

# EMERGENCY TRAINING FOR IN- HOME CAREGIVERS

Valley Area  
Agency on Aging



# Purpose

- Often you are the first one to realize there is a problem with the person you are caring for
- Because of the responsibilities you have, this presentation will...
- Review basic information to enhance your knowledge and abilities to effectively care for your patients and
- Reinforce your observation skills
- Knowing what is normal (baseline information) for your patients is key to effective and responsible caregiving
- At end of presentation you will be able to discuss -
  - When to report
  - What to report
  - When to call 911

# FALLS

## Causes of falls:

- History of falls
- Throw rugs
- Oxygen tubing
- Weakness
- Use of assistive devices
- Poor balance
- Poor vision
- Inability to make safe decisions
- Tremors
- Lightheadedness when first standing
- Helping person in the shower

Do any of these increase fall risk for the person you are caring for?



# Falls

## If someone falls...

Stay calm

Ask person to take several deep breaths (to calm them)

Ask if hurt; if yes call 911

Gently examine for broken bones; if yes, call 911

Make them as comfortable as possible –towel under head

If person says they can get up, proceed slowly and roll them to their side to rest for a few minutes

Place sturdy chair or two chairs next to person

Person to get on hands and knees

Person to choose strongest leg and move that knee forward to place foot on floor

Support person's movements and be responsive to their directions for help

Let person push self up to the chair and help them to sit there until it is safe

If person is unable to help themselves get up, call 911

If person hits head in fall, call 911

Report fall



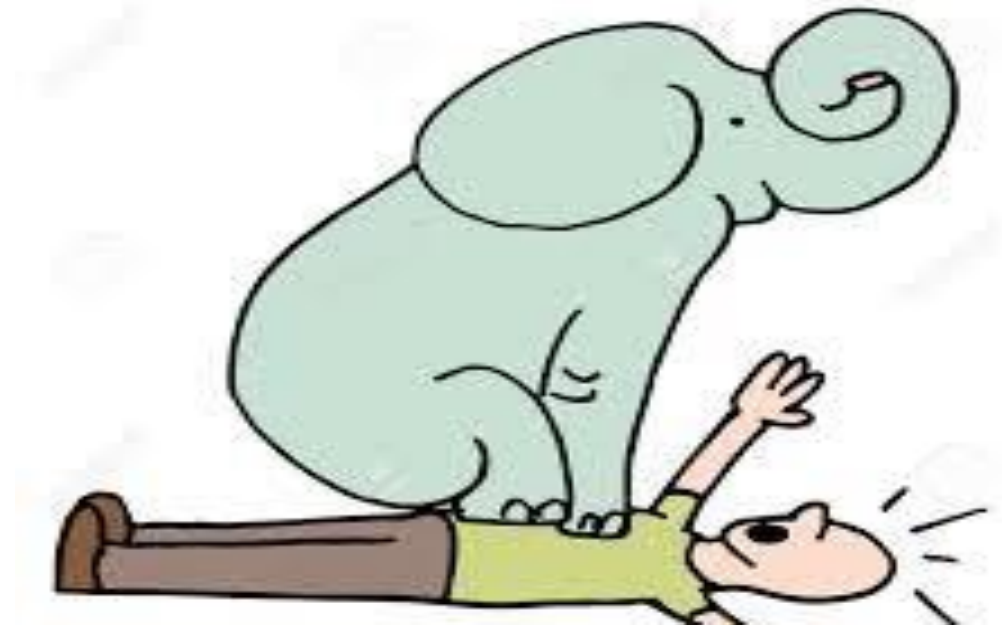
# Pain

Any complaint of new pain (from any source) from person needs to be reported

Any report of chest pain requires a stat 911 call

If (chest) pain travels to jaw, left arm or back, stat 911 call

A complaint of chest pressure like an elephant sitting on chest requires a stat 911 call



# Appetite/Vomiting

Significant loss of appetite for several days (possibly with declining fluids by mouth) needs to be reported. This could be accompanied by a decline in alertness (level of consciousness)

Vomiting needs to be reported

Bloody vomit requires a 911 call

Dehydration could result which needs to be addressed

# Stool

Color, frequency and consistency of stool depend on food/fluid intake or medications or illness

Be aware of person's stool pattern so you know when it is not normal

Black stool (consistency of tar) or bloody stool needs to be reported and most likely a 911 call

Clay (gray/beige) colored stool is not normal and needs to be followed up on; not an emergency

If person has diarrhea –find out how long since last normal stool; if more than two days, report so doctor can be notified

If person has abdominal pain with diarrhea, report

Bloody or black diarrhea, report; possibly 911 call

Dehydration can result from diarrhea which can be a serious consequence

# Urine



Usual color is light yellow to deep yellow

The shade of yellow is usually related to hydration status

If dark amber, cloudy, or bloody, this needs to be reported

Odor – if stronger than normal odor, this is to be reported (could be a sign of infection or dehydration)

If odor is unusual, report

New complaint of burning with urination (most likely an infection).  
Report

Increased frequency of urination should be reported; could occur at the same time as burning



# Skin Color

What is normal for this person?

- Normally pale? Normally pink?

Is skin (or the white part of the eye) yellow? Report

Look at fingernails – pink or pale or blue? If blue, this needs to be reported, possibly a 911 call

Is skin unusually pale? More pale than normal? Report

With an African-American, skin color will look gray if they are pale

Are lips blue? Or is skin around lips blue/gray? - Call 911

Check skin for bruising, unusual redness or broken skin especially where it is bony – tail bone, hips, elbows, heels. If any of these are newly present, report

If there are signs of being restrained – redness around wrists or ankles, report

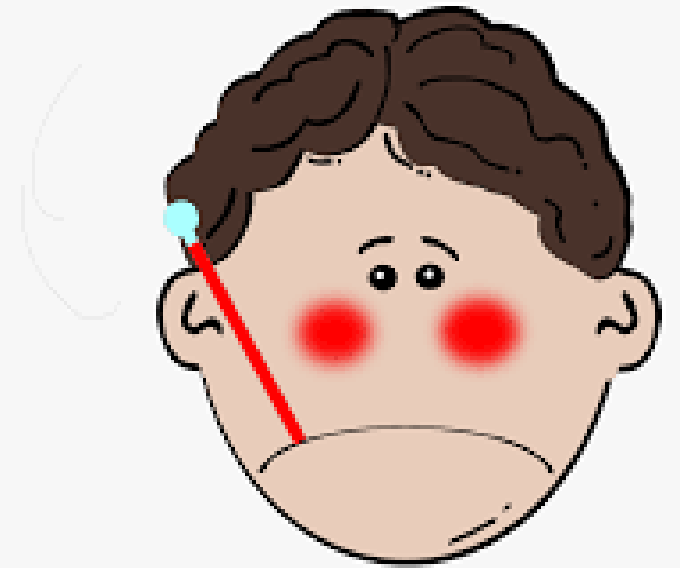
# Skin Temperature

Is skin cool to your touch or is skin warm to your touch?

What is normal for this person?

Different parts of the body may feel different from other parts; hands and feet may feel cooler than chest or face – this is normal

New fever needs to be reported



# Respirations

Normal range is 12-20 per minute

Count respirations for a full minute

What is normal (baseline) for your person?

Observe for depth of respiration-

Shallow (can barely see rise and fall of chest or abdomen) or is it a deep breathing pattern? Some people breathe with chest muscles and others breathe with abdominal muscles

Regular or irregular breathing pattern?

Very slow (under 10/minute) or very fast (over 24/minute) respirations need to be reported; may require a stat 911 call if person is in distress. If person is in pain, respirations could increase

Distress = blue lips, gasping for air, long periods of time between breaths, new irregular breathing, grunting, struggling to get air

New cough? Productive? Clear mucus? Yellow or green mucus? Report

New wheezing? Report. Possible 911 call if in distress

Struggling to breath or working too hard to breathe – call 911

# Altered Level of Consciousness (LOC)

Level of consciousness is a measurement of a person's arousability and responsiveness to stimuli

Stimuli could be a voice or a touch

Is person alert to person, place, time according to his baseline?

Is person able to tell you his name, location, day, month, birthday?

Is person's alertness (level of consciousness/LOC) changed?

Is person not alert to person, place, time and this is new?

Is person unable to tell you his name, your name, where he is, what day or month it is?

\*\*\*Report. Possible 911 call

Has person's ability to verbalize changed, deteriorated? Report

Does person respond to verbal stimuli? Call his name

Does person only respond to painful stimuli (chest rub)? Stat 911 call

Is person unresponsive? Stat 911 call

Report anything that has changed from normal behavior

# Stroke

Identifying a stroke in progress: remember **FAST**

**F** – Face drooping. Is one side of person's face drooping or numb? Ask them to smile. Is smile uneven?

**A** – Arm weakness. Is the person experiencing weakness or numbness in one arm? Ask person to raise both arms. Does one drift downward?

**S** – Speech. Suddenly slurred or hard to understand? Is person unable to speak or repeat a simple sentence?

**T** – Time to call 911 stat if any of these symptoms are present. Check the time so you can report when the symptoms began (very important).

Remember: Time lost is brain lost

# Suicidal Behavior

Has person confided in you that he is thinking of ending his life?

Is person talking about lack of hope, no purpose in life?

Is person agitated?

Is person feeling trapped?

Is person withdrawing from others?

Is person giving away personal items?

Do not leave person alone.

Report any of the above!

Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255

# Hoyer Lift

- Reference FDA information on line for transferring patients  
<https://www.fda.gov/files/medical%20devices/published/Patient-Lifts-Safety-Guide.pdf>

This is a multi-page, detailed, basic illustration for safely transferring patients

- Video on how to use a Hoyer lift:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MI1CMip07tA>

QUIZ  
TIME!



# Quiz

1. Is a respiratory rate of 30/minute in normal range? Yes No

2. Which Acronym can help you spot the signs and symptoms of a stroke?

ABCS

FAST

SPOT

None of the above

3. True or False? Normal urine color can range from pale yellow to dark amber

4. True or false? As long as person uses his assistive device (walker) he is not in danger of falling

5. True or False? Always move the Hoyer lift quickly to increase your patient's confidence in your ability

6. True or False? Dehydration can be a consequence of vomiting or diarrhea, fever or increased urination


# Quiz

1. JoEllen is sleeping when you let yourself into her apartment which is not unusual because it is early. You start the laundry and clean the kitchen. You go to JoEllen to wake her up for breakfast. She does not wake up when you enter her bedroom. She does not open her eyes when you call her name. You touch her arm and she does not respond. Her skin is warm and pink. She is breathing. What do you do next?
  - a. Rub her arms
  - b. Call her name loudly
  - c. Rub her breast bone hard with your hand
  - d. All of the above
  - e. None of the above. Call 911

# Quiz

2. Henry gave you a nice little gift off his bookshelf last week. He insisted you take it. At your last visit with him he said he was getting tired of being tired from dialysis treatments. He said he had talked with his doctor about his fatigue that was getting worse every month. He said he felt his doctor did not listen to him and just talked about his lab work being stable.

What should you do?

REPORT	CALL 911	STAT CALL 911
Fall	Fall with injury/broken bones/head injury/unable to get up themselves	Chest Pain
Fever	Bloody vomit	Chest pressure
Loss of appetite over several days	Bloody stool or black stool	Respiratory Distress
Black stool	Black stool/diarrhea	Unresponsive patient
Diarrhea for more than 2 days	Blue lips, fingernails	Signs of Stroke (FAST)
Urine – unusual or stronger than normal odor	Very fast or very slow respirations	
Burning with urination/increased frequency	Struggling to breathe	
Yellow skin color	Altered level of consciousness (inability to verbalize name, place, day or month or season)	
Unusually pale, cool skin	Diarrhea with abdominal pain	
Signs of being restrained		
New wheezing, productive cough		 <p><b>Valley Area Agency On Aging</b> Answers, Action &amp; Advocacy for <b>All Things Senior</b></p>
Suspected suicidal behavior		
New broken down skin		
Vomiting		
New complaint of pain		
Bloody or cloudy urine		