

Comfort Care and End of Life

Physical Care of the Body

Every facility has specific procedures for caring for the body after death. *Postmortem* means after death, and these procedures are usually outlined in a policy called Postmortem Care. Box 8-2 lists common practices. Your facility may include other procedures in postmortem care. Be sure to read and follow your facility's policy.

BOX 8-2

CARING FOR THE RESIDENT'S BODY AFTER DEATH

1. Treat the body gently and with respect.
2. If the resident has a roommate who is aware of their surroundings, arrange for the roommate to go somewhere else until the body is removed.
3. Close the door or pull the curtain for privacy.
4. Remove any tubes and dressings
5. Put the resident's body in a flat position with the limbs straight. Place one pillow under the head to prevent their face and neck from becoming discolored.
6. Put their hands on their chest.
7. Put their dentures in their mouth.
8. Wash the body as you would when giving a bed bath. Place a fresh dressing over any open or draining wounds.
9. Comb their hair.
10. Cover their perineal area with a pad to absorb any drainage.
11. Put a clean gown on their body.

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.