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Watch Your Back When a Loved One Needs a Lift *Family Caregiver Tips for Proper Lifts and Transfers to Avoid Injury*

NEW HAMPTON, NH (May 21, 2014) Over half of all family caregivers are injured as a result of lifting or transferring the person for whom they are providing care, which can put their loved one at risk of harm. These injuries often occur because many family caregivers:

- Haven't learned proper lift and transfer techniques
- Don't recognize when they've reached their physical limit
- Aren't suited for the physical stress of lifting and transferring
- Want to "do it by themselves" instead of asking for help

Knowing when to call for help is as important as knowing how to help. For example, never try to lift a frail person who has fallen onto the floor by yourself. Make the person as comfortable as possible and get help.

Learning when to lift, how to lift and when to ask for help when lifting or transferring will help to prevent injury, avoid fatigue and make the best use of strength.

When Lifting or Transferring a Person, Remember:

- Never lift more than you can comfortably handle.
- Let the person do as much as he or she is capable of during the lift or transfer. If the person cannot assist with the transfer at all, you may require special training and/or adaptive equipment for lifts or transfers.
- Work at the person's level and speed and check for pain.
- Avoid sudden jerking motions.
- Never pull on the person's arms or shoulders.
- Have the person wear shoes with good treads or sturdy slippers.
- Create a base of support by standing with your feet shoulder width apart with one foot a half-step in front of the other.
- Let your legs do the lifting, not your back.
- Avoid letting the person put his arms around your neck or grab you. If the person is fearful, have him clasp his hands close to his chest during the lift or transfer.
- Breathe deeply and keep shoulders relaxed.

Let Assistive Devices Do the Heavy Lifting

When mobility issues are too much for a family caregiver to handle alone, there are specific assistive devices designed to help caregivers lift and transfer loved ones safely. This can allow for continued care at home as opposed to having to move to a care facility. Some common assistive devices for lifting and transferring include:

- **Sliding boards:** Used to create a bridge between two surfaces, allowing the caregiver to slide the person across the board and transfer him or her to a new surface
- **Transfer or gait belts:** Used for support when guiding a person on a sliding board, a transfer or gait belt is also used to help hold up a person as he or she walks and for sit-to-stand transfers
- **Lift chairs:** Recliner-style chairs that feature a remote-controlled, powered lifting mechanism that pushes the entire chair up from its base, gently guiding the user to a standing position
- **Ceiling-mounted lifts:** Sling-like devices anchored to a track in the ceiling in which a person can sit and

be guided from one place to another by the caregiver

For more information about proper body mechanics or assistive lifting and transferring devices, please visit Live Free Home Health Care at www.livefreehomehealthcare.com.

About Live Free Home Health Care:

Serving the Lakes Region and Central New Hampshire, Live Free Home Health Care, LLC is dedicated to providing top quality care in the comfort of home, wherever home may be. Family owned and operated, Live Free Home Health Care offers a wide range of services, from companion care and assistance with activities of daily living to skilled nursing. All care is supervised and updated by a registered nurse, who is specially trained to watch for new or changing health issues. Whether the need is for short or long term care, Live Free Home Health Care works with each client's physician to provide a continuum of care unparalleled with other agencies, and the compassionate staff promises to treat each client respectfully and like a cherished family member. Live Free Home Health Care also offers medical alert systems to provide extra peace of mind should an emergency care need arise.

For further information, contact **(603) 217-0149** or visit www.LiveFreeHomeHealthCare.com.