Tips to Informal Caregivers
on Giving Personal Care

Helping a Person to Walk

Walking may need to be relearned. After the person is able to sit up, get out of bed, move in and out of a chair, he may feel strong enough to walk. Before walking is attempted, the person should have regained most of his strength. The informal caregiver's assessment of the person is essential to determining when increased activity should be tried. The person who is walking after being in bed needs to be watched carefully.

Procedure and caution to be used with an ill and weak person:

- Explain to the person what is to be done.
- Have the person wear low-heeled shoes with non-slippery soles.
- Have the person practice shifting weight, using support to help maintain balance.
- Have him practice shifting weight, using firm supports on either side. Two chairs may be used.
- Walk with the person as he begins to walk. If there is no disability, have him wear a securely fastened belt to provide something for you to grip. This helps provide stability and if he becomes faint, he can be pulled against you for support.
- If there is one-sided weakness, walk on the weak side and slightly behind the person. Put the far hand on the stronger hip and the other hand in front of the person's shoulder on the weak side. His shoulder can be pulled back and his hips forward to help his alignment. Or he can be pulled back against you if he becomes faint and cannot be held.
- Help the person follow his normal walking gait. A cane or walker may assist the person. The person will feel he has much more control over what is happening to him. He usually will feel he has made good progress toward improving his state of health. The caregiver will notice

that, with ambulation, the elimination of bodily wastes improves and appetite returns.

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.