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Chronic Renal Failure

Patient name: _____

Admission: _____

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- I. The client/caregiver has a basic understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the renal system.**
- The kidneys are two bean-shaped organs. They are located on each side of the vertebral column at the 12th thoracic vertebrae at the posterior abdominal wall.
 - Each kidney has a ureter about 25 to 30 centimeters long that connects to the bladder.
 - The function of the kidneys is to remove waste materials from blood, balance body fluids, and form urine.
- II. The client/caregiver can define chronic renal failure.**
- It is the irreversible deterioration of renal function.
 - Symptoms may occur very rapidly or very slowly over years.
 - Uremia, an excess of urea and other nitrogenous wastes, occurs.
 - Progression may continue to end-stage renal disease.
- III. The client/caregiver can list factors that increase risk of chronic renal failure.**
- Obstruction of the urinary tract
 - Toxic agents
 - Uncontrolled high blood pressure
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - Kidney diseases
 - Recurrent infections
- IV. The client/caregiver can recognize signs and symptoms of chronic renal failure.**
- Initial symptoms of chronic renal failure are
 - Loss of appetite
 - Unintentional loss of weight
 - Fatigue, apathy, and weakness
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Frequent hiccups
 - Generalized itching

- B. Later symptoms may include**
- Increased or decreased urine output
 - Easy bruising or prolonged bleeding
 - Decreased alertness, confusion, and coma
 - Muscle twitching or cramps
 - Seizures
 - Decreased sensation in hands and feet
 - Uremic frost (deposits of white crystal in and on the skin)
- C. Late symptoms may be**
- Excessive nighttime urination
 - Excessive thirst
 - Abnormally dark skin or paleness
 - Nail abnormalities
 - Breath odor
 - High blood pressure
 - Loss of appetite
 - Agitation
- V. The client/caregiver can list measures to manage chronic renal failure.**
- Follow prescribed diet closely
 - High in carbohydrates
 - Low in protein
 - Low in sodium
 - Low in potassium
 - Take vitamin and mineral supplements as ordered.
 - Avoid infections or obtain prompt treatment for infections.
 - Follow activity as instructed, with frequent rest periods.
 - Avoid stress, which can aggravate symptoms.
 - Monitor blood pressure closely.
 - Monitor fluid status closely.
 1. Weigh daily (same time, same scale, and same amount of clothing).
 2. Measure intake and output.
 3. Restrict fluids as instructed.
 - Provide skin care and oral hygiene.
 1. Keep fingernails short and avoid scratching.
 2. Use lotions to moisturize skin and decrease itchiness.

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3. Use soft-bristled toothbrush and mouthwash.
4. Use medications and ointments as ordered to decrease itchiness.
5. Obtain regular dental checkups.
- I. Prevent constipation with regular exercise and increased fiber.
- J. Keep follow-up appointments with physician and for laboratory tests.
- K. Take medications as ordered.
- L. Monitor and report to physician signs of bleeding, mental status changes, edema, elevated blood pressure, loss of appetite, weight loss or rapid weight gain, and skin breakdown.
- M. Wear Medic Alert bracelet.

VI. The client/caregiver can list possible complications.

- A. End-stage renal disease
- B. Congestive heart failure
- C. Hypertension
- D. A loss of blood from the gastrointestinal tract
- E. Hemorrhage
- F. Increased incidence of infection
- G. Hepatitis B, hepatitis C, liver failure
- H. Seizures
- I. Dementia
- J. Fractures and joint disorders
- K. Changes in glucose metabolism
- L. Electrolyte imbalance

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- M. Decreased libido, impotence
- N. Menstrual problems and infertility
- O. Dry, itchy skin with probable skin infections

RESOURCES

National Kidney Foundation
www.kidney.org

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse
<http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/about/index.htm>

Support groups

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