



GUIDELINES FOR FALL PREVENTION AFTER AN OSTEOTOMY SURGERY

The following guidelines have been prepared to assist you in reducing your chances of falling after surgery. Please read this information thoroughly and prepare in advance of your surgeries. Keep in mind that these are suggestions and common situations that patients may come across. It is important for you to individually assess your home and living situation to ultimately minimize YOUR chance of falling in your own environment; no two situations are alike.

- 1. Walk through your home and assess any areas of concern that pose potential fall hazards (common examples below):**
 - a. Assess your driveway, sidewalk and house for safety of entry and exit
 - b. Throw rugs that might slip under your crutches
 - c. Tile and wood floors where water may gather from shoes, melted ice, bath areas, pet water bowls
 - d. Areas of clutter such as children's playrooms or areas where dog toys collect.
 - i. Consider asking someone to take your dog(s) during the first six weeks of recovery
 - ii. Do not pick up children prior to 6 weeks
 - e. Stair use should initially be avoided and then limited;
 - i. In the first two weeks, stair use should be **avoided**
 - ii. After two weeks, limit stairs use to twice daily – down in the morning and returning upstairs at night.
 - iii. You **MUST** have someone with you at all times while using the stairs
 - iv. If you forgot something, send your caregiver, **DO NOT** make the extra trip
 - f. During winter months assess your driveway, sidewalk and house entry points for snow and ice
- 2. Establish reliable caregivers in advance with the following time frames in mind:**
 - a. For the first 48 hours you will need someone with you at all times; 24/7
 - b. During the first two weeks you will continue to need assistance most of the time
 - c. From weeks 3-6 you will continue to need help with ADL's (activities of daily living) and transportation
- 3. Considerations for the caregivers – keeping in mind you will not be hands free to do things for yourself:**
 - a. A caregiver needs to be available any time you are up and needing assistance with ambulation to another area of the house.
 - b. Will they be available to help with bathing and use of the toilet
 - i. Remain with the patient, always, while in the restroom
 - c. Will they be available to assist with the changes of clothing
 - d. Will they be able to prepare meals and serve you
 - i. The caregiver should bring the food and drink to you, to minimize the patient getting up and down several times per day
 - e. Arrange in advance, those who will drive you to and from appointments
 - i. Consider staying home for the first six weeks unless you need to leave for essential appointments ie: post op follow up and physical therapy, PCP

- ii. If possible avoid the need for dental, massage, hair and other non-essential appointments to minimize risk.
- f. It is recommended that you arrange help from more than one person during the first six weeks to ensure full coverage of your needs and to avoid burn out in caregivers.
 - i. Create a schedule, including days and times, for those who will be assisting.
 - ii. Review, the expectation, with those willing to help, in advance of surgery to ensure your caregiver can commit to the help you will need
 - iii. The goal is for you, the patient, to do as little as possible and to allow your caregivers to support you and minimize the number of times you get up and move around.

4. Common adaptive equipment to lower fall risk:

- a. Ergonomic crutches such as mobilelegs
 - i. A proper crutch fit is imperative to safe use – watch the video on this website
 - ii. Practice crutch use prior to surgery
 - 1. If you do not have experience with crutches, we can arrange 1-2 gait training visits with a physical therapist
- b. Walker
 - i. Proper height is important
- c. Shower stool/chair
- d. Bedside commode
- e. Non-slip mat in your tub or shower
- f. Toilet seat riser
- g. Wheelchair should be considered, especially during winter months
- h. Good fitting shoes – no open back or slides
 - i. Kiziks or Sketcher slide in