

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stay on your feet during April No Falls month

Injury from falls is an ever-increasing risk for people aged 65 years and over, with statistics showing that more than one in three people in that age bracket will have a fall each year.

Of those more than 30 per cent will require medical treatment.

April No Falls is an international campaign designed to raise awareness of falls and help those at risk to stay on their feet.

Toowoomba Hospital's Geriatric, Adult Rehabilitation and Stroke Service (GARSS) treats many patients who are deemed to be at high risk of falls.

"In GARSS we see a lot patients who are recovering from things like stroke or acquired injuries that have impaired their cognitive function, and in many cases those patients are at a higher risk of falls," physiotherapist Rebecca Flemming said.

"For that reason alone falls awareness and prevention is a huge priority here in GARSS.

"We place a lot of emphasis on minimising falls while patients are going through recovery and rehabilitation and this continues after they've been discharged.

"We have three separate groups doing balance and mobility classes here in the gym and they come in twice a week to do their balance and walking exercises.

"Part of the classes are exercise-based but we also focus on education, so throughout the class we're explaining what the exercises are for, and we always put a strong an emphasis on avoiding falls."

Ms Flemming said the importance of falls prevention was also being reinforced to staff through a special challenge to coincide with April No Falls month.

"We've recently started up a health and wellbeing club for our staff within GARSS and each month we set a challenge for the staff," she said.

"With April being No Falls month we're doing a balance challenge which involves doing a single-leg stand and holding it for as long possible, then doing the alternate leg.

"We're encouraging everyone to give it a go and to continually try and improve on their previous results, keeping the focus on falls prevention."

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