St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
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Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Durable medical equipment (DME) is equipment used for a medical purpose, intended to be used in the home to assist patients with certain medical conditions or physical limitations. This overview provides basic instructions for use, however please always refer to the manufactures instructions and hospice staff regarding specific questions or concerns with use and safety precautions.

Common DME used in Hospice:

- ### Hospital Bed
  - **Purpose:** Allows for easier patient positioning, comfort, and caregiver access.
  - **Tips:**
    - Adjust the bed height and angle using the remote control
    - Ensure side rails are in place to prevent falls, but be mindful of their potential to cause injury.
    - Always lock the wheels when the bed is stationary.
    - Position the bed in a place that allows caregivers to easily move around and access the patient from both sides.

- ### Oxygen Concentrator
  - **Purpose:** Provides supplemental oxygen for patients with respiratory difficulties.
  - **Tips:**
    - Turn on the machine and ensure its set to the prescribed oxygen flow rate.
    - Clean the nasal cannula or mask daily and replace as recommended.
    - Place the machine in a well-ventilated area, at least 6 inches away from walls, to ensure proper airflow.
    - Keep oxygen tubing free of kinks or obstructions.

- ### Wheelchair
  - **Purpose:** Assists with patient mobility when they are unable to walk.
  - **Tips:**
    - Always lock the brakes before transferring the patient in or out.
    - Ensure footrests are adjusted properly to avoid tripping or dragging.
    - Position the wheelchair close to the bed or chair before transfers, and use proper lifting techniques or transfer devices if needed.

- Regularly check tires for wear and tear to ensure smooth movement.

Walkers and Rollators

- **Purpose:** Provides support for patients who can still walk but need assistance.
- **Tips:**
  - Ensure the walker is adjusted to the patient's height, with elbows slightly bent when holding the handles.
  - Teach the patient to move the walker forward first, then step into it, avoiding leaning too far forward.
  - If using a rollator, lock the brakes when the patient stops walking or before sitting down on the rollator's seat.

Bedside Commode

- **Purpose:** Provides an alternative to using the bathroom for patients with limited mobility.
- **Tips:**
  - Place the commode next to the bed or chair for easy access.
  - Ensure the commode is on a flat, stable surface and adjust the height if needed.
  - Keep it clean and empty the waste container after each use.
  - If the patient needs assistance, use a gait belt for transfers to ensure safety.

Shower Chair/Transfer Bench

- **Purpose:** Ensures patient safety and comfort while bathing.
- **Tips:**
  - Place the shower chair or bench securely in the shower or tub.
  - Adjust the height so the patient's feet are flat on the floor or inside the tub.
  - Use a handheld shower head to make bathing easier.
  - Ensure non-slip mats are in place to avoid slipping, and help the patient with transfers when necessary.

Alternating Pressure Mattress

- **Purpose:** Helps prevent and manage pressure ulcers by alternating pressure points.
- **Tips:**
  - Set the pressure settings according to the patient's weight and care plan.
  - Ensure the mattress is inflated properly, with all sections fully operational.

- Regularly check the mattress for leaks or damage.
- Reposition the patient every two hours, even with the mattress, to further prevent pressure sores.

Portable Oxygen Tanks

- **Purpose:** Provides mobile oxygen for patients when they need to move around.
- **Tips:**
  - Ensure the tank is filled and set to the prescribed flow rate.
  - Secure the tank on a wheeled cart or carry it in an appropriate holder to avoid dropping.
  - Check the tank's gauge frequently to monitor oxygen levels.
  - Store the tank upright in a secure place, away from heat sources or flammable materials.

Nebulizer

- **Purpose:** Delivers medication in mist form for patients with respiratory conditions such as COPD or asthma.
- **Tips:**
  - Plug in the nebulizer and assemble it with the prescribed medication.
  - Ensure the mask or mouthpiece fits securely and comfortably on the patient.
  - Run the nebulizer until all the medication is gone, typically 10–15 minutes.
  - Clean the nebulizer cup, mouthpiece, and mask after each use to prevent infections.

Over the Bed Table

- **Purpose:** Provides a flat surface for patients to use while in bed, to complete activities such as eating, reading, or writing.
- **Tips:**
  - Adjust the height of the table so it comfortably fits over the bed.
  - Ensure the table is on a stable surface, with wheels locked when not in use.
  - Wipe down and sanitize the table regularly, especially after meals.
  - Avoid overloading the table with heavy items that could cause it to tip.

Air Mattress Overlay

- **Purpose:** Reduces the risk of pressure sores by redistributing weight more evenly across the body.
- **Tips:**

- Lay the mattress overlay on top of the regular mattress, ensuring it is spread evenly without wrinkles.
- Connect the overlay to a pump if it is air-powered, ensuring the correct settings for the patient's needs.
- Regularly inspect for leaks and ensure proper inflation.
- Check the skin regularly for signs of pressure ulcers.

Foam Positioning Wedges

- **Purpose:** Helps maintain proper body alignment and reduces pressure points for patients who are bedridden.
- **Tips:**
  - Place the wedges under the patient to support areas such as the back, hips, or legs as needed.
  - Reposition the wedges every few hours to relieve pressure on certain areas of the body.
  - Ensure the wedges are firm enough to provide support but soft enough for comfort.
  - Check the patient's skin regularly for signs of pressure or irritation from the wedge.