

# Safe Patient Handling

For the Patient and Caregiver

# Importance of Safe Patient Handling

- **Who benefits from safe patient handling?**
  - **The patient is provided with quality of care and safety.**
  - **The caregiver is also kept safe and has improved working conditions.**



# Safe Patient Handling Through the Prevention of Falls

- **What is the main reason for preventing falls in the hospital?**
  - **Falls present a significant challenge for healthcare providers and can potentially result in life threatening injuries.**



# Safe Patient Handling Through the Prevention of Falls

- **What is the best way to prevent falls?**
  - **There are numerous intervention strategies that target single specific risks, but prevention programs that target multiple risk factors and incorporate a range of solutions are the most effective.**
  - **These strategies include risk-assessment of patients, identifying and modifying potential risk factors in the environment, the introduction of equipment to provide safer mobility options, and opening blinds so the sunlight can be seen.**

# Ways to Handle Patients Safely

- **Conduct a risk evaluation on every patient that enters the facility.**
- **Have a falls prevention policy and procedure that is used for every patient that enters the facility.**
- **Conduct a risk evaluation, utilizing criteria for the choice and use of equipment, training, building and environment in relation to risk estimation, and evaluation of patient handling interventions.**

# Four Principles of Safe Patient Handling

- **Maintain a wide, stable base with your feet**
- **Put the bed at the correct height (waist level when providing care and at hip level when moving the patient)**
- **Try to keep your work directly in front of you to avoid rotating the spine**
- **Keep the patient as close to your body as possible**

# **Keep Your Patient Safe, Educate Prior to Moving**

- **Coach the patient and explain what you are going to do prior to making any attempt at moving the patient.**
- **Show the patient what you are going to do.**
- **Explain how your patient can help if he or she has the ability to do so.**

# Important Items to Know for Safe Patient Handling and Caregiver Safety

- **If using equipment, know how it works.**
- **Assess the environment for safety prior to moving the patient (lock the wheels on the bed or chair).**
- **Gather appropriate equipment and other staff members if needed.**
- **Organize the physical environment to ensure safe completion of the task.**
- **Make sure other team members, if any, know their roles; rehearse if necessary.**
- **Position yourself using the principles of body mechanics.**
- **Coach the patient.**
- **Tell the patient what actions you will be doing and what you expect from him or her. Show your patient how you need him or her to help move through the activity. Practice to keep the patient and you, the caregiver, safe.**

# Scenarios About Safe Patient Handling

- When ready to transfer a patient from the stretcher to the operating-room bed, you observe that the stretcher brakes will not lock. What should you do? Call for additional assistance to hold the stretcher securely against the operating-room bed while the patient transfers to the operating-room bed by sliding on his or her back.
- The primary concern when moving an older adult across a slide board is keeping the patient safe and limiting friction and shear during the transfer.
- A patient uses a walker at home and spends most of the day in a chair. When you ask the patient if he or she can move over to the bed, the patient says “I should be able to.” What should, you the nurse, do to protect the patient? **Allow the patient to move unassisted** because there is a potential for injury.
- A patient says, “I had shoulder surgery 1 month ago.” This type of statement should alert the nurse that additional assistance is needed to help transfer the patient.

# References

- **Arjo Safe Patient Handling Presentation, March, 2014.**
- **Adapted from Perry, A.G., Potter, P.A., Ostendorf, W.R. (2014). Clinical nursing skills and techniques (8<sup>th</sup> ed.), St. Louis: Mosby.**