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For questions, call your Hospice of Broward County team 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We're there to help!

Some General Guidelines

It is sad to see a loved one suddenly become unable to handle their daily basic needs. However difficult it may be, this can also be a special time for you to express your support, love and comfort. The following guidelines are intended to be helpful for both you and the patient. Your specific questions and concerns should be shared with your Hospice of Broward County team. We're here to assist you in any way we can.

- ❖ Your loved one may want you to do things they are able to do on their own. It's always a good idea to encourage the patient to be as independent as possible.
- ❖ You may have difficulty watching your loved one struggle to complete a simple task. Try to be patient and allow them the time necessary to complete the task.
- ❖ Don't hesitate to accept offers from friends and family to assist with the patient's daily care needs. It's okay to need – and accept – a helping hand! Keep handy a list of helpful tasks and be specific with others on what would be helpful to you and your loved one.
- ❖ There are times when you will simply need a total break from your caregiver role. A Hospice volunteer, as well as a friend or neighbor, may provide you some respite time.
- ❖ Don't forget that your well-being is essential! Get adequate rest and nutrition. Take care to follow our guidelines for preventing injury to yourself when physically assisting the patient.
- ❖ Take some special time for yourself each day, even if it's brief. Don't give up celebrating with your loved one, or on your own, important occasions and holidays. Remember: You can't be a caregiver if you don't take care of yourself.

Overview of Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Activities of Daily Living are those things we normally do for ourselves. They include bathing, brushing teeth, dressing, walking, eating and going to the bathroom. Your loved one may need help with these activities.

- ❖ Encourage independence whenever possible; it is a basic need.
- ❖ Maintain as normal a routine as possible. Allow your loved one as much control over their activities as possible.
- ❖ Respect your loved one's privacy; we all wish to maintain our dignity no matter how ill or dependent on others we become.
- ❖ Encourage others to be as involved as your loved one is comfortable with. It's okay to need and accept help.

Call Hospice of Broward County when there is a change in your loved one's ability to maintain their activities of daily living. We are here to help you and the patient through the changes you will encounter on this journey.

Walking / Ambulation

Most activities require walking and moving about. Your loved one may become weak and have difficulty or not be able to walk. Formerly simple tasks like getting out of bed or a chair can become complicated.

- ❖ Walking requires strength and balance. Your loved one may be weak and unsteady from being in bed or from feeling ill.
- ❖ Be aware of your loved one's limitations and do not rush him or her. Your help or an assistive device such as a gait belt, walker or cane may be needed. Please discuss this with your Hospice team; we can provide the appropriate walking aid.
- ❖ Support your loved one as he or she stands. Assist them in maintaining balance. Your Hospice team can demonstrate this for you.

- ❖ It's helpful to move any furniture that may obstruct the walking space. You'll need to make enough space for you to walk alongside your loved one.
- ❖ Practice some "preventive housekeeping." Keep the floor dry and clear of clutter. Avoid having throw rugs, cords or other potentially hazardous obstacles.
- ❖ When "transferring" the patient from bed to chair or from the chair to bed, place the bed in the lowest position. Allow ample time for moving from one place to another.
- ❖ Shoes and socks will provide safety and may prevent slips and falls. However, do not use socks without shoes, as that can be slippery on floors. Booties with tread provide comfort and safety.
- ❖ If your loved one does start to fall, you should gently and slowly ease him or her to the floor. Do not try to "catch" them or pick them up to stop the fall. You will want to protect yourself from getting hurt as well. (See following section on preventing falls.)

Remember to call your Hospice of Broward County team when there is a change in ability to walk. You may be provided equipment to assist your loved one with walking or moving from bed to chair.

Preventing Falls and What To Do If a Fall Occurs

Your loved one is at risk for falling as he or she becomes weak, unsteady or confused. As discussed in the beginning of this section, falls also occur from slipping on spills, waxed or tiled floors, throw rugs, improper shoes and wearing socks on floors. Your Hospice of Broward County nurse can evaluate the safety of your home and make recommendations regarding the removal of safety hazards. Some precautions you can take include:

- ❖ Rearrange furniture, making it safer for your loved one to walk around your home.
- ❖ Encourage the use of any assistive devices you have obtained, such as a cane or walker.

- ❖ If your loved one is standing and starts to fall, help them gently to the floor. This lets you break the fall without hurting your loved one or yourself.
- ❖ If your loved one falls before you are able to help him or her to the floor, look at their arms, legs and head for any area that may be injured. Ask them if they are hurt.
- ❖ Call Hospice of Broward County if your loved one has fallen, even if they don't appear to be hurt.
- ❖ If your loved one is unable to get up with your help, make them comfortable on the floor. You can use a pillow or blanket. Move any objects or cords away from the area.

Remember to report to your nurse any signs of increasing weakness or unsteady gait or any falls your loved one may have. Report how the fall occurred, what the person was doing just before falling and any complaints before and after the fall.

Bathing and Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene is important in maintaining a patient's dignity and comfort. There are several areas – bathing, hair, skin – that you need to think about. Your Hospice of Broward County team can show you how to follow the procedures described here. Don't be afraid to ask questions!

As long as your loved one is strong enough, they should bathe or shower as usual. There may come a time when they feel weak and unsteady. There is equipment, such as a shower chair, designed to enable a person to sit in the shower or bathtub while bathing. Your Hospice of Broward County staff will be happy to make arrangements for delivery of the shower chair.

Bed Bath

The soothing comfort of bathing and feeling clean is especially important for your loved one at this time. Feeling clean promotes a sense of well-being. If your loved one is physically limited or confined to bed, a bed bath will be needed and appreciated by them.

- ❖ Allow your loved one to determine the best time for bathing.
- ❖ Make the person as comfortable as possible before you begin bathing.
- ❖ Waiting one hour after taking pain medications may lessen the discomfort of moving.
- ❖ Provide privacy by closing doors.
- ❖ Keep the person covered with a light blanket or sheet.
- ❖ Reduce the strain on your back by raising the bed so it is even with your waist.
- ❖ Raise the side rail on the side opposite of where you are working.
- ❖ Take caution not to remove or loosen medication patches.

Bed Bath Procedure

- ❖ Gather equipment:
 - ◆ Large bowl or bath basin with warm water
 - ◆ Mild Soap
 - ◆ 2 to 3 towels and washcloths
 - ◆ Lotion and other toilet articles as requested
 - ◆ Clean clothing
 - ◆ Light bath blanket or sheet to cover your loved one
- ❖ Ensure privacy by closing doors and curtains. Cover your loved one with the light blanket or sheet.
- ❖ Start on one side of the body. Keep a towel under the area being washed, and wash from the face down toward the feet. Keep an extra towel nearby for spills.
- ❖ Gently wash, rinse and dry.
- ❖ Change the water when it becomes soapy, cold or dirty.
- ❖ Remember to wash your loved one's back, and to gently apply lotion.

- ❖ If possible, soak your loved one's hands or feet in water for a few minutes, which is soothing.
- ❖ Wash the genital or private area last. Begin in the front and wipe to the back. Rinse well and gently pat dry.
- ❖ If the bedding is damp or wet following the bath, it will need to be changed for your loved one's comfort (see making an occupied bed if needed).

Remember to call your Hospice of Broward County team if medication patches are dislodged. It's especially important to notify your primary nurse if there are any reddened or open areas on the skin. You also should let the nurse know if your loved one complains of sudden or severe pain when being moved.

Your Hospice certified nursing assistant may be scheduled to bathe your loved one, and can also show you how to give a bed bath.

Hair Washing in Bed

Your loved one may be affected by how their hair looks and smells even when they do not feel well. You can assist in shampooing. The patient's personal preference and safety should always be considered.

Hair Washing Procedure

- ❖ Gather equipment:
 - ◆ A rubber or plastic bed-protecting trough. You may make your own by rolling up three sides of a flat bed sheet to form a trough. Leave one side open. Your Hospice team can show you how to do this.
 - ◆ An underpad is placed over the rolled bed sheet, with the plastic side facing up. The side of the sheet should be left open so that it drains into a bucket, tub or basin.
 - ◆ Two bath towels
 - ◆ Mild shampoo
 - ◆ Pitcher or large plastic cup for pouring water

- ◆ Basin, tub or pail
- ◆ Comb and brush
- ◆ Hair dryer
- ❖ If possible, position your loved one with their head and shoulders as close as possible to the top edge of the bed.
- ❖ Line the top of the bed with an underpad.
- ❖ Place the trough under the patient's head.
- ❖ Place the basin or bucket on a chair below the trough drain. Test the trough with a small amount of water to make sure the basin will catch the water.
- ❖ Fill the water pitcher or a large plastic cup with warm (not hot) water, and completely wet the hair.
- ❖ Apply a small amount of shampoo and lather with both hands. Rub very gently and then rinse thoroughly. You may need to rinse 3 to 5 times to remove all the shampoo.
- ❖ Apply conditioner if desired and rinse lightly.
- ❖ Gently wrap your loved one's head with a bath towel and pat their hair dry.
- ❖ Gently comb the hair to remove any tangles and blow dry if they can tolerate the noise and heat of the dryer.
- ❖ If the bedding is damp or wet following the bath, it will need to be changed for your loved one's comfort (see making an occupied bed if needed).

Mouth Care

Oral hygiene or good mouth care is essential for comfort. Mouth care should be given at least twice a day and can help prevent mouth sores, as well as possibly improving the patient's appetite.

- ❖ Gather equipment:
 - ◆ Toothbrush
 - ◆ Toothpaste

- ◆ Small bowl or basin
- ◆ Washcloth
- ◆ Towel
- ◆ Water
- ◆ Mouthwash
- ❖ Raise the head of the bed to prevent choking.
- ❖ Place a towel over the patient's chest.
- ❖ Brush the teeth gently.
- ❖ Allow the patient to rinse with water and spit into the basin.
- ❖ Use mouthwash as desired by your loved one. You may need to dilute the mouthwash since most mouthwashes have alcohol and may burn a sensitive mouth.

If your loved one has dentures, you should:

- ❖ Remove and clean dentures after eating.
- ❖ Clean the mouth with a soft cloth and rinse.

If your loved one can no longer sit up to brush their teeth, Hospice can provide "toothettes" or other supplies in place of a toothbrush for your use. You can also use a soft, damp washcloth to provide mouth care, as well as any type of lip balm to prevent chapped lips.

Remember to call Hospice of Broward County if your loved one is having difficulty swallowing or chokes excessively while you are giving mouth care.

Skin Care

It is especially important to provide good skin care when the patient is confined to bed or has difficulty moving. In addition to maintaining cleanliness, you will want to prevent skin breakdown and sores, which often occur when patients are confined to bed for an extended period of time. The first sign may be a reddened area on the skin. This usually begins in areas where the bones are close to the skin. Some areas to watch for redness are the back (spine and shoulder blades), buttocks, elbows, and

heels of each foot. Good skin care can also help increase circulation.

- ❖ Wash the skin with a mild soap and gently pat the skin dry.
- ❖ Apply lotion to gently moisturize the skin. You should use an unscented or very lightly scented lotion.
- ❖ Keep bed linens dry and free from wrinkles. Even small wrinkles can be intensely troublesome for someone in bed for long periods of time.
- ❖ Change the position of your loved one every two hours.
- ❖ Use pillows to support the legs, back and shoulders.
- ❖ Administer pain medication as ordered to promote comfort during washing.

Call your Hospice of Broward County team if your loved one develops diarrhea that may be irritating to the skin. If dressings are soiled and you are uncomfortable changing them, please let your nurse know that you need help in meeting this need.



Body Mechanics / Positioning

As you help your loved one, it is important that you maintain your own health and safety! Utilizing good body mechanics and positioning will help protect you from injury. This is important when helping your loved one with bathing, getting out of bed, walking, and turning or moving from bed to the chair.

- ❖ When lifting the patient, you should use the longest and strongest muscles in your body: your shoulders, upper arms, thighs and hips. Do not use your back for leverage!
- ❖ Face your loved one as closely as possible, and – keeping your back straight – bend your knees and hips. Use your thigh muscles, not your back.
- ❖ Make sure your feet are about shoulder width apart and flat on the floor. This will give you a wide base of support.
- ❖ You can also work at waist level whenever possible, so that you do not have to bend.
- ❖ Avoid twisting your body when working.

Remember to call Hospice of Broward County if you have problems lifting or moving your loved one. We can show you the body mechanics in detail and answer your questions.

Lifting, Turning and Repositioning in Bed

Your loved one may become weaker and need more help to move in bed and change their position. You should reposition them frequently for comfort.

- ❖ Always be sure the side rails are up when turning the person in bed.
- ❖ Use wheelchair locks when moving your loved one in or out of the wheelchair.
- ❖ Protect yourself by using good body mechanics/positioning. Raise the bed to the level of your waist. Stand close to your loved one. Keep your back straight and flex your knees.

Let your legs do the work!

- ❖ Keep your feet about shoulder width apart to provide a firm base of support.

Making an Occupied Bed

If your loved one can no longer get out of bed, you will be able to change the bed sheets while they remain in bed. Your Hospice nurse or certified nursing assistant will show you how. Whenever the bed becomes soiled, clean sheets are needed to prevent skin breakdown, enhance your loved one's self esteem and keep them feeling their best.

- ❖ Adjust the bed to the level of your waist.
- ❖ If your loved one can tolerate it, lower the head and foot of the bed so the bed is flat.
- ❖ Raise the side rail on the opposite side from where you are working.
- ❖ Turn your loved one to face the side rail.
- ❖ Loosen the sheets all around the bed.
- ❖ Roll the bottom sheets toward the patient. Tuck the rolled sheets under them if possible. If you are unable to tuck the sheet under your loved one, roll the sheet as close to them as you can.
- ❖ Place the clean sheets on the bed and finish changing the side of the bed closest to you by tucking the sheets under the mattress.
- ❖ You may want to fold a flat sheet in half to use as a draw sheet. A draw sheet can be used to help you with turning and moving your loved one.
- ❖ Roll the sheets toward the middle of the bed and tuck them under the old or dirty sheet that has been tucked under the patient's body.
- ❖ Raise the side rail where you started working, and lower the rail on the opposite side.

- ❖ Roll your loved one away from you over the rolled-up bed sheets/linens to the clean side of the bed.
- ❖ Pull the dirty sheets off the bed.
- ❖ Pull the clean sheets toward you.
- ❖ Finish making the bed by tucking in the clean bed sheets. Make sure there are minimal wrinkles in the sheets.

Your Hospice of Broward County nurse or CNA will be happy to demonstrate the procedure, including how to make a draw sheet.



Using the Bathroom

There may be a time when your loved one can no longer walk to the bathroom. A bedside commode (toilet), which can be provided by Hospice of Broward County, may be necessary. Your loved one may eventually need to use a bedpan or urinal if they are unable to get out of bed. Your Hospice of Broward County nurse or certified nursing assistant will teach you how to safely help your loved with the commode or bedpan.

- ❖ Your loved one may be prone to constipation because of their medications and lack of activity. If a stool softener is ordered, please make sure the person takes the medication as the doctor ordered.
- ❖ Your loved one should have a bowel movement at least every 3 days, even if they are eating less food.
- ❖ The need to urinate may be as frequent as every 2 to 3 hours.
- ❖ Frequent checking of your loved one's elimination is important. Feel free to discuss this with your hospice team if you have concerns about this.
- ❖ Using the bathroom is a very personal matter. Always try to ensure and respect your loved one's privacy.
- ❖ There may be a time when the person no longer has control of his or her bladder and bowel movements. Waterproof bed protectors may be used to keep the bed dry. Your Hospice of Broward County team can provide these for you.
- ❖ Quickly removing any wet or soiled linens is essential for comfort and must be done to prevent sores, rashes or infection.

Remember to call Hospice of Broward County if any of the following occurs:

- ❖ Your loved one has not urinated in the last 12 hours.
- ❖ Your loved one has not had a bowel movement in 3 days.
- ❖ There is blood in the stool or urine.

Foley Catheter Care

If the patient loses the ability to urinate or control their bladder, a Foley catheter may be used. A Foley catheter is a sterile, soft tube that is inserted into the bladder to drain urine. The urine drains out of the bladder, into a tube to a closed drainage bag. The bag is usually hung off the floor at the bottom of the bed frame. Leg bags are available if the person is able to walk. Daily care and cleanliness of the catheter is needed to prevent a bladder infection. Your nurse will teach you steps in caring for the Foley catheter.

- ❖ When moving your loved one, be careful not to pull on the tubing or catheter.
- ❖ If no urine is in the drainage bag, check for kinks in the tubing.
- ❖ Keep the drainage bag below the level of your loved one's bladder. This will help drain the urine from the bladder to the drainage bag.
- ❖ Always wear gloves when cleaning the catheter. Be sure to wash your hands before and after you work with the catheter.
- ❖ Again, if no urine is in the drainage bag, check for kinks in the tubing.
- ❖ To empty the drainage bag:
 - ◆ Empty the drainage bag whenever it appears full.
 - ◆ Place the nozzle at the bottom of the bag into a collection container.
 - ◆ Let the urine drain out of the bag into the container.

- ◆ When the bag is empty, clamp the nozzle and place it back in the drainage bag nozzle holder.
- ◆ Remove the gloves and wash your hands.

Remember to call Hospice of Broward County if any of the following occurs:

- ❖ You notice any blood in the tube or drainage bag.
- ❖ Your loved one has not urinated in the last 12 hours.
- ❖ Your loved one reports pain.



Food & Water / Nutrition

Providing good nutrition for someone who is ill can be difficult. Your loved one may be nauseated, have difficulty swallowing, or just not feel hungry. Loss of appetite is normal and may increase as the disease progresses.

- ❖ Determine and respect your loved one's preferences for food and fluids. You should never force food upon the patient!
- ❖ Small feedings given every few hours may be more appetizing. You should try to provide a variety of food in small portions.
- ❖ Offer mouth care before and after meals. (see section on page 8)
- ❖ If your loved one is taking meals in bed, be sure to raise the head of the bed.
- ❖ Always maintain the correct schedule of pain medications to reduce discomfort at mealtime.

Tube Feeding

As a disease or illness advances, most people want to eat and drink less and less. This is a normal process as your loved one's body is actually helping to make them more comfortable. Occasionally, some people feel hungry and it may be necessary to provide artificial feeding through a "tube" placed in the stomach by a nurse or doctor. This is called a feeding tube. You may need to assist the patient in the care of this tube. In some cases, tube feedings may put your loved one at risk for aspiration of fluids into the lungs. Your Hospice of Broward County nurse will carefully review with you the details on the feeding tube.

- ❖ Before giving a feeding, make sure that the tube is in its proper location, in the stomach.
- ❖ Elevate or raise the head of the bed.
- ❖ Make sure the feeding contents are at room temperature.
- ❖ Flush or clean the tube with 2 to 3 ounces of water before and after the feeding.

- ❖ If you meet resistance or pressure (it feels hard to push down on the plunger), do not force the fluid through the tube.
- ❖ Although your loved one is not taking food by mouth, continue to provide good mouth care.

Remember to contact your Hospice of Broward County team immediately if you meet resistance in the tube, cannot flush the tube, or if the tube should fall out.



Oxygen Therapy

Your loved one may require oxygen supplements for comfort. The doctor will determine the amount of oxygen that is appropriate. Hospice of Broward County will provide the oxygen and necessary equipment. Your nurse will teach you how to use the oxygen.

Oxygen can be dangerous if not used properly. Your Hospice nurse will review the procedure and the guidelines with you. No smoking signs will be provided for display.

- ❖ Everyone must obey the restriction of **NO SMOKING** when oxygen is in the home. Even if the oxygen is turned off, this safety rule must be followed.
- ❖ Oxygen is considered a medication. The amount or rate of oxygen must not be increased or decreased without an order from the doctor. Call your Hospice of Broward County nurse if you have any questions or concerns about the amount of oxygen being given.
- ❖ Check the tubing around your loved one's ears to make sure there is no redness or irritation to the side of the ear or head.
- ❖ Adjust the facemask or tubing so it fits appropriately.
- ❖ Check the nasal cannula (tube that goes into the nose) to be sure it is not irritating the nose.
- ❖ Oxygen has a drying effect, so remember to provide mouth care frequently.
- ❖ If a humidifying bottle is attached to the oxygen, be sure it has fluid in it and does not run dry.
- ❖ The air filters on the oxygen concentrator need to be cleaned weekly. Your Hospice of Broward County nurse or CNA will show you how to do this.

Call Hospice of Broward County any time if you have any questions or concerns about administering the oxygen. Also, call if the oxygen system does not appear to be working properly.

Range of Motion

Exercises that promote comfort and prevent complications from lack of mobility or movement are essential in the care of your loved one. These “range of motion” movements involve supporting and moving each limb at the joint. If your loved one is able to do so, they may exercise independently. If they are too weak, you can provide the range of motion exercises for them.

- ❖ Watch your loved one’s facial expressions when providing range of motion.
- ❖ Make sure that your loved one’s pain medications have been given as directed before performing the exercises.
- ❖ Support the limb at the joint while you are providing exercise.
- ❖ Repeat the exercise three times for each joint, moving each limb slowly, gently and smoothly. Avoid sudden forceful movements.

Your Hospice of Broward County nurse or CNA can demonstrate these range of motion exercises. Remember to call your Hospice of Broward County team if the patient has any sudden complaint of pain unrelieved by medication or if you note swelling or redness of a joint.



WE'RE THERE FOR YOU...
to help in any way we can.

Suctioning

As your loved one becomes weaker, they may not have the strength to cough or clear secretions (fluid made by the mouth and lungs). Medications may be given to reduce lung secretions. However, in some cases, it may be necessary to remove excessive secretions by suctioning them out of the mouth. Your nurse will provide instructions on mouth (“light”) suctioning of these secretions. (“Deep” suctioning may not be recommended in the care of your loved one because it causes discomfort in many people.) Speak with your primary nurse for more information.

Procedure for “Light” Suctioning:

- ❖ Gather equipment:
 - ◆ Suction Machine
 - ◆ Container of water
 - ◆ Gloves
 - ◆ Yankauer tube – attached to the suction machine, used to suction the mouth
- ❖ Wash your hands before and after suctioning.
- ❖ Place your loved one in a sitting position by raising the head of the bed if possible.
- ❖ Turn your loved one’s head toward you. Remember: some people gag when objects are placed in their mouth.
- ❖ Pour water into a container.
- ❖ Put on gloves.
- ❖ Turn on the machine.
- ❖ Suction a small amount of water from the container.
- ❖ Insert the Yankauer catheter gently into the mouth where secretions are located.
- ❖ Apply suctioning by covering the hole on the Yankauer catheter with your gloved finger, and suction for a short period of time (no longer than 5 seconds at a time).

- ❖ Provide a period of rest before continuing.
- ❖ Clear secretions from the tubing using the water.
- ❖ Discard gloves after each use.
- ❖ Place the re-usable Yankauer catheter back in the clean, original packaging for the next use.

Humidifying the air (adding water droplets to the air), may help to thin secretions, and make it easier to cough them up. Ask your Hospice of Broward County nurse if humidifying the air will help. Be sure to contact us if you cannot clear the secretions or if a large amount of blood is noted during suctioning.



Helping The Unconscious Patient

When your loved one no longer responds to their surroundings, they may drift into unconsciousness. This is normal and usually progresses over a period of time. This stage can last for weeks or it may occur suddenly as the person nears death. Providing care at this time may become both physically and emotionally draining. Your Hospice team will assist you in any way we can.

- ❖ Even though it may appear otherwise, your loved one can hear you and feel your touch.
- ❖ Do not try to feed your loved one. They may be unable able to swallow, which is normal at this point. You may want to remember that none of us normally eat or drink while we are sleeping.
- ❖ You may place a few ice chips in the side of the mouth to keep the mouth moist.
- ❖ Provide mouth care frequently (see page 8).
- ❖ If your loved one is unconscious, they will not have control of the bowels or bladder. Try to keep them clean and comfortable.
- ❖ As you talk with your loved one, explain what you are doing. You can tell them what day and time it is, and what you are going to do.
- ❖ Maintain good skin care. It's helpful to massage the body with lotion. Observe the condition of the skin and whether there are reddened areas.
- ❖ Gently turn your loved one every two hours. Pillows or rolled blankets may be used as a "prop" or support behind your loved one's back or between their legs or arms.
- ❖ Note if your loved one appears uncomfortable. Observe their facial expressions while moving or turning them.

Remember to call Hospice of Broward County if unconsciousness should occur suddenly, or when you any need assistance in providing care.

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