

Taichung Armed Forces General Hospital
Leaflet of Inpatient Nursing Instructions
衰弱病人之護理指導

Sir/Lady:

Nursing instructions for frail patients

I. Definition of frailty:

Frailty is typically a chronic decline in physical function, not an acute illness, accompanied by a series of clinical signs, including muscle loss, weight loss, fatigue, weakness, slowness of movement, reduced endurance, and decreased activity levels.

II. Frailty signs:

Frailty can be defined if 3 or more of the following clinical signs are present:

- (1) Unintentional weight loss (loss of at least 3 kg or >5% in the past year).
- (2) Feeling fatigued or lacking energy (at least 3 times a week).
- (3) Decreased muscle strength (unable to stand up from a chair 5 times without support; grip strength: males <28 kg, females <18 kg).
- (4) Reduced walking speed (6-meter walk speed <1 meter/second).
- (5) Decreased physical activity or reduced mobility.

III. Care Guidelines for Preventing Frailty:

- (1) Protein supplementation: Elderly individuals should aim to consume 1.0-1.2 g of protein per kg of body weight per day. Each meal's protein intake should be about the size of the palm of the hand. Patients can discuss their protein intake with a doctor or nutritionist.
- (2) Strength training: Resistance exercises can help increase muscle strength (e.g., leg raises, squats, sitting leg raises, arm raises). Before starting training, it's recommended to consult with a rehabilitation specialist.
 - 1 Leg raise backward: Hold onto a support (e.g., a chair back) to maintain balance, extend one leg straight back, and raise it 10 times before switching to the other leg.
 - 2 Squat: Hold onto a support, squat halfway down, then stand up. Repeat 10 times.
 - 3 Sitting leg raise: Sit comfortably in a chair, raise one leg until the ankle and knee are level, repeat 10 times, and switch to the other leg for another 10 repetitions. If you can complete these raises without a problem, proceed with progressive additions of weight with a sandbag around the ankle.
 - 4 Arm raise: Hold a plastic bottle full of water (350-600cc) and lift it overhead, then lower it. Repeat 10 times.

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- (3) Fall prevention: Select appropriate assistive devices (non-slip slippers, cane, walker, wheelchair, etc.), and ensure an obstacle-free environment (non-slip flooring, handrails, minimal obstacles in walking paths) to prevent falls.
- (4) Encourage daily sunlight exposure for at least 15 minutes (avoid the midday period and avoid directly looking at the sun) to promote vitamin D synthesis in the body for muscle health and to prevent osteoporosis.

IV. Discharge Care Instructions:

- (1) For frail patients, if there is a need for home care or assistive devices, ask the nurse to arrange for a discharge consultation with the discharge preparation team to assess the patient's condition and home care needs. Long-term care resources can be integrated and appropriate service units contacted to provide home-based care services or refer to community health management professionals.
- (2) Adequate nutrition: Ensure the patient consumes sufficient calories, quality proteins, vitamins, and minerals. Appetite enhancers can be used to promote appetite and nutrition intake.
- (3) Rehabilitation and regular exercise: Exercise 2-3 times per week for more than 10-15 minutes per session to improve body function, bone density, and muscular endurance.
- (4) Regular check-ups and enhanced disease management: Monitor and control blood pressure and blood sugar levels to maintain overall health.
- (5) Medication safety: Follow the doctor's instructions carefully to avoid missing or duplicating medication doses. Avoid taking non-government-approved medications or dietary supplements.
- (6) Educate family members or primary caregivers on measures to prevent falls at home and identify potential warning signs, such as reduced activity levels, weight loss, gait and balance abnormalities, or confusion. It's important to monitor the patient's activities closely.

If you are still unclear about something or have any questions, please contact the nursing station in the ward