

End of Life Care Guidance for HCAs & Nurses

1. Principles of End-of-Life Care

Care should prioritise dignity, comfort, and respect. All interventions should be guided by the resident's needs, wishes, and end-of-life care plan. Communication with families and within the team is essential.

2. Personal Care

- Provide gentle hygiene care
- Maintain privacy and dignity
- Perform regular oral care
- Keep skin clean and dry
- Explain care even if resident is unresponsive

3. Pressure Care

- Inspect skin regularly
- Use pressure-relieving equipment
- Keep bedding smooth and dry
- Avoid friction and shear
- Document skin condition

4. Repositioning

- Reposition based on comfort (not rigid schedules)
- Use pillows and supports
- Avoid causing pain or distress
- Record repositioning

5. End-of-Life Care Plan

- Follow the individualised care plan
- Respect DNAR orders where applicable
- Be aware of symptom management plans
- Support family involvement
- Escalate concerns appropriately

6. Standards to Follow (Ireland)

- HIQA National Standards for Residential Care Settings
- HSE Palliative Care Guidelines
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) Code of Professional Conduct
- Local nursing home policies and procedures

7. Competency Checklist

- Demonstrates dignity and respect in all care
- Provides safe and effective personal care
- Performs regular skin inspection
- Implements appropriate pressure care
- Uses safe repositioning techniques
- Recognises signs of discomfort or pain
- Follows end-of-life care plan
- Communicates effectively with team and family
- Documents care accurately
- Escalates concerns appropriately