

Best Practices for Using Lateral Position Gel Pads in the Operating Room

During surgery, patients must be positioned in specific ways to guarantee patient welfare, comfort and efficiency during surgery. The two objectives are achieved with the help of a lateral position gel pads as these products help support the patient's sides when they are positioned on their sides during surgeries. Because the lateral position is often applied in various surgeries including thoracotomies, kidney procedures, and hip replacement procedures, supportive equipment having excellent quality including lateral position gel pads, prone head rest, and silicon gel pads should be used. Below are some operational tips every OR nurse and surgical team should embrace when using lateral position gel pads.

1. Choose the Right Type of Gel Pad

Not all surgeries will need the same type of gel pads and the selection process of the appropriate gel pad is the key factor to patient safety. [Lateral position gel pads](#) are movable immobilizers in different shapes and sizes which are intended to support different regions of the body including the head, shoulders and hips. Select gel pads of higher quality silicone or viscoelastic material as they help in achieving better pressure redistribution in nerve injuries than others.

2. Use Gel Pads in Conjunction with Other Positioning Devices

Lateral position gel pads should be also used in conjunction with other positioning equipment, such as prone head rests and arm cradles. Cervical alignment must be neutral when the patient is in a lateral position; therefore, the head needs to be supported. A [prone head rest](#) can be used to help support the victims head and neck thereby not placing undue pressure on areas that may already be injured. Likewise, silicon gel pads can be positioned below the shoulders or hips and prevent shear forces that disturb the alignment of the body parts.

3. Ensure Proper Placement and Alignment

Gel pads used in lateral position must be well placed. Place the gel pads on strategic parts of the body especially over the bone structure such as the scapula, hip bones, and hip bone – sprawling area to minimize pressure on such areas. It is important that the head and spine of the patient are perfectly aligned by using a gel pad and a prone head rest. Depending on what stage of the procedure is taking place, gel pads may be repositioned to prevent formation of skin folds that might cause pressure ulcers.

4. Regularly Monitor and Adjust During Surgery

In long operations, movement supine or otherwise, should be observed and changes made from time to time. Despite placing 'the best' gel pads, opportune pressure may result in complications like nerve smashing or pressure sores. The patient should be checked for skin integrity and body position to avoid signs of discomfort or prolonged tissue stress. Slightly shift the position of side lying gel pads while the other gel pads, [silicon gel pads](#) and sitz pad need to be repositioned occasionally to help relieve pressure from some areas.

5. Post-Surgery Evaluation and Documentation

Below you will find recommended evaluation statements for the skin condition and comfort with a patient after the surgery: Record notes or findings made about the use of lateral position gel pads and other positioning equipment. This information is useful in determining the effectiveness of the current positioning practice and modify them in future procedures.

Conclusion

Implementing the latter guidelines for the utilization of lateral position gel pads into surgery, it is possible to prevent complications, such as pressure injuries and peripheral nerve damage, in the operating room. Including the further tools like prone head rests and silicon gel pads helps to provide additional support to patients allowing focusing on the possibility to get optimal results in surgery safe for the patient.