

## Hospital in the Home (Wallaby)

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne  
50 Flemington Road Parkville  
Victoria 3052 Australia  
TELEPHONE +61 3 9345 4770  
[www.rch.org.au/wallaby](http://www.rch.org.au/wallaby)

Stock #62109 - RCH 10/24 April 2015



The Royal  
Children's  
Hospital  
Melbourne

# Don't let your guard down

Falls safety information  
for parents going home  
with a sick child

### Melbourne Children's

A world leader  
in child and  
adolescent  
health



The Royal  
Children's  
Hospital  
Melbourne



Murdoch  
Children's  
Research  
Institute



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

**Whether in the hospital or at home, falls are a risk for all children. Some children have a higher risk than others due to their medical diagnosis, prolonged admission to hospital, the medication they take or when using new or complex equipment.**

## Assessing risk

Falls cannot always be prevented. However, by assessing the risk we can identify children who will need extra safety measures put in place. Nursing staff will assess your child's risk of falling during the 'hospital in the home' or other follow up programs. The risks may change as your child's health alters. If your child is identified as having a high risk of falling, your nurse will develop a management plan in consultation with you, to ensure you are aware of the extra safety measures your child needs.

If a fall does occur at home you should inform Wallaby nursing staff immediately. If you are concerned that your child has been injured in the fall, take them to the GP or to RCH Emergency. Every time a fall occurs, Wallaby nursing staff complete an incident report. The reports help to prevent further falls from occurring by identifying and removing the risk(s).

## What are the risks for your child?

### MEDICATIONS

Use of medications such as barbiturates, phenothiazines, sedatives, hypnotics, antidepressants, laxatives and diuretics may increase the risk of falls. Extra care should be taken to check your child regularly after they have been given any medications, and be aware of possible side effects.

### MOBILITY

Difficulty moving around and the use of walking aids are key fall risk factors. Strategies such as wearing non-slip footwear, and supervising or assisting with moving around can help to reduce the risk. Ensuring that you know how to properly and safely use all the equipment you have been provided with will help prevent falls.

### TOILETING

Having special toileting needs can increase the risk of falling. Simple strategies such as regularly checking your child and routinely taking them to the toilet will help minimise the risks.

### BED REST

The majority of falls occur at the bedside. Strategies such as ensuring the bed is in a low position, the brakes are locked, bed rails or cot sides are used appropriately, placing a mattress on the floor beside the bed or sleeping on a mattress on the floor can help reduce the risk of falling. Ensuring your child can easily reach necessary items will also reduce their risk of falling.

## Key points to remember

- Use appropriate non-slip footwear for children who walk or weight-bear.
- Ensure your child can easily get your attention by calling, texting or using a bell.
- Maintain good lighting in your child's room; use a dim night-light when it is dark.
- Keep floors clear of tripping hazards such as equipment, toys and clothing.
- Supervise children when using wheelchairs, highchairs, strollers, infant seats and any specialist seating (e.g. Tumbleforms). Ensure that the appropriate safety belt or harness is worn and securely fastened.
- Always assist your child to walk if they are unsteady on their feet.
- Place necessary items your child may need (e.g. drink of water, phone, etc) within easy reach.
- Ensure all the equipment you use (e.g. wheelchairs and commodes) is well maintained and serviced appropriately.

For further information see the Kids Health Info factsheet 'Preventing Falls' at [www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact\\_sheets/Preventing\\_Falls/](http://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Preventing_Falls/)