

## Suggestions to Avoid Falling in a Hospital:

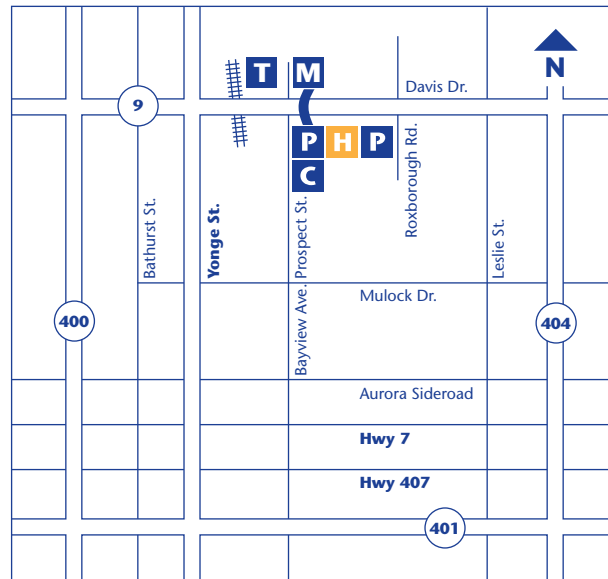
- Wear firm, flat, closed-heel, non-skid footwear while walking.
- Put footwear on before standing.
- Wear clothing that fits well and is comfortable. Do not wear clothing that drags on the floor.
- Ask for help if you feel weak, dizzy, or are lightheaded when getting up.
- Change position slowly to allow your body time to adjust – count to 10 slowly.
- Use the call bell in the bathroom if you become weak or need help to get back to bed.
- Let the staff know if a spill occurs on the floor.
- Ask to have items such as bedside tables, phone, and call bell within easy reach if it is difficult for you to get up.
- Make sure that recommended walking aids are within reach.


### Use safe transfer techniques as instructed by the healthcare team:

- Ensure that the brakes are applied on the wheelchair and bed when getting up or down from bed and/or a wheelchair.
- Use both hands to support yourself when getting on and off a bed, chair, or toilet.
- Back into a chair to sit down. Don't sit until the back of your legs touch the seat of the chair.
- Hold on to stable objects when transferring to bed, chair, walker, etc.
- Avoid obstacles – try to choose a clear path in which to walk.
- Use a night light, or leave the bathroom light on at night.

If you have any questions or concerns about falls, do not hesitate to ask a member of the Healthcare team.

## How to find us:



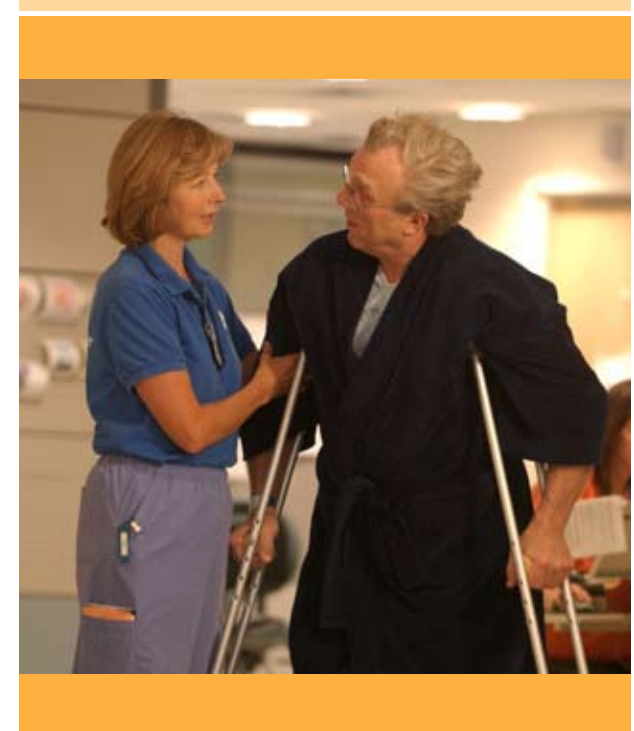
- H** Southlake Regional Health Centre
- C** Stronach Regional Cancer Centre
- T** The Tannery Mall, 465 Davis Drive
- M** Medical Arts Building, 581 Davis Drive
- P** Parking
-  Bridge crossing Davis Drive. Accessible from P3 of the Parking Garage and Level 3 of the Medical Arts Building.

### For more information, please contact:

**Southlake Regional Health Centre**  
596 Davis Drive  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 2P9  
Tel: 905-895-4521  
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TTY: 905-952-3062  
[www.southlakeregional.org](http://www.southlakeregional.org)

# Reducing the Risk of Falls

## A Guide to Safe Practices to Avoid Falling



# Suggestions to Avoid Falling at Home

### Keep things close that are easy to use:

- Use a cordless telephone, if possible.
- Place frequently-used items in easy-to-reach places.

### Proper lighting:

- Install proper lighting throughout your home, particularly around stairs and washrooms.
- Install night lights in hallways, bedrooms, and bathrooms.

### Clutter:

- Keep your floors and stairs free of clutter.
- Avoid throw mats or scatter rugs.

### Climbing the stairs:

- Use at least one handrail on all stairs.
- Mark the edge of stair treads with contrasting colours to make them easier to see.

### Navigating Your Home:

- Use stable, sturdy footwear inside and outside the home.
- Be aware of pets getting in your way.
- Avoid rushing to answer the phone or doorbell, or get to the bathroom.

### Maintain Your Health:

- Exercise regularly to maintain muscle strength and flexibility.
- Have your hearing and eyesight tested regularly.
- When getting out of bed, wait a few minutes before standing.

### Medications:

- Review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist – some over-the-counter medications can cause drowsiness and dizziness.
- Consult your doctor before taking new medications or herbal remedies.
- Avoid combining alcohol with medications as this may increase your risk for falling.
- Avoid excessive alcohol intake.

### In the Bathroom:

- Keep bathroom doors unlocked, so help can enter if needed.
- Install grab bars by the toilet and in the bathtub or shower. Do not use towel racks for support.
- If extra support is needed in the bathroom, consider a bath bench, or bath seat for the bath tub/shower, and a raised toilet seat.
- Use a hand-held shower in the bathtub or shower stall to avoid sudden twisting, turning, or bending movements.
- Use no-slip mats on the floor and bath mats with suction cups in the shower/bath tub.
- Be aware of water spills that may be slippery.
- Avoid very hot bathing temperatures that can cause dizziness.

### In case of Emergency:

- Install a personal response unit. Using the response unit appropriately will enable you to contact help immediately if you should need it.

# Suggestions to Avoid Falling Outside Your Home

### When coming in from the cold and/or wet exterior:

- Dry off canes, crutches, and walkers upon entering your home.
- Ice picks and tips are available to use on walking aids during the winter.
- Sit down when removing shoes/boots.
- Avoid going outdoors during bad weather.
- Keep walkways and stairs free of snow, ice, and clutter.
- Ensure stairs are well lit.
- Ensure stairs are equipped with at least one handrail.

### Personal Notes:

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Adapted from Trillium Health Centre’s *Preventing Falls, Inside and Outside Your Home* and The Ottawa Hospital’s *Suggestions to Avoid Falls*.