

CNA Vocabulary

24 hr. Urine Collection

A test where all urine is collected for 24 hours. Used to evaluate how well the kidneys filter waste.

Abandonment

Leaving a resident without needed care or supervision. This creates risk and is considered abuse.

Abdominal Thrust

A first-aid maneuver used during choking to force air behind an obstruction. Also called the Heimlich maneuver.

Ability

A person's physical, mental, or emotional capacity to perform tasks or activities.

Abuse Registry Department of Health (DOH)

A state-maintained list of individuals confirmed to have abused or neglected a vulnerable adult.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

The advanced stage of HIV infection. The immune system is severely weakened, increasing risk of illness.

Acute Care

Short-term medical treatment for sudden illness or injury, usually provided in a hospital.

Adaptive/Assistive Devices

Tools that help a resident perform tasks they cannot do independently, such as walkers or special utensils.

ADLs (Activities of Daily Living)

Basic self-care activities including bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, and walking.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

A state agency that investigates reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults.

Advance Directive

A legal document outlining a person's wishes for medical care if they cannot speak for themselves.

Agitation

Restlessness or irritability often caused by stress, unmet needs, or dementia.

Alternatives

Non-restraint interventions designed to keep residents safe, such as alarms or increased observation.

Alveoli

Tiny air sacs in the lungs where oxygen enters the blood and carbon dioxide is removed.

Alzheimer's Disease

A progressive, irreversible brain disease that affects memory, behavior, and thinking. Most common cause of dementia.

AM Care

Morning personal care tasks such as bathing, grooming, toileting, and dressing.

Amputation

The surgical removal of a limb or body part.

Amputee

A person who has had a limb surgically removed.

Anaphylaxis

A sudden, severe allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. Requires emergency treatment.

Anemia

A condition in which the blood has too few healthy red cells, causing fatigue and weakness.

Anti-microbial

A substance that kills or slows the growth of harmful microorganisms.

Anxiety

Feelings of worry or fear that may interfere with daily functioning.

Aphasia

Difficulty speaking or understanding speech, often after a stroke.

Apical

Refers to the apex of the heart. The apical pulse is taken with a stethoscope on the left chest.

Apnea

A temporary stop in breathing.

Artery

A blood vessel that carries blood away from the heart.

Arthritis

Inflammation of a joint, causing pain, stiffness, and reduced movement.

Asepsis

Practices used to keep germs out and prevent infection. Includes hand hygiene and clean technique.

Aspiration

When food, liquid, or vomit is breathed into the lungs. Can cause pneumonia.

Aspiration Precautions

Safety steps to prevent aspiration, such as upright positioning and slow feeding.

Asthma

A chronic condition causing airway inflammation and breathing difficulty.

Atrophy

Loss or shrinking of muscle due to lack of use.

Autism

A developmental condition affecting communication, social interaction, and behavior.

Axillary

Relating to the armpit. An axillary temperature is taken under the arm.

Bacteria

Microscopic organisms. Some are harmless; others cause infections.

Base of Support

The area beneath a person that provides stability. A wider stance increases balance.

Bed Cradle

A frame used to keep blankets off a resident's legs or feet to prevent pressure or discomfort.

Bed Pan

A device used for toileting when a resident cannot get out of bed.

Bed Protector

A waterproof pad placed under a resident to protect bedding from moisture.

Belief

A personal idea or conviction that influences attitudes and behavior.

Belonging

A feeling of connection, acceptance, and being part of a group.

Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH)

Enlargement of the prostate gland in older men, causing urinary frequency or difficulty.

Beside Commode

A portable toilet used beside the bed for residents who cannot walk to the bathroom.

Biohazardous

Materials that contain potentially infectious substances such as blood or body fluids.

Bipolar Disorder

A mental illness marked by cycles of depression and periods of high energy or mania.

Bladder

A muscular organ that stores urine.

Bladder Retraining

A program designed to help a resident regain control of urination through scheduled toileting.

Blindness

Partial or complete loss of vision.

Blood Borne Pathogens

Disease-causing germs transmitted through blood, such as hepatitis B and HIV.

Blood Clot

A thickened mass of blood. Can block circulation and become life-threatening.

Blood Pressure

The force of blood against artery walls. Recorded as systolic/diastolic.

Blood Sugar

The amount of glucose in the blood. Important in diabetes management.

Body Language

Communication through facial expressions, gestures, and posture.

Body Mechanics

Using the body safely and efficiently to prevent injury during movement or lifting.

Bony Prominences

Areas where bones are close to the skin's surface, such as heels and elbows. High risk for pressure injuries.

Bowel Movement (BM)

The passage of stool from the body.

Bowel Obstruction

A blockage preventing stool from moving through the intestines. A medical emergency.

Bowel Retraining

A scheduled program to help promote regular bowel function.

Brachial Artery

The artery in the upper arm used for measuring blood pressure.

Brain

The organ that controls thinking, movement, and vital functions.

Briefs

Disposable undergarments used for incontinence.

Bronchi

Large air passages that lead from the trachea into the lungs.

Bronchitis

Inflammation of the bronchi, causing coughing and mucus production.

Burns

Injuries caused by heat, chemicals, electricity, or extreme cold. Severity varies from minor to life-threatening.

Fainting

A brief loss of consciousness from reduced blood flow to the brain.

Faith

A person's spiritual or religious belief system.

False Imprisonment

Restraining or restricting a person's movement without legal justification.

Fats

Nutrients that provide energy and help the body absorb vitamins.

Fecal Impaction

A hard mass of stool stuck in the rectum that cannot be passed naturally.

Feces

Stool or bowel movement.

Fiber

Parts of plant foods that aid digestion and prevent constipation.

First Aid

Immediate care provided before professional help arrives.

Flatus

Gas in the stomach or intestines; passing gas.

Fluid Restriction

A medical order limiting the amount of fluids a person may drink.

Force Fluids

A medical order encouraging increased fluid intake.

Foreskin

The fold of skin covering the tip of the penis in uncircumcised males.

Fracture

A broken bone.

Fracture Pan

A small, shallow bedpan used when residents cannot lift their hips.

Fraud

Intentional deception for personal gain, such as falsifying documentation.

CNA Vocabulary Master List – Segment 2 (G–N)

Gait

A person's manner of walking. Changes in gait may indicate weakness or need for assistance.

Gait/Transfer Belt

A safety belt placed around the resident's waist to assist with transfers or walking.

Gastroesophageal Reflux (GERD)

A condition where stomach acid flows backward into the esophagus, causing heartburn or discomfort.

Gastrostomy Tube

A feeding tube inserted through the abdomen for nutrition, hydration, or medication.

Geriatrics

The branch of healthcare that focuses on older adults.

Glaucoma

Increased pressure in the eye that can damage vision over time.

Glucometer

A device used to measure blood sugar levels.

Graduate

A container used to measure fluid output such as urine.

Grooming

Personal care tasks such as brushing hair, shaving, and nail care.

Hallucinations

Seeing, hearing, or feeling things that are not real.

Hand Hygiene

The most important method of preventing infection; includes handwashing and sanitizer use.

Handicap

A physical or mental limitation that restricts activities.

Health Care Team

All staff involved in resident care, including CNAs, nurses, therapists, and physicians.

Healthcare-associated Infection (HAI)

An infection acquired while receiving care in a healthcare facility.

Hearing Impaired

Partial or total inability to hear.

Hemiplegia

Paralysis of one side of the body, often after a stroke.

Hemorrhoids

Swollen veins in the rectal area causing pain or bleeding.

Hepatitis

Inflammation of the liver, often caused by viral infection.

Hip Fracture

A break in the upper part of the femur; common in older adults.

Hip Replacement

Surgical replacement of the hip joint with artificial parts.

HIPAA

A federal law requiring protection of residents' health information.

Holistic Care

Care that addresses physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

Home Health

Care provided in a person's home by healthcare professionals.

Hormones

Chemicals that regulate body processes.

Hospice

Comfort-focused care for individuals with terminal illness.

Hospital

A facility providing acute medical care.

HS/PM Care

Evening personal care before bedtime.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

A virus that weakens the immune system and can progress to AIDS.

Hygiene

Practices that maintain cleanliness and health.

Hypertension

High blood pressure.

Hypotension

Low blood pressure.

Ileostomy

A surgical opening in the abdomen allowing stool to exit from the small intestine.

Incident

An unexpected event that may cause harm or requires reporting.

Incident Report

A document describing an unusual event involving a resident, staff, or visitor.

Incontinence

Inability to control bladder or bowel function.

Incontinent Pad

Absorbent pad used to protect bedding or clothing.

Indwelling Catheter

A catheter that remains in the bladder to drain urine continuously.

Infection

Invasion of the body by microorganisms that cause illness.

Infection Prevention

Practices that reduce the spread of infection, including hand hygiene and PPE.

Inflammation

Swelling, redness, and heat caused by tissue irritation or injury.

Influenza

A contagious respiratory illness caused by the flu virus.

Inhalation/Inspiration

Breathing air into the lungs.

Inhale

To take air into the lungs.

Insulin

A hormone needed to move sugar from the blood into cells.

Intake and Output

A measurement of all fluid consumed and all fluid eliminated.

Integumentary

Relating to the skin, hair, and nails.

Intellectual Disability

A condition involving limitations in learning and problem-solving.

Interdisciplinary Person-Directed Care

A care approach involving multiple professionals while centering on the resident's preferences.

Intravenous (IV)

Delivery of fluids or medications directly into a vein.

Inventory/Belonging List

A record of a resident's personal possessions on admission.

Irregular

Not following a normal pattern; used to describe pulse or breathing.

Isolation

Separating individuals to prevent the spread of infection.

Joint

The place where two bones meet.

Kidney Stone

A hard accumulation of minerals forming in the kidneys.

Knee Replacement

Surgical replacement of the knee joint with artificial components.

Knowledge Exam

The written portion of the CNA certification test.

Labia

Folds of skin around the female genital opening.

Larynx

The voice box; helps with speech and breathing.

Lateral

Position in which the resident lies on their side.

Supine

Position in which the resident lies flat on their back.

Leg Bag

A urinary drainage bag worn on the leg.

Lice

Tiny insects that live on hair or skin and cause itching.

Life Support Systems

Equipment or treatments used to keep a person alive, such as ventilators.

Ligament

Tissue that connects bone to bone.

Living Will

A document stating a person's wishes for end-of-life care.

Log Rolling

A turning technique that keeps the spine straight.

Long Term Care

Care for people who need assistance over an extended period.

Malpractice

Professional negligence that results in harm.

Mandated Reporter

A person legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Mania

A state of elevated mood, increased energy, and impulsive behavior.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

A theory describing human needs from basic to advanced.

Mechanical Lift

A device used to lift and transfer residents safely.

Medicaid

A program that helps pay medical costs for low-income individuals.

Medical Doctor (MD)

A licensed physician.

Medical Record

A legal document containing a resident's health information.

Medical Terminology

Words and phrases used to describe medical conditions and procedures.

Medicare

A federal insurance program for people 65+ or with certain disabilities.

Message

The information communicated in a conversation.

Metabolism

The body's process of using food for energy.

Microorganism

A tiny living organism, such as bacteria or viruses.

Misappropriation of Property

Taking or using a resident's belongings without permission.

Mitered Corner

A method of folding linens to keep sheets tight.

Mobility

The ability to move from one place to another.

Mottling

Blotchy skin coloring, often seen near end of life.

Mucous Membrane

Moist tissues lining body openings.

Multidrug-resistant Organisms (MDROs)

Germ resistant to many antibiotics.

Multiple Sclerosis

A disease causing nerve damage affecting movement and sensation.

Myocardial Infarction (MI, Heart Attack)

A blockage of blood flow to the heart muscle.

MyPlate

A guide showing recommended portions of food groups.

Nares

Nostrils.

Nasogastric Tube

A tube through the nose into the stomach for feeding or medication.

Neglect

Failure to provide needed care, causing harm or risk.

Nerves

Fibers that carry messages between the brain and body.

Nocturia

Frequent urination at night.

Non-Pathogen

A microorganism that does not cause disease.

Non-Verbal

Communication without words.

Normal Flora

Harmless microorganisms naturally present in the body.

NPO

Nothing by mouth; no food or fluids allowed.

Nursing Care

Services provided to meet residents' health needs.

Nursing Team

Nurses and CNAs working together to provide care.

Objective

Observable and measurable information.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

A condition involving anxiety and repetitive behaviors.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Federal agency ensuring workplace safety.

Occupational Therapy

Therapy helping residents perform daily activities.

Occupied Bed

A bed made while the resident is in it.

Ombudsman

Advocate for residents' rights in long-term care.

Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA)

Federal law setting training and care standards for long-term care.

CNA Vocabulary Master List – Segment 3 (O–Z + Abbreviations)

Open Bed

A bed prepared to welcome a new resident, with linens folded back.

Oral

Relating to the mouth; medications or care provided by mouth.

Osteoporosis

A condition causing bones to become weak and brittle.

Ostomy Bag

A bag attached to a stoma to collect waste.

Outpatient Care

Care that does not require an overnight hospital stay.

Pacemaker

A device implanted to regulate the heart's rhythm.

Pain

An unpleasant sensation signaling injury or illness.

Palliative Care

Comfort-focused care for people with serious illness.

Paraplegia

Paralysis of the legs and lower body.

Parkinson's Disease

A progressive disorder affecting movement and balance.

Pathogen

A microorganism that causes disease.

Patient Abuse

Any action causing harm or distress to a patient.

Patient Rights

Legal and ethical rights ensuring respectful, safe care.

Pediatric

Relating to the care of children.

Penis

Male reproductive and urinary organ.

Peptic Ulcers

Sores in the stomach or intestinal lining.

Perineal Care

Cleaning the genital and anal areas.

Perineum

Area between the genitals and anus.

Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD)

Reduced blood flow to limbs due to narrowed vessels.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Equipment such as gloves, masks, gowns used to prevent infection.

Pertussis

A contagious respiratory infection also known as whooping cough.

Phantom Pain

Pain felt in a limb that has been amputated.

Phobia

An intense, irrational fear.

Physical

Relating to the body; also physical exams.

Physical Therapy

Therapy to improve movement and physical function.

Pneumonia

A lung infection causing cough, fever, and breathing difficulty.

POLST

A medical order outlining end-of-life treatment preferences.

Polyuria

Excessive urination.

Post Mortem

Care given to the body after death.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

A mental health condition following trauma.

Pressure Injury/Ulcer/Sore

Skin breakdown from prolonged pressure.

Prone

Position lying face down.

Prosthesis

An artificial limb or body part.

Proteins

Nutrients needed for tissue growth and repair.

Psychosocial

Relating to psychological and social well-being.

Pulse

The heartbeat felt through an artery.

Quadriplegia

Paralysis of all four limbs.

RACE

Fire response: Rescue, Alarm, Contain, Extinguish.

Radial Artery

Artery in the wrist used for pulse checks.

Rash

Skin irritation with redness or bumps.

Receiver

The person receiving a message in communication.

Rectal

Relating to the rectum; rectal temperature route.

Re-direction

Guiding a confused resident to a safer or calmer activity.

Reflux

Backward flow of stomach acid into the esophagus.

Rehabilitation

Therapies helping residents regain function.

Religion

A person's spiritual or faith practice.

Renal Failure

Kidneys' inability to filter waste.

Renewal

The process of renewing CNA certification.

Reporting

Informing supervisors of changes or concerns.

Resident

A person living in a long-term care facility.

Resident Rights

Legal protections ensuring safe, respectful care.

Respirations

Breathing in and out.

Respiratory Therapist (RT)

A professional specializing in breathing treatments.

Restorative

Care focused on maintaining abilities.

Restraints

Devices limiting movement; used only when necessary.

Reverse Isolation

Protecting an immunocompromised resident from infection.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

An autoimmune disorder causing joint inflammation.

Rigor Mortis

Stiffening of muscles after death.

Rotation

Circular movement of a joint or limb.

Safety

Practices preventing injury or harm.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

Chemical safety information sheets.

Sample/Specimen

A small amount collected for testing.

Scabies

A skin infestation caused by mites.

Schizophrenia

A severe mental illness affecting thinking and behavior.

Scope of Practice

Tasks a CNA is legally permitted to perform.

Seizures

Uncontrolled electrical activity in the brain.

Self Esteem

A person's sense of self-worth.

Self-care

Care actions residents perform for themselves.

Sender

The person giving a message.

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted sexual behavior or comments.

Sexual Orientation

A person's emotional or romantic attraction.

Sexuality

How a person expresses themselves sexually.

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)

Diseases spread through sexual contact.

Shearing

Skin damage from sliding across surfaces.

Sheet

Bed linen used for comfort and hygiene.

Shingles

A painful rash caused by the chickenpox virus.

Side Rails

Rails on beds used for safety.

Skilled Nursing Facility

A facility providing medical and rehabilitative services.

Skills

Tasks CNAs must learn and perform safely.

Social Worker (SW)

A professional helping residents with psychosocial needs.

Speech Therapy

Therapy helping with speech and swallowing.

Sphygmomanometer

A device used to measure blood pressure.

Spinal Cord

Nerve tissue connecting the brain to the body.

Spinal Cord Injury

Damage affecting movement and sensation.

Spiritual Needs

Needs related to faith, meaning, or purpose.

Standard Precautions

Infection-control practices used with all residents.

Sterile

Completely free of microorganisms.

Stethoscope

A device used to listen to heart and lung sounds.

Stoma

An artificial opening on the abdomen for waste elimination.

Stool

Solid waste from the bowel.

Straight Catheter

A catheter inserted to drain urine and then removed.

Stress

A physical or emotional response to pressure.

Subjective

Information reported by the resident, not observed directly.

Suicide

Intentional self-harm resulting in death.

Sundowning

Increased confusion or agitation in the late day.

Supportive Devices

Equipment that helps residents maintain function.

Suprapubic Catheter

A catheter inserted through the abdomen into the bladder.

Sympathy

Understanding another's feelings from your perspective.

Symptoms

Signs of illness felt or described by the patient.

Systolic

Top blood pressure number; pressure during heart contraction.

Temporal

Related to the temple; used in temporal thermometers.

Tendon

Tissue connecting muscle to bone.

Terminal Illness

An illness that cannot be cured and will lead to death.

Thermometer

A device to measure body temperature.

Thyroid

A gland regulating metabolism.

Toe Tuck (pleat)

A way of tucking sheets to avoid pressure on toes.

Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN)

IV nutrition for people unable to eat.

Trachea

The windpipe carrying air to the lungs.

Transmission-based Precautions

Isolation precautions for specific infections.

Trapez

A triangular bar above the bed used for repositioning.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Brain damage from force or impact.

Triggers

Events or stimuli causing distress or behavior changes.

Tuberculosis (TB)

A contagious lung disease.

Tympanic

Relating to the ear canal; tympanic thermometers measure ear temperature.

Uncircumcised

Penis with foreskin intact.

Unconscious

Not awake and not aware.

Urinal

A container used for urination.

Urinalysis

A test of urine to detect illness.

Urinary Incontinence

Loss of bladder control.

Urinary Meatus

The opening where urine leaves the body.

Urinary Retention

Inability to empty the bladder completely.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

Infection in the urinary system.

Urination

The act of passing urine.

Vagina

The female genital canal.

Validating

Accepting a person's feelings as real and meaningful.

Values

Beliefs that guide a person's decisions.

Veins

Blood vessels carrying blood back to the heart.

Verbal Communication

Communication through spoken words.

Vertigo

A spinning sensation or dizziness.

Voiding

The act of emptying the bladder.

Walker

A mobility aid providing support.

Willful Infliction of Harm

Intentional action causing pain or injury.

Abbreviations**AKA**

Above Knee Amputation

Amb

Ambulate or Walk

ASAP

As Soon As Possible

BID

Twice a day

KA

Below Knee Amputation

BRP

Bathroom Privileges

cl liq

Clear Liquids

c/o

Complains Of

DX

Diagnosis

FBS

Fasting Blood Sugar

FWB

Full Weight Bearing

HOB

Head of Bed

HS

Hours of Sleep (bedtime)

LLE

Left Lower Extremity

LUE

Left Upper Extremity

NKA

No Known Allergies

NPO

Nothing by Mouth

NWB

Non-Weight Bearing

OOB

Out of Bed

PO

By Mouth

PPE

Personal Protective Equipment

PRN

As Needed

RLE

Right Lower Extremity

RUE

Right Upper Extremity

TID

Three Times a Day