

During your hospital stay, we will focus on mobility to help you avoid losing strength and function while you are here.

- **Function** includes the ability to physically move around (**mobility**), do **activities** (meaningful and purposeful tasks), and use thinking, reasoning, and memory skills (**cognition**).
- Hospitalized patients generally spend much of their day in bed, which limits their mobility. This lack of mobility and the issues that come from it can cause patients to have to stay in the hospital longer, putting them at risk and leading to worse health outcomes.
- Sometimes patients will lose their ability to do **activities of daily living (ADLs)** independently (without another person helping them) after they are hospitalized. ADLs are personal self-care activities like being able to feed, dress, and clean yourself. For patients older than 70, 30% are discharged from the hospital with a new ADL **impairment** (problem that makes normal functioning hard or not possible).

This decline in function can be reduced by early activity and mobility, both in the hospital and at home after discharge. This handout includes information on issues to watch for and ways to help with patient mobility.

What could increase my risk for mobility issues?

Risk factors leading to mobility problems include:

- Cognitive impairment (issues with thinking or memory)
- Lack of movement or activity
- Physical illness

- Muscle paralysis or limitation (being unable or limited in moving your muscles)

What are some signs that I might have a mobility issue?

Signs and symptoms include:

- Pain that limits your movement
- Weakness
- You're unable to get out of bed without help
- You need help with standing or moving to the chair
- You can't manage your wheelchair or move it forward
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

What can I do to improve my mobility?

You (with help from your care team) can do the following to improve your safety and independence with mobility, both in the hospital and at home:

- Wear non-skid socks
- Make sure the spaces you are in have proper lighting to support any vision impairments
- Use the call light to ask for help
- Declutter the environment (clean out the spaces you'll be in so there isn't a lot of stuff to get in the way of you moving around)
- Ask for help when needed

What kinds of devices can help me with mobility?

Mobility aids, or **mobility assistive devices**, are products that can help you move around when you have physical impairments that make moving difficult.

- Some examples include a gait belt, cane, walker, or wheelchair.
- Our nurses or physical therapists can suggest and teach you to use and care for this equipment. We will provide you with help for your safety.

What should I know about safety and mobility?

- Every patient is different. We will work with you to figure out what kind of education, training, and equipment is best to make sure you can move around safely.
 - Our mobility training may also include training for a caregiver or family member to help you with mobility or setting up activities.
- We may teach you about safety for activities like getting in and out of bed, standing and walking, using stairs, and wheelchair mobility. We may also talk with you about posture and safe lifting techniques, as needed.
- To prepare you for all mobility issues, we will review safe falling techniques with you, as well as ways to safely get up from the floor or ground.

When should I get medical help?

- Call your healthcare provider if your mobility issues get worse, or if you have new symptoms that prevent you from doing ADLs.
- Get medical help if you have severe pain or you're unable to move.

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