EC1028 When Your are a Home Nurse

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WHEN YOU ARE A Home Nurse

EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR
FOREWORD

This Home Extension Lesson is called When You Are a Home Nurse because it is not intended that it should be a course in Home Nursing. Two Extension Club meetings can hope only to show a few of the methods and techniques that may be employed when a homemaker is confronted with the problems of caring for a sick member of the household. Certainly the homemaker's responsibilities are greatly increased when illness occurs in the home. If she knows how to give simple home nursing care safely, effectively, and easily, her burdens are greatly lightened, the patient may be made more comfortable and the whole family's well-being may be assured. Acknowledgements are due, therefore, the American Red Cross whose principles and procedures in home nursing are used in this lesson. This lesson in no way attempts to substitute for the Red Cross Home Nursing course but rather attempts, in two lessons, to show what may be gained from such a course for homemakers who are able to take part in their community Red Cross program. The American National Red Cross offers a 14-hour course in Home Care of the Sick. You should consult your local Red Cross chapter about this. The cooperation of other community organizations is welcomed and is a great aid in making possible complete county coverage in this program. Perhaps a class may be arranged for a club in your community. If there is no home nursing program in the county, you may help to make this possible by offering your services. People are needed to serve on committees to recruit classes, locate classrooms, assemble equipment and secure instructors. American Red Cross provides a training course to prepare instructors who may be either registered nurses or non-nurses with teaching experience. Home nursing instruction is a vital part of civil defense preparation. Cooperative efforts will result in prepared people.
WHEN YOU ARE A HOME NURSE

You Acquire Home Nursing Skills

To safeguard the health of the family the homemaker should have basic knowledge for caring for the sick in the home. The objectives of this lesson are to help the homemaker to:

1. Recognize signs of illness
2. Carry out the doctor's instruction
3. Protect the patient and other members of the family from further infection.
4. Keep the patient comfortable.

You Observe Symptoms of Illness

1. Temperature (normal 98.6°)
2. Pulse rate - note change in quality, force and rhythm rate varies with individuals. The average for a man is 70 times per minute, average for a woman is 75 to 80 times per minute.
3. Respiration - 16-20 times per minute for adults; infants 30-35; and children from 20-25 times, four or five heart beats for one respiration.
4. Loss of appetite
5. Irritability
6. Extreme fatigue
7. Nausea
8. Headache
9. Signs of cold in the head
10. Slight sore throat
11. Chilliness
12. Swollen glands in the neck
13. Rashes
14. Any degree of temperature

You Keep a Daily Schedule

The home nurse is usually the mother who has the double responsibility of caring for the home, the family, and the patient. A definite plan of care contributes to the comfort and welfare of the patient. If the routine is followed it avoids confusion, the home nurse's energy is conserved, her mind is free to watch the patient, and to keep up other duties.

Make a schedule for giving medicine, special treatments, meals and water as
ordered by the doctor, and check all the items when done. Here is an example of a record you might keep:

**DAILY RECORD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date &amp; Hour</th>
<th>Temp.</th>
<th>Diet, Medicine and Treatment</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>BM</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

You Stop the Spread of Infection

1. By wearing a cover-all apron when you are caring for the patient and removing it when you leave the patient's room.

2. By disposing of waste materials properly.

Waste material from a sickroom may carry infection and therefore, must be disposed of properly. Paper bags may be used for disposing of many types of waste.

**Procedure**

a. Place the newspaper, folded in half, with the center fold toward the person making the bag.

b. Bring the top edge of the upper sheet of the paper down to the center fold. This makes a cuff.

c. Turn the paper over, smooth side up, keeping the center fold toward the person throughout the procedure.

d. Fold it in thirds from the sides; crease well to hold the fold.

e. Lock by tucking one whole side under the cuff of the other side.

f. Bring the flap over the locked cuff.

g. Place a hand in the opening at the top; stand the bag up; and shape.

h. Use the flap as a cover for the bag or as a means of fastening the bag to the side of the bed.
3. By Washing Your Hands Properly

Procedure

a. Lower the hands over the basin.

b. Pour enough water over hands to wet them.

c. Soap hands well.

d. Rinse off the bar of soap so it will be clean for the next use.

e. Work up a lather and rub well between the fingers and around the nails. Wash the entire hand and wrist.

f. Rinse the hands to get off the first dirt.

g. Soap the hands again.

h. Rinse the bar of soap.

i. Work up a good lather, using friction around the nails and between the fingers.

j. Rinse the hands finally, getting all the dirt off.

You Consider the Comfort of Your Patient

1. The sick room

a. The patient has a bed to himself.

b. Bright, cheerful and sunny room.

c. Pleasing view to the outside if possible.

d. Convenient to bathroom and kitchen.

e. Adequate heat - 68° F. during the day and warmer during baths and treatments.

f. Well-ventilated but patient protected from drafts.

g. Bed - single or three-quarter.

2. Furnishings for the sickroom

a. Bed - single or three-quarter sized bed if possible.

b. Springs and mattress should be firm and level

c. Bed placed so that it can be reached from both sides.

d. Bed elevated to conserve energy, reduce fatigue and minimize the hazard of back strain of the home nurse.

e. One or two bedside tables - one table to be used by nurse and the other for the patient's possessions.

f. Attractive pictures or a mirror to reflect outside views may be desirable.

3. Making the bed

To make a bed comfortable for a sick person is one of the most important skills a home nurse can acquire.

a. Put the bed linen on a chair at foot of bed so that it can be reached from either side.

b. Turn mattress and cover with bed pad.

c. Put bottom sheet on and tuck it under the head of the bed for nine inches, then under the foot and then under one side and tighten it from the other side.

d. Place rubber sheet across the bed and tuck it in both sides.
4. Changing bed with patient

a. Remove top sheet and spread, leaving patient covered with blanket.
b. Have patient lie on side facing the edge of the bed.
c. Remove sheets, rubber sheet and draw sheet on unoccupied side of bed and fold close to patient's back.
d. Make up half the bed with fresh sheets pulling rubber sheet back in place.
e. Roll patient on changed side of bed and remove soiled bottom sheet and draw sheet and finish tucking in clean sheet, rubber sheet and clean draw sheet.
f. Put clean top sheet over blanket and pull blanket out from underneath.
g. Make a box pleat in the top sheet over the patient's toes.
h. Put on the blanket and top cover and tuck under the foot.

5. Improvised Equipment

See Red Cross Home Nursing Manual.