Safety

- Safety is a basic need.
  - The health team must provide for resident safety.
  - The goal is to decrease the person’s risk of accidents and injuries without limiting mobility and independence.
  - Measures to protect residents must not interfere with their rights.
The Safe Environment

- A person in a safe environment:
  - Has little risk of illness or injury.
  - Feels safe and secure physically and mentally.
  - Has a low risk of infection, falls, burns, poisoning, and other injuries.
  - Temperature and noise levels are comfortable.
  - Smells are pleasant.
  - There is enough room and light to move about safely.
  - Is safe and the person’s property are safe.
  - Not afraid.
  - Has few worries and concerns.
Accident Risk Factors

Be aware of these risk factors:

- Age
- The person in a coma relies on others for protection.
- Residents with dementia rely on others.
- Agitated and aggressive behaviors
- Vision loss
- Hearing loss
- Impaired smell and touch
- Impaired mobility
- Drugs
Identifying the Person

- You must give the right care to the right person.
- To identify the person:
  - Compare identifying information on the assignment sheet or treatment card with that on the identification (ID) bracelet.
  - Call the person by name when checking the ID bracelet.
- Alert and oriented residents may choose not to wear ID bracelets.
  - Follow center policy and the care plan to identify the person.
- Learn to use your center’s resident identification system safely.
Preventing Burns

• Causes of burns in nursing centers include:
  ➢ Smoking
  ➢ Spilled hot liquids
  ➢ Electrical items
  ➢ Very hot bath water

• Burn severity depends on water temperature and length of exposure.
Table 10-1: Water Temperature and Length of Exposure for a Third-Degree Burn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fahrenheit (F)</th>
<th>Centigrade (C)</th>
<th>Time Required for a Third-Degree Burn to Occur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>155°F</td>
<td>68°C</td>
<td>1 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148°F</td>
<td>64°C</td>
<td>2 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140°F</td>
<td>60°C</td>
<td>5 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133°F</td>
<td>56°C</td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127°F</td>
<td>52°C</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124°F</td>
<td>51°C</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120°F</td>
<td>48°C</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100°F</td>
<td>37°C</td>
<td>Usually a safe temperature for bathing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preventing Poisoning

- Poisoning is a health hazard and a major cause of death.
  - Carelessness, poor vision, and confusion are major risk factors.
  - Drugs and household products are common poisons.

- To prevent poisoning:
  - Make sure residents cannot reach hazardous materials.
  - Follow agency policy for storing personal care items.
Preventing Suffocation

- Suffocation occurs when breathing stops because of lack of oxygen.
- Causes of suffocation include:
  - Choking
  - Drowning
  - Inhaling gas or smoke
  - Strangulation
  - Electrical shock
  - Carbon monoxide poisoning
Choking

- Choking (foreign-body airway obstruction [FBAO])
  - Air cannot pass through the air passages to the lungs.
  - The body does not get enough oxygen.
  - It can lead to cardiac arrest.
  - Choking often occurs during eating.
  - Older persons are at risk for choking.
  - Choking can occur in the unconscious person.
  - With mild airway obstruction:
    - Some air moves in and out of the lungs.
    - The person is conscious.
    - Usually, the person can speak.
    - Often, forceful coughing can remove the object.
Severe Airway Obstruction: Air Is *Not* Moving

- With severe airway obstruction:
  - The conscious person clutches at the throat (the “universal sign of choking”).
  - The person cannot breathe, speak, or cough.
  - The person appears pale and cyanotic (bluish color).
  - Air does not move in and out of the lungs.
  - If the obstruction is not removed, the person will die.

- The Heimlich maneuver is used to relieve severe airway obstruction.
  - It involves abdominal thrusts.
  - It is performed with the person standing, sitting, or lying down.

- The Heimlich maneuver is not used for very obese persons or pregnant women.
Relieving Choking

- Call for help when an adult or a child (>1 year of age) has:
  - Severe airway obstruction
  - Mild airway obstruction that persists despite the person’s efforts to remove the object by coughing

- The unresponsive adult:
  - Do not assume the cause is choking.
  - If the person is not responding, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

- You can perform the Heimlich on yourself (self-administered Heimlich maneuver).
Preventing Infection

- Infection is a risk for persons who are:
  - Older
  - Chronically ill
  - Disabled

- The spread of infection is a major hazard in nursing centers.
Preventing Equipment Accidents

- All equipment is unsafe if:
  - Broken
  - Not used correctly
  - Not working properly
- Inspect all equipment before use.
- Follow your center’s policy on reporting damaged or nonfunctioning equipment.
- Frayed cords and overloaded electrical outlets can cause:
  - Fires, burns, and electrical shocks
Electrical Safety

- Three-pronged plugs are used on all electrical items.
- Warning signs of a faulty electrical item include:
  - Shocks
  - Loss of power or a power outage
  - Dimming or flickering lights
  - Sparks
  - Sizzling or buzzing sounds
  - Burning odor
  - Loose plugs
- Do not use or give damaged items to residents.
Wheelchair Safety

- Check the wheel locks (brakes).
- Check for flat or loose tires.
- Make sure the wheel spokes are intact.
- Make sure the casters point forward.
- Position the person’s feet on the footplates.
- Make sure the person’s feet are on the footplates before moving the chair.
- Push the chair forward when transporting the person. Do not pull the chair backward unless going through a doorway.
- Lock both wheels before you transfer a person to or from the wheelchair.
Wheelchair Use

- Clean the wheelchair according to center policy.
- Ask a nurse or physical therapist to show you how to propel wheelchairs up steps and ramps and over curbs.
- Follow measures to prevent equipment accidents.
Handling Hazardous Substances

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that health care employees:
  - Understand the risks of hazardous substances
  - Know how to safely handle them

- Exposure to hazardous substances can occur:
  - Under normal working conditions
  - During certain emergencies
Handling Hazardous Substances (Cont’d)

- Hazardous substances include:
  - Drugs used in cancer therapy
  - Anesthesia gases
  - Gases used to sterilize equipment
  - Oxygen
  - Disinfectants and cleaning agents
  - Radiation used for x-rays and cancer treatments
  - Mercury

- OSHA requires a hazard communication program.

- Labeling
  - Hazardous substances need warning labels.
Labeling

- Warning labels identify:
  - Physical and health hazards
  - Precaution measures
  - What personal protective equipment to wear
  - How to use the substance safely
  - Storage and disposal information

- If a warning label is removed or damaged:
  - Do not use the substance.
  - Take the container to the nurse and explain the problem.
  - Do not leave the container unattended.
Safety Data Sheets

- Safety data sheets (SDSs)
  Previously called Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
  - Every hazardous substance has an SDS.
  - Employees must have ready access to SDSs.
  - Check the SDS before:
    - Using a hazardous substance
    - Cleaning up a leak or spill
    - Disposing of the substance
  - Tell the nurse about a leak or spill right away.
  - Do not leave a leak or spill unattended.

- Your employer provides training about hazards, exposure risks, and protection measures.
Fire Safety

- Major causes of fire include:
  - Faulty electrical equipment and wiring
  - Overloaded electrical circuits
  - Smoking

- The entire health team must:
  - Prevent fires
  - Act quickly and responsibly during a fire
Fire and Oxygen

Fire and the use of oxygen

- Three things are needed for a fire.
  - A spark or flame
  - A material that will burn
  - Oxygen

- Safety measures are needed where oxygen is used and stored.

- Centers have no-smoking policies and smoke-free areas.

- You may have to remind a resident or visitor not to smoke inside the center.
Fire Safety Measures

- Preventing fires
  - Follow the safety measures for oxygen use.
  - Smoke only where allowed to do so.
  - Be sure all ashes, cigars, cigarettes, and other smoking materials are out before emptying ashtrays.
  - Empty ashtrays into a metal container partially filled with sand or water.
  - Provide ashtrays for persons who are allowed to smoke.
  - Supervise persons who smoke.
  - Follow safety practices when using electrical items.
Fire Safety Measures (Cont’d)

- Keep matches and lighters away from confused and disoriented persons.
- Do not leave cooking unattended on stoves, in ovens, or in microwave ovens.
- Store flammable liquids in their original containers. Keep the containers out of residents’ reach.
- Do not smoke or light matches or lighters around flammable liquids or materials.
During a Fire

- What to do during a fire
  - Know your center’s policies and procedures for fire emergencies.
  - Know where to find fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and emergency exits.
  - Remember the word RACE.
    - R is for rescue.
    - A is for alarm.
    - C is for confine.
    - E is for extinguish.
During a Fire (Cont’d)

- Clear equipment from all normal and emergency exits.
- Do not use elevators if there is a fire.
- To use a fire extinguisher, remember the word PASS.
  - P (Pull the safety pin.)
  - A (Aim low.)
  - S (Squeeze the lever.)
  - S (Sweep back and forth.)
- Centers have evacuation policies and procedures.
  - Once firefighters arrive, they direct rescue efforts.
Disasters

- A disaster is a sudden catastrophic event.
  - People are injured and killed.
  - Property is destroyed.
- There are natural disasters and human-made disasters.
- The center has procedures for disasters that could occur in your area.
- Communities, fire and police departments, and health care agencies have disaster plans.
- Centers have procedures for bomb threats.
Workplace Violence

- Workplace violence is defined as violent acts directed toward persons at work or while on duty.
- Workplace violence can occur in any place where an employee performs a work-related duty.
- According to OSHA, more assaults occur in health care settings than in other industries.
  - Nurses and nursing assistants are at risk.
Violence Prevention

- OSHA has guidelines for violence prevention programs.
  - The goal is to prevent or reduce employee exposure to situations that can cause death or injury.
  - Worksite hazards are identified.
  - Prevention measures are developed and followed.
  - Employees receive safety and health training.

- You need to:
  - Understand and follow your center’s workplace violence prevention program.
  - Understand and follow safety and security measures.
  - Voice safety and security concerns.
  - Report strange or suspicious persons right away.
  - Report violent incidents promptly and accurately.
  - Serve on health and safety committees.
  - Attend training programs.
Risk Management

- Risk management identifies and controls risks and safety hazards affecting the center.

- The intent of risk management is to:
  - Protect everyone in the center
  - Protect center property from harm or danger
  - Protect the person’s valuables
  - Prevent accidents and injuries
Risk Management (Cont’d)

- Risk management deals with these and other safety issues:
  - Accident and fire prevention
  - Negligence and malpractice
  - Resident abuse
  - Workplace violence
  - Federal and state requirements
Wristbands

- **Color-coded wristbands**
  - Promote the person’s safety and prevent harm
  - Communicate an alert or warning
  - Commonly used colors:
    - Red = allergy alert
    - Yellow = fall risk
    - Purple = “do not resuscitate” order
  - To safely use color-coded wristbands:
    - Know the wristband colors used in your center.
    - Check the care plan and your assignment sheet when you see one. Ask the nurse if you have questions.
    - Do not confuse “social cause” bands with them.
    - Check for wristbands on person transferred from another agency. The nurse needs to remove them.
    - Tell the nurse if you think a person needs one.
Personal
Belongings and Valuables

- Personal belongings
  - The person’s belongings must be kept safe.
  - A personal belongings list is completed.
  - A valuables envelope is used for jewelry and money.
  - Items kept at the bedside are listed in the person’s record.
  - Items brought from home are labeled with the person’s name.
Reporting Incidents

- Report accidents and errors at once.
  - Accidents involving residents, visitors, or staff
  - Giving the wrong care
  - Giving care to the wrong person
  - Not giving care
  - Broken or lost items owned by the person
  - Lost money or clothing
  - Hazardous substance incidents
  - Workplace violence incidents
Quality of Life

● Promote safety by:
  ➢ Knowing the common safety hazards
  ➢ Knowing the causes of accidents
  ➢ Knowing who needs protection
  ➢ Using common sense

● You need to:
  ➢ Practice safety measures.
  ➢ Use safety devices as needed.
  ➢ Follow the person’s care plan.