

Quality of Life

In addition to helping your loved one with decision making and providing physical care, as a caregiver, you can help enhance your loved one's quality of life. The following suggestions can help improve or maintain your loved one's physical and emotional well-being.

In the last weeks of life as the body naturally shuts down, your loved one will need and want less food. Offer small amounts of the food they enjoy. Since chewing takes energy, they may prefer milkshakes, ice cream or pudding.

Meals

As people age, their taste buds diminish so their appetite and desire for food changes. Also, they can experience problems with chewing and swallowing. If this is a problem, please contact your doctor and ask for a nutritional consultation to help you and the person you are caring for.

Clothing

Regardless of our age or physical condition, we want to look and feel our best. Today's clothing options make that a much easier goal to reach. When buying clothing, consider the following:

- Slacks and skirts that have elasticized waistbands or tie waistbands are easier to get on and off and are more comfortable.
- Clothing with snaps, zippers and/or buttons down the front are easier to manipulate.
- Shoes that will not slip off easily, and have a non-skid tread.
- Interchangeable and color coordinated clothing. For example, slacks and tops that can be worn with several others.
- Clothing that is washable and wrinkle-free saves on dry cleaning bills and ironing time.

Exercise

In consultation with your loved one's or friend's physician and physical therapist, you can plan a routine of exercises.

Exercise, even for bed and wheelchair-bound persons, helps to improve:

- Circulation (blood flow)
- Lung and heart function
- Posture
- Mental alertness