



Hospital Bed

If the patient will be spending most of the day in bed, an adjustable hospital bed is essential. It will allow for the patient to sit up in bed for feeding, reading, conversation, and other daytime activities. Changes in position are also essential to minimize pressure sores and to help relieve boredom and fatigue. The hospital bed may also be raised or lowered to give the caregiver easier access to the patient or for ease of transfer.

Mattresses

Always protect mattresses with a waterproof mattress cover. When a patient is using the bed constantly, the caregiver should turn the mattress from end to end on a weekly basis. At this time, wipe the mattress cover with a disinfecting solution. Make sure you unplug before cleaning it or the mattress.

Bed Rails

Bed rails are an essential safety aid to keep the patient from accidentally falling out of bed. They also provide a handhold for the patient to aid in positioning. Never use the bed rails to pull yourself up to a seated position.

Installation

Make sure the right kind of outlet with proper grounding is available. Always test for ground with an electric ground tester.

Adjusting Bed

The hospital bed is semi-electric. The bed uses four buttons. Two buttons raise and lower the headspring section; the other pair operates the foot section. There is also a manual crank to raise and lower the height of the bed.

General Information

Before elevating the head section of the bed, elevate the thighs first by elevating the foot section slightly. This prevents the patient from sliding down in bed. For some individuals raising the thighs and flexing the knees may provide a more comfortable position.

Raising and lowering the height of the bed can make getting in or out of the bed much easier. If using a cane or walker, the height of the bed can be increased to make reaching a stable standing position safer and easier.

Transferring to and from a wheelchair or bedside commode, the bed height can be set slightly higher for transferring out of bed, and slightly lower for transfers back into bed. This makes transfers easier by using the assistance of gravity.

It is important that the brakes be applied on the two locking casters any time entering or leaving the bed. This prevents the bed rolling away and causing a fall. Even with these locks applied, patients who are

unstable on their feet should not attempt to enter or exit the bed without assistance. Even though the wheels may not turn while the bed is locked, the casters may slide on the floor, allowing the bed to shift, causing an accident.

In addition to being helpful with transfers, the bed height can be raised to reduce bending or stooping by the caregiver when assisting the patient with turning or changing positions in bed. This is also helpful during bathing, feeding, and other bedside care.

When assisting a patient to turn in bed, the brakes and side rails should be locked. The caregiver should stand on the side of the bed the individual will be turning. Set the bed at a height that permits the caregiver to reach over the bed rails and roll the patient towards them. Never roll the patient toward the opposite side of the bed.