

# How to Properly Weigh and Measure Residents

One of the most important things we do in caring for elders in long term care communities is making sure we keep accurate and current records of the weights and heights of the people in our care. Weight gain or loss is an important gauge of health. Weight needs to be measured as accurately as possible without causing distress to the person we are weighing.

PERSON  
CENTERED  
CARE

## PROTOCOLS FOR WEIGHING:

### Residents

- ✓ Provide a private area in which to weigh residents.
- ✓ Make sure to calibrate all scales.
- ✓ To calibrate scale, weigh an item of known weight and then adjust per manufacturer's guidelines. *(Use 10 lb weight to ensure an accurate calibration. This should be done weekly.)*
- ✓ Use the same scale each time you weigh a person.
- ✓ People should be weighed at the same time of day in similar clothing
- ✓ The resident should stand or sit according to the type of scale used. Record the weight and reweigh if the weight is showing +/- 5 pounds from the last weight.

### Residents in Wheelchairs

- ✓ Pre-weigh the resident's wheelchair then record its weight.
- ✓ Weigh the person in the wheelchair with both feet on the footrest. Arms must be folded in the person's lap.
- ✓ To provide an accurate weight, make sure the scale is balanced and not resting against the wall.
- ✓ To determine the person's weight, you must subtract the weight of the wheelchair from the total weight.
- ✓ If the weight is showing plus or minus 5 pounds from the last weight, repeat the entire procedure.

"Measure & record height in inches on admission and if last measurement is more than one year old."

- Diane Hall, RD

## PROCEDURE FOR MEASURING RESIDENTS



There should be a private area for measuring residents.

### If the person can stand ...

- A) **Measuring Stick Fixed against a Wall:** The person should stand with his/her back to the wall and feet against the wall. The person should be measured without shoes
- B) **Measuring Rod on a Platform Scale:** The person should be measured without shoes

### If the person cannot stand ...

- A) **Supine Measurement:** Position the person in bed without pillows or wedges. They should lay as flat as possible with body and limbs straight. Mark the surface at the tip of the head and base of the heels. Move the person and measure the length of the flat surface.
- B) **Double Amputee Measurement.** Measure from the tip of the head to the longest remaining limb.

### If the length of the body is affected by the person's medical condition, i.e. vertebral fracture, spinal curvature of kyphosis ...

- A) **Arm Span Measurement (person can comfortably extend one arm.)** Using a cloth measuring tape, have the person extend one arm out. Measure from the notch of the sternum the tip of the fingertips and double. This is an ESTIMATE of height, and should be documented in the chart as an estimated height.
- B) **Knee to Heel Measurement: (may be used for adults 60 and over, and/or person has contractures or paralysis)** Have the person lie in a position where the left knee and ankle of one leg are held at a 90-degree angle. Although a tape measure can be used, the use of a large sliding caliper is recommended. Measure from the base of the heel, along the length of the lower leg, to the anterior surface of the thigh at a point at least 2 inches behind the knee cap. Record measurement to nearest 0.1cm. zz

## FORMULA FOR KNEE HEIGHT MEASUREMENT

A person's height (in centimeters) can be estimated using the knee height measurement based on the following calculations:

- ✍ Men=  $64.19 - (.04 \times \text{age}) + (2.02 \times \text{knee height in cm})$
  - ✍ Women=  $84.88 - (.24 \times \text{age}) + (1.83 \times \text{knee height in cm})$
- Divide the answer in centimeters by 2.54 to determine the height in inches (2.54 cm = 1 inch).

