

Safety and Emergencies



Nurse Aide Education Program
Inservice/Continuing Education Credit Courses

Safety

Providing an environment in which the client feels safe and secure is an important goal of every member of the health care team.

To promote safety you need to be aware of the environment:

1. Keep traffic patterns clear in client's living space and in hallways.
2. Clean up spills immediately.
3. Check electrical cords for fraying.
4. Check that equipment is working properly before using.
5. Use equipment safely and according to manufacturer's guidelines.
6. Never use electrical equipment near water or oxygen.
7. Report potentially hazardous conditions to your supervisor immediately.

To promote safety follow good infection control practices:

1. Wash hands properly.
2. Use Standard Precautions at all times during the workday.
3. Handle all linen and equipment according to proper infection control practices.



To promote safety be aware of your body and the client's body when moving the client:

1. Use good body mechanics.
2. Never turn a client toward the side of the bed with the side rail down. Raise the side rail, walk to the other side of the bed and assist the client to turn toward the raised side rail. (not all home care clients have a hospital bed)
3. Never lean over the client in the bed to do any procedure. Discomfort and injury to both you and the client can result. The linen and your clothing can cross contaminate.
4. Be certain the client is wearing shoes or slippers with rubber soles when getting out of bed.
5. Have the client sit on the side of the bed with feet flat on the floor 10-15 seconds and check for dizziness before moving.
6. Never move a client by grabbing him under the arm.
7. Place a pillow against headboard when moving the client up in bed.
8. Ask the client to help as much as possible.
9. Always move the client on the count of "one, two, three".



To promote safety understand that side rails can be considered:

1. A safety aid and must be up if the bed is elevated to working height.
2. A self help device to assist the client to move independently.
3. A restraint if used for the sole purpose of confining the client in bed. This will require a doctor's order.

To promote safety use extreme caution when oxygen is in use:

1. Oxygen is highly flammable. Never use electrical appliances near oxygen.
2. Keep open flames (matches, lighter, and cigarettes) away from oxygen.
3. "No Smoking, Oxygen in Use" signs must be posted on the inside and outside of the house.

Your Role:

Be aware of safety at all times.

Observe and report unsafe situations to the nurse immediately.

Always practice proper infection control.

Use proper body mechanics.

Use side rails as directed by the nurse.

Understand that safety is an important consideration for the Home health aide and the client.



Emergencies

An emergency is a sudden, unexpected severe problem that endangers people. Emergencies can occur anywhere at anytime. Remain calm and know what to do.

Fire is a major concern in any building where larger number of people live and work. Three things necessary to start a fire are fuel (anything that will burn, i.e. paper, cloth, or grease), heat (a spark or flame), and oxygen (air). If all three are present at the same time, in the same place, a fire will result.

Common causes of fire are: faulty electrical wiring and careless or unsupervised smoking.

To prevent fires these precautions for oxygen use must be followed:

1. Post "No Smoking, Oxygen in Use" signs on the inside and out side of the house. Usually a sign is placed on the front entrance of the home and also at the door of the room the oxygen is being used.
2. Do not allow any smoking or open flames near the oxygen.
3. Do not use electrical appliances such as electric razors or hairdryers.
4. Remove flammable liquids from the room that contains the oxygen.
5. Use cotton instead of wool or synthetics that can cause static electricity.

Follow smoking safety and use good sense:

1. Smoke only in designated areas.
2. Never leave smoking materials at the bedside of a confused or sedated client.
3. Provide ashtrays and dispose of contents into approved containers.
4. Supervise smoking of clients that can not protect themselves.

Actions necessary in the event of a fire:

1. **R**=remove client from immediate fire areas to safety.
A=activate alarm....call 911. Use lifeline system if available.
C=contain the fire by closing all doors and windows.
E=extinguish fire.
2. Know how to use an extinguisher if available.
P=pull pin.
A=aim nozzle.
S=squeeze handle.
S=sweep from side to side.
3. Additional points to remember
Never use the elevator in the event of a fire.
Avoid smoke inhalation.
Stay low and cover your mouth with a wet cloth.



If your clothing should catch on fire.....**STOP, DROP** and **ROLL** to smother the flames.

Client emergencies such as choking, falls, shock, burns, seizures, fainting, hemorrhage or cardiac arrest require immediate action:

- Know your limitations. Start emergency measures that you are trained to perform.
- Call 911 or use the client's lifeline immediately.
- Remain calm and reassure the client.
- Observe the client for life threatening problems (breathing, pulse or bleeding).
- Keep the client in the same position.
- Keep the client warm.
- Do not give the client any food or fluids.

Things to remember when responding to specific client emergencies:

Choking – a complete blockage of the airway requiring immediate action.

1. The client can not breathe, speak or cough and has no chest movement.
2. The client gasps or clutches at the throat (the universal sign for choking).
3. The procedure used on an adult in the Heimlich maneuver or abdominal thrusts.

Falls – preventing falls is the best way to avoid serious injury. If a client begins to fall, never try to stop the fall. Gently ease the client to the floor and;

1. Call for help immediately. Keep the client in the same position until you are sure the client does not have a noticeable injury and is free from pain.
2. Remain calm and reassure the client if an injury is apparent.

Shock – occurs when vital parts of the body (brain, heart and lungs) do not get enough blood.

1. Call for help immediately.
2. Keep the client lying down.
3. If bleeding is external, apply direct pressure to the bleeding site using Standard Precautions.
4. Keep the client warm and reassure him/her.

Burns – smoking, spilled hot liquids and bath water that is too hot are some causes of burns.

1. Call 911 when it is evident that client has sustained burn that needs medical attention.
2. Notify the nurse at your agency for instructions.



Seizures (convulsions) – are sudden contractions of muscles due to a disturbance in brain activity.

1. Call 911 or activate lifeline and stay with client.
2. Protect the client from injury.
3. Never restrain the client or place anything in their mouth.
4. Loosen clothing, especially around the neck.
5. After the seizure, turn the client to the side to prevent choking and allow the client to rest.
6. Observe and report (time and duration of seizures).

Poisoning – many products in the home are dangerous if used improperly.

1. Never use anything from an unlabeled container.
2. In case of suspected poisoning, call 911 and notify your agency immediately.
3. Keep toxic substances and cleaning supplies away from the client.

**Nationwide Poison Control..... dial 1-800-222-1222. This number works anywhere in the United States. This new number allows the public to call from anywhere in the United States and be connected to the poison center responsible in their area.*

Fainting – sudden loss of consciousness because of inadequate blood supply to the brain. Causes include hunger, fatigue, pain and fear. Dizziness and perspiration are symptoms.

1. Call for help with client's lifeline or call 911.
2. Have client sit or lie down before fainting occurs. If sitting, have client bend forward and place head between knees. If lying down slightly elevate the client's legs.
3. Loosen tight fitting clothing.
4. Keep client lying down until medical help arrives.

Hemorrhage – excessive loss of blood from a blood vessel.

1. Use Standard Precautions.
2. Apply direct pressure over the area with a sterile dressing or a clean piece of linen.
3. Activate the client's lifeline and/or call 911.

Cardiac Arrest – heart function and circulation stop. The client will be unresponsive, no chest movement or pulse, pupils dilated and fixed, skin may be cyanotic (blue tinged).

1. Touch or tap client and ask, "Are you OK?"
2. Check breathing. If breathing has stopped, call 911 and start CPR.



A disaster is a sudden event in which property is destroyed and many people may be killed or injured. Floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes and blizzards are natural disasters. Fires, explosions, train and air accidents are considered man-made disasters.

- Know your community and each client should have an emergency response plan.
- Know your agency's policies and procedures relating to disasters.
- Each client should have a home evacuation plan.
- Remain calm.
- Remove client from immediate danger.
- Remove any client records for safe keeping.



Your role:

Know where the fire extinguishers are located.
Remain calm.
Always reassure the client.
Call 911 as soon as you notice an emergency.