

PREVENTING FALLS & FALL-RELATED INJURIES

Create a safe environment

- Ensure necessities are within the patient's reach
- Ensure the correct bed height
- Assign patients to beds that allow patients to exit on their stronger side
- Ensure rooms are free of clutter
- Assistive devices, such as walkers, are within reach
- Ensure furniture is sturdy and wheels are locked

Assess a patient's risk

- Use the Morse or Hendrich's scale to assess a patient's risk of falls
- Assess risk on **admission, transfer, change in status, and after a fall** (Some facilities assess a patient's risk on every shift, daily or weekly)

Reduce the patient's risk

- Individualize interventions to reduce a patient's risk of falling
 - Move High risk patients to rooms near the nursing station
 - Provide transfer assistance for weak patients
 - Implement toileting schedules for incontinent patients
 - Use bed alarms to alert staff when patients attempt to get out of bed unassisted
 - See the Falls Team or your Patient Safety Manager for more information
- Individualize interventions to reduce the risk of injury
 - Implement hip protectors and padded floor mats to reduce the risk of hip fractures
 - Use helmets to prevent head injuries

Evaluate interventions

- Complete Post Fall Assessments & Incident reports to allow the Falls Team and Patient Safety Manager to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The risks of not preventing falls:

- Patients dying prematurely due to **hip fractures**
- Patients suffering **traumatic brain injuries**
- Patients suffering **severe loss of independence**

At the VA we **CARE** about preventing falls & fall-related injuries.

For more information contact your Falls Team or your Patient Safety Manager.