

## STAFF HANDOUT

# Safety First for Staff: Device Dislodgements

### WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DEVICE DISLODgements?

- Indwelling devices, such as intravenous (IV) catheters and feeding tubes, can inadvertently become dislodged from a patient even when you thought the device was securely in position.
- Dislodgement can occur with a variety of devices, ranging from frequently used IV catheters, central lines, and feeding tubes to less commonly used nephrostomy tubes and cannulae for extracorporeal membrane oxygenation.
- Although many dislodgement events do not harm patients, some can cause serious injury and even death, depending on how quickly dislodgement is recognized and treated.



### WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

- Devices can dislodge when a caregiver is tending to a patient's needs, such as during bathing, repositioning or transferring the patient, and helping the patient in the bathroom.
- Patients who have signs of confusion or agitation can pull out their tubes and lines; sometimes, a very determined patient planning to leave a facility against medical advice will pull out the devices.
- Dislodgement can also occur when a line or tube is accidentally caught on something, such as a bedrail or chair armrest.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT DEVICE DISLODgements?

- Know your organization's procedures for inserting and securing indwelling devices.
- Routinely check on the device position and securement. Use device markings, if available, to measure and monitor device position. Even the slightest change in a device's position may indicate that it has become dislodged and prompt further investigation.
- When possible, keep a line or tube from being covered by anything that can obstruct your sight line to the device and the insertion site.
- Identify patients at high risk for pulling out a tube or line and takes steps to prevent its occurrence; for example, using soft wrist restraints or mitts or closer monitoring of the patient may sometimes—but not always—deter a patient from removing the device.
- Check to ensure that the inserted device is in place when performing patient care tasks.
- Periodically reevaluate whether a patient still needs an inserted device, such as a urinary catheter.
- Report instances of dislodged lines and tubes to the organization's event reporting program; the information may help to identify the need for additional strategies to prevent dislodgement.
- Teach your patients and their family members about how to handle the devices and prevent dislodgement.

**Source:** ECRI Institute PSO. Device dislodgements: common but sometimes harmful event. PSO Navigator. November 2018;10[4].  
<https://www.ecri.org/components/PSOCore/Pages/PSONav1118.aspx>