MODULE 2- COMFORT AND SAFETY MEASURES

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**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

• explain the meaning of comfort and safety.

• list the purposes of providing comfort and safety.

• discuss the measures to promote comfort.

• describe the comfort devices which can be used at home.

• explain the meaning, purposes, and types of safety measures.

* list the type of injuries and causes of hazards at home; and

• describe the measures to promote environmental safety at home.

**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit we discussed about hygienic measures to keep client neat and clean, it is important to meet comfort and safety needs also. In this unit you will learn about comfort and safety measures that can be applied at home. This will help the home-based care provider to take care of the needs related to comfort and safety of the sick person. There is a growing concern for care of patient suffering from chronic diseases at home. It is important to know about various measures to be adopted for their safety so that helpless patient can be made comfortable as well as safe in their home environment.

**2.2 PROVIDING COMFORT TO THE PATIENT**

Let us now learn about what do you mean by comfort and some of the factors responsible for discomfort of the patient, so that you take certain measures to avoid these discomfort situations.

2.2.1 Meaning of Comfort is a state of mind in which an individual is generally at peace with himself and with his environment.

2.2.2 Factors Influencing Comfort. There are certain factors which influence comfort of the patient such as:

• Physical conditions

• Psychological conditions

I) Physical conditions

• pain

• restricted movement

• uncomfortable bed

• improper environment such as too bright light or too much humidity

• temperature too hot or too cold (extremes) and

• inadequate attention to personal needs e.g. cleanliness, elimination. nourishment

2) Psychological conditions

• fear and anxiety regarding illness,

• concern for the family,

• interruption in daily routine,

• noise or failure to provide privacy.

**Purposes of providing comfort are to:**

* relieve fatigue or physical strain
* improve and stimulate blood circulation
* prevent muscular spasm and contractures/deformities
* prevent bed sores/decubitus ulcers
* facilitate drainage from body cavity
* facilitate breathing.

Measures to Promote Comfort j Comfort devices: The various comfort devices used are:

1) **Comfortable bed:** The bed should be firm, clean having smooth sheets, unwrinkled, free from lumps and crumbs with bed clothes neither too heavy nor light. Mattress may be cotton or air depending on the need and pillows arranged according to comfort.

2) **Back rest**: It is needed for those patients who are not able to sit themselves. These patients need help as well as support of some device with the help of which patient is made to sit on the bed. It is needed while you want to give mouth care, or feed the patient or giving steam inhalation helping in deep breathing exercise etc. It is a light wooden or cane covered frame or may be made up of metal. Many times, it is attached with bed itself and can be raised whenever needed. At home it can be improvised by use of back of chair without arms. Pillows are arranged in this frame against which the patient rests.

3) **Bed board:** It is a support that is placed under the bed mattress to give added rigidity to the mattress. It is used for patients who need hard bed for providing additional support to the spine or when doing cardiopulmonary resuscitation etc.

4**) Bed cradle**: It is used to keep the weight of the top bed clothes off the. patient. Patients who have bums, uncovered wounds or wet casts often need to keep the top bed clothes away from the injured area. The cradle is carefully positioned so that the area of the patient's body that -is to be free from the weight of the top bed clothes is directly under the cradle. The top bed clothes must be pulled up higher than normally so that they cover the shoulders of the patient.

5) **The foot board:** It is a device that is placed toward the foot of the patient’s bed to serve as a support for his feet. Foot boards are usually' made up of ' wood. They are also used to keep the weight of the bed clothes off the patient’s feet as well as to support the patient in maintaining his feet in dorsal flexion. If the feet are not exercised or supported they may become fixed in planter flexion. This condition is known as foot drop. With this complication, the patient is unable to stand with his heels on the floor. The foot boards are so placed that. the patient can rest the soles of his feet against it while the rest of his body is in good alignment. ' '

6) **Over bed table:** It is used for assisting patients who have difficulty breathing. The patient with the help of this, can lean forward Which makes it possible for him to use extraordinary muscles of respiration.

7) **Trochanter roll:** It is often made from a bath towel. The towel is folded lengthwise. The roll is secured by two safety pins that are fastened between the body of the roll and the tail of the roll is placed under the patient's thighs, with the safety pins away from the patient. The roll is then secured firmly along the patient's leg. They are also used to raise a patient's heels off the foundation of the bed. These are used in paralysis, unconscious patients to keep the body in proper shape.

8) **Air rings**: It is made of rubber and filled with air. It should have sufficient air in it to partially inflate it but at the same time it should, remain soft and flexible. Air rings are used under a patient's sacrum to take pressure off the bony prominenees. The air ring is covered with cotton cloth to prQtect the patient.

9) Air rings are also used to protect the skin over bony prorninences, but caution is needed while using because they are also known to increase pressure upon tissues and may interfere with circulation.

10) **Doughnuts**: are small rings used to support patient's elbows and heels above the bed surface. They can be made from a large dressing which is rolled and moulded into a circle and then covered with gauze.

11) **Sponge rubber pads and small pillows:** When placed under bony prominences they relieve pressure; placed in the lumbar curve or under a limb they support or elevate an injured part,

12) **Sandbags**: serve as a means of providing su patient. They are ~ firmer than trochanter rolls and, because of their weight, are less easily moved. For this reason sandbags are desirable, when body alignment must be maintained e.g. in fractures.

Positions :Patients are provided certain positions for their comfort or for therapeutic purpose such as lying down (supine), side lying (lateral), Fowler's position (sitting at 45°), lying on abdomen (prone) etc. to prevent contractures, to promote drainage, to facilitate breathing and to treat pressure sores. You may refer Skill 8 on positioning and comfort measures.

Check Your Progress 1

1. List the purposes of providing comfort.

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2) List the device to promote comfort.

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**2.3 SAFETY MEASURES AT HOME**

As comfort measures are important for wellbeing of the patient, it is equally desired to meet safety requirements as well. Let us learn about safety in brief.

2.3.1 Meaning of Safety A safe and comfortable environment is one that contributes to the well-being of the patient and promote recovery. It implies freedom from injury.

Let us now learn about persons who are at risk of getting injured at home such as:

• Unconscious

• Paralyzed

* Mentally ill persons

• Partially or totally blind persons

• Deaf persons

• Elderly patients

• Excessive fatigue

2.3.2 Purposes The purposes of safety measures are to:

• provide a safe environment

• prevent mechanical injuries

• prevent thermal injuries

• prevent chemical injuries

• prevent electrical injuries

• protect from bacteriologic, allergic and psychologic injuries

• maintain proper body circulation.

2.3.3 Types of Injuries

Home is a safe place for aperson when he falls sick. But injuries are always uncertain, and can occur any where. So let us learn about injuries which a person can come across at home, so that preventive measures can be taken in advance to keep the patient safe. Injuries can be classified as follows:

i) Mechanical Injuries: can be caused by machines, falls while standing, walking or fall from bed.

ii) Thermal Injuries: is caused by fires or other sources of heat, bums by hot applications e.g. steam inhalation, serving too hot food.

iii) Chemical Injuries: use of too strong chemicals on skin or taken internally or an overdose of prescribed drug for example, consumption of poison.

iv) Electrical Injuries: due to defective wiring, defective equipment, touching an electrical appliance with wet hands.

v) Bacteriological Injuries: are caused by disease producing micro-organisms which enter (attack) the normal defences of the body. The sick person and injured are more prone to infections due to lowered body resistance.

vi) Injury from Allergens : from insect bites, feathers, mattress, food, pollens, cosmetics, powders, chemicals, soap and dust.

vii) Psychological: can be caused when the needs of the person are not met according to his condition. For example, when a patient wants to sleep and the environment is noisy, the patient could not sleep whole night, family and family members are not showing concern for patient' sfeelings~, '. .\_-" . ,

2.3.4 causes of hazards at home

Let us learn about possible causes of home hazards which can be prevented for the safety of the patient:

• Poor lighting inside or outside

• Uneven walking areas having grooveshigh and low floors etc.

• Steps with broken concrete and without railings

• Loose mats

• Slippery tub or shower

• Defective wiring

• Smoking in bed or alone at night

• Obstructed doorways - Some of the things kept on the door ways which does not allow doors to open completely

• Loose fitting clothes worn while cooking

• Many medications which has expiry date or unlabelled are not discarded and , keep lying at name

• Unlocked cupboar~s with poisons such as rat killing medicine, DDT"insect killing sprays etc.

• Items placed too close to the heat source of the kitchen stove which catch fire easily such as cooking oil, match box

• Unsupervised children in bathtub

• Water temperature that is too hot.

2.3.5 Types of Safety Measures - , When person is sick and bedridden due to chronic illness his body movements become less and concern for safety become important, e.g. if client is' bed ridden then he/she may fall from bed if there is no side rails. If client is alone in the room and he/she can not speak to get some thing then he may become restless and may fall from bed. As you are there with the client round the clock at home, it is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your client and surroundings.

A) Freedom from mechanical injuries

. Mechanical injuries may be caused by any object, by fall and blows:

• ' It can be prevented by using side rails or guard on bed andwindow.

"4, • By keeping floor dry to prevent slipping as patient might slip and fall.

• Hold stretcher and wheelchair secure while assisting patient and lock the wheels (you will be given further detail 'about care of patient on wheel chair in Practical -Manual-Z, Skill-12)

• Lift the patient together with cooperation of family members if looking after" bedridden client.

B) Freedom from thermal injury

It is caused by fire, hot objects and bums:

• Ensure regular checking of equipment used for client for its safe and working condition i.e. room heater in winter.

• Always check the hotness and coldness of anything before giving to client or applying on client skin (for further detail you can refer Practical Manual- 2, Skill-14 under hot and cold applications).

• No smoking - Inside or outside the house. It may lead to fire ifleft untum. J C) Freedom from allergens

Injury from allergens may result from insect bites and from material in the environment such as dust, feather, mattresses, food, cosmetics, lotion, powder, medicines etc.

Prevention of allergy may be accomplished by following measures:

• Do dusting with out raising the dust in air for this you can do damp (wet cloth) dusting before dry dusting.

• By putting on covers for the mattresses and pillows.

• Always test for allergies before an 'agent is applied on the body.

• Home should be free from pests.

• Keep room clean to prevent breeding of flies.

• Prevent the breeding of mosquitoes by removing the stagnant water and by using mosquito repellent.

• Mosquito net can be used in the nights.

Ensure freedom from insects, animal, pests, moth, bedbugs and cockroaches. These are kept away from client's room by using the D.D.T. spray and by use of naphthalene balls in cupboards. "

2.3.6 .,Measures to Promote Safety at Home

Home constitutes environment inside and outside the home, hence safety has to be ~ maintained in and around the house.

A) Environmental Safety

Environment at and around home includes entrance of the house, door bell, entry gate, provision of security staff etc.

• The inside of the home include lighting, "ventilation, areliable heating system, furniture, rugs well secured, bathroom floors not slippery, non-skid bathtub surfaces, well maintained electrical appliances and electrical cords, ladders, and careful labelling, handling arid storing of all potentially toxic substances. Left over food and medications are discarded on their expiry .date,

• Outdoor areas have adequate lighting, maintained fences and proper security for potential hazards.

Kitchen has facility of hand washing and proper storage area within reach. Sharp appliances kept separately, food items kept covered and cleaner. In spite of having safety measures athome, accidents can take place at any time. You would be learning about home hazards, so that you take measures well in advance by discussing with family members, so that home becomes the safe place for a patient.

B) Other safety measures - Drugs, Isolation and Disposal of Waste

Accidents involving chemicals generally result from the incorrect use of medicinal preparations. Thus, medicines are generally kept in locked cupboards. Although poisoning happen more frequently in children, or older adults. The following information includes suggestions for educating the patient and family members about other safety measures such.as:

1) Drugs

• Do not hesitate to call the physician, nurse, or pharmacist.

• Keep the phone numbers for your health care facility.

• Develop good communication with physician, nurse, and pharmacist.

• Report the side effects from medications to health care provider.

• Do not stop taking prescribed drug or change the dose without consulting the physician or nurse.

• Use large print labels on your drugs.

• Use a medication calendar or diary to keep track of drug schedule.

• Avoid doubling a dose if you forget a medication.

• When a drug is discontinued, throwaway any remaining medication.

2) Isolation

-, Infections are caused by .disease producing germs which invade the normal defences of the body. The sick and injured are particularly prone to infections because of lowered body resistance, often as a result of disease processes.

Health team members sometimes unknowingly act as carriers of micro organisms. These micro organisms, as well as many others, can cause infections when they come in contact with broken skin or mucous membrane or when they are inhaled or ingested. Micro organisms are found in the air, on the floors, on equipment and furniture and on articles which come in contact with a person who has an infection. They oan be spread through the air, and by linen, dishes and even care taker's hands. Simple measures such as hand washing and boiling of used articles of the patient prevent spread of infection .

.'Hand washingis an important measure in preventing the spread of micro-organisms. Hand washing remove and destroy organisms. The running water washes away organisms, while soap emulsifies foreign matter thus facilitating the removal of oils, greases and dirt.

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Boilingis another method of rendering articles free of micro-oranisms, Boiling for 10 minutes will destroy all pathogens and spores can be destroyed after 20 minutes

of boiling. The article to be sterilised must be completely dipped in water during the entire time, the boiling time being counted after water comes to full boil.

3) . Disposal of waste

There are many categories of waste which has to be treated before discarding.' Sharp waste such as needles and syringes, scalpel, blades need to be disinfected by use of chemicals and discarded in puncture proof container. Solid and liquid waste needs to be disinfected by chemicals and liquids can be discharged into drains.

2.3.7 Role of Home Base Care Provider in Meeting .Safety Needs .

Let us discuss the role of home care provider to meet safety needs as given below:

., Ensure the use of railings and guards on window and beds.

• 'Keep floor dry and it should not be slippery.

• Hold stretchers and wheelchairs securely while' assisting patient and lock the wheels.

• Ensure firm and safe attachment of equipment in place.

• Liftpatient together with co-operation of family members.

• Ensure regular checking of equipment for its safe and working condition.

• Careful observation is necessary while applying hot application like electric pads, hot water bottles, steam inhaler etc.

• Restrict smoking in patient's room.

• Careful and regular monitoring of electric~ connections and gadgets to prevent accidents.

• Ensure damp dusting is done before dry dusting.

'. Identify specific allergens for individual and accordingly prevention may be carried out.)

• .Ensure the regular and frequent spray of insecticides and pesticides.

• Prevent breeding places for mosquitoes by ensuring regular cleanliness and removal of areas of stagnant water.

• Use mosquito repellent e.g. DDT spray etc.

• Ask the family members to provide mosquito nets at nightfor patient.

• Ensure regular use of naphthalene balls in cupboard. Check Your Progress 2

1) List the types of injuries which can occur at home .

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1. Name the persons at risk for injury athome.

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List causes of health hazards.

2.4 LET US SUM UP

In this module, you have learnt about meaning of comfort and safety, how to provide comfort to the patient at home by using various comfort devices. Youhave also learntaboutthecausesofhazardsathomeandintheenvironment.Further,information on safety athome isalso discussed with special emphasis on environmental safety. Educating thepatient and the family members about other safety measures aswell ashelp the home care providers to take special precautions for the people who are atrisk for getting injured athome. '

2.5 KEYWORDS

Anoxia Lack ofoxygen supply.

Hyperaemia

Ischaemia

Having more blood in the area.

Deficient (reduced) blood flowtoanareadue to constriction or obstruction of a blood vessel.

Necrotic The tissues comprised of dead cells due to lackofoxygen.

Tissue hypoxia-Decreased oxygen supply to the tissue

2.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

. Check Your Progress 1

I) a) For physical comfort - in order to relieve fatigue orany physical strain.

b) For therapeutic effect:

toimprove and stimulatecirculation

toprevent muscular spasm and contractures/deformities

to prevent bed sores/decubitus ulcers

to facilitate drainage from body cavity Comfort and Safety Measures

to facilitate breathing.

2) Comfort devices:

Comfortable bed.

Back rest

Bed board

Bed cradle

Foot board

Trochanter rolls

Rolled towel or sheet

Air rings

Sandbags

Check Your Progress 2

1) a) Mechanical injuries

b) Thermal injuries

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c) Chemical injuries

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d) Electrical injuries

e) Bacteriological injuries

f) Psychological injuries

2) Persons at risk for injuries at home:

a) Unconscious

,b) Paralysed

c) Mentally ill persons

d) Partially or totally blind persons

e) Deaf persons

f) Elderly patients

g) Excessive fatigue 3) • Poor lighting inside or outside \ • Uneven walking areas having grooves high and low floors etc. • Steps with broken c~crete and without railings "• Loose mats

Slippery tub or shower

• Defective~g

• Smoking in bed or alone at night

• Obstructed doorways.

• Loose fitting clothes worn while cooking

• Many medications which has expiry date or unlabelled

• Unlocked cupboards with poisons

• Items placed too close to the heat source of the kitchen stove

• Unsupervised children in bathtub

• Water temperature that is too hot.

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