EYE IRRIGATION

POLICY

Eye irrigations will be performed only under physician’s order. Eye irrigations will be performed in accordance to procedure as described below.

PURPOSE

To define standard of care to irrigate and clean the eyeball or eye socket.

EQUIPMENT

1. Prescribed irrigation solution
2. Tissues
3. Soft-bulb syringe or eye dropper
4. Basin
5. Sterile cup for irrigation solution
6. 4x4 gauze pads
7. Cotton balls
8. Washcloth and towels
9. Disposable nonsterile gloves

PROCEDURE

1. To be performed by RN or LPN.

2. Review the physician’s orders designating which eye requires irrigation:
   - o.d. (oculus dexter) – right eye
   - o.s. (oculus sinister) – left eye
   - o.u. (oculus uterque) – both eyes

3. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.

4. Assist the patient to a sitting position with his/her head tilted.

5. Inspect the eye for drainage or redness, and wipe away any discharge. Gently clean any crust or drainage along the eyelid with a damp washcloth. Always clean the eye from the inner to outer canthus.

6. Inspect the color and appearance of the noninvolved eye.

7. Position and drape the patient with a plastic sheet or towel to facilitate the drainage of fluid away from the eye.

Formulated 05/96
8. Place a towel underneath the patient’s face. Place an emesis basin or bowl under the patient’s cheek on the side of the effected eye to collect irrigation solution.

9. Pour irrigation fluid into a sterile cup, and draw up the irrigation fluid into the bulb syringe.

10. Separate the patient’s eyelids with your thumb and index finger and have the patient look up. Gently direct the fluid flow from the inner to the outer canthus. Do not touch the patient’s eye area or lid with the syringe.

11. Continue irrigation as prescribed by the physician or when secretions are cleaned from the eye.

12. Instruct the patient to close his/her eyes, but not to squeeze the eyes shut.

13. Avoid contact of applicator with the eye.

14. Wipe off excess solution with a tissue or gauze.

15. Clean and replace the equipment. Discard disposable items in a plastic trash bag.