

Best Practice Guidelines for the Management of the Hemiplegic Arm: A Positioning and Handling Protocol

Introduction

In this package you will find a CD that contains the entire contents of the package in electronic form. As well, laminated hard copies of the bedside job aids are also provided. The job aids are organized into **2 sets: Right** hemiplegic arm, and **Left** hemiplegic arm. Be sure to select the correct one when implementing. You may want to attach a “*Please return to...*” sticker at the back of each job aid so that they are returned to their rightful owner.

Purpose of Protocol

This protocol was developed to support best practice guidelines for the management of the hemiplegic arm. The aim of the protocol is to prevent injury to the hemiplegic arm through careful handling and correct positioning. A sample protocol customized and piloted with acute care staff working with stroke patients at University Hospital, LHSC, and Regional Stroke Centre has been provided, (see Appendix A). This document is a generic protocol which may be adapted to suit a variety of settings (acute, rehab, long-term care and community).

Getting Started

Before implementing the protocol, you will need to:

- Identify target staff caring for the stroke survivor. Target staff are the health care providers involved in the care of the stroke survivor.
- Develop a small working group representative of the target staff who will be impacted by the protocol. You will need to arrange a meeting with the workgroup to address the following Agenda items:
 - Review the Hemiplegic Arm Protocol (Appendix A), and the Power Point: Background Information regarding the Management of the Hemiplegic arm (see Appendix J).
 - Determine when education sessions of staff will begin, and who is best suited to deliver the education. (PowerPoint presentation available, see Appendix B).
 - Equipment needed for the protocol: lap trays, pillows, wheelchairs, and hemi slings.
 - Are there any policies that would impact the implementation of the Hemiplegic Arm Protocol?
 - Target stroke survivors eligible for the protocol will need to be identified. These patients would need to be identified by a qualified health care professional, using the inclusion criteria identified in # 3, Appendix A.
 - Discuss evaluation, will an audit be done? A sample audit has been provided (see Appendix I).