

In-Home Aides Partners in Quality Care

- April 2010 -

Being Part of the Health Care Team

What you will learn:

- Describe the In-home aide's role in recognizing signs and symptoms of patient conditions to report to the supervisor
- Discuss ways in which early recognition of signs and symptoms in disease conditions may help avoid hospitalization.
- Identify the aide's role in observing signs and symptoms to be alert for to report to the supervisor

The In-home aide plays a valuable role in helping to prevent avoidable hospitalizations for Home Care client's by providing valuable services and by recognizing signs and symptoms of illness to report to the supervisor for follow up. As an In-home aide, who is with the client for an extended period of time, you are in a unique role to be the eyes and ears in observing your client and the home environment for issues that need to be reported. Many chronic conditions have early symptoms that signal when the condition is worsening and if caught early, may be treatable at home and a hospitalization or trip to the Emergency room may be able to be avoided.



Your Observations Can Make a Difference!

- **Report anything unusual about your patient**
- **Be aware of changes in the patient's mental status or physical condition**
- **Pass on any significant information that the patient or caregiver may share with you**
- **Remember, you are often the main source of information for the supervisor**
- **Make sure you know your agency policies about Emergency Care in the Home**

Types of symptoms to report to the supervisor that you may observe or your patient may report to you: (per agency instructions)

- New pain or pain that is worse, ringing in ears, unusual bad headache
- Worsening cough, patient reports coughing up sputum that is a different color, fever or chills, hard to breathe when lying flat
- Dizziness, patient fell, trouble with balance
- Trouble moving, trouble thinking, change in urine color, or foul odor. Bleeding.

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If a patient has diabetes and reports the following, notify your supervisor (per agency instructions):

- Thirsty or hungry more than usual
- Urinating a lot
- Vision is blurred
- Feeling weak
- Skin is dry and itchy
- Blood sugars elevated
- Shaky
- Sweating
- Extreme tiredness
- Hungry
- Have a headache
- Confusion
- Heart is beating fast
- Trouble thinking, confused or irritable
- Vision is different
- Low blood sugars

Types of symptoms to report- cont. - per agency instructions

- Appetite change
- Weaker than usual
- Dizzy, lightheaded, shaky
- Very tired, patient reports heart fluttering, skipping or racing
- Blurred vision.
- Throwing up
- New coughing at night
- Diarrhea
- Black, dark or bloody bowel movements
- Constipation
- Trouble urinating
- Anxious or depressed
- Loss of appetite
- Unable to concentrate
- Trouble sleeping
- Loss of hope
- Constant sadness
- Change in a wound- color, drainage, odor, pain
- Fever

Report concerns about patient medications that you may have observed:

- ❖ Medications not taken
- ❖ Pill containers found in the bed, table, etc.
- ❖ Worrisome patient comments such as “I didn’t take my Lasix this morning because I have to use the bathroom too much at night”.
- ❖ Pills found on the floor
- ❖ Other issues you notice related to medications

The loop of communication between the In-home aide and the supervisor is vital! Thanks for being part of the team!!!

*Always check with your supervisor about information regarding your specific client and what to report!!
Know your agencies policies about what to do in an emergency situation in the home*

Did you know- more than 1 out of every 4 home care episodes ends in a hospitalization