

Holiday Hazards

Safety Tips for the Season



Decorations

The holiday season brings bright, festive decorations, fun activities for individuals, and increased visitors. During this time, it is important for staff to keep safety in mind. There are many potential hazards during this time of year.

Holiday Plants

Plants such as poinsettias are often used during the holidays as decorations or given as gifts of appreciation. For vulnerable individuals and individuals prone to Pica, an eating disorder characterized by eating non-food items, ingesting these plants is dangerous. Holly, mistletoe, poinsettia, amaryllis, and Jerusalem Cherry are common holiday plants that are poisonous and pose a risk if chewed or swallowed. Side effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, hallucinations, seizures, and cardiac arrhythmias (poor heart rhythm). Staff should take reasonable precautions to prevent individuals from handling or ingesting these decorative plants. If it is suspected that an individual has ingested a plant, seek prompt medical attention and follow all emergency protocols.



Trees, candles, wreaths, and lights are commonly used during this time of year and are often a part of fun and festive activities for individuals and their families. For these items, providers should choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant. If providers and individuals chose to decorate a tree, ensure that trees, preferably artificial, are placed away from heat sources such as heating units, radiators, and vents. When using additional lighting such as strings of lights, follow all manufacturers' instructions for replacement of bulbs and connecting multiple strands of lights. Additionally, be mindful of power strip usage and avoid overloading circuits which can easily become a fire hazard. Finally, remember to always turn off lights, especially those on trees at night or prior to leaving the residence.

Visitors

The saying goes, “*sharing is caring*” but not with germs! Remind all visitors, all year long, to use good hand hygiene and wash or sanitize hands when entering residences. If using soap and water, wash hands with running water and rub them together for at least 20 seconds. Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Have a healthy holiday season!

Centers for Disease Control. (2017) Holiday health and safety tips. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/>

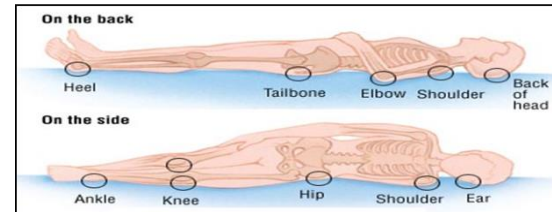
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Health and Safety Alert

Repositioning to Prevent Pressure Injuries

Repositioning is an essential task for providers and caregivers of individuals with limited mobility. Unrelieved pressure on an area of the body can result in a pressure injury. This is usually noted over a bony area, creating a decrease or loss of blood flow to the area resulting in skin breakdown, tissue death, and ulcer formation. See image for common areas of pressure.



Redness of the skin is usually the first sign that a pressure injury may be developing.

Diligent and proactive staff can help curb the occurrence of pressure injuries by repositioning individuals frequently, as needed, and as tolerated. Most importantly, follow all medical orders and individualized repositioning protocols; be sure protocols are signed by the individual's physician, PT, OT, or other professional. To reduce pressure, use wedges and pillows to relieve pressure points. Additionally and at minimum, turn and reposition the individual every 2 hours. Proper maintenance of skin is ideal which includes removal of dead or damaged skin tissue, ensuring the skin is clean and dry, and following basic infection control procedures.

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**Team
work!**

Office of Integrated Health

Team Highlight

Long Term Care and Community Transition Team is a vital part of the Office of Integrated Health. The team oversees a process called Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR). This process is a federally mandated process to ensure that individuals with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI), Intellectual Disability (ID), and/or a Related Condition (RC) are not inappropriately placed in nursing facilities. The team works to ensure individuals who are identified with a SMI, ID, or RC are evaluated properly and makes recommendations for rehabilitative and Specialized Services. Additionally, the Community Transition team was developed in an effort to implement a post-move monitoring process for children being discharged from a nursing facility to ensure that services and supports are in place at the time of their discharge and there are no gaps in care.

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