



- Do not use any walker on the stairs. It is unsafe. Please use elevator.

Other safety considerations:

- Wear shoes with rubber soles. Slippers and shoes with leather heels or soles can slide off your feet and potentially cause a fall.
- Check the floor to be sure it is safe for using the walker. The floor must be clean, dry, and well lit. Remove all throw rugs to prevent falls. Be careful when walking on thick carpet as it can prevent the walker from moving easily.
- Ensure that loose carpet edges have been taped or nailed down.
- Make sure the traffic areas and the floor are free of clutter.
- Ensure that spills are wiped up quickly to prevent a fall.

How do you get a walker?

It is very important to get the most appropriate walker for you. Contact your local health care professional to have a walker prescribed properly. Your walker should be individualized and personalized. Consulting a health care professional (an occupational therapist or a physiotherapist) before purchasing

a walker will help ensure your safety. It will also allow you to ask any questions you may have about using the walker or obtaining assistance to purchase one. Walkers can be purchased at selected pharmacies and home health supply stores.

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Not medical advice: The information provided in this brochure is intended for education purposes only. It is not and should not be taken as advice or treatment from a health professional. Never disregard professional health care advice or delay in seeking assistance because of something you have read in this manual.

For more information about Stable, Able and Strong (SAS) including the SAS Resource Database, please visit:

Stable, Able and Strong

Walkers

What are they?

A walker is a mobility aid that assists people who have trouble with balance, walking, strength or endurance. Using a walker will help you do day-to-day activities, allow you to be more independent, and give you confidence in your ability to walk.



There are three types of walkers:

1. A **Standard** (“pickup”) walker has four solid legs and gives the most stability and support. It will allow you to take all or some of your weight off your leg(s) as you walk.

2. A **two-wheeled** walker is not as stable as a ‘pick-up’ walker, but more stable than a rollator walker. It does not need to be picked up to move.

3. A **Rollator** walker has 4 wheels. This walker is useful if you need less support, but still need assistance with balance. This walker often has larger wheels, which makes it easier to use outdoors.

All walkers have a number of optional features, such as baskets, brakes or seats. This allows you to select a walker that meets your needs.

Why use a walker?

Walkers are used when canes do not provide enough stability or support. They may be recommended for temporary use during rehabilitation or to help maintain your safety and activity on a regular basis. Walkers

can be used indoors and outside in the community.

Here are some typical reasons for using a walker:

- To improve balance
- To reduce leg pain
- To decrease the load on one or both legs
- To make up for weakness of the hip, leg or foot

Why choose a walker over a cane?

- A walker provides more support that is balanced between both hands
- Walkers can be fitted with baskets to carry items
- Wheeled walkers can include a seat which allows you to rest if you are standing for a long period of time or walking long distances

How do you use a walker?

A walker should be selected with your abilities and needs in mind and adjusted to suit your height and weight. This includes ensuring that you have enough upper body strength, coordination, and hand grip to be able to use a walker safely.

Keep your back straight and look ahead as you walk. This allows you to see any obstacles that may be in your path.

Keep the walker close to your body to ensure you have the benefit of its support.

Safety precautions:

- When standing up from a chair or bed with your walker, position your walker in front of you and lock the brakes. Push up from the bed or chair; the walker could tip if you pull on it. Keep the brakes on with wheeled walkers until you are completely upright and ready to move.
- After you stand up, wait a few seconds before you walk. This will give you time to adjust and allow any dizziness or light-headedness you may experience to clear away.
- Before sitting down, turn around, so the back of your legs touch the chair or bed. Keep the walker in front of you and lock the brakes on wheeled walkers before sitting. Put one hand down on the chair or bed as you sit.