



Falls Specialist Service client information

A home-based falls prevention service to help you maintain your independence.

What is the Falls Specialist Service?

A physiotherapist or occupational therapist may assess you in clinic or at your home to find out why you have previously fallen and/or assist you in identifying risk factors that may put you at risk of falling. During the assessment, the therapist will assess the following potential risk factors:

- medication
- balance, walking and muscle strength
- footwear and foot health
- vision
- bladder and bowel function
- confidence with daily activities
- memory and mood concerns
- home environment
- health conditions e.g. eyesight, blood pressure.

How can you reduce your risk of falling?

The therapist will discuss your risk factors with you and make suggestions on how you can **take action** to reduce your risk of falls and stay safe and independent at home.

This may include:

- a home or community **exercise program** which teaches you how to exercise safely and improve your balance and walking
- **equipment** to assist your walking or daily activities.

- a referral to a geriatrician and other members of the multidisciplinary team in a **falls clinic**
- advise you to visit an **optometrist, podiatrist, GP** or other health care provider (at their usual cost)
- **home hazards reduction** and home modifications (e.g. installation of grab rails, ramps or box steps)
- **podiatry review** for foot care or specific advice related to footwear
- **education** related to the development of a **personalised falls action plan** – “what to do if you fall at home”
- **education** about activities that may contribute to your risk of falling
- referral for **medication review**
- referral for access to **community support program** (e.g. Commonwealth Home Support Programme; Home Care Packages).

The therapist will, with your permission, liaise with your general practitioner (GP) with regards to any medical or medication issues that need further management.

We will always ask for permission before making a referral and only provide relevant medical information to that professional.

How long does a visit by the Falls Specialist Service take?

The first assessment typically takes at least one hour. Depending on the results of your assessment, you may be seen a second time (or contacted by phone) to discuss recommendations. The length of this visit

will vary depending on the number of recommendations to discuss.

Further visits may be required if you are prescribed a home exercise program or equipment and home installations need to be arranged.

What support is available for doing home exercises?

The therapist may provide you with a home exercise program. Exercises are provided at an appropriate level for your physical capabilities.

The therapist or their therapy assistant can provide supervision to ensure you are doing the exercises correctly if it is needed.

The Falls Specialist Service will monitor your progress with your exercise program by a phone call or home visit depending on your needs. You will be discharged once you have completed the program or met your individual goals.

Important: Inform your GP and your therapist immediately if you have any chest pain, dizziness, or are excessively short of breath while you are exercising.

What does the service cost?

There is no cost associated with assessment by the Falls Specialist Service for public or private clients. There may however be some costs associated with the recommendations suggested by the therapist.

How can you assist us when the Falls Specialist Service visits you at home?

- It is important that you, a relative or friend contact us if you are not able to keep your appointment time. We can

reschedule your appointment, however continual cancellations may result in discharge from the service.

- We request that you do not smoke when we visit your home.
- To respect the human worth and dignity of staff who visit you, abuse (verbal or physical) will not be tolerated.
- Provide a safe environment (e.g. lock away any aggressive pets).

Can someone else speak on your behalf?

You can ask a family member or friend to advocate on your behalf. Or you can ask for an advocate from Advocare Incorporated who can be contacted on (08) 9479 7566.

If you require an interpreter, please let us know so we can arrange one to attend your appointments. There is no cost to you if an interpreter is required.

Contact details

If you are seeking a referral to your local Falls Specialist Service or Falls Clinic please contact your GP as they can refer you to the most appropriate service. If you already know the location of your nearest public hospital you can contact them and they will be able to assist. Further information can be obtained through **Stay on Your Feet** on 1300 30 35 40_or you can visit www.stayonyourfeet.com.au for a list of clinics and services in your area.

Comments

We aim to provide a high quality service. We want to know if you have any concerns or suggestions. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your therapist please contact the Consumer Liaison Support Officer through the hospital switchboard to which you have been referred.