

# 10 Things to Know

# When Considering a Power Wheelchair



## 1 **Maintain independence**

Power wheelchairs (PWC) allow you to be independent navigating home and community as strength and energy levels decline.



## 2 **It's a team approach**

A face to face visit with your doctor and an evaluation by a PT or OT are required to order a PWC. A knowledgeable Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider will guide you through the ordering process.



## 3 **Timing is important**

It can take an average of 3 months to receive the chair after paperwork is completed. Starting the process early allows time to learn how to drive the chair before it is an urgent situation.



## 4 **Use an ALS expert**

A DME provider who understands ALS is important. They can often accelerate the order process, plan ahead for changes and train you and your caregivers how to use the chair. They will be available for maintenance, repairs, or additional features as function changes.



## 5 **Built for you**

PWCs are built custom to your size. The correct sizing of the frame and seat is important to prevent injury or skin breakdown. Features and controls are added based on your needs.



## 6

## **Features are important**

Features such as tilt, recline, seat elevation and elevating leg rests are important for comfort, ease of breathing, transfers, skin health and circulation. A supportive seat cushion helps to avoid pain and pressure wounds caused by prolonged sitting.



## 7

## **Driving the chair**

A PWC can be controlled by a joystick, with a switch or with eye gaze. The type and location of the controller is determined by mobility and can change over time. A caregiver control can also be placed on the back of the chair for help with driving when needed.



## 8

## **Insurance coverage**

Medicare pays 80% of the cost, and only covers one wheelchair every 5 years. They will pay for repairs and additional features if needed unless you purchase the wheelchair privately.



## 9

## **Lifestyle matters**

PWCs can be used inside and out, on nearly any surface. Communication devices and respiratory equipment can be attached to the chair for easy mobility. Discuss your lifestyle and have a home assessment with the team as you are determining the right chair for you.



## 10

## **Getting around**

An adapted van or accessible transportation is needed to transport a PWC. Ramps, wide doorways, minimal clutter, and open spaces to easily navigate the PWC are important considerations within your home and places you frequent.