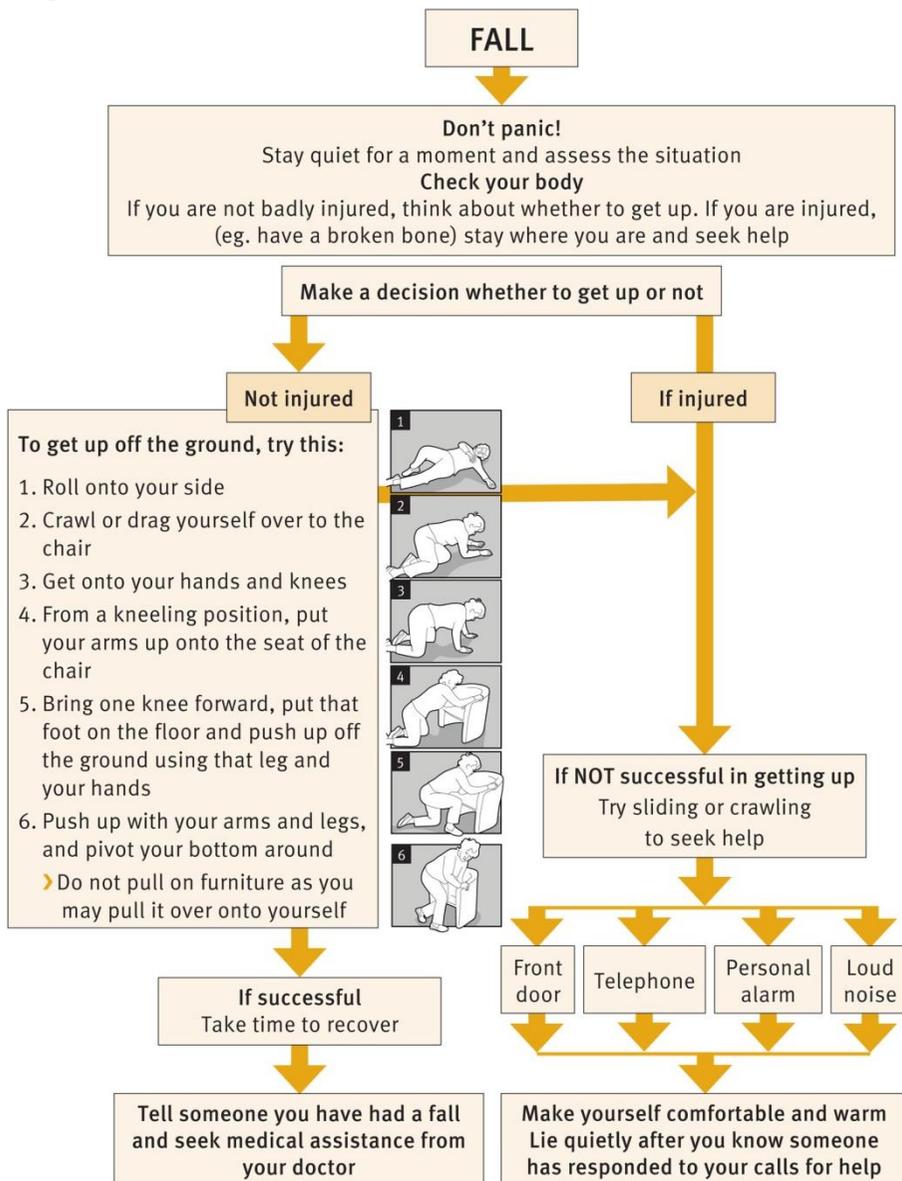
- Most falls were caused by slips and trips on a level surface
- Fall injuries were mainly to the head, hip and forearm
- Each day, 35 people were admitted to hospital due to fall-related injuries (with 10 of these being admitted due to hip fractures)

Falls Prevention

Most falls can be prevented by

- Staying healthy and active
- Maintaining strength and balance
- Identifying fall risk factors and addressing them
- Improving home safety to avoid hazards

What to do if you fall at home



Queensland Eye Hospital

Falls Prevention – Information for Patients and Carers



References:

Queensland Stay on your feet, Falls injury prevention Collaboration

Other resources available from

- <http://www.health.qld.gov.au> Staying on Your Feet
- <http://www.mdffoundation.com.au/> Slips, Trips and Falls Guide

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