

BACKGROUND

- Crutches are medical devices designed to aide in ambulation, by transferring body weight from the legs to the torso and arms.
- Axilla crutches are the most commonly type of crutches given to patients in Quick Care settings.
- Improper use such as bearing weight directly through the armpit, incorrect crutch fitting/training can lead to complications and/or injuries.

METHODS

Fitting for axilla crutch:

- Position crutch 4" to 6" to the side of patient's foot.
- Adjust height of crutch and place 1" to 1 ½" or about two finger below axillary fold.
- Adjust the handgrip so that the elbow is flexed at a 30-degree angle and wrist at a 15-degree angle.
- Make sure that the padding on the arm cuffs, rubber hand grips, and suction rubber at the tip of crutches are secured.
- Instruct patient to lift with their arms and push down through the hand grips.
- Evaluate patient's understanding and performance by observing if patient is able to ambulate safely with axilla crutches and as directed.
- 3 point gait is a popular crutch gate training method used in quick care settings



RESULTS

- Staff able to educate patient on how to use axilla crutches confidently.
- Crutches adjusted to appropriate height for patient.
- Patient is able to correctly demonstrate ambulating with axilla crutches with minimal assistance.
- Patient is able to identify and prevent complications such as pain in armpits, nerve damage, improper use, poor balance, or falls.

PURPOSE

Patient teaching on how to use axilla crutches are vital to patients recovery and safety. The purpose of this study is to provide a reference tool to QC staff, promote patients safety in mobility, improve patients confidence and independence in using crutches, and reduce the risk of complications associated with immobility or improper weight bearing.

CONCLUSIONS

For both Quick Care nurses and patients, effective axillary crutch training is vital to ensure patient safety and patient mobility. Nurses should focus on proper crutch fitting, education which is focus on avoiding pressure under the arms to prevent nerve injury and teaching the correct gait pattern based on the patient's weight bearing status. Patients should feel comfortable with basic movements, including walking, turning, and navigating up and downstairs. With ongoing guidance, reinforcement on safety techniques, and patient practice, axillary crutches can greatly enhance independence while reducing the risk of falls and complications during recovery.

REFERENCES

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