



# The Importance of Preventing Falls

One Long-Term Care Facility's Experience  
Making the Change to Fall Fighter® Products



## Introduction

Fall prevention is a concern throughout healthcare. Research studies show the serious nature of how falls affect long-term care residents, staff and families as well as the importance of preventative measures. Crest Healthcare Supply is working to find the right products to help prevent falls in healthcare facilities. The following information is a snapshot of falls, some solutions for prevention and one facility's experience switching to Crest Fall Fighter® products.

## Fall Prevention Background

Resident falls are a problem that many healthcare facilities face. An average nursing home with 100 beds typically reports 100 to 200 falls per year.<sup>1</sup> Studies suggest as many as three out of four residents in nursing homes fall each year,<sup>2</sup> with many falling more than once.<sup>3</sup> The effects of a fall can be devastating for both the individual and the facility.

***"It's so demoralizing when a resident falls - for the staff, families and the resident themselves... It can cause any number of injuries for a person, so we take it very seriously."***

— Anne, R.N., Assistant Director of Nursing

Falls can have many physical effects such as bruising, lacerations, broken bones and even death. Residents may also experience a range of emotional issues in addition to the physical implications of a fall.

***"...There is a sense of embarrassment that comes when a resident falls...They have a sense of insecurity and will isolate themselves. Family members are always worried about residents falling because they fear them getting injured and fear they will continue to decline."***

— Marjie, R.N., Director of Nursing

## Fall Prevention Background *(Continued)*

As many as 10 to 20% of nursing home falls cause serious injury with up to 6% resulting in fractures. Falls can even be fatal. Approximately 1,800 nursing home occupants die every year as a result of injuries sustained from falls.<sup>4</sup> These statistics underline the importance of the tremendous efforts put forth by facilities to minimize falls and promote the well-being of their residents.

*“Our facility spends a great deal of time looking at fall prevention. We have a committee that meets once a month to review all incidents... We spend a lot of time investigating what caused the fall, how we can prevent the fall and any further incidents with that resident.”*

— Marjie, R.N., Director of Nursing

In 2008, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, announced that it would no longer pay the extra cost of treating certain conditions called “Never Events”, which includes falls. The CMS defines Never Events as acquired conditions that should be considered reasonably preventable. This no-payment policy for treatment places added emphasis on the importance of fall prevention.

Fortunately, the dedicated professionals working within healthcare facilities are working diligently to identify each resident’s fall risk factors and find ways to help prevent falls before they occur.

*“Some factors are medications, dementia if they have poor safety awareness... We make sure they are on the right program to promote continence so they don’t feel the need to self transfer to use the restroom. Hearing and vision can also cause problems with their mobility.”*

— Shanda, R.N., Nurse Manager Clinical Care



## Solutions

Because of the many combinations of factors and the large number of at-risk residents, a multi-faceted approach can be the most effective solution to helping prevent or reduce the number of falls in a facility.

*“We’ve found you really need to figure out the true cause (of falls)... the strategies that you implement will be much more successful. It takes a team approach. Every discipline can have a major impact on our residents’ safety. We try to utilize everyone as a resource.”*

— Marjie, R.N., Director of Nursing

To create a truly effective program in the long term, emphasis also needs to be placed on continually reassessing the changing needs of residents and working with the team to provide the best quality care.

*“(A person’s) condition changes rather quickly. You have to be on task about it daily—sometimes hourly.”*

— Susie, R.N., Nurse Manager Clinical Care

Crest Healthcare Supply provides a number of tools that can assist in fall prevention programs. Using a Sensor Pad or String Monitor product that alarms, such as Crest Fall Fighter, can help alert facility staff when a resident is at increased risk for a fall due to self transfer attempts or other high-risk behavior. There are three monitor styles available to best fit the needs of each situation.



*“When we started using the Fall Fighter equipment our Nurse Manager Group... scrutinized it pretty closely. We’ve used a million different types of alarms. The thing we really liked about it was the no on-off button. There is no chance that someone is going to forget to turn it on or turn the alarm off to do something and forget to turn it back on. We really, really liked that.”*

— Anne, R.N., Assistant Director of Nursing

## Solutions



The Fall Fighter String Monitor features an adjustable string with magnet connection that is clipped to the user's clothing. When the user leans forward too far, or attempts to stand or sit up, the string pulls the magnet from the monitor, sounding an alarm.

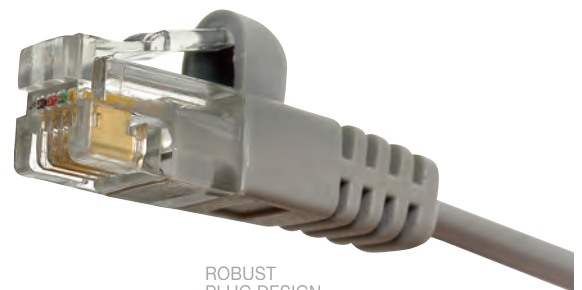
Crest Fall Fighter Chair and Bed Monitors use pressure-sensitive sensor pads that detect when a user's weight is removed from the pad. When the user rises from the pad, the alarm sounds to summon help.



*"The durability of the pads is something we have been impressed with — we feel they definitely hold up better than other products we have used."*

— Marjie, R.N., Director of Nursing

Fall Fighter Sensor Pads feature an over-molded plug end to protect against strain and clip breakage and heavy-duty bonding with a reinforced anchor that prevents separation of the cord from the pad.



ROBUST  
PLUG DESIGN

## An Experience Using Fall Fighter



Emmanuel Home, a long-term care facility, had not used Fall Fighter products previously, but agreed to switch a portion of their facility to strictly using Fall Fighter Monitors and Sensor Pads. In the past they used a variety of brands and styles of fall prevention devices, but were open to consolidating their product usage for consistency.

Training staff on multiple products can be a cumbersome task. This facility quickly realized the benefit of using only Fall Fighter and felt that implementing and using the monitors and pads was an easy process. They also found Fall Fighter products to be very effective. Emmanuel experienced approximately 30% less falls compared to their previous monthly average in the first 30-days of using Fall Fighter.

In the past, Emmanuel experienced several patient falls that correlated to fall prevention equipment failure, including alarms not sounding as they should, connection failure, alarms shut off by accident, pad failure due to cracked wires and battery failures. For this reason, durability was very important to them. However, with Fall Fighter, Emmanuel experienced no falls related to equipment failure. They also had no Fall Fighter products that needed to be repaired, replaced or thrown away during the first 30 days of use.

After installing and using the Fall Fighter products, Emmanuel's staff felt the products were easier to use than previous brands of monitors based on the design and clear instructions, and that the products effectively met the needs of their facility. They also found it helpful to use the same monitoring system throughout an entire area. Training and familiarity with the products became more efficient and easier for staff.

***"I think the most positive effect is that the staff loves them."***

— Susie, R.N., Nurse Manager Clinical Care

Emmanuel Home identified many features of the Fall Fighter products that they found especially useful: no On/Off button, the sturdiness of the sensor pads and plugs, the available volume and tone options, and the auto-reset feature when a resident returns to the pad. They also liked the easy-to-use low-battery indicator and the optional AC adapter to save on battery life.



## Cost Savings

Emmanuel also realized cost savings by switching to Fall Fighter. They found Fall Fighter products to be very competitively priced compared to previously purchased equipment. By switching to Fall Fighter products Emmanuel will save \$10-\$23 on each monitor and sensor pad when purchased individually.

### Average Savings per Product by Switching To Fall Fighter

Product	Chair Monitor	Bed Monitor	Chair Sensor Pad	Bed Sensor Pad	Total
<b>Savings</b>	\$23	\$12	\$10	\$12	
<b>Average Used/Year</b>	15	20	15	20	
<b>Annual Savings</b>	\$345	\$240	\$150	\$240	<b>\$975</b>

Based on their typical purchasing habits, Emmanuel would see a total yearly savings of \$975 by switching to Fall Fighter products and has the potential for even greater savings by purchasing in kits or quantity packs.

*"I think from my standpoint as Director of Nursing, budget is always a big concern for me. We found they (Fall Fighter) are very competitively priced and typically are lower priced than many other products. If you can get the durability with the economical price it's a win-win for both."*

— Marjie, R.N., Director of Nursing

## Conclusion

This combination of cost savings, ease of use, durability, functionality and the overall staff satisfaction experienced by using Fall Fighter products has proven to be beneficial for Emmanuel Home. Fall Fighter products are available to help all healthcare facilities with their fall prevention efforts. Contact Crest Healthcare Supply today to try Fall Fighter in your facility

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Rubenstein LZ. Preventing falls in the nursing home. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1997;278(7):595–6.
- <sup>2</sup> Rubenstein LZ, Josephson KR, Robbins AS. Falls in the nursing home. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 1994;121:442–51.
- <sup>3</sup> Rubenstein LZ, Robbins AS, Josephson KR, Schulman BL, Osterweil D. The value of assessing falls in an elderly population. A randomized clinical trial. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 1990;113(4):308–16.
- <sup>4</sup> Rubenstein LZ, Robbins AS, Schulman BL, Rosado J, Osterweil D, Josephson KR. Falls and instability in the elderly. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 1988;36:266–78.

*A special thanks to the Emmanuel Home Staff.*





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