

Pembroke Regional Hospital Is Doing Its Part To Help Prevent Falls

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEMBROKE – Are you at risk of falling? Recognizing that falls are the leading cause of injury and hospitalization among older adults in Canada, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has implemented use of a new fall risk screening checklist. Patients aged 65 and older who visit the Emergency Department or have appointments in Diagnostic Imaging and in the clinics can expect to receive the *Stop Falls – Staying Independent Checklist* which they will be asked to complete in order to assess their risk of falling.

The checklist, which patients will be asked to fill out while they wait for their appointments, consists of a self-assessment questionnaire. Their results will be reviewed with a member of the health care team while they are at the hospital and if they are deemed to be at risk for falls they will be asked to share the assessment with their primary care physician and continue the conversation.

“Anyone can fall, but as we age our risk of falling becomes greater,” said Beth Brownlee, Director of Surgical, Medical and Maternal Child Care programs at PRH.

“Falls can result in fracture, chronic pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence and death in some cases so it’s important to do all we can to help prevent them. Statistics show that 50% of all falls causing hospitalization happen at home and 20-30% of older Canadians experience at least one fall per year so we are using this tool as a preventive measure to try and reduce the risk for our patients,” Ms. Brownlee said, adding that 95% of hip fractures are the result of falls.

For those interested in completing the checklist at home or having family members review it, the checklist and other information about fall prevention can be found online at <https://www.rgpeo.com/stop-falls/patient-families/> or on the hospital’s website at <https://www.pemreghos.org/fallprevention>.

“We would like to see people revisit the checklist regularly, or at least on an annual basis, especially when there has been a change in their condition, a change in their medications, or a change in their living environment,” said Laurie Menard, Director of Diagnostic Imaging, Emergency Department/Intensive Care Unit and Ambulatory Clinics at PRH.

“Any of these changes can cause a dramatic increase in the risk of falling. We encourage everyone at risk to speak with members of their health care team to not only look at ways to prevent falls, but strategies to reduce the risk of injury should they experience a fall.”

Tips for keeping safe at home:

Exterior:

- Keep front steps and walkway in good repair and free of snow, ice and leaves.
- Keep front entrance well lit.
- Put garden tools such as hoses and rakes away when not using them.

Living room and bedroom:

- Reduce clutter. Get rid of loose wires and cords as well as any other obstacles.
- Consider using a cordless phone to avoid rushing to answer.
- Have good lighting throughout the house and install night lights.
- Make sure the path is clear between the bedroom and bathroom.
- Get rid of scatter mats or make sure they are non-slip.
- Get out of your bed or chair slowly; moving suddenly can make you dizzy.

Kitchen:

- Store kitchen supplies and pots and pans in easy-to-reach locations.
- Store heavy items in lower cupboards.
- Always wipe up any spills immediately to prevent slipping.

Stairs:

- Make sure your stairs are well lit.
- Install solid handrails on both side of the stairway.
- Remove your reading glasses when you go up and down the stairs.
- Never rush up or down the stairs. It's a major cause of falls.

Bathroom:

- Ensure you have non-slip surfaces for the tub and shower.
- Install well-anchored grab bars by the toilet and bath to help you sit and stand.
- Use a raised toilet seat and a bath seat in the shower if you need them.
- Keep the floor clear of water or obstacles.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Carolyn Levesque, Public Affairs and Communications Coordinator
Pembroke Regional Hospital**

carolyn.levesque@prh.email / (613) 732-3675, extension 6165