

AJCC Patient Care Page

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CARING FOR PATIENTS 'ON THE ROAD'

By Linda Bell, RN, MSN

When patients from any nursing unit require transport for diagnostic, procedural, or surgical interventions we commonly refer to this as a "road trip." And just like any other road trip, this one calls for planning ahead, packing the necessary equipment, and carefully considering the activity to take place upon arrival.

The hospital road trip also requires planning for potential complications that can occur because of what happens during the transport itself. Some facilities have dedicated teams for intrahospital transport. No matter what mechanism is used, the goal is to maintain patient safety and a consistent standard of care throughout the transport and intervention.

Here's what you can do:

If you have an intrahospital transport team:

- Invite team members to discuss the hazards of the moving environment and the information they need about the patient prior to transport.
- Collaborate with the team to develop a unit-based checklist of equipment, medications, and information needed when the team arrives for transport.
- Evaluate the length of time for any transport and have extra bags of fluid and titrated medications available during transport.

If you do not have a transport team:

- Evaluate the current unit or hospital policy for decision-making support tools or algorithms for determining the risk versus benefit of each potential transport.
- Determine the personnel needed for each type of transport common to your unit (eg, procedural, diagnostic, surgical intervention).
- Make a checklist of monitoring and emergency equipment, medications, documents, and information that are required for each type of transport.
- Based on your patient population, develop an inservice to educate staff on the potential complications that can occur during transport.

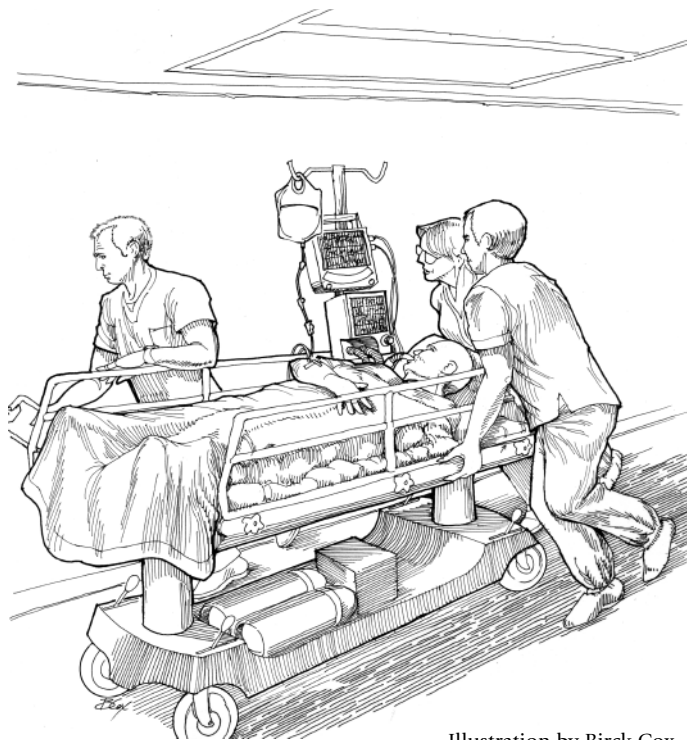


Illustration by Birck Cox

- Provide opportunities for staff to participate in patient transport during orientation so they can learn transport protocols in a preceptored environment.

Other helpful resources:

- Alspach JG, ed. *Core Curriculum for Critical Care Nursing*. 6th ed. St. Louis, MO: Saunders Elsevier; 2006.
- Warren J, Fromm RE Jr, Orr RA, Rotello LC, Horst HM. Guidelines for the inter- and intrahospital transport of critically ill patients. *Crit Care Med*. 2004;32:256-262.

REFERENCE

1. Tracy MF. Planning care for critically ill patients and their families. In: Chulay M, Burns S, eds. *AACN Essentials of Critical Care Nursing*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill; 2010:17-35.

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