

Chapter 15

Assisting With Comfort

The Person's Unit

- Patient and resident rooms are designed to provide comfort, safety, and privacy.
- The person's unit is the personal space, furniture, and equipment provided for the person by the agency.

The Person's Unit, cont'd.

● Temperature and ventilation

- Most healthy people are comfortable when the temperature is 68° F (Fahrenheit) to 74° F.
- The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA) requires that nursing centers maintain a temperature range of 71° F to 81° F.
- To protect older and ill persons from cool areas and drafts:
 - Keep room temperatures warm.
 - Make sure they wear the correct clothing.
 - Offer lap robes to those in chairs and wheelchairs.
 - Provide enough blankets for warmth.
 - Cover them with bath blankets when giving care.
 - Move them from drafty areas.

The Person's Unit, cont'd.

● Odors

➤ To reduce odors:

- Empty, clean, and disinfect bedpans, urinals, commodes, and kidney basins promptly.
- Make sure toilets are flushed.
- Check incontinent persons often.
- Clean persons who are wet or soiled from urine, feces, vomitus, or wound drainage.
- Change wet or soiled linens and clothing promptly.
- Keep laundry containers closed.
- Follow agency policy for wet or soiled linens and clothing.
- Dispose of incontinence and ostomy products promptly.
- Provide good hygiene to prevent body and breath odors.
- Use room deodorizers as needed and allowed by agency policy.

The Person's Unit, cont'd.

- If you smoke:
 - Follow the agency's policy.
 - Practice hand washing after handling smoking materials and before giving care.
 - Give careful attention to your uniforms, hair, and breath.

The Person's Unit, cont'd.

● Noise

- Common health care sounds may disturb patients and residents.
- To decrease noise:
 - Control your voice.
 - Handle equipment carefully.
 - Keep equipment in good working order.
 - Answer phones, call lights, and intercoms promptly.

The Person's Unit, cont'd.

- Lighting

- Good lighting is needed for safety and comfort.
- Adjust lighting and window coverings to meet the person's changing needs.
- Keep light controls within the person's reach.
 - This protects the right to personal choice.

The Person's Unit, cont'd.

● Room furniture and equipment

➤ The bed

- Beds have electrical or manual controls.
- Beds are raised horizontally to reduce bending and reaching when giving care.
- The lowest horizontal position lets the person get out of bed with ease.
- The head of the bed is flat or raised to varying degrees.

➤ Electric beds may have:

- Controls on a side panel, bed rail, or the foot-board
- Hand-held devices

➤ Manual beds have cranks at the foot of the bed.

- The cranks are pulled up for use.
- They are kept down at all other times.

Bed Positions

- The six basic bed positions are:
 - The flat position
 - Fowler's position
 - High-Fowler's position
 - Semi-Fowler's position
 - Trendelenburg's position
 - Reverse Trendelenburg's position

Bed Safety

- Bed safety involves the hospital bed system.
 - Hospital bed systems have seven entrapment zones.
 - Entrapment means that the person can get caught, trapped, or entangled in spaces created by bed rails, the mattress, the bed frame, the head-board, or foot-board.
 - Persons at greatest risk for entrapment include persons who:
 - Are older
 - Are frail
 - Are confused or disoriented
 - Are restless
 - Have uncontrolled body movements
 - Have poor muscle control
 - Are small in size
 - Are restrained
 - Always check the person for entrapment.

Furniture and Equipment

- The over-bed table

- The over-bed table is placed over the bed by sliding the base under the bed.
- Only clean and sterile items are placed on the table.
- Clean the table after using it for a work surface.

- The bedside stand

- The bedside stand has a top drawer and a lower cabinet with shelves or drawers.
- Place only clean and sterile items on top of the bedside stand.
- If you use the bedside stand for a work surface, clean it when you are done.

Furniture and Equipment, cont'd.

● Chairs

- The person's unit always has at least one chair.
- The chair must:
 - Be comfortable and sturdy
 - Not move or tip during transfers
 - Allow the person to get in and out of it with ease

● Privacy curtains

- Each person has the right to full visual privacy (to be completely free from public view while in bed).
- Always pull the privacy curtain completely around the bed before giving care.
- Remember, privacy curtains do not block sounds or conversations.

Furniture and Equipment, cont'd.

- The call system

- The call system lets the person signal for help.
- Always keep the call light within the person's reach.
- An intercom system lets a nursing team member talk with the person from the nurses' station.
 - When using an intercom, remember confidentiality.
- Persons with limited hand mobility may need a call light that is turned on by tapping it with a hand or fist.

Furniture and Equipment, cont'd.

- Some people cannot use call lights.
 - Check the care plan for special communication measures.
 - Check these persons often.
 - Make sure their needs are met.
- You must:
 - Keep the call light within the person's reach.
 - Place the call light on the person's strong side.
 - Remind the person to signal when help is needed.
 - Answer call lights promptly.
 - Answer bathroom and shower or tub room call lights at once.

Furniture and Equipment, cont'd.

● The bathroom

- A toilet, sink, call system, and mirror are standard equipment in bathrooms.
- For safety, grab bars are by the toilet.
- Some bathrooms have raised toilet seats.
 - They make wheelchair transfers easier.
 - They are helpful for persons with joint problems.
- The bathroom call light flashes above the room door and at the nurses' station.
 - The sound at the nurses' station is different from the sound made by call lights in rooms.

Furniture and Equipment, cont'd.

- Closet and drawer space are provided.
 - OBRA requires closet space for each nursing center resident.
 - The space must have shelves and a clothes rack.
 - The person must have free access to the closet and its contents.
 - Items in closets and drawers are the person's private property.
- Many agencies furnish rooms with other equipment.
- Residents may bring some furniture and other items from home.

Bedmaking

- Clean, dry, and wrinkle-free linens:
 - Promote comfort
 - Prevent skin breakdown and pressure ulcers
- To keep beds neat and clean:
 - Straighten linens whenever loose or wrinkled and at bedtime.
 - Check for and remove food and crumbs after meals.
 - Check linens for dentures, eyeglasses, hearing aids, sharp objects, and other items.
 - Change linens whenever they become wet, soiled, or damp.
 - Follow Standard Precautions and the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.

Bedmaking, cont'd.

● Types of beds

- A closed bed is not in use.
 - The bed is ready for a new patient or resident.
 - In nursing centers, closed beds are made for residents who are up during the day.
- An open bed is in use.
 - Top linens are fan-folded back so the person can get into bed.
- An occupied bed is made with the person in it.
- A surgical bed is made:
 - To transfer a person from a stretcher
 - For persons who arrive by ambulance

Bedmaking, cont'd.

● Linens

- Collect linens in the order you will use them.
- Place the clean linen on a clean surface.
- Remove dirty linen one piece at a time.
 - Roll each piece away from you.
 - Discard each piece into the laundry bag.
- Wet, damp, or soiled linens are changed right away.
 - Wear gloves and follow Standard Precautions and the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.

Bedmaking, cont'd.

● Drawsheets

- A drawsheet is a small sheet placed over the middle of the bottom sheet.
- A cotton drawsheet helps keep the mattress and bottom linens clean.
- A waterproof drawsheet is placed between the bottom sheet and the cotton drawsheet.
- Many agencies use incontinence products, waterproof pads, or disposable bed protectors.
- Cotton drawsheets are often used without waterproof drawsheets.
- When cotton drawsheets are used as assist devices, do not tuck them in at the sides.

Bedmaking, cont'd.

- Making beds

- The closed bed is made:
 - After a person is discharged
 - For a new patient or resident
 - In nursing centers, for residents who are up for most or all of the day
- The open bed is made for:
 - Newly admitted persons arriving by wheelchair
 - Persons who are getting ready for bed
 - Persons who are out of bed for a short time

Bedmaking, cont'd.

- You make an occupied bed when the person stays in bed.
 - Keep the person in good alignment.
 - Follow restrictions or limits in the person's movement or position.
 - Explain each procedure step to the person before it is done.
- The surgical bed (recovery bed or post-operative bed) is made for persons:
 - Returning to their rooms from surgery
 - Arriving at the agency by ambulance
 - Taken by stretcher to treatment or therapy areas
 - Using portable tubs

Assisting With Pain Relief

- Pain means to ache, hurt, or be sore.
- Pain is subjective.
 - You must rely on what the person says.
- The nurse uses the nursing process to promote comfort and relieve pain.
- Report the person's complaints and your observations to the nurse.

Factors Affecting Pain

- Factors affecting pain
 - Past experience
 - Anxiety
 - Rest and sleep
 - Personal and family duties
 - The value or meaning of pain
 - Support from others
 - Culture
 - Illness
 - Age

The Back Massage

- The back massage (back rub):
 - Relaxes muscles and stimulates circulation
 - Is given after the bath and with evening care
 - Can be given after repositioning or helping the person to relax
 - Lasts 3 to 5 minutes

The Back Massage, cont'd.

- Before giving the massage, observe the skin for:
 - Breaks in the skin
 - Bruises
 - Reddened areas
 - Other signs of skin breakdown
- Lotion reduces friction during the massage.
- During the massage:
 - Use firm strokes
 - Keep your hands in contact with the person's skin

Promoting Sleep

- Sleep is a basic need.
 - The mind and body rest.
 - The body saves energy.
 - Body functions slow.
 - Vital signs are lower than when awake.
 - Tissue healing and repair occur.
 - Sleep lowers stress, tension, and anxiety.
 - It refreshes and renews the person.
 - The person regains energy and mental alertness.

Promoting Sleep, cont'd.

- The nurse uses the nursing process to promote sleep.
 - Report your observations about how the person slept.
- Factors affecting sleep
 - Illness (increases need for sleep)
 - Nutrition (can promote or prevent sleep)
 - Exercise (stimulant effect from release of substances into the bloodstream)
 - Environment
 - Drugs and other substances
 - Emotional problems

Promoting Sleep, cont'd.

- Sleep disorders involve repeated sleep problems.
- The amount and quality of sleep are affected.
- Insomnia is a chronic condition in which the person cannot sleep or stay asleep all night.
- Sleep deprivation means that the amount and quality of sleep are decreased.
- Sleep is interrupted.
- Sleepwalking is when the person leaves the bed and walks about.