



Keep Moving:

Myths and Facts about Being Active in the Hospital

UHN

General Internal Medicine, University Health Network



Patient Education
Improving Health Through Education

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Myths

Patients should stay in bed because they will get better faster if they rest.

- It is not safe for patients to get out of bed.
- Patients are not supposed to do their own personal care, such as washing or dressing.

These mistaken beliefs often lead patients to lose the ability to do things they want to do, and have difficulty coping when they go home.

Facts

Research shows that bed rest is not a good way to recover from many different conditions, and may actually make recovery time longer.

Staying in bed and not moving can lead to problems with breathing, skin breakdown (bed sores), muscle loss, weakness and tiredness.

Although there can be risks to moving around, staying in bed can actually be more risky to overall health and well-being. There are many things that can be done to avoid falls and stay safe while moving around in the hospital.

If you don't use it, you lose it! People who stay in bed are at risk of losing their ability to move around and do their own personal care, such as washing and dressing.

Benefits of Staying Active in the Hospital

- Better breathing
- Better able to fight infections
- Better appetite
- Better sleep
- Better mood
- Better able to manage at home
- Less skin breakdown (bed sores)
- Less weakness and fatigue
- Less dizziness
- Less falls
- Less pain

How to Stay Active While in the Hospital

Every little bit of activity can help to keep you healthy. If you are not sure what is safe to do, ask a member of your healthcare team.

Continue to do tasks that you were able to do at home, such as dressing or walking to the washroom. Ask someone to bring in your clothes, shoes and grooming supplies.

- 1) Sit up for all of your meals, either in a chair or at the edge of the bed.
- 2) Sit up in a chair when you have visitors.
- 3) Walk around the unit, either alone or with help.
- 4) Do bed exercises on your own throughout the day.
- 5) Watch a Patient Education TV program for more tips.