



ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN AMERICA'S NURSING HOMES

Increase Resident Mobility

CONSUMER FACT SHEET

Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes is a national campaign that began in September 2006. Our goal is to improve the quality of care and life for the 1.5 million people served by nursing homes in the United States. Nursing homes and their staff, along with residents and their families and consumers can join in this effort by working on the Campaign goals that are designed to improve quality. We do this by providing tools and resources to help nursing homes achieve their quality improvement goals. To learn more about the Campaign, visit www.nhqualitycampaign.org.

This fact sheet is about the importance of promoting mobility as a key part of quality care.

Introduction: What do we mean by mobility?

Mobility means being able to move your own body or having someone help you move place to place. It's not just walking. It is about strength, flexibility and staying power, or endurance. It includes things like

- Turning over in bed,
- Getting up;
- Standing
- Using a cane, walker or wheelchair to help get around.
- Moving from place to place within or outside your nursing home.

Why is mobility important for your quality of life?

Research shows that being able to move easily makes people feel good because it helps:

- Strengthen muscles and bones.
- Improve appetite.
- Give a sense of confidence and well-being, which can put you in a better mood.
- Reduce serious falls.
- Improve sleep and energy level.
- Make it easier to socialize and get to group activities.
- Make visits from family and friends more enjoyable.
- Enable you to do more for yourself. For example, you may be able to put on a sweater, brush your own hair or take a few steps to the toilet.

What about falls?

Frail older adults fall more than young people. For years, we thought physical restraints were the best way to help keep residents safe. We know now that using restraints is harmful. There have even been times when a resident has strangled themselves. Research shows that there are other ways to prevent falls that work very well. In fact, serious falls, can actually be reduced by keeping people more mobile. More mobile residents are stronger, have better balance and greater flexibility so bad falls are less likely.

What can you do to promote your own mobility?

Some of the things you can to help are:

- At care planning meetings, ask what your nursing home is doing to keep you moving easily.
- If a fall occurs ask what, besides keeping you seated, could have been done to reduce your risk and what they will do in the future so that there is not a repeat fall? Don't ask staff to use a physical restraint (e.g., a lap belt) to try to prevent another fall.
- Ask about the kinds of activities your nursing home offers to keep people moving.
- Encourage your home to participate in the Advancing Excellence Campaign and make use of the tools and resources on the website.