**Training for Foreign Domestic Helpers in Elderly Care**

**The skills in measuring blood pressure, body temperature and blood sugar**

The film is co-produced by Department of Health and Social Welfare Department as reference material for the Pilot Scheme on Training for Foreign Domestic Helpers in Elderly Care. The copyright of the contents of this film is owned by Department of Health. The film is produced solely for non-commercial use. It should not be rented, sold or otherwise used for profit-making purposes.

Disclaimer

The skills in measuring blood pressure, body temperature and blood sugar demonstrated in this film serve as general reference and are for educational purposes. They may not be applicable under every situation. Please consult health care professionals in case of doubt over the applicability of the skills or devices under specific situations.

Vital signs observation and skills in measuring blood pressure, body temperature and blood sugar

Vital signs observation and skills for measurement

are important in daily elderly care, especially for frail elderly persons

Important vital signs include:

body temperature, blood pressure, pulse rate, breathing and blood sugar level

Blood pressure measurement

Blood pressure is the pressure produced on blood vessels during contraction and relaxation of heart

It is one of the important vital signs of the body

It helps in diagnosing hypertension and monitoring of treatment effects

Therefore, measurement accuracy is crucial

For hypertensive elderly persons

regular weekly home monitoring is advised

The blood pressure record can be provided to the doctor as reference during follow-up

Try to measure the blood pressure at around the same time of the day

Equipment for blood pressure measurement includes:

a validated digital blood pressure monitor (sphygmomanometer), a blood pressure record booklet and a pen

It should be conducted in a quiet environment with comfortable temperature

Avoid exercise, smoking, alcohol, coffee or tea 30 minutes before measuring the blood pressure

Advise the elderly person to stay calm and sit still for 5 to 15 minutes before measuring

Rest the elbow over a table or cushion to support the arm

Before measuring

make sure that the digital blood pressure monitor and the elderly person’s arm are at the heart’s level

The carer should wash their hands with soap

or alcohol hand-rub before the procedures

Explain the procedures to the elderly person

Loosen tight sleeve if necessary

Ensure that the elderly person is relaxed and comfortable

Inform the elderly person that there may be some discomfort on the arm during the measurement

Advise the elderly person not to talk during the process

Press the ‘On/Off’ button to turn on the monitor

Then press the ‘Start’ button

The cuff will automatically inflate and deflate slowly during measurement

When the measurement is completed

readings of systolic pressure, diastolic pressure and pulse rate will be displayed on the monitor

Write down the readings immediately, do not rely on memory

Inform the elderly person about the results as appropriate

After measuring the blood pressure

the carer should wash their hands again

Body temperature measurement

Measuring body temperature is another important vital sign to monitor body function

With the use of a tympanic thermometer

body temperature can be

measured within 1 to 2 seconds

However, the tympanic thermometer is not suitable for persons

with external ear disease or excessive ear wax in the ear canal

In general, tympanic temperature is 0.5 degrees Celcius (oC) higher than oral temperature

Equipment for taking body temperature includes:

a tympanic thermometer, a disposable probe cover, a pen and the record book

The elderly person should avoid exercise

bathing, smoking, eating cold/hot foods or excessive emotions

30 minutes before taking body temperature

Explain the procedures to the elderly person

The carer should wash their hands with soap

or alcohol hand-rub before the procedures

Attach a new probe cover onto the thermometer probe

Press the ‘On/Off’ button to turn on the thermometer

Straighten the elderly person’s ear canal by gently pulling

the outer ear backward and upward

Insert the thermometer into the ear canal gently

Point the probe slightly forward and downward along the ear canal towards the tympanic membrane

Remain still then press the ‘Start’ button

When a beep sound is heard, take out the thermometer and read the temperature

Discard the probe cover

then return the thermometer into its case

The carer should clean their hands with soap or alcohol hand-rub

Write down the temperature

Inform the elderly person about the result

Caring of thermometer

A new probe cover should be used each time

Never wash or soak the thermometer into liquid disinfectant or alcohol for cleansing

Abrasive cleanser or strong chemicals will damage the thermometer

Use a soft cotton cloth to wipe clean the thermometer

Measuring blood glucose

Diabetes is a disorder of which the body cannot utilize glucose effectively

Persistent high blood glucose will lead to widespread vascular damage

Too high or too low the blood glucose can even be life-threatening

Monitoring of blood glucose level is therefore vital to the control of diabetes mellitus

Blood glucose can be measured on a regular basis with a glucometer

For example, before breakfast, lunch or dinner

2 hours after meal or before bedtime

Equipment for monitoring blood glucose includes:

a glucometer

a test strip

a lancet

alcohol swab

cotton ball/gauze

70%-80% alcohol hand-rub

disposable gloves

a blood glucose diary and a pen

Read the user manual before the procedures

Explain the procedures to the elderly person to gain their consent and cooperation

The carer should wash their hands with soap or alcohol hand-rub before the procedures

Clean the elderly person’s fingertip with alcohol swab

Turn on the glucometer

Insert a test strip into the test strip port

Carer should clean their hands

Put on the disposable gloves

Use the lancet to prick on the side of the elderly person’s fingertip

Transfer a drop of blood from the fingertip to the test strip

Apply a cotton ball/gauze to onto the wound to stop bleeding

Remove the disposable gloves and clean their hands

Record the result

Inform the elderly person about the result

Turn off the glucometer

The film is co-produced by Department of Health and Social Welfare Department