Tips to Informal Caregivers
on Giving Personal Care

Elimination of Body Wastes

Body wastes are eliminated through perspiration, evaporation from the lungs, bowel movements and urination. The bed-bound person may be concerned about how he can eliminate through his kidneys and bowels. This is particularly true of the elderly. Be aware of his concerns and respond quickly to his needs. In giving the bedpan or urinal to a person, consider his privacy and the importance of making him feel comfortable.

Procedure for use of bedpan:

- Warm the bedpan with warm tap water and dry it.
- Cover the bedpan with a newspaper or washcloth when carrying it to the person.
- Add extra protection to the bed, even if a plastic or rubber sheet is used on the mattress; an extra cloth or newspaper may be placed under the person's hips.
- Sprinkle talcum powder or cornstarch on the bedpan seat to make it easier to get on or off; if the person is thin, add a small pad to cushion the seat. (A sanitary pad or soft cloth may be used.)
- Place the bedpan on the bed near the person's hips with the open end towards the foot of the bed.
- Fold the top covers to one side to avoid soiling and partially drape the sheet or blanket to prevent chilling and provide privacy.
- If the person needs help in raising the hips, have him flex his knees. Place one hand under the small of the back and, on signal, push his hips up is he pushes down with his hands and heels. With the other hand, place the bedpan under his hips and adjust the pan for comfort.
- Help the person to a sitting position, if possible. Provide toilet paper and a call signal. Then leave the room to allow for privacy. Remind the female to wipe from front to back to avoid bringing germs into the vagina and bladder.
- Assist with thorough wiping.
- Apply talc sparingly.

- To remove the bedpan, have the person flex his knees and push down with his heels.
- Remove the bed protector, cover the pan, and take it to the bathroom.
- Help the person wash his hands.
- Position him comfortably.
- Inspect the contents of the bedpan.
- Rinse the bedpan with cold water to prevent coagulation of proteins.
- Clean the bedpan with soap and water, cover and store.

Procedure for use of urinal:

- Use a protector under the person's hips.
- Give the person the urinal. If he is helpless, place it between his legs in a position to collect the urine.
- Provide for privacy by replacing covers, leaving the room if safe to do so.
- Rinse the urinal with cold water.
- Wash urinal, cover and store.

The above statements are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. You should always consult with your physician about any health and lifestyle concerns or issues you may have.