



Health Care Alert

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION PROVIDING HEALTH CARE TIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THEIR SUPPORT TEAMS

Risk Management Corner

Bed Rails: The Benefits and Risks



Most people are safe in bed without bed rails. However, there are situations and times when bed rails are used in an attempt to increase individual safety. These may include:

- times following surgery and use of anesthesia;
- efforts to support individuals who have uncontrolled body movements (e.g., due to seizure disorders or significant spasticity);
- situations in which a fall would cause devastating harm (e.g., when a person has severe osteoporosis).

There are benefits and risks related to bed rails. So, when bed rails are considered, a person's team, including the physician, must determine the best plan for their use. To assure the bed rails best meet an individual's medical needs, the physician must order them.

Benefits & Risks

There are several potential benefits of bed rails. They include:

- helping when turning and repositioning;
- providing a place to hold when getting in and out of bed;
- reducing the risk of falling out of bed; and,
- providing a feeling of comfort and security.

However, there are a number of serious risks of bed rails. They include

- strangling, suffocating, physical injuries or death when people are caught between bed rails or bed rails and the mattress;
- injuries from falls when going over bed rails (which can be more serious than falls from a bed without bed rails);
- bruising, cuts and scrapes;
- feeling isolated and restricted; and,

- preventing individuals from performing routine activities (e.g., using the bathroom).

Because of the risks involved with the use of bed rails, they should only be used when medically necessary. Therefore, a person's physician must order the bed rails. If bed rails are used to control or restrict an individual without a physician's order they are considered a mechanical restraint. For people who live in homes licensed under DPW 6400 and 6500 Regulations, use of bed rails without a physician's order, will be cited as non-compliance with the regulations.



Optimizing Safety

Use of bed rails must be monitored closely to optimize safety. The mattress used must be a proper size or the mattress should have raised edges to prevent the person from being trapped between the mattress and rail. Gaps between the mattress and side rails should be reduced. Not all mattresses and bed rails are compatible and fit with every bed frame. Therefore, manufacturers of beds should be consulted to identify compatible rails.

For some people, lowering one section of the rail for getting into and out of bed may limit falls over the top of the rail. Maintenance of bed rails, to keep them in good condition, is essential in

limiting some risks and protective covers may eliminate other risks. Finally, the need for bed rails must be re-assessed frequently and routinely.

Alternatives to Bed Rails

There are a number of strategies that can be tried as alternatives to bed rails. Beds with adjustable heights can be raised and lowered to meet needs of individuals and their caregivers. Mats can be placed on the floor next to the bed to cushion a fall. Bed alarms can be used to alert caregivers that an individual is attempting to get out of bed and may be in danger. By anticipating and satisfying an individual's needs and desires (e.g., bathroom needs, desire for a drink), he/she may not rush to get out of bed and possibly fall. No matter what strategy is tried, individuals must be monitored frequently to optimize their safety.

References

- <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/beds/>
- http://www.aarp.org/families/caregiving/bed_rails_and_safety.html
- http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/md-im/bedrail_cotedelit_e.pdf

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The information presented to you is to increase your awareness of health conditions. It is not intended to replace medical advice. Please seek the advice of a physician for any health related concerns.

“Community Connections”

STRESS ...Everyone has it...How to know...How to cope...

Stress is defined as our body's response to any demand made on it. Our bodies respond when we are faced with events we perceive as endangering our physical or psychological well-being. Some examples of stress could include:

- Pain from a surgery
- Someone chasing you down the street with a baseball bat
- You return home from work and find that someone rearranged your bedroom furniture

While most would agree that having pain and being chased are stressful, having a clean bedroom would be wonderful. The truth is that *different people consider different situations as stressful*. Take a minute to think of someone you work with. Have you ever witnessed them stressed? Did you ever wonder why something trivial has caused them problems? Well, now you know why! Your stress is different than my stress and her stress and his stress.....

Not all stress is bad. Too little stress results in boredom. Small amounts of stress can work to your benefit by making you more productive. Manageable stress can fuel personal achievement and make you more creative. Everyone has an optimal level of stress. However, too much stress is bad. It is important to learn how to recognize when we are suffering from too much stress, be aware of the detrimental effects of too much stress, and learn how to reduce the effects of too much stress.

Knowing when you are stressed is relatively easy because you can feel it physically and mentally. Knowing when another might be stressed might take some detective work. Look for clues such as irritability, tiredness, restlessness, pacing, stomach problems, getting sick a lot.

Both emotional and physical health can be linked to levels of stress. When stress is down, our emotional and physical health benefits. But when stress is high, our emotional and physical health can suffer.

Some external or environmental factors of stress include the following:

- Changes in your life
- Trauma or crisis
- Small daily hassles
- Conflicts or unpleasant people
- Feeling little control over your life
- Excessive or impossible demands
- Boring or lonely work

Some internal or personal causes of stress include the following:

- Irrational ideas about how things must or should be
- Believing you are helpless or can't handle a situation
- Assigning fault for bad events – placing blame on yourself or others
- Having unreasonable fears
- Pushing yourself to excel and then failing

There are two main types of stress. *Short term stress* appears in particular situations whereas *long term stress* occurs from a build up of stress over a long period.

Short term stress can affect us physically because it releases powerful hormones in our body which have the following effects:

- Body's need for oxygen increases
- Breathing rate increases
- Heart rate and blood pressure go up
- Blood vessels in your skin contract
- Muscles tense
- Digestion slows down
- Body temperature rises
- Blood sugar levels rise
- Blood has an increased tendency to clot
- Cells pour stored fat into your blood
- Urinary function slows down

Long term stress also has physical effects which put a tremendous strain on the body and cannot be kept up for very long. After awhile, another group of hormones is released which allows the body to continue to fight the stressor at a lower level for a longer period of time. However, the effect of these hormones puts a heavy demand on the body, particularly on the heart, blood vessels, adrenal glands and the immune system. Eventually, with continued stress, the organ systems weaken and fail.

SO....What can you do? **PLENTY!**

Remember: We can control how we *react* to stressors, even if we cannot control the stressors themselves. We can learn to *manage* stress.

Stress management techniques for short-term stress include mental techniques such as:

- Avoidance – can you avoid the situation?
- Thought stopping – gain control of self defeating thoughts
- Positive affirmation – “I can do this!”
- Reducing importance – put things in perspective

- Imagery – imagine yourself in a relaxing place
- Rational thinking – are your concerns true or false?
- Planning – analyze and plan your response
- Rehearsal – run through the event in advance

And physical techniques

- Breathing control – “take a deep breath”
- Exercise – improve blood flow and release endorphins
- Progressive muscle relaxation – let it all out

Reducing long term stress requires an adjustment of **LIFESTYLE**. This takes time and practice and includes:

- Time management
- Positive attitude
- Assertive behavior
- Meditation
- Self-hypnosis
- Healthy diet
- Exercise
- Progressive relaxation
- Rest
- Pleasant environment



Now that you have the information you need to reduce harmful stress in your lives, try to apply this to those you work with and possibly support. Think of someone you know who is all stressed out – look at the options above and see what might help. Don't judge other people's stressors. Remember a rearranged bedroom might be great for you but upsetting to another. If stress management techniques are not working, tap into outside resources such as licensed social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. Support groups are also available in the community.

Remember that lifestyle changes take time but they are worth the effort. Don't give up along the way. Remember to relax. Rome was not built in a day but when it was done – it was beautiful!

US. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, “Medical Encyclopedia: Stress management”, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov>

"Do you know that PCHC can help Pennhurst Class Members to access Special Services?"

The Special Services Funds (SSF) are funds available for only the Pennhurst or a dual Pennhurst/Embreeville Class Members who are supported through Philadelphia County. These funds were established by the Office of Developmental Programs (MRS) to be used for health care services, products or specialty care items (i.e. hearing aides, orthopedic shoes) that are not covered or denied by Medical Assistance (MA, Medicaid), Medicare or private insurance. The cost coverage for these health care services and products should be reasonable.

Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) is responsible for administrating the funds. There is an SSF application that must be completed. The form itself can be found on the PCHC website: www.pchc.org, under 'publications'. The application is very simple, but does ask for

copies of the documentation of denials, bills, etc. Send the completed SSF form along with any corresponding documentation to the PCHC Health Care Community Outreach (HCCO) Department, attention Julio Nieves. Once received, the application packet will be reviewed before submission to the fiscal department.



The following items are requested at time of submission:

- Documentation (copies) will be needed to verify appropriateness of the treatment
- Documentation (copies) of the denial letter from the insurance provider
- A copy of the bill to directly pay services provider, or a bill indicating the paid service
- Request financial support from agency on behalf of the person

If you support someone who is a Pennhurst or a dual Pennhurst/Embreeville Class Member in Philadelphia County and you feel that they may be eligible to utilize the Special Service Funds please contact: Julio Nieves, PCHC HCCO at (215) 546-0300, ext 3387.

Practice Without Pressure (PWP)

Practice Without Pressure, Inc. (PWP), in New Castle, DE is a unique organization with a very important goal: *to build confidence in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. PWP consists of parents and professionals who have learned that there is a better way to support people with cognitive and developmental disabilities undergo medical, dental and personal care procedures. PWP has set up areas to simulate different environments, including getting blood drawn, a medical exam room, and a dental office complete with chair and exam light.

The staff works with children and adults in the most positive manner possible to help them face their fears in a non-threatening and unhurried

atmosphere. The organization strives to educate parents, caregivers and professionals in ways to help avoid the trauma which so often accompanies medical, dental and personal care procedures.

PWP currently offers practice modules for the following procedures:

- Dental cleaning
- Dental x-rays
- Blood draws
- Haircuts
- Nail care
- Women's Health



Note: Practice Without Pressure does not currently accept insurance to cover the cost of their services. Fees are generally around \$130 per session.

For more information, contact:

Practice Without Pressure, Inc.

20 Russell Rd

New Castle, DE 19720

Phone: 302-832-2800

Email: deb@pwpde.com

Website: www.pwpde.com



April is Autism Awareness Month!

The Bureau of Autism Services (BAS) has been traveling the state announcing the future initiatives and services available for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs).

Please visit the following website: www.autisminpa.org for more information.

You can contact the bureau directly to find out the most current information regarding the *Autism Waiver* and *Adult Community Autism Program (ACAP)*.

BAS can be reached at DPW-AutismOffice@state.pa.us or call toll free in Pennsylvania: (866) 497-6898

Video trainings including Autism 101, Parts 1 and 2, and future collaborative trainings can be viewed at www.odpconsulting.net





SAVE THESE DATES!!

Friday, April 25, 2008
Regional Nurse Network Meeting
9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

SE area Staff Development Training Center (King of Prussia)

All nurses from across the SE Region (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties) are encouraged to register and attend.

PCHC and the Alzheimer's Association have collaborated to create and present:
"DEMENTIA AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES"

Nurses will walk away with a clear understanding of "Dementia," Symptom Management Strategies, Environmental Considerations and Caregivers' needs.

For more information or to register for this all day event, please contact the PCHC Training Hotline: 215-546-0300 ext: 3367



Friday, May 9, 2008
Nurse Appreciation Day
11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
Valley Forge Radisson Hotel



MR Directors were invited to attend an *Appreciation Luncheon* with their agency nurse(s) during Nurses Week.

The "General Guidelines for Nurses in Community Residential Programs" which was developed as a result of the Nursing Forum held in December 2006 will be presented and distributed.

Special Recognition Awards will be given to nurses across the SE Region for their work in the specialized field of Developmental Disability Nursing.

To nominate a nurse in the field or find out how to submit information regarding your nurse(s) to be displayed at the luncheon, go to the PCHC website: www.pchc.org and click on 'announcements.'

There you will be able to download the forms with instructions on how to submit names & information to PCHC.

For more information regarding the event or the awards, please contact Patty Graves, PCHC's Director of Nursing: 215-546-0300 ext: 3673

Please Remember!

To request copies of any publications (ie. Booklets), visit the PCHC website: www.pchc.org and go to the 'publications' tab. Click on the "Request a Publication" tab which will open up a form to submit an e-mail directly to PCHC. Just fill it out with the name and number of publications requested and where to send them.

Please note: Some documents can be downloaded directly from the website. Check the most current list under 'publications.'

ATTENTION!! ATTENTION!!

PCHC is collaborating with the Regional County Risk Managers to host a

Regional Risk Management—Injury Prevention Forum

June 17, 2008

9:30 a.m.—12 noon

PA Southeast Area Staff Development Training Center, Bridgeport, PA

The main goal of this forum is to create awareness, education and provide strategies and tools to prevent "FALLS." A panel from varied disciplines will offer ideas and suggestions about what has worked in the past to help decrease the incidents of falls.

Supports Coordinators and Risk Management Staff from residential provider agencies will be invited to attend through their County Risk Manager.

Please call them directly for more information or to be included.



Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care

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PCHC is a core program of PMHCC, Inc.