

Home & Patient Safety



Home and Hospice Services

Moving Safely at Home

People suffering from serious illness can lose strength and/or the ability to move around safely at home. You and those caring for you need information and training on how to ensure that you can move about safely at home.

WHY MOVING SAFELY AT HOME MATTERS

- Problems moving about at home can result in falls and serious injuries for you and/or those caring for you
- Falls are the leading cause of injuries in adults over the age of 65, and most falls are preventable
- Falls and injuries can result in trips to the hospital, hospital admissions or even death
- Being afraid to move around at home may cause you to move less, placing you more at risk for falls and injuries

WHAT CAN HELP

- Allowing your hospice care team to help you assess your home for safety concerns
- Limiting or avoiding alcohol use, eating well, and drinking enough other fluids like water or juice to help prevent dehydration
- Being aware of medication side effects that may affect your balance or stability
- Wearing glasses and hearing aids if these have been prescribed for you
- Rising slowly when you get up from a chair or bed, and allowing time to adjust to changes in position before moving
- Allowing yourself plenty of time to get to the bathroom
- Monitoring your blood pressure, if recommended by a doctor or nurse, and reporting low readings to your hospice nurse or doctor
- Accepting referrals for physical and occupational therapy if recommended
- Agreeing to use equipment or assistive devices as directed (such as canes, walkers, wheelchairs, commodes, grab bars, lifting devices and hospital beds)
- Participating, and asking family and caregivers to participate, in training provided by the hospice care team

Call our 24-hour number **(847) 475-3002** with questions or concerns so we can provide timely care.

WHAT TO REPORT TO YOUR HOSPICE CARE TEAM

- Trouble seeing, weakness, dizziness, problems with balance or feeling unsteady when walking
- Trouble getting out of chairs or off the bed, or getting dressed and undressed
- Difficulty getting on or off the toilet, or in and out of the tub or shower
- Bathroom accidents due to not being able to get to the toilet in time
- Needing to hold onto furniture or place your hands on the wall to steady yourself when you walk
- Falls, near falls, fear of falling, or episodes of tripping or stumbling
- Medication side effects like dizziness, sleepiness or feeling less alert

WHAT YOUR HOSPICE CARE TEAM WILL DO

- Listen carefully, ask questions and help address concerns
- Communicate your concerns to your doctor and to others on your hospice care team
- Arrange for therapy evaluations if needed, and any equipment recommended
- Provide the training you and your family/caregiver need to help you understand how to move safely
- Your hospice nurse will provide training on medications and any potential side effects that may impact your ability to move safely



Fall Precautions

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Wear proper footwear—shoes should have a back and a nonslip sole
- Use your assistive device—walker, cane, etc.
- Change positions slowly
- Walk with assistance as appropriate

MAKE THE HOME SAFER

- Remove items that you can trip over from stairs and walkways—e.g., throw rugs
- Increase lighting throughout the home—e.g., night light and brighter bulbs
- Add hand rails on stairs
- Avoid low furniture and rolling chairs—use arm chairs if possible and add a cushion if needed

BATHROOM SAFETY

- Use a nonslip bath mat inside and outside of the shower/tub
- Consider installing a wall-mounted or tub-mounted grab bar—do NOT use a towel rack to hold onto when getting in and out of bathtub
- Consider a bath bench and handheld shower
- Many bathroom safety items are provided by NorthShore Hospice, and others can be purchased or obtained from a local lending closet; speak with your hospice nurse to find out what is available
- Installing a black toilet seat can help you judge the distance to sit down

KITCHEN SAFETY

- Use a “reacher” or “grabber” to pick up dropped items or clean up spills
- Store essential food items on the most accessible shelves of the refrigerator
- Use a lazy Susan for easier reach
- Prepare simple meals using stove top or counter-level appliances

What to Do if You Fall

Every year one in four adults age 65 or older falls (CDC, 2016). Those who fall are twice as likely to fall again within the next year (CDC, 2016). Your hospice care team will provide training on what you can do to prevent falls. It is also important for you to know what to do if a fall does happen, and how to get up after a fall. This information is intended to guide you if a fall happens.

WHEN YOU FALL AND YOU THINK YOU ARE OK

Try to remain calm. Evaluate yourself for possible injuries. Getting up too fast or the wrong way can make an injury worse. Do not try to get up on your own without something supportive to hold onto, or assistance if available.

If you think you are not hurt and you can get up, follow these steps:

- Look around for a sturdy piece of furniture or the bottom step of a stairway that you can reach. Push or shove the piece of furniture against the wall if you can so it will not slide.
- Roll to your side by turning your head in the direction you want to roll. Slowly turn your shoulders, arms, hips and legs over in the same direction.
- Push your upper body up by easing onto your elbows. Stay in this position a moment to steady yourself.
- Slowly get up onto your hands and knees.
- Crawl to a sturdy chair or stair step.
- Place your hands on the seat of the chair or the step. Slide one foot forward so it is flat on the floor. Keep the other leg bent with the knee on the floor.
- Rise slowly from this kneeling position while facing the chair or step.
- Turn slowly and sit on the chair or step.
- Sit for several minutes before trying to do anything else, then seek help.

Report the fall to your doctor and hospice care team as soon as possible.

WHEN YOU FALL AND THINK YOU MAY BE INJURED

Try to remain calm. Evaluate yourself for possible injuries. Getting up too fast or the wrong way can make an injury worse. Do not try to get up on your own without something supportive to hold onto, or assistance if available.

If you think you may be hurt but can get up, follow the steps above. If you can *not* get up and are injured, follow the steps below.

WHEN YOU FALL, ARE HURT AND CANNOT GET UP

Try to remain calm. Evaluate your injuries. Do not try to get up if you think you have a serious injury. If you know you are hurt and cannot get up, follow these steps:

- **Get help now.** Activate your medical alert device if you have one. If not, and you can reach a phone, call hospice.
- If you do not have a medical alert device or phone, try calling out or banging on the floor or wall to try to get someone's attention.
- While you wait for help:
 - o If you are bleeding from head injuries or cuts, apply pressure to the area to control bleeding until help comes.
 - o Do what you can to stay comfortable (roll up clothing to place under your head, adjust your position if able and if needed to a more comfortable position).
 - o Try to stay warm (if there is a blanket, table cloth, rug or clothing within reach, use this to cover yourself while you wait for help).
 - o If you can, shift your weight and change position often while waiting for help to prevent pressure sores from happening and to avoid stiffness in joints and encourage circulation.
 - o If your bladder lets go, try to roll away from damp areas on the floor.

Report the fall to your doctor and hospice care team as soon as possible.

Infection Prevention

The best way to prevent the spread of infection is by frequent hand washing.

WHEN WASHING HANDS, BE SURE TO

- Use warm water
- Use liquid soap
- Wash between fingers, under nails and both sides of your hands
- Rinse well
- Dry your hands with a paper towel
- Turn off the water using a paper towel

OR

- Use hand gel
- Rub between fingers, under nails and on the back of your hands for 15–20 seconds or until the gel dries



Call our 24-hour number [\(847\) 475-3002](tel:8474753002) with questions or concerns so we can provide timely care.

Respiratory Infections

The transmission of respiratory illnesses such as influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough and the common cold occurs by coughing, sneezing and not washing your hands.

To help stop the spread of germs, the following preventive actions should be taken

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and promptly dispose of the tissue in the trash after use
- If tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 15–20 seconds; if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; germs spread this way
- Try to avoid contact with other people who are sick—and when you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them

During periods of increased respiratory infection in the community, respiratory etiquette is very important when visiting emergency rooms, doctor's offices and clinics.

To prevent infecting others when you are coughing, ask for a surgical mask to wear. Healthcare workers must observe respiratory infection precautions by wearing a mask.

If you should be admitted to the hospital due to respiratory illness, additional protective measures may be required.

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene refers to actions you take to care for your health and body, such as the steps you take to keep yourself clean. Personal hygiene is sometimes called good grooming.

Examples of personal hygiene practices:

- Washing hands
- Fingernail and toenail care
- Bathing or showering
- Brushing and flossing teeth
- Washing and combing hair
- Ear and eye care
- Skin care
- Care for your genitals
- Good sleeping and eating habits

WHY PERSONAL HYGIENE MATTERS

- Good personal hygiene habits can help prevent some complications of illness such as infection, sores on the skin or sores in the mouth
- Feeling clean and fresh can improve your comfort level and overall feeling of well-being when you are sick, and make you feel better about yourself
- Regular personal hygiene helps control the number of germs on your skin and body, and in your mouth; this can help prevent some types of infection from happening

WHAT TO REPORT TO YOUR HOSPICE CARE TEAM

- Redness, sore spots or open areas on any part of the body such as under the breasts or in skin folds, on the scalp, trunk, elbows, heels, buttocks, genitals, groin or any other body part
- Sores or pain in your mouth or problems caring for your mouth, teeth, tongue or gums
- Problems managing personal hygiene for yourself or the one in your care
- Questions or concerns about how to manage personal hygiene for yourself or the one in your care

Call our 24-hour number **(847) 475-3002** with questions or concerns so we can provide timely care.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAINTAIN GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Wash your hands before and after eating, using the bathroom or if visibly soiled to decrease the spread of germs
- Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze; then wash your hands to prevent the spread of germs
- Clean and trim or file fingernails and toenails regularly, and keep feet clean and dry to help prevent foot problems
- Bathe or shower and wash your hair regularly using mild, nonirritating soap; arrange for help with this if needed
- Use lotions on your skin as directed if your skin is very dry
- Brush your teeth and tongue after each meal or at least twice a day, and floss between teeth at least daily to help decrease germs in your mouth and keep your gums healthy
- Clean dentures at least twice a day, and care for your gums and mouth if you have false teeth
- Clean your ears and eyes when bathing, and as needed
- Try to get eight to 10 hours of rest each night
- Eat nutritious meals and drink adequate fluids

WHAT YOUR HOSPICE CARE TEAM WILL DO

- Listen carefully and help address your concerns
- Ask questions and evaluate your needs
- Assist with arranging referrals for assistance with personal care if needed
- Communicate your concerns to your doctor and to others on your hospice care team
- Provide training on how to manage your personal hygiene needs
- Your nurse will train you on skin care and hygiene practices, and any medications needed to address concerns

Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are small, brown bugs that like to hide in cracks and tight spaces on or near your bed or sleeping area. They are often found on mattresses, box springs, bed frames or headboards, in bedding (blankets, sheets), on clothing, in luggage or on secondhand furniture. They can get on your clothing when you travel or use public transportation. Bed bugs can be found in any home. Bed bugs hide during the day and come out at night. They look for warm bodies (people or pets) to feed on. The only way to know for sure that you have bed bugs is to see a bug. Bed bugs have not been shown to spread human diseases from one person to another. Bed bugs are a problem in Illinois as well as other places.

WHY BED BUGS MATTER

- Identifying bed bugs and acting quickly if you find them in your home helps prevent them from spreading; it can be hard to control or get rid of bed bugs
- Bed bugs lay eggs in the places where they hide; this results in more bed bugs
- Bed bug bites can cause rashes, itching, redness and swelling on skin
- Bed bugs can spread from one unit to another in the same building, or be carried from one place to another on clothing, in luggage or on furniture

WHAT CAN HELP

- Keeping your sleeping area clean and free of clutter (this makes it easier to spot bugs)
- Not buying used furniture, beds or mattresses
- Checking your bedding, mattress and box spring for signs of bed bug activity often
 - o Look for blood smears and small, dark brown or black spots on bedding; inspect sleeping areas
 - o Check creases and corners on your mattress and box spring when changing linens

- Putting bedding, pillows and clothing in the dryer on high heat for at least 30 minutes (heat kills bed bugs and their eggs)
- Reporting to your landlord or a pest control expert as soon as possible if you think you see bed bugs

WHAT TO REPORT TO YOUR HOSPICE CARE TEAM

- Bugs seen in your home
- Blood smears or small, dark brown or black spots on your bed sheets or in your sleeping area
- A sweet, musky odor in your sleep area
- Skin rashes, bug bites on your skin, or red, itchy, swollen skin

WHAT YOUR HOSPICE CARE TEAM WILL DO

- Listen to your concerns and ask questions
- Communicate your concerns to your doctor and to others on your hospice care team
- Train you on how to address the situation and take steps to help prevent the spread of bed bugs

Call our 24-hour number **(847) 475-3002** with questions or concerns so we can provide timely care.

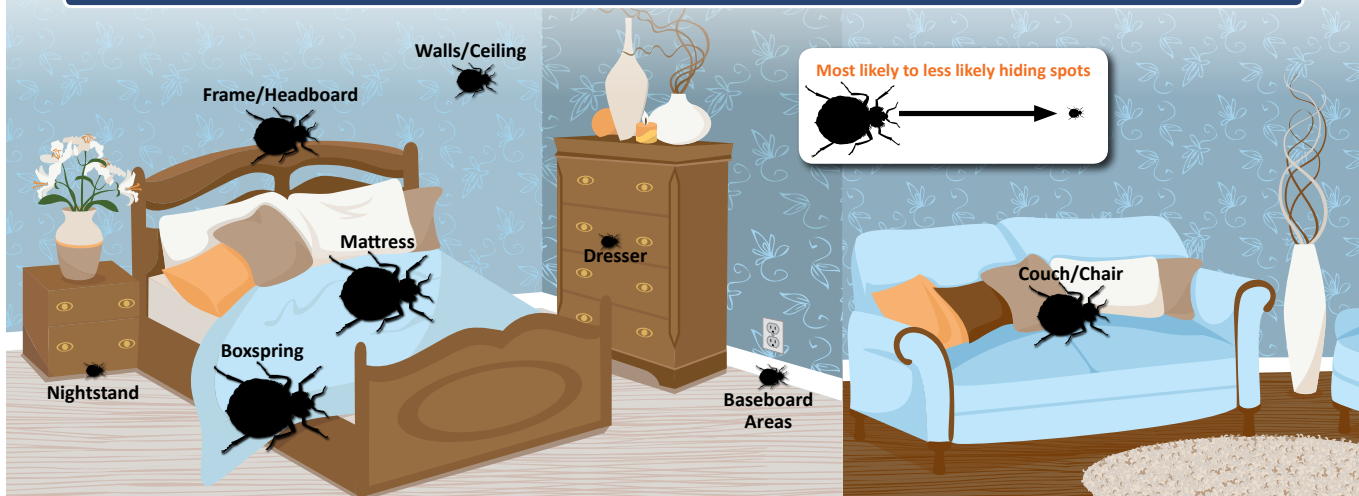
BITE BACK!

YOU CAN CONTROL BED BUGS.

Bed bugs are a widespread problem in Illinois and around the world.
Here's what you can do to protect yourself.

WHERE TO LOOK: BED BUG HIDING SPOTS

Bed bugs hide in cracks and tight spaces within 6 to 8 feet of the sleeping areas – above, under and around.

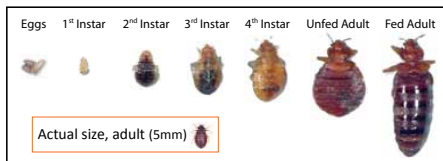


WHAT TO LOOK FOR.

Dark brown or black spots



Bedbug life cycle



Pictures courtesy of J.L. Obermeyer, Purdue University and Dr. D. Miller, Virginia Tech University

WHAT ABOUT BITES?

The only way to be sure that you have bed bugs is to find the bug. Why? Because their bites look like those of other insects or skin problems, and many people don't react to their bites at all.



Dirty living conditions DO NOT attract bed bugs, but cleaning regularly and removing clutter will help you see and better control them. Always be aware of your surroundings and take action quickly when a problem is found.

How You Get Bed Bugs



Travel



Used Furniture



Guests

Top 4 Things You Can Do To Stop Bed Bugs

- Reduce clutter, especially in bedrooms.
- Look often for signs in sleeping areas.
- Put bedding and other items in the clothes dryer using high heat for at least 30 minutes.*
- Report problems quickly to landlord and/or an experienced pest control operator.

*Heat is one of the best treatments for bed bugs because it kills all bed bugs, eggs to adults.



IMPORTANT! Bed bug bombs and foggers do NOT work for controlling bed bugs.



State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Public Health

For Additional Information Contact:

Illinois Department of Public Health, www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pcbedbugs.htm
Safer Pest Control Project, www.spcpweb.org



SAFER PEST
CONTROL PROJECT

Oxygen Safety

WHY OXYGEN SAFETY MATTERS

Oxygen therapy can be helpful if you have breathing problems; however, oxygen can increase your risk of injuries or fire if not used properly. The information provided here will help you understand how to use oxygen safely at home.

OXYGEN SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Never smoke any tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, pipes), cannabis or e-cigarettes when wearing oxygen or let others smoke these products around you or your oxygen source (concentrator or cylinder)
- Always keep the “NO SMOKING” sign provided to you posted on your front door or window
- Never cook while wearing oxygen; stay at least six feet away from any source of open flame or sparks
- Do not use electrical appliances like heating pads, hair dryers, electric blankets or electric razors while wearing oxygen
- Do not use oil-based lubricants or apply oil-based face or hand lotions, petroleum jelly products or aerosol sprays to your face or body while using oxygen
- Do not use extension cords with oxygen concentrators; always plug the cord directly into the wall outlet
- Never plug the concentrator into an outlet that is being used to power another major appliance
- Always position your concentrator at least 12 inches away from walls and furniture
- Be sure your oxygen cylinders are secured at all times; store portable oxygen cylinders lying down or in a storage rack
- Never store oxygen cylinders in an enclosed space, such as a closet, as oxygen can leak out; a small spark can ignite a fire
- Never place oxygen cylinders or oxygen equipment in the trunk of your car; if your car is rear-ended, oxygen tanks may explode

Call our 24-hour number **(847) 475-3002** with questions or concerns so we can provide timely care.

CLEANING AND MAINTAINING HOME OXYGEN EQUIPMENT

- Replace your nasal cannula or oxygen face mask every two to three weeks or sooner if cracked or discolored
- Clean the concentrator filter according to instructions in the manual provided by your oxygen supplier
- Clean the humidifier bottle at least once a week
- Use only distilled water (or boiled and cooled tap water) in the humidifier bottle
- Use only a cloth dampened with water to clean the surface of your concentrator

TROUBLESHOOTING AND HOME OXYGEN EQUIPMENT

- If you have a problem, first check to see that the power cord is plugged into the wall outlet
- Make sure the oxygen tubing is not kinked, and is properly connected to you and your oxygen source
- If you have questions or concerns about your oxygen equipment, contact the supplier's 24-hour number for help; this number is usually located on the equipment

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Register life-sustaining medical equipment with your utility company and local authorities
- Keep the emergency oxygen tanks provided to you for emergencies only
- Call your oxygen supplier before known potential emergencies (such as severe weather) to ensure that you have an adequate backup supply of oxygen
- Keep the number for your oxygen supplier close by; call immediately if you lose power (electricity)
- Be sure you have smoke detectors in your home and that they are functioning properly at all times
- Make sure your house number can be seen easily from the street and/or alleyway for emergency response teams if needed