
The Nursing Assistant's Role in Pain Management

The nursing assistant spends a significant amount of time with the patient and family, and plays an important role in pain management. When the patient or family reports pain or pain is observed, the nursing assistant must report it to the nurse, who can evaluate the patient and revise the plan of care. See also the TIPS Sheet on *Recognizing Pain in Patients with an Inability to Communicate Verbally*, which is available at: <http://www.hpna.org/DisplayPage.aspx?Title=TIPS>.

The nurse needs to be consulted before a nursing assistant begins any of the following methods of pain relief:

- Breathing Techniques
- Application of heat/cold
- Aromatherapy
- Gentle massage (back, hand, foot)

The nurse may suggest that the nursing assistant help the patient and/or family with one of the following methods to treat pain as described in the plan of care. Some of these treatments may need instruction from the nurse before the nursing assistant begins them:

- Repositioning
- Distraction (pets, social support, quiet listening, laughter, reminiscing)
- Prayer or spiritual reading
- Music

Report to the nurse the patient's use of pain-relieving medications.

Other HPNA Teaching Sheets on are available at www.HPNA.org.

Reference

Ferrell B, Coyle N. *Textbook of Palliative Nursing*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2011.

Hospice and Palliative Nursing Assistant Core Curriculum, Pittsburgh, PA: Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association; 2009.

Approved by the HPNA Education Committee June 2006.
Reviewed January 2009, July 2013.