

Dementia and Falling in Long-Term Care

Information for Residents and Families

People with dementia have a greater chance of falling.

Dementia can make it harder to:

- think
- make decisions
- learn new things
- know how far away something is (depth perception)
- ask for help when needed
- express feelings
- walk
- keep balance

Dementia can also affect a person's vision, hearing, and sense of touch.

Keep Active

When you are living in long-term care, we will ask you to be as active as possible. Being active will help you stay strong and independent.

How to be active:

- ✓ Sit in a chair to eat.
- ✓ Walk 2 or 3 times a day.
- ✓ Do any exercises we give you

Being active might increase your chance of falling, but knowing how to move safely will help reduce falls and help you have a better quality of life.

How to stay safe

- Wear non-slip shoes or socks.
- Wear hip protectors, even in bed. Ask your care team for a different kind if they don't fit.
- Keep your bed area free of clutter. Ask family to take items home if you don't need them.
- Wear your glasses and hearing aids.
- Get up out of bed slowly.
- Sit at the edge of the bed before standing up. Standing up quickly might make you feel dizzy.
- Ask for help with your care when you need it. For example, going to the bathroom.

About Medicines

Some medicines can make you feel weak, dizzy, or confused.

If you feel dizzy or weak:

- Sit down or lie down.
- Tell us right away.

Common myths about falls

Myth: All falls and injuries can be prevented.

Truth: Safety measures can only reduce your chances of falling and hurting yourself.

Myth: Using a restraint will stop a person from falling.

Truth: Restraints do not stop falls from happening.

Myth: The care team is responsible for preventing **all** falls and **all** fall-related injuries.

Truth: When you, your family, and the care team work together, we can lower the chances of your falling and hurting yourself.

To Friends and Family

How can you help?

- Ask the care team about your family member's care and health. Has their status changed? Is anything new?
- Walk with your family or friend when you visit.
- Ask the care team how you can help keep them safe.
- Let the care team know when you arrive and when you leave the unit.
- Let the care team know if you notice any changes in your family member's behaviour.
- Before you leave the unit, tell the care team if you have turned the bed or chair alarm off, so we can turn it back on.
- Help keep the bed area free of clutter by taking items home that are not needed.
- Talk to the care team about your family member's goals of care and living at risk, such as the benefits and risks of using restraints versus living as independently as possible.