

WHAT ARE ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADLS)?

The ADL's are divided into two levels, from the more basic to the more advanced and are necessary for self-care. At each level, the purposes of the functional assessment and the implications of changes in function are different. The basic activities of daily living (ADLs) involve personal care--feeding, being continent, transferring, toileting, dressing, and bathing. Normally, these activities are performed independently. As the frail elderly becomes progressively unable to do these tasks, they require more and more caregiving assistance. The amount of assistance depends on the type of help needed; an older adult who only needs help with bathing may require assistance every few days, whereas someone who has difficulty transferring might require full-time help.

The loss of independence in the performance of an ADL may be a sign of a chronic illness such as dementia, depression or heart failure. The loss of continence is a predictor for placement in long term care facilities.

AT RISK RESIDENTS ~ 1-2 ADLs

FRAIL RESIDENTS ~ 3 or more ADLs

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living – IADLs

The IADL screening instrument can uncover more subtle disabilities. These are tasks necessary for independent functioning in the community. They include cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, shopping, using the telephone and means of transportation, taking medicines, and managing money. The IADLs are influenced by a person's cultural background to a greater degree than are the basic tasks of everyday living. For example, some older women may never have managed the household's money, and some men were never expected to do laundry. Therefore, it is more important to assess whether the individual could complete the task if needed than to determine whether he or she is

currently doing it. It is also important to determine whether there is a substitute--either a family member or aide or a social program, such as Meals on Wheels--that could perform the task if the individual could not do so.

Basic ADLs (BADLs) consist of self-care tasks, including:

- Personal hygiene and grooming
- Dressing and undressing
- Self feeding
- Functional transfers (getting into and out of bed or wheelchair, getting onto or off toilet, etc.)
- Bowel and bladder management
- Ambulation (walking with or without use of an assistive device (walker, cane, or crutches) or using a wheelchair)

Instrumental ADLs

Instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) are not necessary for fundamental functioning, but they let an individual live independently in a community:

- Housework
- Taking medications as prescribed
- Managing money
- Shopping for groceries or clothing
- Use of telephone or other form of communication
- Using technology (as applicable)
- Transportation within the community