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Congestive Heart Failure

Patient name: _____ Admission: _____

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- I. **The client/caregiver can define congestive heart failure.**
 - A. The heart is unable to pump sufficient blood to meet the body's metabolic needs.
 - B. Heart failure describes the accumulation of blood and fluids in organs and tissues as a result impaired heart function.
 - C. Heart failure is classified as acute or chronic and right sided or left sided.

- II. **The client/caregiver can briefly describe the anatomy and physiology of the heart.**
 - A. The heart consists of four chambers: the right and left ventricles and the right and left atria.
 - B. The upper chambers, the atria, receive the blood from various parts of the body and pump it into the ventricles.
 - C. The right ventricle pumps blood into the lungs, and the left ventricle pumps blood into all parts of the body.
 - D. The primary reason for heart failure or decreased cardiac output is damage to muscular wall of the heart.

- III. **The client/caregiver can list factors that may increase risk.**
 - A. Myocardial infarction
 - B. Coronary artery disease
 - C. Hypertension
 - D. Congenital heart defects
 - E. Obesity
 - F. Aging
 - G. Diabetes mellitus

- IV. **The client/caregiver can recognize the signs and symptoms.**
 - A. Left-sided failure produces hypoxemia and respiratory symptoms
 - 1. Fatigue with activity
 - 2. Effort at breathing when active (exertional dyspnea)

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- 3. Inability to breathe unless sitting upright (orthopnea)
- 4. Awakening at night by breathlessness (paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea)
- 5. Elevated blood pressure
- 6. Productive cough with pink, frothy sputum
- 7. Decreased urine output
- 8. In acute situation, pulmonary edema develops demonstrated by sudden hypoxic, restlessness, and confusion
- 9. Elevated blood pressure
- B. Right-sided failure
 - 1. Gradual unexplained weight gain from fluid retention
 - 2. Dependent pitting edema in feet and ankles
 - 3. Fluids retention in sacral area or abdomen (ascites)
 - 4. Loss of appetite and/or nausea
 - 5. Dyspnea as a result of enlarged abdomen

- V. **The client/caregiver can report measures to prevent congestive heart failure.**
 - A. Lifestyle changes include stress reduction and energy conservation.
 - B. Schedule rest periods to reduce fatigue and dyspnea.
 - C. Follow the diet or any fluid restrictions prescribed by physician.
 - D. Take medication exactly as prescribed.
 - E. Avoid tobacco and alcohol.
 - F. Weigh daily at the same time of day using the same scale. Notify physician if a more than 2-pound gain in 24 hours is identified.
 - G. Measure pulse rate and blood pressure daily. Report a heart rate that is less than 60 beats per minute or more than 120 beats per minute.
 - H. Elevate legs while sitting.
 - I. Avoid extreme heat, cold, or humidity.
 - J. Keep follow-up appointments with physician and have laboratory work obtained as ordered.

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VI. The client/caregiver can demonstrate understanding of nutritional issues related to congestive heart disease (refer to Nutrition and Cardiovascular Disease).

VII. The client/caregiver can list possible complications of congestive heart disease.

- A. Acute pulmonary edema
- B. Damage to organs such as liver, kidney, or brain
- C. Pneumonia
- D. Electrolyte imbalance related to diuretic therapy
- E. Need for oxygen therapy

RESOURCES

American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

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