

Box 3.2 lists things you should look for. Your agency will provide you with a form on which to write your observations.

Box 3.2: Observations

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean or dirty• Alert, confused or drowsy• Change in mental status• Skin color and temperature• Skin rashes or reddened areas• Bruises• Swelling• Unsteady or shuffling gait• Difficulty moving• Loss of appetite or change in eating habits• Difficulty swallowing• Abnormal elimination of urine or stool• Fatigue• Unusual body discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tremors• Grimacing or guarding can be a reaction to pain• Seizures, generalized or limited to one part of the body• Chills• Accidents or injuries• Complaints of pain or discomfort• Mood such as angry, happy or withdrawn• Activity of the client including dressing, bathing, eating, personal hygiene, ambulation, continence• Use of a cane or walker• Posture changes• Contractures
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Guidelines for Reporting Observations

Observe for the unusual then report and document only what you observe or the client tells you. Do not make judgments or try to diagnose. When in doubt, always report your observations to the supervisor or nurse as soon as possible. When calling your supervisor be prepared to give the following information:

- Your name
- Name of the client
- Abnormal signs
- Any symptoms the client mentions
- How long the client has had the problem

Making observations is an important part of your job as an In-Home Aide. Always be alert for changes and abnormalities in the condition of each of your clients.

Chapter Review

1. What are the four methods of observation used by health care providers?
2. What should the In-Home Aide observe about the client's appearance and behavior?
3. What information do you need when reporting observations to a supervisor?