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Pernicious Anemia

Patient name: _____ Admission: _____

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I. The client/caregiver can define pernicious anemia.

- A. It is a decreased absorption of vitamin B12 caused by a deficiency of an intrinsic factor.
- B. This causes cell destruction and low hemoglobin levels.
- C. Vitamin B12 is necessary for gastric, intestinal, and nervous system functioning.

II. The client/caregiver can list factors that may increase risk of pernicious anemia.

- A. Age (it typically affects people over 50 years old)
- B. Race (it typically affects those of Scandinavian origin with blue eyes)
- C. Autoimmune diseases
- D. Diet insufficient in folic acid
- E. Familial history
- F. Malabsorption syndromes
- G. Strict vegetarian diet without B12 supplements
- H. Pregnancy due to increased need in third trimester
- I. Surgical removal of the stomach
- J. Celiac disease
- K. Metabolic disorders
- L. Alcoholism

III. The client/caregiver can recognize signs and symptoms of pernicious anemia.

- A. Smooth, sore, red tongue and bleeding gums
- B. Impaired sense of smell
- C. Loss of appetite
- D. Abdominal pain
- E. Decreased sensation in hands and feet
- F. Fatigue and weakness
- G. Shortness of breath
- H. Constipation or diarrhea
- I. A lack of coordination and difficulty walking
- J. Nausea and vomiting
- K. Poor memory

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IV. The client/caregiver can list measures to control pernicious anemia.

- A. Take medications as prescribed. Injections of B12 are the treatment of choice. Oral supplements of vitamin B12 can be added. Vitamin B12 can be administered intranasally.
- B. Eat a well-balanced diet that is high in vitamin B12 (i.e., eggs, fish, meat, and milk).
- C. Avoid injury due to decreased sensations in hands and feet.
- D. Perform good oral and personal hygiene.
- E. Exercise regularly with regular rest periods.
- F. Keep follow-up appointments with physician and laboratory.
- G. Report signs and symptoms of infection or any reoccurrence to physician.

V. The client/caregiver is aware of possible complications of untreated disease.

- A. Heart failure
- B. Increased risk for gastric polyps and gastric cancer
- C. Persistent neurological defects if treatment is delayed

RESOURCE

Nutritionist or dietitian

REFERENCES

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