



Patient Care Sling Selection and Usage Toolkit

- VISN 8 Patient Safety Center of Inquiry
- Arjo, Inc.



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Overview of Toolkit

Purpose

Ineffective use of patient slings can result in adverse events such as patient falls, pressure ulcers, head injury and death. Our patient population is aging, is more dependent and has more co-morbidities thus making patient handling and transfers more challenging for healthcare staff. Transfers including moving patients of all dependency levels from bed to chair or wheelchair, to toilet, bathroom, to procedures, and in rehabilitation. Use of patient slings with lifts can greatly assist these transfers. However, there are a wide variety of slings commercially available and it is difficult for healthcare staff to keep abreast of such advancements in technology. Inappropriate use of slings may result in adverse events. The purpose of this toolkit is to offer some clinical tools that can educate, assist and guide healthcare staff in the selection, use and maintenance of slings to enhance overall safety.

Goal

Our goal is to educate healthcare staff on various types of slings and their appropriate use. This includes the importance of sling selection, safe use, routine inspection and maintenance. A sling chart was developed and intended to foster discussion on how medical conditions may affect sling selection. The ultimate goal is to enhance safety for both caregivers and for patients.

Content

- Technology Resource Guide for Slings
- CD titled “Guidelines for Selection, Use and Maintenance of Slings”
- Sling chart “Guidelines for Sling Selection”
- Bibliography
- Medical Conditions Worksheet
- Quiz

Suggested Use of Toolkit

We recommend that all staff performing patient transfers review the CD, Sling Chart, discuss the Medical Conditions Worksheet, and take the Quiz to test what they have learned. Please feel free to add to any of these items and tailor them to the needs of your unit/facility. The Medical Conditions Worksheet is designed for clinicians to discuss patients’ medical conditions and how they affect sling selection and application. The Technology Resource Guide should be accessible to all staff who perform patient transfers and especially to the staff who are responsible for ordering replacement slings. Temporary staff (e.g. floaters) should also be required to look at the CD for proper sling use and should discuss the Sling Chart and Medical Conditions Worksheet. The CD and Quiz can be offered as competency training throughout the year for new and existing staff and also to supplement inservices on patient lifts.

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