The purpose of this policy is to clarify patient provider roles with regard to general and therapeutic mobilization to ensure that patients are mobilized to their potential.

Mobilization, whether general or therapeutic, may include bed mobility, mobilizing to a chair, commode or bathroom as well as ambulation. Both types of mobilization are important – the degree of intervention required dictates the type of mobilization provided to the patient. In some instances patients require both general and therapeutic mobilization.

**General mobilization** is appropriate for all patients to help them gain optimal independence as quickly as possible and then to maintain this level of mobility. General mobilization helps avoid the risks associated with immobility. Nursing staff play the primary role in encouraging patients to be independent and to maintain their level of mobility. Patients should be encouraged and assisted to sit out of bed or ambulate (walk) a minimum of twice a day as per their tolerance.

The goals of general mobilization are to:

- prevent or minimize the risks of bed rest
- maintain muscle strength
- avoid bone loss
- reduce constipation
- maintain circulation
- maintain joint mobility
- maintain or improve function
- avoid loss of self esteem and depression associated with immobility, and
- encourage independence towards discharge.
General mobilization is the responsibility of nursing staff; however, Rehabilitation staff are available for consultation to recommend the safest method of transferring and mobilizing patients and to ensure that appropriate techniques are used.

**Therapeutic mobilization** is appropriate for patients who have experienced a loss of functional ability, or deterioration in their level of physical function, and who are determined (via rehabilitation assessment) to have potential to improve with active, progressive intervention.

The goals of therapeutic mobilization are to:

- treat patient specific mobility needs
- address patient safety
- assess equipment needs
- enhance endurance, and
- progress mobilization as required for discharge

Therapeutic mobilization is the responsibility of the Rehabilitation Team (physical therapists, occupational therapists and therapy assistants) and a patient care order is required.

References:


TITLE: Therapeutic and General Mobilization of Patients


