

## Health and Safety Awareness

### *Urinary Tract Infections*



Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are the second most common infection that can occur in the body. The infections may appear in the lower urinary tract, the bladder, and the urethra. Serious UTIs may appear in the kidneys and cause wide-spread infection. If the symptoms are not recognized, a UTI can quickly become an infection that spreads in the body causing sepsis or septicemia. If left untreated, sepsis can cause hospitalization or worse, death. More information on sepsis can be found on the Office of Integrated Health's webpage under Health and Safety Alerts.

Risk factors include, but are not limited to, the following

- Individuals with spinal cord injuries
- Non-verbal individuals or individuals with communication difficulties
- Individuals with diabetes
- Individuals who are incontinent
- History of urinary tract infections
- Individuals with catheters or tubes places in the urethra and/or the bladder
- Women are at a greater risk for developing urinary tract infections than men.

#### **Preventative Measures**

Drink plenty of water- encourage hydration, track water intake either orally or through enteral nutrition. Increased water intake helps dilute the urine allowing bacteria to be flushed out with more frequent urination. Be sure to follow doctor's orders if an individual is on a fluid restriction.

Perform proper toileting hygiene- For women clean the perineum from front to back to decrease the spread of bacteria. Additionally, avoid potentially irritating feminine hygiene products such as deodorants or powders, unless otherwise directed by a doctor.

#### Signs and Symptoms

- Urinary frequency- an individual has to go to the bathroom a lot.
- Urinary urgency- an individual has to go now
- Decreased urine output- though an individual goes a lot, not much comes out
- Pain and burning- upon urination
- Incontinence- an individual just can't hold it in
- Appearance of urine- the urine may be cloudy, a deep yellow color, blood-tinged, or may have a strong odor.
- Falling- many times, an individual may try to get up at night without assistance. What may look like confusion may actually be a person's attempt to get to the bathroom.
- Altered mental status- as the infection spreads, it may cause confusion, especially in older individuals.
- Fever- a low grade fever may be present
- Pelvic pain in women
- Rectal pain in men
- Back pain
- Nausea and vomiting

Finally, staff training is an essential component to preventing UTI's. Staff should be trained in proper toileting hygiene and most importantly hand hygiene. While easily overlooked, hand hygiene is an important factor in reducing infections.



**For more Health and Safety Alerts visit the  
DBHDS website at Get Safety Alerts.**



## New Safety Alert!

### *Psychotropic Medication Side Effects*

All medications have side effects. Side effects can be harmful or not depending on the medication, dose, and characteristics of the individual such as health, family history, and adherence to medical regimen.

Antipsychotic medications or psychotropic medications are a class of drugs that are capable of effecting the mind, emotions, and behavior. This class of medications often has serious side effects that must be monitored. In addition, it is important to note that when a psychotropic medication is prescribed, the medical professional must obtain, and document the receipt of, informed consent from the individual, legal authorized representative, or guardian.

Information on the side effects of medications should be maintained on-site. Side effects can be obtained by the prescriber or the pharmacy at the time the medication is prescribed.

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (2019) Psychotropic medication side effects. <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/office-of-integrated-health#>

### High Alert Side Effects

**Akathisia:** An inability to sit still; individuals may pace around uncontrollably. \*This side effect has been linked to assaultive, violent behavior.

**Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome:** A potentially fatal toxic reaction. Individuals become confused, agitated, and extremely rigid; often with high fevers.

**Tardive Dyskinesia:** a permanent impairment of the involuntary movement of the lips, tongue, jaw, fingers, toes, and other body parts.

There are many more potential side effects of antipsychotic medications. A comprehensive guide to Psychotropic Medication Side Effects and more resources can be found on the DBHDS website at <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/office-of-integrated-health#>

## Save the Date!

### Skin Integrity and Oral Health Training

*The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Health Support Network and The Virginia Department of Health's Dental Health Program are excited to present a FREE educational opportunity for people providing direct care to individuals with Developmental Disabilities*

When:

Thursday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
9am-4pm

Where:

New River Valley Community Services  
401 Main Street  
Radford, VA

Register Here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZM7GHZY>

**Stay tuned for more training dates!**

**Register  
today!**

This interactive workshop is for participants to learn how to deliver the best oral care for even the most challenging of clients; support individuals who need improved oral care, and prevent diseases of the mouth through good oral hygiene. Additionally, learn how to support individuals in preventing skin breakdown and acquire best practice skills for skin care. Upon completion, participants will have the information and tools to present the program in their home agencies for staff training. This interactive workshop is designed to "Train the Trainer". The curriculum and all of the tools needed to teach the class will be provided.