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Oxygen Therapy

Patient name: _____

Admission: _____

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- I. **The client/caregiver can define oxygen therapy.**
 - A. Oxygen therapy is needed when a condition interferes with adequate oxygen supply to the tissues of the body. The delivery of oxygen to the tissues of the body helps ensure normal metabolism.
 - B. Sources of therapeutic oxygen can come from
 1. A liquid oxygen container (stores oxygen at very cold temperatures)
 2. Oxygen tank (stores oxygen under pressure)
 3. Portable tanks that are available with liquid and gas oxygen
 4. A portable air oxygen concentrator (removes components of the air and stores and concentrates remaining oxygen)
 - C. Oxygen can be delivered via
 - Nasal cannula
 - Simple mask
 - Specialty masks such as partial rebreather mask, nonrebreather mask, or venturi mask
 - Nasal catheter
 - Transtracheal catheter

- II. **The client/caregiver can recognize signs and symptoms of lack of oxygen.**
 - A. Restlessness or anxiety
 - B. Tiredness, drowsiness, and trouble waking up
 - C. Persistent headache
 - D. Slurred speech
 - E. Confusion and difficulty in concentrating
 - F. Bluish fingernails or lips

- III. **The client/caregiver can list measures for skin care.**
 - A. Nostrils, earlobes, and bridge of nose may be padded with commercially made foam pieces or gauze to prevent skin breakdown.

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- B. Teach client how to remove and reposition oxygen equipment to aid in bathing, eating, etc.
 - C. If nostrils become irritated, apply a soluble gel like K-Y gel—never a petroleum-based lubricant because of fire safety.
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- IV. **The client/caregiver can list safety tips necessary for oxygen therapy.**
 - A. No smoking or open flames within 10 feet of oxygen source. Place “No Smoking” signs to warn visitors.
 - B. Keep oxygen away from open flames, heat, gas stoves, hot pipes, radiators, kerosene heater, and so forth. Check all electrical equipment used in the same room for faulty or frayed cords.
 - C. Equip the home with an all-purpose fire extinguisher and smoke alarm.
 - D. Keep oxygen at least 5 feet away from electric outlets and electrical equipment, and avoid use of electric blankets and heating pads close to oxygen.
 - E. Avoid the use of flammable products such as body lotion, face creams, and rubbing alcohol.
 - F. Avoid the use of aerosol sprays.
 - G. Keep oxygen in an upright position, and secure tank in holder.
 - H. Report to physician any signs of persistent headache, slurred speech, confusion, drowsiness, increased shortness of breath, vomiting, and so forth.
 - I. Keep car windows partly open while using oxygen.
 - J. Keep emergency numbers next to phone. Notify local fire department and utility companies of the use of oxygen.
 - K. If using a concentrator, have a back-up oxygen tank in case of power failure. Allow adequate air flow around oxygen concentrator—avoid placing directly against the wall.

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- V. **The client/caregiver can list general care measures to provide oxygen therapy.**
- A. Stress the need to follow the prescribed oxygen flow rate.
 - B. Encourage fluids up to 2500 ml per day unless contraindicated.
 - C. If using humidification with oxygen therapy, use distilled or sterile water. Do not allow the water to enter the oxygen flow tubing.
 - D. To check whether oxygen is flowing through tube, place the cannula in water and check for bubbling. Always shake off water before placing in nose.
 - E. Reorder oxygen 2 to 3 days before needing a new tank.
 - F. Use portable tanks when going out of home to increase mobility.
 - G. Never adjust oxygen rate without permission from physician.
 - H. Administer oxygen exactly as prescribed by a physician.
 - I. Keep follow-up appointments with physician.

RESOURCES

- American Lung Association

- Respiratory therapist

- Medical supply company

REFERENCES

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