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Hypothyroidism

Patient name: _____ Admission: _____

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- I. The client/caregiver has a basic understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the thyroid gland.**
- The thyroid gland is located in the lower neck and in front of the trachea.
 - It is divided into two lobes and is joined by a band of tissue called isthmus.
 - It concentrates iodine from food and uses it to synthesize two hormones.
 - These two hormones regulate the body's metabolic rate.
- II. The client/caregiver can define hypothyroidism.**
- Hypothyroidism is a disease resulting from a deficiency of thyroid hormones.
 - Hypothyroidism can affect infants, children, and adults.
 - Severe hypothyroidism is myxedema.
- III. The client/caregiver can state possible causes of hypothyroidism.**
- Congenital deficiency
 - Tumors
 - Inflammation of the thyroid
 - Pituitary disease
 - Surgical removal of thyroid
 - Iodine deficiency
 - Radioactive iodine treatment
- IV. The client/caregiver can recognize signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism.**
- Adults
 - Lethargy and fatigue
 - Forgetfulness
 - Weight gain
 - Dry, scaly skin
 - Puffy face and swollen around the eyes
 - Thinning and loss of hair
 - Hoarse voice
 - Constipation
 - Irregular menstrual periods or heavy flow

- Increased sensitivity to cold
 - Hypersensitivity to drugs such as barbiturates and sedatives and to anesthesia
- B. Congenital hypothyroidism**
- Excessive sleeping and lack of energy
 - Greater risk for delayed mental development
 - Constipation or bloated abdomen
 - Puffy face and swollen tongue
 - Hoarse cry
 - Low muscle tone
 - Cold extremities
 - Increased birth weight, but little to no growth later
- V. The client/caregiver can list measures for management symptoms of the disease.**
- Exercise regularly with planned rest periods.
 - Set realistic goals to increase activity as tolerated.
 - Eat a diet that is low in sodium, cholesterol, fat, and calories.
 - Avoid constipation with a diet high in fiber, adequate fluids, stool softeners, and so forth.
 - Take thyroid medication as instructed at the same time each day (thyroid medication and laboratory testing must be taken lifelong).
 - Contact physician before taking any over-the-counter medication (sedatives or hypnotics can cause respiratory depression).
 - Keep follow-up appointments with physician.
 - Provide a warm environment to promote comfort.
 - Avoid pressure or irritation to the skin to prevent skin breakdown.
 - Avoid excess stress, which increases metabolic rate.
 - Use a Medic Alert bracelet or card.

(Continued)

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- A. Signs/symptoms of hyperthyroidism are weight loss, restlessness, fast heart rate, fatigue, loose bowel movements, or heat intolerance (hyperthyroidism can be caused by hormone therapy).
- B. Signs/symptoms of hypothyroidism are a puffy, mask-like face and swelling around the eyes.
- C. Signs/symptoms of respiratory infections are fever, cough, and cold symptoms.
- D. Signs/symptoms of urinary infections are burning, frequency, and urgency.

VII. The client/caregiver is aware of signs and symptoms of possible complications.

- A. Enlarged heart and/or heart failure
- B. Organic psychosis
- C. Myxedema coma
- D. Intestinal obstruction
- E. Anemia

American Thyroid Association
www.thyroid.org/

National Institutes of Health/Thyroid Disease
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/thyroiddiseases

Community support group

Dietician or nutritionist

REFERENCES

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RESOURCES

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
www2.niddk.nih.gov/