

Wheelchair user name:

Emergency wheelchair provider name and contact details:

Important information

This booklet contains important information for your health and mobility. You have been assessed for a wheelchair through an emergency wheelchair service. We recommend you are reassessed in 6-9 months, or sooner if your needs change.

Ask for follow up if you:

- Develop any sign of a pressure wound
- Are uncomfortable
- Do not feel safe when using the wheelchair

If you move to a different place after receiving your wheelchair, ask if you can be referred to a wheelchair service in your new location.

How to handle your wheelchair



FOLDING THE WHEELCHAIR

- Tip the wheelchair towards you to raise two wheels off the ground
- Lift the seat.

UNFOLDING THE WHEELCHAIR

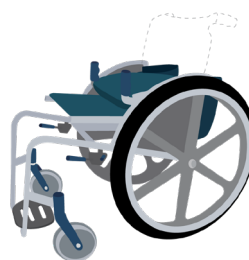
- Press your hands down on the seat rails.



Do not wrap your fingers around the seat. Your fingers may get trapped!

PREPARING FOR TRANSPORT

- Remove armrests (if removable)
- Remove footrests (if removable)
- Fold (some backrests fold forwards)
- Unlock brakes and remove rear wheels (if removable).



Always check rear wheels have clicked or locked back in position. A loose rear wheel is very dangerous!



Watch this video to learn how to fold and unfold a wheelchair.

How to check your cushion



PUTTING THE CUSHION ON THE SEAT

Make sure the cushion is placed correctly on the seat.

- Check front of cushion is positioned at front of wheelchair seat
- Cushion is the right way up
- Cover is positioned correctly on cushion.

How to avoid pressure wounds

Remember

Any part of your body that comes into contact with the wheelchair can be an area where a pressure wound could develop.

You are at most risk of developing a pressure wound if you:

- Have reduced feeling (sensation) in any area in contact with the wheelchair
- Have had a pressure wound in the past
- Are very thin or frail
- Cannot easily shift your weight.

It is easier to prevent pressure wounds than to treat them.

Pressure wounds can usually be prevented by:

- Using a pressure relief cushion
- Pressure relief techniques
- Checking for pressure wounds
- Regularly changing position.

RELIEVE PRESSURE

There are different ways to relieve pressure when in your wheelchair. Choose a method that works for you.



BENDING FORWARD

- Lean forward until weight comes off your sitting bones
- Hold for 30 seconds.

SIDE TO SIDE LEANING

- Lean to each side until weight comes off each sitting bone.
- Hold for 30 seconds.



CHANGING POSITION

Sitting for too long can cause pressure wounds. Start sitting for one hour and build up slowly. Lying down and changing position to remove pressure from your hips and buttocks can help.



Watch this video to learn more about wheelchair pressure relief techniques.



CHECK FOR PRESSURE WOUNDS

Check daily:

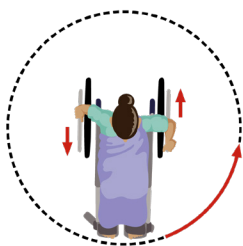
- Before getting up and going to sleep
- If you have difficulty, ask a family member or caregiver to hold the mirror or take a photo so you can check.

How to propel and turn your wheelchair

PUSHING POSITION

There are three ways to make pushing your wheelchair easier:

- Lean your head forward before pushing
- Aim for long smooth pushes
- Let your arms relax and swing back after each push.



TURNING THE WHEELCHAIR

- To turn, push one hand forward and the other hand backward.



Watch this video to learn how to propel and turn a wheelchair.

How to go up and down slopes



PROPELLING UP A SLOPE

- Lean forward to go up slopes.



If you have a double amputation, the castor wheels may lift when going up slopes. An extra weight can be added to the footrests to assist with balance.

PROPELLING DOWN A SLOPE

- Lean backwards to go down slopes
- Let the push rim slide slowly through your hands.



When practicing, ask an assistant to follow closely behind until you feel confident.



Watch this video to learn how to go up and down slopes.

How to move on rough ground with assistance

ASSISTANCE OVER ROUGH GROUND

- Ask your assistant to tilt your wheelchair on its back wheels until it feels balanced
- Your assistant should keep good control of the tilt by holding the push handles firmly
- Keep your head forward while you push the wheels



How to go up and down stairs

It is possible to go up and down stairs with one or two people. If in doubt, ask two people to help. One person stands behind holding push handles and one person stands in front holding the wheelchair frame.

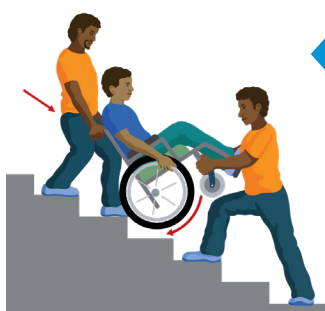
- Your assistant should keep their back straight and bend their knees
- Co-ordinate the lift, such as by counting “1,2,3”.

UP STAIRS

- Go up **backwards**
- Balance on the rear wheels
- Pull the rear wheel back when going up.



Watch this video to learn how to go up and down stairs.



DOWN STAIRS

- Go down **forwards**
- First balance on the rear wheels
- Squeeze the push rim to gently roll the rear wheel down each step.

How to transfer to and from your wheelchair

There are different ways to transfer. Choose a method that works for you.

PREPARING THE WHEELCHAIR

Some armrests and footrests are swing away or removable. Move these out of the way before transferring.





TRANSFERRING WITHOUT ASSISTANCE

- Position your wheelchair close and put on brakes
- Lift to front of cushion
- Position your hands and feet
- Push shoulders down to lift
- Keep head down to help balance.

USING A TRANSFER BOARD

If you have difficulty doing a transfer in one lift, a transfer board can help.

Lean to the side while positioning and removing the transfer board.



STANDING TRANSFER WITH ASSISTANCE

- Check you are able to take weight through your legs
- If you need extra assistance, ask two people for help.



Watch this video to learn more about assisted transfers.

TRANSFERRING TO AND FROM A VEHICLE

There is more than one way to transfer in and out of a vehicle.



PREPARE

- Open the vehicle door fully
- Position the vehicle seat as far back as possible
- Position the wheelchair as close as possible.

SITTING

- Lift bottom onto vehicle seat first
- Then lift legs in to vehicle
- When transferring out of vehicle, lift legs out first.

STANDING WITH ASSISTANCE

- Lower bottom on to vehicle seat
- Lift legs in to vehicle.



Watch the video of Ryan transferring into a vehicle.

How to care for your wheelchair and cushion

CUSHION

Cushions should be clean and dry to protect skin.

To clean a cushion:

- Wipe clean with soapy water and rinse.
- Always dry completely before using
- Remove cover and wash and dry separately.



TYRES

It is easier to propel a wheelchair with firm tyres. Keep tyres firmly pumped up.

- Press the tyres. They should only press a few millimetres.
- When tyre pressure changes, always check the brake position. Adjust if necessary.

NUTS AND BOLTS

Loose bolts allow unwanted movement in parts of the wheelchair. This can be unsafe.

- Check nuts and bolts
- Tighten if loose.



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For more information see:

<https://www.gate-tap.org>

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