

CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Environmental assessment and assuring patients live in safe homes is part of home healthcare practice.
2. Approximately 3,500 Americans die in fires each year. Cooking is the main cause of fires in the home, but cigarette use is the most common reason for fire deaths.
3. Patients at increased risk of dying in fires include patients who:
 - a. Have physical, functional or sensory limitations
 - b. Smoke cigarettes
 - c. Use oxygen
 - d. Drink alcohol or take medications, which make them drowsy/sleepy
4. Safe (from fires) smoking includes:
 - a. Smoking only where there are sturdy surfaces and hard furnishings
 - b. Set ashtrays on something sturdy and hard
 - c. Always snubbing cigarettes completely when done
 - d. Using a deep sturdy “safety” ashtray. Only smoking when alert
 - e. Only smoking “fire-safe” cigarettes. They are less likely to start fires

EQUIPMENT:

RACE/PASS Fire Safety Card, optional
Home Healthcare Fire Prevention Checklist (attached)

PROCEDURE:

1. Perform an environmental assessment, noting fire hazards:
 - a. Space heaters too close to flammable materials
 - b. Overloaded electrical outlets
 - c. Ashtrays that can tip over or that are left in inappropriate places
 - d. Burn marks of furniture/carpeting
2. Assess patient’s personal risk factors:
 - a. Physical, functional or sensory limitations
 - b. Smoke cigarettes
 - c. Oxygen use
 - d. Alcohol use
 - e. Use of medications with sedation effect
3. During functional assessment, assess:
 - a. Does patient cook
 - b. Is patient safe to use the stove
 - c. If a fire occurred, would the patient be able to leave the home
4. Assess fire preparedness:
 - a. Is there a fire detector
 - b. When was it last checked
 - c. Does patient have an escape plan
 - d. Is there a fire extinguisher
 - e. Does patient know how to use it

5. If patient is chair/bed bound:
 - a. What is the plan for getting out of the house
 - b. Is the patient able to call 911
 - c. Is the phone reachable
6. If the patient smokes:
 - a. Where does the patient smoke
 - b. When does the patient smoke? When drowsy
 - c. Assess ashtrays: Where are they kept
 - d. Are they “safety” ashtrays
7. If the patient uses oxygen:
 - a. See *Safety – Oxygen Safety*
8. If assessment includes fire risk:
 - a. Teach patient about prevention strategies, such as:
 - i. Need for working smoke detectors
 - ii. Do not leave the stove/oven unattended
 - iii. Do not smoke in bed
 - iv. Have a planned escape route
 - v. Keep exits and doors clear of debris
 - b. Use a patient educational resource (see attachment)
 - c. Consider teaching about RACE/PASS strategies

ATFER CARE:

1. Document in patient record:
 - a. Assessment of fire risk
 - b. Instructions given to patient/caregiver to decrease risk
 - c. Response to teaching
2. Discuss concerns/recommendations with family member/caregiver.

REFERENCE:

National Library of Medicine (2011). *Fire Safety*. Retrieved May 5, 2012 from <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/firesafety.html>

U.S. Fire Administration (2011). People with Disabilities. <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/disability/fswy22.shtm>

Adopted VNAA; Approved Policy Committee 12/10/13