

Use of “Pull/Roll Sheet”

A folded sheet (“pull/roll sheet”) placed under the body (neck to buttocks) can be used to move the patient around in the bed. It assists to maintain the body alignment during movement.

- Always support head if person is unable to;
- Two people can move a person up in the bed by rolling the sides of the sheet up and close to the person’s hips and together moving the person up in bed;
- One person can use sheet to move a person over to one side of the bed and/or to roll them on their side.

Other Hints in Adjusting Position

- When moving the patient to the near side of the bed, begin with the head then the shoulders, trunk, legs, and feet;
- When moving from side to side, it can be helpful to bend and flex the knee. This helps the rotation of the hip; the body will follow;
- When the person is in the new position, support the arms and legs with pillows or rolled up towels, especially when the person is in a side-lying position;
- If the person is unable to communicate, imagine yourself in that position. Check that the person is not lying on the shoulder and/or arm;
- Rearrange pillows. Pillows can be placed for support under the person’s head, between the knees, or under hands or arms;
- Keep skin clean and dry. Keep linen and clothing dry and wrinkle free;
- Reddened areas or opened areas of skin need to be checked by the nurse;
- Apply lotion and massage the skin to assist in increasing the circulation and general comfort.

Transferring (Moving from One Place to Another)

Plan ahead what you are going to do and the easiest way to do it.

When moving someone from bed to a chair:

- Place the bed in a low position;
- Always assist patient to their strong side if they have one;
- Always lock/secure the bed, the wheelchair, and/or chair to prevent movement. Place the chair close to the bed, equalizing heights as much as possible;
- If moving from the bed to chair, put the bed in its lowest position with the head raised to a sitting position, if possible;
- Stand in front of the person being transferred;
- Stand with your feet apart. This position broadens your base support, improving your balance and control when moving;
- Help the person to a sitting position;
- Give the person time in a sitting position to be sure that any dizziness subsides before attempting to get them up;
- Absorb the strain with your knees and legs, not your back. Keep your back straight;
- Flex your hips slightly;
- Stand in front of the person and put your arms around their body, placing your hands on their ribs in back;
- Instruct the person to place their hands on your shoulders, not around your neck;
- Make sure the person who is being moved has his or her feet on the ground;
- Using your weight to balance, and keeping your knees slightly bent, gently rock the person into a standing position;

- To turn, continue to counterbalance with your weight and maintain a wide-based stance. Pivot on your feet, slowly turning your whole body, not twisting your trunk;
- Gently lower the person into the chair by bending your knees.

Providing a Bath While in Bed

Bathing a person provides for more than cleanliness. Baths encourage exercise, stimulate circulation, prevent pressure sores, promote relaxation, and give you an opportunity to look at the skin for open areas.

Assemble Supplies:

- towels
- washcloth
- clean clothes
- soap (oatmeal soap can help with itching)
- basin
- lotion (containing lanolin)

General Principles:

- When giving a bath, encourage independence when possible;
- Give pain medications one hour before bathing, if movement is painful;
- Provide privacy and prevent drafts;
- Suggest toileting before beginning;
- Adjust the bed to a comfortable position;
- Bathe only a small area at a time to avoid chills;
- Dry the person as you bathe;
- Change the water frequently when it is dirty, soapy, or cool;
- If the person is unable to tolerate a full bath, offer to wash the face, hands, back and perineal area only;
- Avoid powders. Cornstarch is a good substitute for powder and can be lightly sprinkled on linen.

Process for Bathing:

- Fill basin two-thirds full with warm water;
- Wash one area at a time, starting with the face;
- Wash the eyes from the inner to the outer corner using water only; rinse the cloth after each eye;
- Wash and rinse the face, neck, and ears;
- Work from the head down, washing with long, circular motions, washing, rinsing, and drying thoroughly;
- The person may want to clean the perineal area themselves, but if they are unable to— for females, separate the labia with one hand and cleanse the area with downward strokes. For males, clean the penis with circular motions. Pull back the foreskin of the uncircumcised male to clean this area. Wipe from front to back, changing location with each wipe. Daily washing of this area and after toileting is important to prevent infection and skin breakdown. There are skin-protecting lotions that can be applied;
- Roll the person to the side;
- Wash, rinse, and dry the backside;
- Wash feet. Sometimes it's comforting to place feet in a basin of water;
- Apply deodorant, lotion and put on clean clothes, gown, or pajamas.

Mouth Care

Remember to assist with mouth care, as needed. Often, this is easily forgotten. Cleaning the mouth helps prevent sores and may improve appetite.

Assemble Supplies:

- soft toothbrush or toothette
- towel
- toothpaste
- small bowl

General Principles:

When providing for mouth care, have the person sit up in an upright position, if possible.

- Place the towel under his or her chin;
- Brush teeth and gums gently with toothpaste;
- Try to remove all food particles and crusted materials;
- Avoid putting toothbrush too near the back of the person's throat, as this may cause the person to gag;
- Rinse the mouth out with cool water;
- If the person has dentures, remove and clean them. Cleaning after meals is also helpful. When people lose weight, dentures may no longer fit properly. This may be caused by a change in the shape of the jaw. Poorly fitting dentures may result in mouth sores. Some people choose to leave dentures out and eat softer foods;
- If you notice mouth sores, tell the nurse. There are medications that can provide comfort;
- After completing mouth care, apply a moisturizer to the lips and the corners of the mouth to prevent cracking.

Changing Linens

Clean sheets can be helpful to make an individual feel more comfortable. Change sheets whenever they're dirty, wet, or sweaty. This might mean changing sheets anywhere from several times a day to once a week. This is easier if the person can get out of bed, but if that is too difficult, the following are brief instructions:

- Have the clean linens available and near before you begin;
- Untuck the top sheets;
- Move the person to one side of the bed. If the bed has a side rail put it up. Roll the person onto their side facing the side rail. Be careful the person doesn't slip off the side;
- Loosen the bottom sheets along the other side of the bed and roll them up along the person's back;
- Position the clean bottom sheet on the open side of the bed and tuck it in;
- Fold the remainder of the clean sheet and roll it close to the dirty sheet;
- Help the person roll over both sheets to the area of the clean sheets;
- Pull away the dirty sheets carefully and tuck the clean ones into the bed;
- Change the pillowcases;
- Help the person back into the middle of the bed and a location of comfort;
- Replace the top sheets and cover.

Preventing the Spread of Infection

Infections are caused by germs that spread from one person or location to another. They can spread in different ways. Some, like colds and flu, spread when you come in contact with a contaminated surface. Washing your hands the right way and at the right times is very helpful in preventing these kinds of infections. Other infections, like HIV and Hepatitis B, are found in blood and other body fluids. Always taking precautions around blood and other body fluids is the key to stopping these types of infection. Some infections, like Tuberculosis, can even be carried on tiny particles in the air.

Preventing the spread of infection is an important part of hospice care. You need to know that infections can cause disease and complications for the patient, for caregivers, and for others who are living with or visiting the patient.

What can you do to help prevent the spread of infection? Here are five key points:

1. Get in the **habit of washing your hands** both before and after doing things like: providing care; eating, drinking, or handling food; using the toilet; covering a cough; or blowing your nose. When you wash your hands, take the time to do it correctly. Following these steps is a good idea:
 - Push up your sleeves and rinse with warm water;
 - Work your hands together with soap for at least 10 full seconds;
 - Get under your nails and cuticles;
 - Rinse well;
 - Dry your hands (*Suggestion: use a clean paper towel to dry your hands; then use a dry paper towel to turn off the faucet.*)
2. Use **extra caution around blood, body fluids, and any sharp objects** (like used syringes). Find out from someone on the hospice team what special safety precautions they recommend.
3. If **personal protective items...** such as gloves or masks... are recommended or specified by the hospice team, be sure you learn how to put them on and take them off correctly, and then use them as called for.
4. Maintain a **clean caregiving environment**. If there is a spill, for example of blood, be sure to clean it up, being careful about avoiding any direct contact. Ask the hospice team about correct disposal of used syringes, bandages, and other contaminated items. And following whatever directions or recommendations they give you.
5. Finally, **work together** on the goal of preventing the spread of infection. Let someone on the hospice team know if you have questions or need help. Make it clear to yourself and others involved in care that you understand this is an important part of the care giving effort you're involved in.

Using Oxygen Safely

Basic points for using oxygen safely include:

- Safe use of oxygen is important;
- The prongs of the nasal cannula must be in the patient's nose;
- If using a face mask, it must fit snugly on the person's face;
- Small pieces of cotton or pads between tubing and skin can lessen irritation if it occurs;
- Understand how to use the equipment and any backup system;
- Oxygen is a drug and must be used only as prescribed by your physician. Treat it just like any other medication your loved one takes. Don't change the amount unless he/she is instructed to do so. Oxygen needs vary with activity;
- Never use petroleum products (e.g. oil or grease) if oxygen equipment is being used because of the risk of combustion. Vaseline is a petroleum based product and should never be used for nasal irritation. Instead, use a water-based moisturizer such as K-Y jelly;
- Make certain that the delivery device (cannula, mask, etc.) is clean to reduce potential infection and to assure adequate oxygen delivery;

- Oxygen tubing should be no longer than 50 feet, because it may decrease the amount of oxygen received;
- If patient or a visitor smoke, the smoker should be at least 10 feet away from the oxygen source and any tubing;
- There should be no open flames (e.g. candle, wood stove, fireplace) within 10 feet of the person using oxygen, all tubing, and the source of oxygen.

Types of Oxygen Delivery Systems—Precautions, Instructions

There are different ways that oxygen can be provided:

Concentrators

These machines take the air and concentrate it into oxygen.

- Place concentrators 6-12 inches away from curtains, heating units, or open flame;
- Remove any frayed electrical wiring. Do not use extension cords. Concentrators draw as much as 5-6 amps, be careful not to overload circuits;
- Do not use aerosol sprays in the vicinity of the concentrator as they may clog the filter.

Liquid Systems

- Store in a cool, well-ventilated place at least 10 feet from outlets, open flames or other heat sources;
- Do not touch the fill adapter (the area that frosts over) after filling the portable;
- Special precautions are required when traveling with liquid oxygen, especially during hot weather when car temperatures may exceed 200° F. Windows must be left open for ventilation and the car's electrical system must be in good working order to prevent sparks from igniting in a highly combustible atmosphere.

Tank Oxygen

- Store away from heat sources. The pressure inside the tank increases for each 5 degree increase in cylinder temperature;
- Secure tanks to the wall, stand, or other stabilizing device to prevent them from falling over. Because of high pressures inside the tank, damage to the tank or regulator can be dangerous. Do not store in hot, unventilated area, such as trunks of cars, closets, storage units, or under the bed.

Note: Both liquid and cylinder oxygen must be secured with a seat belt when traveling. Oxygen tanks should not be stored in an area that can reach above 120° F.

Using Restraints

At times, patients become forgetful and confused. They may move about in ways that put them at risk for injury. Be sure to talk with the hospice team about this. They can help you in promoting patient safety, including deciding whether use of restraints may be necessary and appropriate.

In many cases, there are alternatives which solve the problem without using physical or chemical (by medication) restraint. A bonus with most of these recommendations is that they also improve the quality of life for your loved one. Alternatives to physical or chemical restraint include:

Increased Physical Comfort Positioning

- food or drink
- back rub
- toileting
- appropriate clothing
- glasses, hearing aid, dentures