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Gastroesophageal Reflux

Patient name: _____

Admission: _____

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- I. **The client/caregiver can define gastroesophageal reflux (GERD).**
 - A. The esophagus carries food from the mouth to the stomach.
 - B. A ring of muscle at the bottom of the esophagus acts like a valve between the esophagus and stomach.
 - C. When that ring or sphincter does not close properly, stomach contents may leak back into the esophagus.
 - D. Stomach contents contain acid, and when they touch the lining of the esophagus, they create a burning sensation called heartburn.

- II. **The client/caregiver can list symptoms of GERD and explain when to seek medical attention.**
 - A. Symptoms for adults with GERD are
 - Heartburn, which is the most common symptom (GERD can be present without this symptom)
 - Excessive clearing of the throat
 - Problems swallowing
 - Feeling that food is stuck in your throat
 - Burning in the mouth
 - Chest pain
 - B. Symptoms for children with GERD may be
 - Repeated vomiting
 - Coughing
 - Respiratory problems
 - Most babies will outgrow GERD by the age of 1 year
 - C. Reasons to consult with physician are
 - Heartburn or other symptoms more than twice a week
 - The use of antacids for more than 2 weeks

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- III. **The client/caregiver can list methods of treatment and measures to manage this condition.**
 - A. Medication ordered by physician
 1. Take medicine as ordered.
 2. Consult the physician if medication is not effective.
 - B. Lifestyle changes recommended by physician
 1. Do not consume alcohol.
 2. Do not smoke.
 3. Lose weight if necessary.
 4. Eat smaller, more frequent meals.
 5. Wear loose-fitting clothing.
 6. Avoid lying down for 3 hours after eating.
 7. Raise the head of bed 6 to 8 inches by placing blocks of wood under the bedposts.
 8. Use foam wedge to elevate head, but avoid pillows. Pillows create more pressure on stomach.
 - C. Nutritional recommendations are to avoid the following:
 - Chocolate
 - Drinks with caffeine or carbonation
 - Fatty and fried food
 - Garlic and onions
 - Mint flavorings
 - Spicy foods
 - Tomato-based foods such as chili and pizza

- IV. **The client/caregiver can list possible complications.**
 - A. Prolonged irritation can result in bleeding, ulceration, or scar formation of the esophagus.
 - B. Development of Barrett's esophagus that over time can lead to cancer.
 - C. GERD can aggravate condition such as asthma, chronic cough, and pulmonary fibrosis.
 - D. There may be a need for surgical repair.

(Continued)

RESOURCES

Dietician

American College of Gastroenterology
www.acg.gi.org

North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology,
Hepatology, and Nutrition
www.naspghan.org

Pediatric/Adolescent Gastroesophageal Reflux
Association, Inc.
www.reflux.org

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