

The Home Health Aide Handbook

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SIXTH EDITION

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Notice to Readers

Though the guidelines and procedures contained in this text are based on consultations with healthcare professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow employer, local, state, and federal guidelines concerning healthcare practices. These guidelines change, and it is each reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of their healthcare agency.

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Gender Usage

This textbook uses gender pronouns interchangeably to denote care team members and clients.

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Welcome to
Hartman Publishing's
Home Health Aide
Handbook!



We hope you will happily place this little reference book into your purse, backpack, or home care visit bag and leave it there so you will have it available as you go about your day-to-day duties as a home health aide. This handbook will serve as a quick but comprehensive reference tool for you to use from client to client.

Features and Benefits

This book is a valuable tool for many reasons. It includes all the procedures you learned in your home health aide training program, plus references to abbreviations, medical terms, care guidelines for specific diseases, and an appendix where you can write down important names and phone numbers. For certified nursing assistants moving to home care, we have included information on making the transition from facilities to homes. In addition, this book contains all of the federal requirements for home health aides, so it can also be used in a basic training program.

We have divided the book into eight sections and assigned each section its own colored tab, which you will see at the top of every page.



You will find **key terms** throughout the text. Explanations for these terms are in the Glossary section of the Appendix of this book. **Common Disorders**, **Guidelines**, and **Observing and Reporting** are also colored for easy reference. Procedures are indicated with a black bar. A blue video icon on the black bar indicates that Hartman Publishing offers a corresponding video for that skill. There is also an Index in the back of the book. Comments or questions?

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Beginning and ending steps in care procedures

These steps should be performed for most care procedures. Understanding why they are important will help you remember to perform each step every time care is provided.

Beginning Steps

Wash your hands.

Handwashing provides for infection prevention. Nothing fights infection like performing consistent, proper hand hygiene. Handwashing may need to be done more than once during a procedure. Practice Standard Precautions with every client.

Explain the procedure to the client. Speak clearly, slowly, and directly. Maintain face-to-face contact whenever possible.

Clients have a legal right to know exactly what care you will provide. It promotes understanding, cooperation, and independence. Clients are able to do more for themselves if they know what needs to happen.

Provide privacy for the client.

Doing this maintains the client's right to privacy and dignity. Providing for privacy is not simply a courtesy; it is a legal right.

If the bed is adjustable, adjust the bed to a safe level, usually waist high. If the bed is movable, lock the bed wheels.

If the client has an adjustable bed, locking the bed wheels is an important safety measure. It ensures that the bed will not move as you are performing care. Raising the bed helps you remember to use proper body mechanics. This helps prevent injury to you and to the client.

Ending Steps

Return the bed to its lowest position.

Lowering an adjustable bed provides for the client's safety.

Wash your hands.

Handwashing is the most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infection.

Document the procedure and your observations.

You will often be the person who spends the most time with a client, so you are in the best position to note any changes in a client's condition. Every time you provide care, observe the client's physical and mental capabilities, as well as the condition of their body. For example, a change in a client's ability to dress himself may signal a greater problem. After you have finished giving care, document the care properly. Do not record care before it is given. If you do not document the care you gave, legally it did not happen.



In addition to the beginning and ending steps listed above, remember to follow infection prevention guidelines. Even if a procedure in this book does not tell you to wear gloves or other PPE, there may be times when it is appropriate.