

CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE NEWS

“CARING FOR YOU ... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Back Safety & Transfers

Golden Rules To Be Safe

Being a caregiver puts you at risk for back injuries. Many occur when lifting, moving, transferring or changing the position of the one in your care. Improper movements can cause injury to the person being moved, such as abrasions to skin, strains, sprains and tears--even fractures. Learn how to avoid harming yourself *and* the one in your care.

First--take care of YOU

Maintain good posture, and exercise to strengthen your back and stomach muscles. If you are overweight, lose weight. Excess weight puts extra stress on back and stomach muscles and on joints. One pound of extra weight puts 4 extra pounds of stress on knee joints.

The Golden Rule...

First, consider the task at hand. Think about what you are capable of, what assistance you might need and to what degree the one in your care can assist you. Then, eliminate hazards such as clutter, throw rugs, or excess furniture. When planning on the space you need to move, pivot, or transfer, allow for more space than you think you need.

Remember these tips:

- Let the person you are helping do as much as he or she can do safely.
- Never allow the person you are helping to put his or her arms around your neck.
- Have the person PUSH off rails, chair arms, etc. (No pulling)
- Avoid sudden jerking movements; move slowly and communicate what you are doing and need the person to do. Remember, if the person in your care does not move often, he/she may become lightheaded with a change in position--**move slowly!**
- Have all equipment you need ready and in working order, such as a transfer belt, chair, wheelchair, commode, or Hoyer lift. If transferring to or from a bed, wheelchair or commode with locking brakes, make sure they are locked.
- If, during a transfer, you start to “lose” the person, do not try to hold him or her up. Doing so will probably result in injury. Instead, lower him or her slowly to the floor and call for assistance.



ASSISTIVE DEVICES . . . tools to help prevent injury

These devices can be very helpful in making a lift or transfer easier and in preventing injuries, however, these items require a prescription, and the caregiver should be trained by a therapist or nurse before using them.

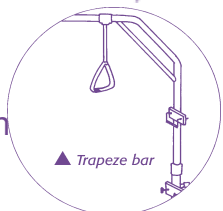
Transfer belt -- Placed around the waist of a person and used to secure the person while walking; gait belt

Transfer board (sliding board) -- A polished board used to slide a person when moving from one place to another; for example, from bed to wheelchair or commode.

Trapeze -- A metal bar suspended over a bed that the person can grab to pull up in bed or assist with turning in bed or coming to a seated position.

Mechanical lift -- Also called a hydraulic lift or known as a Hoyer lift. A canvas sling is placed under the person and he/she lies in bed, then attached to the lift with straps. The caregiver starts the lift (electronically or by hydraulics), which secures the sling around the person and lifts him/her off the bed. The position of the sling can then be adjusted and the person transferred into a chair.

REMEMBER. . . Get proper training before using a transfer belt, transfer board, trapeze or mechanical lift.



The Ombudsman program can handle your concerns about areas such as elder abuse, client care, consumer rights, etc. For more information, call 1-800-582-7277.

For information about Ohio Medicaid programs or to report suspected Medicaid fraud, you may call the Ohio Medicaid Fraud Hotline at 1-800-324-8680.

NEXT ISSUE...LOSS, GRIEF & DEPRESSION

www.aaa7.org

Tip

If you're not sure about the proper body mechanics for lifting and transferring, ask a therapist or nurse to show you how, or call the AAA7 Caregiver Support Program for a home visit at 1-800-582-7277.

Article continues on next page>

www.aaa7.org

Transferring from a Wheelchair to a Car

Be sure the car is parked on a level surface without cracks or potholes.

1.

- Open the passenger door as far as possible.
- Move the left side of the wheelchair as close to the car seat as possible.
- **Lock the chair's wheels.**
- Move both footrests out of the way.



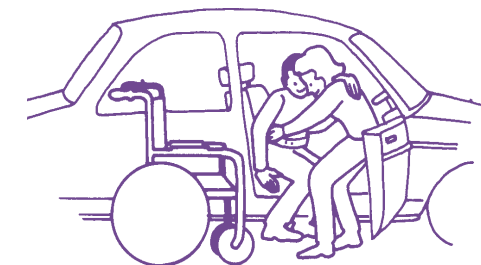
2.

- Position yourself facing the person.
- Tell him/her what you are going to do.
- Bending your knees and hips, lower yourself to his or her level.
- Grasp the transfer belt around his/her waist to help him or her stand while straightening your hips and knees.
- If her or his legs are weak, brace her/his knees with your knees.



3.

- While he or she is standing, turn the person so he/she can be eased down to sit on the car seat. **GUIDE THE PERSON'S HEAD** so it is not bumped.



4.

- Lift his/her legs into the car by putting your hands under his/her knees.
- Move the person to face the front.
- Put on his or her seat belt.
- Close door carefully.

In the United States, approximately 37,000 people over age 65 are injured yearly when entering and exiting cars; 40 percent of these injuries were severe, with 25 percent requiring hospitalization.

Source: Journal of American Geriatrics Society; April 2008

Taking Care of Yourself

You can easily become exhausted, sleep deprived, and depressed if you don't get enough sleep. Not only will you feel overwhelmed, but many physical illnesses have been linked to sleep deprivation.

These include a reduction in natural immunity to infections and diseases, an increased sensitivity to pain, appetite changes and weight gain, and an increased risk of diabetes, to name just a few. Caregiving demands can easily extend to 24 hours a day in many cases, if proper thought and preparation is not considered.



Plan ahead, so you don't become sleep deprived, because when it occurs, judgment and mood changes can impair your problem-solving abilities. Here are some things you should do to assure proper rest and "down time:"

- ♥ Plan ahead for adequate relief and support
- ♥ Be realistic--no one can be a caregiver 24 hours a day
- ♥ Learn to listen to your body; recognize fatigue early and plan to reset
- ♥ Openly express how you are feeling to those who support you
- ♥ Join a caregivers' support group

Remember . . . alcohol, excessive caffeine, lack of exercise and lack of a routine all make exhaustion worse.

LIVE LIFE LAUGHING

What a fighter! She's going to make it.



Inspiration

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

~Angela Mayou

Resource for You

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
(800)346-AAOS (800-346-2267)
www.aaos.org

Offers a free booklet "Lift It Safe" on lifting procedures for home-based caregivers.