

Changing an Occupied Bed

The best time to change the bed is just after the person has a bath, although you should periodically check for crumbs, creases or moisture as these can make the bed uncomfortable and contribute to skin breakdown.

When your loved one becomes too weak to get out of bed, follow this procedure to change an occupied bed. It is usually helpful to think of the bed as two halves: You can change one half of the bed while your loved one lies on the other, then move onto the clean half and make the other side. Ask your Empath Health team to demonstrate.



Place patient in side-lying position on far side of bed.
Fold soiled linens toward patient's back.



Place clean bottom sheet on bed with center fold close to patient's back.
Patient in side-lying position on far side of bed.



Tuck in bottom sheets of bed.
Patient lies on far side of bed on other half of clean sheet.

Following are Guidelines for Changing an Occupied Bed:

- Leave one pillow on the bed, placed under the head. Keep the body covered loosely with a sheet or light blanket.
- If changing in an electric bed, raise it to a height that is comfortable for you to work at the bedside.
- Help your loved one roll to one side of the bed. If in an electric bed, be sure the rail is up on the side the patient is rolling toward.
- Work from the side with the patient's back facing you. Loosen all bedding on that side and roll the bottom sheet to the middle of the bed.

Call Empath Health with any questions (888) 855-2838:

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- Place a fresh sheet on the bed with the middle of the sheet in the middle of the bed. If you are using a pull sheet or incontinence pad, place those in the same way.
- Tuck in the side, top and bottom of the sheet on the side you are working on, then roll the rest of the bedding to the middle of the bed, tucking the roll under the back and legs.
- Have the patient roll toward you over the folded linen and onto the clean side of the bed. If there's a side rail, pull it up before moving to the other side of the bed.
- Pull out the dirty linen.
- Unroll the clean bedding and tuck in side, top and bottom of sheet on the second side.
- Position the patient as the nurse has taught you, covering with a clean top sheet or blanket if desired. If your loved one prefers to be on his or her side, remember to use pillows between the knees. If the patient prefers to be on his or her back, consider placing a pillow under the lower calves to elevate the heels.

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