

Bed Baths - Back to the Basics
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Problem

Maintaining skin integrity in the geriatric patient is just one of the major responsibilities of any staff nurse. Intact skin serves the body in maintaining homeostasis and is the first line of defense a patient has against infections.

Evidence

The use of the traditional daily bathing routine commonly utilized in hospitals may contribute to the potential injury to patient's skin integrity. By simply altering the way we do basic nursing care, we may be able to keep them from inheriting yet another hospital acquired injury/infection.

Practice Change

Utilizing evidence-based practice based upon the Rosswurm and Larrabee model, with its six step process, the daily activity of daily baths was revisited. Baths were changed to every other day/evening on the Inpatient

Rehabilitation Unit. Also, the use of one type of non-drying soap was used to keep the trial as uniform as possible.

Strategy

During this trial individual questionnaires were developed (department specific) for the selected 41 patients to gather information regarding their specific home bathing practice. Along with the questionnaires, in-depth assessment and diagrams were completed on each patient.

Evaluation

Skin integrity, patient satisfaction, and staff satisfaction were measured using post patient diagram, post practice change questionnaire, and one on one follow-up with staff.

Results

Rehabilitation units have an inherent connection to skin issues in the geriatric patient due to the length of stay most patients require. Patients felt more in control of some portion of their stay, and percentages of satisfaction based on the initial questionnaire were measured.

Recommendations

The use of non-drying cleansers, along with an every other day bath routine, will assist the nurse in giving the geriatric patient the head start on the recovery toward home and be on the forefront of what is considered best practice.

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