

# Getting Back to Daily Activities



## Getting Dressed

- ✓ Sit on a stable surface, a chair or a firm bed where your feet are able to touch the floor.
- ✓ If you can do so without straining, you may cross your leg to start clothing over your feet. If this position is difficult or uncomfortable, don't do it.
- ✓ Do not bend over to reach your feet.
- ✓ If you are not able to reach your feet, please ask for help, wear slip-on shoes, or use adaptive equipment such as a reacher, sock aid, or shoehorn.

## Using a Reacher

- ✓ Reachers can be used to pick up items you drop on the floor.
- ✓ They can also be used to hold underwear or pants so they can be started over your feet and pulled up.

# Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists may see you while you are in the hospital. They teach you how to do everyday activities while protecting your spine. They can answer your questions about grooming, hygiene, and use of equipment for bathing and dressing (if needed). Occupational therapists also discuss how to manage household activities, as well as work and leisure activities.

## Using a Sock Aid

- ✓ Pull the sock over the sock aid until the toe of the sock touches the end of the sock aid.
- ✓ Lower the aid down to your foot by using the straps, and place your foot into the opening of the sock.
- ✓ Pull the aid until the sock is all the way on. The sock aid pulls out of the top of the sock.

## In the Bathroom

- ✓ Try not to lean over the sink. When brushing your teeth, use a glass of water to rinse your mouth, and spit into an empty glass.
- ✓ If you have trouble getting up from a low surface, you may need an elevated toilet seat. Before getting a toilet seat, consider your height and weight, the space around your toilet, and whether or not it should have attached armrests.





## Bathing

- ✓ Showers are generally permitted, but not soak tubs.
- ✓ Your discharge instructions tell you how to care for your incision during showering.
- ✓ The first few times you shower, have a family member or caregiver stay close enough to assist, if needed.
- ✓ If you don't feel safe getting into the shower, sit or stand at the sink to sponge bathe.
- ✓ You may want a bath seat to use in the shower.
- ✓ Have nonskid surfaces on the bathroom and shower floors.
- ✓ A long-handled sponge or brush makes it easier to wash your legs and feet.

## In the Kitchen

- ✓ Items that you often use should be easily within reach.
- ✓ If using a walker, you can sometimes move items around the kitchen by sliding them along a counter as you walk beside it.
- ✓ Steady yourself on a counter or other stable surface when you first try to reach low items, and remember to bend your knees, not your back. Only attempt if your legs are strong enough to easily straighten up again.



## Chores

- ✓ Do not attempt household chores until you feel steady on your feet. In all of your activities, try to avoid bending, lifting, or twisting your back.
- ✓ Remember, no bending, lifting or twisting. Activities such as vacuuming, emptying the dishwasher, and sweeping all require these motions.

## Car Safety

- ✓ When going home from the hospital, it is easier to get into a car that is neither too high nor too low.
- ✓ Back up to the passenger seat and sit on the seat with both feet remaining outside of the car.
- ✓ Lift your legs and bring them into the car as you turn to face the front.
- ✓ Reverse the process to get out of the car.
- ✓ Limit your time riding in the car. If you are taking a long trip, stop every 30 minutes, get out of the car, and walk around.
- ✓ Always maintain good posture when riding in or driving a car.
- ✓ Do not drive until your surgeon allows it. This may not be until 4 to 6 weeks after surgery. You should not drive while you are taking pain medication.