**LAST OFFICE**

Defn. The term last offices is the care given to a body after death.

When performing last offices nurses need to ensure they are aware of the local guidelines, policies and procedures such as infection control and moving and handling and this is to ensure they provide compassionate care. The following guideline to be followed:

* Provide support to family as necessary.
* Ensure that death has been verified and discuss with senior nursing and medical staff any specific legal and health and safety issues that may influence last offices practice.
* Ascertain if there is any need for referral to the coroner.
* Discuss with family any preferences they may have or that the patient, in life, may have requested that will influence last offices practice.
* Collect all equipment necessary.
* Ensure the area where the procedure is to be performed is private and as free from interruptions as possible.
* Remove tubes, lines and access devices as agreed with senior medical staff.
* If lines are to remain, cut and spigot off any large-bore tubes and cover with gauze and adhesive dressing . Ensure that documentation alerts mortuary staff to their presence.
* Apply gentle pressure over the bladder area, if the patient is not catheterised, allowing the bladder to drain. This will minimise the risk of post-mortem leakage
* Remove jewellery and any personal items, unless requested or advised otherwise. Ensure that appropriate records are made of any personal items left on the body or otherwise.
* Attend to hygiene needs, paying particular attention to hair, nail care and oral hygiene.
* If the patient has dentures place them in the mouth, if this cannot be done send them to the mortuary with the patient.
* Attempt to close the eyes, using a small piece of clinical tape if required.
* Attach identification labels/wrist bands according to local guidelines and organisational policy.
* Dress the patient in gown or own clothes, as required.
* Place an incontinence pad underneath the buttocks to contain any soiling.
* If a body bag is to be used, place the body in the bag as per instructions, completing any necessary documentation.
* If a body bag is not to be used, enclose the body in a sheet, securing it with adhesive tape.
* Complete documentation (notice of death) as per organisational policy. Document last offices practice, including property and any specific requirements for mortuary care.
* Dispose of highly infectious clinical waste.
* Arrange for transfer of the body, communicating any specific requirements to portering/mortuary staff.
* Transfer property, patient records and any additional items to the bereavement care office or appropriate area.