

Wheelchair Evaluation

Your doctor or other health care professional has recommended that a manual wheelchair, power wheelchair, or scooter would be helpful for household and/or community level mobility.

How do you decide which one would be best for you?

At Baptist Medical Center South, a qualified physical therapist (PT) or occupational therapist (OT) can help evaluate what type of equipment would be most appropriate. Why is a wheelchair evaluation necessary? By participating in a wheelchair evaluation, we will be able to identify which type of mobility device would best suit your function and needs. It will provide valuable information about your functional abilities, your environment (home, work, school), and any other special needs. Insurance providers (both private and governmental) have very specific requirements that must be fulfilled in order for them to approve the purchase of any mobility device/wheelchair. This will include a detailed evaluation and/or a letter of medical necessity. Your therapist will be able to identify these requirements and meet those obligations.

What can I expect during the wheelchair evaluation?

The evaluation will take approximately 1-2 hours. The physical or occupational therapist will be present at the time of the evaluation, along with a representative from a wheelchair company to assist in identifying the most appropriate equipment for you.

The therapist will evaluate:

- Your physical abilities
- The accessibility of your environment
- Your functional limitations
- Your ability to perform mobility related activities of daily living (MRADLs) such as bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, home management, transfers, and ambulation

- The type of transportation you use
- How the wheelchair will increase your independence
- Your ability to use the mobility device safely, including specific seating and positioning issues

Once your mobility needs have been identified, the therapist will provide you an opportunity to try similar equipment and provide training in the use of the equipment, whether it is a wheelchair or scooter.

Why should I have an appointment with an occupational or physical therapist?

Physical and occupational therapists have knowledge of anatomy, disease progression, and wheelchairs, and can advocate for the appropriate equipment for you. It is their job to:

- Identify the mobility device that best meets your needs and functional limitations (manual wheelchair, power wheelchair, or scooter)
- Identify the seating and positioning products that will work best for your body and functional needs
- Identify any special needs that require custom fitting, adaptive seating functions (tilt/recline), or specific modifications to meet your needs. The therapist will assist in making these decisions and provide the justifications for medical necessity to the insurance company.