

Tips On Supporting Recovery At Home

Taking care of a family member who is recovering from surgery or an illness can be very demanding for both the caregiver and the person who receives care. It is essential to make the older person feel comfortable and at ease while he or she gets stronger with your help and support. You will also need to set up a sickroom and administer care to the person who is ill.

You may need to purchase or rent medical equipment and assistive devices. Check with your local Visiting Angels office for referrals to reliable medical equipment companies in your area. Hospital staff (nurses, therapists, social workers, and discharge planners) can tell you what equipment you will need and will make suggestions about how to obtain it. The doctor can arrange for visiting nurses and therapists to visit the home to assess your equipment needs and to show you how to use it.

Your number one goal is to provide safety, support, encouragement, and assistance to the older person. Tender loving care is the best way to boost the person's spirits. Keep in mind that he or she was once independent and now needs to depend on you for encouragement and assistance.

Give the older person as much control as possible. You should involve him or her in the decision-making process. Ask questions such as, "What clothes would you like to wear today?" and "When would you like to take a walk?"

As the older person becomes stronger, do not rush him or her into new activities. It takes time to gain strength. The older person may not want to do new exercises, saying, "I can't," but really meaning, "I'm scared." Introduce new activities slowly and explain them in detail.

It is a myth that bed rest is good for a person recuperating from illness or surgery. Sitting or lying in bed can cause many problems to the body such as pressure ulcers, chest infections, like pneumonia, muscles shrinking away, reflexes becoming inactive, and blood pressure increasing. In addition to these problems, a person who remains in bed for several days and then gets up may experience dizziness, fainting, stiff joints, weakness, and problems with muscle malfunction (muscles that don't communicate with the brain). You should encourage the person to get out of bed as soon as the person is medically cleared to get up.

Your goals are to:

- Prepare a room where the older person can be cared for
- Make sure the older person is comfortable
- Be encouraging about progress
- Prevent the complications of bed rest
- Obtain the necessary resources you need

And don't forget **Visiting Angels** is always here to help you with your caregiving duties. Visiting Angels can provide assistance with bathing, dressing, medication reminders, assistance with walking, errands, meal preparation, light housekeeping, transportation to appointments and friendly companionship. Just contact us at (765) 670-6260 or at 1-866 99-MY-ANGEL.