SUPPORT DEVICES: CARE OF IMMOBILIZED PATIENTS

POLICY

Support devices will be used in accordance to procedure(s) as described.

PURPOSE

Support surface will reduce or relieve pressure while sitting or lying.

Bedboard

1. Purpose

   To provide back support and back alignment.

2. Equipment

   Bedboard

3. Procedure

   A. May be used by RN, LPN or Aide
   B. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.
   C. Position the patient in a chair, maintaining the proper body alignment.
   D. Remove the mattress from the bed, and place the bedboard on top of the box springs.
   E. Replace the mattress, and remake the bed.
   F. Assist the patient to return to bed as desired.
   G. Document procedure, device used, condition of skin, patient/caregiver instructions and ability to follow on the patient visit report.

Bed Cradle

1. Purpose

   To keep linen pressure off affected extremity.

2. Equipment
A. Bed cradle
B. Sheet

3. Procedure

A. May be used by RN, LPN, or Aide.
B. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.
C. Position the bed cradle directly over the area that needs the pressure alleviated.
D. Adjust the room temperature as the patient requests if the cradle covers a large area of the body.
E. Document procedure, device used, condition of skin, patient/caregiver instructions and ability to follow on the patient visit report.

Footboard

1. Purpose

To provide correct body alignment and to prevent foot drop.

2. Equipment

A. Footboard
B. Towel, sheet, bath blanket for padding as needed.

3. Procedure

A. May be used by RN, LPN or Aide.
B. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.
C. Secure the footboard to the end of the bed.
D. Position the patient’s heels over the mattress edge when possible.
E. If the patient is in a supine position, position the patient so that the soles of the feet are flat against the footboard to prevent footdrop.
F. Encourage the patient to flex his or her toes against the footboard. (Consider the use of high top tennis shoes to prevent footdrop as an alternate or a supplement to the footboard.)
G. Inspect the patient’s feet every visit for pressure sores and for evidence of skin breakdown.

H. Document procedure, device used, condition of skin, patient/caregiver instructions and ability to follow on the patient visit report.

**Heel/Elbow Protector**

1. **Purpose**
   
   To prevent friction and skin breakdown.

2. **Equipment**

   Heel or elbow protectors

3. **Procedure**

   A. May be used by RN, LPN, or Aide.

   B. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.

   C. Apply heel/elbow protectors. Keep the seams straight, and smooth out any wrinkles.

      1) Heel Protector-slip on over the foot and ankle; make sure that the padded side is against the heel.

      2) Elbow Protector-slip on over the arm and onto the elbow: make sure that the padded side is against the elbow.

   D. Instruct the patient/caregiver to remove the protectors once very 4 hours to check pressure areas and to correct placement.

   E. Wash the protectors with soap and water as needed to keep clean.

   F. Document procedure, device used, condition of skin, patient/caregiver instructions and ability to follow on the patient visit report.

**Pillows**

1. **Purpose**

   To elevate an extremity, to support the patient in a constant position, to prevent pressure sores and skin breakdown and to prevent aspiration during tube feedings.
2. Equipment
   Pillows

3. Procedure
   A. May be used by RN, LPN or Aide.
   B. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.
   C. Use pillows with a fabric cover.
   D. Place the pillows to support, to elevate and to prevent pressure sores as needed. (Placing the patient in a 30-degree oblique position when at rest will avoid pressure over bony prominences.)
   E. Document procedure, device used, condition of skin, patient/caregiver instructions and ability to follow on the patient visit report.

Sheepskin

1. Purpose
   To reduce pressure to bony prominences of the body and to prevent skin breakdown.

2. Equipment
   Sheepskin

3. Procedure
   A. May be used by RN, LPN or Aide.
   B. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.
   C. Place a sheepskin under the area to be protected from skin breakdown. (Do not cover the sheepskin with multiple Chux pads or with a bedpan as this defeats the purpose of the sheepskin.)
   D. Remove the sheepskin and launder if it becomes soiled.
   E. Place a clean sheepskin under the patient.
Trochanter Roll

1. Purpose

To control external rotation of the hip.

2. Equipment

   A. Trochanter roll
   B. Rolled towel, bath blanket, or pillow for improvised trochanter roll as needed

3. Procedure

   A. may be used by RN, LPN or Aide.

   B. Explain the procedure to the patient/caregiver.

   C. Ensure that the trochanter roll extends from the patient’s iliac crests to mid thigh.

   D. The leg must be in the correct anatomical position: slightly abducted.

   E. Document procedure, device used, condition of skin, patient/caregiver instructions and ability to follow on the patient visit report.