



"Lighting the way with better patient care."

Anova
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Home Health • Hospice • Palliative • Home Care

HOSPICE PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

SKIN CARE

Care of the skin is an important part of the overall care of a sick patient. The skin is the largest organ of the body. It is the immune system's first line of defense against infection.

How can I keep the skin healthy?

- Healthy skin needs to be clean and well hydrated.
- Wash with warm water and mild soap.
- Avoid friction or rubbing.
- Clean skin after each soiling.
- Use alcohol-free lotions on dry skin for moisturizing.
- Do not massage reddened areas.

What can be done to prevent damage to the skin?

- Get patient out of bed as tolerated.
- Avoid having patient sit up straight in the bed any longer than necessary.
- Keep heels off bed with pillows under calves.
- Change bed patient's position at least every two hours; one hour if in a chair.
- Have patients shift their own weight, if possible, every 15 minutes.
- Ask your team to show you how to use "draw" or "pull" sheets to move the person, avoiding friction from sheets.
- Cornstarch may reduce injury due to friction.
- Keep patient clean and dry as much as possible.

What should you report to the interdisciplinary team?

- Any new areas of edema, changes in the amount of edema, pain in area with edema.
- Any skin color changes or redness in the area of edema.
- Warmth or temperature changes in the skin.
- Difficulty breathing or a cough.
- Fluid seeping out of the skin.

How you can support the family:

- Inform the family that they play an important role in managing the edema.
- Reinforce that sometimes edema may not go away.
- Reinforce that the goal is patient comfort and edema may not be painful.
- Teach them how to elevate affected area (i.e., use of pillows, recliner, and/or propping feet on a stool)
- Let the family know that if moving the affected area appears to cause pain, tell the interdisciplinary team.

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