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Pneumothorax

Patient name: _____ Admission: _____

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I. The client/caregiver can define pneumothorax.

- A. Two thin layers of tissue (pleura) separate your lungs and chest wall.
- B. If air leaks through lung tissue into this space, the lung tissue will start to collapse.
- C. Collapse of lung tissue results in pneumothorax. This condition requires immediate medical attention.
- D. Reasons for air to collect in the pleura space are
 - Injuries to the chest wall (stab/gunshot wound)
 - Broken rib that punctures the lung
 - Procedure or surgery that involves the chest or lung
 - Spontaneous pneumothorax

II. The client/caregiver can list signs and symptoms of pneumothorax.

- A. Sudden, sharp chest pain on affected side
- B. Shortness of breath
- C. Chest tightness
- D. Rapid respiratory rate and/or abnormal breathing movement
- E. Bluish color of skin due to lack of oxygen

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III. The client/caregiver can list complications.

- A. Need for chest tube insertion or surgery
- B. Recurrent pneumothorax

IV. The client/caregiver can list self-care measures.

- A. The recurrence rate of pneumothorax can be as high as 40%.
- B. Discontinue smoking, and avoid high altitudes, scuba diving to prevent the recurrence of pneumothorax.

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