

Chapter 11

Preventing Falls

Lesson 11.1

- Define the key terms and key abbreviations in this chapter.
- Identify the causes and risk factors for falls.
- Describe the safety measures that prevent falls.
- Explain how to use bed and chair alarms safely.
- Explain how to use bed rails safely.

Lesson 11.1 (Cont.)

- Explain the purpose of hand rails and grab bars.
- Explain how to use wheel locks safely.
- Describe how to use transfer/gait belts.
- Explain how to help the person who is falling.
- Perform the procedures described in this chapter.
- Explain how to promote PRIDE in the person, the family, and yourself.

Causes and Risk Factors for Falls

- The risk of falling increases with age.
- A history of falls increases the risk of falling again.
- Most falls occur:
 - In patient and resident rooms and in bathrooms
 - Between 1800 (6:00 PM) and 2100 (9:00 PM)
 - During shift changes
- Agencies have fall prevention programs.
- The care plan lists measures for the person's risk factors.

Fall Prevention Programs

- Agencies have fall prevention programs.
- The care plan also lists measures for the person's risk factors.

Bed and Chair Alarms

- Bed and chair alarms alert that the person is moving from the bed or the chair
 - The device attaches to clothing and makes a sound: alarm, beep, chime, music, etc.
- Alarms do not replace close observation.

Bed Rails

- A bed rail (side rail) is a device that serves as a guard or barrier along the side of the bed.
- The nurse and care plan tell you when to raise bed rails.
- If a person needs bed rails, keep them up at all times except when giving bedside nursing care.

Bed Rails (Cont.)

- Bed rails present hazards.
 - The person can fall when trying to climb over them.
 - The person cannot get out of bed or use the bathroom.
 - Entrapment is a risk.
- Bed rails are considered to be restraints if:
 - The person cannot get out of bed.
 - The person cannot lower them without help.

Bed Rails (Cont.)

- Bed rails cannot be used unless needed to treat a person's medical symptoms.
 - They must be in the person's best interests.
 - The person or legal representative must give consent for raised bed rails.
 - The need for bed rails is carefully noted in the person's medical record and the care plan.
- The nurse, the care plan, and your assignment sheet tell you which people use bed rails.
- If a person uses bed rails, check the person often.
 - Report to the nurse that you checked the person.

Hand Rails and Grab Bars

- Hand rails are in hallways and stairways.
 - They give support to persons who are weak or unsteady when walking.
- Grab bars (safety bars) are in bathrooms and in shower/tub rooms.
 - They provide support for:
 - Sitting down or getting up from a toilet
 - Getting in and out of the shower or tub

Wheel Locks

- Bed legs have wheels. Each wheel has a lock to prevent the bed from moving.
 - Wheels are locked at all times except when moving the bed.
 - Make sure bed wheels are locked:
 - When giving bedside care
 - When you transfer a person to and from the bed
- Wheelchair and stretcher wheels are locked during transfers.

Transfer/Gait Belts

- A transfer belt (gait belt) is a device used to support a person who is unsteady or disabled.
 - It helps prevent falls and injuries.
 - The belt goes around the person's waist.
 - Grasp under the belt:
 - To support the person during the transfer
 - When assisting the person to walk

The Falling Person

- A person may start to fall when standing or walking.
 - Do not try to prevent the fall.
- If a person starts to fall, ease him or her to the floor.
- Do not let the person move or get up before the nurse checks for injuries.
- If you find a person on the floor, do not move the person.
 - Stay with the person, and call for the nurse.