



Partners in Quality Care

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- *Define Mobility
- *Overview of assistive devices
- *Assisting with ambulation
- *Effects of immobility

MOBILITY

Mobility allows a person to increase their overall independence and is important for overall health. Body mechanics is the proper use of muscles to move and lift objects and to maintain correct posture. This is important as you assist a client with mobility. There are different ways to help a person become mobile. Assistive devices can help a person with a disability maintain mobility.

Definitions related to mobility:

Mobility- the quality or state of being mobile or movable- Merriam Webster

Mobile- capable of moving or being moved- Merriam Webster

Immobile- not moving - Merriam Webster



Ways mobility may be achieved:

Walking (ambulation) with or without assistance

Using an assistive device- wheelchair, walker, rolling walker, cane, crutches, other

Using a mechanical lift device- full-sling or stand-assist lift

- ➔ Full-sling Mechanical Lift – mechanical device that uses a sling and used to transfer an individual who cannot assist or are too heavy for staff to transfer themselves
- ➔ Stand-assist lift – mechanical device used to transfer an individual, who can bear some weight, follow directions, can sit on the side of the bed, and can bend hips, knees, and ankles

Transfer -moving an individual from one place to another

- ➔ Moving an individual from one area to another is a transfer. The type of transfer depends on the individual's ability to assist with the transfer. A transfer (gait) belt may be used to assist a person with ambulation.
- ➔ Standing transfer is when an individual can bear weight on one or both legs. Sitting transfer is when an individual is unable to support weight on both legs, a transfer (sliding) board may be used.
- ➔ Lifting transfer is when an individual is unable to move or cannot be moved by one or more persons, a mechanical lift may be used.

You may be assigned to assist a client with range of motion (ROM) exercises to help with joint flexibility and prevent permanent issues with joint function such as contractures. If you are assigned ROM exercises, talk to your supervisor to determine what type of ROM exercises (active or passive) and how to perform, record, and report this task.

TRANSFERS

- ❖ Anytime you assist a person to transfer, you need to know their abilities **and** your abilities. Do not attempt to transfer someone if you do not think you can perform the task **safely**. You do not want to risk harm to a client or yourself.
- ❖ Notify your supervisor if a task assigned related to assisting a client with transfers or mobility is unable to be performed due to **safety** concerns.
- ❖ The plan of care should have the level of assistance a client requires, and the type of assistance required.
- ❖ Ask the person how they are feeling **before** you assist with movements.
- ❖ Look at the environment you are working in such as; **is the path clear**, what direction are you going. Do not rush and do not perform tasks that you do not feel you can provide safely.
- ❖ A person who has difficulty standing or is unable to bear weight on their legs but has certain abilities such as being able to sit up and use their arms, may be able to be transferred from the bed to a wheelchair, or other areas with a transfer board. You will need to be trained in the use of a transfer board if this is an assigned task.
- ❖ When you assist a client from a lying to sitting to standing position, give the client time between positions to ensure they are oriented to their space and are **not dizzy**.
- ❖ An individual may use a wheelchair for mobility. Remember to follow safety guidelines with wheelchair use such as locking both wheelchair brakes and moving the footrests out of the way when assisting an individual to transfer in and out of the wheelchair. If the wheelchair appears too small or too large for the client, report to your supervisor per the plan of care. A wheelchair that is not fitted properly for the individual is a **safety** issue.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES:

- ❖ Assistive devices to help a person when walking such as a walker, cane, or crutches should be fitted to the person's size.
- ❖ The individual's healthcare provider determines the type of assistive device needed according to the person's abilities and needs.
- ❖ Assist the client with ensuring the assistive device needed is within reach and report to your supervisor if the client is having difficulty using the device correctly and if you need training in helping your clients with assistive devices.
- ❖ A client must be standing and steady before starting to use a walker, cane, or crutches and to begin ambulation.

IMMOBILITY:

- Moving and repositioning a client in bed is a task that may be assigned if the client is bedbound or in bed for long periods. A person who is immobile and spends long periods of time in bed is at risk of wasting of the muscles, joint issues, constipation, urinary retention, blood clots due to slowed circulation, pressure ulcers (i.e. bedsores), pneumonia from reduced lung expansion, emotional discomfort, generalized discomfort and other physical issues.
- Each time you assist a client to change their position in bed or when you turn a client in bed (at least every two hours and per the plan of care) , observe the skin and check over bony areas and in areas where there may be pressure on the skin. Report reddened skin areas as per the plan of care.

SAFETY TIPS WHEN USING WALKERS, CANES AND CRUTCHES:

- Make sure that all bolts are tightened, and tips have rubber safety protectors
- Place walkers, canes, or crutches, when not in use, near the client but out of traffic pattern of the room
- Assist client to put on walking shoes, not floppy slippers
- Remove obstacles from the client's path
- Reinforce instructions of the physical therapist (if applicable)
- Do not rush the client; allow plenty of time to practice walking
- Practice using assistive devices when the client's energy level is high



ASSISTING WITH AMBULATION:

- ✓ Wash your hands.
- ✓ Talk with the client about assisting them to walk- what they want to do for themselves and what you will do to assist.
- ✓ Remind the client, if necessary, regarding which shoes to wear
- ✓ Walk beside the client
- ✓ Assist the client in practicing standing and shifting weight
- ✓ Walk slowly, taking small steps
- ✓ Walk with the client on the client's weak side, use correct positioning
- ✓ Walk for short distances

- ✓ Observe, record, and report as assigned on the client plan of care the distance the client walked, any client issues with dizziness, pain, shortness of breath or other complaints the client may experience during ambulation.

- ✓ Report if the client is unsteady during ambulation and if the caregiver in the home needs training in helping the client to ambulate or in the use of assistive devices such as gait belts, mechanical (hoyer) lifts or other equipment.

- ✓ A transfer (gait) belt is a safety device that buckles securely around a person's waist. It provides a secure grasping surface to help with a person's transfer and ambulation. A gait belt should be applied over clothing and not on bare skin. The belt should be snug but not uncomfortable, painful, or cause breathing difficulties. If a gait belt is assigned for use according to the client's plan of care, talk to your supervisor to ensure you have received the necessary training and have been checked as competent to use a gait belt.

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