

## If You Fall

Falls can be startling and upsetting. They can happen at home or in a public place. If you do fall, stay as calm as you can. Take several deep breaths to try to relax.

### How to Get Up from a Fall

1. Remain still on the floor or ground for a few moments. This will help you get over the shock of falling.
2. Decide if you are hurt. Getting up too quickly or the wrong way could make an injury worse.
3. If you think you can get up safely without help, roll over onto your side. Push yourself up into a seated position.
4. Rest a bit to let your body and blood pressure adjust.
5. Slowly get up on your hands and knees and crawl to a sturdy chair.
6. Place your hands on the seat of the chair. Slide one foot forward so that it is flat on the floor. Keep the other leg bent with the knee on the floor.
7. From this kneeling position, slowly rise and turn your body to sit in the chair.

If you are hurt or cannot get up on your own, ask someone for help or call 911. If you are alone, wait for help to arrive. Try to get into a comfortable position while you wait.

### Emergency Response Devices

If you have a fall, tell your doctor. If you have problems with balance or dizziness share that as well. If you live alone or have had some falls think about getting a personal emergency response system. This service provides a button or bracelet to wear at all times. Even in the shower.

A personal emergency response system is a safety net. It connects you to help if needed. If you fall and cannot get up, the service can send help. The service could also call a neighbor or family member to help you. You choose who this person is. If you fall and cannot get up, push the button to alert the service that you need help.

Some people carry a cell phone. They have it with them everywhere. The phone is with them even as they move about the house. You must have the phone with you and it must be charged. If the phone is within reach, it might make it easier to call. If you slip in the bathtub, you might not be able to reach the cell phone on the sink.

In other rooms you might put a telephone in a place that you can reach from the floor. This might make it easier to call from help from the floor.

### Tell Your Doctor

Be sure to discuss any fall with your doctor. Write down when, where and how you fell. Write down details so that you can discuss it with your doctor. The doctor can assess whether this is a health issue. After a fall, your doctor might refer you to other health care providers who can help prevent future falls.

A physical therapist can help you with walking, balance and strength. They can also teach you to use a cane or walker if needed.

An occupational therapist can suggest changes in your home that may lower your risk for falls. Falling is not a normal part of aging.

There are things you can do to prevent falls. Knowledge is power. Knowing causes of falls can help you prevent future falls. Ask your doctor or clinic about a falls prevention class.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6627

