

How to Get Moving While in the Hospital

When you're in the hospital, it's good to move as much as you can.

Moving around even a little bit helps you recover, and it may help prevent problems that can happen when you're in bed a lot, such as blood clots in your legs or lungs; muscle weakness and loss of flexibility; damage to your skin, called pressure injuries; or other problems, like pneumonia or urinary infections.

Moving more helps you breathe better and improves your strength and flexibility, which can help your balance--so you're less likely to fall.

So let your care team know that you understand how important it is to get moving, and that you'd like to move as much as you can.

Here are some things you can do.

Change your position often.

This can help protect your skin from pressure injuries.

Sit up as much as you can.

Try eating your meals in a chair.

Your nurses can show you some simple exercises to do while you're up.

If your doctor says it's safe and you feel up to it, go for short walks.

Just walking around your room or to the bathroom can help you get your strength back.

You should be able to take walks even if you have an IV-- it's usually connected to a pole that has wheels.

Your care team can help you if you're connected to a lot of stuff, like a catheter, tubes, or other equipment.

If you don't feel steady, or if your care team says it's not safe to get up, be sure to ask for help.

If being ill or being hooked to lots of equipment makes it hard to get up, you can still do activities in bed, like leg exercises to keep your blood moving.

You may work with a physical therapist some of the time.

You'll do exercises, and you'll learn to get around safely.

So, let's go over the key things again: Change your position.

Sit up when you can.

And take walks or do exercises if you're able.

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And don't forget to remind your care team that you'd like to be active.

Being in the hospital doesn't have to mean being stuck in bed.

Once you're able to get moving, your body can start to heal, and you'll recover faster.