

Partners in Quality Care

- December 2018 -

In-Home Aides Partners in Quality Care is a monthly newsletter.

© Copyright AHHC 2018 - May be reproduced for in-home aides.

Kathie Smith, BSN, RN: VP State Relations, Home and Community Based Care, AHHC of NC, Editor in Chief

Content:

Tips for good body Mechanics

Safety when assisting client's to use assistive devices

Assisting clients to walk

Observations and reporting during ambulation and using assistive devices

Assisting With Mobility (Ambulation and Using Assistive Devices):

The term ambulate means to move the body by walking with or without assistance.

Assistive devices are types of equipment that make it easier for clients to perform Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). Walking devices, such as walkers, canes, and crutches, may be needed to help support clients when walking. The physician determines the type(s) of assistive device according to the client's needs and abilities.

Sometimes, clients want or need your assistance to use a cane, walker, crutches, or wheelchair. Always ask if they want you to assist them. If they say yes, make sure you are clear about what they want you to do and follow the plan of care.

Assisting clients to walk (ambulation) what to observe, record, report (ORR):

Observe, record, and report any changes in the client's condition or behavior during and after walking. Also, report any problems you noticed. These include:

- Client reports pain or discomfort with movement
- Client reports dizziness
- Client reports feeling faint or weak
- Problems with the skin

Discuss with your supervisor the best way to assist the client with mobility and transfers to avoid injury to yourself and your client

Safety tips: using walkers, canes and crutches:

- Make sure all bolts are tightened and tips have rubber safety protectors
- Place walkers, canes, or crutches, when not in use, near the client but out of the traffic pattern of the room
- Assist the client to put on walking shoes, not floppy slippers
- Remove obstacles from the client's path
- Reinforce instructions of the physical therapist (if applicable)
- Do not rush the client; allow plenty of time to practice walking
- Practice using assistive devices when the client's energy level is high



Walkers are small metal stands that the client leans on when walking from place to place. They are used for clients who have difficulty with balance or are weak and need additional support.

Of all the types of assistive walking devices, walkers offer the greatest amount of stability because they provide four points of support.

Some walkers have wheels and are pushed around, some are moved by lifting and others have seats attached so that the client may rest when necessary. The type of walker is ordered by the physician.



ZWANI.COM

In-Home Aides- Partners in Quality Care * December 2018

Practicing Good Body Mechanics Includes:

(Follow the plan of care when moving or transferring the client)

- *Even when assistive devices are used during client care, some amount of physical exertion may still be necessary.*
- *Move along the side of the client's bed instead of reaching while performing tasks at the bedside.*
- *When manually moving the client, stand as close as possible to the client without twisting your back, keeping your knees bent and feet apart. To avoid twisting the spine, make sure one foot is in the direction of the move.*
- *Using gentle rocking motions can also reduce exertion.*
- *Pulling a client up in bed is easier when the head of the bed is flat or down if the client can tolerate that position. Raising the client's knees and encouraging the client to push (if possible) can also help. The use of slide/draw sheets may also be helpful.*
- *Apply anti-embolism stockings by pushing them on while you are standing at the foot of the bed. You can use less force in this position than standing at the side of the bed.*
- *Notify your employer promptly of any injury in the workplace.*

Use of the Transfer(gait)Belt (talk to you agency supervisor about obtaining training in using a transfer belt if assigned on the client's plan of care) **The transfer (gait) belt is a belt worn by the client, if the client can partially support their own weight, and used by the In-Home Aide to hold on to the client during a transfer. It is used to help support a weak or unsteady client to move or walk. Apply the belt (as assigned) before beginning the transfer or before assisting the client to walk.**

- ❖ Transferring from bed to chair and back
- ❖ Ambulating the client around the house
- ❖ Assisting in transferring the client in and out of the shower/tub
- ❖ Assisting family in transferring in and out of vehicle
- ❖ Assisting in climbing stairs
- ❖ Application of transfer belt- Receive training in transfer belt application- belt should be snug around client's waist (It goes around the patient's center of gravity which is close to the belly button) Make sure you are allowed to use one!

Ask your client, how they are feeling and doing before you assist in their movements

Ambulation- When assisting your client's to walk, follow these general rules (wash hands):

- Prepare yourself and the client, look that the direction you are heading is clear
- Talk with the client about assisting them to walk-what they want to do for themselves and what you will do to assist.
- Remind the client, if necessary, regarding which shoes to wear.
- Walk beside the client.
- Assist the client in practicing standing and shifting weight.
- Walk slowly, taking small steps.
- Walk with the client on the client's weak side. Use correct positioning.
- Walk for short distances.
- **Follow the Plan of Care for your client.**

In-Home Aides- Partners in Quality Care * December 2018

The In-Home Aide's Role in Working with Clients With Assistive Devices:

- Most common types of equipment found in the home are- walkers (most common), canes, crutches, wheelchairs, gait belts, sliding boards, reachers, hospital beds, Hoyer lifts, bedside commodes.
- Equipment such as adjustable beds, raised toilet seats, shower chairs, and grab bars are also helpful for reducing risk factors for musculoskeletal injuries. These types of equipment can allow the client to help during transfer.

→ **Eyes and Ears – you are many times the eyes and ears of the care team**

- ❖ **Identify potential safety issues** – Report any potential safety issues with assistive devices used for your client's care, notify your supervisor if you find something unsafe immediately
- ❖ **Do not use a piece of equipment that you have not been trained to use or do not feel comfortable using. There are many types of Hoyer lifts and you may need specific training on the lift in the client's home.**
- ❖ **Ask-** ask the client if they have ever done the activity you may be assisting with (such as a shower transfer) before you do it, ask how they are feeling and doing before you move them.

Reporting:

- ❑ **Report if a piece of equipment used in the home does not seem to “fit” the client properly such as a walker that looks too short or too tall, if the client's wheelchair is too big or too small (a client could fall out of a wheelchair that is too big or could get pressure ulcers from a wheelchair that is too small).**
- ❑ **Report if the client is unsteady during ambulation and if the personal caregiver in the home needs training in helping the client to ambulate or in the use of assistive devices such as gait belts, hoyer lifts or other equipment**
- ❑ **Report if a bedside commode is not adjusted correctly or if any bathroom equipment appears unsteady**

Reminder:

- ❑ **Medications such as sleeping pills, anti-anxiety medications and narcotics (pain pills) can affect a client's mental status making them dizzy and affecting their ability to function.**

Happy Holidays and thank you for your hard work, dedication and valuable service as an In-home aide!



Safety first –

The client assessment by your supervisor should include health and safety risks in client mobility and transfers to look at possible solutions, tools, and equipment with clients in their homes and to ensure staff training with client mobility both with assistive devices and manual transfers and mobility assistance.

Be sure to ask for instructions and training in using equipment such as a Hoyer lift, gait belt, and other assistive devices that you may encounter in the home as part of the client's care. Proper training is important to avoid injury to the client and yourself. Also report if you notice the client or family caregivers need training in using assistive devices.

Other tips- Use good body mechanics to prevent injury to yourself and your client. Keep your body in good physical condition. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes. Follow rules for safe moving and lifting. Practice infection control when positioning, moving and lifting your client.

Resources- NC PHCAST training phase II module 10, handout 10.24; AHHC In-home aide teleconference – Assistive Devices in the Home, November 2014; Mosby's textbook for the Home Care Aide, third edition. DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2012-120-Home Health Care Workers, How to Prevent Musculoskeletal Disorders. February 2012, accessed 11/28/18.