

# Patient Lifts: Safety for You and Your Patient

## Hoyer Lifts

Hoyer Lifts allow a person to be lifted and transferred with a minimum of physical effort. Before attempting to lift anyone practice with the lifter by using a helper, not your patient. These general safety recommendations will help keep you and your patient safe.

### Caregiver Safety Tips:

- Help avoid back injury to lift someone from the floor, transferring, repositioning
- Work as close to the patient as possible to avoid stress of leaning
- Is the sling the right size for your patient and in good condition?
  - ✓ If too large, the patient may slip out. If too small, the sling may worsen patient's condition
  - ✓ Do not use the sling if the battery is not charged or if you see tears, holes or frayed seams

### Check Patient's Physical Capabilities and Condition:

- Can the patient assist with the transfer?
- Have you checked the patient's weight and physical condition before using the lift?
- Is the patient alert enough to understand and follow instructions?
  - ✓ Do not use the lift if the patient is agitated, resistant or combative
- Is the patient ready to be placed in the lift?

### Prepare Environment:

- How many caregivers are needed to use the lift?
- Position lift and receiving surface
  - ✓ Move lift base legs near or around the patient
  - ✓ Position lift and receiving surface at correct height
- Clear path for lift
  - ✓ Is there enough space for lift to pivot and move freely?
  - ✓ Is lift able to fit under or around receiving surface and through doorways?

### Safely Placing Patient in Sling:

- Is the center of the sling positioned under your patient's spine?
  - ✓ Did you place leg straps flat under the patient and there are no folds?
- Attach sling straps to sling bar
  - ✓ Did you match the loops from each side to ensure balance?
  - ✓ Did you check that all clips or loops are secure and straps are not twisted?
  - ✓ Is the patient's head and back supported?



### Lifting Your Patient:

- Do not leave the patient unattended while in the lift. Never keep the patient suspended in the sling for more than a few minutes
- Lift the patient 2 inches off the surface to make sure he is secure.
  - ✓ Are the sling straps secured?
  - ✓ Is your patient's weight spread evenly between the straps?
- Is the patient comfortable?
  - ✓ Make sure the sling is not pinching or pulling skin
  - ✓ Look for nonverbal signs of discomfort
- Lift the patient slowly and only as high as necessary to complete the transfer

### Lowering Your Patient:

- Do not hold or support your patient's weight while in the sling as it may cause the straps or hooks to detach
- Slowly lower your patient toward the receiving surface and move body into correct position before releasing
- Carefully remove sling from patient's body
  - ✓ Make sure to protect the patient's skin

### Other Safety Tips:

- Keep lift away from children and pets
- Make sure you recognize and understand any alarms and error messages.
- Always follow-through when you hear an alarm
- Report to your supervisor if you need help or have a problem with the patient lift
- If the sling is frayed, ripped or has holes do not use. Tell your supervisor immediately.
- To clean the lift:
  - ✓ Disinfect all lift surfaces and the sling after every use
  - ✓ Follow manufacturer's instructions on washing

