THE CARE PARTNER PROJECT

## ABOUT PNEUMONIA FROM A VENTILATOR:

*Patients who need a machine to help them breathe can get a lung infection (pneumonia) if germs get into the breathing tube. This type of pneumonia is also called VAP, which stands for Ventilator Associated Pneumonia.*

## RISK FACTORS:

- *Use of a ventilator.*
- *Lung disease.*
- *Age 65 and older.*

## NOTE:

*Sometimes patients on ventilators have their hands bound to keep them from pulling out the tubes by accident. This may be scary for your loved one and may even cause a panic attack. Get a nurse to help ease your loved one's fears.*

HOW TO HELP

# PREVENT VENTILATOR PNEUMONIA:

☐ **Ask about the sterile steps** used to put the breathing tube into your loved one.

☐ **Ask for a daily check** of your loved one's ability to breathe without machine help.

☐ **Ask if your loved one's mattress needs to be raised at an angle.**

- If so, tell a nurse right away if your loved one slumps down or lowers the mattress.
- Be on the lookout for bed sores on your loved one's tail bone and "sit bones."

- Follow our ***"How-To" Checklist*** to help prevent bed sores.

☐ **Ask about medicines** to help prevent your loved one from getting stomach ulcers (sometimes caused from the breathing tube).

☐ **Ask about care for your loved one's teeth, gums, and tongue** every four hours to kill germs that could go from mouth to lungs. Make sure these are used every time:

- A toothbrush with soft bristles and 1.5% peroxide toothpaste.
- A vacuum tool to pull germs and waste from the mouth.

## GET A NURSE IF:

### You see:

- The tube come loose.
- A pool of water inside the tube. (If in doubt, call a nurse.)

### Your loved one shows signs of or complains about:

- Fever, chills, shivering, body aches, headaches, confusion.
- White patches or sores in your loved one's mouth or on the lips.
- Cough with phlegm (can be yellow or green).
- Increasing need for suctioning.
- Need for higher settings on the breathing machine.

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