Using a Manual Wheelchair

Uneven ground:
- Know the terrain you need to travel. It is best to go with someone before going alone.
- Select flat, smooth surfaces whenever possible.
- Use a controlled lift of your casters (small front wheels) to get over bumps.
- Keep both casters (small front wheels) pointing in the same direction.
- Soft surfaces require keeping forward momentum.
- Hitting a bump or soft ground at speed can cause you to fall forward out of the chair.

Ramps:
- Keep body weight forward when going up.
- Lean back slightly when going down.
- Use momentum going up if there is no bump at the bottom of the ramp.
- If handrails are reachable, use them to assist.

Stairs and curbs:
- Ask for assistance; do not go up or down stairs or curbs alone.

Using a Manual Wheelchair

Uneven ground:
- Know the terrain you need to travel. It is best to go with someone before going alone.
- Select flat, smooth surfaces whenever possible.
- Use a controlled lift of your casters (small front wheels) to get over bumps.
- Keep both casters (small front wheels) pointing in the same direction.
- Soft surfaces require keeping forward momentum.
- Hitting a bump or soft ground at speed can cause you to fall forward out of the chair.

Ramps:
- Keep body weight forward when going up.
- Lean back slightly when going down.
- Use momentum going up if there is no bump at the bottom of the ramp.
- If handrails are reachable, use them to assist.

Stairs and curbs:
- Ask for assistance; do not go up or down stairs or curbs alone.
These tips are intended to assist you in the planning of traveling in the community. They are a guide only and cannot guarantee your safety. It is the responsibility of the reader to follow his/her health care professional’s advice related to their specific condition. Always be prepared to encounter the unpredictable.