

## Ambulation with a Cane

**Purpose:** This policy provides the organization's guidelines for ambulation with a cane, which should be followed by all staff when providing care to patients.

**Procedure:**

1. Instruct the patient and/or caregiver about reasons for cane ambulation:
  - a. To improve stability for weakened side
  - b. To enhance balance
  - c. To provide support
2. Apply transfer belt around patient's waist per transfer belt procedure (Transfer Belt Use).
3. For surface walking, instruct patient to:
  - a. Hold cane close to body.
  - b. Keep cane on uninvolved side.
  - c. Keep length of step for each leg equal.
  - d. Keep pace of each step equal.
4. For stair climbing, instruct patient to:
  - a. Go up stairs with a railing by leading with the uninvolved leg.
  - b. Go up stairs without a railing by holding cane on uninvolved side and leading with uninvolved leg.
  - c. Advance cane, then advance leg.
  - d. Go down stairs with a railing by leading with the involved leg.
  - e. Go down stairs without a railing by holding cane on uninvolved side and leading with cane.
  - f. Follow with involved leg, and then advance uninvolved leg.
5. For sitting down, instruct patient to:
  - a. Stand with back of legs against edge of chair seat.
  - b. Grasp chair armrests with both hands.
  - c. Lower body onto chair seat while supporting body weight with hands on armrests.
6. For standing up, instruct patient to:
  - a. Grasp chair armrests with both hands.
  - b. Place involved foot and body slightly forward.
  - c. Push hands against armrests to rise up from chair.
7. Stand slightly behind patient and to the uninvolved side.
8. Place one foot between patient's feet and the other foot outside the uninvolved leg while instructing patient.

9. Caution patient about leaning on cane when sitting or rising in order to maintain balance and prevent falls.
10. Remove transfer belt from patient's waist.
11. Document the following in the patient's clinical record:
  - a. Date and time of cane use
  - b. Pertinent observations
  - c. Patient's progress
  - d. Distance walked
  - e. Assistance needed