5.5: National Patient Safety Goals

Every year, national patient safety goals are published by The Joint Commission to improve patient safety. **National Patient Safety Goals** are goals and recommendations tailored to seven different types of health care agencies based on patient safety data from experts and stakeholders. The seven health care areas include ambulatory health care settings, behavioral health care settings, critical access hospitals, home care, hospital settings, laboratories, nursing care centers, and office-based surgery settings. These goals are updated annually based on safety data and include evidence-based interventions. It is important for nurses and nursing students to be aware of the current National Patient Safety Goals for the settings in which they provide patient care and use the associated recommendations.

The National Patient Safety Goals for nursing care settings (otherwise known as long-term care centers) are described in Table 5.5. (Note that the term “bedsore” is used in the last goal. This is a historic term for the current term “pressure injuries.”)

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Recommendations and Rationale</th>
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| Identify residents correctly   | Use at least two ways to identify patients or residents. For example, use the patient's or resident's name and date of birth. This is done to make sure that each patient or resident gets the correct medicine and treatment.  
Take extra care with patients and residents who take medications to thin their blood.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Use medicines safely           | Record and pass along correct information about a patient's or resident's medications. Find out what medications the patient or resident is taking. Compare those medications to new medications given to the patient or resident. Give the patient or resident written information about the medications they need to take. Tell the patient or resident it is important to bring their up-to-date list of medications every time |
they visit a doctor.

**Prevent infection**

Use the hand hygiene guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization. Set goals for improving hand cleaning.

**Prevent residents from falling**

Find out which patients and residents are most likely to fall. For example, is the patient or resident taking any medicines that might make them weak, dizzy, or sleepy? Take action to prevent falls for these patients and residents.

**Prevent bed sores**

Find out which patients and residents are most likely to have pressure injuries. Take action to prevent pressure injuries in these patients and residents. Per agency protocol, recheck patients and residents frequently for pressure injuries.

**Note**

Read more about National Patient Safety Goals established by The Joint Commission.

Read more details about how to identify patients correctly, administer medications safely, and prevent infection by visiting the following sections in Open RN Nursing Skills:

- Initiating Patient Interaction
- Aseptic Technique Basic Concepts
- Basic Concepts of Administering Medications

Read more about “Pressure Injuries” (the newest term used for bed sores) in the “Integumentary” chapter of this book.