

## Section 18

# Back Care and Equipment

Back pain is common among carers. For your safety, and the safety of the person you care for, you should not be attempting to lift anyone or take their body weight. Even helping someone to dress or to move from the bed to a chair can result in back strain for you and could possibly injure the person you care for.

Ask your GP to refer you to the appropriate person (this could be a Nurse, Physiotherapist or Occupational therapist) who will be able to assess what tasks you are doing and what is the safest way to do them.

Here are a few tips for you to remember when you move anything (including the person you care for).

### **ALWAYS:**

- ask yourself, do they need to be moved? Avoid unnecessary transfers;
- allow and encourage the person you care for to help you as much as possible;
- tell them what you plan to do;
- allow plenty of time for the task in hand;
- wear sensible shoes and comfortable clothes;
- make sure the space around you is clear;
- stand as close as possible;
- do not twist or bend to assist them;
- go round slowly using small steps;
- sit or kneel down to perform tasks to avoid bending, for example feeding, talking, listening;
- **Keep your back straight**– bend your knees, not your back

## **What should I do if the person I care for has a fall?**

**Do not attempt to lift someone if they have fallen or slipped over** – contact **999** or **112** and ask for the Ambulance Service.

If you try to lift someone after a fall you could:

- injure yourself or the person you care for and/or
- make worse an injury they may have got during the fall

Make them as comfortable as you can without moving them and remove any hazards that may be around.

Reassure them that help is on the way.

The paramedics will assess any injury the person you care for may have and advise you about what they think should happen next.

## **I have back pain—what should I do?**

### **Don't ignore it!**

Your GP may prescribe anti-inflammatory drugs to calm strained muscles. There is no need to be immobile, very gentle stretching exercises will help your muscles to relax.

**Seek advice** before purchasing lifting or turning aids to help you, in case it is not suitable or is available from Social Services, please read about Occupational Therapy Services on the next page.

## Back Care Training for carers

**Looking After Your Back** is for all carers who want to take care of their backs - to learn about things they should and shouldn't do and what they can do to prevent problems. Sessions include gentle exercises.

**Moving People Safely** is for carers who want to learn safe techniques to help the person they care for to walk, stand, transfer, etc. The session includes being shown and trying out some of the equipment available.

For more information about these training sessions contact Kirstie Cochrane on **020 8547 6124**

## Where can I go for advice or equipment?

### Adult Social Care Services

Provided by Kingston Council, Adult Social Care Services can advise you on the most appropriate equipment for your needs and the needs of the person you care for.

They aim to help people keep as safe and independent as possible in their own homes. By talking to people about what they are able to do and what they find difficult, they can then advise on the different ways their needs can be met. This is called an **Occupational Therapy Assessment** and may lead to the offer of services.

Unfortunately, we cannot help those with a short-term disability or medical problem. If you are in this situation, please contact your doctor for advice.

For more advice contact **020 8547 5005**

## Where can I buy equipment from?

There are many places you can visit to get ideas and buy pieces of equipment including:

### **Daily Living Equipment Shop    020 8547 6511**

Adult Social Care run a non-profit making shop at the Noble Centre, 109a Blagdon Road, New Malden KT3 4BD where you can try out the equipment and staff will order any equipment you need if it is not in stock. Open Monday and Tuesday 10am - 4pm.

### **Keep Able**

**01784 440044**

[www.keepable.co.uk](http://www.keepable.co.uk)

Keep Able, 11-17 Kingston Road, Staines, Middlesex, is a large store where you can try pieces of equipment and get advice. If you are not able to visit, you can contact them and ask for a catalogue to be sent to you to order over the phone or internet.

Open Mon to Fri 8.30am—5pm and Saturday 9am—5pm

### **Careful Mobility**

**020 8549 8855**

[www.carefulmobility.com](http://www.carefulmobility.com)

Based in Canbury Park Road, Kingston, this small outlet is able to advise you about equipment and will arrange a home visit for you to try out equipment. They also have a catalogue that can be sent to you.

### **Boots the Chemist**

[www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com)

Boots have a catalogue you can order from or visit the store and speak to staff at the Pharmacy counter.

**Kingston 8541 1644**

**Tolworth 8399 9836**

**Surbiton 8399 2715**

**New Malden 8942 0935**