

# **COMFORT DEVICES**

## **❖ Introduction -**

Comfort is concerned with rest, with exercise, with the relation of one part of the body to another, with the bed and the whole environment. Comfort is a phase of every procedure as it is an aspect of the total care of the patient.

Comfort devices are invented articles which would add to comfort of patient when used in appropriate manner.

## **❖ Definition of Comfort**

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

## **❖ Definition of Comfort devices**

These devices relieve the discomfort and help in maintaining correct posture.

Various comfort devices are used for giving comfort to the patient, such as: pillows, back rest, foot rest, bed block, bed cradles, sand bags, air cushion, rubber and cotton rings, air and water mattresses and knee rest.

### **• Factors Influencing Comfort**

#### 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

#### II) Psychological conditions

- fear and anxiety in regard to illness,
- concern for the family,
- interruption in daily routine,
- noise or failure to provide privacy.

- **Purposes**

- Relieve fatigue or physical strain
- Improve and stimulate circulation
- Prevent muscular spasm and contractures/deformities
- Prevent bed sores/decubitus ulcers
- Facilitate drainage from body cavity
- Facilitate breathing.

- ❖ **Safety**

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

persons who are at risk of getting injured at home such as:

- Unconscious
- Paralysed
- Mentally ill persons
- Partially or totally blind persons
- Deaf persons
- Elderly patients
- Excessive fatigue

- **Purposes**

- 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.

## ❖ **Comfort Device -**

### 1) **PILLOWS**

Pillows are used to give comfortable position to the patient. These are most commonly used to support various body parts.

#### **Purpose**

- To maintain proper body alignment
- To support body part in good alignment
- Help to reduce pressure
- It can be folded, rolled or tucked firmly against the body to maintain position
- It is used to support head, neck, arms, legs and part of the back adds to the physical comfort

### 2) **BACK REST**

Back rest is a mechanical device which provides a suitable support and rest for the back of the patient in sitting position

#### **Purpose**

- To support back
- To facilitate easy breathing
- It is given especially for heart patients and asthma patients
- Used in postoperative period

### 3) **ROLLS**

Hand rolls are made of cloth that rolled into a cylinder' about 4-5 inches long and 2-3 inches in diameter and stuffed firmly

#### **Purpose**

- These used to keep the fingers from being held in a tight fist leading to flexion contracture in patients who are unable to move hands due to paralysis, injury or disease. Thigh rolls are made by folding a sheet to the desired length of 2-3 feet and then rolled into a tight cylinder.
- Thigh rolls are used to support hips and thighs preventing them from outward rotation and keeping the feet in good alignment in case of paralysis, fracture of femur of hip surgery.

#### 4) FOOT RESTS

Foot rests are the mechanical device used to give rest to feet. Sands bags or foot board may be substituted.

##### **Purpose**

- It helps to maintain the normal position of feet
- It is used for the comfort
- To prevent foot drop

#### 5) SAND BAGS

Sand bags are canvas, rubber or plastic bags filled with sand and are 1, 5 and 10 lbs in weight. Sand bags are used to immobilize a part.

##### **Purpose**

- To relieve discomfort
- Used to support the body part
- Used to immobilize the body part
- Used to support as in fractures bones
- To prevent foot drop or wrist drop

#### 6) AIR AND WATER MATTRESSES

Air and water mattresses are used for very thin or obese patients and for those who are prone to get pressure sores. The principles is that pressure exerted by the body, will be distributed equally in all directions.

Air and water mattresses are plastic mattresses with two sets of chambers. To use them place the mattress on the bed and fill air or water in the compartment. Cover the mattress with light bottom clothes.

##### **Purpose**

- To improve circulation
- To provide comfort
- To prevent pressure sores
- Used in very thin or very obese patients
- Used in chronic bed ridden patients

**Caution**

- Avoid punctures in the mattress with needles, pins or other sharp objects

**7) RINGS**

Air rings are made of rubber. The air rings is inflated about half full tested for leakage, covered and the placed under the patient's hip in such a way that the value is on side and not in contact with body.

Cotton rings are made wrapped with bandage. These are placed under the bony prominences such as heels and fastened in place if necessary.

**Purpose**

- Used to lift the hip from bed to prevent bed sores
- It helps to prevent direct pressure on bony prominence
- It improves the circulation

**8) BED CRADLES**

Bed cradles vary widely in size and in material. Bed cradles are of wooden, metal or electronic. The bed cradles support and take off the weight of the bedding.

Bed cradle are semi-circular in shape made of wood or metal or entirely made of metal tubing or slats.

**Purpose**

- Used to prevent the top cloth is coming in contact with the patients especially in burns patients
- To apply heat in case of dying plaster casts
- Electronic bed cradles are used to supply the desired warm to the case of shock

**9) BED BLOCKS**

Bed blocks are made up of wood size; it may be high or low. These are placed under the foot of bed for various reasons.

**Purpose**

- To prevent shock
- To arrest hemorrhage
- To retain enema
- After spinal anesthesia

- After tonsillectomy
- To provide traction
- To position in postural drainage

#### 10) AIR CUSHION

Air cushions are round in shape and made up of rubber. These can be inflated with air. These are used to take off the weight of the body.

Air cushion should not be applied directly in contact with skin. They should have a cover.

##### **Purpose**

- To relieve pressure on certain parts of the body
- It provides relaxation as it yields to shift off body weight and it relieves pressure on certain parts of the body

##### **Uses**

Air cushion vehicles work by creating a large force of those points to the ground. This lifts the vehicle off the ground letting it ride on a cushion of air.

#### 11) CARDIAC TABLE

A table is in the hospital for patient's use during hospitalization. It is used to maximize safety of both patients and staff. Improve patient's surrounding by modifying the current cardiac table to one that can be kept and folded.

Bed table placed in front with a pillow on it, patient can lean forward and take rest

Table without pillow is used for writing and meals

Used for patients with cardiac conditions and asthma

Position should be changed to relieve fatigue

##### **Purpose**

- Patient can rest over the table with the help of pillow
- Helps to take meals and in writing

#### 12) TRAPEZE BAR

An overhead trapeze is a triangle-shaped metal bar. It hangs from a metal frame, which is attached to the headboard and footboard of the bed.

A triangular metal apparatus above a bed, used to help the patient move and support weight during transfer or position change.

Trapeze bar is suspended from an overhead frame that extends from the foot to head of bed. Patient can grasp the bar to raise the trunk off the bed surface or to move up in bed.

- **ROLE OF NURSE IN COMFORT MEASURES**

- ✓ Nurse identify comfort needs of patients and family members
- ✓ Nurses design interventions to meet identified needs
- ✓ Intervening variables are considered when designing interventions
- ✓ When interventions are delivered in a caring manner and are effective, and when enhanced comfort is attained, interventions are called “comfort measures”
- ✓ Patients and nurse agree on desirable and realistic health seeking behaviors
- ✓ If enhanced comfort is achieved, patients and family members are more likely to engage in health-seeking behaviours these further enhance comfort
- ✓ When patients and family members are given comfort care and engage in health-seeking behaviours, they are more satisfied with health care and have better health-related outcomes.
- ✓ When patients, families, and nurses are satisfied with health care in an institution, public acknowledgement about that institution’s contributions to health care will help the institution remain viable and flourish.

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