

***Module 7:
Caring for People
at Home or in a
Hospice***

What is Different About This?



- Unlike a hospital or long-term care home:
 - Fewer professional staff members present
 - Volunteers may be asked to help with feeding or other personal care tasks that can create physical risk
 - Thus, it is especially important to learn correct techniques

The Importance of Food and Appetite

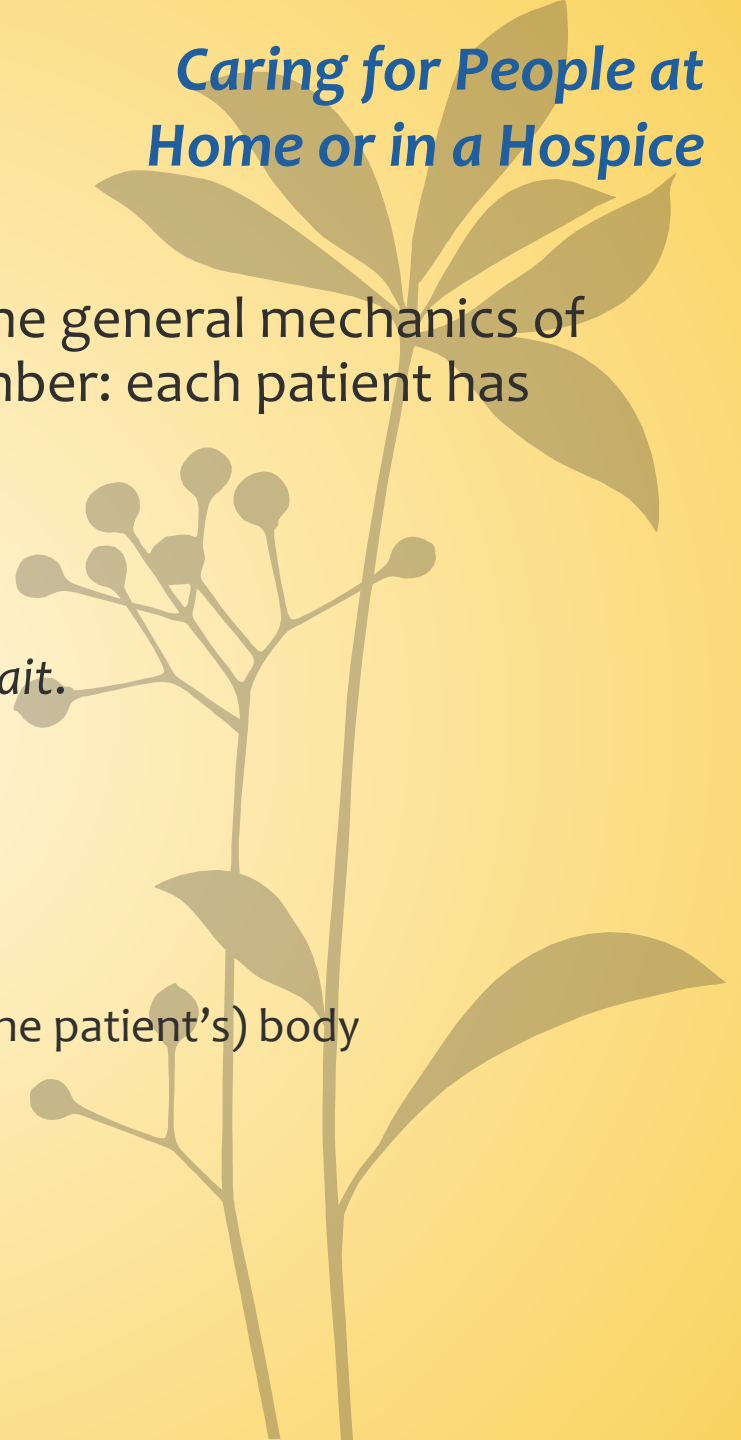
- Food has various social and cultural implications, and is often used to express love, nurturing, and community
- If you have a good understanding of food's various roles, you will be equipped to support the dying person and his/her family in coping with the challenges of eating
- You can help by:
 - Being sensitive to cultural/religious dietary requirements
 - Normalizing the eating experience as much as possible
 - Encouraging the patient to try small amounts of food and drink
 - Cleaning the person's teeth and mouth
 - Communicating the person's and family's food-related needs to the care team
 - Helping the person participate in ceremonies and rituals
 - Making the person physically comfortable while eating
 - Helping the family to understand the person's decreased need for food

When Families Make Decisions About Nutrition

- Families often ask that fluids and nutrition be given to the person artificially. It is not as good an idea as it seems:
 - Decreases mobility
 - Can cause breakdown of skin, vomiting, lung congestion and other painful symptoms
- However, it is not your role to advise. You can help by:
 - Supporting the person's and family's decision (no matter what it is)
 - Encouraging the person and/or family members to discuss their feelings of hope and loss.

Body Mechanics

- You will receive detailed instructions on the general mechanics of lifting and transferring people, but remember: each patient has unique needs
- Before you lift:
 - Assess the risks
 - Decide whether you need help. If so, then *wait*.
 - Remember the general mechanics:
 - posture
 - use your legs, not your back
 - travel shortest distance
 - proper footwear and positioning of your (and the patient's) body
 - ensure equipment is set properly (i.e. brakes)
 - lift and turn — don't twist
 - Ask your supervisor



What If the Person Falls?

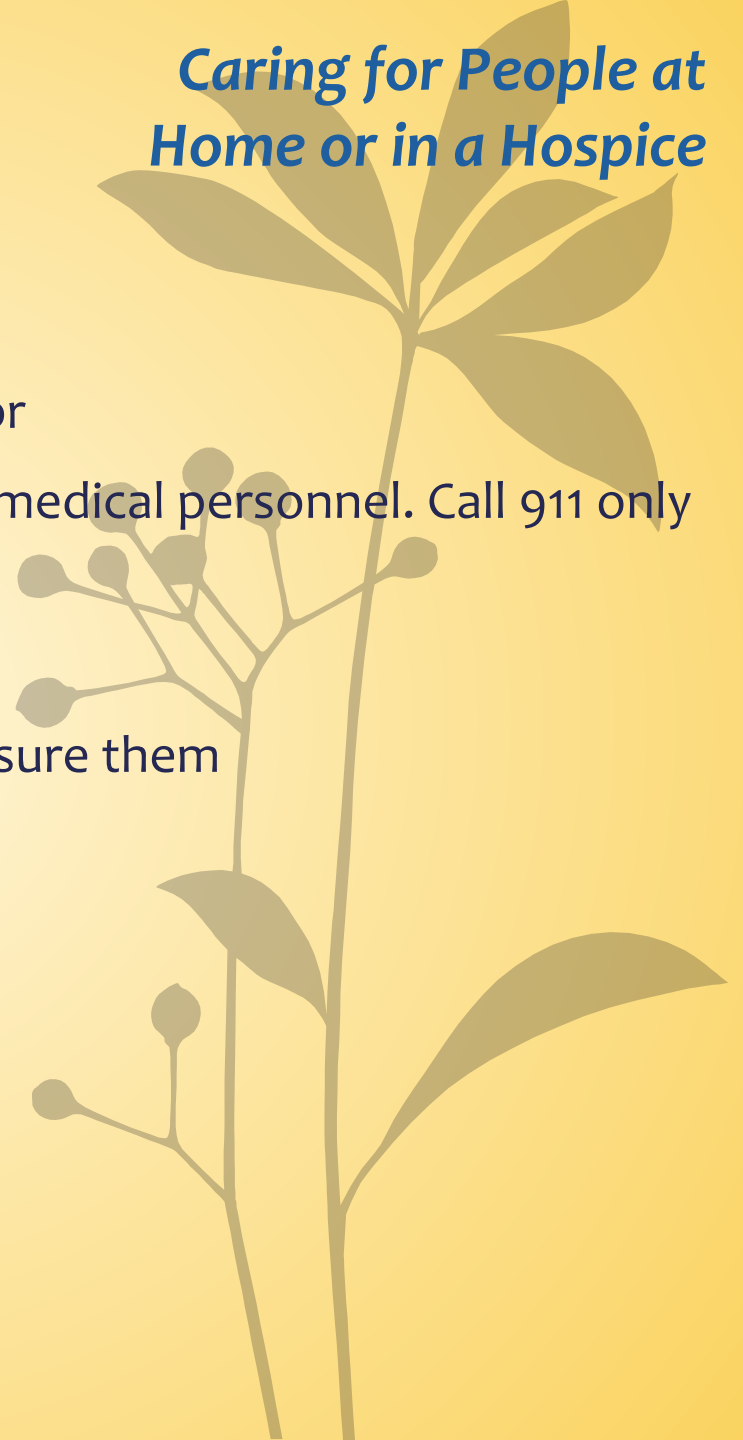
- As the person is falling:
 - Remain calm
 - Do not attempt to stop the fall
 - Protect the person's head
- After the fall:
 - Assess the situation. Make the person comfortable
 - Get help from trained staff. Do not try to help the person up from the floor
 - Notify your supervisor
 - Tell family members what happened
 - Complete the required Incident Report



If You Find the Person on the Floor

- Say his/her name and ask if he/she is OK
- Do not try to help the person up from the floor
- Call for assistance from trained staff or other medical personnel. Call 911 only if it is a medical emergency
- Notify your supervisor
- Tell family members what happened and reassure them
- Complete the required Incident Report

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Next Steps?

- Click on the link below to take you to the *Module 7: Caring for People at Home or in a Hospice* quiz section
 - [Module 7 Quiz](#)

