








## PREVENT FALLS WITH DME

DME is Durable Medical Equipment, and it can prevent falls when you know when and how to use it.

EQUIPMENT	WHEN TO USE	HOW TO USE
<p><b>Cane</b> <b>Pronged cane/Quad cane</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased balance</li> <li>• Patient needs assistance to stand more upright when walking</li> </ul> <p>A pronged or quad cane provides more support at the bottom and allows more stabilization. If more than 20% of body weight is applied on a cane, then a walker is needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sure the cane is the correct height. Hang your arm loosely at your side and measure the distance from your wrist to the floor. The distance should be the same as the height of your cane.</li> <li>• If you have a stronger side, hold the cane on the side of your stronger leg.</li> <li>• Get your balance.</li> <li>• Move the cane and your weaker leg forward.</li> <li>• Support your weight on both the cane and your weaker side.</li> <li>• Step with your stronger leg.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard walker</b> <b>Walker with wheels</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased steadiness</li> <li>• Balance issues such as leg muscle weakness, medication side effects, vision problems, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sure the walker is the correct height.</li> <li>• Roll the walker (or lift it, if you're using one without wheels) forward about 12 inches.</li> <li>• Step forward with your weaker leg first.</li> <li>• Use the walker to help keep your balance.</li> <li>• Bring your other foot forward to the center of the walker.</li> <li>• Start again from step 1.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rollator</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased stability</li> <li>• Need for rest breaks with ambulation (Patients can easily turn and sit on the seat without falling.)</li> <li>• Not appropriate for patients with memory problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sure the Rollator is the correct height.</li> <li>• Brakes must be locked when ready to sit or transfer.</li> <li>• Walk with your hands in front of your body, pushing the walker forward as you get closer to it.</li> <li>• Always keep your back upright when pushing walker since this prevents the walker from getting too far in front of you.</li> </ul>

*Remember there is a Hospice of West Alabama nurse available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to help you. Please notify the nurse any time there is a fall.*

EQUIPMENT	WHEN TO USE	HOW TO USE
<p><b>Shower chair/Shower bench</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased stability</li> <li>• Need for a rest place for those who have difficulty standing for long periods of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure rubber tips are on the legs to prevent sliding.</li> <li>• Adjust all four leg extensions to the height that is easy to sit down and stand up from.</li> <li>• Ensure patient's weight is evenly distributed when in use.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bedside commode</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased mobility problems, yet ability to stand steadily for five minutes or so for toileting</li> <li>• Urinary incontinence with inability to hold urine for long enough to ambulate to bathroom safely</li> <li>• Increased shortness of breath decreasing ability to be mobile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risers decrease the distance and amount of effort required to lower and raise patient.</li> <li>• Grab bars and height-adjustable legs add safety and versatility to the device.</li> <li>• Ensure device is stable and can accommodate patient's weight and size.</li> <li>• Consider covering the floor under the commode to reduce the risk of falls related to urine spills or drips.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wheelchair</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in strength and stability</li> <li>• Difficulty performing daily activities</li> <li>• Increased pain or weakness</li> </ul> <p>A wheelchair can offer much needed assistance and can protect you from injury in more ways than one. If you have begun to feel weak and exhausted more frequently, you are putting yourself at risk of a dangerous fall or another serious accident. Allowing yourself the time to rest by using a wheelchair off and on throughout the day may be all that you need to do to keep yourself safe.</p>	<p>Push equipment, rather than pull, when possible. Keep arms close to the body and push with whole body and not just arms.</p> <p>Assisting a patient in transferring out of a wheelchair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back the wheelchair so that the front casters swivel forward.</li> <li>• Ensure that both the brakes are on.</li> <li>• Fold up both footplates and swing them to the sides, out of the way.</li> <li>• Assist patient to move forward on the seat.</li> <li>• Assist patient to place both feet firmly on the ground, slightly apart and with one foot further back.</li> <li>• Patient should place both hands on the front of the armrests, then lean forward with their head and shoulders over their knees for balance.</li> <li>• Push to standing position.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hospital bed</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased difficulty getting in and out of bed without slipping or sliding out</li> <li>• Increased difficulty lying flat due to shortness of breath</li> <li>• Increased confusion</li> <li>• Need for assistance with patient positioning and transferring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the bed at a height that allows the patient to sit on the edge of the bed with knees bent 90 degrees and feet planted firmly on the floor for better balance.</li> <li>• Raise the bed higher to promote safety when the patient stands or for transfers.</li> <li>• When lying in bed, keep the bed in a low position with wheels locked.</li> </ul>