

Mosby's Nursing Video Skills

Procedure Guideline for Measuring Height and Weight

1. Verify the health care provider's orders.
2. Gather the necessary equipment and supplies.
3. Perform hand hygiene and apply gloves if needed.
4. Introduce yourself to the patient and family if present.
5. Provide for the patient's privacy.
6. Determine if the patient can bear his own weight and can stand safely on a scale. If the patient is unable to stand, use a wheelchair or bed scale to weigh the patient.
7. Weigh the patient on the same scale at the same time of day, wearing the same type of clothing each time.
8. To measure an ambulatory patient's weight on a standing scale:
 - A. Explain the procedure to the patient.
 - B. Ask the patient to void. Make sure the patient is wearing lightweight clothing. Provide assistance with removing the patient's shoes and socks if needed. Have the patient put on skid proof socks.
 - C. To obtain an accurate weight, make sure the beam scale has been calibrated. Before you begin, slide each weight over to 0. Assist the patient onto the platform. Have the patient stand still on the scale, evenly distributing body weight on both feet.
 - D. Adjust the scale weights until the balance indicator rests in the middle. Record the patient's weight to the nearest 0.1 kg (1/4 lb).
9. To measure the patient's height:
 - A. Help the patient stand erect, with his or her body weight evenly distributed on both feet.
 - B. Instruct the patient to let the arms hang freely at the sides, with the palms facing the thighs.
 - C. Ask the patient to look straight ahead, take a deep breath, and hold the position as you bring the horizontal bar down firmly on top of the patient's head. Measure the

- patient's height to the nearest 0.1 cm (1/8 inch). To read the measurement accurately, your eyes must be level with the bar.
10. To measure the patient's weight for a patient who is alert but unable to stand, a wheelchair can be rolled upon the platform of a scale.
 - A. If the scale is digital, begin with a reading of 0 and select the unit of measurement.
 - B. Establish the weight of the wheelchair and cushions prior to weighing the patient. For consistency, always weigh the patient in the same chair.
 - C. Position the wheelchair on the scale and lock the wheels to keep it from rolling.
 - D. Wait for the trigger or watch for the reading to appear on the digital display.
 11. To weigh a patient using a bed scale:
 - A. Explain the procedure to the patient.
 - B. Before weighing the patient, place the sling on the arms of scale, and calibrate the scale to 0. After obtaining the reading, remove the sling.
 - C. With help from an assistant and using good body mechanics, roll the patient onto one side and place the sling beneath the patient. Roll the patient onto the other side to finish placing the sling. Have the patient cross the arms over the chest.
 - D. Position the scale at the bedside and lock the wheels for safety.
 - E. Lower the arm of the scale and attach the sling to the scale. Raise it slowly until the patient clears the bed. Ask the patient to stay still while you read the digital weight.
 - F. Lower the patient gently onto the bed. Detach the sling from the scale. Remove the sling from beneath the patient by rolling the patient from one side to the other.
 12. Help the patient into a comfortable position, and place toiletries and personal items within reach.
 13. Place the call light within easy reach, and make sure the patient knows how to use it to summon assistance.
 14. To ensure the patient's safety, raise the appropriate number of side rails and lower the bed to the lowest position.
 15. Dispose of used supplies and equipment. Leave the patient's room tidy.

16. Remove and dispose of gloves, if used. Perform hand hygiene.
17. Document and report the patient's response and expected or unexpected outcomes.
Always compare the current height and weight with his or her previous measurements.