

## Safety and Equipment

### Fall Prevention Guidelines

The risk of falling, and problems related to falls, have serious implications to the quality of life for the patient. *Please review the following information carefully; we believe by increasing your awareness of fall prevention, you will feel more competent in offering a safe plan of care.*

#### The risk of falls increases when:

- A previous fall has occurred in the last six months.
- A patient does not recognize his/her own limitations.
- Muscle strength is decreased.
- Assistive devices are used incorrectly.
- The medical condition changes.
- Environmental hazards are present.
- Certain medications are administered.

Patients receiving hospice care may have multiple risk factors which make it all the more important to have a safe plan of care in place.

It is always important to talk to hospice team members about any safety concerns you have. A safety re-assessment will be completed and changes in the plan of care can be made. Assistive devices and monitoring systems are available as needed.

#### The Serenity Hospice and Home nurse will:

- Complete a fall risk screening tool.
- Check for safety hazards in the home.
- Identify medications that increase fall risk.
- Provide safety recommendations and education.

#### The caregiver should:

- Share information with Serenity Hospice and Home staff.
- Reduce hazards in the home (see checklist on the next page).
- Record medication administration times and effects.
- Have an increased awareness to safety precautions.
- Promote proper use of assistive devices.

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### Fall Prevention Guidelines Cont...

Taking a proactive approach will help prevent falls. Please look around your home to ensure that a safe environment is being provided.

- Adequate lights in hallways, bedrooms, and bathrooms.
- Remove rugs or small rugs need to have non-skid backing.
- Traffic areas are free of clutter and electrical cords.
- Stairways are in good repair, have hand rails and are free of objects.
- Chairs are sturdy and secure (arms aid when rising).
- Bathroom grab bars (towel bars are not strong enough to be grab bars).
- Raised toilet seat (in a highly visible color).
- Patient wears proper fitting footwear or non-skid socks.
- Maintain a clean environment.
- Have frequently used items in an easy to reach position.
- Have canes and walkers next to patient and encourage them to use as instructed.
- Pets should not be under foot.

### Be aware of things that contribute to falls:

- Alcohol use.
- Vision and hearing deficits.
- Low blood pressure readings.
- Feeling weak and/or dizzy.
- Rising quickly after eating or sleeping.
- Effects from medications.

**Please also note that there may come a time when it is not safe for the patient to be alone.**



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### Fall Prevention Guidelines Cont...

This chart shows the time frame during which the caregiver should monitor the patient for drowsiness and dizziness following the administration of medication. The patient should be observed closely and caution exercised during these time frames.

<b>Medication</b>	<b>Effects Begin</b>	<b>Effects May Last</b>
<b>Morphine</b>	15-30 minutes	30-90 minutes
<b>Ativan</b>	30 minutes	1-6 hours
<b>Haldol</b>	20-30 minutes	2-6 hours

*All slips, trips, and falls need to be reported to the hospice nurse at 815-732-2499*