

How to Measure Weight Accurately

WHAT

This information sheet will tell you how to measure a residents' weight correctly using chair scales.

WHY

Measuring weight correctly is very important to monitor weight change, to determine nutritional risk (see *Information Sheet 2: Screening Residents' Nutritional Risk*), and to calculate the correct dose of medicine.

HOW

1. Decide on the appropriate method. If the resident can walk use chair scales (see below for instructions), if the resident is bed bound use a hoist (for instruction please refer to the manufacturer's operational instructions or ask your organisational educator).
2. Ensure the equipment is clean and calibrated (to check if the scales are calibrated place any item on the chair which you know the weight of eg 2kg bag of flour from the kitchen and see if the scales are accurate).
3. Ensure you have the *Resident Monthly Weight Chart (Chart 1)* or a pad and pen for documentation.
4. Explain the procedure to the resident.¹
5. Make sure the resident has toileted recently.¹
6. Make sure the breaks are on and the foot rests are out of the way.
7. Assist the resident to transfer onto the chair scales (using your organisational manual handling techniques).¹
8. Have the resident sit in the centre of the chair with their feet on the footrests and not leaning or holding onto anything.²
9. Ask the resident to remain still and record the value when the numbers stop moving on the *Resident Monthly Weight Chart*.
10. Assist the resident in resuming their previous activity.¹
11. Report any abnormal findings to the care manager and consider screening the resident for nutritional risk (see *Information Sheet 2: Screening Residents' Nutrition Risk*) if they have lost weight.¹



See the accompanying DVD for a demonstration of these techniques



WHEN/WHO

You can weigh residents:

- On admission,
- Once a month for observation,
- More frequently if they are unwell or have only been eating small amounts or not at all.

1. Konno R. *Intervention: Observations: Weight and Height*. In: The Joanna Briggs Institute; 2007
 2. Collins N. Measuring Height and Weight. *Advances in Skin & Wound Care* 2002;15(2):91-92.