

# Physical Care

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Part of caregiving is providing physical care to your loved one or friend. Ask your family member or friend's doctor, nurses, and other healthcare professionals about the types of care that may be required of you. To help you and your loved one's healthcare providers, we suggest keeping a log of medications and reactions, physical therapy, other treatments and all physical symptoms such as pain or tiredness.

Some important questions to ask the healthcare team about providing physical care:

**Lifting and Moving: Ask about proper techniques.**

How can I protect my back while lifting and moving my uncle?

**Bedpans: Ask about the proper techniques for using and cleaning.**

How do I help my mother use a bedpan and how do I clean it?

**Pressure Ulcers: Ask about avoiding bed sores.**

How can I prevent my father from getting pressure ulcers or bed sores?

**Incontinence: Ask about protecting the loved one from discomfort.**

How can I help my sister with her incontinence?

**Skin Care: Ask about maintaining cleanliness and preventing dryness.**

How can I help my brother take care of his skin so that it is clean and doesn't become dry?

**Additional physical care tips:**

- If possible, have someone help you with the morning and bedtime routines, if your loved one needs a lot of assistance, since getting up and going to bed often are the most challenging times of the day.
- Practice good oral hygiene that includes tooth brushing, denture cleaning, and cleaning around the gums, preferably after every meal. Good oral hygiene helps to prevent tooth decay, tooth loss and gum diseases, as well as secondary infections that can result from poor dental care. Persons with disabilities or medical problems may need special care in addition to daily hygiene routines.
- If your loved one is disabled, has poor eyesight or problems with memory, you may need to remind them about personal hygiene and/or assist them.
- Older persons with limited movement should be turned in bed on a regular basis to prevent pressure sores. Correct bedding, such as sheepskin or egg carton bed coverings and/or an air mattress, helps to prevent pressure sores. It is important to move older persons with disabilities at least once an hour, even if it is just to reposition them, to do range of motion exercises, and to have them sit in various chairs that offer sufficient support.