

# Maintaining your health and independence during your hospital stay



The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

## Working in partnership

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust  
Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust



Care Colleagues  
Collaboration Communities

## Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for anyone who is an inpatient in our hospital.

This booklet will provide you with information about the importance of maintaining your health and independence during your hospital stay. It will guide you about how you can look after yourself and remain active so that you can leave hospital sooner and recover quicker. If you have any questions or concerns that are not answered within this booklet, please speak to a member of staff on the ward.

## What does 'Eat, Drink, Dress & Move to Improve' Mean?

The 'Eat, Drink, Dress & Move to Improve' scheme provides you with information and top tips about how you can help yourself get better and perform your usual daily routine whilst on the ward. This will ensure that you keep your independence as much as possible.

## True or False?

***"Whilst in hospital I should stay in bed because I will get better if I rest". False!***

Fact: Research shows that bed rest does not help you recover from many illnesses or injuries, it could make you much more unwell, delay your chances of getting home sooner and affect your overall recovery. You should not stay in bed unless otherwise recommended by your healthcare team.

***"It is safe for me to get out of bed before I have been seen by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist?" True!***

Fact: Yes, it is safe to get out of bed before seeing a physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Try to get up and move about as you normally would if you were at home. If you are unsure or not confident to get up, the nursing staff will help you. If you feel that you are struggling with your walking and are not as steady as normal, let the staff know and they will refer you to the physiotherapist or occupational therapist on the ward.

***"Patients are not supposed to wash or dress themselves in hospital." False!***

Fact: If you do not try to wash and dress yourself as you normally would you might struggle to care for yourself once you are discharged from hospital.

**We will encourage you to 'Do It Yourself' where you can:**



Eat or drink on your own if you are able.



Wash and dress yourself if you are able and wear your own clothes.



Keep changing your position even if you are in a bed or chair.

## The importance of eating and drinking for your recovery

Adequate food and drink is important for recovery and your overall health. Eating and drinking well helps to keep your skin healthy (important for preventing pressure sores) maintain your muscle strength, reduce infection risk and keep you mentally well and alert.

Here are our top tips:

### **Eat**

- If your appetite is poor, try the 'little and often' approach by having snacks and milky drinks between meals. There are a range of snacks available to choose from on the ward. Ask for meal options that will boost your calorie intake, choose blue top milk, and add extra butter or cheese to your meals to provide extra calories and protein
- Let the staff know of any specific dietary needs or if you are struggling to choose from the menu, as they can offer alternatives to better meet your needs

## Drink

- Unless advised otherwise by your healthcare team, aim to have at least 8 drinks each day to keep well hydrated. This will prevent you getting other illnesses such as a bladder infection
- Let the staff know your drink preferences (tea, coffee, milk, hot chocolate, squash, water). A glass of cold milk or a milky hot chocolate can boost your protein intake, which will help to maintain your strength

Please ask if you need help to eat or drink.

**We will look at what you were able to do before you came into hospital to make sure we understand how best to support and encourage you to keep moving:**



You will have a full assessment to help us to know how you normally get about.



We will make sure we address any risks that may stop you from being able to get out of bed to keep you safe.



Do you need glasses or hearing aid to help you communicate? Do you know where they are?

## Dress and move to improve!

### Get Up

- If safe to do so, try to get out of bed as you normally would (unless otherwise stated by your healthcare professional), as it will help with your recovery
- Carry on with daily activities such as washing, dressing and walking to the bathroom; keep moving little and often
- The ward staff can assist you if you need. Let them know if you normally use a walking aid
- If you are not steady on your feet, the ward staff can refer you to physiotherapy or occupational therapy
- Try to sit out for meals. It is much easier to eat and drink when sitting in a chair than lying in bed!
- Sit up in a chair when you have visitors
- Do gentle exercises throughout the day, even in bed or in a chair

## **Get Dressed**

- We encourage you to bring in and wear your own clothes. Your friends or relatives can bring any clothing in if you have not got any with you
- Ensure that you have well-fitting and supportive footwear (for example, firm slippers that support fully around the foot or trainers). The hospital floors can be slippery, so having a good grip will reduce your risk of falling
- If needed, wear your glasses and/or hearing aids

Let the ward team know what you are normally able to do so they can make sure your care is aimed at returning you to your usual abilities or as near to this as possible.

## **Benefits of Keeping Active:**

- Better breathing
- Better able to fight infections
- Better appetite
- Better sleep
- Better mood
- Better ability to cope at home
- Less risk of bed sores
- Less weakness and fatigue
- Less dizziness
- Less risk of falls
- Less pain
- Less confusion

## **Risks of Staying in Bed**

Staying in bed for prolonged periods of time can lead to reduced muscle strength, lack of energy (feeling tired all the time) and reduced independence. This is known as 'deconditioning' and can result in a longer hospital stay. The longer the period of inactivity, the more severe the deconditioning will be and the longer it will take you to return to your previous level of functional ability.

*“Up to 65% of older patients experience decline in function during hospitalisation” (British Geriatric Society, 2017)*

There are many other risks associated with staying in bed, these include:

- Breathing problems and increased risk of chest infections or pneumonia
- Increased risk of blood clots (DVT and PE) which could move around your body and cause serious illness such as heart attack or stroke
- Your skin could become sore, which could result in pressure sores which can become infected causing serious illness
- Your muscles could lose strength which can make you weaker and tire more easily. This could result in you being more unsteady on your feet and increase your risk of falls
- You could lose independence with personal care, such as washing and dressing and things which you enjoy
- You might not be able to digest food properly causing stomach-ache or constipation
- You may get confused or delirious
- You may lose self-confidence

**We can provide you with anything you need to help move around and get out of bed:**



Do you have the right equipment to help you move about? If not, we should be able to provide what you need.



If you can walk to the toilet, it keeps you moving and prepares you for home.



Sitting out of bed helps. We can help get you out of bed.

## Exercises

It is very important to remain active whilst you are in hospital. Below are some simple exercises which will help to prevent deconditioning and will help to maintain your strength during your hospital stay. Please speak to a health professional about exercises that are suitable for you.

Speak to your healthcare professional if you feel unwell during or after exercise, or if you have any problems with the exercises.

## When you are back home

- Once you get home, if you have any concerns with your ability to look after yourself, your GP can refer you to community services, such as occupational therapy and physiotherapy
- Alternatively, you could contact a local independent living centre, such as the Neville Garratt Centre (Telephone: 01902 553666, option 1) or the Snowdrop Independent Living (Telephone: 01902 711 881), both based in Wolverhampton
- Other useful services include:
  - **Wolverhampton Information Network:**  
[wolverhampton.gov.uk/win](http://wolverhampton.gov.uk/win)
  - **Age UK, Wolverhampton:**  
01902 572060
  - **Accord Age Matters, Walsall:**  
01922 638825
- If you have any medical queries, please contact your GP or dial 111. In life-threatening situations, dial 999

## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。