

# Prevention of Functional Decline During Hospitalization

## Information Sheet for Patients and Families

Acute hospitalization may be a turning point in the life of older adults, after which they may experience a decline in daily functioning. This may occur even after a short hospital stay and sometimes without direct relation to the reason for hospitalization.

It has been found that prolonged bed rest impairs recovery and may lead to significant functional decline. Common conditions that may occur include: acute confusion (delirium), significant loss of muscle mass and strength, pressure ulcers, nutritional problems, and loss of bladder/bowel control. These conditions may endanger the patient, lead to prolonged hospitalization, result in transition from home to a nursing facility, and even death.

### **Mobility during hospitalization may reduce and even prevent functional decline!**

#### **Benefits of Walking During Hospitalization:**

- Prevention of functional decline
- Preservation of muscle strength and mass, reduction in risk of falls, reduced joint pain
- Reduced risk of pressure injuries
- Improved blood circulation and balanced blood pressure
- Increased appetite and reduced risk of choking during meals
- Reduced constipation and improved control of bladder and bowel function
- Improved mood and sleep quality
- Maintains sharper thinking and prevents confusion
- Preservation of lung ventilation, improved breathing, prevention of pneumonia

#### **Guidelines for Staying Active During Hospitalization:**

- It is recommended to sit in a chair during meals and while receiving visitors.
- It is recommended to bring assistive devices such as: walking aids, reading glasses, hearing aids, and dentures.
- It is recommended to maintain independence in daily activities (dressing, hygiene, eating, etc.).
- After receiving approval from the medical team, it is recommended to walk in the ward according to the patient's personal ability, at least twice a day (independently or with supervision and accompaniment by family or staff).
- It is recommended to get up and walk to the bathroom.
- It is recommended to continue engaging in leisure activities such as watching television, reading books, solving puzzles, etc.

Wishing you a speedy recovery and good health,  
**Geriatric Assessment Unit Team**

