

Index of Independence in Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

Overview: The Index of Independence in Activities of Daily Living (ADL) is used to evaluate elderly and chronically ill patients for ability to perform essential life functions (bathing dressing going to toilet transferring maintaining continence and feeding). The patient is assessed in each of these functions and based on the pattern for independence or dependence one of eight grades is assigned. The grade is then used in assessing prognosis and guiding rehabilitation.

The word "assistance" means supervision direction or personal assistance.

Activities of Daily Living:

- (1) bathing
- (2) dressing
- (3) toileting
- (4) transfer
- (5) continence
- (6) feeding

Bathing (sponge bath tub bath or shower):

- Receives no assistance (gets in and out of tube by self if tub is usual means of bathing). [independent]
- Receives assistance in bathing only one part of the body (such as back or a leg). [intermediate]
- Receives assistance in bathing more than one part of the body or is not bathed. [dependent]

Dressing (gets clothes from closet and drawers including underclothes outer garments and using fasteners (including braces if worn):

- Patient gets clothes and gets completely dress without assistance. [independent]
- Gets clothes and gets dressed without assistance except for assistance in tying shoes. [intermediate]
- Receives assistance in getting clothes or getting dressed or stays partly or completely undressed. [dependent]

Toileting (going to the "toilet room" for bowel and urine elimination; cleaning self after elimination; arranging clothes):

- Goes to the "toilet room" cleans self and arranges clothes without assistance. [independent]
- Receives assistance in going to the "toilet room" or in cleansing self or in arranging clothes after elimination or in use of night bedpan or commode. [intermediate]
- Does not go to the "toilet room" for the elimination process. [dependent]

Transfer:

- Moves in and out of bed as well as in and out of chair without assistance. [independent]
- Moves in and out of bed or chair with assistance. [intermediate]
- Does not get out of bed. [dependent]

Continence:

- Controls urination and bowel movements completely by self. [independent]
- Has occasional "accidents". [intermediate]
- Supervision helps keep urine or bowel control; catheter is used or is incontinent. [dependent]

Feeding:

- Feeds self without assistance. [independent]
- Feeds self except for getting assistance in cutting meat or buttering bread. [intermediate]
- Receives assistance in feeding or is fed partly or completely by using tubes or intravenous fluids. [dependent]

Grade	Description
A	independent in all 6 functions
B	independent in all but one of the 6 functions
C	dependent in bathing and one other function
D	dependent in bathing dressing and one other function
E	dependent in bathing dressing going to toilet and one other function
F	dependent in bathing dressing going to toilet transferring and one other function
G	dependent in all 6 functions
other	dependent in at least 2 functions but not classified as C D E or F

References:

Katz S Downs TD et al. Progress in development of the index of ADL. Gerontologist. 1970; 10:20-30.

Katz S Ford AB et al. Studies of illness in the aged. JAMA. 1963; 185:914-919.