



Did you know that Home Care Patients have certain rights that are often spelled out in state and federal laws? In-home aides play an important role in helping agencies comply with regulations on patient rights.

Patients have basic rights in almost all health care settings. Such rights help ensure that the patient is providing input about the care plan and that care is patient centered. The home care agency is responsible for letting the patient know about these rights and what to do if there are problems with the care being provided. Surveyors also look to see that the agencies go over these rights with their patients. As you review a sample of patient rights that are listed below, ask yourself and talk with your supervisor about how you could be involved in making sure your patient's rights are honored.

The Patient Has the Right

Patients have the right to:

- Be informed of their rights
- Make choices about their care
- Provide input about their care and know of any changes in their care plan such as changes in the aide assignment and aide tasks
- Privacy
- Respect for person and property
- Safe, competent care
- Complain about their care without fear of being acted against

What are your responsibilities to your patient?

Your good work ethic means a lot to your patients and to your agency. Your patient is depending on you to visit and provide care as assigned.

- Let your supervisor know immediately if you are unable to provide care to your patient. Your employer needs time to inform the patient and to make scheduling changes to ensure that the patient gets the care needed.
- Let your supervisor know if you do not know how to do a certain task.
- Always treat your patients with dignity and respect. Never threaten a patient or try to force them to do something. If you are having difficulty working with an individual, notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

Be sure to always follow your agency's policies and procedures. Understand the patient's care plan. Always follow the care plan prepared by your supervisor as it will list your assigned tasks. **Notify the nurse supervisor of any tasks you do not know how to do.** Sometimes your patient may ask you to do a task not assigned to you by your supervisor. Let your patient know that you have to check with the supervisor first! This is very important in order to make sure you are providing **appropriate, assigned, safe care.** Be careful to always document your care as assigned!

- Patients have a right to privacy and confidentiality. Do not leave patient information lying around. Don't discuss patient's health or treatment in front of relatives or visitors unless given permission. Don't take other patients' information into someone else's home. Do not throw patient information in the trash. Report any privacy violations to your supervisor.
- Notify your supervisor immediately if patients say they are missing items in their home or have other complaints about their care.
- Never take, use or borrow money from patients. Even if the patient wants to give you money or other items, respectfully decline.
- Also, never take a patient's medications – this is called diversion of the patient's drugs.

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Keep Your Patients Safe!

Examples of Physical Abuse

- Slapping
- Pushing
- Kicking
- Using force
- Pinching

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Cuts, scrapes, scratches
- Broken bones
- Cigarette burns
- Rope marks on ankles or wrists
- Bruises
- Injuries that have not been treated
- Story doesn't "sound right"

Signs of Neglect

- No food or water available
- No heat or ventilation
- Lack of space
- Poor personal hygiene
- Untreated medical conditions
- Unsanitary conditions e.g. animal or insect infestations
- Medications not refilled or laying around
- Clothing not suitable for weather conditions
- Caregiver appears unable to cope or unwilling to meet patient needs
- Patient left alone inappropriately

Misusing Patient Property

- Taking items that belong to the patient
- Using the phone for long distance calls
- Forging or cashing checks for the patient's account
- Using the patient's charge card

What can you do?

- Allow patient choices
- Preserve the patient's dignity by respecting their privacy
- Ask before using any patient property including the phone or bathroom
- Always keep health information secure
- Report complaints, problems and any evidence of abuse or neglect immediately to the agency
- Never use the patient's first name unless asked to do so
- Don't talk over or about the patient in their presence
- Do not curse or use offensive vocabulary
- Know your agency policies
- Follow the assignment/care plan and document carefully
- Do not advise the patient on legal matters
- Always document any exchange of money (e.g. for grocery shopping)

Remember – we are guests in our Patients' homes!

Keep Yourself Safe!!



**Patient's Rights
Post Test
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Name: _____

1. List 3 patient rights.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. List 3 of your responsibilities to your patients that help your agency comply with regulations about patient rights.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. List 3 signs of physical abuse.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

4. Neglect means not providing care to your patients. Describe a situation where not providing care as assigned could put you at risk of being accused of patient neglect.

5. (True or False) It is ok for me to discuss my patients with my cousin, I tell her everything.

TRUE

FALSE