



# Footwear in hospital

## Patient information

### The importance of safe footwear

- Falls in hospital can be serious as they can lead to injuries and longer hospital stays.
- As unsafe footwear can lead to falls, it is important to wear safe slippers or shoes to reduce your risk of a fall.
- You are discouraged from walking around the ward in just your usual socks or surgical stockings, as they are slippery and can put you at risk of a fall.
- It is best if you have safe footwear brought in for you. Sometimes your usual safe slippers or shoes cannot be worn due to foot problems such as swelling and soreness.
- If you cannot wear safe shoes or slippers, or do not have either of these with you, then the nursing and physiotherapy staff will assess you for alternatives.



#### Shoes should have:

- Low heel
- Firm heel counters
- Soft breathable upper
- Thick synthetic soles with tread
- Firm and adjustable fastening

#### Slippers should have:

- Non-slip soles
- A firm fit
- A thin, firm sole
- A supported heel



#### You should avoid:

- Scuffs or thongs
- Shoes or slippers that are too tight
- Shoes or slippers that are loose fitting
- Socks or stockings without shoes or slippers



## Non-slip socks

These are socks with a slip-resistant tread applied to the sole. They may be offered to you as an alternative if you do not have, or cannot wear, safe footwear.

## How to wear non-slip socks

- A comfortable, but not tight, fit is recommended.
- The tread pattern must align with the sole of the foot.
- You should always check that the sock has not slipped around your foot.
- Non-slip socks are not to be worn with other footwear or outdoors.
- They can be worn over surgical stockings
- If you cannot wear safe shoes or slippers, or do not have either of those with you, then the nursing and physiotherapy staff will assess you for alternatives.

### Special considerations:

- If you have a shuffling gait and you wear non-slip footwear you may be at higher risk of falling.
- Your nurse and physiotherapist will assess which is the safest and most appropriate footwear for you.

### Care and maintenance:

- Non-slip socks are for individual patient use only.
- Hand wash in warm water using detergent.
- Air dry out of direct sunlight.
- Do **not** bleach or tumble dry.
- Non-slip socks **must not** be put through the hospital laundry as this may damage the **treads**.



Produced by the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Podiatry Department and Falls Management Unit with thanks to NSW Health, Central Coast Local Health District, Northern Sydney Local Health Clinic. The information provided is for information purposes only. If you are a patient using this publication, you should seek assistance from a healthcare professional when interpreting these materials and applying them to your individual circumstances.



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