# *Sepsis*

## Prevention of Potentially Avoidable Hospitalizations (PAH)

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# *What is Sepsis?*

- Caused by infection that was not treated and got worse
- Serious complication caused by infection anywhere in body
- Most often due to infections of lung, urinary tract, skin or gut (intestine)
- Common germs causing it: Staphylococus aureus, E. coli, some types of Streptococcus
- Medical emergency
- Can lead to death

# *Signs and Symptoms of Sepsis*

- Call doctor or nurse immediately and ask if you should call 911 if **patient has INFECTION AND**:
  - Fever (greater than 100.9 oral) or hypothermia (temp. <96.8)
  - Shivering or feeling very cold
  - Shortness of breath or fast respirations
  - Fast heart beat
  - Confusion or disorientation
  - Extreme pain or discomfort
  - Clammy or sweaty skin
  - Pale or discolored skin
  - Going to the bathroom less than usual even when drinking as usual and no diagnosis of ESRD

# *Why Do I need to Know This?*

- Patients with this disease have a high risk to:
  - Get worse very quickly
  - Have to go to the hospital
  - Die
- All this can be prevented if you:
  - Tell nurse/doctor and caregiver about any new change right away, especially if any of the signs/symptoms on last slide
  - Tell nurse/doctor and caregiver right away if has signs of infection
  - Make sure patient takes antibiotics as ordered by the doctor
  - Goes to the doctor if doctor says so

# Home Health Aide: How Do I Care For This Patient? What is My Job?

- Follow the Plan of Care given by nurse
- Ask questions if you don't understand what to do or how to do it
- Make sure to use universal precautions
- If you yourself have an infection, report it to your supervisor, see your doctor
- Make sure you are cleared to work before starting your shift
- Ask the patient at the start of every shift how they are feeling and if anything has changed
- Observe and report any changes or patient complaints immediately to nurse/doctor and caregiver

# Home Health Aide Job: *Medicines*

- Make sure the patient does what they are supposed to:
  - Remind patient to take medicine or
  - Remind *caregiver* to give medicines to the patient
  - Tell nurse if the doctor has ordered new or stopped any of the current medications or changed a dose
  - Go to the pharmacy to drop off prescriptions for the patient or to pick up filled prescriptions
  - Make sure the patient/caregiver gets rid of or puts away any stopped medication so there will be no confusion
  - Notify the nurse immediately if the patient/caregiver has problems with getting medication, especially an antibiotic

# Home Health Aide Job: *MD Follow Up*

- Make sure the patient goes to the doctor
  - Tell the caregiver and nurse about any changes (can be minor) you notice and ask if a doctor's visit is needed.
  - Don't wait for the patient to get worse.
  - Tell the nurse and caregiver if patient refuses to go to doctor
  - This may be life threatening, ask if you should call 911 if the patient has signs of Sepsis (listed on slide 3)
  - If you cannot reach the nurse or doctor and patient has these symptoms, call caregiver and 911

# Home Health Aide Job: *Other Functions*

- Observe – look at patient when you assist with ADLs (bathing, dressing…) :
  - Are there any new open areas on their skin and if so, is there any drainage that might show infection – a lot of white or green drainage, foul smelling, red or hot skin
  - Do they have a foley catheter and if so, does the drainage show infection – cloudy urine, bad smell, pain or burning
  - Do they have a tube in chest or neck and if so, does the drainage show infection - white or green drainage, bad smell, red, hot skin around the tube
  - Do they have any implanted devices like a pacemaker, and if so, is the skin over the area red, hot, draining?
  - Report any of these signs right away to the nurse/MD and caregiver

# Home Health Aide Job: *Other Tasks*

- If you assist patient and/or caregiver with other functions like:
  - Foley care
  - Ostomy care
  - Enteral feedings
  - Oxygen

- Make sure you:
  - Use gloves
  - Wash your hands before and after task
  - Do each task exactly as you were taught
  - Keep all supplies and equipment stored in a safe, clean area
  - Do not use any dirty or contaminated supplies

# To Sum Up

- The rules require that no matter what disease the patient has, you:
  - Report any changes in their condition to the caregiver and the nurse/MD.
  - Follow the Nursing Plan of Care
  - Follow precautions and assist as needed to keep the patient safe
  - Let your Coordinator and patient/caregiver know ahead of time if you cannot work a particular day so a replacement can be found.

# REMEMBER: YOU PLAY A KEY ROLE IN YOUR PATIENT'S CARE!

## YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE AND PREVENT YOUR PATIENT FROM BEING HOSPITALIZED