

## Preventing Falls

**Slips, trips and falls can happen to anyone, but they are more common and more significant as we get older, because we are more likely to injure ourselves.**

### Did you know?

Falls are a common problem for older people and are often the reason people are admitted to hospital or move to a nursing home. The likelihood of a fall increases partly because of the natural changes that happen as our bodies age. The good news - many falls are preventable.

### How do we determine if you are at risk of a fall whilst visiting us?

We ask you your age and whether you have had any falls within the previous 12 months. If you are aged 65 and over (or 45 and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) and / or if you have had a fall within the previous 12 months, we recognise that you are more likely to sustain a fall whilst visiting us.

### How can you reduce your risk of a fall when visiting the Royal Dental Hospital Melbourne?

- If you have poor eyesight, wear your glasses.
- If you have poor hearing, wear your hearing aids.
- If you have a mobility aid (i.e., a walking stick or frame), use it when you are visiting us.
- If you are attending one of our clinics (NOT the day surgery unit), make sure you are well hydrated. Dehydration increases the risk you may get dizzy and fall.
- Wear appropriate footwear. Footwear should be comfortable, firm-fitting, flat shoes with low broad heels and soles that grip.

- Don't rush, take your time when moving between areas at the hospital.
- Pay attention to your surroundings, especially obstacles, or children. Scan the area before walking.
- If you are at an increased risk of a fall, we recommend that you attend with someone who can support you. They can help you to avoid obstacles, remind you not to rush or get up too quickly.
- If you have had a long consultation, take your time getting up. Some people are more at risk of getting dizzy after lying down for an extended period. Refer to the section *Why do some people get dizzy following a long consultation?* For further information.

### Why do some people get dizzy following a long consultation?

Some people are more likely to get dizzy when they have been lying down for an extended period. After a long consultation, some people may experience:

- Feelings of light headedness,
- Feelings that the room is spinning (i.e., dizzy),
- Blurry vision or black spots in your vision,
- Weakness,
- Fainting.

### Steps to reduce dizziness following a long consultation:

- Let staff know that you are feeling dizzy.
- Get up slowly. Slowly sit up onto the edge of the dental chair and sit for 2 minutes. If no signs of dizziness, then slowly stand up. Wait 1 minute and if no signs of dizziness, then start walking.
- Ensure you are hydrated prior to the consultation.
- If you have diabetes, ensure your diabetes is managed before the consultation.

**Steps to manage dizziness:**

- Ask the staff to lie you back down on the dental chair and elevate your legs.
- Drink a glass of water or ask the staff for a glucose drink.
- If you remain dizzy, we will ask a nurse or medical practitioner to assess you.
- If symptoms persist a Medical Emergency Team (MET) call will be alerted for an urgent review of your condition.

**Advice post discharge (once symptoms resolve):**

- Continue to drink plenty of fluids.
- Continue to use slow to stand principles.
- Consult a General Practitioner if concerned.

**Should you have any concerns please call:**

**The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne**

Phone: (03) 9341 1000  
Open every day  
8:30am - 5:00pm

[www.rdhm.org.au](http://www.rdhm.org.au)