



GUIDELINE

Falls: Care of a newborn following a fall

Scope (Staff):	Nursing, Midwifery and Medical Staff
Scope (Area):	NICU KEMH, NICU PCH, NETS WA and KEMH Postnatal Wards

Child Safe Organisation Statement of Commitment

CAHS commits to being a child safe organisation by applying the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This is a commitment to a strong culture supported by robust policies and procedures to reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.

This document should be read in conjunction with this [disclaimer](#)

Aim

To provide a guide and increased awareness to newborn safety with regards to accidental falls and patient care in the event of a fall.

Risk

Inadequate follow-up/management in the event of a fall.

Background

All newborns are at risk of falling from raised surfaces or caregivers hold. Awareness and education of healthcare workers and caregivers remains paramount in providing a safe environment, minimising risks of falls and injury in the NICU and Post Natal Wards.

Fall Prevention & Minimising Harm

Maternal patients in the post-partum period may experience fatigue, sensory and motor impairment secondary to labour, medication, anaesthetic agents that have the potential to impact safe mobilisation and ability to care for a newborn safely. All obstetric in-patients undergo an individualised Maternity Inpatient Falls/Pressure Injury Risk Assessment (MR 260.02) upon admission and post-partum as part of standard care.

Environmental considerations to optimise lighting, maintain floor surfaces dry and free of clutter, ergonomics of medical equipment and furniture, for example, lowered cot & bed heights, use of cot sides/bed rails, brakes, wheelchairs for mobilisation, placement of monitoring cables, IV lines, catheters etc. and patient escort by healthcare staff and loved ones.

Caregiver education is to be provided, including written information provided on Safe Sleeping. This is in addition to the safe sleeping information found in the 'Pregnancy, birth and your baby' patient information book. Specific recommendations to be discussed and reinforced:

- Supine newborn sleeping position in a designated cot, adjacent to the adult bed.
- Risk of a falling asleep while holding their newborn.
- Risks of falls while walking and holding their newborn in arms and advice to place their newborn supine in the cot to transport.
- Diligence in ensuring safe positioning of a newborn with placement of in a cot, resuscitaire platform with use of cot sides or incubator and never leaving a newborn unattended on a bed or change table surface.

Patient Care in the Event of a Fall

In the event of a newborn falling from an elevated surface or persons hold:

- Ensure newborn safety & call for assistance from the Neonatal Senior Registrar or Consultant.
- Provide immediate supportive care to the newborn.
- Neonatal Medical team to conduct a full physical examination, clinical monitoring and documentation of patient observations (temperature, HR, RR, work of breathing, pulse oximetry saturations) in patient medical records and MR494.00 Neonatal Neurological Observation Form.
- Clinical history, examination and observations may indicate the requirement for skeletal and organ imaging with radiographs, ultrasound, MRI or CT.
- Provide emotional support to parent/caregivers and staff using debrief.
- Notification to Neonatal Consultant on-call and nursing/midwifery managers as appropriate.
- Notification of the clinical incident via DATIX CIMS.
- For unwitnessed falls in the care of a parent/caregiver, consider referral to social work or Child Protection Unit for assessment of conditions surrounding the patient fall.
- Continued newborn care with further fall prevention strategies.

Related CAHS internal policies, procedures and guidelines

CAHS

- [Falls Risk Management](#)

Neonatology

- [Visiting Guideline](#)

WNHS – Obstetrics and Gynaecology

- [Falls: Risk assessment and management of patient falls](#)

References and related external legislation, policies, and guidelines (if required)

1. Carr, Hester MN, et al. A System-Wide Approach to Prevention of In-Hospital Newborn Falls, MCN, The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing: March/April 2019 - Volume 44 - Issue 2 - p 100-107 doi: 10.1097/NMC.0000000000000516
2. <https://healthpoint.hdwa.health.wa.gov.au/policies/Policies/NMAHS/WNHS/WNHS.OG.FallsRisksPreventionManagement.pdf>

Useful resources (including related forms)


<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/comprehensive-care/related-topics/falls-prevention>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/safety>

<https://www.wslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/wnh/health-information/newborn-baby-care/Newborn-Baby-Care>

[Pregnancy, Birth and your baby](#)

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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