

New parents and falls

Tips to protect you and your baby

Anyone can have a fall - even new parents and babies.

Your chance of falling and how serious it might be, depends on things like your eyesight, balance, muscle strength, bone health, thinking skills, and any medicines you take.

Please tell the staff if you've had a fall or feel unsteady. This helps us keep you and your baby safe.

Here are some things to look out for and simple steps you can take to prevent falls.

Things that might increase your chance of falling

- You're a first-time parent.
- You feel very tired, sleepy, or weak.
- You had an anaesthetic, epidural or an injection in your spine.
- You've had surgery.
- You're taking pain relief medicines.
- You've had heavy bleeding during pregnancy or lost a lot of blood during or after birth.
- You have a medical condition like epilepsy, diabetes or nerve damage.
- You have dizziness or problems with your blood pressure.
- You have trouble seeing clearly or reduced vision.
- You find it hard to move or control your movements.
- You're wearing loose footwear or slippery socks, like surgical stockings.
- English isn't your first language.

Things you can do to avoid falling in hospital

- Tell staff if you feel unwell or unsteady.
- Ask your midwife for help before you get out of bed for the first time, especially if you have a drip, a tube in your bladder, oxygen, or a blood pressure monitor.
- Turn on the lights and look around your room before you move.
- Use your call bell and wait for someone to help you.
- Take your time getting up after sitting or lying down.
- Keep your bed low to the ground when you're sleeping, and when you're getting in and out.
- Learn how to use your hospital bed controls to raise or lower your bed.
- Don't lean on things like tables or chairs to help you stand up — they might move and make you fall.
- Wear safe shoes – flat, closed-in shoes that fit well and won't slip.
- Use the armrests or rails in your bathroom to help you stand up from the toilet or chair.
- Sit on a chair when you shower - you might feel dizzy or unsteady after having your baby.

How to keep your baby safe from falling

- Always put your baby to sleep on their back in their own cot, never in your bed.
- Try not to fall asleep while holding your baby because they could slip and fall.
- Keep the cot close to your bed, and make sure your bed is at a safe height when you pick up your baby. Make sure you're comfortable and have plenty of support before you hold or feed your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone on a bed or anywhere they could fall.
- If you feel weak or think you might fall while holding your baby, ask someone else to hold them or put your baby back in their cot.
- When you walk around the hospital, keep your baby in their cot instead of carrying them.
- Don't lean on your baby's cot or use it to support yourself — it might tip over.
- Ask visitors to sit down when they hold your baby.
- Keep everything you need close by when changing your baby so you don't have to leave them alone on the change mat.

What to do if you or your baby fall

- Press your call bell or shout for help.
- Tell your midwife or a staff member right away so we can help keep you and your baby safe.

For more information

Related Women's fact sheets

- Improving recovery after your birth – physiotherapy advice
thewomens.org.au/health-information/fact-sheets#improving-your-recovery-after-birth-physiotherapy-advice
- Going home from hospital after your baby is born
thewomens.org.au/health-information/fact-sheets#going-home-from-hospital-after-your-baby-is-born
- Going home after an epidural or spinal
thewomens.org.au/health-information/fact-sheets#going-home-after-having-an-epidural-or-spinal
- Going home after a caesarean birth
thewomens.org.au/health-information/fact-sheets#going-home-after-a-caesarean-birth

Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732 (24-hour support service)

1800respect.org.au