

Age Specific Care Protocol - Housekeeping

Housekeeping staff are often viewed by the patient as the member of the healthcare team that is easiest to talk with. Staff must be sensitive to issues of confidentiality and use good judgment in recognizing important information that should be passed along to the patient's nurse. They are also expected to be responsive to patients' wish to talk and display attentiveness to patients, without wasting a lot of time in idle chitchat.

Infant (0-1 years)

- prioritizes work so as not to disrupt an infant's sleep
- approaches infant in a slow, non-threatening way
- hands a crying infant his pacifier (cleans with warm water and soap if it has been on the floor)
- speaks in a soothing voice to the infant that is awake
- ensures safe environment for sleeping, care, exploring and playing (makes sure no chemicals or other objects that the infant could put in his mouth are left in infant's reach, etc.)
- after patient discharge, cleans any toys that belong to the hospital (they may have been in the infant's mouth)

Toddler (1-4 years)

- uses clear, simple terms and explanations ("Hi. I'm Becky. I'm here to clean the floor.")
- recognizes that toddlers may be upset by the presence of strangers
- uses distraction to calm the patient (examples: singing, reciting nursery rhymes, having a toy "talk", handing the child a familiar toy or blanket)
- prioritizes work so as not to disrupt the toddler's sleep
- ensures a safe environment for sleeping, care, exploring and playing (makes sure no chemicals or objects that the toddler could put in his mouth, or that he could climb on or knock over, are left in his reach, etc.)
- after patient discharge, cleans any toys that belong to the hospital

Child (5-12 years)

- uses clear, simple terms and explanations (see above)
- allows choices when possible ("Would you rather I cleaned your room now or in a half hour?")
- is attentive to what child says to him/her, but also recognizes that children may use play as a means of saying things
- helps teach/enforce general hospital safety rules

Adolescent (13-16 years)

- allows choices when possible (see above)
- avoids authoritative approaches; shows respect - treats more as an adult than a child
- provides for patient's modesty

- recognizes that teens are very concerned about their appearance
- explains exactly what is expected of patient, if applicable
- speaks directly to the patient
- is attentive to what patient says; considers spoken and unspoken meaning; conveys to clinical staff if indicated

Elderly (>70 years)

- repeats instructions several times
- speaks slowly and distinctly; confirms that patient can hear what's being said clearly, if applicable
- addresses patient as "Ma'am", "Sir", "Mr. Gilbo", "Mrs. Nelson"
- is attentive to what patient says; considers meaning and passes on as indicated
- recognizes possibility of increased risk of falling if floor is wet, pathway to bathroom blocked, etc.; avoids contributing to a fall

General

- adjusts work to the age and other characteristics of the patient
- responds to identified needs, such as dietary practices, food preferences, cultural and religious beliefs, language or educational barriers, etc.
- demonstrates respect for persons as individuals through actions that support autonomy, dignity and privacy
- avoids use of hospital lingo