

Management of the Hemiplegic Arm: A Positioning and Handling Protocol

1. Education of health care providers on best practice guidelines, including:
 - a. Anatomy of shoulder and pathoanatomy of hemiplegic shoulder.
 - b. Handling of the hemiplegic arm during bed mobility and transfers.
 - c. Application of a hemi-sling.
 - d. Positioning of the hemiplegic arm when patient is in bed or in a chair.
2. To determine eligibility of the stroke survivor for this protocol in your clinical setting, the stroke survivor should be assessed by a qualified health care professional.
3. Inclusion criteria for the protocol:
 - e. Hemiplegic arm is flaccid
 - f. And/ Or the patient is unable to lift the arm off the bed to 90 degrees
 - g. And/ Or the arm is painful
4. Patients meeting the criteria will receive:
 - h. A hemi sling at bedside.
 - i. A hemi sling *Job Aid (see Appendix H) posted at bedside.
 - j. A positioning *Job Aid (see Appendix C) posted at bedside.
 - d. Eligibility for the protocol will be noted in the Kardex under the treatment section as follows: "Hemi Arm Protocol". You may use a pink sticker to alert staff that the hemi arm protocol is in place for that particular patient.
5. A healthcare professional will assess the transfer of the patient and place the appropriate Job Aids (see Appendices C to H) at the bedside.
6. A healthcare professional will provide a laptray and wheelchair to patients who require assistance to transfer and meet the inclusion criteria.

*Job Aids are the laminated photographs of proper positioning techniques (see Appendices C to H) to be used with stroke survivors. These photographs act as prompts to remind and alert the immediate staff caring for the stroke survivor of proper positioning.

References:

1. Best Practice Guidelines for Stroke Care. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. 2003.
2. Tips and Tools for Everyday Living: A Guide for Stroke Caregivers. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. 2002
3. Management of the Post Stroke Arm and Hand: Treatment Recommendations of the 2001 Consensus Panel. Barreca S (Ed) 2001.

Protocol Development Team:

Dalia Abromaitis OT, Jennifer Curry PT, Mary Thomas RN, Sharon Wyville RN

Acknowledgements: Shari Gibbons OT, Lauralynn Kelly OT, Heather Ballagh PTA, Deb Willems and Gina Tomaszewski, SWO Stroke Strategy