

# A guide for patients about the role of the Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist



Whilst in hospital you will likely see lots of different healthcare professionals as part of your care. This may include a Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist and this leaflet will give you more information about what they do.

## **Physiotherapist**

A physiotherapist will assess your muscle strength and range of movement. They will also look at your balance and walking. After your assessment they will work with you to try to improve your independence.

## **Occupational Therapist**

An occupational therapist will assess your ability to perform everyday activities such as dressing yourself. We sometimes call this, activities of daily living. They will assess what you can do and work with you to improve your independence where possible.

It is important as part of the physiotherapy and occupational therapy assessment that we fully understand your function (ability) and mobility before you came into hospital.

We will therefore ask you or your relative or carer (with your permission) for information about your abilities before you came into hospital.

We may leave a form for you to fill in about this and we may need to ask you further questions to check the information you give. We would be grateful if you could complete this form as accurately and as quickly as possible. This helps us plan your discharge from hospital.

# During your hospital stay

In most cases bed rest is **not** good for patients.

Even a few days bed rest has been shown to cause a rapid decline in muscle strength leading to reduced ability to do tasks such as walking and increases your dependence on others.

Other potential consequences of bed rest include a higher risk of:

- blood clots
- delirium (a sudden change in mental state)
- bed sores
- infection
- loss of confidence

It is therefore important when you are in hospital that you:-

**Get Up, Get Dressed and Get Moving**

# What to expect from your Physiotherapist...

- They will assess your muscle strength, range of movement, balance and walking.
- They will look at how you get on and off the bed and chair.
- They will look at your walking using a walking aid if you have one or can assess you for a walking aid if required.
- They will provide you with exercises depending on your assessment.
- If you have stairs at home they will take you to the stairs in hospital to assess your ability to manage.
- They may make referrals for further physiotherapy when you leave hospital.
- They will work with you, alongside other members of the ward team (nurses, doctors, occupational therapists) to help plan your discharge from hospital.

# What to expect from your Occupational Therapist....

- They will assess your ability to do everyday activities such as getting washed and dressed and kitchen tasks.
- They may give you equipment to help with everyday activities e.g. using the toilet, getting on and off the bed.
- They will help you practice getting on and off the chair, bed and toilet.
- They may make referrals to community services e.g. for aids and equipment, community alarms, adaptations to your home environment.
- They may assess your memory and problem solving skills.
- They will work with you, alongside other members of the ward team (nurses, doctors, physiotherapists) to help plan your discharge from hospital.

## Patients...What we expect from you....

- To actively participate with your physiotherapy and occupational therapy sessions. **While we try to avoid interrupting visiting this is not always possible.**
- To give as much information as possible about your ability before you came into hospital.
- To discuss goals i.e. what you need to achieve in terms of your ability before leaving hospital
- To be up out of bed for as much of the day as possible.
- To be dressed if you have clothes available.
- To follow any advice about walking on the ward, exercise and moving about.
- To try to be as independent on the ward as possible e.g. getting washed and dressed, using the toilet, eating and drinking.

## Relatives and Carers...What we expect from you....

- Give us information about your relative's abilities at home before coming into hospital and what you think they need to be able to do before leaving hospital.
- Encourage your relative to participate in their physiotherapy and occupational therapy including exercises.
- Encourage your relative to be up out of bed for as much of the day as possible.
- Bring in clothes and shoes for your relative.
- If your relative is allowed to walk then encourage them to do this when you are in at visiting.
- **While we try to avoid interrupting visiting this is not always possible.**

# For more information contact:

**Physiotherapy Department:**

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**Occupational Therapy Department:**

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