

# Understanding Frailty

## What is frailty?

Throughout life you experience events that impact your health. When the impact of these events starts to result in declining function, impaired mobility, or cognitive impairment, it is called frailty.

## Anyone can be frail.

It is more common in people who:

- › Are older
- › Are less active
- › Need help with daily tasks like shopping and cleaning
- › Lose weight unexpectedly
- › Use multiple medications
- › Visit the emergency department often
- › Have memory problems that interfere with daily activities

## How do I know if I am frail?

Signs and symptoms of frailty can be both subtle and obvious. Sometimes you will notice the signs. Sometimes your family members, friends, healthcare team, or others will notice the signs. Your healthcare team may ask you and people who know you well questions to help figure out if you are frail. This may lead to other questions and tests to help get a current and complete picture of your overall health.

## What does this mean for loved ones who support someone with frailty?

People who are frail often need, or will need, the support of people close to them to help with daily activities. This can take a physical and emotional toll on loved ones. It's important that support people find ways to self-care, including taking breaks. This isn't always easy and may involve the help of both formal (self-help groups, respite care) and informal (friends, family) support.

