The Irish Hip Fracture Database (IHFD) was set up to measure the care for all patients over the age of 60 who suffer a hip fracture. There are 16 hospitals who operate on hip fracture patients. The Irish Hip Fracture Standards (IHFS) measure the key clinical steps in the care of hip fracture patients.

WHAT IS A HIP FRACTURE AND HOW CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

A hip fracture is any break in the upper portion of the thigh bone (femur) where the bone meets the pelvis. Falls are the main cause of hip fractures. As we age, our bones can become weaker (osteoporosis) and therefore a fall can result in the bone breaking easily. The majority of hip fractures were caused by falls at home. Across are some helpful tips to keep active at home.

SAFETY IS IMPORTANT


STEP 1
Break up periods of sitting by standing up from your chair at least once an hour. Regular movement helps to keep your mind and body feeling well.

STEP 2
Include stretches in your daily routine to help improve posture and mobility.

STEP 3
Keep your bones and muscles strong with activities that require a bit of effort such as pushing, pulling, lifting or lowering activities. Climbing the stairs and doing housework also help keep you strong.

Adapted from the work of Vanda Cummins, Primary Care Physiotherapist, HSE
KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2020

- **IHFS 1:** 33% of patients were admitted to an orthopaedic ward or went to theatre within four hours.
- **IHFS 2:** 75% of patients received surgery within 48 hours.
- **IHFS 3:** 3% of patients developed a pressure ulcer after admission.
- **IHFS 4:** 82% of patients were seen by a geriatrician.
- **IHFS 5:** 91% of patients received a bone health assessment.
- **IHFS 6:** 85% of patients received a specialist falls assessment.
- **IHFS 7:** 78% of patients were mobilised by a physiotherapist on the day of or day after surgery.

- **Median** length of stay: 11 days.
- **Female:** 67%
- **Male:** 33%
- **Average age of a person who breaks their hip is 81**.
- **85%** of patients admitted from home.
- **82%** of patients were brought directly to operating hospital.
- **94%** of patients received a pre-operative nerve block for pain.
- **94%** of patients received a nutritional risk assessment to identify risk of malnutrition.
- **69%** of patients received a specialist falls assessment.
- **99%** coverage participating hospitals.
- **3666 patients** recorded in 2020.
- **28%** of patients were discharged directly home.
- **16** participating hospitals.

*The median is the middle number in a list of numbers.*
A MESSAGE FROM OUR PATIENT AND PUBLIC INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES

Facing ongoing public health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic made 2020 a year like no other. COVID-19 didn’t appear to have had a hugely detrimental effect on the standards of care in the acute hospitals. However, more hip fracture patients were admitted from the long-term care sector and the percentage of new admissions to nursing home stayed the same. For patients, the transfer between the hospital and nursing home, along with their experience as in-patients and post discharge, most certainly posed additional challenges during the pandemic: new visiting restrictions, lack of direct interaction with friends and relatives, lack of accompaniment during transfer, limited supports to facilitate rehabilitation, strange interaction with others through personal protective equipment, adjusting to new protocols and unprecedented generalised isolation.

Although, more patients returned back home rather than being transferred into a long-term care setting, they all had to face further challenges post discharge from hospital following the hip surgery. The imposed isolation, lack of supports and fear of getting sick or die, on the general backdrop of public health restrictions and advice to remain at home, have been part of the public discourse since March 2020. The wider impact of the pandemic on the patients and the general public is yet to be determined. Nevertheless, the professionalism and dedication of the personnel in the acute hospitals across Ireland committed to provide a high standard of care to patients was evident even during the very challenging circumstances of a pandemic.

Bibiana Savin, Patient and Public Interest Representative, Irish Hip Fracture Database