ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
Established 1977 • Licensed 1990

Restlessness

Restlessness is the inability to rest or relax. Restlessness is very common at end of life and may be called "terminal restlessness". Restlessness may be due to pain, medication side effects, or the body's natural process of shutting down.

Common signs and symptoms to monitor for:

- Agitation or thrashing
- Pulling at clothing or sheets
- Picking or grabbing at the air
- Incoherent speech or shouting
- Increased confusion or disorientations
- Inability to sit still, trying to get out of bed for no known reason
- Aimless ambulation
- Inability to get comfortable
- Grimacing
- Muscle twitching/ fidgeting

Tips for Restlessness Management:

Check if symptoms are due to unmet needs, such as hunger, discomfort, or elimination needs

- **Medication**: Administer prescribed medications to assist in management of restlessness, such as benzodiazepines or antipsychotics. Medications should be given under the guidance of the hospice team.
- **Environment**: Dim the lights and reduce noise to decrease stimulation. Minimize the number of visitors if needed. Maintain a quiet, peaceful environment. Use familiar items (like a favorite blanket or photograph) to create a sense of security. Offer relaxation activities like soothing music or gentle massage.

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- **Hydration**: Provide sips of water if tolerated or moisten the lips and mouth to prevent dryness. Ensure the patient's mouth is comfortable, as dryness can cause agitation.
- **Support**: Offer reassurance and comfort to your loved one, speak in a calm voice.
- **Comfort Measures**: Keep the patient physically comfortable. Adjust pillows, bedding, and clothing to prevent discomfort. Use gentle touch and soothing voices. Keep the patient safe by providing supervision and frequent checks.

Record and Report to St. Francis:

- Any signs of restlessness
- Difficulty administering medications
- Triggers that make the behavior worse
- Activities that make the behavior better
- Concerns with coping
- Additional need for support
- Unsafe situations

St. Francis Reflections is always available to assist with any questions or concerns 24/7

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