

Caring for Elderly Patients **During & After Influenza**

This time of year, doctors typically receive a great deal of information about flu prevention. Let us take a moment to discuss caring for some of the most vulnerable patients who get the flu. Influenza of any type can result in complications and/or death. The CDC states that more than 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths from flu and flu-related complications occur each year. More than half of those deaths occur among the 13% of our population age 65 and older.¹ Aspen Healthcare stands prepared to be part of your team caring for elderly patients with influenza.


DURING: When elderly patients are sent home to recover from the flu, Aspen Healthcare can provide a number of home health services designed to increase your patients' peace of mind, protect their health status, protect their caregivers, and prevent unnecessary hospitalization. An influenza care plan can include:

- Skilled observation and assessment to identify a worsening condition in a timely fashion
- Training, observation, and direct care to ensure optimal at-home care



- Patient / caregiver training in warning signs
- Patient / caregiver training for preventing the spread of the flu in the home

- Activity consultation: Evidence suggests that elderly patients will spend more time than needed in bed or sitting when they are ill.² As with most remedies, bed rest is only useful in proper doses. Too much bed rest can lead to slower strength recovery, functional loss, and other complications.³ Aspen's home health nurses and therapists can monitor patient recovery and advise your patient about optimal activity levels based on your patient's current condition.
- Home health has the additional advantage of limiting community contact.

AFTER: Recovering from influenza usually involves bed rest. Bed rest affects elderly patients more negatively than younger patients. Among a test sample of healthy subjects age 67 and older, 10 days of bed rest resulted in more lean tissue loss than 28 days of bed rest caused in younger test subjects.⁴ This observed loss of muscle at a rate 3 times greater than with younger patients was with healthy test subjects and did not take into account the additional effects that nutritional compromise, inflammation, and comorbidities could have during bed rest for flu. For patients over the age of 70, bed rest is associated with a **major, new** disability in 1/3 of prolonged cases.² For elderly patients who may have experienced a functional loss as the result of bed rest, prescribe physical therapy and occupational therapy assessment and treatment from Aspen Healthcare. Our qualified physical therapists and occupational therapists can set your patient on the path to recovering from strength and functional losses. 

Medicare Pays 100%

Traditional Medicare pays 100% of allowable charges for the home health and hospice services of Aspen Healthcare. Qualified Medicare beneficiaries have no out-of-pocket expense for home health or hospice services from Aspen. Aspen home health and hospice services not only improve the continuum of care received by your patients, they save thousands for the health care system and for hospitals by reducing inpatient stays. **Please offer Aspen Healthcare to your patients.**

Please offer Aspen Healthcare to Your Patients.

References

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3. Knight J, Nigam Y, Jones A, et al. Effects of bedrest 1: cardiovascular, respiratory and haematological systems. *Nursing Times* (2009); 105: 21.
4. Kortebein P, Ferrando A, Lombeida J, et al. Effect of 10 days of bed rest on skeletal muscle in healthy older adults. *JAMA*. 2007; 297(16): 1772-1774.