How to measure lying and standing blood pressure (BP) as part of a falls assessment

1. Identify if you are going to need assistance to stand the patient and simultaneously record their blood pressure.

2. Use a manual sphygmomanometer if possible and definitely if the automatic machine fails to record.

3. Explain the procedure to the patient.

**Lying down**

- Ask the patient to lie down for at least 5 minutes.
- Measure the BP.

**Standing**

- Ask the patient to stand up (assist if needed).
- Measure BP after standing in the first minute.
- Measure BP again after patient has been standing for 3 minutes.
- Repeat recording if BP is still dropping.

In the instance of positive results, repeat regularly until resolved.

If symptoms change, repeat the test.

Notice and document symptoms of dizziness, light-headedness, vagueness, pallor, visual disturbance, feelings of weakness and palpitations.

Advise patient of results, and if the result is positive:
- inform the medical and nursing team.

A positive result is:
- a) A drop in systolic BP of 20 mmHg or more (with or without symptoms).
- b) A drop to below 90 mmHg on standing even if the drop is less than 20 mmHg (with or without symptoms).
- c) A drop in diastolic BP of 10 mmHg with symptoms (although clinically less significant than a drop in systolic BP).