

Sep 2016

Promoting a Safe and Healthy Environment

Date:

Instructor:

Description: This inservice gives information on promoting safe and sanitary conditions and practices in the home care environment.

Objectives:

On completion of this inservice, participants will be able to:

List interventions to prevent injury in the home setting

List risk factors for falls

Describe interventions to help prevent falls

Describe measures to increase the patient's ability to summon help

List interventions for fire prevention

Describe how to secure the home from break-ins

List elements of a home sanitation checklist

Outline:

Safety and Sanitation Assessment

Updating the plan of care

Fall Risks

Fall Prevention Interventions

Interventions for:

Other Injury risks

Fire hazards

Toxic substances and medications

Ability to call for help

Potential for intruders

Sanitation

Safe and Healthy Environment Outline

Promoting a Safe and Healthy Environment

Lesson Plan and Speaking Notes

Promoting a safe and healthy environment in the home care setting is of the utmost importance. The home will be evaluated for safety and sanitation when the plan of care is initiated, but the abilities of an elderly and/or ill person can change abruptly, so safety and sanitation should be evaluated with every contact.

Think about the patient's plan of care, and as you observe the patient in his/her environment, consider whether changes are needed. Look closely at how the patient maneuvers through the rooms and performs activities of daily living.

A comprehensive assessment of each room should be done on a regular basis.

A comprehensive assessment of the patient's safety awareness and abilities should be done on a regular basis. Teaching, training, and alteration in the patient's level of assistance should be changed as necessary.

The charge nurse should be notified immediately if there are any safety or sanitation concerns or changes in the patient's abilities.

Alterations may need to be made to the patient's plan of care and/or environment due to:

- Confusion
- Mobility impairment
- Lack of dexterity
- Weakness
- Communication or sensory deficits
- Lack of safety awareness

Areas of concern in the home environment include:

- Fall risks
- Other Injury risks
- Fire hazards
- Toxic substances and medications
- Ability to call for help
- Potential for intruders
- Sanitation

Can you name some risk factors for falls?

Risk Factors for Falls

Medications

Visual deficits (cataracts; decreased acuity, depth perception, and contrast sensitivity)

Dizziness

Acute illness

Incontinence

Mobility problems:

Impaired balance or gait

Decreased lower extremity strength

Partial weight bearing

Environmental causes (loose rugs, cords, wet or shiny floors, too much/little lighting, clutter, foot stools, lack of hand rails or grab bars, high bed, low toilet seat, IV pole, O2 tubing, catheter)

Slowed reaction time

Impaired safety awareness

Restraint Use and Falls

Numerous studies by the Department of Health and Human Services have demonstrated that the routine use of restraints does not reduce the risk of falls or fall injuries. In fact, the use of restraints can actually contribute to fall-related injuries and deaths.

The hazards of bed rails are also now widely known:

When used as restraints they have all the dangers of any restraint.

The potential for serious injury is higher when a patient attempts to climb over or around bed rails.

There is a risk of entrapment if the patient slips between the mattress and bed rail.

What are some interventions that help prevent falls?

Fall Prevention Interventions

Patient

Educate patient in safety awareness

Provide verbal reminders to patient to call when needing assistance

Instruct patient to sit on side of bed for one minute before standing

Keep most frequently used personal items within reach

Make sure glasses are clean and fit patient, and that prescription is adequate

Clothing

Evaluate clothing for size and length, and shorten all clothing patient might trip on
Make sure patient's shoes are well fitting with non-slip soles
Gripper socks

Toileting

Toilet patient per schedule and request
Raised toilet seat
Grab bars by tubs, showers, and toilets
Rubber mats in tubs and showers

Environment

Maintain rooms and pathways free of clutter
Non-skid strips on floor
Provide adequate lighting, provide night light if needed
Light switches accessible from bed and at room entries
Chairs, nightstands, tables secure and tip-resistant
Remove cords and wires on the floor
Remove throw rugs / Secure carpet edges
Treads on stairs
Handrails in halls and on stairs
Avoid floor wax that is slippery
Clean up spills immediately
No glare on tables, floor, counters

Furniture

Provide chair with arms to assist with rising
Wedge in chair
Chair alarm
Remove wheelchair leg rests when not needed
Remove or lock empty wheelchairs
Bed in lowest position at night with side rails down
Padded floor next to bed
Bed wheels in locked position
Use half side rails to assist with transfer
Bed alarm

Ambulation, Locomotion, and Transfers

Know the patient's plan of care regarding:
Number of persons needed to assist
Weight-bearing status
Balance problems
Assistive devices needed such as cane, gait belt, walker
Distance able to walk

What are some interventions to help prevent fires?

Interventions for Fire Prevention

- Fire extinguishers present, especially in kitchen
- Smoke alarm in each room
- Fire escape plan for each room
- Unblocked exits
- Chain ladder for each upstairs room
- Appliances and wiring in good condition
- No over-use of extension cords
- Appliances used safely
- Avoid use of fireplaces, space heaters, and candles
- Safe use of oxygen
- Keep stove area free of grease, towels, or other flammable materials
- Use outlet strip with circuit breaker instead of extension cord for multiple appliances
- Promote safe smoking practices

Interventions for Increasing Patient's Ability to Summon Help

- Multiple phones
- Cordless speaker phone
- Speed-dial numbers
- Large digital display on phone
- Ring and voice enhancer on phone
- Medical or home alert system
- Intercom or baby monitor
- Emergency numbers by phone
- Bell
- Call Light
- Regular visits from family members, friends, or Meals on Wheels
- Regular phone calls to patient
- Make sure doors and windows can be easily opened by patient

What are some other injuries we need to prevent?

Interventions for Other Injuries

- Water heater set to 120 degrees or below to prevent scalding
- Burners on stove / Microwave de-activated if patient is unable to use safely
- Heavy furniture and objects secured to prevent tipping
- Sharp objects removed or secured if patient is unable to use safely
- Locking doors that lead to hazardous areas or storage
- Removing dangerous appliances such as blender

- Make sure faucets can be easily turned on and off
- Larger markings on faucets for Warm/Cold
- Adapt appliances so they are easier to use: handles on both sides, flat bottoms
- Store every day items where they are easy to see and reach
- Mark items with large print if needed
- Have patient demonstrate correct use of thermostat use
- On/off positions of appliances marked clearly

Interventions for Poisoning/Overdose Prevention

- Secure and store toxic substances in the garage, utility room, or basement
- Secure toxic substances behind a locked door if needed
- Place "Mr. Yuk" stickers on all hazardous items
- Pillbox easy to read and use
- Automatic pill reminder/dispenser
- Assess patient / caregiver management of Oral Medications: Patient's ability to prepare and take all prescribed oral medications reliably and safely, including administration of the correct dosage at the appropriate times/intervals
- Review medication with patient / caregiver weekly/monthly and as needed to re-assess abilities
- Monitor patient / caregiver's self-administration frequently, and monitor use through re-ordering medication

Interventions to Prevent Break-ins

- Have patient verbalize and demonstrate plan for dealing with unknown visitors
- Chain locks on main doors
- Peep-hole on main doors
- Cordless phone
- Emergency numbers in prominent places
- Locks on windows
- Deadbolts on doors that can be easily used

Sanitation Checklist

- Food in refrigerator unspoiled, stored properly
- Garbage disposed of properly and in a timely manner
- Dwelling free of bad odors
- Dwelling free of vermin
- Windows and screens in good repair
- Rooms are clean and uncluttered
- Walls and ceilings are in good repair and free of peeling paint
- No accumulation of dirty dishes or laundry
- Countertops clean
- Bed linens clean

Post-Test

Title: Promoting a Safe and Healthy Environment
Instructor:
Date:
1. List three risk factors for falls.
2. List three interventions to help prevent falls.
3. Name two potential fire hazards in the home setting.
4. Describe two poisoning/overdose prevention measures.
5. List three home sanitation concerns.