

Exercise in the Hospital

Why should I exercise?

Some patients in the hospital need to be out of bed 3 to 4 times a days. If this does not happen, it can cause the patient to:

- Lose muscle strength.
- Feel more tired.
- Not feel normal.
- Be weak or dizzy.
- Have pain when you change positions. For example, going from lying in bed to sitting in a chair.
- Lose body mass if you had chemotherapy and radiation. You may also feel your energy level and endurance go down.
- Lose bone mass if you are taking corticosteroids. This is called osteoporosis. Activity helps increase bone mass.

For these reasons, it is important to get up, move around or play.

What are the benefits?

If you exercise, you will:

- Be less tired during the day.
- Have more energy.
- Strengthen your muscles and bones.
- Sleep better at bed time.
- Improve your eating habits.
- Be in a better mood.
- Have less anxiety and stress.
- Have better endurance.

What exercises can I do?

Start out slow. Exercise as long as you can and slowly work up to 15 minutes.

- Walk laps on the unit. Ask your physical therapist if you would like a pedometer. A pedometer counts how many steps you take when you walk.
- Do standing activities.
- Ride a stationary bike.
- Do beach ball activities.
- Do resistance band exercises.
- Walk to use the toilet.
- Sit up in a chair or on the edge of the bed to eat.
- Activities of daily living (ADL) in a wheelchair, on the couch, in the bathroom, or going to the cafeteria.

If you are getting chemotherapy, some blood tests will need to be done before you exercise.

- **Blood count numbers.** If your hemoglobin and platelet levels are safe, you can do light exercise. Try standing exercises, beach ball games and walking laps.
- **ANC** (Absolute Neutrophil Count). Your doctor will let you know if it is safe to exercise.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.