

Help with Dressing

- Let patients dress themselves as much as possible. Some patients may change what they wear in order to continue dressing themselves, meaning they may not want to wear a bra or a shirt with lots of buttons. Loose-fitting clothing with elastic bands or front zippers are often easier to manage.
- If a patient does need help dressing, remember to be gentle. Have the clothes already out, so they do not need to wait while they are undressed. Also, they may want a choice in what they wear. Let them tell you what they would like. Make it easier by laying out two outfits and letting them choose.
- Helping with dressing is easiest when the patient is sitting in an upright position. Undress and dress one part of the body at a time to help keep them warm and preserve their privacy. If the patient has a weaker side, put the weaker arm through a sleeve first, so they can use the stronger arm to put their arm through the second sleeve. When helping take off a shirt, help them remove their stronger arm first.
- When helping someone dress the bottom half of their body, have them lie flat. To remove clothing from around their waist, have them press the bottom of their feet into the bed and lift their hips and lower back off the mattress. They can rest after you pull the clothing below the knees. If they are too weak to do this, help them roll to one side so you can pull down one side of their waistband. Then help them roll to the other side to pull down the opposite side.
- Finally, dress their feet. Bunch up the socks so that they can slip their toes right into the toe of the sock and then pull them up and over the feet. Put on shoes or slippers that fit easily and comfortably. Avoid putting on anything tight or difficult to move in.