### 3L: Patient and Family Education

**Background:** Below are examples of key educational points about fall prevention that can be handed out to patients and their families.

**Reference:** Available as a patient education brochure at the Minnesota Hospital Association Web site: [www.mnhospitals.org/Portals/0/Documents/ptsafety/falls/English\_Patient\_Education\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.mnhospitals.org/Portals/0/Documents/ptsafety/falls/English_Patient_Education_Brochure.pdf).

**How to use this tool:** The information below can be customized for use within your hospital. When printing your educational brochure, make sure that text is at least 14 points, and make it 16 points if possible; use Times New Roman font or another font that has serifs. We recommend against printing text over photographs or colors in the background (e.g., black text on a dark green background) and suggest using sharper contrasting colors to make the text easier to read. The language should be at no more than a 6th grade reading level to ensure that all patients can understand the message.

Educators and staff nurses can distribute educational information to patients, but verbal counseling on fall risk should be performed by someone trained for this task. Consider handing out educational information to patients and their families when the patient is admitted to your unit.

Preventing Falls in the Hospital

Know when to ask for help

You will do more and more walking as your health improves. To avoid falling and hurting yourself, please follow these guidelines.

* Wear shoes or nonskid slippers every time you get out of bed.
* Call your nurse if you feel dizzy, weak, or lightheaded. Don’t get up by yourself.
* Ask for help to go to the bathroom. Make sure the path to the bathroom is clear.
* Use only unmoving objects to help steady yourself. Don’t use your IV pole, tray table, wheelchair, or other objects that can move.
* Use the handrails in the bathroom and hallway.
* If you wear glasses or hearing aids, use them.
* Keep important items within reach. This includes your call button or call bell.

**Source:** Minnesota Hospital Association.