

# **Patient requirements for Instrumental Activities of Daily Living**

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This chapter deals with those activities that allow an individual to live independently in a community. The ability to perform IADLs can significantly improve the quality of life. However, they may falter and require help. Early identification will help in modification of planned activity.

IADL includes the following:

- Managing finances, such as paying bills and managing financial assets
- Managing transportation, either via driving or by organizing other means of transport.
- Shopping and meal preparation: This covers everything required to get a meal on the table. It also covers shopping for clothing and other items required for daily life.
- Housecleaning and home maintenance: This means cleaning kitchen after eating, keeping one's living space reasonably clean and tidy, and keeping up with home maintenance.
- Managing communication, such as the telephone and mail.
- Managing medication, which covers obtaining medications and taking them as directed.

A person struggling with IADLs does not necessarily translate into needing assisted living; rather, he or she may need some help to perform these tasks every now and then. So, it's time for friends, family, and paid care to pitch in as and when needed. It can also be taken as an indication to get a full check-up done, so that all medical needs can be taken care of. The inability of an individual to perform IADLs can indicate one or many potential issues going on, as well as serve as warnings for worse problems. Some [causes of the memory slippage](#) that tends to be the first step in the progression of IADL loss include:

Mental fog caused by medication side effects, interactions, or overuse

Simply not getting enough sleep can cause or worsen memory problems

The beginning of dementia which often involves memory loss, and can have many causes

Medical issues such as nutritional deficiency, or worsening of pre-existing conditions

IADLs need to be taken as an indicator. If a person is repeatedly failing to do these activities, it is an indication to get help. Living with IADL dependence doesn't have to be difficult- from using assistive technology, [home modifications](#), or bringing in outside care, to considering life in a retirement community; there are numerous ways to promote your independence while living with IADL dependence.

### **Medications:**

- All medication needs to be given on time especially Anti-hypertensive, Thyroid, and diuretics medication.
- Anti-diabetic medication to be given just before meals. For elderly above the age of 75 years, it is to be given after meals, in case the patient does not take adequate feed, to prevent hypoglycaemia.
- During hospital admission medication is to be given by staff nurse only. The family members to be strictly instructed not to give any medication without consent.
- In bed ridden patients, medication can be given through Ryle's tube or peg feeds.

### **Food requirement:**

- Food must be given on time along with medication. The caretaker can enquire from the patient what would be their preference of diet, whether semisolids or a soft diet.
- In bed ridden patients, feeds to be given every 2 or 3 hours. It is important to aspirate the patient before every feed to find out if any content from the previous feed is present. If it is, then it is better to delay the next feeds.
- Following feeds, the Ryle's tube or peg tube need to be flushed with water and washed thoroughly.
- Ensure adequate nutritional diet is given to the patient.
- Feeds to be given to the patient in an upright position and the same position is to be maintained for another half an hour post feed to prevent aspiration.

Some assistive devices to improve IADL and ADL are:

- Shower chairs
- Handheld shower heads
- Grab bars in the bathroom
- Toilet seat risers
- Washcloth mitts
- Bed rails
- Prescription drug organizers
- Kitchen utensils with large handles
- Two handed cups
- Stocking aids
- Tennis shoes with Velcro instead of shoelaces
- Walkers

**References:**

1. <https://www.assistedliving.org/what-are-iadls/>
2. <https://www.healthinaging.org/tools-and-tips/ask-geriatrician-tube-feeding-and-alternatives-older-adults-advanced-dementia>

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