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

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
Established 1977 • Licensed 1990

Secretions

As the body weakens, patients may have difficulty clearing secretions. While it may be distressing to hear, it does not usually cause discomfort to the patient.

Common signs and symptoms to monitor for:

- Gurgling or rattling sounds when breathing
- Coughing or choking
- Difficulty swallowing saliva
- Increased secretions in the throat or lungs

Tips for Secretion Management:

- **Positioning**: Turn the patient onto their side to allow secretions to drain. Elevating the head of the bed can also help reduce the noise and ease breathing.
- **Humidification**: Use a cool-mist humidifier to keep the air moist. This can prevent secretions from becoming too thick and sticky.
- **Medications**: Administer prescribed medications to dry up secretions (e.g., scopolamine or glycopyrrolate). These medications help reduce the production of saliva and mucus.

Record and Report to St. Francis:

- Distress related to secretions
- Difficulty breathing
- Coughing or choking due to secretions

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

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