

Falls facts for support staff (cleaners, food services and transport staff)

Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People:
Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Hospitals 2009

Cleaners, food services and transport staff all have an important role to play in preventing falls and harm from falls in older patients. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has produced national guidelines to help hospitals to develop and implement work practices to prevent falls and injuries from falls.

What can you do to help?

- Assist older patients where possible, especially when they are moving, because many falls can be prevented.
- Look out for ways to prevent older patients from falling; for example, by:
 - reducing clutter at the bedside
 - keeping a patient's walking aid handy
 - ensuring that food and water are within reach
 - cleaning any mess off floors.
- If a fall occurs, report it to the nursing staff.
- Know that your hospital will be reducing falls through programs that will involve you and all other staff.

Recommendations from the guidelines

Working as part of a team, cleaners, food services and transport staff need to know if an older patient is at risk of falling. Be aware that many falls can be prevented, often with simple strategies, and it is everyone's responsibility to always look out for situations in which a fall might occur. While working, keep in mind that clutter, slippery floors, and having to reach for walking aids, food or water can put an older patient at risk of falling. Cleaners, food services and transport staff are well positioned to provide casual observation of older patients and report any falls or 'near misses' to the nursing staff. You can also help put into place changes made as a result of a falls prevention program.

This fact sheet has been adapted from *Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Hospitals 2009*, developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

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1. *Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Hospitals 2009.*



The following resources have been developed to assist implementation of the Falls Guidelines:

2. *Guidebook for Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Australian Hospitals 2009*
A Short Version of Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Hospitals 2009.



3. *Falls Prevention: Information for Patients and Carers.*



4. *Fact sheets:*

- Falls facts for doctors
- Falls facts for nurses
- Falls facts for allied health professionals
- Falls facts for health managers
- Falls facts for support staff.



All publications are available from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care website www.safetyandquality.gov.au

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