

Patient Education Questions 5/23/2014

1. I am having a hard time getting the nursing staff to listen to me. What is the best way to communicate my needs to nursing staff in order to insure my needs will be met in a timely manner?

- The process is a two way communication between nursing and the patient
- Define a plan for the day with nursing- what is to be done
- Nursing is generally really busy between 8-10 AM. Set aside some time with your nurse at 11 AM to directly speak with your nurse –literally make an appointment with them.
- Explain if you like something done in a certain way.
- Talk to the CNAs as they are a big part of your nursing care.
-

2. What are upcoming events for Rec. Therapy?

- Events can be planned by an individual or specific request in addition to organized events such as the National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic (March) , Summer wheelchair Games (August), Valor Games (June), weekly community outings (TBD individually), weekend BBQ's (Sundays usually-as scheduled by volunteer organizations), Aquatic center now open at PAD. For specific questions contact Rec Therapy-Jessica or Scott.
 - Outings-Movie, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Aviation museum
 - Reikes center – archery
 - Fly tying on Wednesday
 - Laser gun, sit volleyball, Quad rugby
 - A calendar for events is currently under development
- How can I get into the swimming pool? (Additional- asked by veteran present)**
- Inpatient doctor referral. Cannot have open wounds. Having a Foley catheter is fine.

Deleted:

3. I know that the spinal cord is unlike any other “organ” in the body and can be somewhat unpredictable as far as recovery goes. Can you explain how the healing process of the spinal cord works? What can I do to help, what options are out there?

Things you can do to help your healing:

- Good alignment in your wheelchair keeps your energy level up.
- Stress can counteract your healing.

Deleted: healing :

- Exercise is important.
- Diabetes needs to be kept in control because blood vessel constriction means less blood to your organs including your nervous system
- Avoid Tobacco use as it also constricts your blood vessels as well lowers your pulmonary function

4. Why isn't the gym open longer hours and on weekends? Why can't SCI patients who are cleared for independent use utilize the gym whenever they want?

- The gym has been designated for Therapy.
- The policy of the gym requires that there be supervision present.
- Safety is paramount, as injury for example can occur from a loss of balance while exercising.
- Hygiene needs to be maintained and equipment is routinely wiped down after exercise.
- The gym is open from 1-3 on Saturday and you should get a time with your therapist. Independence with setup on equipment.
- There is outdoor assessable gym equipment on the PMR side of building 7 (ask your therapist to show it to you)

5. Why does my SCI prognosis change over time? Why has my function level decreased since I was admitted to SCI, rather than improved?

- Through careful examination after injury the nature of the Spinal Cord injury is categorized into complete and incomplete based on motor and sensory function.
- Persons with incomplete injuries have a better prognosis for further recovery.
- Recovery happens the most during the first year after injury.
- Despite diminishing recovery after the first year individuals with spinal cord injury can now live longer productive lives with proper management of their body.
- Function can be deterred for example by spasticity. Spasticity can be reduced by practicing joint range of motion thru stretching and exercise. Medication can also be used to control spasms.

Deleted: Incomplete

6. My ICP routine is interfering with my sleep cycle resulting in extreme fatigue during the day, any tips or additional info regarding ICP schedules that may help?

- The ICP schedule is initiated starting at every four hours which means waking up at 1Am and 5AM.

- Limiting fluid intake after 7pm is recommended.
- A goal is to strive for residual urine output that is less than 400 cc
- The program is then changed from every 4 hours to 6 hours. This could mean one could perform ICP at Bedtime and then not again until 6 AM which would increase hours of undisturbed sleep.
- Using Tedhose (Compression Stockings) and elevating the legs while in bed will help with the program.

7. How long does my skin take to heal after a pressure sore which leaves me bedbound? Pressure sore healing time can be quite variable and depends on the nature and depth of the sore.

- Superficial sores can heal quite quickly while deeper sores that are thru the fatty tissue layer can take months to years to heal.
- Healing is also dependent on you and your body.
- Nutrition and oxygen can be very beneficial to healing. You should have a high protein diet unless you have kidney disease.
- Staying off of the pressure sore and not putting weight on it allows for better healing.
- Smoking (nicotine) can significantly retard pressure sore healing by restricting blood flow to the wound.

Deleted: unles

8. What does it take to get better at transfers? How can I become independent transferring onto different types of surfaces?

- Work hard at the gym to get stronger.
- Keep your body weight in control. Being overweight can hamper your ability to transfer.
- Having strength, being able to bend forward, and good technique make transfers easier.
- Practice, Practice, Practice

9. I need to see a visual representation of what is going on with my body in order to understand my condition--I've heard about holographic imaging of bowel/colon, where can I access this technology and why does the VA not provide this service?

- Holograms are 3D images. Holograms work best for example for imaging the eye.
- Hologram imaging unfortunately does not work so well for the gastrointestinal tract (GI).
- GI issues which are internal are best visualized by colonoscopy and endoscopy techniques.
- There are not any local active programs for GI specific Holographic exams.

Deleted: images.

10. What are other coping strategies in addition to avoidance?

- There are three main styles of coping strategies:
 - *Passive style*- one does not communicate their needs – the person withdraws from others rather than engaging them
 - *Aggressive style*- anger is used to drive people away rather than engaging
 - *Assertive/engaged style*- The person engages by seeking information from the providers of their healthcare, support from family members and peers. Individuals may also find use their spiritual beliefs and being part of a faith community with others that share similar values and world views.
- Find the limit of your energy and back off 20% so you have energy to engage with others and know your limitations.

11. What are the different bowel management programs especially if you are in a TLSO brace?

- Unfortunately you will be dependent on someone to perform your bowel care until the TLSO is off. The TLSO limits lateral bending so you will need nursing to perform bowel care. While the TLSO is on the preferred bowel care position is side lying.
- Bowel management programs are designed around whether your system is Flaccid or Spastic.
- The use of suppositories -- either oil based or water based (faster).
- Suppositories require some hand function to properly use them.
- Bowel care starts in bed, and after tolerating sitting for 4 hours you can start using the commode chair. If you have pressure sores they need to be healed prior to using the commode chair unless the sore is not in contact with the chair.

12. How does one get osteomyelitis and how do you treat it?

- Infection of bone from a bacterial origin.
- An exposed sore is a common entry way for the bacteria.
- The bacteria are carried thru the blood stream.
- Testing of the blood helps identify the bacterial type.
- Antibiotics are delivered by special intravenous lines.
- A 6 week course of antibiotics is common.
-

13. How do you become eligible for the bowel-bladder program and what are the nuts and bolts of reimbursement, taxes, dividing caregiver times, etc.

- For a person with a new injury, first the best program is established for independent management is determined.
- Once a program is established the amount of assistance a person needs can be determined.
- The VA will pay on an hourly basis for the assistance you will need for your bowel-bladder program once your health care givers establish the level of need and time it will take.
- Nursing will train family and or caregivers that will assist you.
- There is a 6-10 week enrollment period to receive VA assistance for paid caregiver help for the bowel-bladder care.
- Taxes will not be taken out of the 2-3 hours of daily care that is paid out, but will be due on April 14th.
- Colostomy care can be included but will be incorporated into the time for the bowel and bladder program.
- Timecards can be faxed to increase processing time for reimbursement to caregivers.

Deleted: ..

Deleted: Cholestomy