



# Signs and Symptoms of Illness

# Introductions

People get sick sometimes. Many of the people that we serve cannot tell you verbally when they are not feeling well.

It is up to us to pay attention to people, notice changes, and take action.

# General Signs of Illness

- Pain
- Fever or chills
- Unusual body discharge
- Dizziness
- Balance problems
- Trembling
- Vital sign change
- Sleep pattern change
- Appetite change
- Behavior change

# What can pain look like?

- Increased heart rate
- Restlessness
- Agitation
- Hitting care givers or peers
- Grimacing
- Refusing cares
- Not moving
- Holding a body part
- Hitting the area of pain
- Limping
- Sweating
- Crying
- Sometimes super subtle things!

# How can we check for Illness?

- Checking vital signs:
  - Blood pressure
  - Oxygen using an pulse oximeter
  - Pulse/Heart rate
  - Temperature
- Noticing or paying attention to changes in people

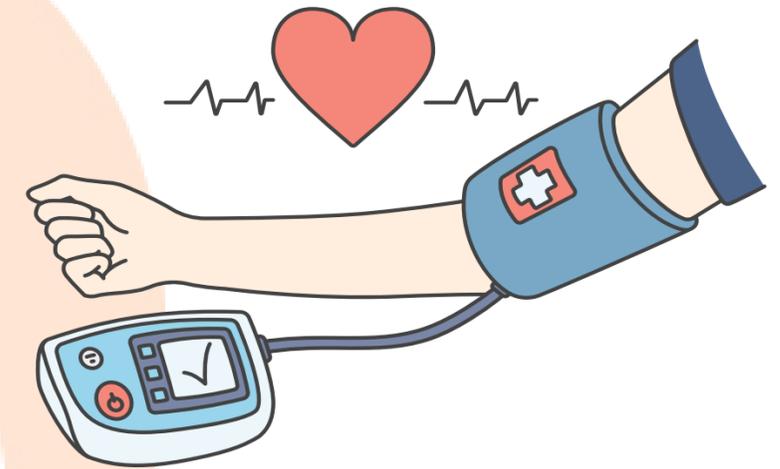
# Vital Signs

- Temperature:
  - Normal temp is between 97.6°F to 99.8°F, depending on the person.
  - Not all fevers are always treated. Make sure to check with the nurse before giving anything.
  - Temperatures can be taken:
    - Under the tongue
    - Rectally
    - In the ear
    - Under the armpit
    - Across the forehead



# Vital Signs

- Blood pressure:
  - Normal range is approximately 90/60 to 140/80
- Oxygen:
  - Normal range is above 95%.
- Pulse (Heart Rate):
  - Normal pulse is between 60 to 100 beats per min (bpm), this can depend on the individual and the persons activity level when reading taken



# What changes do we watch for?

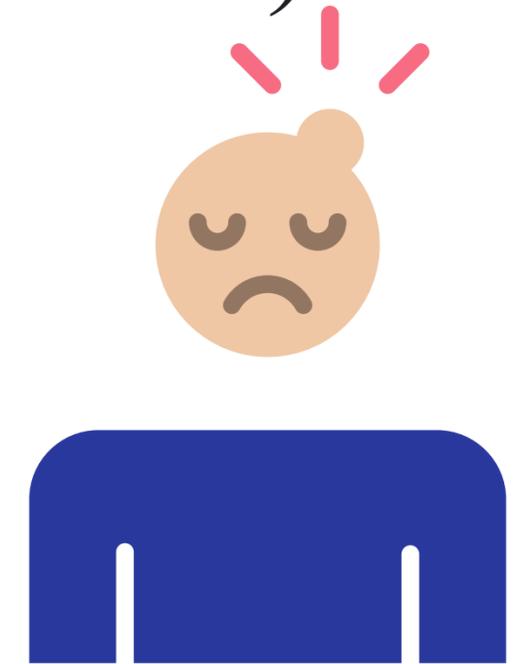
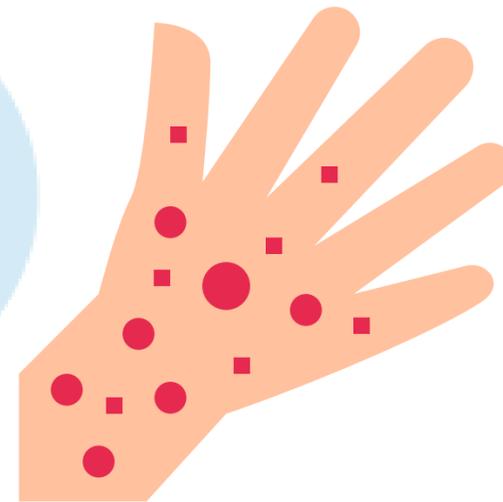
- Skin appearance
- Movement
- Breathing
- Toileting
- Eating and drinking
- Behavior and Mood

# Skin Changes

- **Color**
  - Pale - face, palms, tongue and underside of lower eye lids can be checked.
  - Flushing
    - skin discoloration in the face, neck, chest, or upper trunk
    - Generally red or pink color
  - Cyanosis
    - Blue-purple color to lips and tongue or fingertips and toes

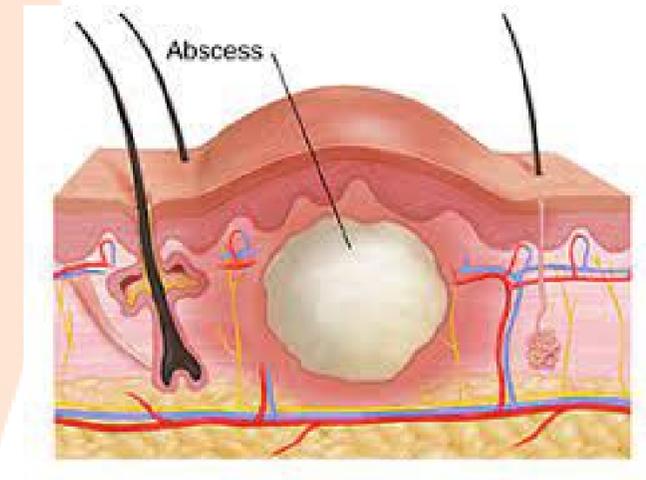
# Skin Changes

- Temperature (warm or cool to touch)
- Abnormal sweating
- Bruising
- Rash, itching
- Open areas
- Swelling, lumps
- Red areas



# Skin Changes

- Signs of a skin or wound infection:
  - Swelling
  - Redness/discoloration
  - Warmer to touch than surrounding area
  - Drainage - like pus
  - Pain



An abscess is a pocket of infection under the skin or in the tissue



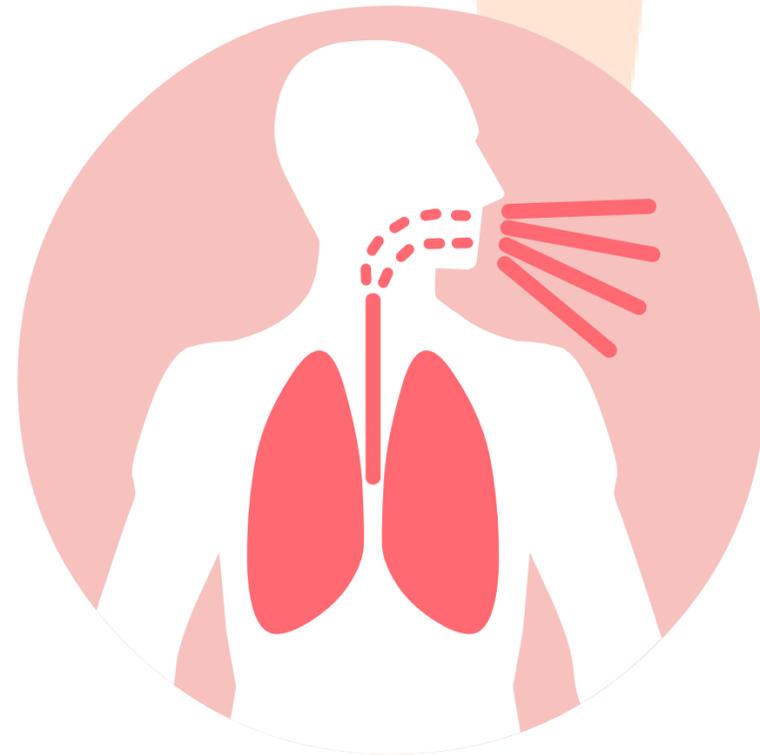
# Musculoskeletal Changes

- Loss of movement or difficulty moving
  - Refusing to move or complete normal tasks
- Loss of coordination
  - Increased falls, unknown bruising or wounds
- Stiffness
- Pain, redness, or swelling in joint
  - Limping, leaning to the side, not moving normally



# Breathing Changes

- Very quick or very slow breathing
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Coughing

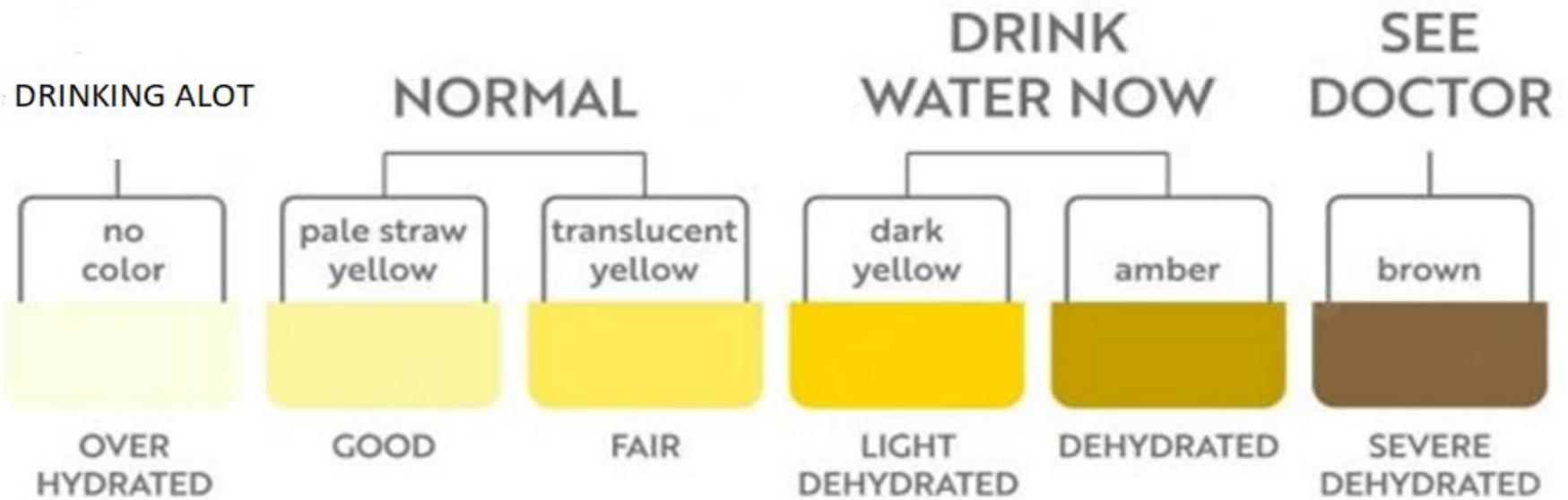
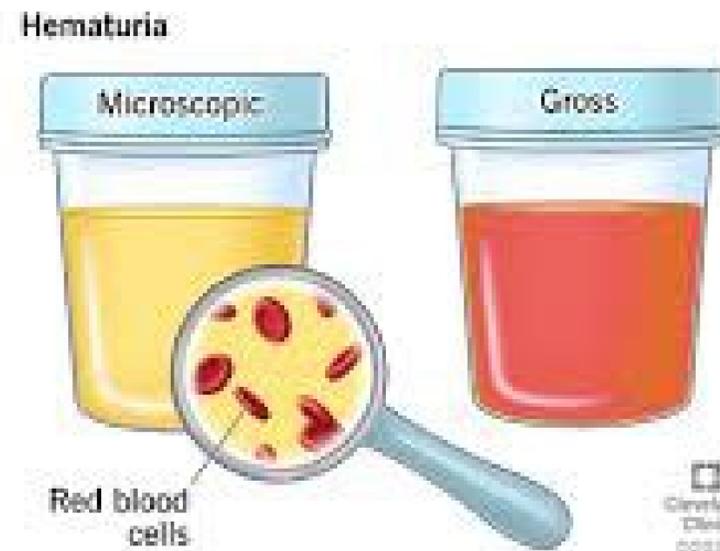
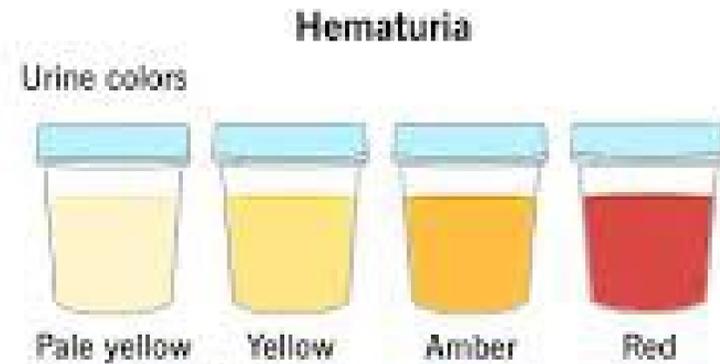


# Urinary Changes

- Not able to urinate
- Burning or pain while urinating
- Incontinence or not making it to the toilet
- Urinating frequently and in small amounts
- Dark colored urine or blood in urine

# Urinary Changes

- How can you tell what is normal urine color and what is concerning?



# Digestive Changes

- Eating more than normal
- Always hungry
- Refusing to eat
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Increased thirst or drinking
- Difficulty chewing or swallowing
  - Coughing only after eating, choking, only eating soft or small foods
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Black or bloody stool



# Mental Status Changes

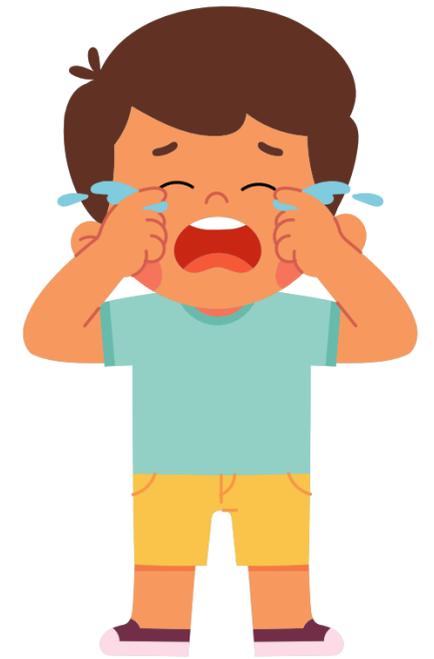
- Increased sleeping
- Not sleeping
- Restlessness
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness- not able to wake up or respond
- Balance issues
- Slurred speech



# Emotional Changes

- Anxiety
- Crying
- Isolating or withdrawal
- Agitation/Irritability
- Quick changes moods

*Sometimes these are the only signs, pay attention for these changes.*



# When Someone Is Sick, What do I do?

- Notify the nurse:
  - Follow the Nurse Notification procedure.
  - Call and leave a voicemail if no answer.
  - Call the On Call nurse if no response from the site nurse.
- Follow the nurse's instruction, let your co-workers know what's going on, and write a T Log in Therap.

# When Someone Is Sick, What do I document?

- Written T-Log's should:
  - Describe the signs and symptoms that you observed, discovered, or noticed.
  - Summarize instructions given by the nurse.
  - Explain what action was taken.
  - Detail what the plan is.

Note in the Communication book for co-workers.

# When Someone Is Sick, What do I do now?

- Continue to offer comfort to the person and interventions instructed by the nurse.
- Watch the person for more changes.
  - Notify the nurse if any noticed
- Document how the person is doing every shift until symptoms resolved.