

# THE FLU & FUNCTIONAL DECLINE



The flu can have lasting impacts on the everyday functioning and independence of older adults. Hospitalization, as a result of the flu, can impact older adults' ability to perform everyday tasks, due to functional decline.

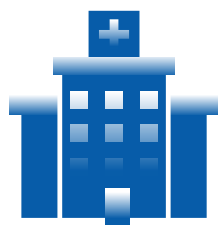
**Functional decline** is a loss of independence, often associated with a deterioration in mobility and a decline in ability to participate in a variety of activities of daily living. These are the meaningful activities we perform every day and can include:

**Self-Care:** Preparing meals, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene (bathing, brushing hair/teeth, etc.), money management, medication management, driving

**Productivity:** Ability to attend work, volunteering, participate in parenting or care-giving roles

**Leisure:** Ability to go out in your community or spend time with family and friends

Studies show that 1/3 of older adults leave the hospital with functional decline and inability to perform important daily activities.



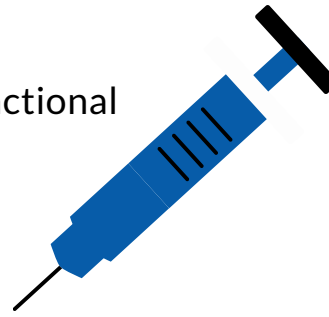
Functional decline can result in long-term loss of independence, decrease in quality of life and social isolation in older adults.



## How to prevent functional decline while recovering from flu:

### 1 GET THE FLU SHOT

The best way to protect yourself from the flu and functional decline as a result of the flu is through vaccination! Get your flu shot annually!



### 2 STAY MOBILE

If it is safe and you are able, try to continue to do tasks you are usually able to do while recovering from the flu. This could include getting up and getting dressed in the morning or walking around your house with or without assistance.

### 3 GET OUT OF BED

If it is safe and you are able, attempt getting out of bed. This can help to prevent bed sores and loss of strength, as well as improve mood, sleep, circulation, and breathing.

### 4 STAY SOCIAL

Staying at home while recovering from illness doesn't mean we can't socialize. Try a phone call, Zoom or Facetime to stay connected with family and friends.



### 5 MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET

A healthy diet is important in preventing functional decline. If you are able, continue to prepare meals, or ask a family member or friend for support. Many community programs are also available to provide nutritional support while recovering from illness.

### 6 MANAGE CHRONIC CONDITIONS

The flu can make chronic conditions worse, increasing the likelihood of complications further functional decline. Stay on top of your medications and doctor visits can help to manage chronic conditions.



### 7 BE AWARE OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Illness and hospitalization increase falls risk. Always ensure you are wearing proper footwear in your home and be aware of your home environment, such as clearing cluttered hallways.

For more information visit [CARP.ca/KeepCanadaHealthy](https://www.carp.ca/KeepCanadaHealthy)

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