



10 Essential Tips for Keeping Patients Injury-Free

Patient falls and handling injuries can lead to longer hospital stays, higher costs and serious harm. Unit-based teamwork can prevent this blow to our patients and members. Here are some ways to keep them — and KP staff— safe and sound.



1

Post signs as a reminder to nurses and other staff members to properly use patient lift equipment or friction-reducing devices.

2

Give patients who are at high risk for falling color-coded identifiers, such as yellow armbands or red socks.

3

Place call button within the patient's reach and have the patient demonstrate its use.

4

Use the paging system to call for a “code assist” when a staff member needs help with a fall-risk patient; create a buddy system for answering call lights and lifting patients together.

5

Turn on bed alarms to alert staff when patients identified as confused or at risk of a fall are trying to get out of bed or sit up by themselves.

6

Collaborate with physicians to review and minimize medications that increase confusion or dizziness or otherwise heighten the risk of falls.

7

Keep the area around the bed and the path to the patient's bathroom free of cords, clutter and spills. Ensure proper lighting.

8

Use huddles to identify and coordinate care of fall-risk patients and hourly rounding to assess patient needs.

9

Conduct safety observations when staff members turn or lift patients. Rethink ways to handle patients in a safer manner.

10

Unless indicated otherwise, encourage patients to get out of bed for meals and other activities to avoid boredom and restlessness. Learn about patients' interests and offer activities to engage them, such as puzzles, crafts and videos.

These practices are gleaned from reporting done by LMP Communications across Kaiser Permanente regions and from data entered into UBT Tracker. They are intended not as a definitive list but as a starting point for team discussions and brainstorming.

