

# Personal Safety and Emergency Care

## Injury Prevention

Studies have shown that on-the-job injuries can result from repetitive body movements, incorrect posture, lifting residents or items that are too heavy, using the wrong equipment, and using equipment incorrectly. When caring for a resident, injuries can be prevented by using a five-step approach:

1. Determine the resident's capabilities.
2. Determine the equipment you need.
3. Determine and communicate to other staff the steps needed for safe handling.
4. Follow the care plan.
5. Evaluate the success of tasks performed.

## Ergonomics

**Ergonomics** is the scientific study of how people can function safely and efficiently at work. Its principles are the basis for the policies, equipment, and staff training needed to provide quality care. You are not responsible for implementing these steps alone. The interdisciplinary team helps to determine the right steps for you and the resident.

You may encounter situations in which you must lift or help someone, but the physical demands are beyond your capability. If you rely on proven ergonomic principles, consider your capabilities and those of the resident, and use the appropriate equipment, you will make the task easier and safer for both of you. You must make sure that you know how to use all equipment before you begin the task.

Repetitive motions such as bending, lifting, turning, and reaching put you at risk of injury. A resident's unpredictable actions also increase the risk. If you don't use the right equipment correctly or you misuse your body when performing your duties, you can seriously injure yourself and the resident. If you are unsure about how to move a resident safely or how to use a particular piece of equipment, ask the charge nurse for help.

Injuries result from not knowing how to do something safely and from bad habits on the job. Sooner or later, if you are not careful, an injury will happen. As you begin your job as a temporary nurse aide, you have the perfect opportunity to develop safe work habits. Using practices based on ergonomic principles reduces your risk of being injured now and throughout your career.

## Being Aware Prevents Injuries

Safety-related decision making begins with your participation as part of the interdisciplinary team in assessing a resident's capabilities. Categorizing residents' abilities provides information that guides you in knowing the best way to move, transfer, or reposition them. It also helps in determining how to help with their daily care. As part of your training and orientation, you will learn your facility's system for communicating this information. This communication must not violate the resident's right to privacy but should give staff the information they need to work safely with the resident. Using the right equipment for each resident is an important part of preventing injuries. Many kinds of equipment can help you move residents from bed to chair, chair to toilet, and chair to bed (Figure 3-6). Other equipment is used to help position and reposition residents in their beds and chairs. The key is to know what is available and to follow the manufacturer's directions for its use. Table 3-1 provides examples of equipment that is commonly used to help move, transfer, or reposition residents and help with activities of daily living. Never put yourself or the resident at risk. Being safety-conscious requires being observant, paying attention to details, and continually evaluating the situation. You must be willing to ask questions and to change your way of doing things, if necessary. Ask the charge nurse about any procedure or equipment you do not completely understand. Ask the charge nurse for help in evaluating situations until you gain more experience. Remember, each resident and situation is different, so you must adapt your actions to meet the resident's unique needs.



**Figure 3-6** Mechanical lifts help move a resident from one place to another, such as from bed to chair.

## Rules for Safety

Following are common sense rules that promote safety for you and your residents. These rules are grouped by how they affect residents, you, and the environment. Some rules involve all three. Consider each resident's individual safety needs. The needs of residents with visual impairments are different from those with hearing impairments. The key is to know your residents and their special needs, the equipment you can use, and other staff who can help. With this knowledge you can adjust the rules to fit each situation.

### Residents

- Before walking with a resident, check their path for potential trip hazards, such as a bed crank.
- Encourage residents to use handrails and grip rails.
- When bathing residents, test the water temperature carefully to be sure it is not too hot or too cold.
- Always turn off the hot-water faucet before the cold one, to prevent hot water from dripping on a resident's skin or on you.
- Encourage residents to use their assistive and prosthetic devices (such as glasses or a walker) when they get up at night to use the bathroom.
- Always respond to call lights immediately. Be sure the call light button is close by each resident and that residents know how to use it.
- Familiarize residents with all furniture and equipment in their surroundings.
- Always keep each resident's bed in its lowest position.
- Frequently inspect residents' assistive devices, such as walkers and canes. Be sure that the rubber tips are in place and that the device fits the resident correctly.
- When moving a resident to or from movable equipment such as wheelchairs, shower chairs, beds, etc., always lock the wheels first.

**Table 3-1 Equipment Used to Help Move Residents**

Type of Equipment	Uses
Mechanical lifts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ total body lifts (Fig. 3-6)</li> <li>■ stand-assist lifts</li> <li>■ ambulation lifts</li> <li>■ bath/shower lifts</li> </ul>	Move residents from one location to another, such as from the bed to a chair, from the chair to the toilet, or off the floor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Slide boards</li> <li>■ Transfer mats</li> <li>■ Slippery sheets (friction-reducing devices)</li> <li>■ Draw sheets</li> <li>■ Trapeze bars</li> </ul>	Lateral transfers between two horizontal surfaces, such as when you move from the bed to a stretcher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gait belt</li> <li>■ Transfer belt with handles</li> <li>■ Pivot discs</li> <li>■ Range-of-motion machines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positioning</li> <li>■ Ambulation</li> <li>■ Repositioning</li> <li>■ Transfer from bed to chair</li> <li>■ Manipulation of a body part</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Shower/toilet combination chairs</li> <li>■ Extension-hand tools</li> <li>■ Pelvic-lift devices</li> </ul>	Help with activities of daily living (ADLs) (bathing, dressing, transferring, toileting, and eating)

## Temporary Nurse Aide

- Wear nonskid shoes.
- Always use good body mechanics (discussed in the following section). For example, avoid jerky movements, such as abrupt turns. When you turn, move your feet so that your body can follow smoothly. Avoid twisting motions. Never reach high overhead for something. Instead, use a stool.
- Use equipment to lift and move residents instead of relying solely on your physical strength. Always ask for help when you need it.
- Never run down a hallway. Use caution when turning a corner, because someone may be there.
- Never use electrical equipment near water.
- Report any nonworking equipment.
- Keep yourself healthy.

## Environment

- Clean up spills immediately.
- Keep residents' rooms and hallways free of clutter.
- Make sure hallways are well lit.
- Use night lights in residents' rooms.
- Always store chemicals such as cleaning solutions and medications in their proper place.

DISCLAIMER: AHCA/NCAL has created this course to assist providers to recruit and train temporary staff during the national emergency caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Federal and/or state requirements may need to be waived to permit individuals under this training program in your location. Employers should check with their state survey agencies and their state occupational licensing agencies where applicable to ensure individuals trained under this program are permitted to assist with care in your location.