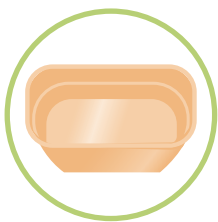


# POSTMORTEM CARE

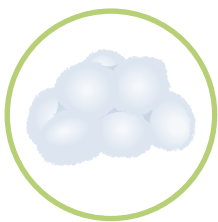


**Postmortem care** is a component of end-of-life care and is the care given to a deceased client. Nurses and unlicensed assistive personnel (UAPs) perform most postmortem care until the deceased client is transferred to funeral provider.

## Postmortem Care Supplies



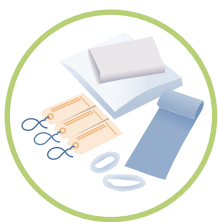
Bathing supplies



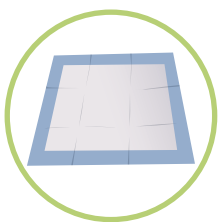
Cotton balls



Clean sheets



Shroud kit  
(identification tags,  
body wrap,  
soft strings)



Absorbent pad



Bag for the client's  
belongings

## NURSING NOTE

Ensure medical examiner's office is notified of death as required by local and organizational regulations. If autopsy is to be performed, all medical devices may need to remain in place. Document phone call, case number (if provided) and whether permission was received to remove medical devices prior to performing postmortem care.

## NOTES

## General Postmortem Care Guidelines

Postmortem care protocols often vary by local laws and practice regulations.

1. Gather all materials.
2. Perform hand hygiene.
3. Put on personal protective equipment (PPE).
4. Raise bed to an appropriate height.
5. Place deceased client in the supine position.
6. Ensure all equipment is turned off.
7. Remove all lines, tubes, drains, and other devices.
8. Close client's eyelids (if eyelids do not close, place moistened cotton balls on eyelids for a few minutes before reattempting to close them).
9. Place folded towel under chin to keep mouth closed (you may need to use gauze ties to wrap under jaw or towel and tie on top of head to ensure mouth closure).
10. Cover puncture sites and open wounds with gauze and dressings.
11. Clean client's body using bathing supplies.
12. Change bed linens and place an absorbent pad under the buttocks.
13. Place a non-removable identification tag on client.
14. Place client in a body bag included with a postmortem kit, with additional labels per facility or medical examiner procedures.  
If client was in isolation, document type of isolation on identification tags on patient and body bag.
15. Ensure client's belongings are in "Client's Belongings" bag, such as clothes and electronic devices.
16. Document all completed actions.

