PROCEDURE

ORIGINAL DATE: 03/93
Reviewed Date: 09/02

SUBJECT: POST-MORTEM CARE IN THE HOME

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for post-mortem care.

To prepare the body for transport from the home.

To provide support to the family/significant other in the initial period of grief.

Considerations

Post-mortem care is provided in cases of anticipated death where a DNR order has been obtained. In case of unexpected death, the medical examiner must examine the body or authorize release of the body

to the funeral home prior to post-mortem care being provided.

Procedure

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1. Clean the body. Remove all tubes and		
dressings unless contraindicated. If an autopsy		
is scheduled or the death is unexpected,		
all tubes should be left in.		
2. Place pads under the buttocks or open wounds.		
3. Dress in clean clothes. Caregiver preference		
should be considered.		
4a. Maintain proper alignment. Normal position		
is supine with arms at the side, palms down or		
across the abdomen.		
b. Place one pillow under the head.		
c. Close eyes by gently pulling lashes		
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downward.		
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Rationale
To absorb urine or feces expelled
Secondary to sphincter relaxation.
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To prevent skin discoloration secondary
to
The pooling of blood.

items. A copy of the signed list is given to	
the family/significant other.	
5. Assist the family as needed with removal	
of equipment and supplies.	
6. Instruct the family/significant other as	
needed regarding cleaning of linens or	
supplies.	
7. Assist the family/significant other in	
disposing of all medications and	
controlled substances.	
8. Documentation should include:	
* The provision of post-mortem care	
* All telephone calls to equipment and	
supply companies	
* Any teaching regarding cleaning of	
linen or supplies.	
* The disposal of medications and the	
name of the witness present.	
* The original copy of the itemized list of	
jewelry and belongings is given to the	
family/significant other.	
9. In cases of anticipated death, stay with the	To provide emotional support
family/significant other until the funeral	
home comes for the body.	