Use of Walking Sticks
Patient Information
Use of walking sticks, general safety measures for people with walking difficulty

1. Use a suitably high chair with arms from which you can easily get in and out.
2. Beware of obstacles to walking such as loose rugs, loose draught excluders and worn floor coverings.
3. Ensure lighting in hallways and stairs is adequate.
4. Flat supportive shoes, not slippers, should be worn.
5. Wet floors must be avoided.
6. Outdoor hazards may include uneven surfaces, wet leaves and ice.
7. Replace ferrules (rubber tips) when these are worn. (These can be obtained from hardware stores, larger chemists or your local Physiotherapy Department).

Walking sticks

Sticks should be used with the handle facing backwards and normally held in the opposite hand to the affected leg.

Using sticks

When the stick is measured correctly, the user should be able maintain an upright posture with the elbow slightly flexed. In this way body weight is taken through the stick by pushing down on the stick when walking.

Walking with a stick

Walk in a normal manner, placing the stick on the ground at the same time as the affected leg. Remember, the stick should normally be held in the hand opposite to the affected leg.

Getting up from the chair

The stick should be near the arm of the chair. The user should lean forward (1) and, with hands on the arms of the chair, push forward and stand up (2-3). When returning to the chair, the user should turn round, feel the chair behind the legs (4), place hands on the chair arms (5), bend forward (6) and lower gently into the chair (7). The stick can be held or rested nearby.

Up and down stairs

Hold on to a handrail if at all possible. The stick goes on the same step as the affected leg.

The unaffected leg should lead when going upstairs, and the affected leg leads when coming down. However, where possible, go up and down stairs in a normal manner.

Walking Aids supplied by the NHS are on loan and should be returned when no longer needed.

The aid should not be altered or passed on to another person for whom it has not been prescribed.