Hospital Bed

Patient/Caregiver Instruction Material

If the patient will be spending most of the day in bed, an adjustable hospital bed is essential. It will allow the patient to sit up in bed for feeding, reading, conversation, and other daytime activities and may assist them in breathing or preventing choking. The ability to change position can also help to minimize pressure sores and to help relieve fatigue. The hospital bed may also be raised or lowered to give the caregiver easier access to the patient or for ease of transfer.

A hospital bed is higher than a regular bed and it rolls easily on wheels. There are three kinds of hospital beds available: manual, semi-electric and fully electric.

Electric hospital beds let patients who are weak or injured elevate the head or feet without physical effort or caregiver's help, and this improves breathing and circulation. The principle advantage of the electric bed is that the patient can adjust positions easily.

Mattress

Most hospital bed mattresses include a water proof cover. If yours do not, you may want to consider adding one. When a patient is using the bed constantly, the caregiver should turn the mattress from end to end and over on a weekly basis. At this time, also wipe the mattress cover with a disinfecting solution. Be sure to unplug an electric bed before cleaning it or the mattress.

Bed Rails

Bed rails are an essential safety aid to keep the patient from accidentally falling out of bed. They also provide a handhold for the patient to aid in positioning. While some manufacturers' beds have bed rails specifically for their beds, most beds use a universal bed rail that has its own frame. Universal rails work with almost any hospital bed.

Operating Instructions

On semi-electric models the remote control has four buttons. One pair of buttons operates the headspring section; the other pair operates the foot section. In each pair, one button raises, and the other one lowers the bed. The function of each button is indicated on the remote control. The semi-electric models have a manual crank system to raise and lower bed height.

Before elevating the head section, it is always wise to elevate the thighs first, by raising the foot section slightly. This prevents the patient from sliding down in the bed. Raising the

thighs and flexing the knees in this manner also provides a more comfortable position for most individuals.

Raising or lowering the height of the bed can make getting in or out of the bed much easier. If the patient is using an ambulation aid, such as a walker or cane, the bed height can be increased to make reaching a stable standing position much safer and easier. This allows the caregiver to concentrate his or her efforts on assisting the patient rather than with struggling to lift the individual up to a standing position.

For transfers to and from a wheelchair or bedside commode the bed height can be set slightly higher for transfers out of the bed, and slightly lower for transfers back into bed. This makes transfers easier by using the assistance of gravity.

Operating Instructions (cont.)

It is extremely important that the wheel locks be applied on the two locking casters any time the patient is entering or leaving the bed to prevent the bed from rolling away and causing a fall. Even with these locks applied, patients who are unstable on their feet should not attempt to enter or exit the bed without assistance. Even though the wheels may not turn, the casters may slide on the floor, allowing the bed to shift, causing an accident. An attendant or caregiver should be present to assist the patient and to help stabilize the bed.

In addition to being helpful with transfers, the bed height can be raised to reduce bending or stooping by the caregiver when assisting the patient with turning or changing positions in bed. This is also helpful during bathing feeding, and other bedside care.

When assisting a patient to turn in bed side rails should be in the up and locked position and the bed set at a height that permits the caregiver to reach over the rails and to roll the patient toward them. Never assist by rolling the patient toward the opposite side of the bed.

- Keep the side rails up. Side rails prevent injury that may result from falling out of bed. They also give a person something a to grasp when changing position. You can lower the side rails when caring for the person or making the bed, but they should remain up at most other times.
- Lock the wheels to keep the bed securely in place. Unlock the wheels only when moving the bed. After repositioning the bed, re-lock the wheels.
- Know how to use the emergency crank. Most electric beds have a manual emergency crank to adjust the bed if a malfunction or power failure leaves it stuck in one position. The crank can also be used during transport.

- To prevent shocks, always unplug an electric hospital bed before washing it or the mattress.
- Keep a bedside call bell and/or a telephone with an emergency number near the bed. In an emergency, a bedridden person must be able to get help.

Please review the user manual provided for more detailed instructions regarding your new equipment
or contact our office. Thank you.