

Critical Considerations to providing quality care to seniors with a spinal cord injury?

SKIN

- BITES, CHEMICALS ON THE SKIN, OR FRICTION. DAMAGE TO THE SKIN CAN OCCUR IN A VERY SHORT TIME. HEAT, WET OR TIGHT CLOTHING, OR OTHER CONDITIONS CAUSE SKIN BREAKDOWN TO OCCUR IN AN EVEN SHORTER TIME.
- MAKE SURE SMALL ITEMS LIKE SAFETY PINS, PENCILS OR PENS DO NOT GET IN THE BED.

Skin con't

- AFTER BATHING, DRY SKIN THOROUGHLY. IN PARTICULAR, BETWEEN TOES, GROIN AREA AND BUTTOCKS.
- INSPECT SKIN AROUND BONY PROMINENCES SUCH COCYX (TAIL BONE), KNEES, ANKLES, HEELS.
- USE A DRAW SHEET TO PREVENT SHEARING WHEN REPOSITIONING INDIVIDUAL IN THE BED.
- MAKE SURE CLOTHING ITEMS SUCH AS SOCKS, UNDERWEAR AND TROUSERS ARE SMOOTH AND STRAIGHT AS THIS COULD RESULT IN A PRESSURE SORE.

Skin con't

- ENSURE CUSHION IS PROPERLY INFLATED (IF IT'S A ROHO) IF IT'S A GEL CUSHION, ENSURE THAT GEL IS KNEADED AND SMOOTH BEFORE TRANSFERRING THE INDIVIDUAL INTO THEIR WHEELCHAIR.
- GENEROUSLY USE MOISTURIZING CREAM (IE. KERRI LOTION) ON INDIVIDUAL'S FEET, LEGS ARMS AND BUTTOCKS

Skin con't

- KEEP URINE OFF OF INDIVIDUAL'S BODY. URINE WREAKS HAVOC ON SKIN AND CAN LEAD TO SKIN BREAKDOWN.
- SIMILARLY, FECES SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY WASHED FROM SOILED AREAS.

Skin con't

- WHEN ASSISTING A INDIVIDUAL IN BED, ENSURE THAT SHEETS ON THE SURFACE OF THE BED ARE STRAIGHT AND SMOOTH (WRINKLE FREE).
- IT IS ADVISABLE TO PLACE THE INDIVIDUAL ON THEIR SIDE WHEN GOING TO SLEEP BY POSITIONING THEM INTO A FETAL POSITION AND SUPPORTING THEIR BACK (PUT A PILLOW BEHIND THEM AND AS WELL AS ONE BETWEEN THEIR KNEES TO ALLIVIATE PRESSURE).

FOR GOOD SKIN CARE:

- CHECK SKIN.
- STAY OFF ANY AREA IF THERE ARE SIGNS OF SKIN BREAKDOWN.
- RELIEVE PRESSURE ON AN AREA BY MOVING EVERY 15-20 MINUTES.

Good Skin Care con't

- ALWAYS USE A WHEELCHAIR CUSHION AND SIT UP STRAIGHT!
- EAT A HEALTHY DIET.
- DRINK 8 -10 GLASSES OF WATER A DAY.
- KEEP SKIN CLEAN AND DRY.

Good Skin Care con't

- PROTECT SKIN FROM HEAT AND COLD.
- KEEP FEET CLEAN AND DRY AND KEEP HIS TOENAILS CUT.
- REMEMBER, A WELL-BALANCED, HEALTHY DIET HELPS PREVENT SECONDARY COMPLICATIONS SUCH AS SKIN BREAKDOWN AND HELPS MAINTAIN GOOD BLADDER AND BOWEL FUNCTIONING.

Thermo Regulation

- HE/SHE SHOULD DRESS TO PREVENT SUNBURN OR FROSTBITE, DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER.
- BE CAREFUL TO PREVENT THE INDIVIDUAL FROM BECOMING OVERHEATED IN HOT WEATHER.
- USE SUNSCREEN ON EXPOSED AREAS OF SKIN.
- **REMEMBER, A PERSON WITH SCI MAY NOT FEEL SOME PARTS OF HIS BODY BECOMING TOO HOT OR TOO COLD.**

Thermo Regulation

- SPRAY THE INDIVIDUAL WITH WATER TO COOL OFF SLOWLY IN HOT WEATHER.
- HE/SHE SHOULD DRINK EXTRA FLUIDS IN THE HOT SUMMER MONTHS TO PREVENT DEHYDRATION.

PREVENTING FRACTURES

- OSTEOPOROSIS IS COMMON WITH PEOPLE WITH A SCI. SENIORS WITH SCI ARE EVEN MORE AT RISK. AS SUCH, EXTRA PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN.
- USE EXTREME CAUTION WHEN TRANSFERING. ENSURE THAT THE LEGS OF THE INDIVIDUAL ARE NOT BEING TWISTED IN AN AWKWARD MANNER.

HOW CAN YOU HELP AN INDIVIDUAL STAY CLEAN AND HEALTHY?

- KEEP CATHETER AND BAGS CLEAN TO HELP PREVENT ODORS.
- SUPPLIES LAST LONGER IF KEPT CLEAN.
- KEEP THE CATHETER AND BAGS CLEAN TO PREVENT INFECTION.

Autonomic Dysreflexia Symptoms

- SWEATING ON FACE, ARMS, OR CHEST (USUALLY *ABOVE* THEIR LEVEL OF INJURY)
- BAD HEADACHE
- RED, BLOTCHY SKIN ON FACE, ARMS, OR CHEST *ABOVE* HIS LEVEL OF INJURY
- PALE SKIN *BELOW* THE LEVEL OF INJURY

Autonomic Dysreflexia Symptoms

- RAISED BLOOD PRESSURE
- STUFFY NOSE AND TROUBLE BREATHING
- BLURRING OF VISION OR SPOTS BEFORE HIS EYES
- “GOOSEBUMPS” ON ARMS, CHEST
- SLOW PULSE

Autonomic Dysreflexia Symptoms

- AN INDIVIDUAL DOES NOT HAVE TO HAVE ALL THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS TO HAVE AD. HE/SHE MAY HAVE JUST ONE SYMPTOM OR THEY MAY HAVE SEVERAL OF THESE SYMPTOMS.

ASSIST COUGH OR QUAD COUGH

- SINCE THE MUSCLES FOR BREATHING DO NOT WORK LIKE BEFORE
- THE SCI, YOU WILL NEED TO HELP THE INDIVIDUAL COUGH. THIS IS
- SOMETIMES CALLED "ASSIST COUGH" OR "QUAD COUGH." IT IS VERY

ASSIST COUGH OR QUAD COUGH

- SIMILAR TO THE HEIMLICK MANEUVER. PLACE YOUR HANDS BELOW THE DIAPHRAGM AND PRESS UP WHILE HE/SHE COUGHS.
- IT HELPS TO GET UP A LOT OF MUCUS AND SECRETIONS TO THE MOUTH.