



# Spinal Cord Injury Changes Everything

There are many changes that will occur as a result of a spinal cord injury, not just physically, but emotionally, socially and financially. As a friend it is important for you to support the person with the injury as they adapt to the changes in their life.

## Changes for a person with a Spinal Cord Injury

Physical appearance	<p>When you have a spinal cord injury, there is a physical change. You may be using a wheelchair and you may look different.</p> <p>Being in a wheelchair affects the way you have a conversation, it brings on stares and watchful eyes from people when out and about that are simply just curious as to what happened and why you look different. Sometimes it even changes the way friends view you.</p>
Emotionally	<p>You may have to rely on people for everyday living activities like showering and dressing. In many cases, you have to get used to being dependent upon others as well as dependent upon equipment to do “normal” things. Your sense of independence may feel threatened. You may feel frustrated with life.</p>
Getting out and about and socialising	<p>There are many things to consider when going out. Some considerations include:</p> <p><i>How will I get there</i> – Do I have a modified car? Is there an accessible bus / train available and a bus / train station nearby which I can wheel to? How much will an accessible taxi cost?</p> <p><i>The Venue</i> – Is it wheelchair accessible? – Are there steps? Is the doorway/entrance wide enough for me to wheel through? Accessible parking and toilets? If staying overnight, is it suitable to my needs as a paraplegic or quadriplegic?</p>
Financially	<p>Work and education – Will I be able to find a job that pays well enough to support all the extra costs that a spinal cord injury incurs? Will I be able to work at all? Will I be able to find a workplace that is understanding and accessible?</p>
Relationships, Friends and finding a partner	<p>When forming relationships, people may have difficulty understanding the day to day challenges that people with a spinal cord injury have. Friendships may change – some become stronger, others need time to adjust.</p>

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.

