Tips to Informal Caregivers
On Giving Personal Care

The Bedridden Older Adult

A person may be confined to bed for a variety of reasons. He may have had surgery, be convalescing after a stroke, have a long-term illness such as cancer, have a short-term illness such as the "flu" (influenza) or be frail.

It is important to meet the older person's human needs of love and affection, recognition, acceptance, security, trust, socialization, food, clothing, shelter, rest, activity, avoidance of pain and escape from danger.

Caregivers should pay special attention to the environment of the bedridden person. Smoking should not be allowed in bed unless someone is in the same room. Essential items, such as good lighting and a system to signal the aid of a family member (which may be no more than a bell or a glass and spoon), should be within easy reach. Electric cords should be checked for frays or loose connections. Gas room heating should be ventilated. All heaters should have a front guard to keep objects away from the coils or flames. Drafts should be avoided.

A fire escape route should be familiar to the person in bed and all family members. Smoke detectors should be installed. In some communities, the fire department will install special labels on the windows of the disabled.

The above statements are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. You should always consult with your physician about any health and lifestyle concerns or issues you may have.