

## Your Safety While in the Hospital

*Partnering with hospital staff to keep you safe*

### Preventing Falls

#### Am I at risk for falls even if I am strong and healthy?

**YES, you are at risk for falls!** Many things can increase your risk of falling while you are in the hospital, in labor, and after giving birth. You might:

- Believe you are not at risk because you are usually healthy
- Be receiving *opioid* pain medicines
- Become dizzy when standing up
- Need to get to the bathroom quickly
- Have equipment that can get tangled
- Be very tired from lack of sleep
- Have weakness
- Have swollen legs
- Have low blood pressure after blood loss during birth or surgery
- Not use your call light because you do not want to bother staff

#### What do I need to do?

- **Please do not try to get out of bed on your own until your nurse has said it is safe to do so.** Instead, use your call light for help.

- Tell your nurse if you start to feel lightheaded or weak. This can happen even after you have been walking safely.



*We may use a gait belt to help keep you steady while you walk.*

- When it is safe, we will turn the sign above your bed to “Ambulates Independently.” This means it is OK for you to get up and walk by yourself.
- **Work with us to create your fall prevention plan.** We want to keep you safe! As part of this plan, we may:
  - Use a *gait belt* around your chest or abdomen to help keep you steady when you walk.
  - Check your mobility by seeing how well you can rotate your ankles, raise your legs, and flex your hips.
  - Help you to the bathroom every 2 to 3 hours. We will stay with you while you use the bathroom to make sure you are safe.

## **How do hospital staff help keep me safe?**

Here are just a few important ways we help keep you safe while you are in the hospital:

- All staff will wash or use gel on their hands before we enter your room, and when we leave.
- We will wear gloves and protective clothing when we expect to have contact with body fluids.
- We will check your hospital ID band:
  - Every time the nurses change shift
  - Before we give you medicines
- We will follow strict safety rules about giving you medicines.
- Your nurses or patient care technicians will check on you every hour during the day and every 2 hours at night. This is called “rounding.”
- Every 4 hours, we have a short unit safety meeting, called a “huddle.” This meeting lasts about 5 minutes. During the huddle, unit staff and the charge nurse review what is happening on the unit and in the hospital.
- We restrict access to the unit and ask your visitors to sign in on entry.

## **What are Public Safety Officers?**

Public Safety Officers are members of the hospital staff. They are specially trained to help us keep the units safe for families and staff.

On the Mother Baby Unit, Public Safety Officers help ensure each family has a calm environment for recovering from birth and getting to know your new baby. If needed, they will explain hospital rules and expectations to you, your visiting support people, or your family members.

All families have their own style of communicating and dealing with stress or tiredness. But there may be some things that work well for your family at home that do not support the quiet healing environment of the Mother Baby Unit.

If we have concerns, we may talk with you and your family about hospital rules of conduct while you are in the unit. We will invite our Public Safety Officers to help lead these conversations.

**Now, please go back to the Table of Contents and check the box so your nurses will know you have read this chapter.**

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Please tell us if you have questions or concerns about your safety.