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**SAUNDERS**

**COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW**



*for  
the*

# **NCLEX-RN®** **EXAMINATION**

**Linda Anne Silvestri**

- ▲ Reflects the latest NCLEX-RN® exam test plan
- ▲ Content review that you can use throughout nursing school

**COMPREHENSIVE  
REVIEW**

**ELSEVIER**



**SAUNDERS**

**COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW**

*for* **NCLEX-RN®**  
*the*

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SAUNDERS COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW FOR THE NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> EXAMINATION

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*To my parents—*

*To my mother, **Frances Mary,***

*and in loving memory of my father, **Arnold Lawrence,***

*who taught me to always love, care,*

*and be the best that I could be.*

**To All Future Registered Nurses,**

Congratulations to you!

You should be very proud and pleased with yourself on your most recent well-deserved accomplishment of completing your nursing program to become a registered nurse. I know that you have worked very hard to become successful and that you have proven to yourself that indeed you can achieve your goals.

In my opinion, you are about to enter the most wonderful and rewarding profession that exists. Your willingness, desire, and ability to assist those who need nursing care will bring great satisfaction to your life. In the profession of nursing, your learning will be a lifelong process. This aspect of the profession makes it stimulating and dynamic. Your learning process will continue to expand and grow as the profession continues to evolve. Your next very important endeavor will be the learning process involved to achieve success in your examination to become a registered nurse.

I am excited and pleased to be able to provide you with the *Saunders Pyramid to Success* products, which will help you prepare for your next important

professional goal, becoming a registered nurse. I want to thank all of my former nursing students whom I have assisted in their studies for the NCLEX-RN exam for their willingness to offer ideas regarding their needs in preparing for licensure. Student ideas have certainly added a special uniqueness to all of the products available in the *Saunders Pyramid to Success*.

*Saunders Pyramid to Success* products provide you with everything that you need to ready yourself for the NCLEX-RN exam. These products include material that is required for the NCLEX-RN exam for all nursing students regardless of educational background, specific strengths, areas in need of improvement, or clinical experience during the nursing program.

So let's get started and begin our journey through the *Saunders Pyramid to Success*, and welcome to the wonderful profession of nursing!

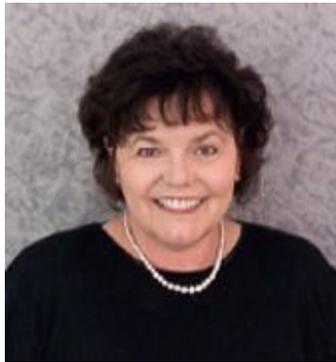
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Anne Silvestri".

Linda Anne Silvestri, PhD, RN



## About the Author



**Linda Anne Silvestri, PhD, RN**

*(Photo by Laurent W. Valliere.)*

As a child, I always dreamed of becoming either a nurse or a teacher. Initially I chose to become a nurse because I really wanted to help others, especially those who were ill. Then I realized that both of my dreams could come true; I could be both a nurse and a teacher. So I pursued my dreams.

I received my diploma in nursing at Cooley Dickinson Hospital School of Nursing in Northampton, Massachusetts. Afterward, I worked at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, where I cared for clients in acute medical-surgical units, the

intensive care unit, the emergency department, pediatric units, and other acute care units. Later I received an associate degree from Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, Massachusetts; my BSN from American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts; and my MSN from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts, with a dual major in Nursing Management and Patient Education. I received my PhD in Nursing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), and conducted research on self-efficacy and the predictors of NCLEX success. In 2012, I received the UNLV School of Nursing, Alumna of the Year Award. I am also a member of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, Phi Kappa Phi, the Western Institute of Nursing, the Eastern Nursing Research Society, the Golden Key International Honour Society, the National League for Nursing, and the American Nurses Association.

As a native of Springfield, Massachusetts, I began my teaching career as an instructor of medical-surgical nursing and leadership-management nursing in 1981 at Baystate Medical Center School of Nursing. In 1989, I relocated to Rhode Island and began teaching advanced medical-surgical nursing and psychiatric nursing to RN and LPN students at the Community College of Rhode Island. While teaching there, a group of students approached me for assistance in preparing for the NCLEX examination. I have always had a very special interest in test success for nursing students because of my own personal experiences with testing. Taking tests was never easy for me, and as a student I needed to find methods and strategies that would bring success. My own difficult experiences, desire, and dedication to assist nursing students to overcome the obstacles associated with testing inspired me to develop and write the many products

that would foster success with testing. My experiences as a student, nursing educator, and item writer for the NCLEX exams aided me as I developed a comprehensive review course to prepare nursing graduates for the NCLEX examination.

Later, in 1994, I began teaching medical-surgical nursing at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, and I remain there as an adjunct faculty member. I also prepare nursing students at Salve Regina University for the NCLEX-RN examination.

I established Professional Nursing Seminars, Inc. in 1991 and Nursing Reviews, Inc. in 2000. These companies are located in Charlestown, Rhode Island. In 2012, I established an additional company, Nursing Reviews, Inc. in Las Vegas, Nevada. Both companies are dedicated to conducting review courses for the NCLEX-RN and the NCLEX-PN examinations and helping nursing graduates achieve their goals of becoming registered nurses, licensed practical/vocational nurses, or both.

Today, I am the successful author of numerous review products. Also, I serve as an Elsevier consultant for HESI Live Reviews, the review courses for the NCLEX examinations throughout the country. I am so pleased that you have decided to join me on your journey to success in testing for nursing examinations and for the NCLEX-RN examination!



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# Preface

*“To laugh often and much, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded.”*

*—Ralph Waldo Emerson*

**Welcome to Saunders *Pyramid to Success!***

# An Essential Resource for Test Success

*Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination* is one in a series of products designed to assist you in achieving your goal of becoming a registered nurse. This text will provide you with a comprehensive review of all of the nursing content areas specifically related to the new 2013 test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination, which is implemented by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. This resource will help you achieve success on your nursing examinations during nursing school and on the NCLEX-RN examination.

# Organization

This book contains 20 units and 77 chapters. The chapters are designed to identify specific components of nursing content, and they contain practice questions, including a critical thinking question and both multiple choice and alternate item formats, that reflect the chapter content and the 2013 test plan for the NCLEX-RN exam. The final unit contains a 75-question Comprehensive Test.

The new test plan identifies a framework based on *Client Needs*. These Client Needs categories include Safe and Effective Care Environment, Health Promotion and Maintenance, Psychosocial Integrity, and Physiological Integrity. *Integrated Processes* are also identified as a component of the test plan. These include Caring, Communication and Documentation, Nursing Process, and Teaching and Learning. All the chapters address the components of the test plan framework.

# Special Features of the Book

## Pyramid Terms

Each unit begins with *Pyramid Terms* and their definitions. These *Pyramid Terms* are important to the discussion of the content in the chapters in the unit. Therefore they are in bold green type throughout the content section of each chapter.

## Pyramid to Success

The *Pyramid to Success*, a feature part of the unit introduction, provides you with an overview, guidance, and direction regarding the focus of review in the particular content area, as well as the content area's relative importance to the 2013 test plan for the NCLEX-RN exam. The *Pyramid to Success* reviews the Client Needs as they pertain to the content in that unit or chapter. These points identify the specific components to keep in mind as you review the chapter.

## Pyramid Points

*Pyramid Points* are the little icons that are placed next to specific content throughout the chapters. The *Pyramid Points* highlight content that is important for preparing for the NCLEX-RN examination and identify content that typically appears on the NCLEX-RN examination.

## Pyramid Alerts

*Pyramid Alerts* are the red text found throughout the chapters that alert you to important information about nursing concepts. These alerts identify content that typically appears

on the NCLEX-RN examination.

## **Priority Nursing Actions**

Numerous *Priority Nursing Actions* boxes have been placed throughout the chapters. These boxes present a clinical nursing situation and the priority actions to take in the event of its occurrence. A rationale is provided that explains the correct order of action, along with a reference for additional research.

## **Critical Thinking: What Should You Do? Questions**

Each chapter contains a *Critical Thinking: What Should You Do?* question. These questions provide a brief clinical scenario related to the content of the chapter and ask you what you should do about the client situation presented. A narrative answer is provided along with a reference source for researching further information.

# Practice Questions

While preparing for the NCLEX-RN examination, it is crucial for students to practice taking test questions. This book contains 1035 NCLEX-style multiple-choice and alternate item format questions.

## Multiple-Choice and Alternate Item Format Questions

Starting with [Unit II](#), each chapter is followed by a practice test. Each practice test contains several multiple-choice questions and an alternate item format question. The alternate item format questions at the end of the chapters may be presented as one of the following:

- Fill-in-the-blank question
- Multiple response question
- Figure/illustration question, also known as a hot spot question
- Graphic options question, in which each option contains a figure or illustration
- Chart/exhibit question

These questions provide you with practice in prioritizing, decision-making, and critical thinking skills.

## Answer Section

The answer sections include the correct answer, rationale, test-taking strategy, question categories, and reference. The structure for the answer section is unique and provides

the following information:

- **Rationale:** The rationale provides you with the significant information regarding both correct and incorrect options.
- **Test-Taking Strategy:** The test-taking strategy provides a logical path for selecting the correct option and helps you select an answer to a question on which you might have to guess. In each practice question, the specific strategy that will assist in answering the question correctly is highlighted in bold **blue** type. Specific suggestions for review are identified in the test-taking strategy and are highlighted in bold **magenta** type to provide you direction for locating the specific content in this book. The highlighting of the specific test-taking strategies and specific content areas in the practice questions will provide you with guidance on what topics to review for further remediation in *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX® Exam* and *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Exam*.
- **Question Categories:** Each question is tagged with categories based on the 2013 NCLEX-RN test plan. Additional content categories are provided with each question to assist you in identifying areas in need of review. The categories identified with each practice question include Level of Cognitive Ability, Client Needs, Integrated Process, and the specific nursing Content Area. New to this edition is a *Priority Concepts* code, which provides you with the specific concepts related to nursing practice. All categories are identified by their full names so that you do not need to memorize codes or abbreviations.

- **Reference:** A reference, including a page number, is provided so you can easily find the information that you need to review in your undergraduate nursing textbooks.

# Pharmacology and Medication Calculations Review

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Students consistently state that pharmacology is an area with which they need assistance. The 2013 NCLEX-RN test plan continues to incorporate pharmacology in the examination as it has in the past. Therefore pharmacology chapters have been included for your review and practice. This book includes 13 pharmacology chapters, a medication and intravenous calculation chapter, and a pediatric medication calculation chapter. Each of these chapters is followed by a practice test that uses the same question format described earlier. This book contains numerous pharmacology questions.

# How to Use This Book

*Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination* is especially designed to help you with your successful journey to the peak of the *Saunders Pyramid to Success*: becoming a registered nurse! As you begin your journey through this book, you will be introduced to all the important points regarding the 2013 NCLEX-RN examination, the process of testing, and unique and special tips regarding how to prepare yourself for this very important examination.

You should begin your process through the *Saunders Pyramid to Success* by reading all of **Unit I** in this book and becoming familiar with the central points regarding the NCLEX-RN examination. Read **Chapter 4**, written by a nursing graduate who recently passed the examination and note what he has to say about the testing experience. **Chapter 5** will provide you with the critical testing strategies that will guide you in selecting the correct option or assist you in selecting an answer to a question if you must guess. Keep these strategies in mind as you proceed through this book. Continue by studying the specific content areas addressed in **Units II** through **XIX**. Review the *Pyramid Terms* and *Pyramid to Success* notes, and identify the Client Needs specific to the test plan in each area. Read through the chapters and focus on the *Pyramid Points* and *Pyramid Alerts* that identify the areas most likely to be tested on the NCLEX-RN examination. Pay particular attention to the Priority Nursing Actions boxes because they provide information about the steps that you will take in clinical situations requiring prioritization.

As you read each chapter, identify your areas of strength and those in need of further review. Highlight these areas and test your abilities by answering the *Critical Thinking: What Should You Do?* question and taking all the practice tests provided at the end of the chapters. Be sure to review all the rationales and the test-taking strategies. The rationale provides you with information regarding both the correct and incorrect options. The test-taking strategy highlights the specific strategy in bold **blue** type and offers a logical path to selecting the correct option. The test-taking strategy also provides the content to review, highlighted in bold **magenta** type. Use the references to easily find any information you need to review.

After reviewing all the chapters in the book, turn to **Unit XX**, the Comprehensive Test. Take this examination and then review each question, answer, and rationale. Identify any areas requiring further review; then take the time to review those areas again in both the book.

# Climbing the *Pyramid to Success*

The purpose of this book is to provide a **comprehensive review** of the nursing content you will be tested on during the NCLEX-RN examination. However, *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination* is intended to do more than simply prepare you for the rigors of the NCLEX; this book is also meant to serve as a valuable study tool that you can refer to throughout your nursing.



After using this book for comprehensive content review, your next step on the *Pyramid to Success* is to get additional practice with a **Q&A review** product. *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination* offers more than 5800 unique practice questions. The questions are focused on the Client Needs and Integrated Processes of the NCLEX test plan, making it easy to access your study area of choice. For on-the-go Q&A review, you can pick up *Saunders Q&A Review Cards for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*, or, if you own an iPhone or iPod Touch, you can search for

“Saunders Q&A Review” in Apple’s App Store.

Your final step on the *Pyramid to Success* is to master the **online review**. *Saunders Online Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination* provides an interactive and individualized platform to get you ready for your final licensure exam. This online course provides 10 high-level content modules, supplemented with instructional videos, animations, audio, illustrations, testlets, and several subject matter exams. End of module practice tests are provided along with several *Crossing the Finish Line* practice tests. In addition, you can assess your progress with a pre-test and comprehensive exam in a computerized environment that prepares you for the actual NCLEX-RN exam.

At the base of the *Pyramid to Success* are my **test-taking strategies**, which provide a foundation for understanding and unpacking the complexities of NCLEX exam questions, including alternate item formats. *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX® Exam* takes a detailed look at all the test-taking strategies you will need to know in order to pass any nursing examination, including the NCLEX. Special tips are integrated for beginning nursing students, and there are more questions included so you can apply the testing strategies.

Good luck with your journey through the Saunders *Pyramid to Success*. I wish you continued success throughout your new career as a registered nurse!

*Linda Anne Silvestri*



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I want to acknowledge my parents, who opened my door of opportunity in education. I thank my mother, Frances Mary, for all of her love, support, and assistance as I continuously worked to achieve my professional goals. I thank my father, Arnold

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*Linda Anne Silvestri*



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# UNIT I



## NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Exam Preparation



## CHAPTER 1

# The NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination

# The Pyramid to Success

## Welcome to the Pyramid to Success

### *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*

*Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination* is specially designed to help you begin your successful journey to the peak of the pyramid, becoming a registered nurse. As you begin your journey, you will be introduced to all the important points regarding the NCLEX-RN examination and the process of testing, and to the unique and special tips regarding how to prepare yourself for this important examination. You will read what a nursing graduate who recently passed the NCLEX-RN examination has to say about the test. Important test-taking strategies are detailed. These details will guide you in selecting the correct option or assist you in selecting an answer to a question at which you must guess.

Each unit in this book begins with the Pyramid to Success. The Pyramid to Success addresses specific points related to the NCLEX-RN examination, including the Pyramid Terms, and the Client Needs as identified in the test plan framework for the examination. Pyramid Terms are key words that are defined and are set in **color** throughout each chapter to direct your attention to significant points for the examination. The Client Needs specific to the content of the unit are identified.

Throughout each chapter, you will find Pyramid Point bullets that identify areas most likely to be tested on the NCLEX-RN examination. Read each chapter, and identify your

strengths and areas that are in need of further review. Test your strengths and abilities by taking all the practice tests provided in this book and on the accompanying Evolve site. Be sure to read all the rationales and test-taking strategies. The rationale provides you with significant information regarding the correct and incorrect options. The test-taking strategy provides you with the logical path to selecting the correct option. The test-taking strategy also identifies the content area to review, if required. The reference source and page number are provided so that you can find the information easily that you need to review. Each question is coded on the basis of the Level of Cognitive Ability, the Client Needs category, the Integrated Process, and the nursing content area.

Following the completion of your comprehensive review in this book, continue on your journey through the Pyramid to Success with the companion book, *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*. This book provides you with practice questions in the multiple-choice and alternate item formats. The book is designed based on the NCLEX-RN examination test plan framework, with a specific focus on Client Needs and Integrated Processes. In addition, each practice question in this book includes a Priority Nursing Tip, which provides you with an important piece of information that will be helpful to answer questions. Then, you will be ready for *HESI/Saunders Online Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*. Additional products in Saunders Pyramid to Success include *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam* and *Saunders Q&A Review Cards for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Exam*. These products are described next.

***HESI/Saunders Online Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup>***

## ***Examination***

This product addresses all areas of the test plan identified by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN). The course contains a pretest that provides feedback regarding your strengths and weaknesses and generates an individualized study schedule in a calendar format. Content review is in an outline format and includes self-check practice questions and testlets (case studies), figures and illustrations, a glossary, and animations and videos. Numerous online exams are included. There are 2500 practice questions; the types of questions in this course include multiple-choice and alternate item formats.

## ***Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam***

This product focuses on the test-taking strategies that will help you pass your nursing examinations while in nursing school and will prepare you for the NCLEX-RN examination. The chapters describe various test-taking strategies and include sample questions that illustrate how to use the strategies. Also included in this book is information on cultural characteristics and practices, pharmacology strategies, medication and intravenous calculations, laboratory values, positioning guidelines, and therapeutic diets. This book has practice questions, and each question provides a tip for the beginning nursing student. The practice questions reflect the framework and the content identified in the NCLEX-RN test plan and includes multiple-choice and

alternate item format questions, including audio and video questions.

## *Saunders Q&A Review Cards for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Exam*

This product is organized by content areas and the test plan framework of the NCLEX-RN test plan. It provides you with 1200 unique practice test questions on portable and easy-to-use cards. The cards have the question on the front of the card, and the answer, rationale, and test-taking strategy are on the back of the card. This product includes multiple-choice questions and alternate item format questions, including fill-in-the-blank, multiple-response, ordered-response, figure, and chart/exhibit questions.

All the products in the Saunders Pyramid to Success can be obtained online by visiting <http://elsevierhealth.com> or by calling 800-545-2522.

Let's begin our journey through the Pyramid to Success.

# Examination Process

An important step in the Pyramid to Success is to become as familiar as possible with the examination process. Candidates facing the challenge of this examination can experience significant anxiety. Knowing what the examination is all about and knowing what you will encounter during the process of testing will assist in alleviating fear and anxiety. The information contained in this chapter addresses the procedures related to the development of the NCLEX-RN examination test plan, the components of the test plan, and the answers to the questions most commonly asked by nursing students and graduates preparing to take the NCLEX. The information contained in this chapter related to the test plan was obtained from the NCSBN Web site (<http://www.ncsbn.org>) and from the NCSBN 2013 test plan for the NCLEX-RN. You can obtain additional information regarding the test and its development by accessing the NCSBN Web site or by writing to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 111 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2900, Chicago, IL 60601. You are encouraged to access the NCSBN Web site because this site provides you with valuable information about the NCLEX and other resources available to an NCLEX candidate.

# Computer Adaptive Testing

The acronym *CAT* stands for computer adaptive test, which means that the examination is created as the test-taker answers each question. All the test questions are categorized on the basis of the test plan structure and the level of difficulty of the question. As you answer a question, the computer determines your competency based on the answer you selected. If you selected a correct answer, the computer scans the question bank and selects a more difficult question. If you selected an incorrect answer, the computer scans the question bank and selects an easier question. This process continues until the test plan requirements are met and a reliable pass-or-fail decision is made.

When a test question is presented on the computer screen, you must answer it or the test will not move on. This means that you will not be able to skip questions, go back and review questions, or go back and change answers. In a CAT examination, once an answer is recorded, all subsequent questions administered depend, to an extent, on the answer selected for that question. Skipping and returning to earlier questions are not compatible with the logical methodology of a CAT. The inability to skip questions or go back to change previous answers will not be a disadvantage to you; you will not fall into that “trap” of changing a correct answer to an incorrect one with the CAT system.

If you are faced with a question that contains unfamiliar content, you may need to guess at the answer. There is no penalty for guessing on this examination. With most of the questions, the answer will be right there in front of you. If you need to guess, use your nursing knowledge and clinical experiences to their fullest extent and all the test-

taking strategies that you have practiced in this review program.

You do not need any computer experience to take this examination. A keyboard tutorial is provided and administered to all test-takers at the start of the examination. The tutorial will instruct you on the use of the on-screen optional calculator, the use of the mouse, and how to record an answer. The tutorial provides instructions on how to respond to all question types on this examination. This tutorial is provided on the NCSBN Web site, and you are encouraged to view the tutorial when you are preparing for the NCLEX examination. In addition, at the testing site, a test administrator is present to assist in explaining the use of the computer to ensure your full understanding of how to proceed.

# Development of the Test Plan

The test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination is developed by the NCSBN. The examination is a national examination; the NCSBN considers the legal scope of nursing practice as governed by state laws and regulations, including the Nurse Practice Act, and uses these laws to define the areas on the examination that will assess the competence of the test-taker for licensure.

The NCSBN also conducts an important study every 3 years, known as a practice analysis study, to determine the framework for the test plan for the examination. The participants in this study include newly licensed registered nurses from all types of basic nursing education programs. From a list of nursing care activities provided, the participants are asked about the frequency and importance of performing them in relation to client safety and the setting in which they are performed. A panel of content experts at the NCSBN analyzes the results of the study and makes decisions regarding the test plan framework. The results of this recently conducted study provided the structure for the test plan implemented in April 2013.

# Item Writers

The NCSBN selects question (item) writers after an extensive application process. The writers are registered nurses who hold a master's degree or a higher degree and many of the writers are nursing educators. Question writers voluntarily submit an application to become a writer and must meet specific criteria established by the council to be accepted as participants in the process.

# Test Plan

The content of the NCLEX-RN examination reflects the activities identified in the practice analysis study conducted by the NCSBN. The questions are written to address Level of Cognitive Ability, Client Needs, and Integrated Processes as identified in the test plan developed by the NCSBN.

## Level of Cognitive Ability

The practice of nursing requires critical thinking in decision making. Most questions on the NCLEX examination are written at the application level or at higher Levels of Cognitive Ability, such as the analysis level. [Box 1-1](#) presents an example of a question that requires you to apply data.

### **BOX 1-1** Level of Cognitive Ability: Applying

The nurse notes blanching, coolness, and edema at the peripheral intravenous (IV) site. On the basis of these findings, the nurse should implement which action?

1. Discontinue the IV
2. Apply a warm compress
3. Check for a blood return
4. Measure the area of infiltration

**Answer: 1**

This question requires that you focus on the data in the question and determine that

the client is experiencing an infiltration. Next, you need to consider the harmful effects of infiltration and determine the action to implement. Because infiltration can be damaging to the surrounding tissue, the appropriate action is to discontinue the IV to prevent any further damage.

## Client Needs

In the test plan implemented in April 2013, the NCSBN has identified a test plan framework based on Client Needs. The NCSBN identifies four major categories of Client Needs. Some of these categories are divided further into subcategories. The Client Needs categories include Safe and Effective Care Environment, Health Promotion and Maintenance, Psychosocial Integrity, and Physiological Integrity (Table 1-1).

**TABLE 1-1 Client Needs Categories and Percentage of Questions on the NCLEX-RN® Examination**

Client Needs Category	Percentage of Questions
<b>Safe and Effective Care Environment</b>	
Management of Care	17-23
Safety and Infection Control	9-15
<b>Health Promotion and Maintenance</b>	6-12
<b>Psychosocial Integrity</b>	6-12
<b>Physiological Integrity</b>	
Basic Care and Comfort	6-12
Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies	12-18
Reduction of Risk Potential	9-15
Physiological Adaptation	11 -17

## *Safe and Effective Care Environment*

The Safe and Effective Care Environment category includes two subcategories: Management of Care, and Safety and Infection Control. According to the NCSBN, Management of Care (17% to 23% of questions) addresses content that tests the nurse's knowledge, skills, and ability required to ensure a safe care delivery setting to protect clients, families, significant others, visitors, and health care personnel. The NCSBN indicates that Safety and Infection Control (9% to 15% of questions) addresses content that tests the nurse's knowledge, skills, and ability required to protect clients, families, significant others, visitors, and health care personnel from health and environmental hazards. [Box 1-2](#) presents examples of questions that address these two subcategories.

### **BOX 1-2** Safe and Effective Care Environment

#### **Management of Care**

The nurse has received the client assignment for the day. Which client should the nurse assess **first**?

1. The client who has a nasogastric tube attached to intermittent suction
2. The client who needs to receive subcutaneous insulin before breakfast
3. The client who is 2 days postoperative and is complaining of incisional pain
4. The client who has a blood glucose level of 50 mg/dL and complaints of blurred vision

**Answer: 4**

This question addresses the subcategory Management of Care in the Client Needs category Safe and Effective Care Environment. It requires you to establish priorities by comparing the needs of each client and deciding which need is urgent. The client described in the correct option has a low blood glucose level and symptoms reflective of hypoglycemia. This client should be assessed first so that treatment can be implemented. Although the clients in options 1, 2, and 3 have needs that require assessment, their assessments can wait until the client in the correct option is stabilized.

### **Safety and Infection Control**

The nurse prepares to care for a client on contact precautions who has a hospital-acquired infection caused by methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). The client has an abdominal wound that requires irrigation and has a tracheostomy attached to a mechanical ventilator, which requires frequent suctioning. The nurse should assemble which necessary protective items before entering the client's room?

1. Gloves and a gown
2. Gloves, mask, and goggles
3. Gloves, mask, gown, and goggles
4. Gloves, gown, and shoe protectors

**Answer: 3**

This question addresses the subcategory Safety and Infection Control in the Client Needs category Safe and Effective Care Environment. It addresses content related to

protecting oneself from contracting an infection and requires that you consider the methods of possible transmission of infection, based on the client's condition. Because splashes of infective material can occur during the wound irrigation or suctioning of the tracheostomy, option 3 is correct.

## *Health Promotion and Maintenance*

The Health Promotion and Maintenance category (6% to 12% of questions) addresses the principles related to growth and development. According to the NCSBN, this Client Needs category also addresses content that tests the nurse's knowledge, skills, and ability required to assist the client, family members, and significant others to prevent health problems; to recognize alterations in health; and to develop health practices that promote and support wellness. See [Box 1-3](#) for an example of a question in this Client Needs category.

### **BOX 1-3** Health Promotion and Maintenance

The nurse is choosing age-appropriate toys for a toddler. Which toy is the **best** choice for this age?

1. Puzzle
2. Toy soldiers
3. Large stacking blocks
4. A card game with large pictures

*Answer: 3*

This question addresses the Client Needs category Health Promotion and Maintenance and specifically relates to the principles of growth and development of a toddler. Toddlers like to master activities independently, such as stacking blocks. Because toddlers do not have the developmental ability to determine what could be harmful, toys that are safe need to be provided. A puzzle and toy soldiers provide objects that can be placed in the mouth and may be harmful for a toddler. A card game with large pictures may require cooperative play, which is more appropriate for a school-age child.

## *Psychosocial Integrity*

The Psychosocial Integrity category (6% to 12% of questions) addresses content that tests the nurse's knowledge, skills, and ability required to promote and support the ability of the client, client's family, and client's significant other to cope, adapt, and problem solve during stressful events. The NCSBN also indicates that this Client Needs category addresses the emotional, mental, and social well-being of the client, family, or significant other, and the knowledge, skills, and ability required to care for the client with an acute or chronic mental illness. See [Box 1-4](#) for an example of a question in this Client Needs category.

### **BOX 1-4** Psychosocial Integrity

A client with coronary artery disease has selected guided imagery to help cope with psychological stress. Which client statement indicates an understanding of this stress

reduction measure?

1. “This will help only if I play music at the same time.”
2. “This will work for me only if I am alone in a quiet area.”
3. “I need to do this only when I lie down in case I fall asleep.”
4. “The best thing about this is that I can use it anywhere, anytime.”

***Answer: 4***

This question addresses the Client Needs category Psychosocial Integrity and the content addresses coping mechanisms. Guided imagery involves the client’s creation of an image in the mind, concentrating on the image, and gradually becoming less aware of the offending stimulus. It can be done anytime and anywhere; some clients may use other relaxation techniques or play music with it.

## ***Physiological Integrity***

The Physiological Integrity category includes four subcategories: Basic Care and Comfort, Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies, Reduction of Risk Potential, and Physiological Adaptation. The NCSBN describes these subcategories as follows. Basic Care and Comfort (6% to 12% of questions) addresses content that tests the nurse’s knowledge, skills, and ability required to provide comfort and assistance to the client in the performance of activities of daily living. Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies (12% to 18% of questions) addresses content that tests the nurse’s knowledge, skills, and ability required to administer medications and parenteral therapies such as

intravenous therapies and parenteral nutrition, and the administration of blood and blood products. Reduction of Risk Potential (9% to 15% of questions) addresses content that tests the nurse's knowledge, skills, and ability required to prevent complications or health problems related to the client's condition or any prescribed treatments or procedures. Physiological Adaptation (11% to 17% of questions) addresses content that tests the nurse's knowledge, skills, and ability required to provide care to clients with acute, chronic, or life-threatening conditions. See [Box 1-5](#) for examples of questions in this Client Needs category.

## **BOX 1-5**      Physiological Integrity

### **Basic Care and Comfort**

A client with Parkinson's disease develops akinesia while ambulating, increasing the risk for falls. Which suggestion should the nurse provide to the client to alleviate this problem?

1. Use a wheelchair to move around.
2. Stand erect and use a cane to ambulate.
3. Keep the feet close together while ambulating and use a walker.
4. Consciously think about walking over imaginary lines on the floor.

***Answer: 4***

This question addresses the subcategory Basic Care and Comfort in the Client Needs category Physiological Integrity, and addresses client mobility and promoting

assistance in an activity of daily living to maintain safety. Clients with Parkinson's disease can develop bradykinesia (slow movement) or akinesia (freezing or no movement). Having these clients imagine lines on the floor to walk over can keep them moving forward while remaining safe.

### **Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies**

The nurse monitors a client receiving digoxin (Lanoxin) for which **early** manifestation of digoxin toxicity?

1. Anorexia
2. Facial pain
3. Photophobia
4. Yellow color perception

#### ***Answer: 1***

This question addresses the subcategory Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies in the Client Needs category Physiological Integrity. Digoxin is a cardiac glycoside that is used to manage and treat heart failure and to control ventricular rates in clients with atrial fibrillation. The most common early manifestations of toxicity include gastrointestinal disturbances such as anorexia, nausea, and vomiting. Neurological abnormalities can also occur early and include fatigue, headache, depression, weakness, drowsiness, confusion, and nightmares. Facial pain, personality changes, and ocular disturbances (photophobia, diplopia, light flashes, halos around bright objects, yellow or green color perception) are also signs of toxicity, but are not early

signs.

### Reduction of Risk Potential

A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) study is prescribed for a client with a suspected brain tumor. The nurse should implement which action to prepare the client for this test?

1. Shave the groin for insertion of a femoral catheter.
2. Remove all metal-containing objects from the client.
3. Keep the client NPO (*nil per os*; nothing by mouth) for 6 hours before the test.
4. Instruct the client in inhalation techniques for the administration of the radioisotope.

### Answer: 2

This question addresses the subcategory Reduction of Risk Potential in the Client Needs category Physiological Integrity, and the nurse's responsibilities in preparing the client for the diagnostic test. In an MRI study, radiofrequency pulses in a magnetic field are converted into pictures. All metal objects, such as rings, bracelets, hairpins, and watches, should be removed. In addition, a history should be taken to ascertain whether the client has any internal metallic devices, such as orthopedic hardware, pacemakers, or shrapnel. For an abdominal MRI study, the client may need to be NPO. NPO status is not necessary for an MRI study of the head. The groin may be shaved for an angiogram, and inhalation of the radioisotope may be prescribed with a positron emission tomography (PET) scan or ventilation/perfusion

lung scan.

### Physiological Adaptation

A client with renal insufficiency has a magnesium level of 3.6 mg/dL. On the basis of this laboratory result, the nurse interprets which sign as significant?

1. Hyperpnea
2. Drowsiness
3. Hypertension
4. Physical hyperactivity

**Answer: 2**

This question addresses the subcategory Physiological Adaptation in the Client Needs category Physiological Integrity. It addresses an alteration in body systems. The normal magnesium level is 1.6 to 2.6 mg/dL. A magnesium level of 3.6 mg/dL indicates hypermagnesemia. Neurological manifestations begin to occur when magnesium levels are elevated and are noted as symptoms of neurological depression, such as drowsiness, sedation, lethargy, respiratory depression, muscle weakness, and areflexia. Bradycardia and hypotension also occur.

## Integrated Processes

The NCSBN identifies four processes in the test plan that are fundamental to the practice of nursing. These processes are incorporated throughout the major categories of Client Needs. The Integrated Process subcategories include Caring, Communication and

Documentation, Nursing Process (Assessment, Analysis, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation), and Teaching and Learning. See [Box 1-6](#) for an example of a question that incorporates the Integrated Process of Caring.

### **BOX 1-6** Integrated Processes

A client is scheduled for angioplasty. The client says to the nurse, “I’m so afraid that it will hurt and will make me worse off than I am.” Which response by the nurse is therapeutic?

1. “Can you tell me what you understand about the procedure?”
2. “Your fears are a sign that you really should have this procedure.”
3. “Those are very normal fears, but please be assured that everything will be okay.”
4. “Try not to worry. This is a well-known and easy procedure for the health care provider.”

***Answer: 1***

This question addresses the subcategory Caring in the category Integrated Processes. The correct option is a therapeutic communication technique that explores the client’s feelings, determines the level of client understanding about the procedure, and displays caring. Option 2 demeans the client and does not encourage further sharing by the client. Option 3 does not address the client’s fears, provides false reassurance, and puts the client’s feelings on hold. Option 4 diminishes the client’s

feelings by directing attention away from the client and to the health care provider's importance.

# Types of Questions on the Examination

The types of questions that may be administered on the examination include multiple-choice; fill-in-the-blank; multiple-response; ordered-response (also known as drag and drop); questions that contain a figure, chart/exhibit, or graphic option item; and audio or video item formats. Some questions may require you to use the mouse and cursor on the computer. For example, you may be presented with a picture that displays the arterial vessels of an adult client. In this picture, you may be asked to “point and click” (using the mouse) on the area (hot spot) where the dorsalis pedis pulse could be felt. In all types of questions, the answer is scored as either right or wrong. Credit is not given for a partially correct answer. In addition, all question types may include pictures, graphics, tables, charts, sound, or video. The NCSBN provides specific directions for you to follow with all question types to guide you in your process of testing. Be sure to read these directions as they appear on the computer screen. Examples of some of these types of questions are noted in this chapter.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

Most of the questions that you will be asked to answer will be in the multiple-choice format. These questions provide you with data about a client situation and four answers, or options.

## Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

Fill-in-the-blank questions may ask you to perform a medication calculation, determine

an intravenous flow rate, or calculate an intake or output record on a client. You will need to type only a number (your answer) in the answer box. If the question requires rounding the answer, this needs to be performed at the end of the calculation. The rules for rounding an answer are provided in the tutorial provided by the NCSBN, and are also provided in the specific question. In addition, you must type in a decimal point if necessary. See [Box 1-7](#) for an example.

### **BOX 1-7** Fill-in-the-Blank Question

A prescription reads: acetaminophen (Tylenol Extra Strength) liquid, 650 mg orally every 4 hours PRN for pain. The medication label reads: 500 mg/15 mL. The nurse prepares how many milliliters to administer one dose? **Fill in the blank.**

**Answer:** *19.5 mL*

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Desired}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Volume} = \text{mL}$$
$$\frac{650 \text{ mg}}{500 \text{ mg}} \times 15 \text{ mL} = 19.5 \text{ mL}$$

In this question, you need to use the formula for calculating a medication dose. When the dose is determined, you will need to type your numeric answer in the answer box. Always follow the specific directions noted on the computer screen. Also, remember that there will be an on-screen calculator on the computer for your use.

## **Multiple-Response Questions**

For a multiple-response question, you will be asked to select or check all the options,

such as nursing interventions, that relate to the information in the question. In these question types, there may be two or more correct answers. No partial credit is given for correct selections. You need to do exactly as the question asks, which will be to select all the options that apply. See [Box 1-8](#) for an example.

### **BOX 1-8** Multiple-Response Question

The emergency department nurse is caring for a child suspected of acute epiglottitis. Which interventions apply in the care of the child? **Select all that apply.**

- 1. Obtain a throat culture.
- 2. Ensure a patent airway.
- 3. Prepare the child for a chest x-ray.
- 4. Maintain the child in a supine position.
- 5. Obtain a pediatric-size tracheostomy tray.
- 6. Place the child on an oxygen saturation monitor.

In a multiple-response question, you will be asked to select or check all the options, such as interventions, that relate to the information in the question. To answer this question, recall that acute epiglottitis is a serious obstructive inflammatory process that requires immediate intervention and airway patency is a priority. Examination of the throat with a tongue depressor or attempting to obtain a throat culture is contraindicated because the examination can precipitate further obstruction. A lateral neck and chest x-ray is obtained to determine the degree of obstruction, if present. To

reduce respiratory distress, the child should sit upright. The child is placed on an oxygen saturation monitor to monitor oxygenation status. Tracheostomy and intubation may be necessary if respiratory distress is severe. Remember to follow the specific directions given on the computer screen.

## Ordered-Response Questions

In this type of question, you will be asked to use the computer mouse to drag and drop your nursing actions in order of priority. Information will be presented in a question, and, based on the data, you need to determine what you will do first, second, third, and so forth. The unordered options will be located in boxes on the left side of the screen, and you need to move all options in order of priority to ordered-response boxes on the right side of the screen. Specific directions for moving the options are provided with the question. See [Box 1-9](#) for an example.

### **BOX 1-9**      Ordered-Response Question

The nurse is preparing to suction a client who has a tracheostomy tube and gathers the supplies needed for the procedure. Arrange in order of priority the actions that the nurse should take to perform this procedure. **All options must be used.**

#### **Unordered Options**

Hyperoxygenate the client.

Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position.

Turn on the suction device and set the

#### **Ordered Responses**

Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position.

Turn on the suction device and set the regulator at 80 mm Hg.

Apply gloves and attach the suction

Apply gloves and attach the suction tubing to the suction catheter.	Hyperoxygenate the client.
Apply intermittent suction and slowly withdraw the catheter while rotating it back and forth.	Insert the catheter into the tracheostomy until resistance is met and then pull back 1 cm.
Insert the catheter into the tracheostomy until resistance is met and then pull back 1 cm.	Apply intermittent suction and slowly withdraw the catheter while rotating it back and forth.

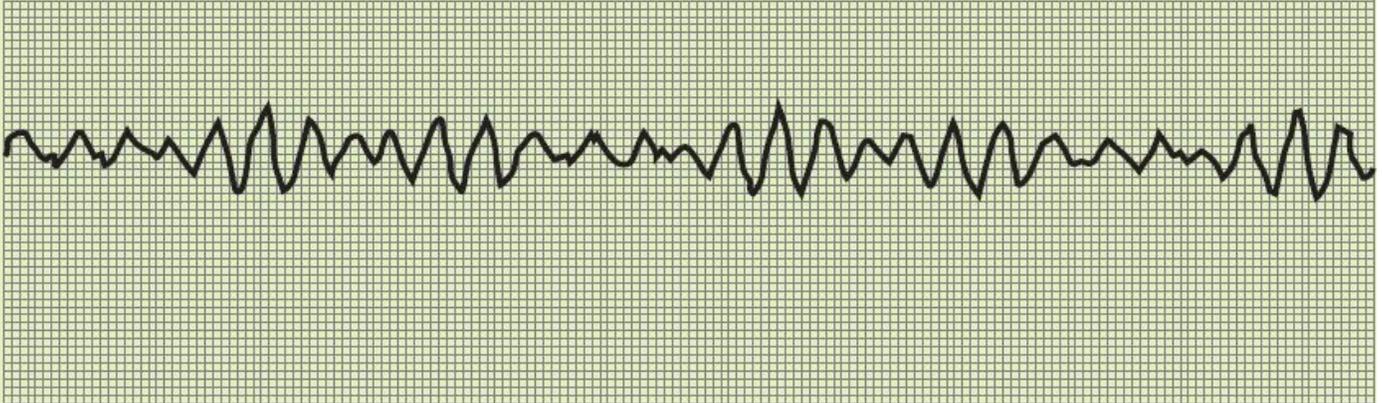
This question requires you to arrange in order of priority the nursing actions that should be taken to suction a client who has a tracheostomy tube. The nurse positions the client first, and then turns the suction device on and sets the regulator. The nurse then dons gloves and attaches the suction tubing to the suction catheter. The nurse hyperoxygenates the client before and after suctioning. The nurse then inserts the catheter into the tracheostomy until resistance is met and pulls back 1 cm, applies intermittent suction, and slowly withdraws the catheter while rotating it back and forth. Remember that the client and equipment are prepared before performing the procedure. Also, remember that on the NCLEX examination, you will use the computer mouse to place the unordered options in an ordered response.

## Figure Questions

A question with a picture or graphic will ask you to answer the question based on the picture or graphic. The question could contain a chart, a table, or a figure or illustration. You also may be asked to use the computer mouse to point and click on a specific area in the visual. A figure or illustration may appear in any type of question, including a multiple-choice question. See [Box 1-10](#) for an example.

**BOX 1-10****Figure Question**

A client who experienced a myocardial infarction is being monitored via cardiac telemetry. The nurse notes the sudden onset of this cardiac rhythm on the monitor (**refer to figure**) and **immediately** takes which action?



Rhythm strip. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

1. Takes the client's blood pressure
2. Initiates cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
3. Places a nitroglycerin tablet under the client's tongue
4. Continues to monitor the client and then contacts the health care provider (HCP)

**Answer: 2**

This question requires you to identify the cardiac rhythm, and then determine the priority nursing action. This cardiac rhythm identifies a coarse ventricular fibrillation (VF). The goals of treatment are to terminate VF promptly and to convert

it to an organized rhythm. The HCP or an Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)–qualified nurse must immediately defibrillate the client. If a defibrillator is not readily available, CPR is initiated until the defibrillator arrives. Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect actions and delay life-saving treatment.

## Chart/Exhibit Questions

In this type of question, you will be presented with a problem and a chart or exhibit. You will be provided with three tabs or buttons that you need to click to obtain the information needed to answer the question. A prompt or message will appear that will indicate the need to click on a tab or button. See [Box 1-11](#) for an example.

### BOX 1-11 Chart/Exhibit Question

CLIENT'S CHART		
History and Physical	Medications	Diagnostic Results
<i>Item 1:</i> Has renal calculi <i>Item 2:</i> Had thrombophlebitis 1 year ago	<i>Item 3:</i> Multivitamin orally daily	<i>Item 4:</i> Electrocardiogram normal

The nurse reviews the history and physical examination documented in the medical record of a client requesting a prescription for oral contraceptives. The nurse determines that oral contraceptives are contraindicated because of which documented item? **Refer to chart.**

**Answer: 2**

This chart/exhibit question provides you with data from the client's medical record and asks you to identify the item that is a contraindication to the use of oral contraceptives. Oral contraceptives are contraindicated in women with a history of any of the following: thrombophlebitis and thromboembolic disorders, cardiovascular or cerebrovascular diseases (including stroke), any estrogen-dependent cancer or breast cancer, benign or malignant liver tumors, impaired liver function, hypertension, and diabetes mellitus with vascular involvement. Adverse effects of oral contraceptives include increased risk of superficial and deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, thrombotic stroke (or other types of strokes), myocardial infarction, and accelerations of preexisting breast tumors.

## Graphic Option Questions

In this type of question, the option selections will be pictures rather than text. Each option will be preceded by a circle, and you will need to use the computer mouse to click in the circle that represents your answer choice. See [Box 1-12](#) for an example.

### **BOX 1-12** Graphic Options Question

The nurse should place the client in which position to administer a soapsuds enema?

**(Refer to the figures in 1-4.)**

1.





(From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

2.



(From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

3.



(From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

4.



(From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

**Answer: 2**

This question requires you to select the picture that represents your answer choice.

To administer an enema, the nurse assists the client into the left side-lying (Sims) position with the right knee flexed. This position allows the enema solution to flow downward by gravity along the natural curve of the sigmoid colon and rectum, improving the retention of solution. Option 1 is a prone position. Option 3 is a dorsal recumbent position. Option 4 is a supine position.

## **Audio Questions**

Audio questions will require listening to a sound to answer the question. These questions will prompt you to use the headset provided and to click on the sound icon. You will be able to click on the volume button to adjust the volume to your comfort level, and you will be able to listen to the sound as many times as necessary. Content examples include, but are not limited to, various lung sounds, heart sounds, or bowel sounds.

## **Video Questions**

Video questions will require viewing of an animation or video clip to answer the question. These questions will prompt you to click on the video icon. There may be sound associated with the animation and video, in which case you will be prompted to use the headset. Content examples include, but are not limited to, assessment techniques, nursing procedures, or communication skills.

# Registering to Take the Examination

It is important to obtain an NCLEX examination candidate bulletin from the NCSBN Web site at [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org) because this bulletin provides all the information that you need to register for and schedule your examination. It also provides you with Web site and telephone information for NCLEX examination contacts. The initial step in the registration process is to submit an application to the state board of nursing in the state in which you intend to obtain licensure. You need to obtain information from the board of nursing regarding the specific registration process because the process may vary from state to state. When you receive confirmation from the board of nursing that you have met all of the state requirements, you can register to take the NCLEX examination with Pearson VUE. You may register for the examination through the Internet, by U.S. mail, or by telephone. The NCLEX candidate Web site is <http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex>.

Following the registration instructions and completing the registration forms precisely and accurately are important. Registration forms not properly completed or not accompanied by the proper fees in the required method of payment will be returned to you and will delay testing. You must pay a fee for taking the examination; you also may have to pay additional fees to the board of nursing in the state in which you are applying. You will then be made eligible by the licensure board and will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) form. If you do not receive an ATT form within 2 weeks of registration, you should contact the candidate services at 1-866-496-2539 (U.S. candidates).



# Authorization to Test Form and Scheduling an Appointment

You cannot make an appointment until you receive an ATT form. Note the validity dates on the ATT form, and schedule a testing date and time before the expiration date on the ATT form. The examination will take place at a Pearson Professional Center; U.S. candidates can make an appointment through the Internet (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex>) or by telephone (1-866-496-2539). You can schedule an appointment at any Pearson Professional Center. You do not have to take the examination in the same state in which you are seeking licensure. A confirmation of your appointment with the appointment date and time and the directions to the testing center will be sent to you.

The ATT form contains important information, including your test authorization number, candidate identification number, and validity date. You need to take your ATT form to the test center on the day of your examination. You will not be admitted to the examination if you do not have it.

# Changing Your Appointment

If for any reason you need to change your appointment to test, you can make the change on the candidate Web site (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex>) or by calling candidate services. The change needs to be made 1 full business day (24 hours) before your scheduled appointment. If you fail to arrive for the examination or fail to cancel your appointment to test without providing appropriate notice, you will forfeit your examination fee and your ATT form will be invalidated. This information will be reported to the board of nursing in the state in which you have applied for licensure, and you will be required to register and pay the testing fees again.

# Day of the Examination

It is important that you arrive at the testing center at least 30 minutes before the test is scheduled. If you arrive late for the scheduled testing appointment, you may be required to forfeit your examination appointment. If it is necessary to forfeit your appointment, you will need to reregister for the examination and pay an additional fee. The board of nursing will be notified that you did not take the test. A few days before your scheduled date of testing, take the time to drive to the testing center to determine its exact location, the length of time required to arrive to that destination, and any potential obstacles that might delay you, such as road construction, traffic, or parking sites.

You must have the ATT and proper identification (ID) such as a U.S. driver's license, passport, U.S. state ID, or U.S. military ID to be admitted to take the examination. All acceptable identification must be valid and not expired and contain a photograph and signature (in English). In addition, the first and last names on the ID must match the ATT form. According to the NCSBN guidelines, any name discrepancies require legal documentation, such as a marriage license, divorce decree, or court action legal name change.

# Testing Accommodations

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If you require testing accommodations, you should contact the board of nursing before submitting a registration form. The board of nursing will provide the procedures for the request. The board of nursing must authorize special testing accommodations. Following board of nursing approval, the NCSBN reviews the requested accommodations and must approve the request. If the request is approved, the candidate will be notified and provided the procedure for registering for and scheduling the examination.

# Testing Center

The test center is designed to ensure complete security of the testing process. Strict candidate identification requirements have been established. You must bring the ATT form and required forms of identification. You will be asked to read the rules related to testing. A digital fingerprint and palm vein print will be taken. A digital signature and photograph will also be taken at the test center. These identity confirmations will accompany the NCLEX exam results. In addition, if you leave the testing room for any reason, you may be required to perform these identity confirmation procedures again to be readmitted to the room.

Personal belongings are not allowed in the testing room; all electronic devices must be placed in a sealable bag provided by the test administrator and kept in a locker. Any evidence of tampering with the bag could result in an incident and a result cancellation. A locker and locker key will be provided for you; however, storage space is limited, so you must plan accordingly. In addition, the testing center will not assume responsibility for your personal belongings. The testing waiting areas are generally small; friends or family members who accompany you are not permitted to wait in the testing center while you are taking the examination.

Once you have completed the admission process, the test administrator will escort you to the assigned computer. You will be seated at an individual work space area that includes computer equipment, appropriate lighting, and erasable note board and a marker. No items, including unauthorized scratch paper, are allowed into the testing

room. Eating, drinking, or the use of tobacco is not allowed in the testing room. You will be observed at all times by the test administrator while taking the examination. In addition, video and audio recordings of all test sessions are made. Pearson Professional Centers has no control over the sounds made by typing on the computer by others. If these sounds are distracting, raise your hand to summon the test administrator. Earplugs are available on request.

You must follow the directions given by the test center staff and must remain seated during the test except when authorized to leave. If you think that you have a problem with the computer, need a clean note board, need to take a break, or need the test administrator for any reason, you must raise your hand. You are also encouraged to access the candidate Web site (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex>) to obtain additional information about the physical environment of the test center.

# Testing Time

The maximum testing time is 6 hours; this period includes the tutorial, the sample items, all breaks, and the examination. All breaks are optional. The first optional break will be offered after 2 hours of testing. The second optional break is offered after 3.5 hours of testing. Remember that all breaks count against testing time. If you take a break, you must leave the testing room and, when you return, you may be required to perform identity confirmation procedures to be readmitted.

# Length of the Examination

The minimum number of questions that you will need to answer is 75. Of these 75 questions, 60 will be operational (scored) questions and 15 will be pretest (unscored) questions. The maximum number of questions in the test is 265. Fifteen of the total number of questions that you need to answer will be pretest (unscored) questions.

The pretest questions are questions that may be presented as scored questions on future examinations. These pretest questions are not identified as such. In other words, you do not know which questions are the pretest (unscored) questions.

# Pass-or-Fail Decisions

All the examination questions are categorized by test plan area and level of difficulty. This is an important point to keep in mind when you consider how the computer makes a pass-or-fail decision because a pass-or-fail decision is not based on a percentage of correctly answered questions.

The NCSBN indicates that a pass or fail decision is governed by three different scenarios. The first scenario is the 95% Confidence Interval Rule, in which the computer stops administering test questions when it is 95% certain that the test-taker's ability is clearly above the passing standard or clearly below the passing standard. The second scenario is known as the Maximum-Length Exam, in which the final ability estimate of the test-taker is considered. If the final ability estimate is above the passing standard, the test-taker passes; if it is below the passing standard, the test-taker fails.

The third scenario is the Run-Out-Of-Time-Rule (R.O.O.T). If the examination ends because the test-taker ran out of time, the computer may not have enough information with 95% certainty to make a clear pass-or-fail decision. If this is the case, the computer will review the test-taker's performance during testing. If the test-taker has not answered the minimum number of required questions, the test-taker fails. If the test-taker's ability estimate was consistently above the passing standard on the last 60 questions, the test-taker passes. If the test-taker's ability estimate falls to or below the passing standard, even once, the test-taker fails. Additional information about pass or fail decisions can be found in the 2013 NCLEX examination candidate bulletin located

at [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org).

# Completing the Examination

When the examination has ended, you will complete a brief computer-delivered questionnaire about your testing experience. After you complete this questionnaire, you need to raise your hand to summon the test administrator. The test administrator will collect and inventory all note boards and then permit you to leave.

# Processing Results

Every computerized examination is scored twice, once by the computer at the testing center and again after the examination is transmitted to Pearson Professional Centers. No results are released at the test center; test center staff do not have access to examination results. The board of nursing receives your result and your result will be mailed to you approximately 1 month after you take the examination. In some states, an unofficial result can be obtained via the Quick Results Service 2 business days after taking the examination. This can be done through the Internet or telephone, and there is a fee for this service. Information about obtaining your NCLEX result by this method can be obtained on the NCSBN Web site under candidate services.

# Candidate Performance Report

A candidate performance report is provided to a test-taker who failed the examination. This report provides the test-taker with information about her or his strengths and weaknesses in relation to the test plan framework and provides a guide for studying and retaking the examination. If a retake is necessary, the candidate must wait 45 to 90 days between examination administration. Test-takers should refer to the state board of nursing in the state in which licensure is sought for procedures regarding when the examination can be taken again.

# Interstate Endorsement

Because the NCLEX-RN examination is a national examination, you can apply to take the examination in any state. When licensure is received, you can apply for interstate endorsement, which is obtaining another license in another state to practice nursing in that state. The procedures and requirements for interstate endorsement may vary from state to state, and these procedures can be obtained from the state board of nursing in the state in which endorsement is sought. You may also be allowed to practice nursing in another state if the state has enacted a Nurse Licensure Compact. The state boards of nursing can be accessed via the NCSBN Web site at <http://www.ncsbn.org>. States that participate in the Nurse Licensure Compact can also be located on this Web site.

# Nurse Licensure Compact

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It may be possible to practice nursing in another state under the mutual recognition model of nursing licensure if the state has enacted a Nurse Licensure Compact. To obtain information about the Nurse Licensure Compact and the states that are part of this interstate compact, access the NCSBN Web site at <http://www.ncsbn.org>.

## **Additional Information about the Examination**

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Additional information regarding the NCLEX-RN examination can be obtained through the 2013 NCLEX examination candidate bulletin located on the NCSBN Web site and from the NCSBN (111 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2900, Chicago, IL 60601). The telephone number for the NCLEX examinations department is 866-293-9600. The Web site is <http://www.ncsbn.org>.



## CHAPTER 2

# NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Preparation for Foreign-Educated Nurses: Transitional Issues for Foreign-Educated Nurses

You have taken an important first step—seeking the information that you need to know to become a registered nurse (RN) in the United States. The challenge that is presented to you is one that requires great patience and endurance. The positive result of your endeavor will reward you professionally, however, and give you the personal satisfaction of knowing that you have become part of a family of highly skilled professionals: registered nurses.

# National Council of State Boards of Nursing

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) is the agency that develops and administers the NCLEX-RN examination, the examination that you need to pass to become licensed as a registered nurse in the United States. Guidelines and procedures must be followed and documents must be sought and submitted to become eligible to take this examination. This chapter provides general information regarding the process you need to pursue to become a registered nurse in the United States. An important first step in the process of obtaining information about becoming a registered nurse in the United States is to access the NCSBN Web site at <http://www.ncsbn.org> and obtain information provided for international nurses in the NCLEX Web site link. The NCSBN provides information about some of the documents you need to obtain as an international nurse seeking licensure in the United States and about credentialing agencies. The NCSBN also provides a resource manual for international nurses that contains all of the necessary licensure information regarding the requirements for education, English proficiency, and immigration requirements such as visas and VisaScreens. You are encouraged to access the NCSBN Web site to obtain the most current information about seeking licensure as a registered nurse in the United States.

 A first step is to access the NCSBN Web site at <http://www.ncsbn.org> and obtain information provided for international nurses in the NCLEX Web site link. The resource manual can be located at [www.ncsbn.org/Resource:manual\\_for\\_international\\_nurses.pdf](http://www.ncsbn.org/Resource:manual_for_international_nurses.pdf).

# State Requirements for Licensure

An important factor to consider as you pursue this process is that some requirements may vary from state to state. You need to contact the board of nursing in the state in which you are planning to obtain licensure to determine the specific requirements and documents that you need to submit. Boards of nursing can decide either to use a credentialing agency to evaluate your documents or to review your documents at the specific state board, known as in-house evaluation. When you contact the board of nursing in the state in which you intend to work as a nurse, inform them that you were educated outside of the United States and ask that they send you an application to apply for licensure by examination. Be sure to specify that you are applying for registered nurse (RN) licensure. You should also ask about the specific documents needed to become eligible to take the NCLEX exam. You can obtain contact information for each state board of nursing through the NCSBN Web site at <http://www.ncsbn.org>. When you have accessed the NCSBN Web site, select the link titled “Boards of Nursing.” In addition, you can write to the NCSBN regarding the NCLEX exam. The address is 111 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2900, Chicago, IL 60601. The telephone number for the NCSBN is 1-866-293-9600; international telephone is 011 1 312 525 3600; the fax number is 1-312-279-1032.

 **Contact the board of nursing in the state in which you are planning to obtain licensure to determine the specific requirements and documents that you need to submit. Documents that you need to submit vary state by state.**



# Credentialing Agencies

The state board of nursing in the state in which you are seeking licensure may choose to use a credentialing agency to review your documents. If so, it is necessary that you use the credentialing agency that the state requires. The state board of nursing will provide you with the name and contact information of the credentialing agency. Seeking this information is important because you need to know where to send your required documents. In addition, the NCSBN Web site (<http://www.ncsbn.org>) can provide information about credentialing agencies.

# General Licensure Requirements

Required documents may vary depending on the state requirements. These documents must be sent to either the state board of nursing or the credentialing agency specified by the state. Neither the credentialing agency nor the state board of nursing will accept these documents if they are sent directly from you. These documents must be official documents sent directly from the licensing authority or other agency in your home country to verify validity. Some of the general documents required are listed in [Box 2-1](#); however, remember that the documents you need to submit vary state by state. Use the list provided in [Box 2-1](#) as a checklist for yourself after you have found out about the documents you are required to submit.

## **BOX 2-1** Some Documents Needed to Obtain Licensure

1. Proof of citizenship or lawful alien status
2. Work visa
3. VisaScreen certificate
4. Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) certificate
5. Criminal background check documents
6. Official transcripts of educational credentials sent directly to credentialing agency or board of nursing from home country school of nursing
7. Validation of a comparable nursing education as that provided in U.S. nursing programs; this may include theoretical instruction and clinical practice in a

variety of nursing areas, including, but not limited to, medical nursing, surgical nursing, pediatric nursing, maternity and newborn nursing, community and public health nursing, and mental health nursing

8. Validation of safe professional nursing practice in home country
9. Copy of nursing license or diploma or both
10. Proof of proficiency in the English language
11. Photograph(s)
12. Social security number
13. Application and fees

When all of your documents have been submitted, they will be reviewed. If you have met the eligibility requirements to take the NCLEX examination, you will be notified that you are eligible. Then you need to obtain an application to take the NCLEX exam from the state in which you intend to seek licensure and submit the required fees. Your application will be reviewed and processed, and you will be notified that you can make an appointment to take the NCLEX exam. Additional information about the application process for the NCLEX exam can be obtained at the NCSBN Web site at [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org). Box 2-2 provides a brief list of the general steps to take in the licensure process.

### **BOX 2-2**      **General Steps in the Licensure Process**

1. Access the NCSBN Web site at <http://www.ncsbn.org> and read the literature

provided for international nurses.

2. Contact the board of nursing in the state in which you are planning to obtain licensure to determine the specific requirements and documents that you need to submit.
3. Have the required documents sent from the appropriate agency in your home country.
4. When you are notified about eligibility to take the NCLEX exam, obtain the application form from the state in which you intend to obtain licensure, complete the form, and submit it with required fees.
5. Schedule an appointment to take the NCLEX exam when you receive your Authorization to Test (ATT) form.
6. Take the NCLEX exam.
7. Become a registered nurse in the United States.

 Official documents must be sent directly from the licensing authority or other agency in your home country.

# Work Visa

A foreign-educated nurse who wants to work in the United States needs to obtain the proper work visa or visas. Obtaining the work visa is a U.S. federal government requirement. To obtain information about the work visa and the application process, contact the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The Web site is <http://www.immigrationdirect.com/index.html>.

# VisaScreen

U.S. immigration law requires certain health care professionals to complete a screening program successfully before receiving an occupational (work) visa (Section §343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996). To become a registered nurse in the United States, you are required to obtain a VisaScreen certificate. You can ask about the VisaScreen certificate when you make your initial contact with the state board of nursing in which you are seeking licensure. The VisaScreen is a federal screening program, and the certificate needs to be obtained through an organization that offers this program.

 **Obtaining the work visa and the VisaScreen is a U.S. federal government requirement.**

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) is an organization that offers this federal screening program. The VisaScreen components of this program include an educational analysis, license verification, assessment of proficiency in the English language, and an examination that tests nursing knowledge. When the applicant successfully achieves each component, the applicant is presented with a VisaScreen certificate. You can obtain information related to the VisaScreen through the CGFNS Web site at <http://www.cgfns.org>. The CGFNS Web site also provides you with specific information about the components of this program.

The CGFNS is also a credentialing agency and awards a CGFNS certificate to the applicant when all eligibility requirements are met. Some state boards of nursing use the

CGFNS as a credentialing agency and require a CGFNS certificate, whereas others do not. Check with the state board of nursing regarding this certificate. The CGFNS certification program contains three parts, and you must complete all parts successfully to be awarded a CGFNS certificate. The three parts include a credentials review, a qualifying examination that tests nursing knowledge, and an English language proficiency examination. These components are similar to those needed to obtain the VisaScreen certificate. You can obtain information related to the CGFNS certificate through the CGFNS Web site at <http://www.cgfns.org>.



The NCLEX examination is administered in English only.

# Registering to Take the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam

When you have completed all state and federal requirements and received documentation that you are eligible to take the NCLEX examination, you can register for the exam. You need to obtain information from the state board of nursing in the state in which you are seeking licensure regarding the specific registration process because the process may vary from state to state. The NCLEX candidate Web site is <http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex>, and you are encouraged to access this site for additional information. Following the registration instructions and completing the registration forms precisely and accurately are important. You must pay a fee for taking the examination, and you may have to pay additional fees to the board of nursing in the state in which you are applying. When your eligibility is determined by the state licensure board, you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) form. You cannot make an appointment to test until the board of nursing declares eligibility and you receive an ATT form.

 Registration forms for taking the NCLEX exam that are not properly completed or not accompanied by the proper fees in the required method of payment will be returned to you and will delay testing.

The examination takes place at a Pearson Professional Center, and you can make an appointment through the Internet or by telephone. You can schedule an appointment at any Pearson Professional Center. You do not have to take the exam in the state in which you are seeking licensure. NCLEX exam testing abroad is also available in some

countries, and it is recommended that you visit the NCLEX Web site for current information about international testing sites. [Chapter 1](#) contains additional information regarding the NCLEX exam and testing procedures. You can also obtain information about the registration process and testing procedures from the NCSBN Web site at <http://www.ncsbn.org>.

# Preparing to Take the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam

When you have successfully completed the requirements to become eligible to take the NCLEX exam, you have one more important goal to achieve: to pass the NCLEX exam.

 **Begin preparing for the NCLEX exam as soon as possible; start preparing even before you begin the licensure process.**

I highly recommend adequate preparation for the NCLEX exam because the examination is difficult. An important step that you have taken in preparing is that you are using this book, *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*. After you have reviewed the content and answered the practice questions, the next step in your journey to success is to use the companion book, *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*; this book provides you with more practice questions based on the NCLEX-RN examination test plan framework, with a specific focus on Client Needs and Integrated Processes. Then you will be ready for *HESI/Saunders Online Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*. Additional products in the Saunders Pyramid to Success include *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam* and *Saunders Q&A Review Cards for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Exam*. These additional products are described next.

*HESI/Saunders Online Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination* addresses all areas of the test plan identified by the NCSBN. The course contains a pretest that provides feedback regarding your strengths and weaknesses and that generates an individualized study schedule in a calendar format. Content review is in an outline

format and includes self-check practice questions and testlets (also known as case studies), figures and illustrations, a glossary, and animations and videos. Numerous practice exams are included. There are more than 2500 practice questions, and the types of questions in this course include multiple-choice and alternate item formats, including audio and video questions.

*Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam* focuses on the test-taking strategies that will prepare you for the NCLEX-RN exam. The chapters describe all the test-taking strategies and include several sample questions that illustrate how to use the test-taking strategy. Also included in this book is information on cultural characteristics and practices, pharmacology strategies, medication and intravenous calculations, laboratory values, positioning guidelines, and therapeutic diets. This book has practice questions. All the practice questions reflect the framework and the content identified in the NCLEX-RN test plan and include multiple-choice and alternate item format questions, including audio and video questions.

*Saunders Q&A Review Cards for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Exam* is organized by content areas and the test plan framework of the NCLEX-RN test plan. It provides you with 1200 unique practice test questions on portable and easy-to-use cards. The question is on the front of the card, and the answer, rationale, test-taking strategy, and content area code are on the back of the card. This product includes multiple-choice questions and alternate item format questions, including fill-in-the-blank, multiple-response, ordered-response, figure and graphic item questions, and chart/exhibit questions.

All the products in the Saunders Pyramid to Success can be obtained online by

visiting <http://elsevierhealth.com> or by calling 800-545-2522.

 Stay positive and confident, and believe that you can achieve your goal.

Finally, never lose sight of your goal. Patience and dedication contribute significantly to your achieving the status of registered nurse. Remember, success is climbing a mountain, facing the challenge of obstacles, and reaching the top of the mountain. I wish you the best success in your journey and beginning your career as a registered nurse in the United States.



## CHAPTER 3

# Pathways to Success

*Laurent W. Valliere, BS, DD*

## ▲ The Pyramid to Success

Preparing to take the NCLEX-RN examination can produce a great deal of anxiety. You may be thinking that this exam is the most important one you will ever have to take and that it reflects the culmination of everything that you have worked so hard for. This is an important examination because receiving your nursing license means that you can begin your career as a registered nurse. Your success on this exam involves getting rid of all thoughts that allow this examination to appear overwhelming and intimidating. Such thoughts can take complete control over your destiny. A strong positive attitude, a structured plan for preparation, and maintaining control in your pathway to success ensure reaching the peak of the Pyramid to Success (Fig. 3-1).



**FIGURE 3-1** Pyramid to Success.

# Pathways to Success (Box 3-1)

## BOX 3-1 Pathways to Success

### Foundation

- Maintaining a strong positive attitude
- Thinking about short-term and long-term realistic goals
- Developing a plan for preparation
- Maintaining control

### List

- Writing short-term and long-term realistic goals in a journal

### Plan for Preparation

- Developing a study plan and schedule
- Deciding on the place to study
- Balancing personal and work obligations with the study schedule
- Sharing the study schedule and personal needs with others
- Implementing the study plan

### Positive Pampering

- Planning time for exercise and fun activities
- Establishing healthy eating habits
- Including activities in the schedule that provide positive mental stimulation

## **Final Preparation**

Reviewing and identifying goals achieved

Remaining focused to complete the plan of study

Writing down the date and time of the examination and posting it next to your name with the letters “RN” following, and the word “yes!”

Planning a test drive to the testing center

Relaxing activities on the day before the examination

## **Day of the Examination**

Grooming yourself for success

Eating a nutritious breakfast

Maintaining a confident and positive attitude

Maintaining control—breathe and focus

Meeting the challenges of the day

Reaching the peak of the Pyramid to Success

## **Foundation**

The foundation of pathways to success begins with a strong positive attitude, the belief that you will achieve success, and developing control. It also includes developing a list of your personal short-term and long-term goals and a plan for preparation. Without these components, your pathway to success leads to nowhere and has no endpoint. You will expend energy and valuable time in your journey, lack control over where you are heading, and experience exhaustion without any accomplishment.

Where do you start? To begin, find a location that offers solitude. Sit or lie in a comfortable position, close your eyes, relax, inhale deeply, hold your breath to a count of four, exhale slowly, and, again, relax. Repeat this breathing exercise several times until you feel relaxed, free from anxiety, and in control of your destiny. Allow your mind to become void of all mind chatter; now you are in control and your mind's eye can see for miles. Next, reflect on all that you have accomplished and the path that brought you to where you are today. Keep a journal of your reflections as you plan the order of your journey through the Pyramid to Success.

## **List**

It is time to create the "List." The List is your set of short-term and long-term goals. Begin by developing the goals that you wish to accomplish today, tomorrow, over the next month, and in the future. Allow yourself the opportunity to list all that is flowing from your mind. Write your goals in your personal journal. When the List is complete, put it away for 2 or 3 days. After that time, retrieve and review the List and begin the process of planning to prepare for the NCLEX-RN exam.

## **Plan for Preparation**

Now that you have the List in order, look at the goals that relate to studying for the licensing exam. The first task is to decide what study pattern works best for you. Think about what has worked most successfully for you in the past. Questions that must be addressed to develop your plan for study are listed in [Box 3-2](#).



**BOX 3-2****Developing a Plan for Study**

Do I work better alone or in a study group?

If I work best in a group, how many study partners should I have?

Who are these study partners?

How long should my study sessions last?

Does the time of day that I study make a difference?

Do I retain more if I study in the morning?

How does my work schedule affect my study pattern?

How do I balance my family obligations with my need to study?

Do I have a comfortable study area at home or should I find another environment that is conducive to my study needs?

The plan must include a schedule. Use a calendar to plan and document the daily times and nursing content areas for your study sessions. Establish a realistic schedule that includes your daily, weekly, and future goals, and stick to your plan of study. This consistency will provide advantages to you and the people supporting you. You will develop a rhythm that can enhance your retention and positive momentum. The people who are supporting you will share this rhythm and be able to schedule their activities and lives better when you are consistent with your study schedule.

The length of the study session depends on your ability to focus and concentrate. You need to think about quality rather than quantity when you are deciding on a realistic amount of time for each session. Plan to schedule at least 2 hours of quality time daily.

If you can spend more than 2 hours, by all means do so.

You may ask, “What do you mean by quality time?” Quality time means spending uninterrupted quiet time at your study session. This may mean that you have to isolate yourself for these study sessions. Think again about what has worked for you during nursing school when you studied for examinations; select a study place that has worked for you in the past. If you have a special study room at home that you have always used, plan your study sessions in that special room. If you have always studied at a library, plan your study sessions at the library. Sometimes it is difficult to balance your study time with your family obligations and possibly a work schedule, but, if you can, plan your study time when you know that you will be at home alone. Try to eliminate anything that may be distracting during your study time. Silence your cell phone appropriately so that you will not be disturbed. If you have small children, plan your study time during their nap time or during their school hours.

Your plan must include how you will manage your study needs with your other obligations. Your family and friends are key players in your life and are going to become part of your Pyramid to Success. After you have established your study needs, communicate your needs and the importance of your study plan to your family and friends.

A difficult part of the plan may be how to deal with family members and friends who choose not to participate in your plan for success. For example, what do you do if a friend asks you to go to a movie and it is your scheduled study time? Your friend may say, “Take some time off. You have plenty of time to study. Study later when we get

back!” You are faced with a decision. You must weigh all the factors carefully. You must keep your goals in mind and remember that your need for positive momentum is critical. Your decision may not be an easy one, but it must be one that will ensure your goal of becoming a registered nurse is achieved.

# Positive Pampering

*Positive pampering* means that you must continue to care for yourself holistically. Positive momentum can be maintained only if you are properly balanced. Proper exercise, diet, and positive mental stimulation are crucial to achieving your goal of becoming a registered nurse. Just as you have developed a schedule for study, you should have a schedule that includes fun and physical activity. It is your choice— aerobics, walking, weight lifting, bowling, or whatever makes you feel good about yourself. Time spent away from the hard study schedule and devoted to some fun and physical exercise pays you back a hundred fold. You will be more energetic with a schedule that includes these activities.

Establish healthy eating habits. Stay away from fatty foods because they slow you down. Eat lighter meals and eat more frequently. Include complex carbohydrates in your diet for energy, and be careful not to include too much caffeine in your daily diet.

Take the time to pamper yourself with activities that make you feel even better about who you are. Make dinner reservations at your favorite restaurant with someone who is special and is supporting your goal. Take walks in a place that has a particular tranquility that enables you to reflect on the positive momentum that you have achieved and maintained. Whatever it is, wherever it takes you, allow yourself the time to do some positive pampering.

# Final Preparation

You have established the foundation of your Pyramid to Success. You have developed your list of goals and your study plan, and you have maintained your positive momentum. You are moving forward, and in control. When you receive your date and time for the NCLEX-RN examination, you may immediately think, “I am not ready!” Stop! Reflect on all you have achieved. Think about your goal achievement and the organization of the positive life momentum with which you have surrounded yourself. Think about all the people who love and support your effort to become a registered nurse. Believe that the challenge that awaits you is one that you have successfully prepared for and will lead you to your goal of becoming a registered nurse.

Take a deep breath and organize the remaining days so that they support your educational and personal needs. Support your positive momentum with a visual technique. Write your name in large letters, and write the letters “RN” after it. Post one or more of these visual reinforcements in areas that you frequent. This is a visual motivational technique that works for many nursing graduates preparing for this examination.

It is imperative that you not fall into the trap of expecting too much of yourself. The idea of perfection must not drive you to a point that causes your positive momentum to falter. You must believe and stay focused on your goal. The date and time are at hand. Write the date and time, and underneath write the word “yes!” Post this next to your name plus “RN.”

Ensure that you have command over how to get to the testing center. A test run is a must. Time the drive, and allow for road construction or whatever might occur to slow traffic down. On the test run, when you arrive at the test facility, walk into it and become familiar with the lobby and the surroundings. This may help alleviate some of the peripheral nervousness associated with entering an unknown building. Remember that you must do whatever it takes to keep yourself in control. If familiarizing yourself with the facility will help you maintain positive momentum, by all means be sure to do so.

It is time to check your study plan and make the necessary adjustments now that a firm date and time are set. Adjust your review so that your study plan ends 2 days before the examination. The mind is like a muscle. If it is overworked, it has no strength or stamina. Your strategy is to rest the body and mind on the day before the examination. Your strategy is to stay in control and allow yourself the opportunity to be absolutely fresh and attentive on the day of the examination. This will help you control the nervousness that is natural, achieve the clear thought processes required, and feel confident that you have done all that is necessary to prepare and conquer this challenge. The day before the examination is to be one of pleasure. Treat yourself to what you enjoy the most.

Relax! Take a deep breath, hold to a count of four, and exhale slowly. You have prepared yourself well for the challenge of tomorrow. Allow yourself a restful night's sleep, and wake up on the day of the examination knowing that you are absolutely prepared to succeed. Look at your name with "RN" after it and the word "yes!"



# Day of the Examination (Box 3-3)

## BOX 3-3

### Day of the Examination

*Breathe:* Inhale deeply, hold your breath to a count of four, exhale slowly

*Believe:* Have positive thoughts today and keep those thoughts focused on your achievements

*Control:* You are in command

*Believe:* This is your day

*Visualize:* “RN” with your name

Wake up believing in yourself and that all you have accomplished is about to propel you to the professional level of registered nurse. Allow yourself plenty of time, eat a nutritious breakfast, and groom yourself for success. You are ready to meet the challenges of the day and overcome any obstacle that may face you. Today will soon be history, and tomorrow will bring you the envelope on which you read your name with the words “Registered Nurse” after it.

Be proud and confident of your achievements. You have worked hard to achieve your goal of becoming a registered nurse. If you believe in yourself and your goals, no one person or obstacle can move you off the pathway that leads to success!

Congratulations, and I wish you the very best in your career as a registered nurse!

# THIS IS NOT A TEST

1. What are the factors needed to ensure a productive study environment? **Select all that apply.**

1. Secure a location that offers solitude
2. Plan breaks during your study session
3. Establish a realistic study schedule that includes your goals
4. Continue with the study pattern that has worked best for you

*Answer: 1, 2, 3, 4*

*Rationale:* A location of solitude helps to ensure concentration. Taking breaks during your study session helps to clear your mind and increase your ability to concentrate and focus. Establishing a realistic study pattern will keep you in control. Do not vary your study pattern. It has been successful for you, so why change now?

2. What are key factors in your final preparation? **Select all that apply.**

1. Remain focused on the study plan
2. Visualize the “RN” after your name
3. Avoid studying the day before the exam and relax
4. Know where the testing facility is and how long it takes to get there

*Answer: 1, 2, 3, 4*

*Rationale:* Focus on your plan of study and success will follow. Positive

reinforcement: Write your name in large letters on a piece of paper with “RN” after your name and post it where you see it often. Allow yourself a day of pampering before the test. Wake up on the day of the test refreshed and ready to succeed. Ensure that you know where the testing facility is; map out your route and the average time it takes to arrive.

3. What key points do the “Pathways to Success” emphasize to help ensure your success? **Select all that apply.**

1. A strong positive attitude
2. Believing in your ability to succeed
3. Being proud and confident in your achievements
4. Maintaining control of your mind, surrounding environment, and physical being

**Answer:** 1, 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** A strong *positive attitude* leads to success. *Believe* in who you are and the goals you have set for yourself. Be “*proud and confident.*” If you believe in yourself you will achieve success. *Maintain control* and all your goals are attainable.

Your grade: A +

Continue to “Believe” and you will succeed.

RN belongs to you!



**Believe!**



## CHAPTER 4

# The NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination: From a Graduate's Perspective

*David Morrow, RN, BSN*

Receiving a bachelor of science degree (BSN) in nursing was one of the proudest moments of my life. Walking across the stage with my classmates at the graduation ceremony had seemed like a distant dream 16 months earlier, and now the day was upon me. Strangely enough, it still felt like a dream to finally be finished with school. Even so, there was no denying that I now had my BSN! Of course, there were two more letters I wanted after my name, and to get them I would have to pass one more test.

Several weeks earlier I had submitted everything to the State Board of Nursing in anticipation of applying for a license, so now I was waiting for my school to send confirmation to the board that I had completed my degree. Once that occurred, an Authorization to Test (ATT) would be sent to me via e-mail and I would be able to choose a date for taking the NCLEX. At this point I wanted to take the test as soon as possible. I spent the last several weeks before the NCLEX studying, catching up with friends whom I hadn't talked to for 16 months, and slowly getting used to the idea that I

would never again have to walk into a patient's room and say "Hi, my name is David. I'm a student nurse and I'll be helping take care of you today."

One by one, my classmates began receiving their ATTs and scheduling their tests. I was trying to be patient but after about 3 weeks I couldn't take it any longer. I called Pearson VUE and explained that I had been waiting patiently for my ATT and that I wanted to make sure there weren't any problems. I was informed that the ATT can take up to 6 weeks to arrive, which was the standard answer I was expecting. I persisted, however, and the representative was kind enough to check into the matter a little further. She informed me that they hadn't received all of the necessary information from the State Board of Nursing, and that was why I hadn't received my ATT. I thanked her profusely and immediately called the board. Apparently there had been a glitch in sending my information to Pearson. The information was re-sent, and less than 24 hours later I received a most welcome e-mail in my inbox.

I went online to reserve a test date and found that there were no dates available in Las Vegas for 2 weeks. There was no way I was waiting another 2 weeks to take the NCLEX. Let's expand the search area to any testing center within 500 miles. I hear Provo is nice this time of year, but maybe that's a little too far. Pasadena has an open slot in only 2 days! I jumped on it. I would leave the next day, stay the night, then wake up and take the test the following day. Perfect.

Driving over 200 miles to a testing center might have increased the anxiety level of many test-takers, but for me it had the opposite effect. I passed the miles reflecting on the path my life had taken since making the decision to become an RN over 2 years

earlier. When I started the whole process I felt like it would take forever. Now as I looked back it all seemed like a blur. It went by so fast, a little too fast at times. In our last semester, I remember commenting to my classmates that I couldn't believe we were going to be RNs soon. It was a scary thought. I didn't feel ready. Knowing that most of them felt the same way made me feel a little better, I suppose. All the exams were behind me now, along with the lab competencies, the clinicals, the endless study sessions, and all the general anxiety that comes with being a nursing student. Everything I had accomplished now came down to one last test.

Many things motivated me to become an RN. Among them were a desire to help people, job security, the professionalism associated with nursing, and the broad opportunities within the field. In our final semester, two members of the Board of Nursing gave a presentation regarding licensure. They talked about the NCLEX, how to apply for licensure, and other useful tidbits to help us transition to becoming practicing RNs. When discussing the importance of getting and maintaining a license, one of them said in all seriousness that a bachelor's degree in nursing is essentially useless without a license to practice. Well, that was just great. I went into nursing expecting a guaranteed job. She certainly wasn't deriding all the hard work we had done or the accomplishment of earning a BSN, but without a license you're not an RN. I tried not to think about it during my trip.

Once I arrived, I decided that my first order of business was to find the testing center. I wanted to know the location of the building, the parking situation, if there was a coffee shop or restaurant nearby, and any other information that might help me avoid

disaster on test day. Everything looked pretty straightforward, so I grabbed some food, found a hotel room, and tried to relax.

Suddenly, I wasn't sure what to do with myself. Should I study? I had been studying for weeks. Actually all of nursing school was one big preparation for the NCLEX, so if I wasn't ready by now I would never be ready. Still, there was no way that I could not study for the biggest test of my life. I survived nursing school by coming into every exam with as much preparation as possible and I wasn't about to treat the NCLEX any differently. I pulled out the resources I had been using for the past few weeks and tried to review anything I could.

The *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination* book was a favorite of many students. I also liked the *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination* simply because it contained so many questions. In preparation for the NCLEX, I answered practice questions, and then went through them all again. I wanted to make sure that I could answer every question right away, without hesitation. More importantly, I made sure I understood the rationale behind each answer. As I reviewed questions I was surprised at how much nursing content I had forgotten. As I did questions over and over my confidence grew. I was answering most questions correctly on the first try, and concepts I had forgotten were quickly reinforced.

After spending time reviewing some final practice questions, I just wanted to relax. I made a couple of phone calls to classmates for moral support, then turned on the TV and tried to coax myself to sleep. I slept well that night. There was no need for an alarm clock since I'd scheduled a 2:00 PM test time. I'm more of a night person than a morning

person, so the later in the day I could take the test the better. I awoke around 9:30 AM, checked out of my room, and went for breakfast before heading to the testing center. I found a parking spot with a good 2 hours to spare, so I headed to a coffee shop across the street and ordered an iced coffee. I moved to a table on the sidewalk outside the coffee shop, pulled out my computer to do some surfing, and tried to relax. An hour later I decided to take a walk. I took my laptop back to the car and set off down the tree-lined streets of Pasadena.

I kept checking my phone for the time and thinking “don’t be late.” I decided to head to the testing center. I arrived with 30 minutes to spare, used the restroom, and then checked in. I knew beforehand that I would be asked to place my personal belongings into a locker, so I brought as little as possible. I was required to keep my driver’s license with me and nothing else. Before entering the testing room I was photographed and completed other identity procedures. The rules were explained, and then I entered the testing room and sat down at my assigned station. I heard something about being able to take a break after an hour and a half, or maybe it was 2 hours. I guess I wasn’t paying attention because I was hoping not to be there that long.

I knew that the NCLEX can be completed in as little as 75 questions or as many as 265. If a test-taker is sufficiently above or below minimum competency, the test could end at 75 questions. I tend to take tests relatively quickly, so if I did well I thought I could be done in an hour or so. I started the test and just went for it. If I didn’t know an answer I didn’t stay on the question too long. Go with your instincts, use testing strategies, and move on. I wanted the test to end at question 75 but I didn’t think about it

too much until I actually got to the 75th question. When I submitted the answer I held my breath for a second. The computer informed me that my test was now complete. I breathed a sigh of relief.

I walked out of the testing center feeling relatively good about the whole experience. I thought I must have been doing well because the questions became insanely difficult pretty quickly. Now I could enjoy a pleasant drive home...maybe. The thought that I couldn't have answered very many of the questions correctly kept nagging me. I started remembering specific questions and the answers I gave, and I began doubting my judgment on some of them. I had over 200 miles of driving to think about it.

All of the anxiety that I should have felt before the test was taking over my thoughts. I must have passed, right? What if I didn't? The words of the State Board of Nursing representative started coming back: "A nursing degree is relatively useless without a..." I stopped myself in mid-thought. Don't think that way. You're fine. Just relax.

I drove the rest of the way home as the sun slowly dipped behind the mountains. As the miles slipped behind me I started to realize that I had done it. Any doubts I had started to melt away, and the weight of preparing for the biggest test of my life was gone. I was certain that I had passed the NCLEX. In a week or so I would be receiving notification from the State Board of Nursing that I was licensed to practice as a registered nurse. There was still a hint of daylight to the west when I entered the valley. A smile crept over my face. I'm home. I really did it. I'm going to be an RN.

Not long after becoming an RN, I accepted a position in the emergency department at the hospital where I had done most of my clinical rotations. The learning curve was

steep, but I can honestly say that I love my job. I learn something new every day, and I really do feel that I'm making a difference in people's lives. Your first year in nursing will be the toughest. Don't give up. If you're in a job that doesn't seem like a good fit there are a multitude of other opportunities available. Just give it a chance. You might not land your dream job right out of school, but nursing can be a dream career if you have the right attitude and stick with it.

As a graduate who recently took the NCLEX, I can offer some bits of advice. First of all, study. I know that some students will say that you don't need to study for the NCLEX, but I disagree. If nothing else, studying will help you reinforce what you already know, and remind you of what you've forgotten. The reduction in test anxiety alone is worth the effort. It may be the biggest test you ever take. Don't be "kind of" ready for it. Be "all the way" ready. Trust me on this one.

Do anything you can to reduce anxiety on test day. Make sure you arrive early, and that you know how to get to the testing center. Make a dry run a day or two beforehand if necessary. Leave home early enough so that you know you'll be on time no matter what. If you're running late your anxiety level will rise with each passing minute, and by the time you get there you'll be so worked up and flustered that the last thing you should be doing is taking the NCLEX. If you're a morning person, take the test early. If you don't like getting up early, take it in the afternoon. Do whatever works best for you. Remove as many obstacles as you possibly can.

Finally, don't wait too long to take the NCLEX. Waiting a few weeks is no big deal. If you wait more than 1 or 2 months after graduation, your anxiety level will only

increase, and the knowledge you've accumulated in nursing school will slowly seep away with each passing day. You might try to rationalize putting off the test by convincing yourself that you'll have more time to study, which means you'll do better on the test. Allow me a moment to convince you otherwise. There's no way you can duplicate the experience of nursing school after you've graduated. Exposure to the clinical setting, classroom time, and the constant testing you went through while in school kept you in "nursing school mode." Simply put, nursing school teaches you to think like a nurse. Schedule a test date within a couple weeks of receiving your authorization to take the NCLEX and devote time each day to studying and doing practice questions. Every faculty member at my school gave this advice to the students and I couldn't agree more.

One of the comments that I hear most often from patients and family members is "Wow, I would never do your job. Not ever." I just smile at them and respond with, "Yes, it can be very challenging. It's not for everyone, that's for sure." In spite of the challenges, nursing is a fantastic profession. I've put my heart and soul into it, and in return I've received much more than I ever imagined. I hope it will be the same for each of you. Nursing school consumed my life for four straight semesters. I spent 16 months studying, wondering if I was on the right path, sharing tears with classmates who didn't make the grade, and in the end knowing that it would all mean very little if I couldn't pass one last test. After everything I've been through to get those two letters after my name I will never (and I mean *never*) grow tired of introducing myself to my patients with a smile and saying "Hi, I'm David. I'm an RN and I'll be taking care of you today."

I'd like to thank Dr. Linda Silvestri for giving me the opportunity to write this chapter. Your confidence and support have meant a great deal to me. Thank you again.



## CHAPTER 5

# Test-Taking Strategies

If you would like to read more about test-taking strategies after completing this chapter, *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX® Exam* focuses on the test-taking strategies that will help you pass your nursing examinations while in nursing school and will prepare you for the NCLEX-RN examination.

### I. Key Test-Taking Strategies (Box 5-1)

#### **BOX 5-1** Key Test-Taking Strategies

- Avoid asking yourself, “Well, what if ...?” because this will lead you right into reading into the question.
- Focus only on the information in the question, read every word, and make a decision regarding what the question is asking.
- Look for the strategic words in the question; strategic words make a difference regarding what the question is asking about.
- Always use the process of elimination when choices or options are presented;

when you have eliminated options, reread the question before selecting your final choice or choices.

- Determine whether the question is a positive or negative event query.
- Use all your nursing knowledge, your clinical experiences, and your test-taking skills and strategies to answer the question.

## II. How to Avoid Reading into the Question (Box 5-2)

### **BOX 5-2** Practice Question: Avoiding the “What if...” Syndrome and Reading into the Question

The nurse is caring for a hospitalized client with a diagnosis of heart failure who suddenly complains of shortness of breath and dyspnea. The nurse should take which **immediate** action?

1. Administers oxygen to the client
2. Elevates the head of the client’s bed
3. Calls the health care provider (HCP)
4. Prepares to administer furosemide (Lasix)

**Answer:** 2

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Now you may immediately think the client has developed pulmonary edema, a complication of heart failure, and needs a diuretic. Although pulmonary edema is a complication of heart failure, there is no information in the question that indicates the presence of pulmonary edema. The question simply states

that the client suddenly complains of shortness of breath and dyspnea. Read the question carefully. Note the **strategic word** *immediate* and focus on the **subject**: the client's complaints. An HCP's prescription is needed to administer oxygen. Although the HCP may need to be notified, this is not the immediate action. Furosemide is a diuretic and may or may not be prescribed for the client. Because there is no information in the question that indicates the presence of pulmonary edema, option 2 is correct. The question is asking you for a nursing action, so that is what you need to look for as you eliminate the incorrect options. Use nursing knowledge and test-taking strategies to assist in answering the question. Remember to avoid the "What if ...?" syndrome and reading into the question.

#### A. Pyramid Points

1. Avoid asking yourself the forbidden words, "Well, what if ...?" because this will lead you right into the "forbidden" area: reading into the question.
2. Focus only on the information in the question, read every word, and make a decision about what the question is asking.
3. Look for the strategic words in the question, such as *immediate*, *initial*, *first*, *priority*, *side effect*, or *toxic effect*; strategic words make a difference regarding what the question is asking.
4. In multiple-choice questions, multiple-response questions, or questions that require you to arrange nursing interventions or other data in order of priority, read every choice or option presented before answering.

5. Always use the process of elimination when choices or options are presented; after you have eliminated options, reread the question before selecting your final choice or choices.
6. With questions that require you to fill in the blank focus on the information in the question and determine what the question is asking; if the question requires you to calculate a medication dose, an intravenous flow rate, or intake and output amounts, recheck your work in calculating and always use the on-screen calculator to verify the answer.

**B. Ingredients of a question (Box 5-3)**

**BOX 5-3**      **Ingredients of a Question: Event, Event Query, and Options**

*Event:* The nurse is caring for a client with terminal cancer.

*Event Query:* The nurse should consider which factor when planning opioid pain relief?

*Options:*

1. Not all pain is real.
2. Opioid analgesics are highly addictive.
3. Opioid analgesics can cause tachycardia.
4. Around-the-clock dosing gives better pain relief than as-needed dosing.

*Answer:* 4

*Test-Taking Strategy:* Focus on the **subject** and the client's diagnosis. Around-the-

clock dosing provides increased pain relief and decreases stressors associated with pain, such as anxiety and fear. Pain is what the client describes it as, and any indication of pain should be perceived as real for the client. Opioid analgesics may be addictive, but this is not a concern for a client with terminal cancer. Not all opioid analgesics cause tachycardia.

1. The ingredients of a question include the event, which is a client or clinical situation; the event query; and the options or answers.
2. The event provides you with the content about the client or clinical situation that you need to think about when answering the question.
3. The event query asks something specific about the content of the event.
4. The options are all the answers provided with the question.
5. In a multiple-choice question, there will be four options and you must select one; read every option carefully and think about the event and the event query as you use the process of elimination.
6. In a multiple-response question, there will be several options and you must select all options that apply to the event in the question; visualize the event and use your nursing knowledge and clinical experiences to answer the question.
7. In a prioritizing (ordered response)/drag-and-drop question, you will be required to arrange in order of priority nursing interventions or other data; visualize the event and use your nursing knowledge and clinical experiences to answer the question.

8. A fill-in-the-blank question will not contain options, and some figure/illustration questions and audio or video item formats may or may not contain options. A graphic option item will contain options in the form of a picture or graphic.
9. A chart/exhibit question will most likely contain options; read the question carefully and all of the information in the chart or exhibit before selecting an answer.

### III. Strategic Words (Boxes 5-4 and 5-5)

#### **BOX 5-4** Common Strategic Words and Assessment Words

##### Words That Indicate the Need to Prioritize

Best

Early or late

Essential

First

Highest priority

Immediate

Initial

Next

Most

Most appropriate or least appropriate

Most important

Most likely or least likely

Primary

Vital

### Words That Reflect Assessment

Ascertain

Assess

Check

Collect

Determine

Find out

Gather

Identify

Monitor

Observe

Obtain information

Recognize

### **BOX 5-5** Practice Question: Strategic Words

The nurse is caring for a client who just returned from the recovery room after undergoing abdominal surgery. The nurse should monitor for which **early** sign of hypovolemic shock?

1. Sleepiness
2. Increased pulse rate
3. Increased depth of respiration
4. Increased orientation to surroundings

**Answer: 2**

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. Think about the pathophysiology that occurs in hypovolemic shock to direct you to the correct option. Sleepiness is expected in a client who has just returned from surgery. Although increased depth of respirations occurs in hypovolemic shock, it is not an early sign. Rather, it occurs as the shock progresses. Increased orientation to surroundings is expected and will occur as the effects of anesthesia resolve. Remember to look for **strategic words**.

- A. Strategic words focus your attention on a critical point to consider when answering the question and will assist you in eliminating the incorrect options.
- B. Some strategic words may indicate that all options are correct and that it will be necessary to prioritize to select the correct option; words that reflect the process of assessment are also important to note (see **Box 5-4**).
- C. As you read the question, look for the strategic words; strategic words make a difference regarding the focus of the question. Throughout this book, *strategic words* presented in the question, such as those that indicate the need to prioritize, are bolded. If the test-taking strategy is to focus on *strategic words*, then *strategic words*

is highlighted in **blue** where it appears in the test-taking strategy.

#### IV. Subject of the Question (Box 5-6)

##### **BOX 5-6** Subject of the Question

The nurse is teaching a client in skeletal leg traction about measures to increase bed mobility. Which item would be **most** helpful for this client?

1. Television
2. Fracture bedpan
3. Overhead trapeze
4. Reading materials

**Answer:** 3

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, increasing bed mobility. Also note the **strategic word** *most*. The use of an overhead trapeze is extremely helpful in assisting a client to move about in bed and to get on and off the bedpan. Television and reading materials are helpful in reducing boredom and providing distraction. A fracture bedpan is useful in reducing discomfort with elimination. Remember to focus on the **subject**.

- A. The subject of the question is the specific topic that the question is asking about.
- B. Identifying the subject of the question will assist in eliminating the incorrect options and direct you in selecting the correct option. Throughout this book, if the *subject* of

the question is a specific strategy to use in answering the question correctly, it is highlighted in **blue** in the test-taking strategy. Also, the specific content area to review, such as *heart failure*, is bold in **magenta** where it appears in the test-taking strategy.

- C. The highlighting of the strategy and specific content areas will provide you with guidance on what topics to review for further remediation in *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam* and *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup> Examination*.

## V. Positive and Negative Event Queries (Boxes 5-7 and 5-8)

### BOX 5-7 Practice Question: Positive Event Query

The nurse provides medication instructions to a client about digoxin (Lanoxin).

Which statement by the client indicates an understanding of its adverse effects?

1. “Blurred vision is expected.”
2. “If I am nauseated or vomiting I should stay on liquids and take some liquid antacids.”
3. “This medication may cause headache and weakness but that is nothing to worry about.”
4. “If my pulse rate drops below 60 beats a minute, I should let my health care provider know.”

**Answer: 4**

**Test-Taking Strategy:** This question is an example of a positive event query question. Note the words *indicates an understanding* and focus on the **subject**, adverse effects. Digoxin is a cardiac glycoside and a concern is toxicity. Adverse effects that indicate toxicity include gastrointestinal disturbances, neurological abnormalities, bradycardia or other cardiac irregularities, and ocular disturbances. If any of these occur, the health care provider is notified. Remember, note positive event queries.

**BOX 5-8** Practice Question: Negative Event Query

The nurse has reinforced discharge instructions to a client who has undergone a right mastectomy with axillary lymph node dissection. Which statement by the client indicates a **need for further instruction** regarding home care measures?

1. “I should use a straight razor to shave under my arms.”
2. “I need to be sure that I do not have blood pressures or blood drawn from my right arm.”
3. “I should inform all of my other health care providers that I have had this surgical procedure.”
4. “I need to be sure to wear thick mitt hand covers or use thick pot holders when I am cooking and touching hot pans.”

**Answer: 1**

**Test-Taking Strategy:** This question is an example of a **negative event query**. Note

the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These strategic words indicate that you need to select an option that identifies an incorrect client statement. Recalling that edema and infection are concerns with this client and that the client needs to be instructed in the measures that will avoid trauma to the affected arm will direct you to the correct option. Remember to watch for **negative event queries**.

- A. A positive event query uses strategic words that ask you to select an option that is correct; for example, the event query may read, “Which statement by a client *indicates an understanding* of the side effects of the prescribed medication?”
- B. A negative event query uses strategic words that ask you to select an option that is an incorrect item or statement; for example, the event query may read, “Which statement by a client *indicates a need for further teaching* about the side effects of the prescribed medication?”

## VI. Questions That Require Prioritizing

- A. Many questions in the examination will require you to use the skill of prioritizing nursing actions.
- B. Look for the strategic words in the question that indicate the need to prioritize (see [Box 5-4](#)).
- C. Remember that when a question requires prioritization, all options may be correct and you need to determine the correct order of action.
- D. Strategies to use to prioritize include the ABCs (airway, breathing, and circulation),

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, and the steps of the nursing process.

E. The ABCs (Box 5-9)

**BOX 5-9** Practice Question: Use of the ABCs

A client with a diagnosis of cancer is receiving morphine sulfate for pain. The nurse should employ which **priority** action in the care of the client?

1. Monitors stools
2. Encourages fluid intake
3. Monitors the urine output
4. Encourages the client to cough and breathe deeply

**Answer:** 4

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—as a guide to direct you to the correct option and note the **strategic word** *priority*. Recall that morphine sulfate suppresses the cough reflex and the respiratory reflex. Although options 1, 2, and 3 are components of the plan of care, the correct option addresses airway. Remember to use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to prioritize.

1. Use the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation—when selecting an answer or determining the order of priority.
2. Remember the order of priority—airway, breathing, and circulation.

3. Airway is always the first priority. Note that an exception is the performance of cardiopulmonary resuscitation; in this situation, the nurse follows the CAB (circulation, airway, breathing) guidelines.

F. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory (Box 5-10; Fig. 5-1)

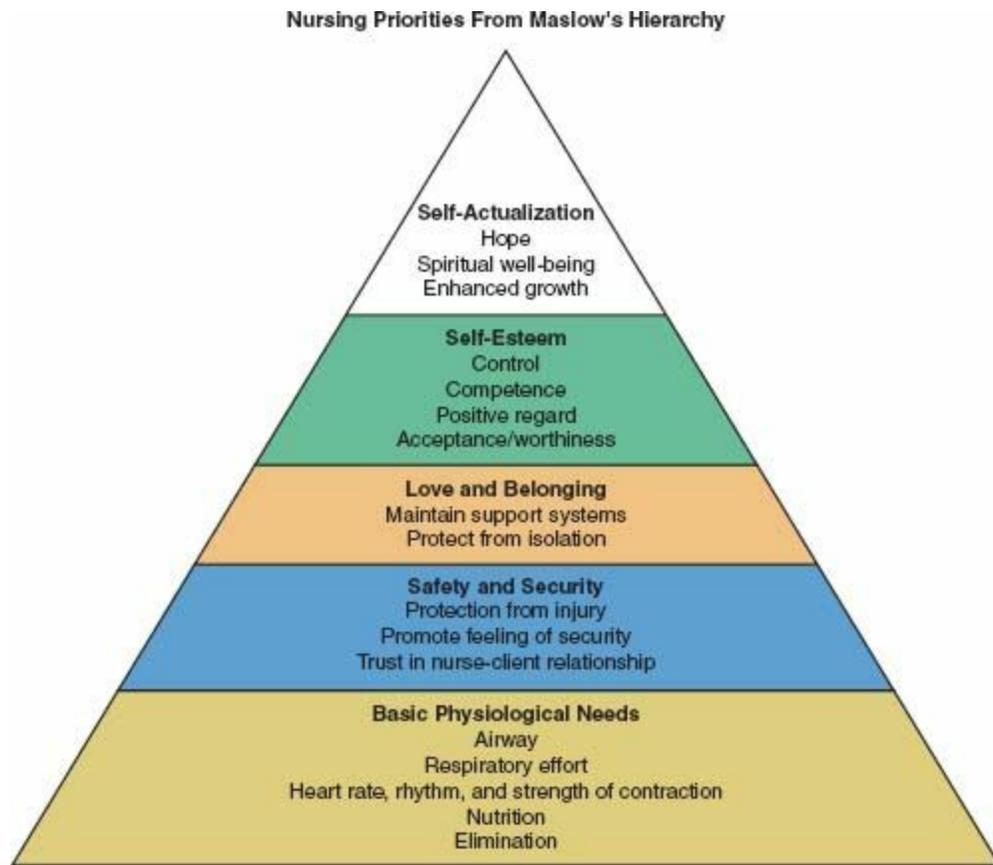
**BOX 5-10** Practice Question: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The nurse caring for a client experiencing dystocia determines that the **priority** is which action?

1. Position changes and providing comfort measures
2. Explanations to family members about what is happening to the client
3. Monitoring for changes in the physical condition of the mother and fetus
4. Reinforcement of breathing techniques learned in childbirth preparatory classes

**Answer:** 3

**Test-Taking Strategy:** All the options are correct and would be implemented during the care of this client. Note the **strategic word** *priority*, and use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to prioritize, remembering that physiological needs come first. Also, the correct option is the only one that addresses both the mother and the fetus. Remember to use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to prioritize.



**FIGURE 5-1** Use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to establish priorities. (From Harkreader H, Hogan MA, Thobaben M: *Fundamentals of nursing: Caring and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)

1. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, physiological needs are the priority, followed by safety and security needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and, finally, self-actualization needs; select the option or determine the order of priority by addressing physiological needs first.
2. When a physiological need is not addressed in the question or noted in one of the options, continue to use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory as a guide and look for the option that addresses safety.

## G. Steps of the nursing process

1. Use the steps of the nursing process to prioritize.
2. The steps include assessment, analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation and are followed in this order.
3. Assessment
  - a. Assessment questions address the process of gathering subjective and objective data relative to the client, confirming the data, and communicating and documenting the data.
  - b. Remember that assessment is the first step in the nursing process.
  - c. When you are asked to select your first, immediate, or initial nursing action, follow the steps of the nursing process to prioritize when selecting the correct option.
  - d. Look for strategic words in the options that reflect assessment (see [Box 5-4](#)).
  - e. If an option contains the concept of assessment or the collection of client data, the best choice is to select that option ([Box 5-11](#)).

### **BOX 5-11** Practice Question: The Nursing Process—Assessment

A client who had an application of a right arm cast complains of pain at the wrist when the arm is passively moved. The nurse should take which action **first**?

1. Elevate the arm.
2. Document the findings.
3. Medicate with an additional dose of an opioid.
4. Check for paresthesias and paralysis of the right arm.

**Answer: 4**

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Use the **steps of the nursing process**, remembering that assessment is the first step. The only option that addresses assessment is the correct option. Options 1, 2, and 3 address the implementation step of the nursing process. Also, these options are inaccurate first actions. The arm in a cast should have already been elevated. The client may be experiencing compartment syndrome, a complication following trauma to the extremities and application of a cast. Additional data need to be collected to determine whether this complication is present. Remember that assessment is the first step in the **nursing process**.

- f. If an assessment action is not one of the options, follow the steps of the nursing process as your guide to select your first, immediate, or initial action.
- g. Possible exception to the guideline—if the question presents an emergency situation, read carefully; in an emergency situation, an intervention may be the priority.

#### 4. Analysis (Box 5-12)

### **BOX 5-12** Practice Question: The Nursing Process—Analysis

The nurse reviews the arterial blood gas results of a client and notes the following: pH 7.45,  $\text{PCO}_2$  30 mm Hg, and  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  22 mEq/L. The nurse analyzes these results as indicating which condition?

1. Metabolic acidosis, compensated
2. Respiratory alkalosis, compensated
3. Metabolic alkalosis, uncompensated
4. Respiratory acidosis, uncompensated

**Answer: 2**

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **steps of the nursing process** and analyze the values. The normal pH is 7.35 to 7.45. In a respiratory condition, an opposite effect will be seen between the pH and the  $PCO_2$ . In this situation, the pH is at the high end of the normal value and the  $PCO_2$  is low. So, you can eliminate options 1 and 3. In an alkalotic condition, the pH is elevated. The values identified indicate a respiratory alkalosis. Compensation occurs when the pH returns to a normal value. Because the pH is in the normal range at the high end, compensation has occurred. Remember that analysis is the second step in the **nursing process**.

- a. Analysis questions are the most difficult questions because they require understanding of the principles of physiological responses and require interpretation of the data based on assessment.
- b. Analysis questions require critical thinking and determining the rationale for therapeutic prescriptions or interventions that may be addressed in the question.
- c. Analysis questions may address the formulation of a nursing diagnosis and the communication and documentation of the results of the process of analysis.

## 5. Planning (Box 5-13)

### **BOX 5-13** Practice Question: The Nursing Process—Planning

The nurse developing a plan of care for a client with a cataract understands that which problem is the **priority**?

1. Concern about the loss of eyesight
2. Altered vision due to opacity of the ocular lens
3. Difficulty moving around because of the need for glasses.
4. Becoming lonely because of decreased community immersion

*Answer: 2*

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **steps of the nursing process**. This question relates to planning nursing care and asks you to identify the priority problem. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to answer the question, remembering that physiological needs are the priority. Concern and becoming lonely are psychosocial needs and would be the last priorities. Note that the correct option directly addresses the client's problem. Remember that planning is the third step of the **nursing process**.

- a. Planning questions require prioritizing client problems, determining goals and outcome criteria for goals of care, developing the plan of care, and communicating and documenting the plan of care.
- b. Remember that actual client problems rather than potential client problems will

most likely be the priority.

## 6. Implementation (Box 5-14)

### BOX 5-14 Practice Question: The Nursing Process—Implementation

The nurse is caring for a hospitalized client with angina pectoris who begins to experience chest pain. The nurse administers a nitroglycerin (Nitrostat) tablet sublingually as prescribed, but the pain is unrelieved. The nurse should take which action **next**?

1. Reposition the client.
2. Call the client's family.
3. Contact the health care provider.
4. Administer another nitroglycerin tablet.

*Answer: 4*

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **steps of the nursing process**. Implementation questions address the process of organizing and managing care. This question also requires that you prioritize nursing actions. Note the **strategic word** *next* and that the client is hospitalized. Recalling that the nurse would administer three nitroglycerin tablets 5 minutes apart from each other to relieve chest pain will assist in directing you to the correct option. Remember that implementation is the fourth step of the **nursing process**.

- a. Implementation questions address the process of organizing and managing care, counseling and teaching, providing care to achieve established goals, supervising and coordinating care, and communicating and documenting nursing interventions.
- b. Focus on a nursing action rather than on a medical action when you are answering a question, unless the question is asking you what prescribed medical action is anticipated.
- c. On the NCLEX-RN exam, the only client that you need to be concerned about is the client in the question that you are answering; avoid the “What if ...?” syndrome and remember that the client in the question on the computer screen is your only assigned client.
- d. Answer the question from a textbook and ideal point of view; remember that the nurse has all the time and all of the equipment needed to care for the client readily available at the bedside; remember that you do not need to run to the treatment room to obtain, for example, sterile gloves because the sterile gloves will be at the client’s bedside.

## 7. Evaluation (Box 5-15)

### **BOX 5-15** Practice Question: The Nursing Process—Evaluation

The nurse is monitoring the function of a client’s chest tube drainage system and notes that the fluid in the water seal chamber is below the 2-cm mark. Which interpretation should the nurse make?

1. There is a leak in the system.
2. The client has a pneumothorax.
3. Suction should be added to the system.
4. Water should be added to the chamber.

**Answer: 4**

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **steps of the nursing process**. Focus on the **subject** and the data in the question. It makes sense to add water to the chamber if the water level is too low. The water seal chamber should be filled to the 2-cm mark to provide an adequate water seal between the external environment and the client's pleural cavity to prevent air from reentering the pleural cavity. Because evaporation of water can occur, the nurse should remedy this problem by adding water until the level is again at the 2-cm mark. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect interpretations. Remember that evaluation is the fifth step of the **nursing process**.

- a. Evaluation questions focus on comparing the actual outcomes of care with the expected outcomes and on communicating and documenting findings.
- b. These questions focus on assisting in determining the client's response to care and identifying factors that may interfere with achieving expected outcomes.
- c. In an evaluation question, watch for negative event queries because they are frequently used in evaluation-type questions.

## **VII. Client Needs**

### **A. Safe and Effective Care Environment**

1. According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), these questions test the concepts that the nurse provides nursing care; collaborates with other health care team members to facilitate effective client care; and protects clients, significant others, and health care personnel from environmental hazards.
2. Focus on safety with these types of questions, and remember the importance of hand washing, call bells, bed positioning, appropriate use of side rails, asepsis, use of standard and other precautions, triage, and emergency response planning.

## **B. Physiological Integrity**

1. The NCSBN indicates that these questions test the concepts that the nurse provides comfort and assistance in the performance of activities of daily living and provides care related to the administration of medications and parenteral therapies.
2. These questions also address the nurse's ability to reduce the client's potential for developing complications or health problems related to treatments, procedures, or existing conditions and to provide care to clients with acute, chronic, or life-threatening physical health conditions.
3. Focus on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory in these types of questions and remember that physiological needs are a priority and are addressed first.
4. Use the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation—and the steps of the nursing process when selecting an option addressing Physiological Integrity.

## **C. Psychosocial Integrity**

1. The NCSBN notes that these questions test the concepts that the nurse provides

nursing care that promotes and supports the emotional, mental, and social well-being of the client and significant others.

2. Content addressed in these questions relates to supporting and promoting the client's or significant others' ability to cope, adapt, or problem-solve in situations such as illnesses; disabilities; or stressful events including abuse, neglect, or violence.
3. In this Client Needs category, you may be asked communication-type questions that relate to how you would respond to a client, a client's family member or significant other, or other health care team members.
4. Use therapeutic communication techniques to answer communication questions because of their effectiveness in the communication process.
5. Remember to select the option that focuses on the thoughts, feelings, concerns, anxieties, or fears of the client, client's family member, or significant other (Box 5-16).

### **BOX 5-16** Practice Question: Communication

A client scheduled for bowel surgery states to the nurse, "I'm not sure if I should have this surgery." Which response by the nurse is appropriate?

1. "It's your decision."
2. "Don't worry. Everything will be fine."
3. "Why don't you want to have this surgery?"
4. "Tell me what concerns you have about the surgery."

**Answer: 4**

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use **therapeutic communication techniques** to answer communication questions and remember to focus on the client's thoughts, feelings, concerns, anxieties, and fears. The correct option is the only one that addresses the client's concern. Option 1 is a blunt response and does not address the client's concern. Option 2 provides false reassurance. Option 3 can make the client feel defensive and uses the nontherapeutic communication technique of asking "why." Remember to use **therapeutic communication techniques** and focus on the client.

#### **D. Health Promotion and Maintenance**

1. According to the NCSBN, these questions test the concepts that the nurse provides and assists in directing nursing care to promote and maintain health.
2. Content addressed in these questions relates to assisting the client and significant others during the normal expected stages of growth and development, and providing client care related to the prevention and early detection of health problems.
3. Use the Teaching and Learning theory if the question addresses client teaching, remembering that the client's willingness, desire, and readiness to learn is the first priority.
4. Watch for negative event queries because they are frequently used in questions that address Health Promotion and Maintenance and client education.

## VIII. Eliminating Comparable or Alike Options (Box 5-17)

### BOX 5-17 Practice Question: Eliminate Comparable or Alike Options

The nurse is caring for a group of clients. On review of the clients' medical records, the nurse determines that which client is at risk for excess fluid volume?

1. The client taking diuretics
2. The client with kidney disease
3. The client with an ileostomy
4. The client undergoing gastrointestinal suctioning

**Answer:** 2

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the client at risk for excess fluid volume. Think about the pathophysiology associated with each condition identified in the options. The only client who retains fluid is the client with kidney disease. The client taking diuretics, the client with an ileostomy, and the client undergoing gastrointestinal suctioning all lose fluid; these are **comparable or alike** options. Remember to eliminate **comparable or alike** options.

- A. When reading the options in multiple-choice questions, look for options that are comparable or alike.
- B. Comparable or alike options can be eliminated as possible answers because it is impossible for both options to be correct.

## IX. Eliminate Options Containing Closed-Ended Words (Box 5-18)

### BOX 5-18

### Practice Question: Eliminate Options That Contain Closed-Ended Words

A client is to undergo a barium swallow study, and the nurse provides preprocedure instructions. The nurse instructs the client to take which action in the preprocedure period?

1. Avoid eating or drinking after midnight before the test.
2. Limit self to *only* two cigarettes on the morning of the test.
3. Have a clear liquid breakfast *only* on the morning of the test.
4. Take *all* routine medications with a glass of water on the morning of the test.

**Answer:** 1

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **closed-ended words** *only* in options 2 and 3 and *all* in option 4. Eliminate options that contain **closed-ended words** because these options are usually incorrect. Also, note that options 2, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** options in that they all involve taking in something on the morning of the test. Remember to eliminate options that contain **closed-ended words**.

- A. Some closed-ended words include *all, always, every, must, none, never, and only*.
- B. Eliminate options that contain closed-ended words because these words infer a fixed or extreme meaning; these types of options are usually incorrect.
- C. Options that contain open-ended words, such as *may, usually, normally, commonly,*

or *generally*, should be considered as possible correct options.

## X. Look for the Umbrella Option (Box 5-19)

### BOX 5-19 Practice Question: Look for the Umbrella Option

A client admitted to the hospital is diagnosed with urethritis caused by chlamydial infection. The nurse should implement which precaution to prevent contraction of the infection during care?

1. Enteric precautions
2. Contact precautions
3. Standard precautions
4. Wearing gloves and a mask

**Answer:** 3

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the client's diagnosis and recall that this infection is sexually transmitted. Also, note that the correct option is the **umbrella option**.

Remember that the **umbrella option** is a broad or universal option that includes the concepts of the other options in it.

- A. When answering a question, look for the umbrella option.
- B. The umbrella option is one that is a broad or universal statement and that usually contains the concepts of the other options within it.
- C. The umbrella option will be the correct answer.

## XI. Use the Guidelines for Delegating and Making Assignments (Box 5-20)

### BOX 5-20 Practice Question: Use Guidelines for Delegating and Assignment-Making

The nurse in charge of a long-term care facility is planning the client assignments for the day. Which client should be assigned to the unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP)?

1. A client on strict bed rest
2. A client with dyspnea who is receiving oxygen therapy
3. A client scheduled for transfer to the hospital for surgery
4. A client with a gastrostomy tube who requires tube feedings every 4 hours

**Answer:** 1

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject** of the question, the assignment to be delegated to the UAP. When asked questions about delegation, think about the role description of the employee and the needs of the client. A client with dyspnea who is receiving oxygen therapy, a client scheduled for transfer to the hospital for surgery, or a client with a gastrostomy tube who requires tube feedings every 4 hours has both physiological and psychosocial needs that require care by a licensed nurse. The UAP has been trained to care for a client on bed rest. Remember to match the client's needs with the scope of practice of the health care provider.

- 
- A.** You may be asked a question that will require you to decide how you will delegate a task or assign clients to other health care providers.
  - B.** Focus on the information in the question and what task or assignment is to be delegated.
  - C.** When you have determined what task or assignment is to be delegated, consider the client's needs and match the client's needs with the scope of practice of the health care providers identified in the question.
  - D.** The Nurse Practice Act and any practice limitations define which aspects of care can be delegated and which must be performed by a registered nurse. Use nursing scope of practice as a guide to assist in answering questions.
  - E.** In general, noninvasive interventions, such as skin care, range-of-motion exercises, ambulation, grooming, and hygiene measures, can be assigned to an unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP).
  - F.** A licensed practical nurse can perform the tasks that a UAP can perform and can usually perform certain invasive tasks, such as dressings, suctioning, urinary catheterization, and administering medications orally or by the subcutaneous or intramuscular route; some selected piggyback intravenous medications may also be administered.
  - G.** A registered nurse can perform the tasks that a licensed practical nurse can perform and is responsible for assessment and planning care, analyzing client data, implementing and evaluating client care, supervising care, initiating teaching, and

administering medications intravenously.

## XII. Answering Pharmacology Questions (Box 5-21)

### BOX 5-21

### Practice Question: Answering Pharmacology Questions

Quinapril hydrochloride (Accupril) is prescribed as adjunctive therapy in the treatment of heart failure. After administering the first dose, the nurse should monitor which item as the **priority**?

1. Weight
2. Urine output
3. Lung sounds
4. Blood pressure

**Answer:** 4

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the name of the medication and note the **strategic word** *priority*. Recall that the medication names of most angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors end with “-*pril*” and that these medications are used to treat hypertension. Excessive hypotension (“first-dose syncope”) can occur in clients with heart failure or in clients who are severely salt-depleted or volume-depleted.

Although weight, urine output, and lung sounds would be monitored, monitoring the blood pressure is the priority. Remember to use pharmacology guidelines to assist in answering questions about medications.

- A. If you are familiar with the medication, use nursing knowledge to answer the question.
- B. Remember that the question will identify the generic name and the trade name of the medication.
- C. If the question identifies a medical diagnosis, try to form a relationship between the medication and the diagnosis; for example, you can determine that cyclophosphamide is an antineoplastic medication if the question refers to a client with breast cancer who is taking this medication.
- D. Try to determine the classification of the medication being addressed to assist in answering the question. Identifying the classification will assist in determining a medication's action or side effects or both; for example, diltiazem (*Cardizem*) is a cardiac medication.
- E. Recognize the common side effects associated with each medication classification and relate the appropriate nursing interventions to each side effect; for example, if a side effect is hypertension, the associated nursing intervention would be to monitor the blood pressure.
- F. Focus on what the question is asking: intended effect, side effect, adverse effect, or toxic effect.
- G. Learn medications that belong to a classification by commonalities in their medication names; for example, medications that act as beta blockers end with “-lol” (e.g., *atenolol*).

**H.** Look at the medication name and use medical terminology to assist in determining the medication action; for example, *Lopressor* lowers (*lo*) the blood pressure (*pressor*).

**I.** If the question requires a medication calculation, remember that a calculator is available on the computer; talk yourself through each step to be sure the answer makes sense, and recheck the calculation before answering the question, particularly if the answer seems like an unusual dosage.

**J.** Pharmacology: Pyramid Points to remember

1. In general, the client should not take an antacid with medication because the antacid will affect the absorption of the medication.
2. Enteric-coated and sustained-release tablets should not be crushed; also, capsules should not be opened.
3. The client should never adjust or change a medication dose or abruptly stop taking a medication.
4. The nurse never adjusts or changes the client's medication dosage and never discontinues a medication.
5. The client needs to avoid taking any over-the-counter medications or any other medications, such as herbal preparations, unless they are approved for use by the health care provider.
6. The client needs to avoid consuming alcohol.
7. Medications are never administered if the prescription is difficult to read, is unclear, or identifies a medication dose that is not a normal one.
8. Additional strategies for answering pharmacology are presented in *Saunders*

*Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX<sup>®</sup> Exam.*

# UNIT II



## Issues in Nursing

### PYRAMID TERMS

**accountability** Moral concept that involves acceptance by a professional nurse of the consequences of a decision or action.

**acculturation** Process of learning norms, beliefs, and behavioral expectations of a group other than one's own group.

**advance directive** Written document recognized by state law that provides directions concerning the provision of care when a client is unable to make his or her own treatment choices; the two basic types of advance directives include living wills and durable powers of attorney.

**advocacy** Acting on behalf of the client and protecting the client's right to make his or her own decisions.

**Client's Bill of Rights** The rights and responsibilities of clients receiving care.

**confidentiality/information security** In the health care system, refers to the protection of privacy of the client's personal health information.

**consent** Voluntary act whereby a person agrees to allow someone else to do something.

**cultural assimilation** Process in which individuals from a minority group are absorbed by the dominant culture and take on the characteristics of the dominant culture.

**cultural competence** Acquisition of knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of a culture that facilitates provision of culturally appropriate health care.

**cultural diversity** Differences among groups of people that result from ethnic, racial, and cultural variables.

**cultural imposition** Tendency to impose one's own beliefs, values, and patterns of behavior on individuals from another culture.

**culture** The knowledge, beliefs, patterns of behavior, ideas, attitudes, values, and norms that are unique to a particular group of people.

**delegation** Process of transferring a selected nursing task in a situation to an individual who is competent to perform that specific task.

**disaster** Any human-made or natural event that causes destruction and devastation that cannot be alleviated without assistance; internal disasters are events that occur within a health care agency, whereas external disasters are events that occur outside the health care agency.

**dominant culture** Group whose values prevail within a society.

**emergency response plan** A health care agency's preparedness and response plan in the event of a disaster.

**ethics** The ideals of right and wrong; guiding principles that individuals may use to make decisions.

**ethnic group** People within a culture who share characteristics based on race, religion, color, national origin, or language.

**ethnicity** An individual's identification of self as part of an ethnic group.

**evidence-based practice** Approach to client care in which the nurse integrates the client's preferences, clinical expertise, and the best research evidence to deliver quality care.

**informed consent** A client's understanding of the reason for the proposed intervention, with its benefits and risks, and agreement with the treatment by signing a consent form.

**interprofessional collaboration** Promotes sharing of expertise from health care professionals to create a plan of care that will restore and maintain a client's health.

**leadership** Interpersonal process that involves influencing others (followers) to achieve goals.

**malpractice** Type of negligence; failure to meet the standards of acceptable care, which results in harm to another person.

**management** Accomplishment of tasks or goals by oneself or by directing others.

**minority group** Ethnic, cultural, racial, or religious group that constitutes less than a numerical majority of the population.

**negligence** Conduct that falls below a standard of care; failure to meet a client's needs either willfully or by omission or failure to act.

**prioritizing** Deciding which needs or problems require immediate action and which ones could tolerate a delay in action until a later time because they are not urgent.

**race** A grouping of people based on biological similarities; members of a racial group may have similar physical characteristics, such as blood group; facial features; and color of skin, hair, and eyes.

**racism** Discrimination directed toward individuals or groups who are perceived to be inferior.

**stereotyping** Expectation that all people within the same racial, ethnic, or cultural group act alike and share the same beliefs and attitudes.

**triage** Classifying procedure that ranks clients according to their need for medical care.

## Pyramid to Success

Nurses often care for clients who come from ethnic, cultural, or religious backgrounds that are different from their own. In the past 10 years, the Hispanic population in the United States has increased by 43%; the African American population by 12.3%; and the Asian population by 43% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). It is projected that minority groups will make up a majority of the U.S. population by 2042 (Perez and Hirschman, 2009). Awareness of and sensitivity to the unique health and illness beliefs and practices of people of different backgrounds are essential for the delivery of safe and effective care. Acknowledgment and acceptance of cultural differences with a nonjudgmental attitude are essential to providing culturally sensitive care. The NCLEX-RN exam test plan is unique and individualized to the client's culture and beliefs. The nurse needs to avoid stereotyping and needs to be aware that there are several subcultures within cultures and there are several dialects within languages. In nursing practice, the nurse needs to assess the client's perceived needs before planning and implementing a plan of care.

Across all settings in the practice of nursing, nurses frequently are confronted with ethical and legal issues related to client care. The professional nurse has the responsibility to be aware of the ethical principles, laws, and guidelines related to providing safe and quality care to clients. In the Pyramid to Success, focus on ethical practices; the Nurse Practice Act and clients' rights, particularly confidentiality, information security, and informed consent; advocacy, documentation, and advance

directives; and cultural, religious, and spiritual issues. Knowledgeable use of information technology, such as an electronic health record, is also an important role of the nurse.

A professional nurse is a leader and a manager. As described in the NCLEX-RN exam test plan, a professional nurse needs to provide integrated, cost-effective care to clients by coordinating, supervising, and collaborating or consulting with members of the interprofessional health care team. A primary Pyramid Point focuses on the skills required to prioritize client care activities. Pyramid Points also focus on concepts of leadership and management, the process of delegation, an emergency response plan, and triaging clients.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Acting as a client advocate

Assessing for advance directives documents

Being familiar with the emergency response plan

Delegating client care activities and providing continuity of care

Ensuring ethical practices

Ensuring informed consent

Ensuring legal rights and responsibilities

Collaborating with interprofessional teams

Establishing priorities related to client care activities

Instituting quality improvement procedures

Integrating case management concepts

Maintaining confidentiality and information security issues related to the client's health care

Supervising the delivery of client care

Triaging clients

Upholding client rights

Using information technology in a confidential manner

Using leadership and management skills

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Considering cultural issues related to family systems and family planning

Identifying changes related to the aging process

Identifying high-risk behaviors of the client

Performing physical assessment techniques

Promoting health and preventing disease

Promoting the client's ability to perform self-care

Providing health screening and health promotion programs

Respecting cultural preferences and lifestyle choices

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Addressing end-of-life care based on the client's preferences and beliefs

Assessing the use of effective coping mechanisms

Being aware of culture preferences and incorporating these preferences when planning  
and implementing care

Identifying abuse and neglect issues

Identifying clients who do not speak or understand English and determining how  
language needs will be met, including the use of agency-approved interpreters

Identifying end-of-life care issues

Identifying family dynamics as they relate to the client's culture

Identifying support systems

Providing a therapeutic environment and building a relationship based on trust

Respecting religious and spiritual influences on health (see [Box 6-1](#))

# Physiological Integrity

Ensuring that emergencies are handled using a prioritization procedure

Identifying cultural differences for providing holistic client care

Identifying cultural issues related to alternative and complementary therapies

Identifying cultural issues related to receiving blood and blood products

Implementing therapeutic procedures considering cultural preferences

Providing nonpharmacological comfort interventions

Providing nutrition and oral hydration, considering cultural preferences (see [Box 6-1](#))

Ensuring that palliative and comfort care is provided to the client

Monitoring for alterations in body systems or unexpected responses to therapy



## CHAPTER 6

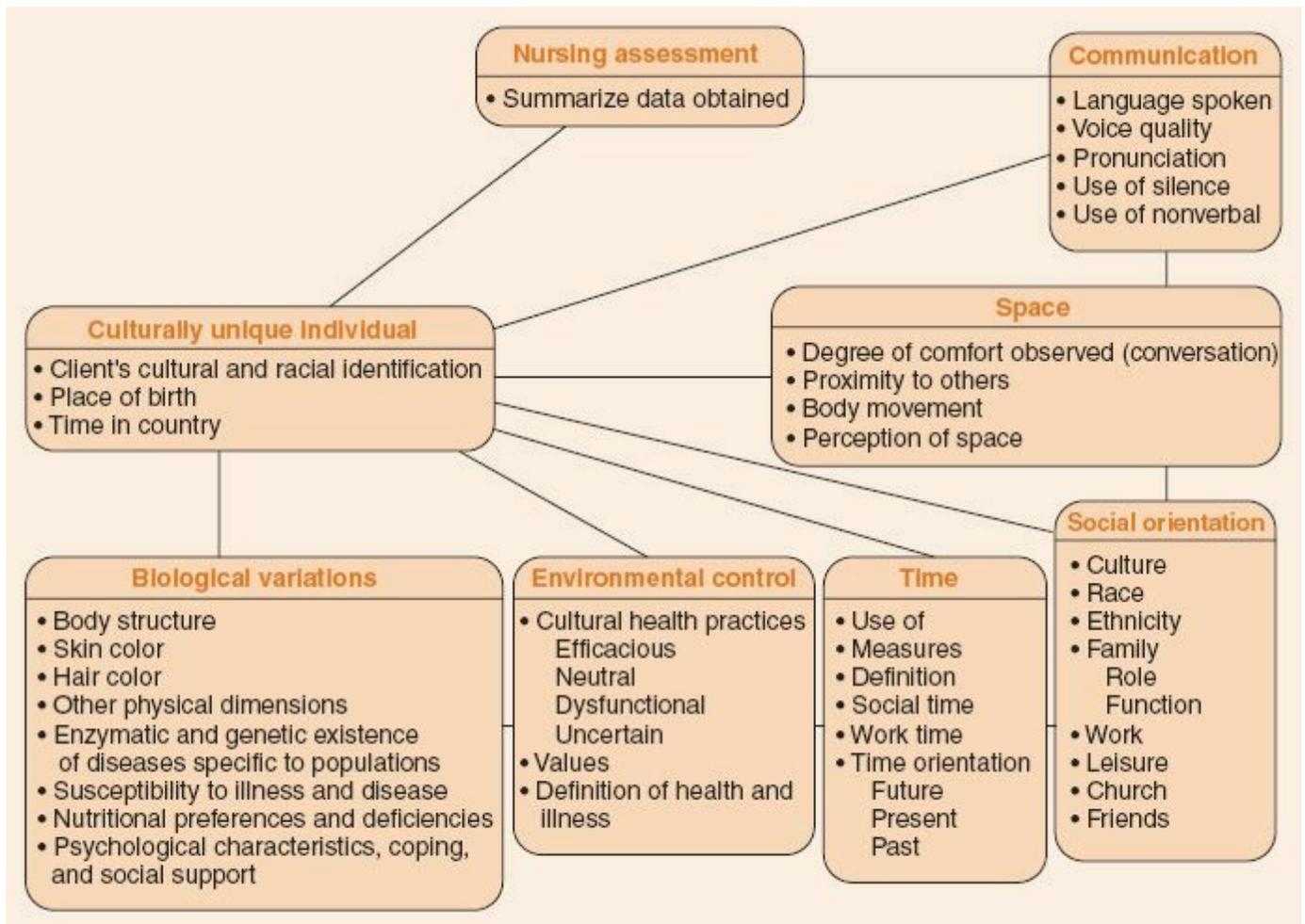
# Cultural Awareness and Health Practices

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse is preparing a client for an echocardiogram and notes that the client is wearing a religious medal on a chain around the neck. What should the nurse do with regard to removing this personal item from the client?

*Answer located on p. 45.*

For reference throughout the chapter, see [Fig. 6-1](#) and [Box 6-1](#).



**FIGURE 6-1** From Giger and Davidhizar’s Transcultural Assessment Model. (From Giger J: *Transcultural nursing: Assessment and intervention*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

**BOX 6-1 Religions and Dietary Preferences**

**Seventh-Day Adventist (Church of God)**

Alcohol and caffeinated beverages are usually prohibited.

Many are lacto-ovo vegetarians; those who eat meat avoid pork.

Overeating is prohibited; 5 to 6 hours between meals without snacking is practiced.

## **Buddhism**

Alcohol is usually prohibited.

Many are lacto-ovo vegetarians.

Some eat fish, and some avoid only beef.

## **Roman Catholicism**

They avoid meat on Ash Wednesday and Fridays of Lent.

They practice optional fasting during Lent season.

Children, pregnant women, and ill individuals are exempt from fasting.

## **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon)**

Alcohol, coffee, and tea are usually prohibited.

Consumption of meat is limited.

The first Sunday of the month is optional for fasting.

## **Hinduism**

Many are vegetarians; those who eat meat do not eat beef or pork.

Fasting rituals vary.

Children are not allowed to participate in fasting.

## **Islam**

Pork, birds of prey, alcohol, and any meat product not ritually slaughtered are prohibited.

During the month of Ramadan, fasting occurs during the daytime; some individuals may be exempt from fasting, such as pregnant women.

## **Jehovah's Witnesses**

Any foods to which blood has been added are prohibited.

They can eat animal flesh that has been drained.

## **Judaism**

Orthodox believers need to adhere to dietary kosher laws:

- Meats allowed include animals that are vegetable eaters, cloven-hoofed animals, and animals that are ritually slaughtered.
- Fish that have scales and fins are allowed.
- Any combination of meat and milk is prohibited.

During Yom Kippur, 24-hour fasting is observed.

Pregnant women, children, and ill individuals are exempt from fasting.

During Passover, only unleavened bread is eaten.

## **Pentecostal (Assembly of God)**

Alcohol is usually prohibited.

Members avoid consumption of anything to which blood has been added.

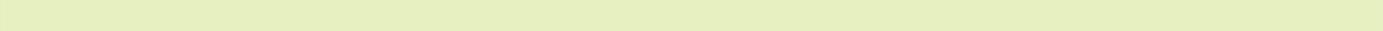
Some individuals avoid pork.

## **Eastern Orthodox**

During Lent, all animal products, including dairy products, are forbidden.

Fasting occurs during Advent.

Exceptions from fasting include illness and pregnancy; children may also be exempt.



 Cultural awareness includes learning about the cultures of clients with whom you will be working; also, ask clients about their health care practices and preferences.

## **I. African Americans**

**A.** Description: Citizens or residents of the United States who may have origins in any of the black populations in Africa.

**B.** Communication 

1. Members are competent in standard English.
2. Head nodding does not always mean agreement.
3. Prolonged eye contact may be interpreted as rudeness or aggressive behavior.
4. Nonverbal communication may be important.
5. Personal questions asked on initial contact with a person may be viewed as intrusive.

**C.** Time orientation and personal space preferences

1. Time orientation varies according to age, socioeconomics, and subcultures and may include past, present, or future orientation.
2. Members may be late for an appointment because relationships and events that are occurring may be deemed more important than being on time.
3. Members are comfortable with close personal space when interacting with family and friends.

**D.** Social roles

1. Large extended family networks are important; older adults are respected.
2. Many households may be headed by a single-parent woman.
3. Religious beliefs and church affiliation are sources of strength.

#### **E. Health and illness**

1. Religious beliefs profoundly affect ideas about health and illness.
2. Food preferences include such items as fried foods, chicken, pork, greens such as collard greens, and rice; some pregnant African American women engage in pica.

#### **F. Health risks** ▲

1. Sickle cell anemia
2. Hypertension
3. Heart disease
4. Cancer
5. Lactose intolerance
6. Diabetes mellitus
7. Obesity

#### **G. Interventions** ▲

1. Assess the meaning of the client's verbal and nonverbal behavior.
2. Be flexible and avoid rigidity in scheduling care.
3. Encourage family involvement.
4. Alternative modes of healing include herbs, prayer, and laying on of hands practices.

 Assess each individual for cultural preferences because there are many individual and subculture variations.

## II. Amish

### A. Description

1. The Amish are known for simple living, plain dress, and reluctance to adopt modern convenience and can be considered a distinct **ethnic group**; the various Amish church fellowships are Christian religious denominations that form a very traditional subgrouping of Mennonite churches.
2. Cultural beliefs and preferences vary depending on specific Amish community membership.
3. In general, they have fewer risk factors for disease than the general population because of their practice of manual labor, diet, and rare use of tobacco and alcohol; risk of certain genetic disorders is increased because of intermarriage (sexual abuse of women is a problem in some communities). 

**B. Communication:** Usually speak a German dialect called Pennsylvania Dutch; German language is usually used during worship and English is usually learned in school.

### C. Time orientation and personal space preferences

1. Members generally remain separate from other communities, physically and socially.
2. They often work as farmers, builders, quilters, and homemakers.

### D. Social roles

1. Women are not allowed to hold positions of power in the congregational

organization.

2. Roles of women are considered equally important to those of men but are very unequal in terms of authority.
3. Family life has a patriarchal structure.
4. Marriage outside the faith is not usually allowed; unmarried women remain under the authority of their fathers.

#### **E. Health and illness**

1. Most Amish need to have church (bishop and community) permission to be hospitalized because the community will come together to help pay the costs.
2. Usually, Amish do not have health insurance because it is a “worldly product” and may show a lack of faith in God.
3. Some of the barriers to modern health care include distance, lack of transportation, cost, and language (most do not understand scientific jargon).

#### **F. Health risks**

1. Genetic disorders because of intermarriage (inbreeding)
2. Nonimmunization
3. Sexual abuse of women

#### **G. Interventions**

1. Speak to both the husband and the wife regarding health care decisions.
2. Health instructions must be given in simple, clear language.
3. Teaching should be focused on health implications associated with nonimmunization, intermarriage, and sexual abuse issues.

 Be alert to cues regarding eye contact, personal space, time concepts, and understanding of the recommended plan of care.

### III. Asian Americans

A. Description: Americans of Asian descent; can include **ethnic groups** such as Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans, Japanese Americans, and others whose national origin is the Asian continent.

B. Communication 

1. Languages include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, and English.
2. Silence is valued.
3. Eye contact may be considered inappropriate or disrespectful (some Asian cultures interpret direct eye contact as a sexual invitation).
4. Criticism or disagreement is not expressed verbally.
5. Head nodding does not always mean agreement.
6. The word “no” may be interpreted as disrespect for others.

C. Time orientation and personal space preferences

1. Time orientation reflects respect for the past, but includes emphasis on the present and future.
2. Formal personal space is preferred, except with family and close friends.
3. Members usually do not touch others during conversation. 
4. For some **cultures**, touching is unacceptable between members of the opposite gender. 

5. The head is considered to be sacred in some cultures; touching someone on the head may be disrespectful. ▲

#### D. Social roles

1. Members are devoted to tradition.
2. Large extended-family networks are common.
3. Loyalty to immediate and extended family and honor are valued.
4. The family unit is structured and hierarchical.
5. Men have the power and authority, and women are expected to be obedient.
6. Education is viewed as important.
7. Religions include Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity.
8. Social organizations are strong within the community.

#### E. Health and illness

1. Health is a state of physical and spiritual harmony with nature and a balance between positive and negative energy forces (yin and yang).
2. A healthy body may be viewed as a gift from the ancestors.
3. Illness may be viewed as an imbalance between yin and yang.
4. Illness may also be attributed to prolonged sitting or lying or to overexertion.
5. Food preferences include raw fish, rice, and vegetables.

⚠ Yin foods are cold and yang foods are hot; one eats cold foods when one has a hot illness, and one eats hot foods when one has a cold illness.

## F. Health risks ▲

1. Hypertension
2. Heart disease
3. Cancer
4. Lactose intolerance
5. Thalassemia

## G. Interventions ▲

1. Be aware of and respect physical boundaries; request permission to touch the client before doing so.
2. Limit eye contact.
3. Avoid gesturing with hands.
4. A female client usually prefers a female health care provider.
5. Clarify responses to questions and expectations of the health care provider.
6. Be flexible and avoid rigidity in scheduling care.
7. Encourage family involvement.
8. Alternative modes of healing include herbs, acupuncture, restoration of balance with foods, massage, and offering of prayers and incense.

**⚠** If health care recommendations, interventions, or treatments do not fit within the client's cultural values, they will not be followed.

## IV. Hispanic and Latino Americans ▲

A. Description: Americans of origins in Latin countries; Mexican Americans, Cuban

Americans, Colombian Americans, Dominican Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, Spanish Americans, and Salvadoran Americans are some Hispanic and Latino American subgroups.

## **B. Communication** ▲

1. Languages include primarily English and Spanish.
2. Members tend to be verbally expressive, yet confidentiality is important.
3. Avoiding eye contact with a person in authority may indicate respect and attentiveness.
4. Direct confrontation is usually disrespectful and the expression of negative feelings may be impolite.
5. Dramatic body language, such as gestures or facial expressions, may be used to express emotion or pain.

## **C. Time orientation and personal space preferences**

1. Members are usually oriented more to the present.
2. Members may be late for an appointment because relationships and events that are occurring are valued more than being on time.
3. Members are comfortable in close proximity with family, friends, and acquaintances. ▲
4. Members are very tactile and use embraces and handshakes. ▲
5. Members value the physical presence of others.
6. Politeness and modesty are important.

## **D. Social roles**

1. The nuclear family is the basic unit; also, large, extended-family networks are common.
2. The extended family is highly regarded.
3. Needs of the family take precedence over the needs of an individual family member.
4. Depending on age and **acculturation** factors, men are usually the decision makers and wage earners, and women are the caretakers and homemakers.
5. Religion is usually Catholicism, but may vary depending on origin.
6. Members usually have strong church affiliations.
7. Social organizations are strong within the community.

#### E. Health and illness

1. Health may be viewed as a reward from God or a result of good luck.
2. Some members believe that health results from a state of physical and emotional balance.
3. Illness may be viewed by some members to be a result of God's punishment for sins.
4. Some members may adhere to nontraditional health measures such as folk medicine.
5. Food preferences include beans, fried foods, and spicy foods.

#### F. Health risks

1. Hypertension
2. Heart disease

3. Diabetes mellitus
4. Obesity
5. Lactose intolerance
6. Parasites

## G. Interventions

1. Allow time for the client to discuss treatment options with family members.
2. Protect privacy.
3. Offer to call clergy because of the significance of religious preferences related to illnesses.
4. Ask permission before touching a child when planning to examine or care for him or her; some believe that touching the child is important when speaking to the child to prevent “evil-eye.”
5. Be flexible regarding time of arrival for appointments and avoid rigidity in scheduling care.
6. Alternative modes of healing include herbs, consultation with lay healers, restoration of balance with hot or cold foods, prayer, and religious medals.

 **Treat each client and individuals accompanying the client with respect and be aware of the differences and diversity of beliefs about health, illness, and treatment modalities.**

## V. Native Americans

**A. Description:** Term that the U.S. government uses to describe indigenous peoples from the regions of North America encompassed by the continental United States,

including parts of Alaska, and the island state of Hawaii; comprises a large number of distinct tribes, states, and **ethnic groups**, many of which survive as intact political communities.

#### **B. Communication** ▲

1. There is much linguistic diversity, depending on origin.
2. Silence indicates respect for the speaker for some groups.
3. Some members may speak in a low tone of voice and expect others to be attentive.
4. Eye contact may be viewed as a sign of disrespect.
5. Body language is important.

#### **C. Time orientation and personal space preferences**

1. Members are oriented primarily to the present.
2. Personal space is important.
3. Members may lightly touch another person's hand during greetings.
4. Massage may be used for the newborn to promote bonding between the infant and mother. ▲
5. Some groups may prohibit touching of a dead body. ▲

#### **D. Social roles**

1. Members are family oriented.
2. The basic family unit is the extended family, which often includes persons from several households.
3. In some groups, grandparents are viewed as family leaders.
4. Elders are honored.

5. Children are taught to respect traditions.
6. The father usually does all the work outside the home, and the mother assumes responsibility for domestic duties.
7. Sacred myths and legends provide spiritual guidance for some groups.
8. Most members adhere to some form of Christianity, and religion and healing practices are usually integrated.
9. Community social organizations are important.

#### **E. Health and illness**

1. Health is usually considered a state of harmony between the individual, family, and environment.
2. Some groups believe that illness is caused by supernatural forces and disequilibrium between the person and environment.
3. Traditional health and illness beliefs may continue to be observed by some groups, including natural and religious folk medicine tradition.
4. For some groups, food preferences include cornmeal, fish, game, fruits, and berries.

#### **F. Health risks** ▲

1. Alcohol abuse
2. Obesity
3. Heart disease
4. Diabetes mellitus
5. Tuberculosis

6. Arthritis

7. Lactose intolerance

8. Gallbladder disease

## G. Interventions

1. Assess each individual for cultural preferences because there may be individual variations.
2. Clarify communication.
3. Understand that the client may be attentive, even when eye contact is absent.
4. Be attentive to your own use of body language when caring for the client or family.
5. Obtain input from members of the extended family.
6. Encourage the client to personalize space in which health care is delivered; for example, encourage the client to bring personal items or objects to the hospital.
7. In the home, assess for the availability of running water, and modify infection control and hygiene practices as necessary.
8. Alternative modes of healing include herbs, restoration of balance between the person and the universe, and consultation with traditional healers.

 If language barriers pose a problem, seek a qualified medical interpreter; avoid using ancillary staff or family members as interpreters.

## VI. White Americans

A. Description: Term used to include U.S. citizens or residents having origins in any of

the original people of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa; the term is interchangeable with Caucasian American.

## **B. Communication** ▲

1. Languages include language of origin (e.g., Italian, Polish, French, Russian) and English.
2. Silence can be used to show respect or disrespect for another, depending on the situation.
3. Eye contact is usually viewed as indicating trustworthiness in most origins.

## **C. Time orientation and personal space preferences**

1. Members are usually future oriented.
2. Time is valued; members tend to be on time and to be impatient with people who are not on time.
3. Some members may tend to avoid close physical contact. ▲
4. Handshakes are usually used for formal greetings. ▲

## **D. Social roles**

1. The nuclear family is the basic unit; the extended family is also important.
2. The man is usually the dominant figure, but a variation of gender roles exists within families and relationships.
3. Religions are varied, depending on origin.
4. Community social organizations are important.

## **E. Health and illness**

1. Health is usually viewed as an absence of disease or illness.

2. Many members usually have a tendency to be stoical when expressing physical concerns.
3. Members usually rely primarily on the modern Western health care delivery system.
4. Food preferences are based on origin; many members prefer foods containing carbohydrates and meat items.

#### F. Health risks ▲

1. Cancer
2. Heart disease
3. Diabetes mellitus
4. Obesity
5. Hypertension

#### G. Interventions ▲

1. Assess the meaning of the client's verbal and nonverbal behavior.
2. Respect the client's personal space and time.
3. Be flexible and avoid rigidity in scheduling care.
4. Encourage family involvement.

## VII. End-of-Life Care (Box 6-2)

### BOX 6-2 Religion and End-of-Life Care

#### Christianity

### ***Catholic and Orthodox***

A priest anoints the sick.

Other sacraments before death include reconciliation and holy communion.

### ***Protestant***

No last rites are provided (anointing of the sick is accepted by some groups).

Prayers are given to offer comfort and support.

### ***Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)***

A sacrament may be administered if the client requests.

### ***Jehovah's Witnesses***

Members are not allowed to receive a blood transfusion.

Members believe that the soul cannot live after the body has died.

### ***Amish***

Funerals are conducted in the home without a eulogy, flower decorations, or any other display; caskets are plain and simple, without adornment.

At death, a woman is usually buried in her bridal dress.

One is believed to live on after death, either with eternal reward in heaven or punishment in hell.

### ***Islam***

Second-degree male relatives such as cousins or uncles should be the contact people and determine whether the client or family should be given information about the

client.

The client may choose to face Mecca (west or southwest in the United States).

The head should be elevated above the body.

Discussions about death usually are not welcomed.

Stopping medical treatment is against the will of Allah (Arabic word for God).

Grief may be expressed through slapping or hitting the body.

If possible, only a same-gender Muslim should handle the body after death; if not possible, non-Muslims should wear gloves so as not to touch the body.

### **Judaism**

Prolongation of life is important (a client on life support must remain so until death).

A dying person should not be left alone (a rabbi's presence is desired).

Autopsy and cremation are usually not allowed.

### **Hinduism**

Rituals include tying a thread around the neck or wrist of the dying person, sprinkling the person with special water, and placing a leaf of basil on their tongue.

After death, the sacred threads are not removed, and the body is not washed.

### **Buddhism**

A shrine to Buddha may be placed in the client's room.

Time for meditation at the shrine is important and should be respected.

Clients may refuse medications that may alter their awareness (e.g., opioids).

After death, a monk may recite prayers for 1 hour (need not be done in the presence

of the body).

- A.** People in the Jewish faith generally oppose prolonging life after irreversible brain damage.
- B.** Some members of Eastern Orthodox religions, Muslims, and Orthodox Jews may prohibit, oppose, or discourage autopsy.
- C.** Muslims permit organ transplant for the purpose of saving human life.
- D.** The Amish permit organ donation with the exception of heart transplants (the heart is the soul of the body).
- E.** Buddhists in the United States encourage organ donation and consider it an act of mercy.
- F.** Some members of Mormon, Eastern Orthodox, Islamic, and Jewish (Conservative and Orthodox) faiths discourage, oppose, or prohibit cremation.
- G.** Hindus usually prefer cremation and cast the ashes in a holy river.
- H.** African Americans
  - 1.** Members discuss issues with the spouse or older family member (elders are held in high respect).
  - 2.** Family is highly valued and is central to the care of terminally ill members.
  - 3.** Open displays of emotion are common and accepted.
  - 4.** Members prefer to die at home.
- I.** Asian Americans
  - 1.** Family members may make decisions about care and often do not tell the client the

diagnosis or prognosis.

2. Dying at home may be considered bad luck.
3. Organ donation may not be allowed in some ethnic groups.

#### **J. Hispanic and Latino groups**

1. The family generally makes decisions and may request to withhold the diagnosis or prognosis from the client.
2. Extended-family members often are involved in end-of-life care (pregnant women may be prohibited from caring for dying clients or attending funerals).
3. Several family members may be at the dying client's bedside.
4. Vocal expression of grief and mourning is acceptable and expected.
5. Members may refuse procedures that alter the body, such as autopsy.
6. Dying at home may be considered bad luck.

#### **K. Native Americans**

1. Family meetings may be held to make decisions about end-of-life care and the type of treatments that should be pursued.
2. Some groups avoid contact with the dying (may prefer to die in the hospital).

 **Provide individualized end-of-life care to client and families.**

### **VIII. Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)**

#### **A. Description**

1. Therapies are used in addition to conventional treatment to provide healing resources and focus on the mind-body connection.

2. High-risk therapies (therapies that are invasive) and low-risk therapies (those that are noninvasive) are included in CAM.
3. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) has proposed a classification system that includes five categories of complementary and alternative types of therapy ([Box 6-3](#)).

### **BOX 6-3**

### **Categories of Complementary and Alternative Medicine**

- Whole medical systems
- Mind-body medicine
- Biologically based practices
- Manipulative and body-based practices
- Energy medicine

#### **B. Whole medical systems**

1. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM): Focuses on restoring and maintaining a balanced flow of vital energy; interventions include acupressure, acupuncture, herbal therapies, diet, meditation, tai chi, and qigong (exercise that focuses on breathing, visualization, and movement).
2. Ayurveda: Focuses on the balance of mind, body, and spirit; interventions include diet, medicinal herbs, detoxification, massage, breathing exercises, meditation, and yoga.
3. Homeopathy: Focuses on healing and interventions consisting of small doses of

specially prepared plant and mineral extracts that assist in the innate healing process of the body.

4. Naturopathy: Focuses on enhancing the natural healing responses of the body; interventions include nutrition, herbology, hydrotherapy, acupuncture, physical therapies, and counseling.

### C. Mind-body medicine

1. Mind-body medicine focuses on the interactions among the brain, mind, body, and behavior and on the powerful ways in which emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and behavioral factors can directly affect health.
2. Interventions include biofeedback, hypnosis, relaxation therapy, meditation, visual imagery, yoga, tai chi, qigong, cognitive-behavioral therapies, group supports, autogenic training, and spirituality.

### D. Biologically based practices (Box 6-4)

#### **BOX 6-4** Biologically Based Practices

##### **Aromatherapy**

The use of topical or inhaled oils (plant extracts) that promote and maintain health

##### **Herbal Therapies**

The use of herbs derived mostly from plant sources that maintain and restore balance and health

##### **Macrobiotic Diet**

Diet high in whole-grain cereals, vegetables, beans, sea vegetables, and vegetarian

soups

Elimination of meat, animal fat, eggs, poultry, dairy products, sugars, and artificially produced food from the diet

### **Orthomolecular Therapy**

Focus on nutritional balance, including use of vitamins, essential amino acids, essential fats, and minerals

1. Biologically based therapies in CAM use substances found in nature, such as herbs, foods, and vitamins.
2. Therapies include botanicals, prebiotics and probiotics, whole-food diets, functional foods, animal-derived extracts, vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, amino acids, and proteins.

#### **E. Manipulative and body-based practices**

1. Interventions involve manipulation and movement of the body by a therapist.
2. Interventions include practices such as chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation, massage therapy, and reflexology.

#### **F. Energy medicine**

1. Energy therapies focus on energy originating within the body or on energy from other sources.
2. Interventions include sound energy therapy, light therapy, acupuncture, qigong, Reiki and Johre, therapeutic touch, intercessory prayer, whole medical systems,

and magnetic therapy.

## IX. Herbal Therapies (Box 6-5)

### BOX 6-5

### Commonly Used Herbs and Health Products

*Aloe*: Antiinflammatory and antimicrobial effect; accelerates wound healing

*Angelica*: Antispasmodic and vasodilator; balances the effects of estrogen

*Bilberry*: Improves microcirculation in the eyes

*Black cohosh*: Produces estrogen-like effects

*Cat's claw*: Antioxidant; stimulates the immune system, lowers blood pressure

*Chamomile*: Antispasmodic and antiinflammatory; produces mild sedative effect

*Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)*: Converts to androgens and estrogen; slows the effects of aging; used for erectile dysfunction

*Echinacea*: Stimulates the immune system

*Evening primrose*: Assists with metabolism of fatty acids

*Feverfew*: Antiinflammatory; used for migraine headaches, arthritis, and fever

*Garlic*: Antioxidant; used to lower cholesterol levels

*Ginger*: Antiemetic; used for nausea and vomiting

*Ginkgo biloba*: Antioxidant; used to improve memory

*Ginseng*: Increases physical endurance and stamina; used for stress and fatigue

*Glucosamine*: Amino acid that assists in the synthesis of cartilage

*Goldenseal*: Antiinflammatory and antimicrobial used to stimulate the immune system; has an anticoagulant effect and may increase blood pressure

*Kava*: Antianxiety and skeletal muscle relaxant; produces a sedative effect

*Melatonin*: A hormone that regulates sleep; used for insomnia

*Milk thistle*: Antioxidant; stimulates the production of new liver cells, reduces liver inflammation; used for liver and gallbladder disease

*Peppermint oil*: Antispasmodic; used for irritable bowel syndrome

*Saw palmetto*: Antiestrogen activity; used for urinary tract infections and benign prostatic hypertrophy

*St. John's wort*: Antibacterial, antiviral, antidepressant

*Valerian*: Used to treat nervous disorders such as anxiety, restlessness, and insomnia

*Zinc*: Antiviral; stimulates the immune system

- A.** Herbal therapy is the use of herbs (plant or a plant part) for their therapeutic value in promoting health.
- B.** Some herbs have been determined to be safe, but some herbs, even in small amounts, can be toxic.
- C.** If the client is taking prescription medications, the client should consult with the health care provider regarding the use of herbs because serious herb-medication interactions can occur.
- D.** Client teaching points
  1. Discuss herbal therapies with the health care provider (HCP) before use.
  2. Contact the HCP if any side effects of the herbal substance occur.
  3. Contact the HCP before stopping the use of a prescription medication.

4. Avoid using herbs to treat a serious medical condition, such as heart disease.
5. Avoid taking herbs if pregnant or attempting to get pregnant or if nursing.
6. Do not give herbs to infants or young children.
7. Purchase herbal supplements only from a reputable manufacturer; the label should contain the scientific name of the herb, name and address of the manufacturer, batch or lot number, date of manufacture, and expiration date.
8. Adhere to the recommended dose; if herbal preparations are taken in high doses, they can be toxic.
9. Moisture, sunlight, and heat may alter the components of herbal preparations.
10. If surgery is planned, the herbal therapy may need to be discontinued 2 to 3 weeks before surgery.

 Some herbs have been determined to be safe, but some herbs, even in small amounts, can be toxic. Ask the client to discuss herbal therapies with the HCP before use.

## **X. Low-Risk Therapies**

- A.** Low-risk therapies are therapies that have no adverse effects and, when implementing care, can be used by the nurse who has training and experience in their use.
- B.** Common low-risk therapies
  1. Meditation
  2. Relaxation techniques
  3. Imagery

4. Music therapy
5. Massage
6. Touch
7. Laughter and humor
8. Spiritual measures, such as prayer

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Before certain diagnostic procedures, it is typical to have a client remove personal objects that are worn on the body. The nurse should ask the client about the significance of such an item and its removal because it may have cultural or spiritual significance. The nurse should also determine whether the item will compromise client safety or the test results. If so, then the nurse should ask the client if the item can be either removed temporarily or placed on another part of the body during the procedure.

### *Reference*

Lewis et al (2011), p. 93.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. The ambulatory care nurse is discussing preoperative procedures with a Japanese American client who is scheduled for surgery the following week. During the

discussion, the client continually smiles and nods the head. How should the nurse interpret this nonverbal behavior?

1. Reflecting a cultural value
2. An acceptance of the treatment
3. Client agreement to the required procedures
4. Client understanding of the preoperative procedures

2. When communicating with a client who speaks a different language, which **best** practice should the nurse implement?

1. Speak loudly and slowly.
2. Arrange for an interpreter to translate.
3. Speak to the client and family together.
4. Stand close to the client and speak loudly.

3. The nurse educator is providing in-service education to the nursing staff regarding transcultural nursing care; a staff member asks the nurse educator to describe the concept of acculturation. The nurse educator should make which **most appropriate** response?

1. "It is a process of learning a different culture to adapt to a new or changing environment."
2. "It is a subjective perspective of the person's heritage and a sense of belonging to a group."
3. "It is a group of individuals in a society who are culturally distinct and have a

unique identity.”

4. “It is a group that shares some of the characteristics of the larger population group of which it is a part.”

4. The nurse is providing discharge instructions to a Chinese American client regarding prescribed dietary modifications. During the teaching session, the client continuously turns away from the nurse. The nurse should implement which **best** action?

1. Continue with the instructions, verifying client understanding.
2. Walk around the client so that the nurse constantly faces the client.
3. Give the client a dietary booklet and return later to continue with the instructions.
4. Tell the client about the importance of the instructions for the maintenance of health care.

5. The nurse identifies low-risk therapies to a client and should include which therapy(s) in the discussion? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Herbs
2. Prayer
3. Touch
4. Massage
5. Relaxation
6. Acupuncture

6. Which client(s) has a high risk of obesity and diabetes mellitus? **Select all that apply.**

1. A 40-year-old Latino American man
2. A 45-year-old Native American man
3. A 23-year-old Asian American woman
4. A 35-year-old Hispanic American man
5. A 40-year-old African American woman

7. The nurse is preparing a plan of care for a client who is a Jehovah's Witness.

The client has been told that surgery is necessary. The nurse considers the client's religious preferences in developing the plan of care and should document which information?

1. The client believes the soul lives on after death.
2. Medication administration is not allowed.
3. Surgery is prohibited in this religious group.
4. The administration of blood and blood products is not allowed.

8. Which meal tray should the nurse deliver to a client of Orthodox Judaism faith who follows a kosher diet?

1. Pork roast, rice, vegetables, mixed fruit, milk
2. Crab salad on a croissant, vegetables with dip, potato salad, milk
3. Sweet and sour chicken with rice and vegetables, mixed fruit, juice
4. Noodles and cream sauce with shrimp and vegetables, salad, mixed fruit, iced

tea

9. An Asian American client is experiencing a fever. The nurse recognizes that the client is likely to self-treat the disorder, using which method?

1. Prayer
2. Magnetic therapy
3. Foods considered to be yin
4. Foods considered to be yang

10. The role of the nurse regarding complementary and alternative medicine should include which action?

1. Advising the client about “good” versus “bad” therapies
2. Recommending herbal remedies that the client should use
3. Discouraging the client from using any alternative therapies
4. Educating the client about therapies that he or she is using or is interested in using

11. An antihypertensive medication has been prescribed for a client with hypertension. The client tells the clinic nurse that they would like to take an herbal substance to help lower their blood pressure. The nurse should take which action?

1. Tell the client that herbal substances are not safe and should never be used.
2. Teach the client how to take their blood pressure so that it can be monitored closely.

3. Encourage the client to discuss the use of an herbal substance with the health care provider.
4. Tell the client that if they take the herbal substance they will need to have their blood pressure checked frequently.

12. The nurse educator asks a student to list the five categories of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), developed by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Which statement, if made by the nursing student, would indicate an understanding of the five categories of CAM?

1. Herbology, hydrotherapy, acupuncture, nutrition, and chiropractic care
2. Mind-body medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, homeopathy, naturopathy, and healing touch
3. Biologically based practices, body-based practices, magnetic therapy, massage therapy, and aromatherapy
4. Whole medical systems, mind-body medicine, biologically based practices, manipulative and body-based practices, and energy medicine

## ANSWERS

1. 1

**Rationale:** Nodding or smiling by a Japanese American client may reflect only the cultural value of interpersonal harmony. This nonverbal behavior may not be an indication of acceptance of the treatment, agreement with the speaker, or understanding of the procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, select the correct option because it is characteristic of Asian American cultures. In addition, option 4 is an incorrect interpretation of the client's nonverbal behavior.

**Review:** The cultural characteristics of **Asian Americans**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Culture

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), p. 43.

## 2. 2

**Rationale:** Arranging for an interpreter would be the best practice when communicating with a client who speaks a different language. Options 1 and 4 are inappropriate and are ineffective ways to communicate. Option 3 is inappropriate because it violates privacy and does not ensure correct translation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best* in the question. Eliminate option 3 first because it violates the client's right to privacy. Next, eliminate options 1 and 4 noting the word *loudly* in these options and because they are nontherapeutic actions.

**Review:** **Communication techniques** for a client who speaks a different language

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Culture

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), pp. 45-47.

### 3. 1

**Rationale:** Acculturation is a process of learning a different culture to adapt to a new or changing environment.

Option 2 describes ethnic identity. Option 3 describes an ethnic group. Option 4 describes a subculture.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the **subject**, acculturation. Think about the definition of acculturation to help direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The definition of **acculturation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Culture; Professionalism

**References:** Jarvis (2012), p. 16; Lewis et al (2011), p. 24.

### 4. 1

**Rationale:** Most Chinese Americans maintain a formal distance with others, which is a form of respect. Many Chinese Americans are uncomfortable with face-to-face communications, especially when eye contact is direct. If the client turns away from the nurse during a conversation, the best action is to continue with the conversation.

Walking around the client so that the nurse faces the client is in direct conflict with this cultural practice. The client may consider it a rude gesture if the nurse returns later to continue with the explanation. Telling the client about the

importance of the instructions for the maintenance of health care may be viewed as degrading.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Focus on the **subject**, the behavior of a Chinese American client. Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because these actions are nontherapeutic. To select from the remaining options, think about the cultural practices of Chinese Americans and recall that direct eye contact may be uncomfortable for the client.

**Review:** The communication practices of **Asian Americans**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Culture

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), p. 47.

## ❖ 5. 2, 3, 4, 5

**Rationale:** Low-risk therapies are therapies that have no adverse effects and, when implementing care, can be used by the nurse who has training and experience in their use. Low-risk therapies include meditation, relaxation techniques, imagery, music therapy, massage, touch, laughter and humor, and spiritual measures, such as prayer. The other options are not considered low-risk therapies.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, low-risk therapies. Recalling that low-risk therapies are therapies that are noninvasive and that have no adverse effects and can be used by the nurse who has training and experience will direct you to the correct options.

**Review:** **Complementary and alternative medicine** and **low-risk therapies**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Stress

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 91.

## ❖ 6. 1, 2, 4, 5

**Rationale:** Because of their health and dietary practices, Native Americans, Latino Americans, Hispanic Americans, and African Americans have a high risk of obesity and diabetes mellitus. Asian Americans have a lower risk for obesity and diabetes mellitus.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, those with a high risk for diabetes mellitus and obesity. Think about the health and dietary practices of each cultural group and note the ages of each client in the options to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The **health risks** for various ethnic groups

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Culture; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 946, 1235.

## 7. 4

**Rationale:** Among Jehovah's Witnesses, surgery is not prohibited, but the administration of blood and blood

products is forbidden. This religious group believes the soul cannot live after death. Administration of medication is an acceptable practice except if the medication is derived from blood products.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. Remember that the administration of blood and any associated blood products is forbidden among Jehovah's Witnesses.

**Review:** The cultural preferences of **Jehovah's Witnesses**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Culture

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 28.

### 8. 3

**Rationale:** Orthodox Judaism believers adhere to dietary kosher laws. In this religion, the dairy-meat combination is unacceptable. Only fish that have scales and fins are allowed; meats that are allowed include animals that are vegetable eaters, cloven-hoofed, and ritually slaughtered.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, dietary kosher laws, and recall that the dairy-meat combination is unacceptable in the Orthodox Judaism group. Eliminate option 1 because this option contains pork roast and milk. Next eliminate options 2 and 4 because both options contain shellfish.

**Review:** The dietary rules of members of the **Orthodox Judaism** religious group

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concept:** Culture; Nutrition

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 28; Potter et al (2013), p. 111.

### 9. 3

**Rationale:** In the Asian-American culture, health is believed to be a state of physical and spiritual harmony with nature and a balance between positive and negative energy forces (yin and yang). Yin foods are cold and yang foods are hot. Cold foods are eaten when one has a hot illness (fever), and hot foods are eaten when one has a cold illness. Options 1 and 2 are not health practices specifically associated with the Asian American culture or the yin and yang theory.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an Asian American, and the client's diagnosis, fever. Remember that cold foods (yin foods) are eaten when one has a hot illness, and hot foods (yang foods) are eaten when one has a cold illness.

**Review:** The **yin and yang** theory and the health practices of the **Asian-American** culture

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concept:** Culture; Thermoregulation

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), p. 21.

### 10. 4

**Rationale:** Complementary (alternative) therapies include a wide variety of treatment modalities that are used in

addition to conventional therapy to treat a disease or illness. Educating the client about therapies that he or she uses or is interested in using is the nurse's role. Options 1, 2, and 3 are inappropriate actions for the nurse to take because they provide advice to the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use **therapeutic communication techniques**. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are nontherapeutic. Recommending an herbal remedy or discouraging a client from doing something is not within the role practices of the nurse. In addition, it is nontherapeutic to advise a client to do something.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques** and the nurse's role in educating clients about **complementary and alternative medicine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Culture

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 643-646.

### 11.3

**Rationale:** Although herbal substances may have some beneficial effects, not all herbs are safe to use. Clients who are being treated with conventional medication therapy should be encouraged to avoid herbal substances with similar pharmacological effects because the combination may lead to an excessive reaction or to unknown interaction effects. The nurse should advise the client to discuss the use of the herbal substance with the HCP. Therefore, options 1, 2, and 4 are inappropriate nursing actions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate option 1 first because of the **closed-ended word** *never*. Next, eliminate options 2 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and relate to blood pressure monitoring.

**Review:** The limitations associated with the use of **herbal substances**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Adherence; Client Education

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 93; Ulbricht (2010), p. 4.

## 12. 4

**Rationale:** The five categories of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) include whole medical systems, mind-body medicine, biologically based practices, manipulative and body-based practices, and energy medicine. The other options contain therapies within each category of CAM.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, the five categories of CAM. Noting that the question asks about categories, not therapies, will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** The categories of **complementary and alternative medicine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Evidence

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 643-646.



## CHAPTER 7

# Ethical and Legal Issues

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

While preparing a client for surgery scheduled in 1 hour, the client states to the nurse: “I have changed my mind. I don’t want this surgery.” What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 60.*

### I. Ethics

- A. Description: The branch of philosophy concerned with the distinction between right and wrong on the basis of a body of knowledge, not only on the basis of opinions
- B. Morality: Behavior in accordance with customs or tradition, usually reflecting personal or religious beliefs
- C. Ethical principles: Codes that direct or govern nursing actions (**Box 7-1**)

#### BOX 7-1 Ethical Principles

*Autonomy:* Respect for an individual’s right to self-determination

*Nonmaleficence:* The obligation to do or cause no harm to another

*Beneficence:* The duty to do good to others and to maintain a balance between benefits and harms; paternalism is an undesirable outcome of beneficence, in which the health care provider decides what is best for the client and encourages the client to act against his or her own choices

*Justice:* The equitable distribution of potential benefits and tasks determining the order in which clients should be cared for

*Veracity:* The obligation to tell the truth

*Fidelity:* The duty to do what one has promised

**D. Values:** Beliefs and attitudes that may influence behavior and the process of decision making

**E. Values clarification:** Process of analyzing one's own values to understand oneself more completely regarding what is truly important

**F. Ethical codes**

1. Ethical codes provide broad principles for determining and evaluating client care.

2. These codes are not legally binding, but the board of nursing has authority in most states to reprimand nurses for unprofessional conduct that results from violation of the ethical codes. ▲

3. Specific ethical codes are as follows:

a. The Code of Ethics for Nurses developed by the International Council of

Nurses; Web site: <http://www.icn.ch/about-icn/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/>.

b. The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics can be viewed on the American Nurses Associate Web site:

<http://www.nursingworld.org/codeofethics>.

## G. Ethical dilemma

1. An ethical dilemma occurs when there is a conflict between two or more ethical principles.
2. No correct decision exists, and the nurse must make a choice between two alternatives that are equally unsatisfactory.
3. Such dilemmas may occur as a result of differences in cultural or religious beliefs.
4. Ethical reasoning is the process of thinking through what one should do in an orderly and systematic manner to provide justification for actions based on principles; the nurse should gather all information to determine whether an ethical dilemma exists, examine his or her own values, verbalize the problem, consider possible courses of action, negotiate the outcome, and evaluate the action taken.

## H. Advocate ▲

1. An advocate is a person who speaks up for or acts on the behalf of the client, protects the client's right to make his or her own decisions, and upholds the principle of fidelity.
2. An advocate represents the client's viewpoint to others.
3. An advocate avoids letting personal values influence **advocacy** for the client and supports the client's decision, even when it conflicts with the advocate's own preferences or choices.

## I. Ethics committees

1. Ethics committees take a multidisciplinary approach to facilitate dialogue regarding ethical dilemmas.
2. These committees develop and establish policies and procedures to facilitate the prevention and resolution of dilemmas.

 An important nursing responsibility is to act as a client advocate and protect the client's rights.

## II. Regulation of Nursing Practice

### A. Nurse Practice Act

1. A nurse practice act is a series of statutes that have been enacted by each state legislature to regulate the practice of nursing in that state.
2. Nurse practice acts set educational requirements for the nurse, distinguish between nursing practice and medical practice, and define the scope of nursing practice.
3. Additional issues covered by nurse practice acts include licensure requirements for protection of the public, grounds for disciplinary action, rights of the nurse licensee if a disciplinary action is taken, and related topics.
4. All nurses are responsible for knowing the provisions of the act of the state or province in which they work.

### B. Standards of care

1. Standards of care are guidelines that identify what the client can expect to receive

in terms of nursing care.

2. The guidelines determine whether nurses have performed duties in an appropriate manner.
3. If the nurse does not perform duties within accepted standards of care, the nurse places himself or herself in jeopardy of legal action.
4. If the nurse is named as a defendant in a **malpractice** lawsuit and proceedings show that the nurse followed neither the accepted standards of care outlined by the state or province nurse practice act nor the policies of the employing institution, the nurse's legal liability is clear; he or she is liable.

### C. Employee guidelines

1. **Respondeat superior:** The employer is held liable for any negligent acts of an employee if the alleged negligent act occurred during the employment relationship and was within the scope of the employee's responsibilities.
2. **Contracts**
  - a. Nurses are responsible for carrying out the terms of a contractual agreement with the employing agency and the client.
  - b. The nurse-employee relationship is governed by established employee handbooks and client care policies and procedures that create obligations, rights, and duties between those parties.
3. **Institutional policies**
  - a. Written policies and procedures of the employing institution detail how nurses are to perform their duties.

- b. Policies and procedures are usually specific and describe the expected behavior on the part of the nurse.
- c. Although policies are not laws, courts generally rule against nurses who violate policies. ▲
- d. If the nurse practices nursing according to client care policies and procedures established by the employer, functions within the job responsibility, and provides care consistently in a nonnegligent manner, the nurse minimizes the potential for liability.

⚠ The nurse must follow the guidelines identified in the Nurse Practice Act and agency policies and procedures when delivering client care.

#### D. Hospital staffing

1. Charges of abandonment may be made against nurses who “walk out” when staffing is inadequate. ▲
2. Nurses in short staffing situations are obligated to make a report to the nursing administration.

#### E. Floating

1. Floating is an acceptable, legal practice used by health care facilities to alleviate understaffing and overstaffing.
2. Legally, the nurse cannot refuse to float unless a union contract guarantees that nurses can work only in a specified area or the nurse can prove lack of knowledge for the performance of assigned tasks. ▲

3. Nurses in a floating situation must not assume responsibility beyond their level of experience or qualification.
4. Nurses who float should inform the supervisor of any lack of experience in caring for the type of clients on the new nursing unit.
5. The nurse should request and be given orientation to the new unit.

#### F. Disciplinary action

1. Boards of nursing may deny, revoke, or suspend any license to practice as a registered nurse, according to their statutory authority.
2. Some causes for disciplinary action are as follows:
  - a. Unprofessional conduct
  - b. Conduct that could affect the health and welfare of the public adversely
  - c. Breach of client **confidentiality**
  - d. Failure to use sufficient knowledge, skills, or nursing judgment
  - e. Physically or verbally abusing a client
  - f. Assuming duties without sufficient preparation
  - g. Knowingly delegating to unlicensed personnel nursing care that places the client at risk for injury
  - h. Failure to maintain an accurate record for each client
  - i. Falsifying a client's record
  - j. Leaving a nursing assignment without properly notifying appropriate personnel

### III. Legal Liability

## A. Laws

1. Nurses are governed by civil and criminal law in roles as providers of services, employees of institutions, and private citizens.
2. The nurse has a personal and legal obligation to provide a standard of client care expected of a reasonably competent professional nurse.
3. Professional nurses are held responsible (liable) for harm resulting from their negligent acts or their failure to act.

## B. Types of laws (Box 7-2; Fig. 7-1)

### **BOX 7-2** Types of Law

#### **Contract Law**

Contract law is concerned with enforcement of agreements among private individuals.

#### **Civil Law**

Civil law is concerned with relationships among persons and the protection of a person's rights. Violation may cause harm to an individual or property, but no grave threat to society exists.

#### **Criminal Law**

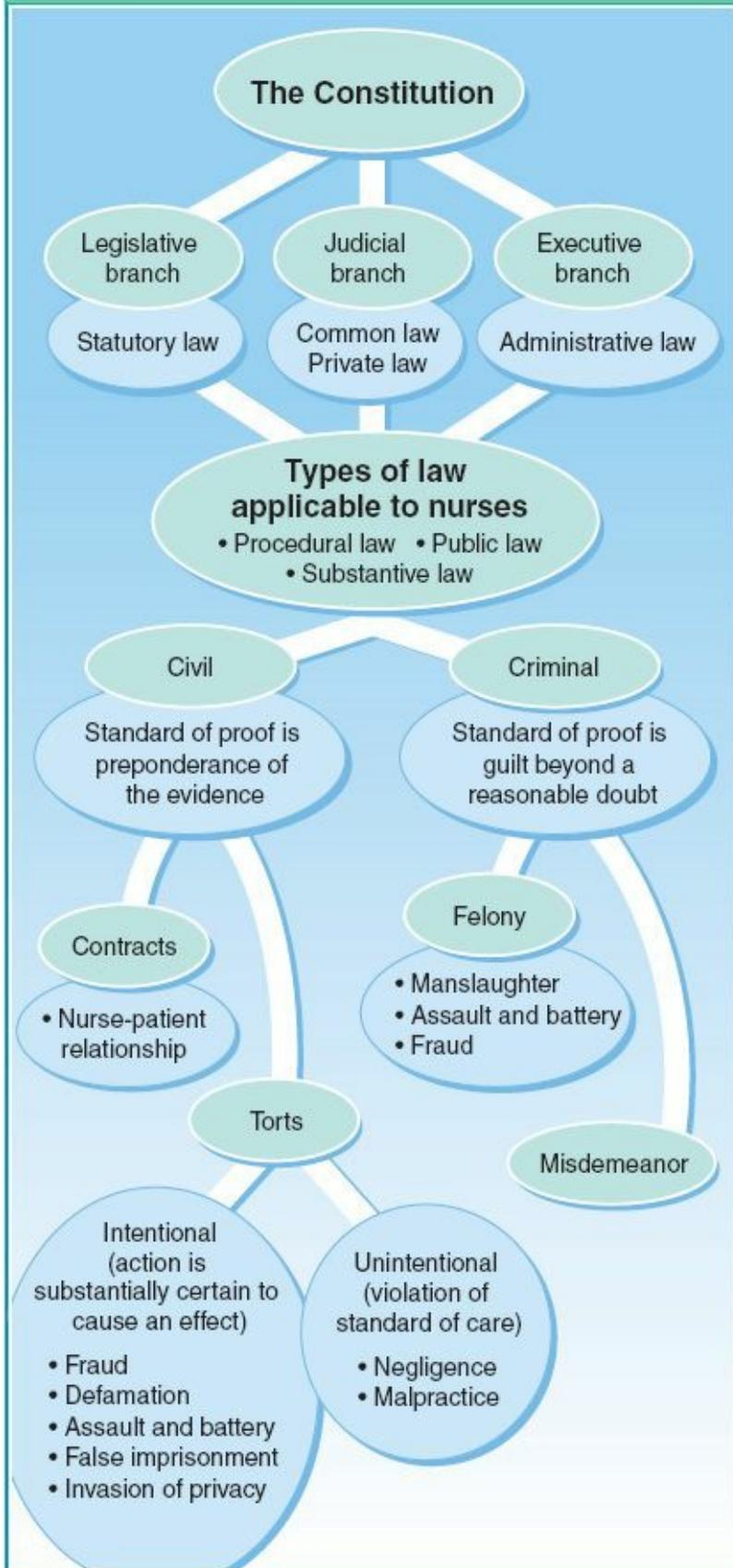
Criminal law is concerned with relationships between individuals and governments, and with acts that threaten society and its order; a crime is an offense against society that violates a law and is defined as a misdemeanor (less serious nature) or felony

(serious nature).

### **Tort Law**

A tort is a civil wrong, other than a breach in contract, in which the law allows an injured person to seek damages from a person who caused the injury.

# Sources of Law (the balance of power)



**FIGURE 7-1** Sources of law for nursing practice. (From Harkreader H, Hogan MA, Thobaben M: *Fundamentals of nursing: Caring and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)

### C. Negligence and malpractice (Box 7-3) ▲

#### **BOX 7-3** Examples of Negligent Acts

- Medication errors that result in injury to the client
- Intravenous administration errors, such as incorrect flow rates or failure to monitor a flow rate, that result in injury to the client
- Falls that occur as a result of failure to provide safety to the client
- Failure to use sterile technique when indicated
- Failure to check equipment for proper functioning
- Burns sustained by the client as a result of failure to monitor bath temperature or equipment
- Failure to monitor a client's condition
- Failure to report changes in the client's condition to the health care provider
- Failure to provide a complete report to the oncoming nursing staff

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

1. Negligence is conduct that falls below the standard of care.

2. Negligence can include acts of commission and acts of omission.
3. The nurse who does not meet appropriate standards of care may be held liable.
4. Malpractice is negligence on the part of the nurse.
5. Malpractice is determined if the nurse owed a duty to the client and did not carry out the duty and the client was injured because the nurse failed to perform the duty.
6. Proof of liability 
  - a. Duty: At the time of injury, a duty existed between the plaintiff and the defendant.
  - b. Breach of duty: The defendant breached duty of care to the plaintiff.
  - c. Proximate cause: The breach of the duty was the legal cause of injury to the client.
  - d. Damage or injury: The plaintiff experienced injury or damages or both and can be compensated by law.

 The nurse must meet appropriate standards of care when delivering care to the client; otherwise the nurse would be held liable if the client is harmed.

#### **D. Professional liability insurance**

1. Nurses need their own liability insurance for protection against malpractice lawsuits. 
2. Having their own insurance provides nurses protection as individuals; this allows the nurse to have an attorney present if necessary, who has only the nurse's

interests in mind.

#### **E. Good Samaritan laws**

1. State legislatures pass Good Samaritan laws, which may vary from state to state.
2. These laws encourage health care professionals to assist in emergency situations and limit liability and offer legal immunity for persons helping in an emergency, provided that they give reasonable care.
3. Immunity from suit applies only when all conditions of the state law are met, such as the health care provider receives no compensation for the care provided and the care given is not intentionally negligent.

#### **F. Controlled substances**

1. The nurse should adhere to facility policies and procedures concerning administration of controlled substances, which are governed by federal and state laws.
2. Controlled substances must be kept locked securely, and only authorized personnel should have access to them.

### **IV. Collective Bargaining**

- A.** Collective bargaining is a formalized decision-making process between representatives of management and representatives of labor to negotiate wages and conditions of employment.
- B.** When collective bargaining breaks down because the parties cannot reach an agreement, the employees usually call a strike.
- C.** Striking presents a moral dilemma to many nurses because nursing practice is a

service to people.

## V. Legal Risk Areas ▲

### A. Assault

1. Assault occurs when a person puts another person in fear of a harmful or offensive contact.
2. The victim fears and believes that harm will result because of the threat.

**B.** Battery is an intentional touching of another's body without the other's **consent**.

**C.** Invasion of privacy includes violating **confidentiality**, intruding on private client or family matters, and sharing client information with unauthorized persons.

### D. False imprisonment

1. False imprisonment occurs when a client is not allowed to leave a health care facility when there is no legal justification to detain the client.
2. False imprisonment occurs when restraining devices are used without an appropriate clinical need.
3. A client can sign an Against Medical Advice form when the client refuses care and is competent to make decisions.
4. The nurse should document circumstances in the medical record to avoid allegations by the client that cannot be defended.

**E.** Defamation is a false communication that causes damage to someone's reputation, either in writing (libel) or verbally (slander).

**F.** Fraud results from a deliberate deception intended to produce unlawful gains.

## VI. Client's Rights ▲

### A. Description

1. The client's rights document, also called the **Client's Bill of Rights**, reflects acknowledgment of a client's right to participate in her or his health care with an emphasis on client autonomy.
2. The document provides a list of the rights of the client and responsibilities that the hospital cannot violate ([Box 7-4](#)).

#### **BOX 7-4**

#### **Client's Rights When Hospitalized**

- Right to considerate and respectful care
- Right to be informed about diagnosis, possible treatments, likely outcome, and to discuss this information with the health care provider
- Right to know the names and roles of the persons who are involved in care
- Right to consent or refuse a treatment
- Right to have an advance directive
- Right to privacy
- Right to expect that medical records are confidential
- Right to review the medical record and to have information explained
- Right to expect that the hospital will provide necessary health services
- Right to know if the hospital has relationships with outside parties that may influence treatment or care
- Right to consent or refuse to take part in research

- Right to be told of realistic care alternatives when hospital care is no longer appropriate
- Right to know about hospital rules that affect treatment, and about charges and payment methods

From Christensen B, Kockrow E: *Foundations of nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby; and adapted from American Hospital Association: *The patient care partnership: Understanding expectations, rights and responsibilities*. Available at [www.aha.org/content/00-10/pcp\\_english\\_030730.pdf](http://www.aha.org/content/00-10/pcp_english_030730.pdf).

3. The client's rights protect the client's ability to determine the level and type of care received; all health care agencies are required to have a Client's Bill of Rights posted in a visible area.
4. Several laws and standards pertain to client's rights (Box 7-5).

### **BOX 7-5**      **Laws and Standards**

#### **American Hospital Association**

Issued Client's Bill of Rights

#### **American Nurses Association**

Developed the Code of Ethics for Nurses, which defines the nurse's responsibility for upholding client's rights

#### **Mental Health Systems Act**

Developed rights for mentally ill clients

### **The Joint Commission**

Developed policy statements on the rights of mentally ill individuals

## **B. Rights for the mentally ill (Box 7-6)**

### **BOX 7-6 Rights for the Mentally Ill**

- Right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Right to communicate with persons outside the hospital
- Right to keep clothing and personal effects with them
- Right to religious freedom
- Right to be employed
- Right to manage property
- Right to execute wills
- Right to enter into contractual agreements
- Right to make purchases
- Right to education
- Right to habeas corpus (written request for release from the hospital)
- Right to an independent psychiatric examination
- Right to civil service status, including the right to vote
- Right to retain licenses, privileges, or permits
- Right to sue or be sued

- Right to marry or divorce
- Right to treatment in the least restrictive setting
- Right not to be subject to unnecessary restraints
- Right to privacy and confidentiality
- Right to informed consent
- Right to treatment and to refuse treatment
- Right to refuse participation in experimental treatments or research

Adapted from Stuart G: *Principles and practice of psychiatric nursing*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

1. The Mental Health Systems Act created rights for mentally ill people.
2. The Joint Commission has developed policy statements on the rights of mentally ill people.
3. Psychiatric facilities are required to have a Client's Bill of Rights posted in a visible area.

#### C. Organ donation and transplantation

1. A client has the right to decide to become an organ donor and a right to refuse organ transplantation as a treatment option.
2. An individual who is at least 18 years old may indicate a wish to become a donor on his or her driver's license (state-specific) or in an **advance directive**.
3. The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act provides a list of individuals who can provide **informed consent** for the donation of a deceased individual's organs.

4. The United Network for Organ Sharing sets the criteria for organ donations.
5. Some organs, such as the heart, lungs, and liver, can be obtained only from a person who is on mechanical ventilation and has suffered brain death, whereas other organs or tissues can be removed several hours after death.
6. A donor must be free of infectious disease and cancer.
7. Requests to the deceased's family for organ donation usually are done by the health care provider (HCP) or nurse specially trained for making such requests.
8. Donation of organs does not delay funeral arrangements; no obvious evidence that the organs were removed from the body shows when the body is dressed; and the family incurs no cost for removal of the organs donated.

**D. Religious beliefs: Organ donation and transplantation**

1. Catholic Church: Organ donation and transplants are acceptable.
2. Orthodox Church: Church discourages organ donation.
3. Islam (Muslim) beliefs: Body parts may not be removed or donated for transplantation.
4. Jehovah's Witness: An organ transplant may be accepted, but the organ must be cleansed with a nonblood solution before transplantation.
5. Orthodox Judaism
  - a. All body parts removed during autopsy must be buried with the body because it is believed that the entire body must be returned to the earth; organ donation may not be considered by family members.
  - b. Organ transplantation may be allowed with the rabbi's approval.

6. Refer to [Chapter 6](#) for additional information regarding end-of-life care.

## VII. Informed Consent ▲

### A. Description

1. Informed consent is the client's approval (or that of the client's legal representative) to have his or her body touched by a specific individual.
2. **Consents**, or releases, are legal documents that indicate the client's permission to perform surgery, perform a treatment or procedure, or give information to a third party.
3. There are different types of consents ([Box 7-7](#)).

#### **BOX 7-7** Types of Consents

##### **Admission Agreement**

Admission agreements are obtained at the time of admission and identify the health care agency's responsibility to the client.

##### **Immunization Consent**

An immunization consent may be required before the administration of certain immunizations; the consent indicates that the client was informed of the benefits and risks of the immunization.

##### **Blood Transfusion Consent**

A blood transfusion consent indicates that the client was informed of the benefits and risks of the transfusion. Some clients hold religious beliefs that would prohibit them

from receiving a blood transfusion, even in a life-threatening situation.

### **Surgical Consent**

Surgical consent is obtained for all surgical or invasive procedures or diagnostic tests that are invasive. The health care provider, surgeon, or anesthesiologist who performs the operative or other procedure is responsible for explaining the procedure, its risks and benefits, and possible alternative options.

### **Research Consent**

The research consent obtains permission from the client regarding participation in a research study. The consent informs the client about the possible risks, consequences, and benefits of the research.

### **Special Consents**

Special consents are required for the use of restraints, photographing the client, disposal of body parts during surgery, donating organs after death, or performing an autopsy.

4. Informed consent indicates the client's participation in the decision regarding health care.
5. The client must be informed, in understandable terms, of the risks and benefits of the surgery or treatment, what the consequences are for not having the surgery or procedure performed, treatment options, and the name of the health care provider performing the surgery or procedure.

6. A client's questions about the surgery or procedure must be answered before signing the consent.
7. A consent must be signed freely by the client without threat or pressure and must be witnessed (witness must be an adult).
8. A client who has been medicated with sedating medications or any other medications that can affect the client's cognitive abilities must not be asked to sign a consent.
9. Legally, the client must be mentally and emotionally competent to give consent.
10. If a client is declared mentally or emotionally incompetent, the next of kin, appointed guardian (appointed by the court), or durable power of attorney has legal authority to give consent (Box 7-8).

### **BOX 7-8**

### **Mentally or Emotionally Incompetent Clients**

- Declared incompetent
- Unconscious
- Under the influence of chemical agents such as alcohol or drugs
- Chronic dementia or other mental deficiency that impairs thought processes and ability to make decisions

11. A competent client older than 18 years of age must sign the consent.
12. In most states, when the nurse is involved in the informed consent process, the nurse is witnessing only the signature of the client on the informed consent form.

13. An informed consent can be waived for urgent medical or surgical intervention as long as institutional policy so indicates.
14. A client has the right to refuse information and waive the informed consent and undergo treatment, but this decision must be documented in the medical record.
15. A client may withdraw consent at any time.

 An informed consent is a legal document, and the client must be informed by the health care provider, in understandable terms, of the risks and benefits of surgery, treatments, procedures, and plan of care. The client needs to be a participant in decisions regarding health care.

## B. Minors

1. A minor is a client under legal age as defined by state statute (usually younger than 18 years).
2. A minor may not give legal consent, and consent must be obtained from a parent or the legal guardian; assent by the minor is important because it allows for communication of the minor's thoughts and feelings.
3. Parental or guardian consent should be obtained before treatment is initiated for a minor except in the following cases: in an emergency; in situations in which the consent of the minor is sufficient, including treatment related to substance abuse, treatment of a sexually transmitted infection, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) testing and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) treatment, birth control services, pregnancy, or psychiatric services; the minor is an emancipated minor; or a court order or other legal authorization has been obtained. Refer to the

Guttmacher Report on Public Policy for additional information:

<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/tgr/03/4/gr030404.html>.

### C. Emancipated minor

1. An emancipated minor has established independence from his or her parents through marriage, pregnancy, service in the armed forces, or by a court order.
2. An emancipated minor is considered legally capable of signing an informed consent.

## VIII. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ▲

### A. Description

1. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) describes how personal health information (PHI) may be used and how the client can obtain access to the information.
2. PHI includes individually identifiable information that relates to the client's past, present, or future health; treatment; and payment for health care services.
3. The act requires health care agencies to keep PHI private, provides information to the client about the legal responsibilities regarding privacy, and explains the client's rights with respect to PHI.
4. The client has various rights as a consumer of health care under HIPAA, and any client requests may need to be placed in writing; a fee may be attached to certain client requests.
5. The client may file a complaint if the client believes that privacy rights have been violated.

**B. Client's rights include the right to do the following:**

- 1.** Inspect a copy of PHI.
- 2.** Ask the health care agency to amend the PHI that is contained in a record if the PHI is inaccurate.
- 3.** Request a list of disclosures made regarding the PHI as specified by HIPAA.
- 4.** Request to restrict how the health care agency uses or discloses PHI regarding treatment, payment, or health care services, unless information is needed to provide emergency treatment.
- 5.** Request that the health care agency communicate with the client in a certain way or at a certain location; the request must specify how or where the client wishes to be contacted.
- 6.** Request a paper copy of the HIPAA notice.

**C. Health care agency use and disclosure of PHI**

- 1.** The health care agency obtains PHI in the course of providing or administering health insurance benefits.
- 2.** Use or disclosure of PHI may be done for the following:
  - a.** Health care payment purposes
  - b.** Health care operations purposes
  - c.** Treatment purposes
  - d.** Providing information about health care services
  - e.** Data aggregation purposes to make health care benefit decisions
  - f.** Administering health care benefits

### 3. There are additional uses or disclosures of PHI (Box 7-9)

#### **BOX 7-9**

#### **Uses or Disclosures of Personal Health Information**

- Compliance with legal proceedings or for limited law enforcement purposes
- To a family member or significant other in a medical emergency
- To a personal representative appointed by the client or designated by law
- For research purposes in limited circumstances
- To a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director about a deceased person
- To an organ procurement organization in limited circumstances
- To avert a serious threat to the client's health or safety or the health or safety of others
- To a governmental agency authorized to oversee the health care system or government programs
- To the Department of Health and Human Services for the investigation of compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or to fulfill another lawful request
- To federal officials for lawful intelligence or national security purposes
- To protect health authorities for public health purposes
- To appropriate military authorities if a client is a member of the armed forces
- In accordance with a valid authorization signed by the client

Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil

Rights: Health information privacy. Available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/>.

## **IX. Confidentiality/Information Security** ▲

### **A. Description**

1. In the health care system, confidentiality/information security refers to the protection of privacy of the client's PHI.
2. Clients have a right to privacy in the health care system.
3. A special relationship exists between the client and nurse, in which information discussed is not shared with a third party who is not directly involved in the client's care.
4. Violations of privacy occur in various ways (**Box 7-10**).

#### **BOX 7-10**      **Violations and Invasion of Client Privacy**

- Taking photographs of the client
- Release of medical information to an unauthorized person, such as a member of the press, family, friend, or neighbor of the client, without the client's permission
- Use of the client's name or picture for the health care agency's sole advantage
- Intrusion by the health care agency regarding the client's affairs
- Publication of information about the client or photographs of the client, including on a social networking site
- Publication of embarrassing facts
- Public disclosure of private information
- Leaving the curtains or room door open while a treatment or procedure is being

performed

- Allowing individuals to observe a treatment or procedure without the client's consent
- Leaving a confused or agitated client sitting in the nursing unit hallway
- Interviewing a client in a room with only a curtain between clients or where conversation can be overheard
- Accessing medical records when unauthorized to do so

## **B. Nurse's responsibility**

1. Nurses are bound to protect client confidentiality by most nurse practice acts, by ethical principles and standards, and by institutional and agency policies and procedures.
2. Disclosure of confidential information exposes the nurse to liability for invasion of the client's privacy.
3. The nurse needs to protect the client from indiscriminate disclosure of health care information that may cause harm ([Box 7-11](#)).

### **BOX 7-11 Maintenance of Confidentiality**

- Not discussing client issues with other clients or staff uninvolved in the client's care
- Not sharing health care information with others without the client's consent (includes family members or friends of the client)

- Keeping all information about a client private, and not revealing it to someone not directly involved in care
- Discussing client information only in private and secluded areas
- Protecting the medical record from all unauthorized readers

### C. Social networks

1. Specific social networking sites can be beneficial to HCPs and clients; misuse of social networking sites by the HCP can lead to HIPAA violations and subsequent termination of the employee.
2. Nurses need to adhere to the code of ethics, confidentiality rules, and social media rules. To access the American Nurses Association Social Media Guidelines, go to <http://www.nursingworld.org/FunctionalMenuCategories/AboutANA/Social-Media/Social-Networking-Principles-Toolkit>.
3. Standards of professionalism need to be maintained and any information obtained through any nurse-client relationship cannot be shared.
4. The nurse is responsible for reporting any breach of privacy or confidentiality.

### D. Medical records

1. Medical records are confidential.
2. The client has the right to read the medical record and have copies of the record.
3. Only staff members directly involved in care have legitimate access to a client's record; these may include HCPs and nurses caring for the client, technicians, therapists, social workers, unit secretaries, client advocates, administrators (e.g.,

for statistical analysis, staffing, quality care review). Others must ask permission from the client to review a record.

4. The medical record is sent to the records or the health information department after discharge of the client from the health care facility.

#### E. Information technology/computerized medical records

1. Health care employees should have access only to the client's records in the nursing unit or work area.
2. Confidentiality/information security can be protected by the use of special computer access codes to limit what employees have access to in computer systems.
3. The use of a password or identification code is needed to enter and sign off a computer system.
4. A password or identification code should never be shared with another person.
5. Personal passwords should be changed periodically to prevent unauthorized computer access.

- #### F. When conducting research, any information provided by the client is not to be reported in any manner that identifies the client and is not to be made accessible to anyone outside the research team.



The nurse must always protect client confidentiality.

## X. Legal Safeguards

### A. Risk management

1. Risk management is a planned method to identify, analyze, and evaluate risks, followed by a plan for reducing the frequency of accidents and injuries.
2. Programs are based on a systematic reporting system for incidents or unusual occurrences.

**B. Incident reports (Box 7-12) ▲**

**BOX 7-12**      **Examples of Incidents That Need to Be Reported**

- Accidental omission of prescribed therapies
- Circumstances that led to injury or a risk for client injury
- Client falls
- Medication administration errors
- Needle-stick injuries
- Procedure-related or equipment-related accidents
- A visitor injury that occurred on the health care agency premises
- A visitor who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease

1. The incident report is used as a means of identifying risk situations and improving client care.
2. Follow specific documentation guidelines.
3. Fill out the report completely, accurately, and factually.
4. The report form should not be copied or placed in the client's record.
5. Make no reference to the incident report form in the client's record.

6. The report is not a substitute for a complete entry in the client's record regarding the incident.
7. If a client injury or error in care occurred, assess the client frequently.

### C. Safeguarding valuables

1. Client's valuables should be given to a family member or secured for safekeeping in a stored and locked designated location, such as the agency's safe; the location of the client's valuables should be documented per agency policy.
2. Many health care agencies require a client to sign a release to free the agency of the responsibility for lost valuables.
3. A client's wedding band can be taped in place unless a risk exists for swelling of the hands or fingers.
4. Religious items, such as medals, may be pinned to the client's gown if allowed by agency policy.

### D. HCP's prescriptions

1. The nurse is obligated to carry out a HCP's prescription except when the nurse believes a prescription to be inappropriate or inaccurate.
2. The nurse carrying out an inaccurate prescription may be legally responsible for any harm suffered by the client.
3. If no resolution occurs regarding the prescription in question, the nurse should contact the nurse manager or supervisor.
4. The nurse should follow specific guidelines for telephone prescriptions ([Box 7-13](#)).

**BOX 7-13****Telephone Prescription Guidelines**

- Date and time the entry.
- Repeat the prescription to the health care provider (HCP), and record the prescription.
- Sign the prescription; begin with “t.o.” (telephone order), write the HCP’s name, and sign the prescription.
- If another nurse witnessed the prescription, that nurse’s signature follows.
- The HCP needs to countersign the prescription within a timeframe according to agency policy.

5. The nurse should ensure that all components of a medication prescription are documented (Box 7-14).

**BOX 7-14****Components of a Medication Prescription**

The nurse should never carry out a prescription if it is unclear or inappropriate. The HCP should be contacted immediately.

- Date and time prescription was written
- Medication name
- Medication dosage
- Route of administration
- Frequency of administration

- Health care provider's signature

## E. Documentation ▲

1. Documentation is legally required by accrediting agencies, state licensing laws, and state nurse and medical practice acts
2. The nurse should follow agency guidelines and procedures ([Box 7-15](#)).

### **BOX 7-15** Do's and Don'ts Documentation Guidelines: Narrative and Information Technology

- Use a black-colored ink pen for narrative documentation.
- Date and time entries.
- Provide objective, factual, and complete documentation.
- Document care, medications, treatments, and procedures as soon as possible after completion.
- Document client responses to interventions.
- Document consent for or refusal of treatments.
- Document calls made to other health care providers.
- Use quotes as appropriate for subjective data.
- Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Sign and title each entry.
- Follow agency policies when an error is made (draw one line through the error, initial, and date).
- Follow agency guidelines regarding late entries.

- Use only the user identification code, name, or password for computerized documentation.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of documented information printed from the computer.
- Do not document for others or change documentation for other individuals.
- Do not use unacceptable abbreviations.
- Do not use judgmental or evaluative statements, such as “uncooperative client.”
- Do not leave blank spaces on documentation forms.
- Do not lend access identification computer codes to another person; change password at regular intervals.

3. Refer to the Joint Commission Web site for acceptable abbreviations and documentation guidelines:

[http://www.jointcommission.org/standards\\_information/npsgs.aspx](http://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/npsgs.aspx).

#### F. Client and family teaching

1. Provide complete instructions in a language that the client or family can understand.
2. Document client and family teaching, what was taught, evaluation of understanding, and who was present during the teaching.
3. Inform the client of what could happen if information shared during teaching is not followed.

#### **XI. Advance Directives** ▲

## A. Client Self-Determination Act

1. The Client Self-Determination Act is a law that indicates clients must be provided with information about their rights to identify written directions about the care that they wish to receive in the event that they become incapacitated and are unable to make health care decisions.
2. On admission to a health care facility, the client is asked about the existence of an advance directive, and if one exists, it must be documented and included as part of the medical record; if the client signs an advance directive at the time of admission, it must be documented in the client's medical record.
3. The two basic types of advance directives include living wills and durable powers of attorney.
  - a. Living will: Lists the medical treatment that a client chooses to omit or refuse if the client becomes unable to make decisions and is terminally ill.
  - b. Durable powers of attorney: Appoints a person (health care proxy) chosen by the client to make health care decisions on the client's behalf when the client can no longer make decisions.

## B. Do not resuscitate (DNR) orders 🟩

1. The DNR is an order written by a HCP when a client has indicated a desire to be allowed to die if the client suffers cardiac or respiratory arrest.
2. The client or his or her legal representative must provide **informed consent** for the DNR status.
3. The DNR order must be defined clearly so that other treatment, not refused by the

client, will be continued.

4. The DNR order must be reviewed regularly according to agency policy.
5. All health care personnel must know whether a client has a DNR order.
6. If a client does not have a DNR order, health care personnel need to make every effort to revive the client.
7. DNR protocols may vary from state to state, and it is important for the nurse to know his or her state's protocols.

### C. The nurse's role

1. Discussing advance directives with the client opens the communication channel to establish what is important to the client and what the client may view as promoting life versus prolonging dying.
2. The nurse needs to ensure that the client has been provided with information about the right to identify written directions about the care that the client wishes to receive.
3. On admission to a health care facility, the nurse determines whether an advance directive exists and ensures that it is part of the medical record.
4. The nurse ensures that the HCP is aware of the presence of an advance directive.
5. All health care workers need to follow the directions of an advance directive to be safe from liability.
6. Some agencies have specific policies that prohibit the nurse from signing as a witness to a legal document, such as a living will.
7. If allowed by the agency, when the nurse acts as a witness to a legal document, the

nurse must document the event and the factual circumstances surrounding the signing in the medical record; documentation as a witness should include who was present, any significant comments by the client, and the nurse's observations of the client's conduct during this process.

## **XII. Reporting Responsibilities** ▲

- A.** Nurses are required to report certain communicable diseases or criminal activities such as child or elder abuse or domestic violence; dog bite or other animal bite, gunshot, or stab wounds, assaults, and homicides; and suicides to the appropriate authorities.
- B.** Impaired nurse
  - 1. If the nurse suspects that a co-worker is abusing chemicals and potentially jeopardizing a client's safety, the nurse must report the individual to the nursing administration in a confidential manner. (Client safety is always the first priority.)
  - 2. Nursing administration notifies the board of nursing regarding the nurse's behavior.
- C.** Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
  - 1. OSHA requires that an employer provide a safe workplace for employees according to regulations.
  - 2. Employees can confidentially report working conditions that violate regulations.
  - 3. An employee who reports unsafe working conditions cannot be retaliated against by the employer.
- D.** Sexual harassment

1. Sexual harassment is prohibited by state and federal laws.
2. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.
3. Follow agency policies and procedures to handle reporting a concern or complaint.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** If the client indicates that he or she does not want a prescribed therapy, treatment, or procedure such as surgery, then the nurse should further investigate the client's request. If the client indicates that he or she has changed their mind about surgery, the nurse should assess the client and explore with the client his or her concerns about not wanting the surgery. The nurse would then withhold further surgical preparation and contact the surgeon to report the client's request so that the surgeon can discuss the consequences of not having the surgery with the client. Under no circumstances would the nurse continue with surgical preparation if the client has indicated that he or she does not want the surgery. Further assessment and follow-up related to the client's request need to be done. In addition, it is the client's right to refuse treatment.

### **References**

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 252; Potter et al (2013), pp. 299, 320-322.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

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**13.** The nurse hears a client calling out for help, hurries down the hallway to the client's room, and finds the client lying on the floor. The nurse performs an assessment, assists the client back to bed, notifies the health care provider of the incident, and completes an incident report. Which statement should the nurse document on the incident report?

1. The client fell out of bed.
2. The client climbed over the side rails.
3. The client was found lying on the floor.
4. The client became restless and tried to get out of bed.

**14.** A client is brought to the emergency department by emergency medical services (EMS) after being hit by a car. The name of the client is unknown, and the client has sustained a severe head injury and multiple fractures and is unconscious. An emergency craniotomy is required. Regarding informed consent for the surgical procedure, which is the **best** action?

1. Obtain a court order for the surgical procedure.
2. Ask the EMS team to sign the informed consent.
3. Transport the victim to the operating room for surgery.
4. Call the police to identify the client and locate the family.

**15.** The nurse has just assisted a client back to bed after a fall. The nurse and health care provider have assessed the client and have determined that the client is not injured. After completing the incident report, the nurse should implement which

action **next**?

1. Reassess the client.
2. Conduct a staff meeting to describe the fall.
3. Document in the nurse's notes that an incident report was completed.
4. Contact the nursing supervisor to update information regarding the fall.

**16.** The nurse arrives at work and is told to report (float) to the intensive care unit (ICU) for the day because the ICU is understaffed and needs additional nurses to care for the clients. The nurse has never worked in the ICU. The nurse should take which action **first**?

1. Call the hospital lawyer.
2. Refuse to float to the ICU.
3. Call the nursing supervisor.
4. Identify tasks that can be performed safely in the ICU.

**17.** The nurse who works on the night shift enters the medication room and finds a co-worker with a tourniquet wrapped around the upper arm. The co-worker is about to insert a needle, attached to a syringe containing a clear liquid, into the antecubital area. Which is the **most appropriate** action by the nurse?

1. Call security.
2. Call the police.
3. Call the nursing supervisor.
4. Lock the co-worker in the medication room until help is obtained.

18. A hospitalized client tells the nurse that a living will is being prepared and that the lawyer will be bringing the will to the hospital today for witness signatures. The client asks the nurse for assistance in obtaining a witness to the will. Which is the **most appropriate** response to the client?

1. "I will sign as a witness to your signature."
2. "You will need to find a witness on your own."
3. "Whoever is available at the time will sign as a witness for you."
4. "I will call the nursing supervisor to seek assistance regarding your request."

19. The nurse has made an error in a narrative documentation of an assessment finding on a client and obtains the client's record to correct the error. The nurse should take which action to correct the error?

1. Documenting a late entry into the client's record
2. Trying to erase the error for space to write in the correct data
3. Using whiteout to delete the error to write in the correct data
4. Drawing one line through the error, initialing and dating, and then documenting the correct information

20. Which identifies accurate nursing documentation notations? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. The client slept through the night.
2. Abdominal wound dressing is dry and intact without drainage.
3. The client seemed angry when awakened for vital sign measurement.

4. The client appears to become anxious when it is time for respiratory treatments.
5. The client's left lower medial leg wound is 3 cm in length without redness, drainage, or edema.

21. A nursing instructor delivers a lecture to nursing students regarding the issue of client's rights and asks a nursing student to identify a situation that represents an example of *invasion of client privacy*. Which situation, if identified by the student, indicates an understanding of a violation of this client right?

1. Performing a procedure without consent
2. Threatening to give a client a medication
3. Telling the client that he or she cannot leave the hospital
4. Observing care provided to the client without the client's permission

22. Nursing staff members are sitting in the lounge taking their morning break. An unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) tells the group that she thinks that the unit secretary has acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and proceeds to tell the nursing staff that the secretary probably contracted the disease from her husband, who is supposedly a drug addict. Which legal tort has the UAP violated?

1. Libel
2. Slander
3. Assault

#### 4. Negligence

23. An 87-year-old woman is brought to the emergency department for treatment of a fractured arm. On physical assessment, the nurse notes old and new ecchymotic areas on the client's chest and legs and asks the client how the bruises were sustained. The client, although reluctant, tells the nurse in confidence that her son frequently hits her if supper is not prepared on time when he arrives home from work. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing response?

1. "Oh, really. I will discuss this situation with your son."
2. "Let's talk about the ways you can manage your time to prevent this from happening."
3. "Do you have any friends that can help you out until you resolve these important issues with your son?"
4. "As a nurse, I am legally bound to report abuse. I will stay with you while you give the report and help find a safe place for you to stay."

24. The nurse calls the health care provider (HCP) regarding a new medication prescription because the dosage prescribed is higher than the recommended dosage. The nurse is unable to locate the HCP, and the medication is due to be administered. Which action should the nurse take?

1. Contact the nursing supervisor.
2. Administer the dose prescribed.
3. Hold the medication until the HCP can be contacted.

4. Administer the recommended dose until the HCP can be located.

25. The nurse employed in a hospital is waiting to receive a report from the laboratory via the facsimile (fax) machine. The fax machine activates and the nurse expects the report, but instead receives a sexually oriented photograph. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

1. Call the police.
2. Cut up the photograph and throw it away.
3. Call the nursing supervisor and report the incident.
4. Call the laboratory and ask for the individual's name who sent the photograph.

## ANSWERS

13. 3

**Rationale:** The incident report should contain the client's name, age, and diagnosis. The report should contain a factual description of the incident, any injuries experienced by those involved, and the outcome of the situation. The correct option is the only one that describes the facts as observed by the nurse. Options 1, 2, and 4 are interpretations of the situation and are not factual information as observed by the nurse.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, documentation of events, and read the information in the question to select the correct option. Remember to focus on factual information when documenting, and avoid including interpretations. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Documentation principles related to **incident reports**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Health Care Law

**Reference:** Huber (2013), pp. 305-358.

### 14.3

**Rationale:** In general, there are two situations in which informed consent of an adult client is not needed. One is when an emergency is present and delaying treatment for the purpose of obtaining informed consent would result in injury or death to the client. The second is when the client waives the right to give informed consent. Option 1 will delay emergency treatment, and option 2 is inappropriate. Although option 4 may be pursued, it is not the best action.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Recalling that when an emergency is present and a delay in treatment for the purpose of obtaining informed consent could result in injury or death will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The issues surrounding **informed consent**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Health Care Law

**References:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 302-303; Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 79-81.

## 15. 1

**Rationale:** After a client's fall, the nurse must frequently reassess the client because potential complications do not always appear immediately after the fall. The client's fall should be treated as private information and shared on a "need to know" basis. Communication regarding the event should involve only the individuals participating in the client's care. An incident report is a problem-solving document; however, its completion is not documented in the nurse's notes. If the nursing supervisor has been made aware of the incident, the supervisor will contact the nurse if status update is necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the data in the question and the **strategic word** *next*. Using the **steps of the nursing process** will direct you to the correct option. Remember that assessment is the first step.

**Review:** Guidelines related to **incident reports** and care to the client after sustaining a **fall**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 358-371.

## 16. 4

**Rationale:** Floating is an acceptable legal practice used by hospitals to solve understaffing problems. Legally, the nurse cannot refuse to float unless a union contract guarantees that nurses can work only in a specified area or the nurse can prove the lack of knowledge for the performance of assigned tasks. When encountering this situation, the nurse should set priorities and identify potential areas of harm to the client. The nursing supervisor is called if the

nurse is expected to perform tasks that he or she cannot safely perform. Calling the hospital lawyer is a premature action.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Eliminate option 2 first because of the word *refuse*. Next, eliminate options 1 and 3 because they are premature actions.

**Review:** Nursing responsibilities related to **floating**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Professionalism

**References:** Potter et al (2013), p. 304; Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 77-78.

### 17. 3

**Rationale:** Nurse practice acts require reporting impaired nurses. The board of nursing has jurisdiction over the practice of nursing and may develop plans for treatment and supervision of the impaired nurse. This incident needs to be reported to the nursing supervisor, who will then report to the board of nursing and other authorities, such as the police, as required. The nurse may call security if a disturbance occurs, but no information in the question supports this need, and so this is not the appropriate action. Option 4 is an inappropriate and unsafe action.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate option 4 first because this is an inappropriate and unsafe action. Recall the lines of organizational structure to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** The nurse's responsibilities when dealing with an **impaired nurse**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Professionalism

**Reference:** Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 489-490.

## 18. 4

**Rationale:** Living wills, also known as natural death acts in some states, are required to be in writing and signed by the client. The client's signature must be witnessed by specified individuals or notarized. Laws and guidelines regarding living wills vary from state to state, and it is the responsibility of the nurse to know the laws. Many states prohibit any employee, including the nurse of a facility where the client is receiving care, from being a witness.

Option 2 is nontherapeutic and not a helpful response. The nurse should seek the assistance of the nursing supervisor.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Options 1 and 3 are **comparable or alike** and should be eliminated first. Option 2 is eliminated because it is a nontherapeutic response.

**Review:** Legal implications associated with **living wills**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Law; Professionalism

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 107-108; Lewis et al (2011), p. 159.

## 19. 4

**Rationale:** If the nurse makes an error in narrative documentation in the client's record, the nurse should follow agency policies to correct the error. This includes drawing one line through the error, initialing and dating the line, and then documenting the correct information. A late entry is used to document additional information not remembered at the initial time of documentation. Erasing data from the client's record and the use of whiteout are prohibited.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, correcting a documentation error, and use principles related to documentation. Recalling that alterations to a client's record are to be avoided will assist in eliminating options 2 and 3. From the remaining options, focusing on the **subject** of the question and using knowledge regarding the principles related to documentation will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The principles and guidelines related to **documentation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Professionalism

**References:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 30-33; Potter et al (2013), p. 351.

## ❖ 20. 1, 2, 5

**Rationale:** Factual documentation contains descriptive, objective information about what the nurse sees, hears, feels, or smells. The use of inferences without supporting factual data is not acceptable because it can be misunderstood. The use of vague terms, such as *seemed* or *appears* is not acceptable because these words suggest that the nurse is stating an opinion.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, accurate documentation notations. Eliminate options 3 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and include vague terms (seemed, appears).

**Review:** **Documentation** guidelines

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Professionalism

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 350-352.

## 21. 4

**Rationale:** Invasion of privacy occurs with unreasonable intrusion into an individual's private affairs. Performing a procedure without consent is an example of battery. Threatening to give a client a medication constitutes assault.

Telling the client that the client cannot leave the hospital constitutes false imprisonment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, invasion of privacy. Noting the words *without the client's permission* in option 4 will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Situations that include **invasion of privacy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Professionalism

**References:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 301-302; Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 82-83.

## 22. 2

**Rationale:** Defamation is a false communication or a careless disregard for the truth that causes damage to someone's reputation, either in writing (libel) or verbally (slander). An assault occurs when a person puts another person in fear of a harmful or an offensive contact. Negligence involves the actions of professionals that fall below the standard of care for a specific professional group.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, the legal tort violated. Focus on the data in the question and eliminate options 1 and 4 first because their definitions are unrelated to the data. Recalling that slander constitutes verbal defamation will direct you to the correct option from the remaining options.

**Review:** The definitions of **libel**, **slander**, **assault**, and **negligence**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Law; Professionalism

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 302.

## 23. 4

**Rationale:** The nurse must report situations related to child or elder abuse, gunshot wounds and other criminal acts, and certain infectious diseases. Confidential issues are not to be discussed with nonmedical personnel or the client's family or friends without the client's permission. Clients should be assured that information is kept confidential, unless it places the nurse under a legal obligation. Options 1, 2, and 3 do not address the legal implications of the

situation and do not ensure a safe environment for the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the data in the question and note that an 87-year-old woman is receiving physical abuse by her son. Recall the nursing responsibilities related to client safety and reporting obligations. Options 1, 2, and 3 should be eliminated because they are **comparable or alike** in that they do not protect the client from injury.

**Review:** The nursing responsibilities related to **reporting responsibilities**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Law; Interpersonal violence

**References:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 301-302; Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 82-83.

## 24. 1

**Rationale:** If the HCP writes a prescription that requires clarification, the nurse's responsibility is to contact the HCP. If there is no resolution regarding the prescription because the HCP cannot be located or because the prescription remains as it was written after talking with the HCP, the nurse should contact the nurse manager or nursing supervisor for further clarification as to what the next step should be. Under no circumstances should the nurse proceed to carry out the prescription until obtaining clarification.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and are unsafe actions. Holding the medication can result in client injury. The nurse needs to take action. The correct option clearly identifies the required action in this situation.

**Review:** Nursing responsibilities related to the **HCP's prescriptions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 590.

### 25. 3

**Rationale:** Ensuring a safe workplace is a responsibility of an employing institution. Sexual harassment in the workplace is prohibited by state and federal laws. Sexually suggestive jokes, touching, pressuring a co-worker for a date, and open displays of or transmitting sexually oriented photographs or posters are examples of conduct that could be considered sexual harassment by another worker. If the nurse believes that he or she is being subjected to unwelcome sexual conduct, these concerns should be reported to the nursing supervisor immediately. Option 1 is unnecessary at this time. Options 2 and 4 are inappropriate initial actions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Remember that using the organizational channels of communication is best. This will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing responsibilities when **sexual harassment** occurs in the workplace

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Law; Professionalism

***Reference:*** Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 500-501.



## CHAPTER 8

# Prioritizing Client Care: Leadership, Delegation, and Disaster Planning

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse notes that there has been an increase in the number of intravenous (IV) site infections that developed in the clients being cared for on the nursing unit. How should the nurse proceed to implement a quality improvement program?

*Answer located on p. 76.*

## I. Health Care Delivery Systems

### A. Managed care

1. *Managed care* is a broad term used to describe strategies used in the health care delivery system that reduce the costs of health care.
2. Client care is outcome driven and is managed by a case **management** process.
3. Managed care emphasizes the promotion of health, client education and responsible self-care, early identification of disease, and the use of health care

resources.

## B. Case management

1. Case management is a health care delivery strategy that supports managed care; it uses an interprofessional health care delivery approach that provides comprehensive client care throughout the client's illness, using available resources to promote high-quality and cost-effective care.
2. Case management includes assessment and development of a plan of care, coordination of all services, referral, and follow-up.
3. Critical pathways are used, and variation analysis is conducted.

 Case management involves consultation and collaboration with an interprofessional health care team.

## C. Case manager

1. A case manager is a professional nurse (often one with a master's degree) who assumes responsibility for coordinating the client's care at admission and after discharge.
2. The case manager establishes a plan of care with the client, coordinates any interprofessional consultations and referrals, and facilitates discharge.

## D. Critical pathway

1. A critical pathway is a clinical management care plan for providing client-centered care and for planning and monitoring the client's progress within an established time frame; **interprofessional collaboration** and teamwork ensure

shared decision making and quality client care.

2. Variation analysis is a continuous process that the case manager and other caregivers conduct by comparing the specific client outcomes with the expected outcomes described on the critical pathway.
3. The goal of a critical pathway is to anticipate and recognize negative variance (i.e., client problems) early so that appropriate action can be taken and positive client outcomes can result.

#### E. Nursing care plan

1. A nursing care plan is a written guideline and communication tool that identifies the client's pertinent assessment data, problems and nursing diagnoses, goals, interventions, and expected outcomes.
2. The plan enhances interprofessional continuity of care by identifying specific nursing actions necessary to achieve the goals of care.
3. The client and family are involved in developing the plan of care, and the plan identifies short-term and long-term goals.
4. Client problems, goals, interventions, and expected outcomes are documented in the care plan, which provides a framework for evaluation of the client's response to nursing actions.

## II. Nursing Delivery Systems

### A. Functional nursing

1. Functional nursing involves a task approach to client care, with tasks being delegated by the charge nurse to individual members of the team.

2. This type of system is task-oriented, and the team member focuses on the delegated task rather than the total client; this results in fragmentation of care and lack of **accountability** by the team member.

## **B. Team nursing**

1. The team generally is led by a registered nurse (team leader) who is responsible for assessing, developing nursing diagnoses, planning, and evaluating each client's plan of care.
2. The team leader determines the work assignment; each staff member works fully within the realm of his or her educational and clinical expertise and job description.
3. Each staff member is accountable for client care and outcomes of care delivered in accordance with the licensing and practice scope as determined by health care agency policy and state law.
4. Modular nursing is similar to team nursing, but takes into account the structure of the unit; the unit is divided into modules allowing nurses to care for a group of clients who are geographically close by.

## **C. Relationship-based practice (primary nursing)**

1. Relationship-based practice (primary nursing) is concerned with keeping the nurse at the bedside, actively involved in client care, while planning goal-directed, individualized care.
2. One (primary) nurse is responsible for managing and coordinating the client's care while in the hospital and for discharge, and an associate nurse cares for the

client when the primary nurse is off-duty.

#### **D. Client-focused care**

1. This is also known as the total care or case method; the registered nurse assumes total responsibility for planning and delivering care to a client.
2. The client may have different nurses assigned during a 24-hour period; however, the nurse provides all necessary care needed for the assigned time period.

### **III. Professional Responsibilities**

#### **A. Accountability ▲**

1. The process in which individuals have an obligation (or duty) to act and are answerable for their actions
2. Involves assuming only the responsibilities that are within one's scope of practice and not assuming responsibility for activities in which competence has not been achieved
3. Involves admitting mistakes rather than blaming others and evaluating the outcomes of one's own actions
4. Includes a responsibility to the client to be competent, providing nursing care in accordance with standards of nursing practice and adhering to the professional ethics codes

**▲** Accountability is the acceptance of responsibility for one's actions. The nurse is always responsible for his or her actions when providing care to a client.

## B. Leadership and management

1. Leadership is the interpersonal process that involves influencing others (followers) to achieve goals.
2. Management is the accomplishment of tasks or goals by oneself or by directing others.

## C. Theories of leadership and management (Box 8-1)

### BOX 8-1 Theories of Leadership and Management

**Charismatic:** Based on personal beliefs and characteristics

**Quantum:** Based on the concepts of chaos theory; maintaining a balance between tension and order prevents an unstable environment and promotes creativity

**Relational:** Based on collaboration and teamwork

**Servant:** Based on a desire to serve others; the leader emerges when another's needs assume priority

**Shared:** Based on the belief that several individuals share the responsibility for achieving the health care agency's goals

**Transactional:** Based on the principles of social-exchange theory

**Transformational:** Based on the individual's commitment to the health care agency's vision; focuses on promoting change

## D. Leader and manager approaches ▲

1. Autocratic

- a. The leader or manager is focused and maintains strong control, makes decisions, and addresses all problems.
- b. The leader or manager dominates the group and commands rather than seeks suggestions or input.

## 2. Democratic

- a. This is also called *participative*.
- b. It is based on the belief that every group member should have input into the development of goals and problem solving.
- c. A democratic leader or manager acts primarily as a facilitator and resource person and is concerned for each member of the group.
- d. The democratic style is a more “talk with the members” style and much less authoritarian than the autocratic style.

## 3. Laissez-faire

- a. A laissez-faire leader or manager assumes a passive, nondirective, and inactive approach and relinquishes part or all of the responsibilities to the members of the group.
- b. Decision making is left to the group, with the laissez-faire leader or manager providing little, if any, guidance, support, or feedback.

## 4. Situational

- a. Situational style uses a combination of styles based on the current circumstances and events.
- b. Situational styles are assumed according to the needs of the group and the tasks

to be achieved.

## 5. Bureaucratic

- a. The leader or manager believes that individuals are motivated by external forces.
- b. The leader/manager relies on organizational policies and procedures for decision making.

## E. Effective leader and manager behaviors and qualities (Box 8-2)

### **BOX 8-2** Effective Leader and Manager Behaviors and Qualities

#### **Behaviors**

Treats employees as unique individuals

Inspires employees and stimulates critical thinking

Shows employees how to think about old problems in new ways and assists with adapting to change

Is visible to employees; is flexible; and provides guidance, assistance, and feedback

Communicates a vision, establishes trust, and empowers employees

Motivates employees to achieve goals

#### **Qualities**

Effective communicator ; promotes interprofessional collaboration

Credible

Critical thinker

Initiator of action

Risk taker

Is persuasive and influences employees

Adapted from Huber D: *Leadership and nursing care management*, ed 4, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.

## F. Functions of management (Box 8-3) ▲

### BOX 8-3 Functions of Management

**Planning:** Determining objectives and identifying methods that lead to achievement of objectives

**Organizing:** Using resources (human and material) to achieve predetermined outcomes

**Directing:** Guiding and motivating others to meet expected outcomes

**Controlling:** Using performance standards as criteria for measuring success and taking corrective action

## G. Problem-solving process and decision making

1. Problem solving involves obtaining information and using it to reach an acceptable solution to a problem.
2. Decision making involves identifying a problem and deciding which alternatives can best achieve objectives.
3. Steps of the problem-solving process are similar to the steps of the nursing

process (Table 8-1).

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**TABLE 8-1 Similarities of the Problem-Solving Process and the Nursing Process**

<b>Problem-Solving Process</b>	<b>Nursing Process</b>
Identifying a problem and collecting data about the problem	Assessment
Determining the exact nature of the problem	Analysis
Deciding on a plan of action	Planning
Carrying out the plan	Implementation
Evaluating the plan	Evaluation

## H. Types of managers

### 1. Frontline manager

- a. Frontline managers function in supervisory roles of those involved with delivery of client care.
- b. Frontline roles usually include charge nurse, team leader, and client care coordinator.
- c. Frontline managers coordinate the activity of all staff who provide client care and supervise team members during the manager's period of accountability.

### 2. Middle manager

- a. Middle manager roles usually include unit manager and supervisor.
- b. A middle manager's responsibilities may include supervising staff, preparing budgets, preparing work schedules, writing and implementing policies that guide client care and unit operations, and maintaining the quality of client services.

### 3. Nurse executive

- a. The nurse executive is a top-level nurse manager and may be the director of nursing services or the vice president for client care services.
- b. The nurse executive supervises numerous departments and works closely with the administrative team of the organization.
- c. The nurse executive ensures that all client care provided by nurses is consistent with the objectives of the health care organization.

## IV. Power

- A. Power is the ability to do or act to achieve desired results.
- B. Powerful people are able to modify behavior and influence others to change, even when others are resistant to change.
- C. Effective nurse leaders use power to improve the delivery of care and to enhance the profession. ▲
- D. There are different types of power (Box 8-4).

### BOX 8-4 Types of Power

**Reward:** Ability to provide incentives

**Coercive:** Ability to punish

**Referent:** Based on attraction

**Expert:** Based on having an expert knowledge base and skill level

**Legitimate:** Based on a position in society

**Personal:** Derived from a high degree of self-confidence

**Informational:** When one person provides explanations why another should behave in a certain way

## V. Empowerment

- A. Empowerment is an interpersonal process of enabling others to do for themselves.
- B. Empowerment occurs when individuals are able to influence what happens to them more effectively.
- C. Empowerment involves open communication, mutual goal setting, and decision making.
- D. Nurses can empower clients through teaching and **advocacy**.

## VI. Formal Organizations

- A. An organization's mission statement communicates in broad terms its reason for existence; the geographic area that the organization serves; and attitudes, beliefs, and values from which the organization functions.
- B. Goals and objectives are measurable activities specific to the development of designated services and programs of an organization.
- C. The organizational chart depicts and communicates how activities are arranged, how authority relationships are defined, and how communication channels are established.
- D. Policies, procedures, and protocols 

1. Policies are guidelines that define the organization's standpoint on courses of action.
  2. Procedures are based on policy and define methods for tasks.
  3. Protocols prescribe a specific course of action for a specific type of client or problem.
- E. Centralization is the making of decisions by a few individuals at the top of the organization or by managers of a department or unit, and decisions are communicated thereafter to the employees.
- F. Decentralization is the distribution of authority throughout the organization to allow for increased responsibility and **delegation** in decision making.

 The nurse must follow policies, procedures, and protocols of the health care agency in which he or she is employed.

## VII. Evidence-Based Practice

- A. Evidence-based practice is an approach to client care in which the nurse integrates the client's preferences, clinical expertise, and the best research evidence to deliver quality care.
- B. Determining the client's personal, social, cultural, and religious preferences ensures individualization and is a component of implementing evidence-based practice.
- C. The nurse needs to be an observer and identify and question situations that require change or result in a less than desirable outcome.
- D. Use of information technology such as online resources, including research

publications, provides current research findings related to areas of practice.

- E. The nurse needs to follow evidence-based practice protocols developed by the institution and question the rationale for nursing approaches identified in the protocols as necessary.

 Evidence-based practice requires that the nurse base nursing practice on the most applicable evidence from clinical research studies. The nurse should also be alert to clinical issues that warrant investigation and develop a researchable problem about the issue.

## VIII. Quality Improvement

- A. Also known as performance improvement, quality improvement focuses on processes or systems that significantly contribute to client safety and effective client care outcomes; criteria are used to monitor outcomes of care and to determine the need for change to improve the quality of care.
- B. Quality improvement processes or systems may be named quality assurance, continuous quality **management**, or continuous quality improvement.
- C. When quality improvement is part of the philosophy of a health care agency, every staff member becomes involved in ways to improve client care and outcomes.
- D. A retrospective (“looking back”) audit is an evaluation method used to inspect the medical record after the client’s discharge for documentation of compliance with the standards.
- E. A concurrent (“at the same time”) audit is an evaluation method used to inspect compliance of nurses with predetermined standards and criteria while the nurses are

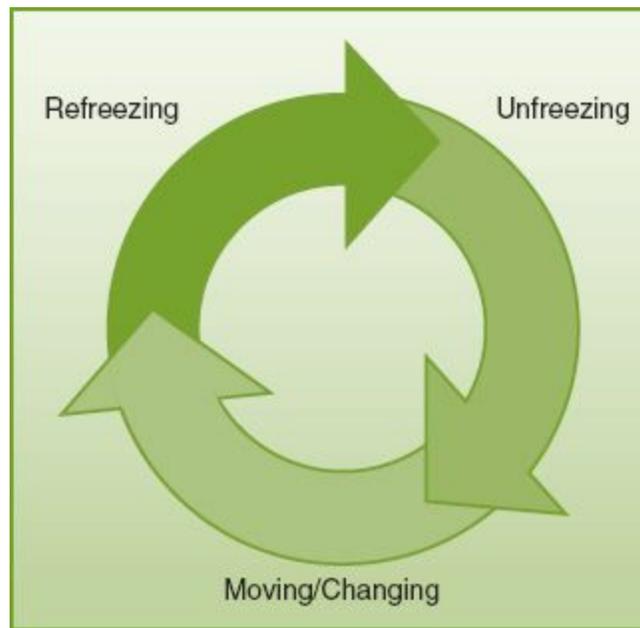
providing care during the client's stay.

- F.** Peer review is a process in which nurses employed in an organization evaluate the quality of nursing care delivered to the client.
- G.** The quality improvement process is similar to the nursing process and involves a interprofessional approach.
- H.** An outcome describes the most positive response to care; comparison of client responses with the expected outcomes indicates whether the interventions are effective, whether the client has progressed, how well standards are met, and whether changes are necessary.
- I.** The nurse is responsible for recognizing trends in nursing practice, identifying recurrent problems, and initiating opportunities to improve the quality of care.

 Quality improvement processes improve the quality of care delivery to clients and the safety of health care agencies.

## **IX. Change Process**

- A.** Change is a dynamic process that leads to an alteration in behavior.
  - 1.** Lewin's basic concept of the change process includes three elements for successful change: unfreezing, moving and changing, and refreezing ([Fig. 8-1](#)).



**FIGURE 8-1** Elements of a successful change. (From Huber D: *Leadership and nursing care management*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

- a. Unfreezing is the first phase of the process, during which the problem is identified and individuals involved gather facts and evidence supporting a basis for change.
- b. During the moving and changing phase, change is planned and implemented.
- c. Refreezing is the last phase of the process, during which the change becomes stabilized.

2. **Leadership** style influences the approach to initiating the change process.

## B. Types of change

1. Planned change: A deliberate effort to improve a situation
2. Unplanned change: Change that is unpredictable but is beneficial and may go unnoticed

## C. Resistance to change (Box 8-5)

**BOX 8-5****Reasons for Resisting Change****Conformity**

One goes along with others to avoid conflict.

**Dissimilar Beliefs and Values**

Differences can impede positive change.

**Habit**

Routine, set behaviors are often hard to change.

**Secondary Gains**

Benefits or payoff are present, so there is no incentive to change.

**Threats to Satisfying Basic Needs**

Change may be perceived as a threat to self-esteem, security, or survival.

**Fear**

One fears failure or has fear of the unknown.

1. Resistance to change occurs when an individual rejects proposed new ideas without critically thinking about the proposal.
2. Change requires energy.
3. The change process does not guarantee positive outcomes.

**D. Overcoming barriers**

1. Create a flexible and adaptable environment.
2. Encourage the people involved to plan and set goals for change.
3. Include all involved in the plan for change.
4. Focus on the benefits of the change in relation to improvement of client care.
5. Delineate the drawbacks from failing to make the change in relation to client care.
6. Evaluate the change process on an ongoing basis, and keep everyone informed of progress.
7. Provide positive feedback to all involved.
8. Commit to the time it takes to change.

## **X. Conflict**

**A.** Conflict arises from a perception of incompatibility or difference in beliefs, attitudes, values, goals, priorities, or decisions.

**B.** Types of conflict

1. Intrapersonal: Occurs within a person
2. Interpersonal: Occurs between and among clients, nurses, or other staff members
3. Organizational: Occurs when an employee confronts the policies and procedures of the organization

**C.** Modes of conflict resolution 

**1.** Avoidance

- a.** Avoiders are unassertive and uncooperative.
- b.** Avoiders do not pursue their own needs, goals, or concerns, and they do not

assist others to pursue theirs.

c. Avoiders postpone dealing with the issue.

## 2. Accommodation

a. Accommodators neglect their own needs, goals, or concerns (unassertive) while trying to satisfy those of others.

b. Accommodators obey and serve others and often feel resentment and disappointment because they “get nothing in return.”

## 3. Competition

a. Competitors pursue their own needs and goals at the expense of others.

b. Competitors also may stand up for rights and defend important principles.

## 4. Compromise

a. Compromisers are assertive and cooperative.

b. Compromisers work creatively and openly to find the solution that most fully satisfies all important goals and concerns to be achieved.

# **XI. Roles of Health Care Team Members** ▲

A. Nurse roles are as follows:

1. Promote health and prevent disease

2. Provide comfort and care to clients

3. Make decisions

4. Act as client advocate

5. Lead and manage the nursing team

6. Serve as case manager

7. Function as a rehabilitator
8. Communicate effectively
9. Educate clients, families, and communities and health care team members
10. Act as a resource person
11. Allocate resources in a cost-effective manner

**B. Health care provider (HCP):** A HCP diagnoses and treats disease.

**C. HCP assistant**

1. A HCP assistant (also known as physician assistant) acts to a limited extent in the role of the HCP during the HCP's absence; the HCP assistant could include a nurse practitioner.
2. The HCP assistant conducts physical examinations, performs diagnostic procedures, assists in the operating room and emergency department, and performs treatments.
3. Certified and licensed HCP assistants in some states have prescriptive powers.

**D. Physical therapist:** A physical therapist assists in examining, testing, and treating physically disabled clients.

**E. Occupational therapist:** An occupational therapist develops adaptive devices that help chronically ill or handicapped clients perform activities of daily living.

**F. Respiratory therapist:** A respiratory therapist delivers treatments designed to improve the client's ventilation and oxygenation status.

**G. Nutritionist:** A nutritionist or dietitian assists in planning dietary measures to improve or maintain a client's nutritional status.

- H.** Continuing care nurse: This nurse coordinates discharge plans for the client.
- I.** Assistive personnel, including unlicensed personnel, and client care technicians, help the registered nurse with specified tasks and functions.
- J.** Pharmacist: A pharmacist formulates and dispenses medications.
- K.** Social worker: A social worker counsels clients and families about home care services and assists the continuing care nurse with planning discharge.
- L.** Chaplain: A chaplain (or trained layperson) offers spiritual support and guidance to clients and families.
- M.** Administrative staff: Administrative or support staff members organize and schedule diagnostic tests and procedures and arrange for services needed by the client and family.

## **XII. Interprofessional Collaboration**

- A.** Client care planning can be accomplished through referrals to or consultations or **interprofessional collaborations** with other health care specialists and through client care conferences, which involve members from all health care disciplines. This approach helps ensure continuity of care.
- B.** Reports ▲
  - 1.** Reports should be factual, accurate, current, complete, and organized.
  - 2.** Reports should include essential background information, subjective data, objective data, any changes in the client's status, nursing diagnoses as appropriate, treatments and procedures, medication administration, client

teaching, discharge planning, family information, the client's response to treatments and procedures, and the client's priority needs.

### 3. Change of shift report

- a. The report facilitates continuity of care among nurses who are responsible for a client.
- b. The report may be written, oral, audiotaped, or provided during walking rounds at the client's bedside.
- c. The report describes the client's health status and informs the nurse on the next shift about the client's needs and priorities for care.

### 4. Telephone reports

- a. Purposes include informing a HCP of a client's change in status, communicating information about a client's transfer to or from another unit or facility, and obtaining results of laboratory or diagnostic tests.
- b. The telephone report should be documented and should include when the call was made, who made the call, who was called, to whom information was given, what information was given, and what information was received.

### 5. Transfer reports

- a. Transferring nurse reports provide continuity of care and may be given by telephone or in person (Box 8-6).

## **BOX 8-6** Transfer Reports

- Client's name, age, health care provider, and diagnoses

- Current health status and plan of care
- Client's needs and priorities for care
- Any assessments or interventions that need to be performed after transfer, such as laboratory tests, medication administration, or dressing changes
- Need for any special equipment
- Additional considerations such as allergies, resuscitation status, precautionary considerations, cultural or religious issues, or family issues

b. Receiving nurse should repeat transfer information to ensure client safety and ask questions to clarify information about the client's status.

### **XIII. Interprofessional Consultation**

- A. Consultation is a process in which a specialist is sought to identify methods of care or treatment plans to meet the needs of a client.
- B. Consultation is needed when the nurse encounters a problem that cannot be solved using nursing knowledge, skills, and available resources.
- C. Consultation also is needed when the exact problem remains unclear; a consultant can objectively and more clearly assess and identify the exact nature of the problem.
- D. Rapid response teams are being developed within hospitals to provide nursing staff with internal consultative services provided by expert clinicians.
- E. Rapid response teams are used to assist nursing staff with early detection and resolution of client problems.

## XIV. Discharge Planning ▲

- A. Discharge planning begins when the client is admitted to the hospital or health care facility.
- B. Discharge planning is an interprofessional process that ensures that the client has a plan for continuing care after leaving the health care facility and assists in the client's transition from one environment to another.
- C. All caregivers need to be involved in discharge planning, and referrals to other health care professionals or agencies may be needed. A HCP's prescription may be needed for the referral, and the referral needs to be approved by the client's health care insurer.
- D. The nurse should anticipate the client's discharge needs and make the referral as soon as possible (involving the client and family in the referral process).
- E. The nurse needs to educate the client and family regarding care at home ([Box 8-7](#)).

### **BOX 8-7** Discharge Teaching

- How to administer prescribed medications
- Side effects of medications that need to be reported to the health care provider (HCP)
- Prescribed dietary and activity measures
- Complications of the medical condition that need to be reported to the HCP
- How to perform prescribed treatments
- How to use special equipment prescribed for the client

- Schedule for home care services that are planned
- How to access available community resources
- When to obtain follow-up care

## XV. Delegation and Assignments ▲

### A. Delegation

1. Delegation is a process of transferring performance of a selected nursing task in a situation to an individual who is competent to perform that specific task.
2. Delegation involves achieving outcomes and sharing activities with other individuals who have the authority to accomplish the task.
3. The nurse practice act and any practice limitations define which aspects of care can be delegated and which must be performed by a registered nurse.
4. Even though a task may be delegated to someone, the nurse who delegates maintains **accountability** for the task.
5. Only the task, not the ultimate accountability, may be delegated to another.
6. The five rights of delegation include the right task, right circumstances, right person, right direction/communication, and right supervision/evaluation.

**⚠ Delegate only tasks for which you are responsible. The nurse who delegates is accountable for the task; the person who assumes responsibility for the task is also accountable.**

### B. Principles and guidelines of delegating (Box 8-8)

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- Delegate the right task to the right delegatee. Be familiar with the experience of the delegates, their scopes of practice, their job descriptions, agency policy and procedures, and the state nurse practice act.
- Provide clear directions about the task and ensure that the delegatee understands the expectations.
- Determine the degree of supervision that may be required.
- Provide the delegatee with the authority to complete the task; provide a deadline for completion of the task.
- Evaluate the outcome of care that has been delegated.
- Provide feedback to the delegatee regarding his or her performance.
- *In general*, noninvasive interventions, such as skin care, range-of-motion exercises, ambulation, grooming, and hygiene measures, can be assigned to the unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP).
- *In general*, a licensed practical nurse (LPN) or licensed vocational nurse (LVN) can perform not only the tasks that a UAP can perform, but also certain invasive tasks, such as dressing changes, suctioning, urinary catheterization, and medication administration (oral, subcutaneous, intramuscular, and selected piggyback medications), according to the education and job description of the LPN or LVN. The LPN or LVN can also review teaching plans with the client that were initiated by the registered nurse.
- A registered nurse can perform the tasks that an LPN or LVN can perform and is

responsible for assessment and planning care, initiating teaching, and administering medications intravenously.

### C. Assignments

1. Assignment is the transfer of performance of client care activities to specific staff members.
2. Guidelines for client care assignments
  - a. Always ensure client safety.
  - b. Be aware of individual variations in work abilities.
  - c. Determine which tasks can be delegated and to whom.
  - d. Match the task to the delegatee on the basis of the nurse practice act and appropriate position descriptions.
  - e. Provide directions that are clear, concise, accurate, and complete.
  - f. Validate the delegatee's understanding of the directions.
  - g. Communicate a feeling of confidence to the delegatee, and provide feedback promptly after the task is performed.
  - h. Maintain continuity of care as much as possible when assigning client care.

## XVI. Time Management

### A. Description

1. Time management is a technique designed to assist in completing tasks within a definite time period.

2. Learning how, when, and where to use one's time and establishing personal goals and time frames are part of time management.
3. Time management requires an ability to anticipate the day's activities, to combine activities when possible, and not to be interrupted by nonessential activities.
4. Time management involves efficiency in completing tasks as quickly as possible and effectiveness in deciding on the most important task to do (i.e., **prioritizing**) and doing it correctly.

## **B. Principles and guidelines**

1. Identify tasks, obligations, and activities and write them down.
2. Organize the work day; identify which tasks must be completed in specified time frames.
3. Prioritize client needs according to importance.
4. Anticipate the needs of the day and provide time for unexpected and unplanned tasks that may arise.
5. Focus on beginning the daily tasks, working on the most important first while keeping goals in mind; look at the final goal for the day, which helps in the breakdown of tasks into manageable parts.
6. Begin client rounds at the beginning of the shift, collecting data on each assigned client.
7. Delegate tasks when appropriate.
8. Keep a daily hour-by-hour log to assist in providing structure to the tasks that must be accomplished, and cross tasks off the list as they are accomplished.

9. Use health care agency resources wisely, anticipating resource needs, and gather the necessary supplies before beginning the task.
10. Organize paperwork and continuously document task completion and necessary client data throughout the day (i.e., documentation should be concurrent with completion of a task or observation of pertinent client data).
11. At the end of the day, evaluate the effectiveness of time management.

## XVII. Prioritizing Care ▲

- A. Prioritizing is deciding which needs or problems require immediate action and which ones could tolerate a delay in response until a later time because they are not urgent.
- B. Guidelines for prioritizing (Box 8-9)

### BOX 8-9 Guidelines for Prioritizing

- The nurse and the client mutually rank the client's needs in order of importance based on the client's preferences and expectations, safety, and physical and psychological needs; what the client sees as his or her priority needs may be different from what the nurse sees as the priority needs.
- Priorities are classified as high, intermediate, or low.
- Client needs that are life-threatening or that could result in harm to the client if they are left untreated are high priorities.
- Nonemergency and non-life-threatening client needs are intermediate priorities.
- Client needs that are not related directly to the client's illness or prognosis are low

priorities.

- When providing care, the nurse needs to decide which needs or problems require immediate action and which ones could be delayed until a later time because they are not urgent.
- The nurse considers client problems that involve actual or life-threatening concerns before potential health-threatening concerns.
- When prioritizing care, the nurse must consider time constraints and available resources.
- Problems identified as important by the client must be given high priority.
- The nurse can use the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation—as a guide when determining priorities; client needs related to maintaining a patent airway are always the priority.
- The nurse can use Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory as a guide to determine priorities and to identify the levels of physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (basic needs are met before moving to other needs in the hierarchy).
- The nurse can use the steps of the nursing process as a guide to determine priorities, remembering that assessment is the first step of the nursing process.

### C. Setting priorities for client teaching

1. Determine the client’s immediate learning needs.
2. Review the learning objectives established for the client.

3. Determine what the client perceives as important.
4. Assess the client's anxiety level and the time available to teach.

#### D. Prioritizing when caring for a group of clients

1. Identify the problems of each client.
2. Review nursing diagnoses.
3. Determine which client problems are most urgent based on basic needs, the client's changing or unstable status, and complexity of the client's problems.
4. Anticipate the time that it may take to care for the priority needs of the clients.
5. Combine activities, if possible, to resolve more than one problem at a time.
6. Involve the client in his or her care as much as possible (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Order of Priority in Assessing a Group of Clients

The nurse is assigned to the following clients. The order of priority in assessing the clients is as follows:

1. A client with heart failure who has a 4-lb weight gain since yesterday and is experiencing shortness of breath
2. A 24-hour postoperative client who had a wedge resection of the lung and has a closed chest tube drainage system
3. A client admitted to the hospital for observation who has absent bowel sounds

4. A client who is undergoing surgery for a hysterectomy on the following day

The nurse determines the order of priority by considering the needs of the client. The nurse also uses guidelines for prioritizing, such as the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation—Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory, and the steps of the nursing process. Clients 1 and 2 have conditions that relate to the cardiac system or respiratory system. These clients are the high priorities. Client 1 is the first priority because this client is experiencing shortness of breath (life-threatening). There is no indication that client 2 is experiencing any difficulty. Because client 4 is scheduled for surgery on the following day, this client would be the last priority (low priority), and the nurse would assess this client and prepare this client for surgery after other clients are assessed. Because absent bowel sounds could be an indication of a bowel obstruction (intermediate priority), this client would be priority 3.

### *Reference*

Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: Fundamentals of nursing, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby, pp. 237-238.

 Use the ABCs (airway, breathing, and circulation), Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory, and the steps of the nursing process (assessment is first) to prioritize.

## **XVIII. Disasters and Emergency Response Plan**

### **A. Description**

1. A disaster is any human-made or natural event that causes destruction and devastation that cannot be alleviated without assistance ([Box 8-10](#)).

## **BOX 8-10**      **Types of Disasters**

### **Human-Made Disasters**

Dam failures resulting in flooding

Hazardous substance accidents such as pollution, chemical spills, or toxic gas leaks

Accidents involving release of radioactive material

Resource shortages such as food, water, and electricity

Structural collapse, fire, or explosions

Terrorist attacks such as bombing, riots, and bioterrorism

Mass transportation accidents

### **Natural Disasters**

Avalanches

Blizzards

Communicable disease epidemics

Cyclones

Droughts

Earthquakes

Floods

Forest fires

Hailstorms

Hurricanes

Landslides

Mudslides

Tidal waves

Tornadoes

Volcanic eruptions

2. Internal disasters are disasters that occur within a health care agency (e.g., health care agency fire, structural collapse, radiation spill), whereas external disasters are disasters that occur outside the health care agency (e.g., mass transit accident that could send hundreds of victims to emergency departments).
3. An emergency response plan is a formal plan of action for coordinating the response of the health care agency staff in the event of a disaster in the health care agency or surrounding community.

#### **B. American Red Cross (ARC)**

1. The ARC has been given authority by the federal government to provide disaster relief.
2. All ARC disaster relief assistance is free, and local offices are located across the United States.
3. The ARC participates with the government in developing and testing community disaster plans.
4. The ARC identifies and trains personnel for emergency response.

5. The ARC works with businesses and labor organizations to identify resources and individuals for disaster work.
6. The ARC educates the public about ways to prepare for a disaster.
7. The ARC operates shelters, provides assistance to meet immediate emergency needs, and provides disaster health services, including crisis counseling.
8. The ARC handles inquiries from family members.
9. The ARC coordinates relief activities with other agencies.
10. Nurses are involved directly with the ARC and assume functions such as managers, supervisors, and educators of first aid; they also participate in emergency response plans and disaster relief programs and provide services, such as blood collection drives and immunization programs.

### C. Phases of disaster **management**

1. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies four disaster management phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.
2. Mitigation encompasses the following:
  - a. Actions or measures that can prevent the occurrence of a disaster or reduce the damaging effects of a disaster
  - b. Determination of the community hazards and community risks (actual and potential threats) before a disaster occurs
  - c. Awareness of available community resources and community health personnel to facilitate mobilization of activities and minimize chaos and confusion if a disaster occurs

- d.** Determination of the resources available for care to infants, older adults, disabled individuals, and individuals with chronic health problems

**3.** Preparedness encompasses the following:

- a.** Plans for rescue, evacuation, and caring for disaster victims
- b.** Plans for training disaster personnel and gathering resources, equipment, and other materials needed for dealing with the disaster
- c.** Identification of specific responsibilities for various emergency response personnel
- d.** Establishment of a community emergency response plan and an effective public communication system
- e.** Development of an emergency medical system and a plan for activation
- f.** Verification of proper functioning of emergency equipment
- g.** Collection of anticipatory provisions and creation of a location for providing food, water, clothing, shelter, other supplies, and needed medicine
- h.** Inventory of supplies on a regular basis and replenishment of outdated supplies
- i.** Practice of community emergency response plans (mock disaster drills)

**4.** Response encompasses the following:

- a.** Putting disaster planning services into action and the actions taken to save lives and prevent further damage
- b.** Primary concerns include safety, physical health, and mental health of victims and members of the disaster response team

**5.** Recovery encompasses the following:

- a. Actions taken to return to a normal situation after the disaster
- b. Preventing debilitating effects and restoring personal, economic, and environmental health and stability to the community

**D. Levels of disaster**

- 1. FEMA identifies three levels of disaster with FEMA response ([Box 8-11](#)).

**BOX 8-11** Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Levels of Disaster

**Level I Disaster**

Massive disaster that involves significant damage and results in a presidential disaster declaration, with major federal involvement and full engagement of federal, regional, and national resources

**Level II Disaster**

Moderate disaster that is likely to result in a presidential declaration of an emergency, with moderate federal assistance

**Level III Disaster**

Minor disaster that involves a minimal level of damage, but could result in a presidential declaration of an emergency

- 2. When a federal emergency has been declared, the federal response plan may take effect and activate emergency support functions.
- 3. The emergency support functions of the ARC include performing emergency first

aid, sheltering, feeding, providing a disaster welfare information system, and coordinating bulk distribution of emergency relief supplies.

4. Disaster medical assistant teams (teams of specially trained personnel) can be activated and sent to a disaster site to provide triage and medical care to victims until they can be evacuated to a hospital.

#### E. Nurse's role in disaster planning ▲

##### 1. Personal and professional preparedness

- a. Make personal and family preparations ([Box 8-12](#)).

#### **BOX 8-12**      Emergency Plans and Supplies

Plan a meeting place for family members.

Identify where to go if an evacuation is necessary.

Determine when and how to turn off water, gas, and electricity at main switches.

Locate the safe spots in the home for each type of disaster.

Replace stored water supply every 3 months and stored food supply every 6 months.

Include the following supplies:

- A 3-day supply of water (1 gallon per person per day)
- A 3-day supply of nonperishable food
- Clothing and blankets
- First-aid kit
- Adequate supply of prescription medication
- Battery-operated radio

- Flashlight and batteries
- Credit card, cash, or traveler's checks
- Extra set of car keys and a full tank of gas in the car
- Sanitation supplies for washing, toileting, and disposing of trash
- Extra pair of eyeglasses
- Special items for infants, older adults, or disabled individuals
- Items needed for a pet such as food, water, and leash
- Important documents in a waterproof case

- b. Be aware of the disaster plan at the place of employment and in the community.
- c. Maintain certification in disaster training and in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- d. Participate in mock disaster drills, including a bomb threat drill.
- e. Prepare professional emergency response items, such as a copy of nursing license, personal health care equipment such as a stethoscope, cash, warm clothing, record-keeping materials, and other nursing care supplies.

## 2. Disaster response

- a. In the health care agency setting, if a disaster occurs, the agency disaster preparedness plan (emergency response plan) is activated immediately, and the nurse responds by following the directions identified in the plan. ▲
- b. In the community setting, if the nurse is the first responder to a disaster, the nurse cares for the victims by attending to the victims with life-threatening problems first; when rescue workers arrive at the scene, immediate plans for

triage should begin.

 In the event of a disaster, activate the emergency response plan immediately.

## F. Triage

1. In a disaster or war, triage consists of a brief assessment of victims that allows the nurse to classify victims according to the severity of the injury, urgency of treatment, and place for treatment (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Triaging Victims at the Site of an Accident

The nurse is the first responder at the scene of a school bus accident. The nurse triages the victims from highest to lowest priority as follows:

1. Confused child with bright red blood pulsating from a leg wound
2. Child with a closed head wound and multiple compound fractures of the arms and legs
3. Child with a simple fracture of the arm complaining of arm pain
4. Sobbing child with several minor lacerations on the face, arms, and legs

Triage systems identify which victims are the priority and should be treated first.

Rankings are based on immediacy of needs, including victims with immediate threat to life requiring immediate treatment (emergent), victims whose injuries are not life-threatening provided that they are treated within 1 to 2 hours (urgent), and victims

with sustained local injuries who do not have immediate complications and can wait several hours for medical treatment (nonurgent). Victim 1 has a wound that is pulsating bright red blood; this indicates arterial puncture. The child is also confused, which indicates the presence of hypoxia and shock (emergent). Victim 2 has sustained multiple trauma, so this victim is also classified as emergent and would require immediate treatment; however, victim 1 is the higher priority because of the arterial puncture. Victim 3 sustained injuries that are not life-threatening provided that the injuries can be treated in 1 to 2 hours (urgent). Victim 4 sustained minor injuries that can wait several hours for treatment (nonurgent).

### ***References***

Ignatavicius, Workman: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care* (2013), p. 157; Lewis et al: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems* (2011), pp. 1783-1785.

2. In an emergency department, triage consists of a brief assessment of clients that allows the nurse to classify clients according to their need for care and establishing priorities of care; the type of illness or injury, the severity of the problem, and the resources available govern the process.

### **G. Emergency department triage system ▲**

1. A commonly used rating system in an emergency department is a three-tier system that uses the categories of emergent, urgent, and nonurgent; these categories may

be identified by color coding or numbers ([Box 8-13](#)).

### **BOX 8-13**      **Emergency Department Triage**

#### **Emergent (Red): Priority 1 (Highest)**

This classification is assigned to clients who have life-threatening injuries and need immediate attention and continuous evaluation, but have a high probability for survival when stabilized.

Such clients include trauma victims, clients with chest pain, clients with severe respiratory distress or cardiac arrest, clients with limb amputation, clients with acute neurological deficits, and clients who have sustained chemical splashes to the eyes.

#### **Urgent (Yellow): Priority 2**

This classification is assigned to clients who require treatment and whose injuries have complications that are not life-threatening, provided that they are treated within 1 to 2 hours; these clients require continuous evaluation every 30 to 60 minutes thereafter.

Such clients include clients with a simple fracture, asthma without respiratory distress, fever, hypertension, abdominal pain, or a renal stone.

#### **Nonurgent (Green): Priority 3**

This classification is assigned to clients with local injuries who do not have immediate complications and who can wait several hours for medical treatment; these clients require evaluation every 1 to 2 hours thereafter.

Such clients include clients with conditions such as a minor laceration, sprain, or cold symptoms.

*Note:* Some triage systems include tagging a client “Black” if the victim is dead or who soon will be deceased because of severe injuries; these are victims that would not benefit from any care because of the severity of injuries.

2. The nurse needs to be familiar with the triage system of the health care agency.
3. When caring for a client who has died, the nurse needs to recognize the importance of family and cultural and religious rituals and provide support to loved ones.
4. Organ donation procedures of the health care agency need to be addressed if appropriate.

 **Think survivability.** If you are the first responder to a scene of a disaster, such as a train crash, the priority victim is the one whose life can be saved.

## H. Client assessment in the emergency department

### 1. Primary assessment

- a. The purpose of primary assessment is to identify any client problem that poses an immediate or potential threat to life.
- b. The nurse gathers information primarily through objective data and, on finding any abnormalities, immediately initiates interventions.
- c. The nurse uses the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation—as a guide in

assessing a client's needs and assesses a client who has sustained a traumatic injury for signs of a head injury or cervical spine injury.

## 2. Secondary assessment

- a. The nurse performs secondary assessment after the primary assessment and after treatment for any primary problems identified.
- b. Secondary assessment identifies any other life-threatening problems that a client might be experiencing.
- c. The nurse obtains subjective and objective data, including a history, general overview, vital sign measurements, neurological assessment, pain assessment, and complete or focused physical assessment.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Quality improvement, also known as performance improvement, focuses on processes or systems that significantly contribute to client safety and effective client care outcomes; criteria are used to monitor outcomes of care and to determine the need for change to improve the quality of care. If the nurse notes a particular problem, such as an increase in the number of intravenous site infections, the nurse should collect data about the problem. This should include information, such as the primary and secondary diagnoses of the clients developing the infection, the type of IV catheters being used, the site of the catheter, IV site dressings being used, frequency of assessment and methods of care to the IV site, and length of time that the IV catheter was inserted. Once these data are collected and analyzed, the nurse

should examine evidence-based practice protocols to identify the best practices for care to IV sites to prevent infection. These practices can then be implemented and followed by evaluation of results based on the evidence-based practice protocols used.

### ***Reference***

Potter et al (2013), pp. 60-62, 366.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

26. The nurse is assigned to care for four clients. In planning client rounds, which client should the nurse assess **first**?
1. A client scheduled for a chest x-ray
  2. A client requiring daily dressing changes
  3. A postoperative client preparing for discharge
  4. A client receiving nasal oxygen who had difficulty breathing during the previous shift
27. The nurse employed in an emergency department is assigned to triage clients coming to the emergency department for treatment on the evening shift. The nurse should assign **priority** to which client?
1. A client complaining of muscle aches, a headache, and malaise
  2. A client who twisted her ankle when she fell while rollerblading
  3. A client with a minor laceration on the index finger sustained while cutting an eggplant
  4. A client with chest pain who states that he just ate pizza that was made with a very spicy sauce
28. A nursing graduate is attending an agency orientation regarding the nursing model of practice implemented in the health care facility. The nurse is told that the nursing model is a team nursing approach. The nurse understands that planning care delivery will be based on which characteristic of this type of nursing model

of practice?

1. A task approach method is used to provide care to clients.
2. Managed care concepts and tools are used in providing client care.
3. A single registered nurse is responsible for providing care to a group of clients.
4. A registered nurse leads nursing personnel in providing care to a group of clients.

29. A nurse has received the assignment for the day shift. After making initial rounds and checking all of the assigned clients, which client should the nurse plan to care for **first**?

1. A client who is ambulatory
2. A client scheduled for physical therapy at 1 PM
3. A client with a fever who is diaphoretic and restless
4. A postoperative client who has just received pain medication

30. The nurse is giving a bed bath to an assigned client when an unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) enters the client's room and tells the nurse that another assigned client is in pain and needs pain medication. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

1. Finish the bed bath and then administer the pain medication to the other client.
2. Ask the UAP to find out when the last pain medication was given to the client.
3. Ask the UAP to tell the client in pain that medication will be administered as

soon as the bed bath is complete.

4. Cover the client, raise the side rails, tell the client that you will return shortly, and administer the pain medication to the other client.

31. The nurse manager has implemented a change in the method of the nursing delivery system from functional to team nursing. An unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) is resistant to the change and is not taking an active part in facilitating the process of change. Which is the **best** approach in dealing with the UAP?

1. Ignore the resistance.
2. Exert coercion on the UAP.
3. Provide a positive reward system for the UAP.
4. Confront the UAP to encourage verbalization of feelings regarding the change.

32. The registered nurse is planning the client assignments for the day. Which is the **most appropriate** assignment for an unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP)?

1. A client requiring a colostomy irrigation
2. A client receiving continuous tube feedings
3. A client who requires urine specimen collections
4. A client with difficulty swallowing food and fluids

33. A new unit nurse manager is holding her first staff meeting. The manager greets the staff and comments that she has been employed to bring about quality improvement. The manager provides a plan that she developed and a list of tasks

and activities for which each staff member must volunteer to perform. In addition, she instructs staff members to report any problems directly to her. What type of leader and manager approach do the new manager's characteristics suggest?

1. Autocratic
2. Situational
3. Democratic
4. Laissez-faire

34. The nurse employed in a long-term care facility is planning assignments for the clients on a nursing unit. The nurse needs to assign four clients and has a licensed practical (vocational) nurse and three unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) on a nursing team. Which client would the nurse **most appropriately** assign to the licensed practical (vocational) nurse?

1. A client who requires a bed bath
2. An older client requiring frequent ambulation
3. A client who requires hourly vital sign measurements
4. A client requiring abdominal wound irrigations and dressing changes every 3 hours

35. The nurse should use which guideline(s) to plan delegation and assignment-making activities? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Ensuring client safety

2. Requests from the staff
3. The clustering of the rooms on the unit
4. The number of anticipated client discharges
5. Client needs and workers' needs and abilities

## ANSWERS

26. 4

**Rationale:** Airway is always the highest priority, and the nurse would attend to the client who has been experiencing an airway problem first. The clients described in options 1, 2, and 3 have needs that would be identified as intermediate priorities.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** and the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to answer the question. Remember that airway is always the highest priority. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Prioritizing care** principles

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Jarvis (2012), pp. 5-6; Potter et al (2013), pp. 838-840.

27. 4

**Rationale:** In an emergency department, triage involves brief client assessment to classify clients according to their need for care and includes establishing priorities of care. The type of illness or injury, the severity of the problem, and the resources available govern the process. Clients with trauma, chest pain, severe respiratory distress or cardiac arrest, limb amputation, and acute neurological deficits, or who have sustained chemical splashes to the eyes, are classified as emergent and are the number 1 priority. Clients with conditions such as a simple fracture, asthma without respiratory distress, fever, hypertension, abdominal pain, or a renal stone have urgent needs and are classified as a number 2 priority. Clients with conditions such as a minor laceration, sprain, or cold symptoms are classified as nonurgent and are a number 3 priority.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option. A client experiencing chest pain is always classified as priority number 1 until a myocardial infarction has been ruled out.

**Review:** The **triage** classification system

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Triage

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Emergency Nurses Association (2010), pp. 62-65.

**28. 4**

**Rationale:** In team nursing, nursing personnel are led by a registered nurse leader in providing care to a group of clients. Option 1 identifies functional nursing. Option 2 identifies a component of case management. Option 3

identifies primary nursing (relationship-based practice).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, team nursing. Keep this **subject** in mind and select the option that best describes a team approach. The correct option is the only one that identifies the concept of a team approach.

**Review:** The various types of **nursing delivery systems**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Collaboration

**References:** Huber (2010), pp. 448-449; Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 253-254.

### 29. 3

**Rationale:** The nurse should plan to care for the client who has a fever and is diaphoretic and restless first because this client's needs are the priority. The client who is ambulatory and the client scheduled for physical therapy later in the day do not have priority needs related to care. Waiting for pain medication to take effect before providing care to the postoperative client is best.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first* and use principles related to prioritizing. Noting the words *diaphoretic* and *restless* will assist in directing you to this option.

**Review:** The principles related to **prioritizing care**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 838-840.

### 30. 4

**Rationale:** The nurse is responsible for the care provided to assigned clients. The appropriate action in this situation is to provide safety to the client who is receiving the bed bath and prepare to administer the pain medication.

Options 1 and 3 delay the administration of medication to the client in pain. Option 2 is not a responsibility of the UAP.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and use principles related to priorities of care.

Options 1 and 3 delay the administration of pain medication, and option 2 is not a responsibility of the unlicensed assistive personnel. The most appropriate action is to plan to administer the medication.

**Review:** Principles related to **prioritizing care**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 784.

### 31. 4

**Rationale:** Confrontation is an important strategy to meet resistance head on. Face-to-face meetings to confront the issue at hand will allow verbalization of feelings, identification of problems and issues, and development of strategies to solve the problem. Option 1 will not address the problem. Option 2 may produce additional resistance.

Option 3 may provide a temporary solution to the resistance, but will not address the concern specifically.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated first because of the words *ignore* in option 1 and *coercion* in option 2. From the remaining options, select the correct option over option 3 because the correct option specifically addresses problem-solving measures.

**Review:** **Resistance to change**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Leadership; Professionalism

**Reference:** Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 469-470.

### 32.3

**Rationale:** The nurse must determine the most appropriate assignment based on the skills of the staff member and the needs of the client. In this case, the most appropriate assignment for the UAP would be to care for the client who requires urine specimen collections. The UAP is skilled in this procedure. Colostomy irrigations and tube feedings are not performed by unlicensed personnel. The client with difficulty swallowing food and fluids is at risk for aspiration.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*, and note the **subject**, an assignment to the UAP. Eliminate option 4 first because of the words *difficulty swallowing*. Next, eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are **comparable or alike** and are both invasive procedures.

**Review:** The **principles and guidelines of delegation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Huber (2010), p. 254.

### 33. 1

**Rationale:** The autocratic leader is focused, maintains strong control, makes decisions, and addresses all problems. The autocrat dominates the group and commands, rather than seeks suggestions or input. In this situation, the manager addresses a problem (quality improvement) with the staff, designs a plan without input, and wants all problems reported directly back to her. A situational leader will use a combination of styles, depending on the needs of the group and the tasks to be achieved. The situational leader would work with the group to validate that the information that the leader gained as a new employee was accurate and that a problem existed. Then, the leader would take the time to get to know the group and determine which approach to change (if needed) would work best according to the needs of the group and the nature and substance of the change that was required. A democratic leader is participative and would likely meet with each staff person individually to determine the staff member's perception of the problem. The democratic leader would also speak with the staff about any issues and ask the staff for input with developing a plan. A laissez-faire leader is passive and nondirective. The laissez-faire leader would state what the problem was and inform the staff that the staff needed to come up with a plan to "fix it."

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the leader and manager approach. Note the data in the question and the words *provides a plan that she developed*, *each staff member must volunteer to perform*, and *instructs staff members to report any problems directly to her*. Remember that autocratic managers take control and

dominate.

**Review:** The various types of **leader and manager approaches**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Leadership; Professionalism

**References:** Huber (2010), p. 223; Yoder-Wise (2011), p. 101.

#### 34. 4

**Rationale:** When delegating nursing assignments, the nurse needs to consider the skills and educational level of the nursing staff. Giving a bed bath, assisting with frequent ambulation, and taking vital signs can be provided most appropriately by the unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP). The licensed practical (vocational) nurse is skilled in wound irrigations and dressing changes and most appropriately would be assigned to the client who needs this care.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assignment to a licensed practical/vocational nurse and note the **strategic words** *most appropriately*. Recall that education and job position as described by the nurse practice act and employee guidelines need to be considered when delegating activities and making assignments. Options 1, 2, and 3 can be eliminated because they are noninvasive tasks that the UAP can perform.

**Review:** The **principles and guidelines of delegation** and **assignments**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Huber (2010), pp. 244-247.

❖ 35. 1, 5

**Rationale:** There are guidelines that the nurse should use when delegating and planning assignments. These include the following: ensure client safety; be aware of individual variations in work abilities; determine which tasks can be delegated and to whom; match the task to the delegatee on the basis of the nurse practice act and appropriate position descriptions; provide directions that are clear, concise, accurate, and complete; validate the delegatee's understanding of the directions; communicate a feeling of confidence to the delegatee, and provide feedback promptly after the task is performed; and maintain continuity of care as much as possible when assigning client care. Staff requests, convenience as in clustering client rooms, and anticipated changes in unit census are not specific guidelines to use when delegating and planning assignments.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, guidelines to use when delegating and planning assignments. Read each option carefully and use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory**. Note that the correct options directly relate to the client's needs and client safety.

**Review:** The **principles and guidelines of delegation** and **assignments**.

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Professionalism

**References:** Alfaro-LeFevre (2012), pp. 111-112; Huber (2010), pp. 244-247; Potter et al (2013), pp. 262, 282-283.



# UNIT III



## Nursing Sciences

### PYRAMID TERMS

**ABO** A type of antigen system. The ABO type of the donor should be compatible with the recipient's. Type A can match with type A or O; type B can match with type B or O; type O can match only with type O; type AB can match with type A, B, AB, or O.

**air embolism** An obstruction caused by a bolus of air that enters the vein through an inadequately primed intravenous (IV) line, from a loose connection, during a tubing change, or during removal of an IV line.

**Allen's test** A test to assess for collateral circulation to the hand by evaluating the patency of the radial and ulnar arteries.

**blood** The liquid pumped by the heart through the arteries, veins, and capillaries. Blood is composed of a clear yellow fluid (plasma), formed elements, and cell types with various functions.

**blood cell** Any of the formed elements of the blood, including red cells (erythrocytes), white cells (leukocytes), and platelets (thrombocytes).

**calcium** A mineral element needed for the process of bone formation, coagulation of blood, excitation of cardiac and skeletal muscle, maintenance of muscle tone, conduction of neuromuscular impulses, and the synthesis and regulation of the endocrine and exocrine glands. The normal adult level is 8.6 to 10 mg/dL.

**catheter embolism** An obstruction caused by breakage of the catheter tip during IV line insertion or removal.

**circulatory overload** A complication resulting from the infusion of blood at a rate too rapid for the size, age, cardiac status, or clinical condition of the recipient.

**compatibility** Matching of blood from two persons by two different types of antigen systems, ABO and Rh, present on the membrane surface of the red blood cells, to prevent a transfusion reaction.

**compensation** Compensation refers to the body processes that occur to counterbalance an acid-base disturbance. When compensation has occurred, the pH will be within normal limits.

**crossmatching** The testing of the donor's blood and the recipient's blood for compatibility.

**enteral nutrition** Administration of nutrition with liquefied foods into the gastrointestinal tract via a tube.

**fat emulsion (lipids)** A white, opaque solution administered intravenously during parenteral nutrition therapy to prevent fatty acid deficiency.

**fluid volume deficit** Dehydration, in which the fluid intake of the body is not sufficient to meet the fluid needs of the body.

**fluid volume excess** Fluid intake or fluid retention that exceeds the fluid needs of the body. Also called *overhydration* or *fluid overload*.

**fresh-frozen plasma** A blood product administered to increase the level of clotting factors in clients with such a deficiency.

**homeostasis** The tendency of a biological system to maintain relatively constant conditions in the internal environment while continuously interacting with and adjusting to changes originating within or outside the system.

**infiltration** Seepage of IV fluid out of the vein and into the surrounding interstitial spaces.

**magnesium** Concentrated in the bone, cartilage, and within the cell itself; required for the use of adenosine triphosphate as a source of energy. It is necessary for the action of numerous enzyme systems such as those involved in carbohydrate metabolism, protein synthesis, nucleic acid synthesis, and contraction of muscular tissue. It also regulates neuromuscular activity and the clotting mechanism. The normal adult level is 1.6 to 2.6 mg/dL.

**malnutrition** Deficiency of the nutrients required for development and maintenance of the human body.

**metabolic acidosis** A total concentration of buffer base that is lower than normal, with a relative increase in the hydrogen ion concentration. This results from loss of buffer bases or retention of too many acids without sufficient bases, and occurs in

conditions such as kidney failure and diabetic ketoacidosis, from the production of lactic acid, and from the ingestion of toxins, such as acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin).

**metabolic alkalosis** A deficit or loss of hydrogen ions or acids or an excess of base (bicarbonate) that results from the accumulation of base or from a loss of acid without a comparable loss of base in the body fluids. This occurs in conditions resulting in hypovolemia, the loss of gastric fluid, excessive bicarbonate intake, the massive transfusion of whole blood, and hyperaldosteronism.

**metabolism** Ongoing chemical process within the body that converts digested nutrients into energy for the functioning of body cells.

**nutrients** Carbohydrates, fats or lipids, proteins, vitamins, minerals, electrolytes, and water that must be supplied in adequate amounts to provide energy, growth, development, and maintenance of the human body.

**packed red blood cells** A blood product used to replace erythrocytes lost as a result of trauma or surgical interventions or in clients with bone marrow suppression.

**parenteral nutrition (PN)** Administration of a nutritionally complete formula through a central or peripheral intravenous (IV) catheter. In the clinical setting, the term PN may be used interchangeably with the term total parenteral nutrition (TPN) or hyperalimentation.

**phlebitis** An inflammation of the vein that can occur from mechanical or chemical (medication) trauma or from a local infection.

**phosphorus** Needed for generation of bony tissue. It functions in the metabolism of glucose and lipids, in the maintenance of acid-base balance, and in the storage and

transfer of energy from one site in the body to another. Phosphorus levels are evaluated in relation to calcium levels because of their inverse relationship; when calcium levels are decreased, phosphorus levels are increased, and when phosphorus levels are decreased, calcium levels are increased. The normal adult level is 2.7 to 4.5 mg/dL.

**plasma** The watery, straw-colored, fluid part of lymph and the blood in which the formed elements (blood cells) are suspended. Plasma is made up of water, electrolytes, protein, glucose, fats, bilirubin, and gases and is essential for carrying the cellular elements of the blood through the circulation.

**platelet transfusion** A blood product administered to clients with low platelet counts and to thrombocytopenic clients who are bleeding actively or are scheduled for an invasive procedure.

**potassium** A principal electrolyte of intracellular fluid and the primary buffer within the cell itself. It is needed for nerve conduction, muscle function, acid-base balance, and osmotic pressure. Along with calcium and magnesium, potassium controls the rate and force of contraction of the heart and thus cardiac output. The normal adult level is 3.5 to 5.0 mEq/L.

**respiratory acidosis** A total concentration of buffer base that is lower than normal, with a relative increase in hydrogen ion concentration; thus a greater number of hydrogen ions is circulating in the blood than the buffer system can absorb. This is caused by primary defects in the function of the lungs or by changes in normal respiratory patterns as a result of secondary problems. Any condition that causes an

obstruction of the airway or depresses respiratory status can cause respiratory acidosis.

**respiratory alkalosis** A deficit of carbonic acid or a decrease in hydrogen ion concentration that results from the accumulation of base or from a loss of acid without a comparable loss of base in the body fluids. This occurs in conditions that cause overstimulation of the respiratory system.

**Rh factor** Rh stands for rhesus factor. A person having the factor is Rh positive; a person lacking the factor is Rh negative. The presence or absence of Rh antigens on the surface of red blood cells determines the classification as Rh positive or Rh negative.

**septicemia** The presence of infective agents or their toxins in the bloodstream. Septicemia is a serious infection and must be treated promptly; otherwise, the infection leads to circulatory collapse, profound shock, and death.

**serum** The clear and thin fluid part of blood that remains after coagulation. Serum contains no blood cells, platelets, or fibrinogen.

**sodium** An abundant electrolyte that maintains osmotic pressure and acid-base balance and transmits nerve impulses. The normal adult level is 135 to 145 mEq/L.

**transfusion reaction** A hemolytic reaction caused by blood type or Rh incompatibility. An allergic transfusion reaction most often occurs in clients with a history of an allergy. A febrile transfusion reaction most commonly occurs in clients with antibodies directed against the transfused white blood cells. A bacterial transfusion reaction occurs after transfusion of contaminated blood products.

**venipuncture** Puncture into a vein to obtain a blood specimen for testing; the antecubital veins are the veins of choice because of ease of access.

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points focus on fluids and electrolytes, acid-base balance, laboratory values, nutrition, intravenous (IV) therapy, and blood administration. Fluids and electrolytes and acid-base balance constitute a content area that is sometimes complex and difficult to understand. For a client who is experiencing these imbalances it is important to remember that maintenance of a patent airway is a priority and the nurse needs to monitor vital signs, cardiovascular status, neurological status, intake and output, laboratory values, and arterial blood gas values. It is also important to remember that normal laboratory values may vary slightly, depending on the laboratory setting and equipment used in testing. If you are familiar with the normal values, you will be able to determine whether an abnormality exists when a laboratory value is presented in a question. The questions on the NCLEX-RN examination related to laboratory values will require you to identify whether the laboratory value is normal or abnormal, and then you are required to think critically about the effects of the laboratory value in terms of the client. Note the disorder presented in the question and the associated body organ affected as a result of the disorder. This process will assist you in determining the correct answer.

Nutrition is a basic need that must be met for all clients. The NCLEX-RN examination addresses the dietary measures required for basic needs and for particular body system alterations and addresses parenteral nutrition (PN), also known as total parenteral nutrition (TPN). When presented with a question related to nutrition,

consider the client's diagnosis and the particular requirement or restriction necessary for treatment of the disorder. With regard to IV therapy, assessment of the client for allergies, including latex sensitivity, before initiation of an IV line and monitoring for complications are critical nursing responsibilities. Likewise, the procedure for administering blood components, the signs and symptoms of transfusion reaction, and the immediate interventions if a transfusion reaction occurs are a focus.

## Client Needs

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Applying principles of infection control

Collaborating with members of the health care team

Establishing priorities for care

Handling hazardous and infectious materials to prevent injury to health care personnel and others

Identifying the client with at least two forms of identifiers (e.g., name and identification number) prior to the administration of the blood product

Initiating home health care referrals

Maintaining continuity of care and providing close supervision during a blood transfusion

Maintaining medical and surgical asepsis and preventing infection in the client when samples for laboratory studies are obtained or when intravenous (IV) solutions are administered

Maintaining standard, transmission-based, and other precautions to prevent transmission of infection to self and others

Obtaining informed consent for invasive procedures and for the administration of blood products

Preventing accidents and ensuring safety of the client when a fluid or electrolyte imbalance exists, particularly when changes in cardiovascular, respiratory,

gastrointestinal, neuromuscular, renal, or central nervous systems occur, or when the client is at risk for complications such as seizures, respiratory depression, or dysrhythmias

Providing information to the client about community classes for nutrition education

Providing safety for the client during implementation of treatments

Using equipment such as electronic IV infusion devices safely

Upholding client rights

## **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Assessing the client's ability to perform self-care

Considering lifestyle choices related to home care of the IV line

Evaluating the client's home environment for self-care modifications

Identifying clients at risk for an acid-base imbalance

Identifying community resources available for follow-up

Identifying lifestyle choices related to receiving a blood transfusion

Implementing health screening and monitoring for the potential risk for a fluid and electrolyte imbalance

Performing physical assessment techniques

Providing client and family education regarding the administration of PN at home

Providing education related to medication and diet management

Providing education related to the potential risk for a fluid and electrolyte imbalance, measures to prevent an imbalance, signs and symptoms of an imbalance, and actions to take if signs and symptoms develop

Teaching the client and family about prevention, early detection, and treatment measures for health disorders

Teaching the client to monitor for signs and symptoms that indicate the need to notify the health care provider

Teaching the client and family about care of the IV line

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing the client's emotional response to treatment

Considering cultural preferences related to nutritional patterns and lifestyle choices

Discussing role changes related to the client's need to receive PN

Ensuring therapeutic interactions with the client regarding the procedure for blood administration

Identifying coping mechanisms

Identifying religious, spiritual, and cultural considerations related to blood administration

Identifying support systems in the home to assist with the caring for an IV and the administration of PN

Providing emotional support to the client during testing

Providing reassurance to the client who is experiencing a fluid or electrolyte imbalance

Providing support and continuously informing the client of the purposes for prescribed interventions

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering and monitoring medications, intravenous fluids, and other therapeutic interventions

Administering blood products safely

Assessing and caring for central venous access devices

Assessing for expected and unexpected responses to therapeutic interventions and documenting findings

Assessing venous access devices for blood administration

Identifying clients who are at risk for a fluid or electrolyte imbalance

Maintaining IV therapy

Managing medical emergencies if a transfusion reaction or other complication occurs

Monitoring for complications related to blood administration

Monitoring for complications related to a body system alteration

Monitoring for changes in status and for complications; taking actions if a complication arises

Monitoring for clinical manifestations associated with an abnormal laboratory value

Monitoring of enteral feedings and the client's ability to tolerate feedings

Monitoring for expected effects of pharmacological and parenteral therapies

Monitoring laboratory values; determining the significance of an abnormal laboratory value and the need to implement specific actions based on the laboratory results

Monitoring of nutritional intake and oral hydration

Obtaining an arterial blood gas specimen and analyzing the results

Providing wound care when blood is obtained for an arterial blood gas study

Reducing the likelihood that an acid-base imbalance will occur



## CHAPTER 9

# Fluids and Electrolytes

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse notes the presence of U waves on a client's cardiac monitor screen. What action(s) should the nurse take?

*Answer located on p. 98.*

## I. Concepts of Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

### A. Electrolytes

1. Description: An electrolyte is a substance that, on dissolving in solution, ionizes: that is, some of its molecules split or dissociate into electrically charged atoms or ions (Box 9-1).

### BOX 9-1 Properties of Electrolytes and Their Components

#### Atom

An atom is the smallest part of an element that still has the properties of the element.

The atom is composed of particles known as the *proton* (positive charge), *neutron* (neutral), and *electron* (negative charge).

Protons and neutrons are in the nucleus of the atom; therefore the nucleus is positively charged.

Electrons carry a negative charge and revolve around the nucleus.

As long as the number of electrons is the same as the number of protons, the atom has no net charge; that is, it is neither positive nor negative.

Atoms that gain, lose, or share electrons are no longer neutral.

### **Molecule**

A molecule is two or more atoms that combine to form a substance.

### **Ion**

An ion is an atom that carries an electrical charge because it has gained or lost electrons.

Some ions carry a negative electrical charge and some carry a positive charge.

### **Cation**

A cation is an ion that has given away or lost electrons and therefore carries a positive charge.

The result is fewer electrons than protons, and the result is a positive charge.

### **Anion**

An anion is an ion that has gained electrons and therefore carries a negative charge.

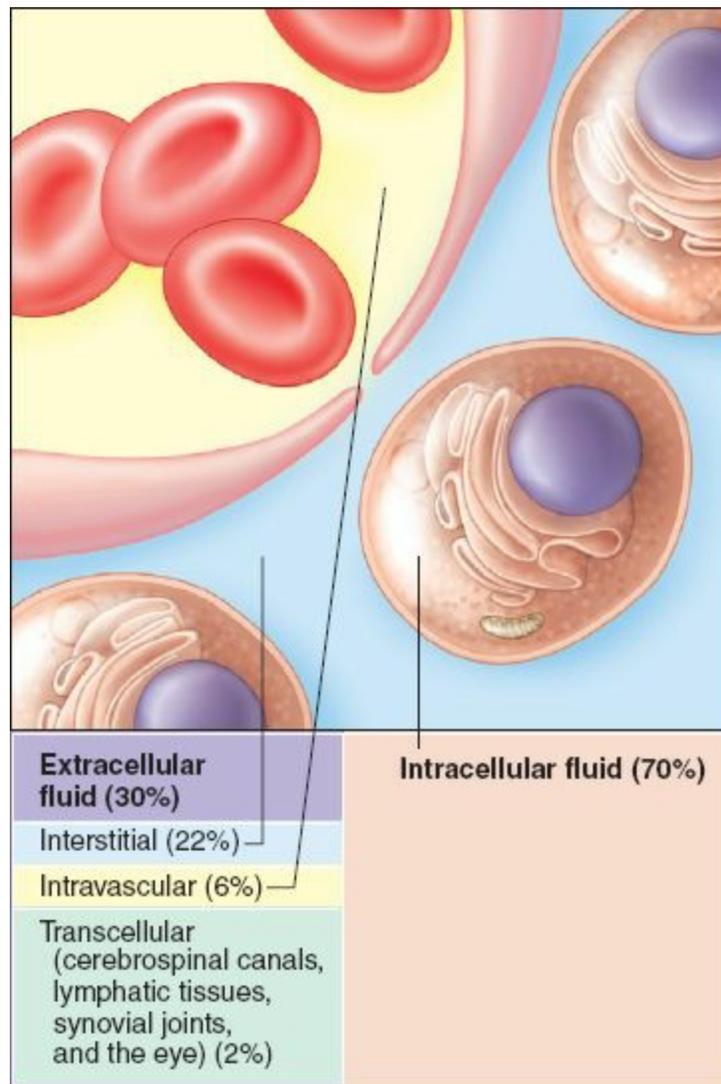
When an ion has gained or taken on electrons, it assumes a negative charge and the

result is a negatively charged ion.

## 2. Measurement

- a. The metric system is used to measure volumes of fluids—liters (L) or milliliters (mL).
- b. The unit of measure that expresses the combining activity of an electrolyte is the milliequivalent (mEq).
- c. One milliequivalent (1 mEq) of any cation always reacts chemically with 1 mEq of an anion.
- d. Milliequivalents provide information about the number of anions or cations available to combine with other anions or cations.

## B. Body fluid compartments (Fig. 9-1) ▲



**FIGURE 9-1** Distribution of fluid by compartments in the average adult. (From Harkreader H, Hogan MA, Thobaben M: *Fundamentals of nursing: Caring and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)

## 1. Description

- a. Fluid in each of the body compartments contains electrolytes.
- b. Each compartment has a particular composition of electrolytes, which differs from that of other compartments.
- c. To function normally, body cells must have fluids and electrolytes in the right

compartments and in the right amounts.

- d. Whenever an electrolyte moves out of a cell, another electrolyte moves in to take its place.
- e. The numbers of cations and anions must be the same for **homeostasis** to exist.
- f. Compartments are separated by semipermeable membranes.

2. Intravascular compartment: Refers to fluid inside a **blood** vessel

3. Intracellular compartment

- a. The intracellular compartment refers to all fluid inside the cells.
- b. Most bodily fluids are inside the cells.

4. Extracellular compartment

- a. Refers to fluid outside the cells.
- b. The extracellular compartment includes the interstitial fluid, which is fluid between cells (sometimes called the *third space*), blood, lymph, bone, connective tissue, water, and transcellular fluid.

### C. Third-spacing ▲

- 1. Third-spacing is the accumulation and sequestration of trapped extracellular fluid in an actual or potential body space as a result of disease or injury.
- 2. The trapped fluid represents a volume loss and is unavailable for normal physiological processes.
- 3. Fluid may be trapped in body spaces such as the pericardial, pleural, peritoneal, or joint cavities; the bowel; or the abdomen; or within soft tissues after trauma or burns.

4. Assessing the intravascular fluid loss caused by third-spacing is difficult. The loss may not be reflected in weight changes or intake and output records, and may not become apparent until after organ malfunction occurs.

#### D. Edema ▲

1. Edema is an excess accumulation of fluid in the interstitial space; occurs as a result of alterations in oncotic pressure, hydrostatic pressure, capillary permeability, and lymphatic obstruction.
2. Localized edema occurs as a result of traumatic injury from accidents or surgery, local inflammatory processes, or burns.
3. Generalized edema, also called *anasarca*, is an excessive accumulation of fluid in the interstitial space throughout the body and occurs as a result of conditions such as cardiac, renal, or liver failure.

#### E. Body fluid

##### 1. Description

- a. Body fluids transport **nutrients** to the cells and carry waste products from the cells.
- b. Total body fluid (intracellular and extracellular) amounts to about 60% of body weight in the adult, 55% in the older adult, and 80% in the infant.
- c. Thus infants and older adults are at a higher risk for fluid-related problems than younger adults; children have a greater proportion of body water than adults and the older adult has the least proportion of body water. ▲

##### 2. Constituents of body fluids

- a. Body fluids consist of water and dissolved substances.
- b. The largest single fluid constituent of the body is water.
- c. Some substances, such as glucose, urea, and creatinine, do not dissociate in solution; that is, they do not separate from their complex forms into simpler substances when they are in solution.
- d. Other substances do dissociate; for example, when sodium chloride is in a solution, it dissociates, or separates, into two parts or elements.

 **Infants and older adults need to be monitored closely for fluid imbalances.**

## F. Body fluid transport

### 1. Diffusion

- a. Diffusion is the process whereby a solute (substance that is dissolved) may spread through a solution or solvent (solution in which the solute is dissolved).
- b. Diffusion of a solute spreads the molecules from an area of higher concentration to an area of lower concentration.
- c. A permeable membrane allows substances to pass through it without restriction.
- d. A selectively permeable membrane allows some solutes to pass through without restriction but prevents other solutes from passing freely.
- e. Diffusion occurs within fluid compartments and from one compartment to another if the barrier between the compartments is permeable to the diffusing substances.

### 2. Osmosis

- a. Osmotic pressure is the force that draws the solvent from a less concentrated solute through a selectively permeable membrane into a more concentrated solute, thus tending to equalize the concentration of the solvent.
- b. If a membrane is permeable to water but not to all the solutes present, the membrane is a selective or semipermeable membrane.
- c. Osmosis is the movement of solvent molecules across a membrane in response to a concentration gradient, usually from a solution of lower to one of higher solute concentration.
- d. When a more concentrated solution is on one side of a selectively permeable membrane and a less concentrated solution is on the other side, a pull called *osmotic pressure* draws the water through the membrane to the more concentrated side, or the side with more solute.

### 3. Filtration

- a. Filtration is the movement of solutes and solvents by hydrostatic pressure.
- b. The movement is from an area of higher pressure to an area of lower pressure.

### 4. Hydrostatic pressure

- a. Hydrostatic pressure is the force exerted by the weight of a solution.
- b. When a difference exists in the hydrostatic pressure on two sides of a membrane, water and diffusible solutes move out of the solution that has the higher hydrostatic pressure by the process of filtration.
- c. At the arterial end of the capillary, the hydrostatic pressure is higher than the osmotic pressure; therefore fluids and diffusible solutes move out of the

capillary.

- d. At the venous end, the osmotic pressure, or pull, is higher than the hydrostatic pressure, and fluids and some solutes move into the capillary.
- e. The excess fluid and solutes remaining in the interstitial spaces are returned to the intravascular compartment by the lymph channels.

## 5. Osmolality

- a. Osmolality refers to the number of osmotically active particles per kilogram of water; it is the concentration of a solution.
- b. In the body, osmotic pressure is measured in milliosmoles (mOsm).
- c. The normal osmolality of **plasma** is 270 to 300 milliosmoles/kilogram (mOsm/kg) water.

## G. Movement of body fluid

### 1. Description

- a. Cell membranes separate the interstitial fluid from the intravascular fluid.
- b. Cell membranes are selectively permeable; that is, the cell membrane and the capillary wall allow water and some solutes free passage through them.
- c. Several forces affect the movement of water and solutes through the walls of cells and capillaries; for example, the greater the number of particles within the cell, the more pressure exists to force the water through the cell membrane out of the cell.
- d. If the body loses more electrolytes than fluids, as can happen in diarrhea, then the extracellular fluid contains fewer electrolytes or less solute than the

intracellular fluid.

- e. Fluids and electrolytes must be kept in balance for health; when they remain out of balance, death can occur.

## 2. Isotonic solutions

- a. When the solutions on both sides of a selectively permeable membrane have established equilibrium or are equal in concentration, they are isotonic.
- b. Isotonic solutions are isotonic to human cells, and thus very little osmosis occurs; isotonic solutions have the same osmolality as body fluids.
- c. Refer to [Chapter 14](#), [Table 14-1](#), for a list of isotonic solutions.

## 3. Hypotonic solutions

- a. When a solution contains a lower concentration of salt or solute than another, more concentrated solution, it is considered hypotonic.
- b. A hypotonic solution has less salt or more water than an isotonic solution; these solutions have lower osmolality than body fluids.
- c. Hypotonic solutions are hypotonic to the cells; therefore osmosis would continue in an attempt to bring about balance or equality.
- d. Refer to [Chapter 14](#), [Table 14-1](#), for a list of hypotonic solutions.

## 4. Hypertonic solutions

- a. A solution that has a higher concentration of solutes than another, less concentrated solution is hypertonic; these solutions have a higher osmolality than body fluids.
- b. Refer to [Chapter 14](#), [Table 14-1](#), for a list of hypertonic solutions.

## 5. Osmotic pressure

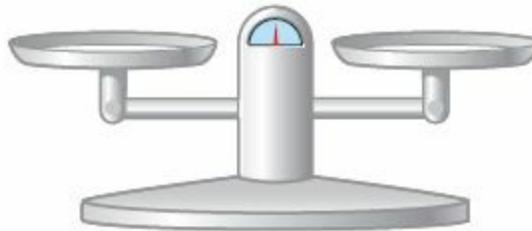
- a. The amount of osmotic pressure is determined by the concentration of solutes in solution.
- b. When the solutions on each side of a selectively permeable membrane are equal in concentration, they are isotonic.
- c. A hypotonic solution has less solute than an isotonic solution, whereas a hypertonic solution contains more solute.
- d. A solvent moves from the less concentrated solute side to the more concentrated solute side to equalize concentration.

## 6. Active transport

- a. If an ion is to move through a membrane from an area of lower concentration to an area of higher concentration, an active transport system is necessary.
- b. An active transport system moves molecules or ions against concentration and osmotic pressure.
- c. Metabolic processes in the cell supply the energy for active transport.
- d. Substances that are transported actively through the cell membrane include ions of **sodium**, **potassium**, **calcium**, iron, and hydrogen, some of the sugars, and the amino acids.

## H. Body fluid intake and output (Fig. 9-2) ▲

Fluid intake		Fluid output	
Ingested water	1200-1500 mL	Kidneys	1500 mL
Ingested food	800-1100 mL	Insensible loss through skin	600-800 mL
Metabolic oxidation	300 mL	Insensible loss through lungs	400-600 mL
<hr/>		Gastrointestinal tract	100 mL
TOTAL	2300-2900 mL	<hr/>	
		TOTAL	2600-3000 mL



**FIGURE 9-2** Sources of fluid intake and fluid output. (From Harkreader H, Hogan MA: *Fundamentals of nursing: Caring and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)

### 1. Body fluid intake

- a. Water enters the body through three sources—orally ingested liquids, water in foods, and water formed by oxidation of foods.
- b. About 10 mL of water is released by the **metabolism** of each 100 calories of fat, carbohydrates, or proteins.

### 2. Body fluid output

- a. Water lost through the skin is called *insensible loss* (the individual is unaware of losing that water).
- b. The amount of water lost by perspiration varies according to the temperature of the environment and of the body, but the average amount of loss by perspiration alone is 100 mL/day.

- c. Water lost from the lungs is called *insensible loss* and is lost through expired air that is saturated with water vapor.
- d. The amount of water lost from the lungs varies with the rate and the depth of respiration.
- e. Large quantities of water are secreted into the gastrointestinal tract, but almost all this fluid is reabsorbed.
- f. A large volume of electrolyte-containing liquids moves into the gastrointestinal tract and then returns again into the extracellular fluid.
- g. Severe diarrhea results in the loss of large quantities of fluids and electrolytes.
- h. The kidneys play a major role in regulating fluid and electrolyte balance and excrete the largest quantity of fluid.
- i. Normal kidneys can adjust the amount of water and electrolytes leaving the body.
- j. The quantity of fluid excreted by the kidneys is determined by the amount of water ingested and the amount of waste and solutes excreted.
- k. As long as all organs are functioning normally, the body is able to maintain balance in its fluid content.

 The client with diarrhea is at high risk for a fluid and electrolyte imbalance.

## I. Maintaining fluid and electrolyte balance

### 1. Description

- a. **Homeostasis** is a term that indicates the relative stability of the internal

environment.

- b.** Concentration and composition of body fluids must be nearly constant.
  - c.** When one of the substances in a client is deficient—either fluids or electrolytes—the substance must be replaced normally by the intake of food and water or by therapy such as intravenous (IV) solutions and medications.
  - d.** When the client has an excess of fluid or electrolytes, therapy is directed toward assisting the body to eliminate the excess.
- 2.** The kidneys play a major role in controlling balance in fluid and electrolytes.
  - 3.** The adrenal glands, through the secretion of aldosterone, also aid in controlling extracellular fluid volume by regulating the amount of sodium reabsorbed by the kidneys.
  - 4.** Antidiuretic hormone from the pituitary gland regulates the osmotic pressure of extracellular fluid by regulating the amount of water reabsorbed by the kidney.

## **II. Fluid Volume Deficit**

### **A. Description**

- 1.** Dehydration occurs when the fluid intake of the body is not sufficient to meet the fluid needs of the body.
- 2.** The goal of treatment is to restore fluid volume, replace electrolytes as needed, and eliminate the cause of the fluid volume deficit. ▲

### **B. Types of fluid volume deficits**

- 1.** Isotonic dehydration
  - a.** Water and dissolved electrolytes are lost in equal proportions.

**b.** Known as *hypovolemia*, isotonic dehydration is the most common type of dehydration.

**c.** Isotonic dehydration results in decreased circulating **blood** volume and inadequate tissue perfusion.

## 2. Hypertonic dehydration

**a.** Water loss exceeds electrolyte loss.

**b.** The clinical problems that occur result from alterations in the concentrations of specific plasma electrolytes.

**c.** Fluid moves from the intracellular compartment into the **plasma** and interstitial fluid spaces, causing cellular dehydration and shrinkage.

## 3. Hypotonic dehydration

**a.** Electrolyte loss exceeds water loss.

**b.** The clinical problems that occur result from fluid shifts between compartments, causing a decrease in plasma volume.

**c.** Fluid moves from the plasma and interstitial fluid spaces into the cells, causing a plasma volume deficit and causing the cells to swell.

## C. Causes of fluid volume deficits

### 1. Isotonic dehydration

**a.** Inadequate intake of fluids and solutes ▲

**b.** Fluid shifts between compartments

**c.** Excessive losses of isotonic body fluids

### 2. Hypertonic dehydration—conditions that increase fluid loss, such as excessive

perspiration, hyperventilation, ketoacidosis, prolonged fevers, diarrhea, early-stage kidney disease, and diabetes insipidus ▲

### 3. Hypotonic dehydration ▲

- a. Chronic illness
- b. Excessive fluid replacement (hypotonic)
- c. Kidney disease
- d. Chronic **malnutrition**

### D. Assessment (Table 9-1) ▲

**TABLE 9-1 Assessment Findings: Fluid Volume Deficit and Fluid Volume Excess**

Fluid Volume Deficit	Fluid Volume Excess
<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Thready, increased pulse rate</li> <li>■ Decreased blood pressure and orthostatic (postural) hypotension</li> <li>■ Flat neck and hand veins in dependent positions</li> <li>■ Diminished peripheral pulses</li> <li>■ Decreased central venous pressure</li> <li>■ Dysrhythmias</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bounding, increased pulse rate</li> <li>■ Elevated blood pressure</li> <li>■ Distended neck and hand veins</li> <li>■ Elevated central venous pressure</li> <li>■ Dysrhythmias</li> </ul>
<p><b>Respiratory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased rate and depth of respirations</li> <li>■ Dyspnea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased respiratory rate (shallow respirations)</li> <li>■ Dyspnea</li> <li>■ Moist crackles on auscultation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neuromuscular</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decreased central nervous system activity, from lethargy to coma</li> <li>■ Fever, depending on the amount of fluid loss</li> <li>■ Skeletal muscle weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Altered level of consciousness</li> <li>■ Headache</li> <li>■ Visual disturbances</li> <li>■ Skeletal muscle weakness</li> <li>■ Paresthesias</li> </ul>
<p><b>Renal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decreased urine output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased urine output if kidneys can compensate; decreased urine output if kidney damage is the cause</li> </ul>

### **Integumentary**

- Dry skin
- Poor turgor, tenting
- Dry mouth
- Pitting edema in dependent areas
- Pale, cool skin

### **Gastrointestinal**

- Decreased motility and diminished bowel sounds
- Constipation
- Thirst
- Decreased body weight
- Increased motility in the gastrointestinal tract
- Diarrhea
- Increased body weight
- Liver enlargement
- Ascites

### **Laboratory Findings**

- Increased serum osmolality
- Increased hematocrit
- Increased blood urea nitrogen (BUN) level
- Increased serum sodium level
- Increased urinary specific gravity
- Decreased serum osmolality
- Decreased hematocrit
- Decreased BUN level
- Decreased serum sodium level
- Decreased urine specific gravity

## **E. Interventions**

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, renal, integumentary, and gastrointestinal status.
2. Prevent further fluid losses and increase fluid compartment volumes to normal ranges.
3. Provide oral rehydration therapy if possible and IV fluid replacement if the dehydration is severe; monitor intake and output.
4. In general, isotonic dehydration is treated with isotonic fluid solutions, hypertonic dehydration with hypotonic fluid solutions, and hypotonic dehydration with hypertonic fluid solutions. ▲
5. Administer medications as prescribed, such as antidiarrheal, antimicrobial, antiemetic, and antipyretic medications, to correct the cause and treat any symptoms.
6. Administer oxygen as prescribed.

7. Monitor electrolyte values and prepare to administer medication to treat an imbalance, if present.

### III. Fluid Volume Excess

#### A. Description

1. Fluid intake or fluid retention exceeds the fluid needs of the body.
2. Fluid volume excess is also called *overhydration* or *fluid overload*.
3. The goal of treatment is to restore fluid balance, correct electrolyte imbalances if present, and eliminate or control the underlying cause of the overload. ▲

#### B. Types

##### 1. Isotonic overhydration

- a. Known as *hypervolemia*, isotonic overhydration results from excessive fluid in the extracellular fluid compartment.
- b. Only the extracellular fluid compartment is expanded, and fluid does not shift between the extracellular and intracellular compartments.
- c. Isotonic overhydration causes **circulatory overload** and interstitial edema; when severe or when it occurs in a client with poor cardiac function, heart failure and pulmonary edema can result. ▲

##### 2. Hypertonic overhydration

- a. The occurrence of hypertonic overhydration is rare and is caused by an excessive **sodium** intake.
- b. Fluid is drawn from the intracellular fluid compartment; the extracellular fluid

volume expands, and the intracellular fluid volume contracts.

### 3. Hypotonic overhydration

- a. Hypotonic overhydration is known as *water intoxication*.
- b. The excessive fluid moves into the intracellular space, and all body fluid compartments expand.
- c. Electrolyte imbalances occur as a result of dilution. ▲

## C. Causes ▲

### 1. Isotonic overhydration

- a. Inadequately controlled IV therapy
- b. Kidney disease
- c. Long-term corticosteroid therapy

### 2. Hypertonic overhydration

- a. Excessive sodium ingestion
- b. Rapid infusion of hypertonic saline
- c. Excessive sodium bicarbonate therapy

### 3. Hypotonic overhydration

- a. Early kidney disease
- b. Heart failure
- c. Syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion
- d. Inadequately controlled IV therapy
- e. Replacement of isotonic fluid loss with hypotonic fluids
- f. Irrigation of wounds and body cavities with hypotonic fluids

D. Assessment (see [Table 9-1](#)) ▲

E. Interventions

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, renal, integumentary, and gastrointestinal status.
2. Prevent further fluid overload and restore normal fluid balance.
3. Administer diuretics; osmotic diuretics typically are prescribed first to prevent severe electrolyte imbalances. ▲
4. Restrict fluid and sodium intake as prescribed.
5. Monitor intake and output; monitor weight.
6. Monitor electrolyte values, and prepare to administer medication to treat an imbalance if present. ▲

**⚠** A client with acute kidney injury or chronic kidney disease is at high risk for fluid volume excess.

## IV. Hyponatremia

A. Description

1. Hyponatremia is a **serum sodium** level lower than 135 mEq/L ([Box 9-2](#)).

### BOX 9-2

#### Sodium

##### Normal Value

135 to 145 mEq/L

##### Common Food Sources

Bacon

Butter

Canned food

Cheese

Frankfurters

Ketchup

Lunch meat

Milk

Mustard

Processed food

Snack food

Soy sauce

Table salt

White and whole-wheat bread

2. Sodium imbalances usually are associated with fluid volume imbalances.

**B. Causes** ▲

1. Increased sodium excretion

a. Excessive diaphoresis

b. Diuretics

c. Vomiting

d. Diarrhea

- e. Wound drainage, especially gastrointestinal
  - f. Kidney disease
  - g. Decreased secretion of aldosterone
2. Inadequate sodium intake
    - a. Fasting; nothing by mouth status
    - b. Low-salt diet
  3. Dilution of serum sodium
    - a. Excessive ingestion of hypotonic fluids or irrigation with hypotonic fluids
    - b. Kidney disease
    - c. Freshwater drowning
    - d. Syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion
    - e. Hyperglycemia
    - f. Heart failure

C. Assessment (Table 9-2) ▲

**TABLE 9-2 Assessment Findings: Hyponatremia and Hypernatremia**

Hyponatremia	Hypernatremia
<b>Cardiovascular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Symptoms vary with changes in vascular volume</li> <li>■ Normovolemic: Rapid pulse rate; normal blood pressure</li> <li>■ Hypovolemic: Thready, weak, rapid pulse rate; hypotension; flat neck veins; normal or low central venous pressure</li> <li>■ Hypervolemic: Rapid, bounding pulse; blood pressure normal or elevated; normal or elevated central venous pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Heart rate and blood pressure respond to vascular volume status</li> </ul>
<b>Respiratory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Shallow, ineffective respiratory movement is a late manifestation related to skeletal muscle weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pulmonary edema if hypervolemia is present</li> </ul>
<b>Neuromuscular</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Generalized skeletal muscle weakness that is worse in the extremities</li> <li>■ Diminished deep tendon reflexes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Early: Spontaneous muscle twitches; irregular muscle contractions</li> <li>■ Late: Skeletal muscle weakness; deep tendon reflexes diminished or absent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Central Nervous System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Headache</li> <li>■ Personality changes</li> <li>■ Confusion</li> <li>■ Seizures</li> <li>■ Coma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Altered cerebral function is the most common manifestation of hypernatremia</li> <li>■ Normovolemia or hypovolemia: Agitation, confusion, seizures</li> <li>■ Hypervolemia: Lethargy, stupor, coma</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gastrointestinal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased motility and hyperactive bowel sounds</li> <li>■ Nausea</li> <li>■ Abdominal cramping and diarrhea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Extreme thirst</li> </ul>
<p><b>Renal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased urinary output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decreased urinary output</li> </ul>
<p><b>Integumentary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dry mucous membranes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dry and flushed skin</li> <li>■ Dry and sticky tongue and mucous membranes</li> <li>■ Presence or absence of edema, depending on fluid volume changes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Laboratory Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serum sodium level less than 135 mEq/L</li> <li>■ Decreased urinary specific gravity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serum sodium level that exceeds 145 mEq/L</li> <li>■ Increased urinary specific gravity</li> </ul>

## D. Interventions

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, cerebral, renal, and gastrointestinal status.
2. If hyponatremia is accompanied by a **fluid volume deficit** (hypovolemia), IV sodium chloride infusions are administered to restore sodium content and fluid volume.
3. If hyponatremia is accompanied by **fluid volume excess** (hypervolemia), osmotic diuretics are administered to promote the excretion of water rather than sodium.
4. If caused by inappropriate or excessive secretion of antidiuretic hormone, medications that antagonize antidiuretic hormone may be administered.

5. Instruct the client to increase oral sodium intake and inform the client about the foods to include in the diet (see [Box 9-2](#)).
6. If the client is taking lithium (Lithobid), monitor the lithium level, because hyponatremia can cause diminished lithium excretion, resulting in toxicity. ▲

⚠ **Hyponatremia precipitates lithium toxicity in a client taking lithium (Lithobid).**

## V. Hypernatremia

A. Description: Hypernatremia is a **serum sodium** level that exceeds 145 mEq/L (see [Box 9-2](#)).

B. Causes ▲

1. Decreased sodium excretion

a. Corticosteroids

b. Cushing's syndrome

c. Kidney disease

d. Hyperaldosteronism

2. Increased sodium intake: Excessive oral sodium ingestion or excessive administration of sodium-containing IV fluids

3. Decreased water intake: Fasting; nothing by mouth status

4. Increased water loss: Increased rate of **metabolism**, fever, hyperventilation, infection, excessive diaphoresis, watery diarrhea, diabetes insipidus

C. Assessment (see [Table 9-2](#)) ▲

## D. Interventions

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, cerebral, renal, and integumentary status.
2. If the cause is fluid loss, prepare to administer IV infusions.
3. If the cause is inadequate renal excretion of sodium, prepare to administer diuretics that promote sodium loss. ▲
4. Restrict sodium and fluid intake as prescribed (see [Box 9-2](#)).

⚠ Monitor the client closely for signs of a potassium imbalance. A potassium imbalance can cause cardiac dysrhythmias that can be life-threatening!

## VI. Hypokalemia

### A. Description

1. Hypokalemia is a **serum potassium** level lower than 3.5 mEq/L ([Box 9-3](#)).

#### BOX 9-3

#### Potassium

##### Normal Value

3.5 to 5.0 mEq/L

##### Common Food Sources

Avocado

Bananas

Cantaloupe

Carrots

Fish

Mushrooms

Oranges

Potatoes

Pork, beef, veal

Raisins

Spinach

Strawberries

Tomatoes

2. Potassium deficit is potentially life-threatening because every body system is affected. ▲

**B. Causes** ▲

1. Actual total body potassium loss

- a. Excessive use of medications such as diuretics or corticosteroids
- b. Increased secretion of aldosterone, such as in Cushing's syndrome
- c. Vomiting, diarrhea
- d. Wound drainage, particularly gastrointestinal
- e. Prolonged nasogastric suction
- f. Excessive diaphoresis
- g. Kidney disease impairing reabsorption of potassium

2. Inadequate potassium intake: Fasting; nothing by mouth status

3. Movement of potassium from the extracellular fluid to the intracellular fluid
  - a. Alkalosis
  - b. Hyperinsulinism
4. Dilution of serum potassium
  - a. Water intoxication
  - b. IV therapy with potassium-deficient solutions

C. Assessment (Tables 9-3 and 9-4) ▲

**TABLE 9-3 Assessment Findings: Hypokalemia and Hyperkalemia**

Hypokalemia	Hyperkalemia
<b>Cardiovascular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Thready, weak, irregular pulse</li> <li>■ Weak peripheral pulses</li> <li>■ Orthostatic hypotension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Slow, weak, irregular heart rate</li> <li>■ Decreased blood pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Respiratory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Shallow, ineffective respirations that result from profound weakness of the skeletal muscles of respiration</li> <li>■ Diminished breath sounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Profound weakness of the skeletal muscles leading to respiratory failure</li> </ul>
<b>Neuromuscular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Anxiety, lethargy, confusion, coma</li> <li>■ Skeletal muscle weakness, eventual flaccid paralysis</li> <li>■ Loss of tactile discrimination</li> <li>■ Paresthesias</li> <li>■ Deep tendon hyporeflexia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Early: Muscle twitches, cramps, paresthesias (tingling and burning followed by numbness in the hands and feet and around the mouth)</li> <li>■ Late: Profound weakness, ascending flaccid paralysis in the arms and legs (trunk, head, and respiratory muscles become affected when the serum potassium level reaches a lethal level)</li> </ul>
<b>Gastrointestinal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decreased motility, hypoactive to absent bowel sounds</li> <li>■ Nausea, vomiting, constipation, abdominal distention</li> <li>■ Paralytic ileus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased motility, hyperactive bowel sounds</li> <li>■ Diarrhea</li> </ul>
<b>Laboratory Findings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serum potassium level lower than 3.5 mEq/L</li> <li>■ Electrocardiogram changes: ST depression; shallow, flat, or inverted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serum potassium level that exceeds 5.0 mEq/L</li> <li>■ Electrocardiographic changes: Tall peaked T waves, flat P waves, widened QRS complexes, and prolonged PR intervals</li> </ul>

**TABLE 9-4 Electrocardiographic Changes in Electrolyte Imbalances**

Electrolyte Imbalance	Electrocardiographic Changes
Hypocalcemia	Prolonged ST segment Prolonged QT interval
Hypercalcemia	Shortened ST segment Widened T wave
Hypokalemia	ST depression Shallow, flat, or inverted T wave Prominent U wave
Hyperkalemia	Tall peaked T waves Flat P waves Widened QRS complex Prolonged PR interval
Hypomagnesemia	Tall T waves Depressed ST segment
Hypermagnesemia	Prolonged PR interval Widened QRS complexes

**D. Interventions**

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, gastrointestinal, and renal status, and place the client on a cardiac monitor.
2. Monitor electrolyte values.
3. Administer potassium supplements orally or intravenously, as prescribed.
4. Oral potassium supplements 
  - a. Oral potassium supplements may cause nausea and vomiting and they should not be taken on an empty stomach; if the client complains of abdominal pain, distention, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or gastrointestinal bleeding, the supplement may need to be discontinued.

b. Liquid potassium chloride has an unpleasant taste and should be taken with juice or another liquid.

5. Intravenously administered potassium (Box 9-4) ▲

**BOX 9-4** Precautions with Intravenously Administered Potassium

- Potassium is never given by intravenous (IV) push or by the intramuscular or subcutaneous route.
- A dilution of no more than 1 mEq/10 mL of solution is recommended.
- Many health care agencies supply prepared IV solutions containing potassium; before administering and frequently during infusion of the IV solution, rotate and invert the bag to ensure that the potassium is distributed evenly throughout the IV solution.
- Ensure that the IV bag containing potassium is properly labeled.
- The maximum recommended infusion rate is 5 to 10 mEq/hour, never to exceed 20 mEq/hour under any circumstances.
- A client receiving more than 10 mEq/hour should be placed on a cardiac monitor and monitored for cardiac changes, and the infusion should be controlled by an infusion device.
- Potassium infusion can cause phlebitis; therefore the nurse should assess the IV site frequently for signs of phlebitis or infiltration. If either occurs, the infusion should be stopped immediately.
- The nurse should assess renal function before administering potassium, and

monitor intake and output during administration.

6. Institute safety measures for the client experiencing muscle weakness. ▲
7. If the client is taking a potassium-depleting diuretic, it may be discontinued; a potassium-retaining diuretic may be prescribed. ▲
8. Instruct the client about foods that are high in potassium content (see [Box 9-3](#)).

**⚠ Potassium is never administered by IV push, intramuscular, or subcutaneous routes. IV potassium is always diluted and administered using an infusion device!**

## VII. Hyperkalemia

### A. Description

1. Hyperkalemia is a **serum potassium** level that exceeds 5.0 mEq/L (see [Box 9-3](#)).
2. Pseudohyperkalemia: a condition that can occur due to methods of **blood** specimen collection and cell lysis; if an increased serum value is obtained in the absence of clinical symptoms, the specimen should be redrawn and evaluated.

### B. Causes ▲

1. Excessive potassium intake
  - a. Overingestion of potassium-containing foods or medications, such as potassium chloride or salt substitutes
  - b. Rapid infusion of potassium-containing IV solutions
2. Decreased potassium excretion
  - a. Potassium-retaining diuretics

**b.** Kidney disease

**c.** Adrenal insufficiency, such as in Addison's disease

**3.** Movement of potassium from the intracellular fluid to the extracellular fluid

**a.** Tissue damage

**b.** Acidosis

**c.** Hyperuricemia

**d.** Hypercatabolism

**C.** Assessment (see [Tables 9-3](#) and [9-4](#)) ▲

**D.** Interventions ▲

**1.** Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, renal, and gastrointestinal status; place the client on a cardiac monitor.

**2.** Discontinue IV potassium (keep the IV catheter patent), and hold oral potassium supplements.

**3.** Initiate a potassium-restricted diet.

**4.** Prepare to administer potassium-excreting diuretics if renal function is not impaired.

**5.** If renal function is impaired, prepare to administer sodium polystyrene sulfonate (Kayexalate), a cation-exchange resin that promotes gastrointestinal **sodium** absorption and potassium excretion.

**6.** Prepare the client for dialysis if potassium levels are critically high.

**7.** Prepare for the administration of intravenous calcium if hyperkalemia is severe to avert myocardial excitability.

8. Prepare for the IV administration of hypertonic glucose with regular insulin to move excess potassium into the cells.
9. Monitor renal function.
10. When **blood** transfusions are prescribed for a client with a potassium imbalance, the client should receive fresh blood, if possible; transfusions of stored blood may elevate the potassium level because the breakdown of older blood cells releases potassium.
11. Teach the client to avoid foods high in potassium (see [Box 9-3](#)).
12. Instruct the client to avoid the use of salt substitutes or other potassium-containing substances.

 **Monitor the serum potassium level closely when a client is receiving a potassium-retaining diuretic!**

## VIII. Hypocalcemia

- A. Description: Hypocalcemia is a **serum calcium** level lower than 8.6 mg/dL ([Box 9-5](#)).

### **BOX 9-5** Calcium

#### Normal Value

8.6 to 10 mg/dL

#### Common Food Sources

Cheese

Collard greens

Milk and soy milk

Rhubarb

Sardines

Spinach

Tofu

Yogurt

## **B. Causes** ▲

- 1. Inhibition of calcium absorption from the gastrointestinal tract**
  - a.** Inadequate oral intake of calcium
  - b.** Lactose intolerance
  - c.** Malabsorption syndromes such as celiac sprue or Crohn's disease
  - d.** Inadequate intake of vitamin D
  - e.** End-stage kidney disease
- 2. Increased calcium excretion**
  - a.** Kidney disease, polyuric phase
  - b.** Diarrhea
  - c.** Steatorrhea
  - d.** Wound drainage, especially gastrointestinal
- 3. Conditions that decrease the ionized fraction of calcium**
  - a.** Hyperproteinemia

- b. Alkalosis
- c. Medications such as calcium chelators or binders
- d. Acute pancreatitis
- e. Hyperphosphatemia
- f. Immobility
- g. Removal or destruction of the parathyroid glands

C. Assessment (Table 9-5 and Fig. 9-3; also see Table 9-4) ▲

**TABLE 9-5 Assessment Findings: Hypocalcemia and Hypercalcemia**

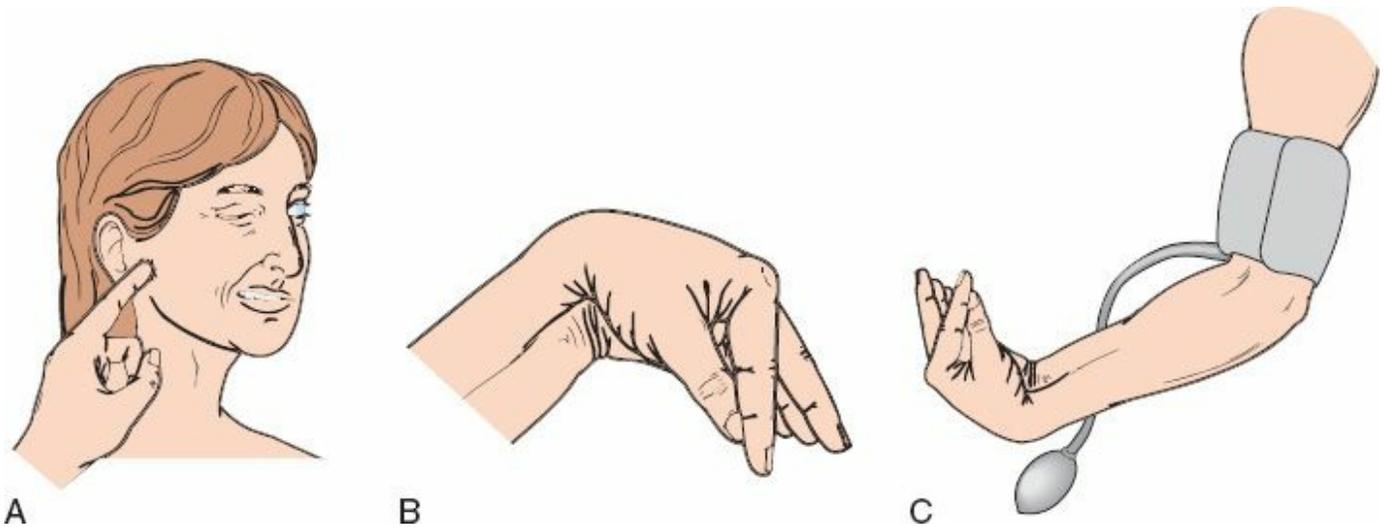
Hypocalcemia	Hypercalcemia
<b>Cardiovascular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decreased heart rate</li> <li>■ Hypotension</li> <li>■ Diminished peripheral pulses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased heart rate in the early phase; bradycardia that can lead to cardiac arrest in late phases</li> <li>■ Increased blood pressure</li> <li>■ Bounding, full peripheral pulses</li> </ul>
<b>Respiratory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Not directly affected; however, respiratory failure or arrest can result from decreased respiratory movement because of muscle tetany or seizures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ineffective respiratory movement as a result of profound skeletal muscle weakness</li> </ul>
<b>Neuromuscular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Irritable skeletal muscles: Twitches, cramps, tetany, seizures</li> <li>■ Painful muscle spasms in the calf or foot during periods of inactivity</li> <li>■ Paresthesias followed by numbness that may affect the lips, nose, and ears in addition to the limbs</li> <li>■ Positive Trousseau’s and Chvostek’s signs</li> <li>■ Hyperactive deep tendon reflexes</li> <li>■ Anxiety, irritability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Profound muscle weakness</li> <li>■ Diminished or absent deep tendon reflexes</li> <li>■ Disorientation, lethargy, coma</li> </ul>
<b>Renal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Urinary output varies depending on the cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Urinary output varies depending on the cause</li> <li>■ Formation of renal calculi; flank pain</li> </ul>
<b>Gastrointestinal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased gastric motility; hyperactive bowel sounds</li> <li>■ Cramping, diarrhea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decreased motility and hypoactive bowel sounds</li> <li>■ Anorexia, nausea, abdominal distention,</li> </ul>

### Laboratory Findings

- Serum calcium level less than 8.6 mg/dL
- Electrocardiographic changes: Prolonged ST interval, prolonged QT interval

constipation

- Serum calcium level that exceeds 10 mg/dL
- Electrocardiographic changes: Shortened ST segment, widened T wave



**FIGURE 9-3** Tests for hypocalcemia. **A**, Chvostek's sign is contraction of facial muscles in response to a light tap over the facial nerve in front of the ear. **B**, Trousseau's sign is a carpal spasm induced by inflating a blood pressure cuff (**C**) above the systolic pressure for a few minutes. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

### D. Interventions

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, and gastrointestinal status; place the client on a cardiac monitor.
2. Administer calcium supplements orally or calcium intravenously.
3. When administering calcium intravenously, warm the injection solution to body temperature before administration and administer slowly; monitor for

electrocardiographic changes, observe for **infiltration**, and monitor for hypercalcemia. ▲

4. Administer medications that increase calcium absorption.
  - a. Aluminum hydroxide reduces **phosphorus** levels, causing the countereffect of increasing calcium levels.
  - b. Vitamin D aids in the absorption of calcium from the intestinal tract.
5. Provide a quiet environment to reduce environmental stimuli.
6. Initiate seizure precautions. ▲
7. Move the client carefully, and monitor for signs of a pathological fracture. ▲
8. Keep 10% calcium gluconate available for treatment of acute calcium deficit. ▲
9. Instruct the client to consume foods high in calcium (see [Box 9-5](#)).

## IX. Hypercalcemia

**A.** Description: Hypercalcemia is a **serum calcium** level that exceeds 10 mg/dL (see [Box 9-5](#)).

**B.** Causes ▲

1. Increased calcium absorption
  - a. Excessive oral intake of calcium
  - b. Excessive oral intake of vitamin D
2. Decreased calcium excretion
  - a. Kidney disease
  - b. Use of thiazide diuretics
3. Increased bone resorption of calcium

- a. Hyperparathyroidism
- b. Hyperthyroidism
- c. Malignancy (bone destruction from metastatic tumors)
- d. Immobility
- e. Use of glucocorticoids

**4. Hemoconcentration**

- a. Dehydration
- b. Use of lithium
- c. Adrenal insufficiency

**C. Assessment** (see [Tables 9-4](#) and [9-5](#)) ▲

**D. Interventions**

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, renal, and gastrointestinal status; place the client on a cardiac monitor.
2. Discontinue IV infusions of solutions containing calcium and oral medications containing calcium or vitamin D.
3. Discontinue thiazide diuretics and replace with diuretics that enhance the excretion of calcium.
4. Administer medications as prescribed that inhibit calcium resorption from the bone, such as phosphorus, calcitonin (Calcimar), bisphosphonates, and prostaglandin synthesis inhibitors (aspirin, nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs).
5. Prepare the client with severe hypercalcemia for dialysis if medications fail to reduce the serum calcium level.

6. Move the client carefully and monitor for signs of a pathological fracture. ▲
7. Monitor for flank or abdominal pain, and strain the urine to check for the presence of urinary stones. ▲
8. Instruct the client to avoid foods high in calcium (see [Box 9-5](#)).

**⚠** A client with a calcium imbalance is at risk for a pathological fracture. Move the client carefully and slowly; assist the client with ambulation.

## X. Hypomagnesemia

- A. Description: Hypomagnesemia is a **serum magnesium** level lower than 1.6 mg/dL ([Box 9-6](#)).

### **BOX 9-6** Magnesium

#### **Normal Value**

1.6 to 2.6 mg/dL

#### **Common Food Sources**

Avocado

Canned white tuna

Cauliflower

Green leafy vegetables, such as spinach and broccoli

Milk

Oatmeal, wheat bran

Peanut butter, almonds

Peas

Pork, beef, chicken, soy beans

Potatoes

Raisins

Yogurt

## B. Causes

### 1. Insufficient magnesium intake

- a. Malnutrition and starvation
- b. Vomiting or diarrhea
- c. Malabsorption syndrome
- d. Celiac disease
- e. Crohn's disease

### 2. Increased magnesium secretion

- a. Medications such as diuretics
- b. Chronic alcoholism

### 3. Intracellular movement of magnesium

- a. Hyperglycemia
- b. Insulin administration
- c. Sepsis

## C. Assessment ([Table 9-6](#); and see [Table 9-4](#))

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**TABLE 9-6 Assessment Findings: Hypomagnesemia and Hypermagnesemia**

Hypomagnesemia	Hypermagnesemia
<b>Cardiovascular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tachycardia</li> <li>■ Hypertension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bradycardia, dysrhythmias</li> <li>■ Hypotension</li> </ul>
<b>Respiratory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Shallow respirations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Respiratory insufficiency when the skeletal muscles of respiration are involved</li> </ul>
<b>Neuromuscular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Twitches; paresthasias</li> <li>■ Positive Trousseau’s and Chvostek’s signs</li> <li>■ Hyperreflexia</li> <li>■ Tetany, seizures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Diminished or absent deep tendon reflexes</li> <li>■ Skeletal muscle weakness</li> </ul>
<b>Central Nervous System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Irritability</li> <li>■ Confusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Drowsiness and lethargy that progresses to coma</li> </ul>
<b>Laboratory Findings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serum magnesium level less than 1.6 mg/dL</li> <li>■ Electrocardiographic changes: Tall T waves, depressed ST segments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serum magnesium level that exceeds 2.6 mg/dL</li> <li>■ Electrocardiographic changes: Prolonged PR interval, widened QRS complexes</li> </ul>

**D. Interventions**

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, neuromuscular, and central nervous system status; place the client on a cardiac monitor.
2. Because hypocalcemia frequently accompanies hypomagnesemia, interventions also aim to restore normal serum calcium levels.
3. Oral preparations of magnesium may cause diarrhea and increase magnesium loss.
4.  Magnesium sulfate by the IV route may be prescribed in severe cases (intramuscular injections cause pain and tissue damage); initiate seizure precautions, monitor serum magnesium levels frequently, and monitor for diminished deep tendon reflexes, suggesting hypermagnesemia, during the

administration of magnesium.

5. Instruct the client to increase the intake of foods that contain magnesium (see [Box 9-6](#)).

## **XI. Hypermagnesemia**

**A. Description:** Hypermagnesemia is a **serum magnesium** level that exceeds 2.6 mg/dL (see [Box 9-6](#)).

**B. Causes** ▲

1. Increased magnesium intake
  - a. Magnesium-containing antacids and laxatives
  - b. Excessive administration of magnesium intravenously
2. Decreased renal excretion of magnesium as a result of renal insufficiency

**C. Assessment** (see [Tables 9-4](#) and [9-6](#)) ▲

**D. Interventions**

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, and central nervous system status; place the client on a cardiac monitor.
2. Diuretics are prescribed to increase renal excretion of magnesium.
3. Intravenously administered calcium chloride or calcium gluconate may be prescribed to reverse the effects of magnesium on cardiac muscle. ▲
4. Instruct the client to restrict dietary intake of magnesium-containing foods (see [Box 9-6](#)).
5. Instruct the client to avoid the use of laxatives and antacids containing magnesium.



 Calcium gluconate is the antidote for magnesium overdose!

## XII. Hypophosphatemia

### A. Description

1. Hypophosphatemia is a **serum phosphorus** level lower than 2.7 mg/dL (Box 9-7).

#### BOX 9-7 Phosphorus

##### Normal Value

2.7 to 4.5 mg/dL

##### Common Food Sources

Fish

Pumpkin, squash

Nuts

Pork, beef, chicken, organ meats

Whole-grain breads and cereals

Dairy products

2. A decrease in the serum phosphorus level is accompanied by an increase in the serum **calcium** level. 

### B. Causes

1. Insufficient phosphorus intake: **Malnutrition** and starvation
2. Increased phosphorus excretion

- a. Hyperparathyroidism
- b. Malignancy
- c. Use of **magnesium**-based or aluminum hydroxide–based antacids

3. Intracellular shift

- a. Hyperglycemia
- b. **Respiratory alkalosis**

C. Assessment ▲

1. Cardiovascular

- a. Decreased contractility and cardiac output
- b. Slowed peripheral pulses

2. Respiratory: Shallow respirations

3. Neuromuscular

- a. Weakness
- b. Decreased deep tendon reflexes
- c. Decreased bone density that can cause fractures and alterations in bone shape
- d. Rhabdomyolysis

4. Central nervous system

- a. Irritability
- b. Confusion
- c. Seizures

5. Hematological

- a. Decreased platelet aggregation and increased bleeding

## b. Immunosuppression

### D. Interventions

1. Monitor cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular, central nervous system, and hematological status.
2. Discontinue medications that contribute to hypophosphatemia.
3. Administer phosphorus orally along with a vitamin D supplement. ▲
4. Prepare to administer phosphorus intravenously when serum phosphorus levels fall below 1 mg/dL and when the client experiences critical clinical manifestations.
5. Administer IV phosphorus slowly because of the risks associated with hyperphosphatemia.
6. Assess the renal system before administering phosphorus. ▲
7. Move the client carefully, and monitor for signs of a pathological fracture. ▲
8. Instruct the client to increase the intake of the phosphorus-containing foods while decreasing the intake of any calcium-containing foods (see [Boxes 9-5](#) and [9-7](#)).

**⚠** A decrease in the serum phosphorus level is accompanied by an increase in the serum calcium level, and an increase in the serum phosphorus level is accompanied by a decrease in the serum calcium level.

## XIII. Hyperphosphatemia

### A. Description

1. Hyperphosphatemia is a **serum phosphorus** level that exceeds 4.5 mg/dL (see [Box 9-7](#)).

2. Most body systems tolerate elevated serum phosphorus levels well.
3. An increase in the serum phosphorus level is accompanied by a decrease in the serum **calcium** level. ▲
4. The problems that occur in hyperphosphatemia center on the hypocalcemia that results when serum phosphorus levels increase.

#### **B. Causes** ▲

1. Decreased renal excretion resulting from renal insufficiency
2. Tumor lysis syndrome
3. Increased intake of phosphorus, including dietary intake or overuse of phosphate-containing laxatives or enemas
4. Hypoparathyroidism

#### **C. Assessment:** Refer to assessment of hypocalcemia.

#### **D. Interventions**

1. Interventions entail the management of hypocalcemia.
2. Administer phosphate-binding medications that increase fecal excretion of phosphorus by binding phosphorus from food in the gastrointestinal tract. ▲
3. Instruct the client to avoid phosphate-containing medications, including laxatives and enemas. ▲
4. Instruct the client to decrease the intake of food that is high in phosphorus (see [Box 9-7](#)).
5. Instruct the client in medication administration: Take phosphate-binding medications, emphasizing that they should be taken with meals or immediately

after meals.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Cardiac changes in hypokalemia include impaired repolarization, resulting in a flattening of the T wave and eventually the emergence of a U wave. Therefore, the nurse should suspect hypokalemia. The incidence of potentially lethal ventricular dysrhythmias is increased in hypokalemia. The nurse should immediately assess the client's vital signs and cardiac status and for signs of hypokalemia. The nurse should also check the client's most recent serum potassium level and then contact the health care provider to report the findings and obtain prescriptions to treat the hypokalemic state.

### **Reference**

Lewis et al (2011), p. 315.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**36.** The nurse is caring for a client with heart failure. On assessment, the nurse notes that the client is dyspneic and crackles are audible on auscultation. What additional signs would the nurse expect to note in this client if excess fluid volume is present?

1. Weight loss
2. Flat neck and hand veins
3. An increase in blood pressure
4. Decreased central venous pressure (CVP)

**37.** The nurse is preparing to care for a client with a potassium deficit. The nurse reviews the client's record and determines that the client was at risk for developing the potassium deficit because of which situation?

1. Sustained tissue damage
2. Requires nasogastric suction
3. Has a history of Addison's disease
4. Is taking a potassium-retaining diuretic

**38.** The nurse reviews a client's electrolyte laboratory report and notes that the potassium level is 2.5 mEq/L. Which pattern would the nurse note on the electrocardiogram as a result of the laboratory value?

1. U waves
2. Absent P waves

3. Elevated T waves
4. Elevated ST segment

39. The nursing student needs to administer potassium chloride intravenously as prescribed to a client with hypokalemia. The nursing instructor determines that the student is unprepared for this procedure if the student states that which action is part of the plan for preparation and administration of the potassium?

1. Obtaining an intravenous (IV) infusion pump
2. Monitoring urine output during administration
3. Preparing the medication for bolus administration
4. Ensuring that the medication is diluted in the appropriate amount of normal saline

40. The nurse provides instructions to a client with a low potassium level about the foods that are high in potassium and tells the client to consume which foods?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Peas
2. Raisins
3. Potatoes
4. Cantaloupe
5. Cauliflower
6. Strawberries

41. The nurse is reviewing laboratory results and notes that a client's serum sodium

level is 150 mEq/L. The nurse reports the serum sodium level to the health care provider (HCP) and the HCP prescribes dietary instructions based on the sodium level. Which food item does the nurse instruct the client to avoid?

1. Peas
2. Nuts
3. Cauliflower
4. Processed oat cereals

42. The nurse is assessing a client with a suspected diagnosis of hypocalcemia. Which clinical manifestation would the nurse expect to note in the client?

1. Twitching
2. Hypoactive bowel sounds
3. Negative Trousseau's sign
4. Hypoactive deep tendon reflexes

43. The nurse caring for a client with hypocalcemia would expect to note which change on the electrocardiogram (ECG)?

1. Widened T wave
2. Prominent U wave
3. Prolonged QT interval
4. Shortened ST segment

44. The nurse reviews the electrolyte results of an assigned client and notes that the potassium level is 5.7 mEq/L. Which finding would the nurse expect to note on

the electrocardiogram as a result of the laboratory value?

1. ST depression
2. Inverted T wave
3. Prominent U wave
4. Tall peaked T waves

45. The nurse caring for a group of clients reviews the electrolyte laboratory results and notes a sodium level of 130 mEq/L on one client's laboratory report. The nurse understands that which client is at highest risk for the development of a sodium value at this level?

1. The client who is taking diuretics
2. The client with hyperaldosteronism
3. The client with Cushing's syndrome
4. The client who is taking corticosteroids

46. The nurse is caring for a client with heart failure who is receiving high doses of a diuretic. On assessment, the nurse notes that the client has flat neck veins, generalized muscle weakness, and diminished deep tendon reflexes. The nurse suspects hyponatremia. What additional signs would the nurse expect to note in a client with hyponatremia?

1. Muscle twitches
2. Decreased urinary output
3. Hyperactive bowel sounds

4. Increased specific gravity of the urine

47. The nurse reviews a client's laboratory report and notes that the client's serum phosphorus level is 2 mg/dL. Which condition **most likely** caused this serum phosphorus level?

1. Alcoholism

2. Renal insufficiency

3. Hypoparathyroidism

4. Tumor lysis syndrome

48. The nurse is reading a health care provider's (HCP) progress notes in the client's record and reads that the HCP has documented "insensible fluid loss of approximately 800 mL daily." The nurse interprets that this type of fluid loss can occur through which route?

1. The skin

2. Urinary output

3. Wound drainage

4. The gastrointestinal tract

49. The nurse is assigned to care for a group of clients. On review of the clients' medical records, the nurse determines that which client is **most likely** at risk for a fluid volume deficit?

1. A client with an ileostomy

2. A client with heart failure

3. A client on long-term corticosteroid therapy
4. A client receiving frequent wound irrigations

50. The nurse caring for a client who has been receiving intravenous (IV) diuretics suspects that the client is experiencing a fluid volume deficit. Which assessment finding would the nurse note in a client with this condition?

1. Lung congestion
2. Decreased hematocrit
3. Increased blood pressure
4. Decreased central venous pressure (CVP)

51. The nurse is assigned to care for a group of clients. On review of the clients' medical records, the nurse determines that which client is at risk for fluid volume excess?

1. The client taking diuretics
2. The client with kidney disease
3. The client with an ileostomy
4. The client who requires gastrointestinal suctioning

52. The nurse caring for a group of clients reviews the electrolyte laboratory results and notes a potassium level of 5.5 mEq/L on one client's laboratory report. The nurse understands that which client is **most** at risk for the development of a potassium value at this level?

1. The client with colitis

2. The client with Cushing's syndrome
3. The client who has been overusing laxatives
4. The client who has sustained a traumatic burn

## ANSWERS

### 36.3

**Rationale:** A fluid volume excess is also known as *overhydration* or *fluid overload* and occurs when fluid intake or fluid retention exceeds the fluid needs of the body. Assessment findings associated with fluid volume excess include cough, dyspnea, crackles, tachypnea, tachycardia, elevated blood pressure, bounding pulse, elevated CVP, weight gain, edema, neck and hand vein distention, altered level of consciousness, and decreased hematocrit. The remaining options identify signs noted in fluid volume deficit.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, fluid volume excess. Note that weight loss, flat veins, and a decreased CVP are **comparable or alike** in that each of these signs reflects a decrease. The correct option reflects an increase.

**Review:** The assessment findings noted in **fluid volume excess**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Fluid and Electrolyte Balance; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 178-179; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 309-310.

### 37. 2

**Rationale:** The normal serum potassium level is 3.5 mEq/L to 5.0 mEq/L. A potassium deficit is known as *hypokalemia*. Potassium-rich gastrointestinal fluids are lost through gastrointestinal suction, placing the client at risk for hypokalemia. The client with tissue damage or Addison's disease and the client taking a potassium-retaining diuretic are at risk for hyperkalemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the **subject** of the question is potassium deficit. The correct option is the only one that identifies a loss of body fluid.

**Review:** The causes of **hypokalemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 184.

### 38. 1

**Rationale:** A serum potassium level lower than 3.5 mEq/L indicates hypokalemia. Potassium deficit is a common electrolyte imbalance and is potentially life-threatening. Electrocardiographic changes include inverted T waves, ST segment depression, and prominent U waves. Absent P waves are not a characteristic of hypokalemia but may be noted in a client with atrial fibrillation, junctional rhythms, or ventricular rhythms.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the ECG pattern noted with a client with a potassium level of 2.5 mEq/L. From the information in the question, you need to determine that the client is experiencing severe hypokalemia. From this point, you must know the electrocardiographic changes that are expected when severe

hypokalemia exists. Remember that a prominent U wave is indicative of hypokalemia.

**Review:** The electrocardiographic changes that occur in **hypokalemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 183-185.

### 39. 3

**Rationale:** Potassium chloride administered intravenously must always be diluted in IV fluid and infused via an infusion pump. Potassium chloride is never given by bolus (IV push). Giving potassium chloride by IV push can result in cardiac arrest. Dilution in normal saline is recommended, and dextrose solution is avoided because this type of solution increases intracellular potassium shifting. The IV bag containing the potassium chloride is always gently agitated before hanging. The IV site is monitored closely because potassium chloride is irritating to the veins and there is risk of phlebitis. The nurse monitors urinary output during administration and contacts the health care provider if the urinary output is less than 30 mL/hour.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the administration of potassium chloride intravenously. Note the word *unprepared*. This word indicates the need to select the incorrect action. Noting the word *bolus* in the correct option will direct you to selecting this option.

**Review:** The precautions with intravenously administered **potassium**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology/Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), pp. 1140-1141.

❖ 40. 2, 3, 4, 6

**Rationale:** The normal potassium level is 3.5 to 5.0 mEq/L. Common food sources of potassium include avocado, bananas, cantaloupe, carrots, fish, mushrooms, oranges, potatoes, pork, beef, veal, raisins, spinach, strawberries, and tomatoes. Peas and cauliflower are high in magnesium.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**: foods high in potassium. Read each food item and recall that peas and cauliflower are high in magnesium.

**Review:** The food items high in **potassium** content

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Schlenker, Roth (2011), pp. 145, 148.

41. 4

**Rationale:** The normal serum sodium level is 135 to 145 mEq/L. A serum sodium level of 150 mEq/L indicates hypernatremia. On the basis of this finding, the nurse would instruct the client to avoid foods high in sodium. Nuts,

cauliflower, and peas are good food sources of phosphorus. Peas are also a good source of magnesium. Processed foods are high in sodium content.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, foods to avoid in a client with a sodium level of 150 mEq/L. First, you must determine that the client has hypernatremia. Next, note the word *avoid* in the question. Eliminate peas and cauliflower first because these are vegetables. From the remaining options, note the word *processed* in the correct option. Processed foods tend to be higher in sodium content.

**Review:** Foods high in **sodium** content

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Schlenker, Roth (2011), pp. 144, 148.

42. 1

**Rationale:** The normal serum calcium level is 8.6 to 10 mg/dL. A serum calcium level lower than 8.6 mg/dL indicates hypocalcemia. Signs of hypocalcemia include paresthesias followed by numbness, hyperactive deep tendon reflexes, and a positive Trousseau's or Chvostek's sign. Additional signs of hypocalcemia include increased neuromuscular excitability, muscle cramps, twitching, tetany, seizures, irritability, and anxiety. Gastrointestinal symptoms include increased gastric motility, hyperactive bowel sounds, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the three incorrect options are **comparable or alike** in that they reflect a hypoactivity. The option that is different is the correct option.

**Review:** The assessment signs and symptoms noted in **hypocalcemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 189.

### 43. 3

**Rationale:** The normal serum calcium level is 8.6 to 10 mg/dL. A serum calcium level lower than 8.6 mg/dL indicates hypocalcemia. Electrocardiographic changes that occur in a client with hypocalcemia include a prolonged ST or QT interval. A shortened ST segment and a widened T wave occur with hypercalcemia. Prominent U waves occur with hypokalemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the electrocardiographic changes that occur in a calcium imbalance.

Remember that hypocalcemia causes a prolonged ST or QT interval.

**Review:** The electrocardiographic changes that occur in **hypocalcemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 189; Lewis et al (2011), p. 317.

### 44. 4

**Rationale:** A serum potassium level greater than 5.0 mEq/L indicates hyperkalemia. Electrocardiographic changes associated with hyperkalemia include flat P waves, prolonged PR intervals, widened QRS complexes, and tall peaked T waves.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the electrocardiographic changes that occur in a potassium imbalance. From the information in the question, you need to determine that this condition is a hyperkalemic one.

From this point, you must know the electrocardiographic changes that are expected when hyperkalemia exists.

Remember that tall peaked T waves are associated with hyperkalemia.

**Review:** The electrocardiographic changes that occur in **hyperkalemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 187.

#### 45. 1

**Rationale:** Hyponatremia is evidenced by a serum sodium level less than 135 mEq/L. Hyponatremia can occur in the client taking diuretics. The client taking corticosteroids and the client with hyperaldosteronism or Cushing's syndrome are at risk for hypernatremia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the causes of a sodium level of 130 mEq/L. First, determine that the client is experiencing hyponatremia. Next, you must know the causes of hyponatremia to direct you to the correct option. Also recall that when a client takes a diuretic, the client loses fluid and electrolytes.

**Review:** The normal serum sodium level and the causes of **hyponatremia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 181; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 313-314.

**46. 3**

**Rationale:** Hyponatremia is evidenced by a serum sodium level lower than 135 mEq/L. Hyperactive bowel sounds indicate hyponatremia. The remaining options are signs of hypernatremia. In hyponatremia, muscle weakness, increased urinary output, and decreased specific gravity of the urine would be noted.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the data in the question and the **subject** of the question. Recalling the signs of hyponatremia will direct you to the correct option. Remember that increased bowel motility and hyperactive bowel sounds indicate hyponatremia.

**Review:** The assessment signs associated with **hyponatremia** and **hypernatremia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 313.

**47. 1**

**Rationale:** The normal serum phosphorus level is 2.7 to 4.5 mg/dL. The client is experiencing hypophosphatemia.

Causative factors relate to malnutrition or starvation and the use of aluminum hydroxide–based or magnesium-based antacids. Malnutrition is associated with alcoholism. Renal insufficiency, hypoparathyroidism, and tumor lysis syndrome are causative factors of hyperphosphatemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words**, *most likely*. Focus on the **subject**, a serum phosphorus level of 2 mg/dL. First you must determine that the client is experiencing hypophosphatemia. From this point, you must know the causes of hypophosphatemia in order to answer correctly.

**Review:** The causative factors associated with **hypophosphatemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 319.

#### 48. 1

**Rationale:** Insensible losses may occur without the person’s awareness. Insensible losses occur daily through the skin and the lungs. Sensible losses are those of which the person is aware, such as through urination, wound drainage, and gastrointestinal tract losses.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the **subject** of the question is insensible fluid loss. Note that urination, wound drainage, and gastrointestinal tract losses are **comparable or alike** in that they can be measured for accurate output. Fluid loss through the skin cannot be measured accurately; it can only be approximated.

**Review:** The difference between **sensible and insensible fluid loss**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2011), pp. 449-450.

#### 49. 1

**Rationale:** A fluid volume deficit occurs when the fluid intake is not sufficient to meet the fluid needs of the body.

Causes of a fluid volume deficit include vomiting, diarrhea, conditions that cause increased respirations or increased urinary output, insufficient intravenous fluid replacement, draining fistulas, and the presence of an ileostomy or colostomy. A client with heart failure or on long-term corticosteroid therapy, or a client receiving frequent wound irrigations, are most at risk for fluid volume excess.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Read the question carefully, noting the **subject**, the client at risk for a deficit. Read each option and think about the fluid imbalance that can occur in each. The clients with heart failure, on long-term corticosteroid therapy, and receiving frequent wound irrigations retain fluid. The only condition that can cause a deficit is the condition noted in the correct option.

**Review:** The causes of a **fluid volume deficit**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 186-187.

**50. 4**

**Rationale:** A fluid volume deficit occurs when the fluid intake is not sufficient to meet the fluid needs of the body. Assessment findings in a client with a fluid volume deficit include increased respirations and heart rate, decreased CVP, weight loss, poor skin turgor, dry mucous membranes, decreased urine volume, increased specific gravity of the urine, increased hematocrit, and altered level of consciousness. The normal CVP is between 4 and 11 cm H<sub>2</sub>O. A client with dehydration (fluid volume deficit) has a low CVP. The assessment findings in the remaining options are seen in a client with fluid volume excess.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, fluid volume deficit. Eliminate lung congestion and increased blood pressure first because they are noted in fluid volume excess. From the remaining options, recall that CVP reflects the pressure under which blood is returned to the superior vena cava and right atrium. Therefore pressure (volume) would be decreased in a deficient fluid volume.

**Review:** The assessment findings noted in **fluid volume deficit**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 309-310.

**51. 2**

**Rationale:** A fluid volume excess is also known as *overhydration* or *fluid overload* and occurs when fluid intake or fluid retention exceeds the fluid needs of the body. The causes of fluid volume excess include decreased kidney function, heart failure, use of hypotonic fluids to replace isotonic fluid losses, excessive irrigation of wounds and body cavities, and excessive ingestion of sodium. The client taking diuretics, the client with an ileostomy, and the client who requires gastrointestinal suctioning are at risk for fluid volume deficit.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, fluid volume excess. Read each option and think about the fluid imbalance that can occur in each. Clients taking diuretics or having ileostomies or gastrointestinal suctioning all lose fluid. The only condition that can cause an excess is the condition noted in the correct option.

**Review:** The causes of **fluid volume excess**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**References:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 185-186; Lewis et al (2011), p. 309.

## 52. 4

**Rationale:** A serum potassium level higher than 5.0 mEq/L indicates hyperkalemia. Clients who experience cellular shifting of potassium in the early stages of massive cell destruction, such as with trauma, burns, sepsis, or metabolic or respiratory acidosis, are at risk for hyperkalemia. The client with Cushing's syndrome or colitis and the client who has been overusing laxatives are at risk for hypokalemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Eliminate the client with colitis and the client overusing

laxatives first because they are **comparable or alike**, with both reflecting a gastrointestinal loss. From the remaining options, recalling that cell destruction causes potassium shifts will assist in directing you to the correct option. Also, remember that Cushing's syndrome presents a risk for hypokalemia and that Addison's disease presents a risk for hyperkalemia.

**Review:** The risk factors associated with **hyperkalemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Fluids and Electrolytes

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluids and Electrolytes

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 186.



## CHAPTER 10

# Acid-Base Balance

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse performs an Allen's test on a client scheduled for an arterial blood gas draw from the radial artery. On release of pressure from the ulnar artery, color in the hand returns after 20 seconds. The nurse should take which action(s)?

*Answer located on p. 111.*

### I. Hydrogen Ions, Acids, and Bases

#### A. Hydrogen ions

1. Vital to life
2. Expressed as pH
3. Circulate in the body in two forms:
  - a. Volatile hydrogen of carbonic acid
  - b. Nonvolatile form of hydrogen and organic acids

#### B. Acids

1. Acids are produced as end products of **metabolism**.
2. Acids contain hydrogen ions and are hydrogen ion donors, which means that acids give up hydrogen ions to neutralize or decrease the strength of an acid or to form a weaker base.
3. The strength of an acid is determined by the number of hydrogen ions it contains.
4. The number of hydrogen ions in body fluid determines its acidity, alkalinity, or neutrality.
5. The lungs excrete 13,000 to 30,000 mEq/day of volatile hydrogen in the form of carbonic acid as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).
6. The kidneys excrete 50 mEq/day of nonvolatile acids.

### C. Bases

1. Contain no hydrogen ions.
2. Are hydrogen ion acceptors; they accept hydrogen ions from acids to neutralize or decrease the strength of a base or to form a weaker acid.

## II. Regulatory Systems for Hydrogen Ion Concentration in the Blood

(Box 10-1)

### **BOX 10-1** Regulatory Systems for Hydrogen Ion Concentration in the Blood

#### **Buffers**

Primary buffer systems in extracellular fluid: hemoglobin system, plasma protein system, carbonic acid– bicarbonate system, phosphate buffer system

**Lungs**

**Kidneys**

**Potassium exchange**

## A. Buffers

1. Buffers are the fastest acting regulatory system.
2. Provide immediate protection against changes in hydrogen ion concentration in the extracellular fluid.
3. Buffers are reactors that function only to keep the pH within the narrow limits of stability when too much acid or base is released into the system, and buffers absorb or release hydrogen ions as needed.
4. Buffers serve as a transport mechanism that carries excess hydrogen ions to the lungs.
5. Once the primary buffer systems react, they are consumed, leaving the body less able to withstand further stress until the buffers are replaced.

## B. Primary buffer systems in extracellular fluid

1. Hemoglobin system
  - a. Red **blood cells** contain hemoglobin.
  - b. System maintains acid-base balance by a process called *chloride shift*.
  - c. Chloride shifts in and out of the cells in response to the level of O<sub>2</sub> in the blood.
  - d. For each chloride ion that leaves a red blood cell, a bicarbonate ion enters.

e. For each chloride ion that enters a red blood cell, a bicarbonate ion leaves.

## 2. Plasma protein system

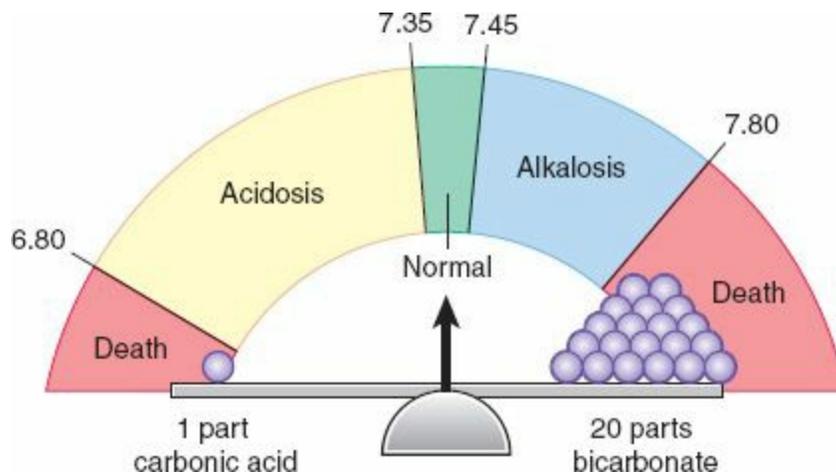
a. The system functions along with the liver to vary the amount of hydrogen ions in the chemical structure of plasma proteins.

b. Plasma proteins have the ability to attract or release hydrogen ions.

## 3. Carbonic acid–bicarbonate system ▲

a. Primary buffer system in the body.

b. The system maintains a pH of 7.4 with a ratio of 20 parts bicarbonate ( $\text{HCO}_3^-$ ) to 1 part carbonic acid ( $\text{H}_2\text{CO}_3$ ) (Fig. 10-1).



**FIGURE 10-1** Acid-base balance. In the healthy state, a ratio of 1 part carbonic acid to 20 parts bicarbonate provides a normal serum pH between 7.35 and 7.45. Any deviation to the left of 7.35 results in an acidotic state. Any deviation to the right of 7.45 results in an alkalotic state. (From Harkreader H, Hogan MA, Thobaben M: *Fundamentals of nursing: Caring and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)

c. This ratio (20:1) determines the hydrogen ion concentration of body fluid.

- d. Carbonic acid concentration is controlled by the excretion of  $\text{CO}_2$  by the lungs; the rate and depth of respiration change in response to changes in the  $\text{CO}_2$ .
- e. The kidneys control the bicarbonate concentration and selectively retain or excrete bicarbonate in response to bodily needs.

#### 4. Phosphate buffer system

- a. System is present in the cells and body fluids and is especially active in the kidneys.
- b. System acts like bicarbonate and neutralizes excess hydrogen ions.

### C. Lungs

1. The lungs are the second defense of the body and interact with the buffer system to maintain acid-base balance.
2. In acidosis, the pH decreases and the respiratory rate and depth increase in an attempt to exhale acids. The carbonic acid created by the neutralizing action of bicarbonate can be carried to the lungs, where it is reduced to  $\text{CO}_2$  and water and is exhaled; thus hydrogen ions are inactivated and exhaled. ▲
3. In alkalosis, the pH increases and the respiratory rate and depth decrease;  $\text{CO}_2$  is retained and carbonic acid increases to neutralize and decrease the strength of excess bicarbonate. ▲
4. The action of the lungs is reversible in controlling an excess or deficit.
5. The lungs can hold hydrogen ions until the deficit is corrected or can inactivate hydrogen ions, changing the ions to water molecules to be exhaled along with  $\text{CO}_2$ , thus correcting the excess.

6. The process of correcting a deficit or excess takes 10 to 30 seconds to complete.
7. The lungs are capable of inactivating only hydrogen ions carried by carbonic acid; excess hydrogen ions created by other mechanisms must be excreted by the kidneys.

 Monitor the client's respiratory status closely. In acidosis, the respiratory rate and depth increase in an attempt to exhale acids. In alkalosis, the respiratory rate and depth decrease; CO<sub>2</sub> is retained to neutralize and decrease the strength of excess bicarbonate.

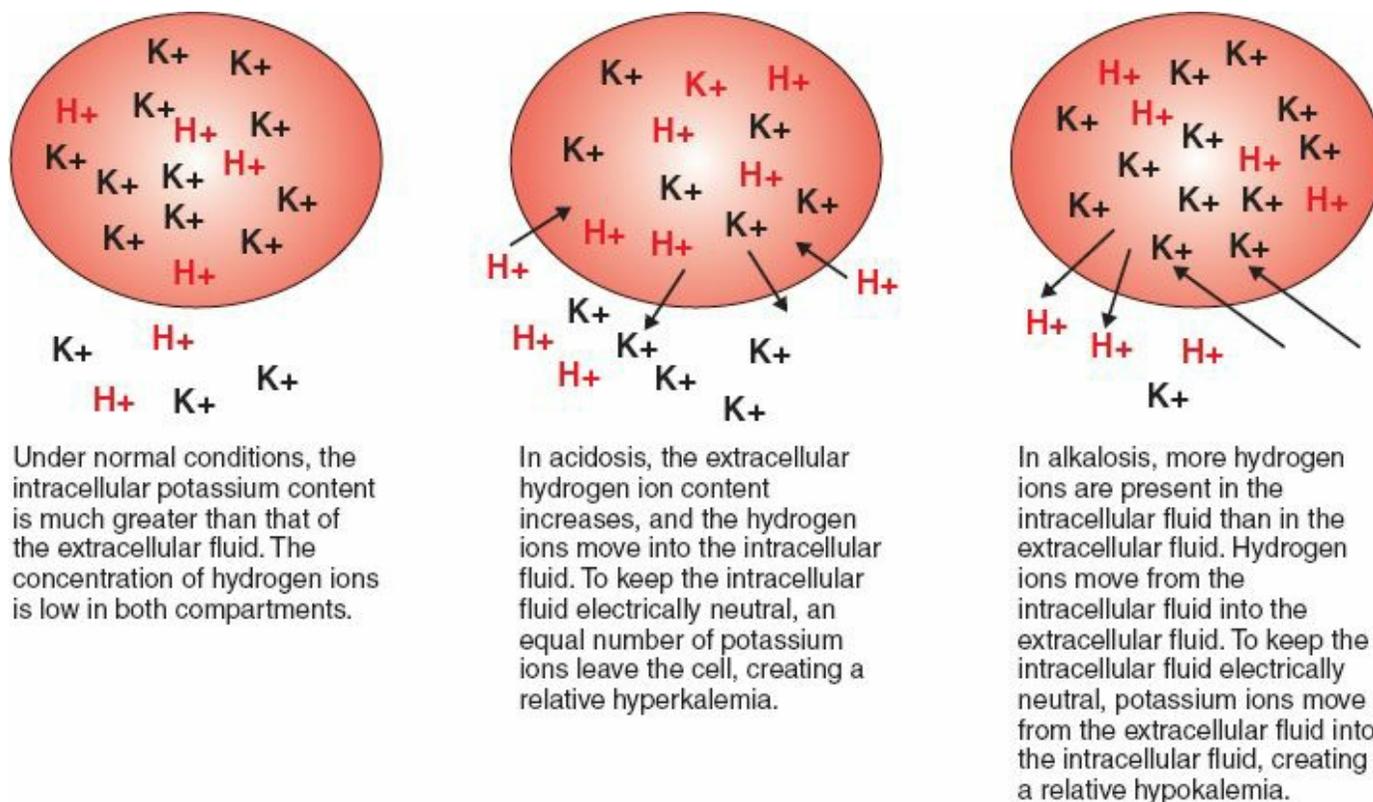
#### D. Kidneys

1. The kidneys provide a more inclusive corrective response to acid-base disturbances than other corrective mechanisms, even though the renal excretion of acids and alkalis occurs more slowly.
2. **Compensation** requires a few hours to several days; however, the compensation is more thorough and selective than that of other regulators, such as the buffer systems and lungs.
3. In acidosis, the pH decreases and excess hydrogen ions are secreted into the tubules and combine with buffers for excretion in the urine.
4. In alkalosis, the pH increases and excess bicarbonate ions move into the tubules, combine with **sodium**, and are excreted in the urine.
5. Selective regulation of bicarbonate occurs in the kidneys.
  - a. The kidneys restore bicarbonate by excreting hydrogen ions and retaining bicarbonate ions.

- b. Excess hydrogen ions are excreted in the urine in the form of phosphoric acid.
- c. The alteration of certain amino acids in the renal tubules results in a diffusion of ammonia into the kidneys; the ammonia combines with excess hydrogen ions and is excreted in the urine.

### E. Potassium ( $K^+$ ) ▲

1. Potassium plays an exchange role in maintaining acid-base balance.
2. The body changes the potassium level by drawing hydrogen ions into the cells or by pushing them out of the cells (potassium movement across cell membranes is facilitated by transcellular shifting in response to acid-base patterns).
3. The potassium level changes to compensate for hydrogen ion level changes (Fig. 10-2).



**FIGURE 10-2** Movement of potassium in response to changes in the extracellular

fluid hydrogen ion concentration. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders. Courtesy of M. Linda Workman.)

- a. In acidosis, the body protects itself from the acidic state by moving hydrogen ions into the cells. Therefore potassium moves out to make room for hydrogen ions and the potassium level increases.
- b. In alkalosis, the cells release hydrogen ions into the blood in an attempt to increase the acidity of the blood; this forces the potassium into the cells and potassium levels decrease.

 When the client experiences an acid-base imbalance, monitor the potassium level closely because the potassium moves in or out of the cells in an attempt to maintain acid-base balance.

### III. Respiratory Acidosis

**A.** Description: The total concentration of buffer base is lower than normal, with a relative increase in hydrogen ion concentration; thus a greater number of hydrogen ions is circulating in the blood than can be absorbed by the buffer system.

**B.** Causes (Box 10-2) 

#### BOX 10-2 Causes of Respiratory Acidosis

- Asthma
- Atelectasis

- Brain trauma
- Bronchiectasis
- Bronchitis
- Central nervous system depressants
- Emphysema
- Hypoventilation
- Pneumonia
- Pulmonary edema
- Pulmonary emboli

1. Respiratory acidosis is caused by primary defects in the function of the lungs or changes in normal respiratory patterns.
2. Any condition that causes an obstruction of the airway or depresses the respiratory system can cause respiratory acidosis.
3. Asthma: Spasms resulting from allergens, irritants, or emotions cause the smooth muscles of the bronchioles to constrict, resulting in ineffective gas exchange.
4. Atelectasis: Excessive mucus collection, with the collapse of alveolar sacs caused by mucous plugs, infectious drainage, or anesthetic medications, results in ineffective gas exchange.
5. Brain trauma: Excessive pressure on the respiratory center or medulla oblongata depresses respirations.
6. Bronchiectasis: Bronchi become dilated as a result of inflammation, and

destructive changes and weakness in the walls of the bronchi occur.

7. Bronchitis: Inflammation causes airway obstruction, resulting in inadequate gas exchange.
8. Central nervous system (CNS) depressants such as sedatives, opioids, and anesthetics depress the respiratory center, leading to hypoventilation; carbon dioxide is retained and the hydrogen ion concentration increases.
9. Emphysema: Loss of elasticity of alveolar sacs restricts air flow in and out, primarily out, leading to an increased CO<sub>2</sub> level.
10. Hypoventilation: Carbon dioxide is retained and the hydrogen ion concentration increases, leading to the acidotic state; carbonic acid is retained and the pH decreases.
11. Pulmonary edema: Extracellular accumulation of fluid in pulmonary tissue causes disturbances in alveolar diffusion and perfusion.
12. Pneumonia: Excess mucus production and lung congestion cause airway obstruction, resulting in inadequate gas exchange.
13. Pulmonary emboli: Emboli cause a pulmonary artery and airway obstruction, resulting in inadequate gas exchange.

 If the client has a condition that causes an obstruction of the airway or depresses the respiratory system, monitor the client for respiratory acidosis.

C. Assessment: In an attempt to compensate, the kidneys retain bicarbonate and excrete excess hydrogen ions into the urine (Table 10-1). 

**TABLE 10-1 Clinical Manifestations of Acidosis**

Respiratory ( $\uparrow$ Pco <sub>2</sub> )	Metabolic ( $\downarrow$ HCO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> )
<b>Neurological</b> Drowsiness Disorientation Dizziness Headache Coma	Drowsiness Confusion Headache Coma
<b>Cardiovascular</b> Decreased blood pressure Ventricular fibrillation (related to hyperkalemia from compensation) Warm, flushed skin (related to peripheral vasodilation)	Decreased blood pressure Dysrhythmias (related to hyperkalemia from compensation) Warm, flushed skin (related to peripheral vasodilation)
<b>Gastrointestinal</b> No significant findings	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
<b>Neuromuscular</b> Seizures	No significant findings
<b>Respiratory</b> Hypoventilation with hypoxia (lungs are unable to compensate when there is a respiratory problem)	Deep, rapid respirations (compensatory action by the lungs)

From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor for signs of respiratory distress.
2. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
3. Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position.
4. Encourage and assist the client to turn, cough, and deep-breathe.
5. Prepare to administer respiratory treatments as prescribed.

6. Encourage hydration to thin secretions.
7. Suction the client's airway, if necessary.
8. Reduce restlessness by improving ventilation rather than by administering tranquilizers, sedatives, or opioids because these medications further depress respirations.
9. Monitor electrolyte values, particularly the potassium level. ▲
10. Administer antibiotics for respiratory infection or other medications as prescribed.
11. Prepare for endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation if CO<sub>2</sub> levels rise above 50 mm Hg and if signs of acute respiratory distress are present.

#### IV. Respiratory Alkalosis

- A. Description:** A deficit of carbonic acid and a decrease in hydrogen ion concentration that results from the accumulation of base or from a loss of acid without a comparable loss of base in the body fluids.
- B. Causes (Box 10-3) ▲**

##### **BOX 10-3** Causes of Respiratory Alkalosis

- Fever
- Hyperventilation
- Hypoxia
- Hysteria

- Overventilation by mechanical ventilators
- Pain

1. Respiratory alkalosis results from conditions that cause overstimulation of the respiratory system.
2. Fever: Causes increased **metabolism**, resulting in overstimulation of the respiratory system.
3. Hyperventilation: Rapid respirations cause the blowing off of CO<sub>2</sub>, leading to a decrease in carbonic acid.
4. Hypoxia: Stimulates the respiratory center in the brainstem, which causes an increase in the respiratory rate in order to increase oxygen; this causes hyperventilation, which results in a decrease in the CO<sub>2</sub> level.
5. Hysteria: Hysteria often is neurogenic and related to a psychoneurosis; however, this condition leads to vigorous breathing and excessive exhaling of CO<sub>2</sub>.
6. Overventilation by mechanical ventilators: The administration of O<sub>2</sub> and the depletion of CO<sub>2</sub> can occur from mechanical ventilation, causing the client to be hyperventilated. ▲
7. Pain: Overstimulation of the respiratory center in the brainstem results in a carbonic acid deficit.

 If the client has a condition that causes overstimulation of the respiratory system, monitor the client for respiratory alkalosis.

C. Assessment: Initially the hyperventilation and respiratory stimulation cause abnormal rapid respirations (tachypnea); in an attempt to compensate, the kidneys excrete excess circulating bicarbonate into the urine (Table 10-2) ▲

**TABLE 10-2 Clinical Manifestations of Alkalosis**

Respiratory (↓ Pco <sub>2</sub> )	Metabolic (↑ HCO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> )
<b>Neurological</b> Lethargy Lightheadedness Confusion	Drowsiness Dizziness Nervousness Confusion
<b>Cardiovascular</b> Tachycardia Dysrhythmias (related to hypokalemia from compensation)	Tachycardia Dysrhythmias (related to hypokalemia from compensation)
<b>Gastrointestinal</b> Nausea Vomiting Epigastric pain	Anorexia Nausea Vomiting
<b>Neuromuscular</b> Tetany Numbness Tingling of extremities Hyperreflexia Seizures	Tremors Hypertonic muscles Muscle cramps Tetany Tingling of extremities Seizures
<b>Respiratory</b> Hyperventilation (lungs are unable to compensate when there is a respiratory problem)	Hypoventilation (compensatory action by the lungs)

From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

## D. Interventions

1. Monitor for signs of respiratory distress.
2. Provide emotional support and reassurance to the client.
3. Encourage appropriate breathing patterns.
4. Assist with breathing techniques and breathing aids as prescribed.
  - a. Encourage voluntary holding of the breath if appropriate
  - b. Provide use of a rebreathing mask as prescribed
  - c. Provide carbon dioxide breaths as prescribed (rebreathing into a paper bag)
5. Provide cautious care with ventilator clients so that they are not forced to take breaths too deeply or rapidly.
6. Monitor electrolyte values, particularly **potassium** and **calcium** levels. ▲
7. Prepare to administer calcium gluconate for tetany as prescribed.

## V. Metabolic Acidosis

**A. Description:** A total concentration of buffer base that is lower than normal, with a relative increase in the hydrogen ion concentration, resulting from loss of too much base and/or retention of too much acid.

**B. Causes (Box 10-4)** ▲

### **BOX 10-4** Causes of Metabolic Acidosis

- Diabetes mellitus or diabetic ketoacidosis
- Excessive ingestion of acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin)

- High-fat diet
- Insufficient metabolism of carbohydrates
- Malnutrition
- Renal insufficiency, acute kidney injury, or chronic kidney disease
- Severe diarrhea

1. Diabetes mellitus or diabetic ketoacidosis: An insufficient supply of insulin causes increased fat **metabolism**, leading to an excess accumulation of ketones or other acids; the bicarbonate then ends up being depleted.
2. Excessive ingestion of acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) causes an increase in the hydrogen ion concentration.
3. High-fat diet: A high intake of fat causes a much too rapid accumulation of the waste products of fat metabolism, leading to a buildup of ketones and acids.
4. Insufficient metabolism of carbohydrates: When the O<sub>2</sub> supply is not sufficient for the metabolism of carbohydrates, lactic acid is produced and lactic acidosis results.
5. **Malnutrition**: Improper metabolism of **nutrients** causes fat catabolism, leading to an excess buildup of ketones and acids.
6. Renal insufficiency, acute kidney injury, or chronic kidney disease results in the following:
  - a. Increased waste products of protein metabolism are retained.
  - b. Acids increase, and bicarbonate is unable to maintain acid-base balance.

7. Severe diarrhea: Intestinal and pancreatic secretions are normally alkaline; therefore excessive loss of base leads to acidosis.

 An insufficient supply of insulin in a client with diabetes mellitus can result in metabolic acidosis known as *diabetic ketoacidosis*.

C. Assessment: To compensate for the acidosis, hyperpnea with Kussmaul's respiration occurs as the lungs attempt to exhale the excess CO<sub>2</sub> (see [Table 10-1](#)). 

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor for signs of respiratory distress.
2. Assess level of consciousness for central nervous system depression.
3. Monitor intake and output and assist with fluid and electrolyte replacement as prescribed.
4. Prepare to administer solutions intravenously as prescribed to increase the buffer base.
5. Initiate safety and seizure precautions.
6. Monitor the **potassium** level closely; as metabolic acidosis resolves, potassium moves back into the cells and the potassium level decreases. 

#### E. Interventions in diabetes mellitus and diabetic ketoacidosis

1. Give insulin as prescribed to hasten the movement of glucose into the cells, thereby decreasing the concurrent ketosis.
2. When glucose is being properly metabolized, the body will stop converting fats to glucose.
3. Monitor for circulatory collapse caused by polyuria, which may result from the

hyperglycemic state; osmotic diuresis may lead to extracellular volume deficit.

 **Monitor the client experiencing severe diarrhea for manifestations of metabolic acidosis.**

## F. Interventions in kidney disease

1. Dialysis may be used to remove protein and waste products, thereby lessening the acidotic state.
2. A diet low in protein and high in calories decreases the amount of protein waste products, which in turn lessens the acidosis.

## VI. Metabolic Alkalosis

**A. Description:** A deficit of carbonic acid and a decrease in hydrogen ion concentration that results from the accumulation of base or from a loss of acid without a comparable loss of base in the body fluids.

**B. Causes (Box 10-5)** 

### **BOX 10-5** Causes of Metabolic Alkalosis

- Diuretics
- Excessive vomiting or gastrointestinal suctioning
- Hyperaldosteronism
- Ingestion of and/or infusion of excess sodium bicarbonate
- Massive transfusion of whole blood

1. Metabolic alkalosis results from a dysfunction of **metabolism** that causes an increased amount of available base solution in the **blood** or a decrease in available acids in the blood.
  2. Diuretics: The loss of hydrogen ions and chloride from diuresis causes a compensatory increase in the amount of bicarbonate in the blood.
  3. Excessive vomiting or gastrointestinal suctioning leads to an excessive loss of hydrochloric acid.
  4. Hyperaldosteronism: Increased renal tubular reabsorption of **sodium** occurs, with the resultant loss of hydrogen ions.
  5. Ingestion of and/or infusion of excess sodium bicarbonate causes an increase in the amount of base in the blood.
  6. Massive transfusion of whole blood: The citrate anticoagulant used for the storage of blood is metabolized to bicarbonate.
- C. Assessment: To compensate, respiratory rate and depth decrease to conserve CO<sub>2</sub> (see [Table 10-2](#)). ▲

**▲** Monitor the client experiencing excessive vomiting or the client with gastrointestinal suctioning for manifestations of metabolic alkalosis.

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor for signs of respiratory distress.
2. Monitor **potassium** and **calcium** levels. ▲
3. Institute safety precautions.

4. Prepare to administer medications and intravenous fluids as prescribed to promote the kidney excretion of bicarbonate.
5. Prepare to replace potassium as prescribed.
6. Treat the underlying cause of the alkalosis.

## VII. Arterial Blood Gases (Table 10-3) ▲

**TABLE 10-3 Normal Arterial Blood Gas Values**

Laboratory Test	Normal Range
pH	7.35-7.45
Pco <sub>2</sub>	35-45 mm Hg
HCO <sub>3</sub>	22-27 mEq/L
PO <sub>2</sub>	80-100 mm Hg

### A. Collection of an arterial blood gas specimen

1. Obtain vital signs.
2. Determine whether the client has an arterial line in place (allows for arterial blood sampling without further puncture to the client).
3. Perform the **Allen's test** to determine the presence of collateral circulation (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

Actions to Take When Performing the Allen's Test before Radial Artery Puncture

1. Explain the procedure to the client.
2. Apply pressure over the ulnar and radial arteries simultaneously.
3. Ask the client to open and close the hand repeatedly.
4. Release pressure from the ulnar artery while compressing the radial artery.
5. Assess the color of the extremity distal to the pressure point.
6. Document the findings.

The Allen's test is performed before obtaining an arterial blood specimen from the radial artery to determine the presence of collateral circulation and the adequacy of the ulnar artery. Failure to determine the presence of adequate collateral circulation could result in severe ischemic injury to the hand if damage to the radial artery occurs with arterial puncture. The nurse first would explain the procedure to the client. To perform the test, the nurse applies direct pressure over the client's ulnar and radial arteries simultaneously. While applying pressure, the nurse asks the client to open and close the hand repeatedly; the hand should blanch. The nurse then releases pressure from the ulnar artery while compressing the radial artery and assesses the color of the extremity distal to the pressure point. If pinkness fails to return within 6 to 7 seconds, the ulnar artery is insufficient, indicating that the radial artery should not be used for obtaining a blood specimen. Finally, the nurse documents the findings. Other sites can be used if the radial artery is not deemed adequate, such as the brachial or femoral artery.

### ***Reference***

Pagana K, Pagana T: *Mosby's manual of diagnostic and laboratory tests*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby, pp. 120-121.

4. Assess factors that may affect the accuracy of the results, such as changes in the O<sub>2</sub> settings, suctioning within the past 20 minutes, and client's activities.
5. Provide emotional support to the client.
6. Assist with the specimen draw by preparing a heparinized syringe (if not already prepackaged).
7. Apply pressure immediately to the puncture site following the blood draw; maintain pressure for 5 minutes or for 10 minutes if the client is taking an anticoagulant. ▲
8. Appropriately label the specimen and transport it on ice to the laboratory.
9. On the laboratory form, record the client's temperature and the type of supplemental oxygen that the client is receiving.

**B. Respiratory acid-base imbalances (Table 10-4)**

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**TABLE 10-4 Acid-Base Imbalances: Usual Laboratory Value Changes**

Imbalance	pH	$\text{HCO}_3^-$	$\text{PaO}_2$	$\text{Paco}_2$	$\text{K}^+$
Respiratory acidosis	U: Decreased PC: Decreased C: Normal	U: Normal PC: Increased C: Increased	Usually decreased	U: Increased PC: Increased C: Increased	Increased
Respiratory alkalosis	U: Increased PC: Increased C: Normal	U: Normal PC: Decreased C: Decreased	Usually normal but depends on other accompanying conditions	U: Decreased PC: Decreased C: Decreased	Decreased
Metabolic acidosis	U: Decreased PC: Decreased C: Normal	U: Decreased PC: Decreased C: Decreased	Usually normal but depends on other accompanying conditions	U: Normal PC: Decreased C: Decreased	Increased
Metabolic alkalosis	U: Increased PC: Increased C: Normal	U: Increased PC: Increased C: Increased	Usually normal but depends on other accompanying conditions	U: Normal PC: Increased C: Increased	Decreased

*C*, Compensated; *PC*, partially compensated; *U*, uncompensated.

1. Remember that the respiratory function indicator is the  $\text{Pco}_2$ .
2. In a respiratory imbalance, you will find an opposite relationship between the pH and the  $\text{Pco}_2$ ; in other words, the pH will be elevated with a decreased  $\text{Pco}_2$  (alkalosis) or the pH will be decreased with an elevated  $\text{Pco}_2$  (acidosis).
3. Look at the pH and the  $\text{Pco}_2$  to determine whether the condition is a respiratory problem.
4. **Respiratory acidosis**: The pH is decreased; the  $\text{Pco}_2$  is elevated.
5. **Respiratory alkalosis**: The pH is elevated; the  $\text{Pco}_2$  is decreased.

C. Metabolic acid-base imbalances (see [Table 10-4](#))

1. Remember, the metabolic function indicator is the bicarbonate ion ( $\text{HCO}_3^-$ ).
2. In a metabolic imbalance, there is a corresponding relationship between the pH and the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$ ; in other words, the pH will be elevated and the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  will be elevated (alkalosis), or the pH will be decreased and the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  will be

decreased (acidosis).

3. Look at the pH and the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  to determine whether the condition is a metabolic problem.
4. **Metabolic acidosis**: The pH is decreased; the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  is decreased.
5. **Metabolic alkalosis**: The pH is elevated; the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  is elevated.

 In a respiratory imbalance, the arterial blood gas (ABG) result indicates an opposite relationship between the pH and the  $\text{Pco}_2$ . In a metabolic imbalance, the ABG result indicates a corresponding relationship between the pH and the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$ .

#### D. **Compensation** (see Table 10-3)

1. Compensation refers to the body processes that occur to counterbalance the acid-base disturbance.
2. When full compensation has occurred, the pH is within normal limits.

#### E. Steps for analyzing arterial blood gas results (Box 10-6)

##### **BOX 10-6** Analyzing Arterial Blood Gas Results

If you can remember the following Pyramid Points and Pyramid Steps, you will be able to analyze any blood gas report.

##### **Pyramid Points**

In acidosis, the pH is decreased.

In alkalosis, the pH is elevated.

The respiratory function indicator is the  $\text{Pco}_2$ .

The metabolic function indicator is the bicarbonate ion ( $\text{HCO}_3^-$ ).

## **Pyramid Steps**

### ***Pyramid Step 1***

Look at the blood gas report. Look at the pH. Is the pH elevated or decreased? If the pH is elevated, it reflects alkalosis. If the pH is decreased, it reflects acidosis.

### ***Pyramid Step 2***

Look at the  $\text{Pco}_2$ . Is the  $\text{Pco}_2$  elevated or decreased? If the  $\text{Pco}_2$  reflects an opposite relationship to the pH, then the condition is a respiratory imbalance. If the  $\text{Pco}_2$  does not reflect an opposite relationship to the pH, go to Pyramid Step 3.

### ***Pyramid Step 3***

Look at the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$ . Does the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  reflect a corresponding relationship with the pH? If it does, then the condition is a metabolic imbalance.

### ***Pyramid Step 4***

Full compensation has occurred if the pH is in a normal range of 7.35 to 7.45. If the pH is not within normal range, look at the respiratory or metabolic function indicators.

If the condition is a respiratory imbalance, look at the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  to determine the state of compensation.

If the condition is a metabolic imbalance, look at the  $\text{Pco}_2$  to determine the state of compensation.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Failure to determine the presence of adequate collateral circulation could result in severe ischemic injury to the hand if damage to the radial artery occurs with arterial puncture. Upon release of pressure on the ulnar artery, if pinkness fails to return within 6 to 7 seconds, the ulnar artery is insufficient, indicating that the radial artery should not be used for obtaining a blood specimen. Another site needs to be selected for the arterial puncture and the health care provider needs to be notified of the finding.

### ***Reference***

Emergency Nurses Association (2010), p. 218.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

53. The nurse reviews the arterial blood gas results of a client and notes the following: pH 7.45, Pco<sub>2</sub> of 30 mm Hg, and HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> of 20 mEq/L. The nurse analyzes these results as indicating which condition?
1. Metabolic acidosis, compensated
  2. Respiratory alkalosis, compensated
  3. Metabolic alkalosis, uncompensated
  4. Respiratory acidosis, uncompensated
54. The nurse is caring for a client with a nasogastric tube that is attached to low suction. The nurse monitors the client, knowing that the client is at risk for which acid-base disorder?
1. Metabolic acidosis
  2. Metabolic alkalosis
  3. Respiratory acidosis
  4. Respiratory alkalosis
55. A client with a 3-day history of nausea and vomiting presents to the emergency department. The client is hypoventilating and has a respiratory rate of 10 breaths/minute. The electrocardiogram (ECG) monitor displays tachycardia, with a heart rate of 120 beats/minute. Arterial blood gases are drawn and the nurse reviews the results, expecting to note which finding?

1. A decreased pH and an increased  $\text{CO}_2$
2. An increased pH and a decreased  $\text{CO}_2$
3. A decreased pH and a decreased  $\text{HCO}_3^-$
4. An increased pH with an increased  $\text{HCO}_3^-$

56. The nurse caring for a client with an ileostomy understands that the client is **most** at risk for developing which acid-base disorder?

1. Metabolic acidosis
2. Metabolic alkalosis
3. Respiratory acidosis
4. Respiratory alkalosis

57. The nurse is caring for a client with diabetic ketoacidosis and documents that the client is experiencing Kussmaul's respirations. On the basis of this documentation, which pattern did the nurse observe?

1. Respirations that cease for several seconds
2. Respirations that are regular but abnormally slow
3. Respirations that are labored and increased in depth and rate
4. Respirations that are abnormally deep, regular, and increased in rate

58. A client who is found unresponsive has arterial blood gases drawn and the results indicate the following: pH is 7.12,  $\text{Pco}_2$  is 90 mm Hg, and  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  is 22 mEq/L. The nurse interprets the results as indicating which condition?

1. Metabolic acidosis with compensation

2. Respiratory acidosis with compensation
3. Metabolic acidosis without compensation
4. Respiratory acidosis without compensation

59. The nurse notes that a client's arterial blood gas results reveal a pH of 7.50 and a  $P_{CO_2}$  of 30 mm Hg. The nurse monitors the client for which clinical manifestations associated with these arterial blood gas results? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Nausea
2. Confusion
3. Bradypnea
4. Tachycardia
5. Hyperkalemia
6. Lightheadedness

60. The nurse reviews the blood gas results of a client with atelectasis. The nurse analyzes the results and determines that the client is experiencing respiratory acidosis. Which result validates the nurse's findings?

1. pH 7.25,  $P_{CO_2}$  50 mm Hg
2. pH 7.35,  $P_{CO_2}$  40 mm Hg
3. pH 7.50,  $P_{CO_2}$  52 mm Hg
4. pH 7.52,  $P_{CO_2}$  28 mm Hg

61. The nurse is caring for a client who is on a mechanical ventilator. Blood gas

results indicate a pH of 7.50 and a Pco<sub>2</sub> of 30 mm Hg. The nurse has determined that the client is experiencing respiratory alkalosis. Which laboratory value would **most likely** be noted in this condition?

1. Sodium level of 145 mEq/L
2. Potassium level of 3.0 mEq/L
3. Magnesium level of 2.0 mg/dL
4. Phosphorus level of 4.0 mg/dL

62. The nurse plans care for a client with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), understanding that the client is **most likely** to experience what type of acid-base imbalance?

1. Metabolic acidosis
2. Metabolic alkalosis
3. Respiratory acidosis
4. Respiratory alkalosis

## ANSWERS

53. 2

**Rationale:** The normal pH is 7.35 to 7.45. In a respiratory condition, an opposite effect will be seen between the pH and the Pco<sub>2</sub>. In this situation, the pH is at the high end of the normal value and the Pco<sub>2</sub> is low. In an alkalotic condition, the pH is elevated. Therefore the values identified in the question indicate a respiratory alkalosis that is compensated by the kidneys through the renal excretion of bicarbonate. Because the pH has returned to a normal

value, compensation has occurred.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, arterial blood gas results. Remember that in a respiratory imbalance you will find an opposite response between the pH and the  $P_{CO_2}$  as indicated in the question. Therefore, you can eliminate the options reflective of a primary metabolic problem. Also, remember that the pH increases in an alkalotic condition and compensation can be evidenced by a normal pH. The correct option reflects a respiratory alkalotic condition and compensation and describes the blood gas values as indicated in the question.

**Review:** The steps related to **analyzing arterial blood gas results** and the findings noted in **respiratory alkalosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 322, 324.

## 54. 2

**Rationale:** Metabolic alkalosis is defined as a deficit or loss of hydrogen ions or acids or an excess of base (bicarbonate) that results from the accumulation of base or from a loss of acid without a comparable loss of base in the body fluids. This occurs in conditions resulting in hypovolemia, the loss of gastric fluid, excessive bicarbonate intake, the massive transfusion of whole blood, and hyperaldosteronism. Loss of gastric fluid via nasogastric suction or vomiting causes metabolic alkalosis as a result of the loss of hydrochloric acid. The remaining options are incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a client with a nasogastric tube attached to suction. Remembering

that a client receiving nasogastric suction loses hydrochloric acid will direct you to the option identifying an alkalotic condition. Because the question addresses a situation other than a respiratory one, the acid-base disorder would be a metabolic condition.

**Review:** The **causes of metabolic alkalosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 322.

**55. 4**

**Rationale:** Clients experiencing nausea and vomiting would most likely present with metabolic alkalosis resulting from loss of gastric acid, thus causing the pH and  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  to increase. Symptoms experienced by the client would include hypoventilation and tachycardia. Option 1 reflects a respiratory acidotic condition. Option 2 reflects a respiratory alkalotic condition, and option 3 reflects a metabolic acidotic condition.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, expected arterial blood gas findings. Note the data in the question and that the client is vomiting. Recalling that vomiting most likely causes metabolic alkalosis will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** The **causes of metabolic alkalosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 207; Lewis et al (2011), p. 322.

## 56. 1

**Rationale:** Metabolic acidosis is defined as a total concentration of buffer base that is lower than normal, with a relative increase in the hydrogen ion concentration. This results from loss of buffer bases or retention of too many acids without sufficient bases, and occurs in conditions such as kidney disease; diabetic ketoacidosis; high fat diet; insufficient metabolism of carbohydrates; malnutrition; ingestion of toxins, such as acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin); malnutrition; or severe diarrhea. Intestinal secretions are high in bicarbonate and may be lost through enteric drainage tubes, an ileostomy, or diarrhea. These conditions result in metabolic acidosis. The remaining options are incorrect interpretations and are not associated with the client with an ileostomy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Focus on the **subject**, the risk for a client with an ileostomy. Note that the client's condition described in the question is a gastrointestinal disorder. This will direct you toward a metabolic disorder. Remembering that intestinal fluids are primarily alkaline will assist you in selecting the correct option. When excess bicarbonate is lost, acidosis will result.

**Review:** The **causes of metabolic acidosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 322.

57. 4

**Rationale:** Kussmaul's respirations are abnormally deep, regular, and increased in rate. Apnea is described as respirations that cease for several seconds. In bradypnea, respirations are regular but abnormally slow. In hyperpnea, respirations are labored and increased in depth and rate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of Kussmaul's respirations. Use knowledge of the description of Kussmaul's respirations. Recalling that this type of respiration occurs in diabetic ketoacidosis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The characteristics of **Kussmaul's respirations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1455.

58. 4

**Rationale:** The acid-base disturbance is respiratory acidosis without compensation. The normal pH is 7.35 to 7.45. The normal  $P_{CO_2}$  is 35 to 45 mm Hg. In respiratory acidosis the pH is decreased and the  $P_{CO_2}$  is elevated. The normal bicarbonate ( $HCO_3^-$ ) level is 22 to 27 mEq/L. Because the bicarbonate is still within normal limits, the kidneys have not had time to adjust for this acid-base disturbance. In addition, the pH is not within normal limits.

Therefore the condition is without compensation. The remaining options are incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interpretation of arterial blood gas results. Remember that in a respiratory imbalance you will find an opposite response between the pH and the Pco<sub>2</sub>. Also, remember that the pH is decreased in an acidotic condition and that compensation is reflected by a normal pH.

**Review:** The procedure for **analyzing blood gas results**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Copstead, Banasik (2010), p. 622; Lewis et al (2011), p. 322.

❖ **59. 1, 2, 4, 6**

**Rationale:** Respiratory alkalosis is defined as a deficit of carbonic acid or a decrease in hydrogen ion concentration that results from the accumulation of base or from a loss of acid without a comparable loss of base in the body fluids. This occurs in conditions that cause overstimulation of the respiratory system. Clinical manifestations of respiratory alkalosis include lethargy, lightheadedness, confusion, tachycardia, dysrhythmias related to hypokalemia, nausea, vomiting, epigastric pain, and numbness and tingling of the extremities. Hyperventilation (tachypnea) occurs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the interpretation of arterial blood gas values. Note the data in the question to determine that the client is experiencing respiratory alkalosis. Next it is necessary to think about the pathophysiology that occurs in this condition and recall the manifestations that occur.

**Review:** The clinical manifestations of **respiratory alkalosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 191-192; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 208.

## 60. 1

**Rationale:** Atelectasis is a condition characterized by the collapse of alveoli, preventing the respiratory exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in a part of the lungs. The normal pH is 7.35 to 7.45. The normal Pco<sub>2</sub> is 35 to 45 mm Hg. In respiratory acidosis, the pH is decreased and the Pco<sub>2</sub> is elevated. Option 2 identifies normal values. Option 3 identifies an alkalotic condition, and option 4 identifies respiratory alkalosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the arterial blood gas results in a client with atelectasis. Remember that in a respiratory imbalance you will find an opposite response between the pH and the Pco<sub>2</sub>. Also, remember that the pH is decreased in an acidotic condition. First eliminate option 2 because it reflects a normal blood gas result. Options 3 and 4 identify an elevated pH indicating an alkalotic condition. The correct option is the only one that reflects an acidotic condition.

**Review:** Blood gas findings in **respiratory acidosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Copstead, Banasik (2010), p. 622; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 370, 577.

## 61. 2

**Rationale:** Respiratory alkalosis is defined as a deficit of carbonic acid or a decrease in hydrogen ion concentration that results from the accumulation of base or from a loss of acid without a comparable loss of base in the body fluids. This occurs in conditions that cause overstimulation of the respiratory system. Clinical manifestations of respiratory alkalosis include lethargy, lightheadedness, confusion, tachycardia, dysrhythmias related to hypokalemia, nausea, vomiting, epigastric pain, and numbness and tingling of the extremities. All three incorrect options identify normal laboratory values. The correct option identifies the presence of hypokalemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Focus on the data in the question and use knowledge about the interpretation of arterial blood gas values to determine that the client is experiencing respiratory alkalosis. Next recall the manifestations that occur in this condition and the normal laboratory values. The only abnormal laboratory value is the potassium level, the correct option.

**Review:** The clinical manifestations of **respiratory alkalosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 191-192; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 207-208.

## 62. 3

**Rationale:** Respiratory acidosis is most often caused by hypoventilation in a client with COPD. Other acid-base

disturbances can occur in a client with COPD during exacerbation of the disease, but the most likely imbalance is respiratory acidosis. The remaining options are incorrect. COPD is a respiratory condition, not a metabolic one.

Respiratory alkalosis is associated with hyperventilation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Also note the word *chronic*. Remembering that hypoventilation results in respiratory acidosis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Causes of respiratory acidosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 322.



## CHAPTER 11

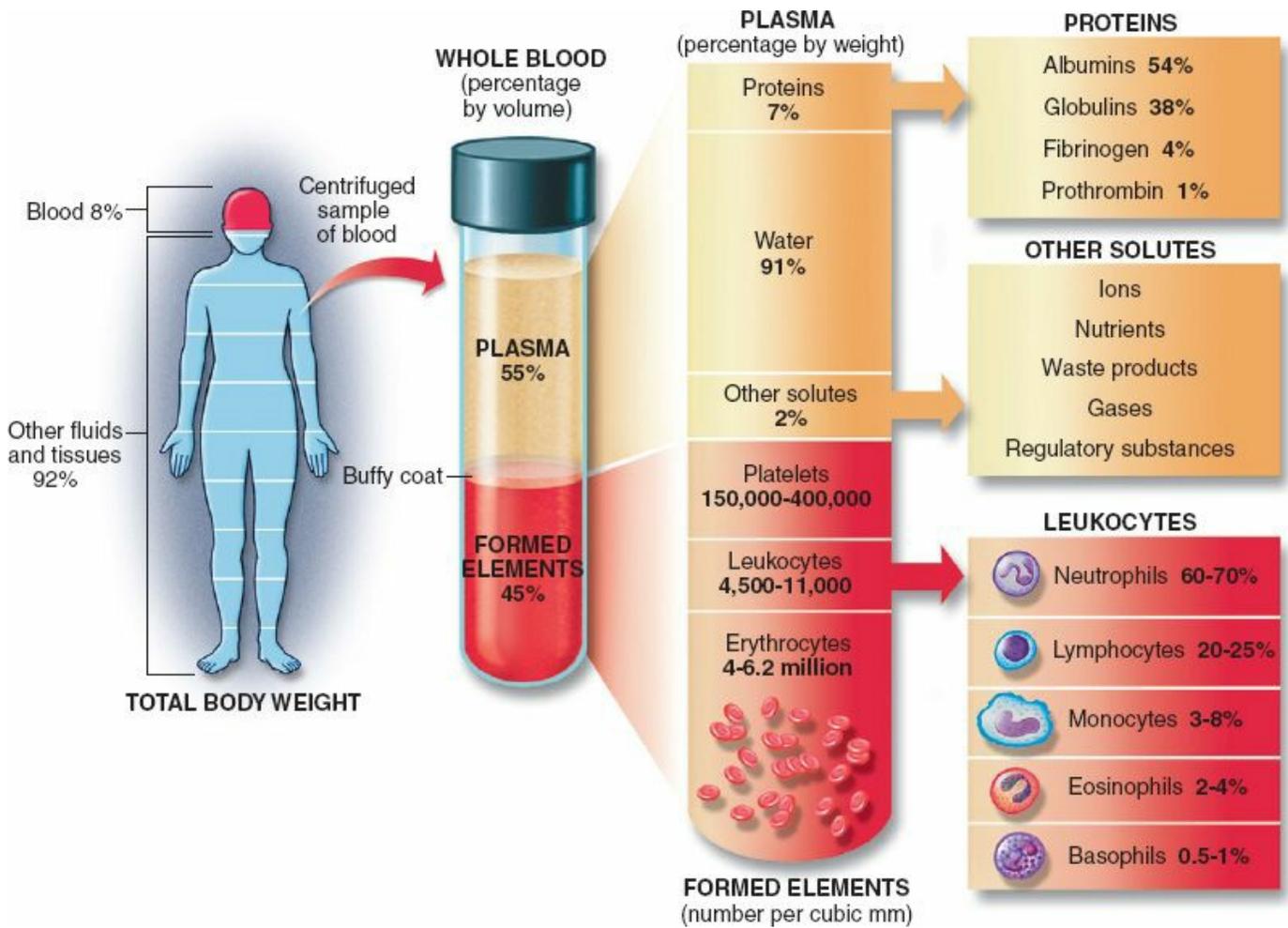
# Laboratory Values

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse notes that the client's alanine aminotransferase (ALT) level is 132 units/L and the aspartate aminotransferase (AST) level is 82 units/L. On the basis of these values, the nurse should collect which subjective data from the client?

*Answer located on p. 124.*

For reference throughout the chapter, please see [Fig. 11-1](#) and [Box 11-1](#).



**FIGURE 11-1** Approximate values for the components of blood in a normal adult. (Adapted from Thibodeau GA, Patton KT: *The human body in health and disease*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

**BOX 11-1** Abbreviations and Definition

**Abbreviation**

g/dL  
 mcg/dL  
 mcg/mL  
 mEq/L  
 mg/dL  
 microunits/mL

**Definition**

grams per deciliter  
 micrograms per deciliter  
 micrograms per milliliter  
 milliequivalents per liter  
 milligrams per deciliter  
 microunits per milliliter

mL/kg	milliliters per kilogram
mm <sup>3</sup>	millimeters cubed
mm/hour	millimeters per hour
ng/mL	nanograms per milliliter
pg/mL	picogram per milliliter
U/L	units per liter
μL	microliters

## I. Electrolytes (Table 11-1)

**TABLE 11-1 Normal Adult Electrolyte Values**

Electrolyte	Value
Sodium	135-145 mEq/L
Potassium	3.5-5.0 mEq/L
Chloride	98-107 mEq/L
Bicarbonate (venous)	22-29 mEq/L

### A. Serum sodium

#### 1. Description

- a. A major cation of extracellular fluid
- b. Maintains osmotic pressure and acid-base balance, and assists in the transmission of nerve impulses
- c. Is absorbed from the small intestine and excreted in the urine in amounts dependent on dietary intake
- d. Minimum daily requirement of sodium is approximately 15 mEq.

#### 2. Nursing consideration: Drawing **blood** samples from an extremity in which an

intravenous (IV) solution of sodium chloride is infusing increases the level, producing an inaccurate result. ▲

▲ Drawing blood specimens from an extremity in which an intravenous solution is infusing can produce an inaccurate result, depending on the test being performed and the type of solution infusing. Prolonged use of a tourniquet and clenching and unclenching the hand before venous sampling can increase the blood level of potassium, producing an inaccurate result.

## B. Serum **potassium**

### 1. Description

- a. A major intracellular cation, potassium regulates cellular water balance, electrical conduction in muscle cells, and acid-base balance.
- b. The body obtains potassium through dietary ingestion and the kidneys preserve or excrete potassium, depending on cellular need.
- c. Potassium levels are used to evaluate cardiac function, renal function, gastrointestinal function, and the need for IV replacement therapy. ▲

### 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Note on the laboratory form that the client is receiving potassium supplementation.
- b. Clients with elevated white **blood cell** (WBC) counts and platelet counts may have falsely elevated potassium levels.

**PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS**

## Actions to Take When Obtaining a Blood Sample

1. Check health care provider's prescription.
2. Identify foods, medications, or other factors that may affect the procedure or results.
3. Identify the client.
4. Explain the purpose of the test and procedure to the client.
5. Draw the blood sample.
6. Provide pressure and apply a bandage or gauze dressing to the venipuncture site.
7. Maintain and deliver the specimen to the laboratory according to agency procedure.
8. Document specifics about the procedure.

The nurse should check the health care provider's prescription for the laboratory test prescribed and then ensure that the client is prepared for the test; for example, that nothing by mouth status has been maintained if needed. The nurse would also identify any foods, medications, or other factors that may affect test results. For example, a diet high in fat or leafy vegetables may shorten the prothrombin time. In addition, there are many medications that can increase or decrease some test results. The nurse then identifies the client and makes sure that the test has been explained to the client. The nurse (or appropriate person as indicated by agency procedure) draws the blood sample, provides pressure, and applies a bandage or gauze dressing to the venipuncture site. Once the client is comfortable, the nurse maintains and delivers the

specimen to the laboratory according to agency procedure. The nurse always follows standard and transmission-based precautions as necessary in performing this procedure. The nurse should also check agency guidelines and laboratory manuals regarding the procedure for obtaining the specific blood sample. The nurse then documents the specifics about the procedure.

### ***Reference***

Pagana K, Pagana T: *Mosby's manual of diagnostic and laboratory tests*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby, pp. 13-16.

## **II. Coagulation Studies**

### **A. Activated partial thromboplastin time (aPTT)**

#### **1. Description**

- a.** The aPTT evaluates how well the coagulation sequence (intrinsic clotting system) is functioning by measuring the amount of time it takes in seconds for recalcified citrated **plasma** to clot after partial thromboplastin is added to it.
- b.** The test screens for deficiencies and inhibitors of all factors, except factors VII and XIII.
- c.** Usually, the aPTT is used to monitor the effectiveness of heparin therapy and screen for coagulation disorders.

#### **2. Value: 20 to 36 seconds, depending on the type of activator used**

#### **3. Nursing considerations**

- a. If the client is receiving intermittent heparin therapy, draw the **blood** sample 1 hour before the next scheduled dose.
- b. Do not draw samples from an arm into which heparin is infusing. ▲
- c. Transport specimen to the laboratory immediately.
- d. Provide direct pressure to the **venipuncture** site for 3 to 5 minutes. ▲
- e. The aPTT should be between 1.5 and 2.5 times normal when the client is receiving heparin therapy. ▲

**⚠** If the aPTT value is prolonged (longer than 90 seconds) in a client receiving IV heparin therapy, initiate bleeding precautions.

## **B. Prothrombin time (PT) and international normalized ratio (INR)**

### **1. Description**

- a. Prothrombin is a vitamin K–dependent glycoprotein produced by the liver that is necessary for fibrin clot formation.
- b. Each laboratory establishes a normal or control value based on the method used to perform the PT test.
- c. The PT measures the amount of time it takes in seconds for clot formation and is used to monitor response to warfarin sodium (Coumadin) therapy or to screen for dysfunction of the extrinsic clotting system resulting from liver disease, vitamin K deficiency, or disseminated intravascular coagulation.
- d. A PT value within 2 seconds (plus or minus) of the control is considered normal.
- e. The INR is a frequently used test to measure the effects of oral anticoagulants.

f. The INR standardizes the PT ratio and is calculated in the laboratory setting by raising the observed PT ratio to the power of the international sensitivity index specific to the thromboplastin reagent used.

## 2. Values

a. PT: 9.6 to 11.8 seconds (male adult); 9.5 to 11.3 seconds (female adult)

b. INR: 2 to 3 for standard warfarin therapy

c. INR: 3 to 4.5 for high-dose warfarin therapy

## 3. Nursing considerations

a. If a PT is prescribed, baseline specimen should be drawn before anticoagulation therapy is started; note the time of collection on the laboratory form.

b. Provide direct pressure to the venipuncture site for 3 to 5 minutes.

c. Concurrent warfarin therapy with heparin therapy can lengthen the PT for up to 5 hours after dosing.

d. Diets high in green leafy vegetables can increase the absorption of vitamin K, which shortens the PT. ▲

e. Orally administered anticoagulation therapy usually maintains the PT at 1.5 to 2 times the laboratory control value. ▲

**⚠** If the PT value is longer than 30 seconds in a client receiving warfarin therapy, initiate bleeding precautions.

## C. Platelet count

## 1. Description

- a. Platelets function in hemostatic plug formation, clot retraction, and coagulation factor activation.
- b. Platelets are produced by the bone marrow to function in hemostasis.

2. Value: 150,000 to 400,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Nursing considerations

- a. Monitor the venipuncture site for bleeding in clients with known thrombocytopenia.
- b. High altitudes, chronic cold weather, and exercise increase platelet counts.
- c. Bleeding precautions should be instituted in clients with a low platelet count.



**⚠ Monitor the platelet count closely in clients receiving chemotherapy because of the risk for thrombocytopenia.**

## D. Bleeding time

### 1. Description

- a. Assesses overall hemostatic function (platelet response to injury and vasoconstrictive ability).
- b. Useful in detecting disorders of platelet function.

2. Normal values (varies by method utilized for sampling)

- a. Ivy method: 3 to 6 minutes
- b. Duke method: 1 to 3 minutes

### 3. Nursing considerations

- a. Validate that the client has not been receiving anticoagulants, aspirin, or aspirin-containing products for 3 days prior to the test. ▲
- b. Inform the client that punctures are made to measure the time it takes for bleeding to stop.
- c. For clients with bleeding tendencies a pressure dressing may be needed post-testing.

#### E. D-dimer test

1. A blood test that measures clot formation and lysis that results from the degradation of fibrin.
2. Helps to diagnose the presence of thrombus in conditions such as deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, or stroke; it is also used to diagnose disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) and to monitor the effectiveness of treatment. ▲

### III. Erythrocyte Studies

#### A. Erythrocyte sedimentation rate

1. Description
  - a. Rate at which erythrocytes settle out of anticoagulated blood in 1 hour
  - b. A nonspecific test used to detect illnesses associated with acute and chronic infection, inflammation, advanced neoplasm, and tissue necrosis or infarction
2. Value: 0 to 30 mm/hour, depending on age of client
3. Nursing consideration: Fasting is not necessary, but a fatty meal may cause plasma

alterations.

## B. Hemoglobin and hematocrit

### 1. Description

- a. Hemoglobin is the main component of erythrocytes and serves as the vehicle for transporting oxygen and carbon dioxide. 🟩
- b. Hemoglobin determinations are important in identifying anemia.
- c. Hematocrit represents red blood cell (RBC) mass and is an important measurement in the identification of anemia or polycythemia ([Table 11-2](#)).

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**TABLE 11-2 Normal Adult Blood Components**

Blood Component	Normal Value
<b>Hemoglobin</b>	
Male adult	14-16.5 g/dL
Female adult	12-15 g/dL
<b>Hematocrit</b>	
Male adult	42%-52%
Female adult	35%-47%
<b>Iron</b>	
Male adult	65-175 mcg/dL
Female adult	50-170 mcg/dL
<b>Red Blood Cells</b>	
Male adult	4.5-6.2 million/ $\mu$ L
Female adult	4-5.5 million/ $\mu$ L

2. Nursing consideration: Fasting is not required.

## C. Serum iron

### 1. Description

- a. Iron is found predominantly in hemoglobin.

- b.** Iron acts as a carrier of oxygen from the lungs to the tissues and indirectly aids in the return of carbon dioxide to the lungs.
- c.** Iron aids in diagnosing anemias and hemolytic disorders.

## 2. Normal values

- a.** Male adult: 65 to 175 mcg/dL
- b.** Female adult: 50 to 170 mcg/dL

- 3.** Nursing consideration: Level of iron will be increased if the client has ingested iron before the test. ▲

## D. RBC count (erythrocytes)

### 1. Description

- a.** RBCs function in hemoglobin transport, which results in delivery of oxygen to the body tissues.
- b.** RBCs are formed by red bone marrow, have a life span of 120 days, and are removed from the blood via the liver, spleen, and bone marrow.
- c.** The RBC count aids in diagnosing anemias and blood dyscrasias.
- d.** The RBC count evaluates the ability of the body to produce RBCs in sufficient numbers.

### 2. Values

- a.** Female adult: 4 to 5.5 million cells/ $\mu$ L
- b.** Male adult: 4.5 to 6.2 million cells/ $\mu$ L

- 3.** Nursing consideration: Fasting is not required.

## IV. Serum Enzymes and Cardiac Markers (Table 11-3) ▲

**TABLE 11-3 Normal Adult Serum Enzymes/Cardiac Markers**

Serum Enzyme	Normal Value
Creatine kinase (CK)	26-174 units/L
CK isoenzymes	
CK-MB	0%-5% of total
CK-MM	95%-100% of total
CK-BB	0%
Troponin I	< 0.6 ng/mL; > 1.5 ng/mL indicates myocardial infarction
Troponin T	> 0.1-0.2 ng/mL indicates myocardial infarction
Myoglobin	< 90 mcg/L; elevation could indicate myocardial infarction
Atrial natriuretic peptides (ANP)	22 to 27 pg/mL
Brain natriuretic peptides (BNP)	Less than 100 pg/mL
C-type natriuretic peptides (CNP)	Reference range provided with results should be reviewed

### A. Creatine kinase (CK)

#### 1. Description

- a. Creatine kinase is an enzyme found in muscle and brain tissue that reflects tissue catabolism resulting from cell trauma.
- b. The CK level begins to rise within 6 hours of muscle damage, peaks at 18 hours, and returns to normal in 2 to 3 days.
- c. The test for CK is performed to detect myocardial or skeletal muscle damage or central nervous system damage; a normal CK value is 26 to 174 units/L.
- d. Isoenzymes include CK-MB (cardiac), CK-BB (brain), and CK-MM (muscles).
- e. Isoenzyme CK-MB is found mainly in cardiac muscle, CK-BB is found mainly in brain tissue, and CK-MM is found mainly in skeletal muscle.

#### 2. Values: (see Table 11-3)

### 3. Nursing considerations

- a. If the test is to evaluate skeletal muscle, instruct the client to avoid strenuous physical activity for 24 hours before the test.
- b. Instruct the client to avoid ingestion of alcohol for 24 hours before the test.
- c. Invasive procedures and intramuscular injections may falsely elevate CK levels.

## B. Troponins ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Troponin is a regulatory protein found in striated muscle (skeletal and myocardial).
- b. Increased amounts of troponins are released into the bloodstream when an infarction causes damage to the myocardium.
- c. Levels elevate as early as 3 hours after myocardial injury. Troponin I levels may remain elevated for 7 to 10 days and troponin T levels may remain elevated for as long as 10 to 14 days.
- d. Serial measurements are important to compare with a baseline test; elevations are clinically significant in the diagnosis of cardiac pathology.

### 2. Values: (see [Table 11-3](#))

### 3. Nursing considerations

- a. Testing is repeated in 12 hours or as prescribed, followed by daily testing for 3 to 5 days.
- b. Rotate **venipuncture** sites.

## C. Myoglobin

### 1. Description

- a. Myoglobin, an oxygen-binding protein that is found in striated (cardiac and skeletal) muscle, releases oxygen at very low tensions.
- b. Any injury to skeletal muscle will cause a release of myoglobin into the **blood**.

### 2. Values: (see [Table 11-3](#))

### 3. Nursing considerations

- a. The level can rise as early as 2 hours after a myocardial infarction, with a rapid decline in the level after 7 hours.
- b. Because the myoglobin level is not cardiac-specific and rises and falls so rapidly, its use in diagnosing myocardial infarction may be limited.

## D. Natriuretic peptides ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Natriuretic peptides are neuroendocrine peptides that are used to identify clients with heart failure (HF).
- b. There are three major peptides: atrial natriuretic peptides (ANP) synthesized in cardiac atrial muscle, brain natriuretic peptides (BNP) synthesized primarily in cardiac ventricle muscle (although originally BNP was identified in extracts of porcine brain), and C-type natriuretic peptides (CNP) synthesized by endothelial cells.
- c. BNP is the primary marker for identifying HF as the cause of dyspnea.

### 2. Values: (see [Table 11-3](#))

3. Nursing consideration: Fasting is not required.

**!** The higher the BNP level, the more severe the heart failure. If the BNP level is elevated, dyspnea is due to heart failure; if it is normal, the dyspnea is due to a pulmonary problem.

## V. Serum Gastrointestinal Studies

### A. Albumin

#### 1. Description

- a. A main plasma protein of **blood**
- b. Maintains oncotic pressure and transports bilirubin, fatty acids, medications, hormones, and other substances that are insoluble in water
- c. Increased in conditions such as dehydration, diarrhea, and metastatic carcinoma; decreased in conditions such as acute infection, ascites, and alcoholism
- d. Presence of detectable albumin, or protein, in the urine is indicative of abnormal renal function

2. Value: 3.4 to 5 g/dL

3. Nursing consideration: Fasting is not required.

### B. Ammonia

#### 1. Description

- a. Ammonia is a by-product of protein catabolism; most of it is created by bacteria acting on proteins present in the gut.
- b. Ammonia is metabolized by the liver and excreted by the kidneys as urea.
- c. Elevated levels resulting from hepatic dysfunction may lead to encephalopathy.

**d.** Venous ammonia levels are not a reliable indicator of hepatic coma.

**2.** Value: 10 to 80 mcg/dL

**3.** Nursing considerations

**a.** Instruct the client to fast, except for water, and to refrain from smoking for 8 to 10 hours before the test; smoking increases ammonia levels.

**b.** Place the specimen on ice and transport to the laboratory immediately.

**C.** Alanine aminotransferase (ALT) ▲

**1.** Description: Used to identify hepatocellular injury and inflammation of the liver and to monitor improvement or worsening of disease.

**2.** Value: 10 to 40 units/L

**3.** Nursing considerations

**a.** Previous intramuscular injections may cause elevated levels.

**b.** No fasting is required.

**D.** Aspartate aminotransferase (AST) ▲

**1.** Description: Used to evaluate a client with suspected hepatocellular disease, injury, or inflammation (may also be used along with cardiac markers to evaluate coronary artery occlusive disease)

**2.** Value: 10 to 30 units/L

**3.** Nursing considerations

**a.** Previous intramuscular injections may cause elevated levels.

**b.** No fasting is required.

**E.** Amylase

## 1. Description

- a. This enzyme, produced by the pancreas and salivary glands, aids in the digestion of complex carbohydrates and is excreted by the kidneys.
- b. In acute pancreatitis, the amylase level may exceed five times the normal value; the level starts rising 6 hours after the onset of pain, peaks at about 24 hours, and returns to normal in 2 to 3 days after the onset of pain. ▲
- c. In chronic pancreatitis, the rise in serum amylase usually does not normally exceed three times the normal value. ▲

2. Value: 25 to 151 units/L

## 3. Nursing considerations

- a. On the laboratory form, list the medications that the client has taken during the previous 24 hours before the test.
- b. Note that many medications may cause false-positive or false-negative results.
- c. Results are invalidated if the specimen was obtained less than 72 hours after cholecystography with radiopaque dyes.

## F. Lipase

### 1. Description

- a. This pancreatic enzyme converts fats and triglycerides into fatty acids and glycerol.
- b. Elevated lipase levels occur in pancreatic disorders; elevations may not occur until 24 to 36 hours after the onset of illness and may remain elevated for up to 14 days.

2. Value: 10 to 140 units/L
3. Nursing considerations: Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) may increase lipase activity.

## G. Bilirubin

### 1. Description

- a. Bilirubin is produced by the liver, spleen, and bone marrow and is also a by-product of hemoglobin breakdown.
- b. Total bilirubin levels can be broken down into direct bilirubin, which is excreted primarily via the intestinal tract, and indirect bilirubin, which circulates primarily in the bloodstream.
- c. Total bilirubin levels increase with any type of jaundice; direct and indirect bilirubin levels help differentiate the cause of the jaundice.

### 2. Values

- a. Bilirubin, direct (conjugated): 0 to 0.3 mg/dL
- b. Bilirubin, indirect (unconjugated): 0.1 to 1 mg/dL
- c. Bilirubin, total: Lower than 1.5 mg/dL

### 3. Nursing consideration

- a. Instruct the client to eat a diet low in yellow foods, avoiding foods such as carrots, yams, yellow beans, and pumpkin, for 3 to 4 days before the blood is drawn.
- b. Instruct the client to fast for 4 hours before the blood is drawn.
- c. Note that results will be elevated with the ingestion of alcohol or the

administration of morphine sulfate, theophylline, ascorbic acid (vitamin C), or acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin).

- d.** Note that results are invalidated if the client has received a radioactive scan within 24 hours before the test.

## **H.** Lipids

### **1.** Description

- a.** Blood lipids consist primarily of cholesterol, triglycerides, and phospholipids.
- b.** Lipid assessment includes total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), low-density lipoprotein (LDL), and triglycerides.
- c.** Cholesterol is present in all body tissues and is a major component of LDLs, brain and nerve cells, cell membranes, and some gallbladder stones.
- d.** Triglycerides constitute a major part of very low-density lipoproteins and a small part of LDLs.
- e.** Triglycerides are synthesized in the liver from fatty acids, protein, and glucose, and are obtained from the diet.
- f.** Increased cholesterol levels, LDL levels, and triglyceride levels place the client at risk for coronary artery disease.
- g.** HDL helps protect against the risk of coronary artery disease

### **2.** Values:

- a.** Cholesterol: 140 to 199 mg/dL
- b.** LDLs: Lower than 130 mg/dL
- c.** HDLs: 30 to 70 mg/dL

**d.** Triglycerides: Lower than 200 mg/dL

### **3.** Nursing considerations

**a.** Oral contraceptives may increase the lipid level.

**b.** Instruct the client to abstain from foods and fluid, except for water, for 12 to 14 hours and from alcohol for 24 hours before the test.

**c.** Instruct the client to avoid consuming high-cholesterol foods with the evening meal before the test.

## **I.** Protein

### **1.** Description

**a.** Protein reflects the total amount of albumin and globulins in the plasma.

**b.** Protein regulates osmotic pressure and is necessary for the formation of many hormones, enzymes, and antibodies; it is a major source of building material for blood, skin, hair, nails, and internal organs.

**c.** Increased in conditions such as Addison's disease, autoimmune collagen disorders, chronic infection, and Crohn's disease.

**d.** Decreased in conditions such as burns, cirrhosis, edema, and severe hepatic disease.

**2.** Value: 6 to 8 g/dL

**3.** Nursing considerations: No special preparation is necessary.

 Clients with liver disease often have prolonged clotting times; therefore, provide prolonged pressure at the venipuncture site and monitor the site closely for bleeding.

## VI. Glucose Studies

### A. Fasting **blood** glucose

#### 1. Description

- a. Glucose is a monosaccharide found in fruits and is formed from the digestion of carbohydrates and the conversion of glycogen by the liver.
- b. Glucose is the main source of cellular energy for the body and is essential for brain and erythrocyte function.
- c. Fasting blood glucose levels are used to help diagnose diabetes mellitus and hypoglycemia (Table 11-4).

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**TABLE 11-4 Normal Adult Glucose Values**

Measurement Setting	Normal Value
Glucose, fasting	70-110 mg/dL
Glucose monitoring (capillary blood)	60-110 mg/dL
Glucose tolerance test, oral	
Baseline fasting	70-110 mg/dL
30-min fasting	110-170 mg/dL
60-min fasting	120-170 mg/dL
90-min fasting	100-140 mg/dL
120-min fasting	70-120 mg/dL
Glucose, 2-hr postprandial	< 140 mg/dL

#### 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Instruct the client to fast for 8 to 12 hours before the test.
- b. Instruct a client with diabetes mellitus to withhold morning insulin or oral hypoglycemic medication until after the blood is drawn.

### B. Glucose tolerance test (see Table 11-4)

## 1. Description

- a. The glucose tolerance test aids in the diagnosis of diabetes mellitus.
- b. If the glucose levels peak at higher than normal at 1 and 2 hours after injection or ingestion of glucose and are slower than normal to return to fasting levels, then diabetes mellitus is confirmed.

## 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Instruct the client to eat a high-carbohydrate (200- to 300-g) diet for 3 days before the test.
- b. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol, coffee, and smoking for 36 hours before the test.
- c. Instruct the client to fast for 10 to 16 hours before the test.
- d. Instruct the client to avoid strenuous exercise for 8 hours before and after the test.
- e. Instruct the client with diabetes mellitus to withhold morning insulin or oral hypoglycemic medication. ▲
- f. Instruct the client that the test may take 3 to 5 hours, requires IV or oral administration of glucose, and the taking of multiple blood samples.

## C. Glycosylated hemoglobin ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Glycosylated hemoglobin is blood glucose bound to hemoglobin.
- b. Hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> (glycosylated hemoglobin A; HbA<sub>1c</sub>) is a reflection of how well blood glucose levels have been controlled for the past 3 to 4 months.

- c. Hyperglycemia in clients with diabetes is usually a cause of an increase in the HbA<sub>1c</sub>.

## 2. Values

- a. Values are expressed as a percentage of the total hemoglobin.
- b. Good control of diabetes: 7% or lower
- c. Fair control of diabetes: 7% to 8%
- d. Poor control of diabetes: Higher than 8%

## 3. Nursing consideration: Fasting is not required before the test.

### D. Diabetes mellitus autoantibody panel

1. Description: Used to evaluate insulin resistance and to identify type 1 diabetes and clients with a suspected allergy to insulin

2. Value: Less than 1:4 titer with no antibody detected

## 3. Nursing considerations

- a. Radioactive scans within 7 days before the test may interfere with test results.
- b. No fasting is required.

## VII. Renal Function Studies

### A. Serum creatinine ▲

## 1. Description

- a. Creatinine is a specific indicator of renal function.
- b. Increased levels of creatinine indicate a slowing of the glomerular filtration rate.

2. Value: 0.6 to 1.3 mg/dL

3. Nursing consideration: Instruct the client to avoid excessive exercise for 8 hours and excessive red meat intake for 24 hours before the test.

## B. Blood urea nitrogen ▲

### 1. Description

a. Urea nitrogen is the nitrogen portion of urea, a substance formed in the liver through an enzymatic protein breakdown process.

b. Urea is normally freely filtered through the renal glomeruli, with a small amount reabsorbed in the tubules and the remainder excreted in the urine.

c. Elevated levels indicate a slowing of the glomerular filtration rate.

2. Value: 8 to 25 mg/dL

3. Nursing consideration: BUN and creatinine ratios should be analyzed when renal function is evaluated.

## VIII. Elements ▲

### A. Calcium

#### 1. Description

a. Calcium is a cation absorbed into the bloodstream from dietary sources and functions in bone formation, nerve impulse transmission, and contraction of myocardial and skeletal muscles.

b. Calcium aids in **blood** clotting by converting prothrombin to thrombin.

2. Value: 8.6 to 10 mg/dL

### 3. Nursing considerations

- a. Instruct the client to eat a diet with a normal calcium level (800 mg/day) for 3 days before the test.
- b. Instruct the client that fasting may be required for 8 hours before the test.
- c. Note that calcium levels can be affected by decreased protein levels and the use of anticonvulsant medications.

## B. Magnesium

### 1. Description

- a. Magnesium is used as an index to determine metabolic activity and renal function.
- b. Magnesium is needed in the blood-clotting mechanism, regulates neuromuscular activity, acts as a cofactor that modifies the activity of many enzymes, and has an effect on the **metabolism** of calcium.

### 2. Value: 1.6 to 2.6 mg/dL

### 3. Nursing considerations

- a. Prolonged use of magnesium products causes increased serum levels.
- b. Long-term **parenteral nutrition** therapy or excessive loss of body fluids may decrease serum levels.

## C. Phosphorus

### 1. Description

- a. Phosphorus is important in bone formation, energy storage and release, urinary acid-base buffering, and carbohydrate **metabolism**.

- b. Phosphorus is absorbed from food and is excreted by the kidneys.
  - c. High concentrations of phosphorus are stored in bone and skeletal muscle.
2. Value: 2.7 to 4.5 mg/dL
  3. Nursing considerations: Instruct the client to fast before the test.

## IX. Thyroid Studies

### A. Description

1. Thyroid studies are performed if a thyroid disorder is suspected.
2. Thyroid studies help differentiate primary thyroid disease from secondary causes and from abnormalities in thyroxine-binding globulin levels.
3. Thyroid peroxidase antibodies test may be done to identify the presence of autoimmune conditions involving the thyroid gland.

### B. Values

1. Thyroid-stimulating hormone (also called thyrotropin): 0.2 to 5.4 microunits/mL
2. Thyroxine (T<sub>4</sub>): 5 to 12 mcg/dL
3. Thyroxine, free (FT<sub>4</sub>): 0.8 to 2.4 ng/dL
4. Triiodothyronine (T<sub>3</sub>): 80 to 230 ng/dL

- C. Nursing consideration: Test results may be invalid if the client has undergone a radionuclide scan within 7 days before the test. ▲

## X. White Blood Cell Count

### A. Description

1. WBCs function in the immune defense system of the body.

2. The WBC count assesses leukocyte distribution.

B. Value: 4500 to 11,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

C. The WBC differential provides specific information on white blood cell types.

(Table 11-5)

**TABLE 11-5 Normal Adult White Blood Cell Differential Count**

Cell Type	Count
Neutrophils	1800-7800 cells/mm <sup>3</sup>
Bands	0-700 cells/mm <sup>3</sup>
Eosinophils	0-450 cells/mm <sup>3</sup>
Basophils	0-200 cells/mm <sup>3</sup>
Lymphocytes	1000-4800 cells/mm <sup>3</sup>
Monocytes	0-800 cells/mm <sup>3</sup>

D. Nursing considerations 

1. A “shift to the left” means that an increased number of immature neutrophils is present in the **blood**.
2. A low total WBC count with a left shift indicates a recovery from bone marrow depression or an infection of such intensity that the demand for neutrophils in the tissue is higher than the capacity of the bone marrow to release them into the circulation.
3. A high total WBC count with a left shift indicates an increased release of neutrophils by the bone marrow in response to an overwhelming infection or inflammation.
4. An increased neutrophil count with a left shift is usually associated with bacterial

infection.

5. A “shift to the right” means that cells have more than the usual number of nuclear segments; found in liver disease, Down syndrome, and megaloblastic and pernicious anemia.

 **Monitor the WBC count and differential closely in clients receiving chemotherapy because of the risk for neutropenia.**

## **XI. Hepatitis Testing**

### **A. Description**

1. Tests include radioimmunoassay, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), and microparticle enzyme immunoassay.
2. Serological tests for specific hepatitis virus markers assist in defining the specific type of hepatitis.

### **B. Values**

1. The presence of immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibody to hepatitis A virus and the presence of total antibody (IgG and IgM) to hepatitis A virus suggests recent or current hepatitis A virus infection.
2. Detection of hepatitis B core antigen (HBcAg), envelope antigen (HBeAg), and surface antigen (HBsAg), or their corresponding antibodies, constitutes hepatitis B assessment.
3. Hepatitis C is confirmed by the presence of antibodies to hepatitis C virus.
4. Serological hepatitis D virus determination is made by detection of the hepatitis D

antigen (HDAg) early in the course of the infection and by detection of anti-hepatitis D virus antibody in the later disease stages.

5. Specific serological tests for hepatitis E virus include detection of IgM and IgG antibodies to hepatitis E.

C. Nursing consideration: If the radioimmunoassay technique is being used, the injection of radionuclides within 1 week before the **blood** test is performed may cause falsely elevated results. ▲

## **XII. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Testing** ▲

### **A. Description**

1. Testing detects HIV, which is the cause of AIDS.
2. Common tests used to determine the presence of antibodies to HIV include ELISA, Western blot, and immunofluorescence assay (IFA).
3. A single reactive ELISA test by itself cannot be used to diagnose HIV and should be repeated in duplicate with the same blood sample; if the result is repeatedly reactive, follow-up tests using Western blot or IFA should be performed.
4. A positive Western blot or IFA result is considered confirmatory for HIV.
5. A positive ELISA result that fails to be confirmed by Western blot or IFA should not be considered negative, and repeat testing should take place in 3 to 6 months.

### **B. CD4<sup>+</sup> T-cell counts**

1. Monitors the progression of HIV
2. As the disease progresses, usually the number of CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells decreases, with a

resultant decrease in immunity.

3. The normal CD4<sup>+</sup> T-cell count is between 500 and 1600 cells/L.
4. In general, the immune system remains healthy with CD4<sup>+</sup> T-cell counts higher than 500 cells/L.
5. Immune system problems occur when the CD4<sup>+</sup> T-cell count is between 200 and 499 cells/L.
6. Severe immune system problems occur when the CD4<sup>+</sup> T-cell count is lower than 200 cells/L.

#### C. CD4-to-CD8 ratio

1. Monitors progression of disease
2. Normal ratio is approximately 2:1.

D. Viral culture involves placing the infected client's **blood cells** in a culture medium and measuring the amount of reverse transcriptase activity over a specified period of time.

E. Viral load testing measures the presence of HIV viral genetic material (RNA) or another viral protein in the client's blood.

F. The p24 antigen assay quantifies the amount of HIV viral core protein in the client's **serum**.

#### G. Oral testing for HIV

1. Uses a device that is placed against the gum and cheek for 2 minutes
2. Fluid (not saliva) is drawn into an absorbable pad, which, in an HIV-positive individual, contains antibodies.

3. The pad is placed in a solution and a specified observable change is noted if the test result is positive.
4. If the result is positive, a blood test is needed to confirm the results.

#### H. Home test kits for HIV

1. In one at-home test kit, a drop of blood is placed on a test card with a special code number; the card is mailed to a laboratory for testing for HIV antibodies.
2. The individual receives the results by calling a special telephone number and entering the special code number; test results are then given.

#### I. Nursing considerations

1. Maintain issues of confidentiality surrounding HIV and AIDS testing.
2. Follow prescribed state regulations and protocols related to reporting positive test results.

### XIII. Urine Tests (Table 11-6)

**TABLE 11-6 Normal Adult Values: Urine Tests**

Name of Test	Value
Color	Pale yellow
Odor	Specific aromatic odor, similar to ammonia
Turbidity	Clear
pH	4.5-7.8
Specific gravity	1.016 to 1.022
Glucose	< 0.5 g/day
Ketones	None
Protein	None
Bilirubin	None
Casts	None to few
Crystals	None

Bacteria	None or < 1000/mL
Red blood cells	< 3 cells/HPF
White blood cells	≤ 4 cells/HPF
Chloride	110-250 mEq/24 hr
Magnesium	7.3-12.2 mg/dL
Potassium	25-125 mEq/24 hr
Sodium	40-220 mEq/24 hr
Uric acid	250-750 mg/24 hr

*HPF*, High-powered field.

## XIV. Therapeutic Serum Medication Levels (Table 11-7)

**TABLE 11-7 Therapeutic Serum Medication Levels**

Medication	Therapeutic Range
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	10-20 mcg/mL
Carbamazepine (Tegretol)	5-12 mcg/mL
Digoxin (Lanoxin)	0.5-2 ng/mL
Gentamicin	5-10 mcg/mL
Lithium (Lithobid)	0.5-1.2 mEq/L
Magnesium sulfate	4-7 mg/dL
Phenobarbital (Luminal)	10-30 mcg/mL
Phenytoin (Dilantin)	10-20 mcg/mL
Salicylate	100-250 mcg/mL
Theophylline	10-20 mcg/mL
Tobramycin (Nebcin)	5-10 mcg/mL
Valproic acid (Depakene)	50-100 mcg/mL

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The normal ALT level is 10 to 40 units/L. The normal AST level is 10 to 30 units/L. These tests are used to identify hepatocellular disease, injury to the liver, and liver inflammation; and to monitor improvement or worsening of disease. If the

client's levels are elevated, the nurse should collect subjective data about factors that could affect the liver. The nurse should ask the client about consumption of alcohol or hepatotoxic medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol). The nurse should also collect subjective data about signs of infection such as an elevated temperature, which could be an indication of liver inflammation (hepatitis, liver abscess, or other infectious process).

### ***Reference***

Lewis et al (2011), pp. 918, 1081.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

63. A client with atrial fibrillation who is receiving maintenance therapy of warfarin sodium (Coumadin) has a prothrombin time (PT) of 35 seconds. On the basis of the prothrombin time, the nurse anticipates which prescription?
1. Adding a dose of heparin sodium
  2. Holding the next dose of warfarin
  3. Increasing the next dose of warfarin
  4. Administering the next dose of warfarin
64. The nurse checks the laboratory result for a serum digoxin level that was prescribed for a client earlier in the day and notes that the result is 2.4 ng/mL. The nurse should take which **immediate** action?
1. Check the client's last pulse rate.
  2. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
  3. Record the normal value on the client's flow sheet.
  4. Administer the next dose of the medication as scheduled.
65. A client has been admitted to the hospital for urinary tract infection and dehydration. The nurse determines that the client has received adequate volume replacement if the blood urea nitrogen level drops to which value?
1. 3 mg/dL
  2. 15 mg/dL
  3. 29 mg/dL

4. 35 mg/dL

66. A client arrives in the emergency department complaining of chest pain that began 4 hours ago. A troponin T blood specimen is obtained, and the results indicate a level of 0.6 ng/mL. The nurse determines that this result indicates which finding?

1. A normal level
2. A low value that indicates possible gastritis
3. A level that indicates a myocardial infarction
4. A level that indicates the presence of possible angina

67. A client is receiving a continuous intravenous infusion of heparin sodium to treat deep vein thrombosis. The client's activated partial thromboplastin (aPTT) time is 65 seconds. The nurse anticipates that which action is needed?

1. Discontinuing the heparin infusion
2. Increasing the rate of the heparin infusion
3. Decreasing the rate of the heparin infusion
4. Leaving the rate of the heparin infusion as is

68. A client with a history of cardiac disease is due for a morning dose of furosemide (Lasix). Which serum potassium level, if noted in the client's laboratory report, should be reported before administering the dose of furosemide?

1. 3.2 mEq/L

2. 3.8 mEq/L

3. 4.2 mEq/L

4. 4.8 mEq/L

69. Several laboratory tests are prescribed for a client, and the nurse reviews the results of the tests. Which abnormal laboratory test results should the nurse report? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Calcium, 7 mg/dL

2. Magnesium, 1 mg/dL

3. Phosphorus, 3.6 mg/dL

4. Neutrophils, 1000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

5. Serum creatinine, 1 mg/dL

6. White blood cells, 3000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

70. An adult client with cirrhosis has been prescribed a diet with optimal amounts of protein. The nurse evaluates the client's status as being **most** satisfactory if the total protein is which value?

1. 0.4 g/dL

2. 3.7 g/dL

3. 6.4 g/dL

4. 9.8 g/dL

71. A client with diabetes mellitus has a glycosylated hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> level of 9%.  
On the basis of this test result, the nurse plans to teach the client about the need

for which measure?

1. Avoiding infection
2. Taking in adequate fluids
3. Preventing and recognizing hypoglycemia
4. Preventing and recognizing hyperglycemia

72. The nurse is caring for a client with a diagnosis of cancer who is immunosuppressed. The nurse would consider implementing neutropenic precautions if the client's white blood cell count was which value?

1. 2000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>
2. 5800 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>
3. 8400 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>
4. 11,500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

73. A client brought to the emergency department states that he has accidentally been taking two times his prescribed dose of warfarin (Coumadin) for the past week. After noting that the client has no evidence of obvious bleeding, the nurse plans to take which action?

1. Prepare to administer an antidote.
2. Draw a sample for type and crossmatch and transfuse the client.
3. Draw a sample for an activated partial thromboplastin time (aPTT) level.
4. Draw a sample for prothrombin time (PT) and international normalized ratio (INR).

74. The nurse is assigned to a 40-year-old client who has a diagnosis of chronic pancreatitis. The nurse anticipates the client's serum amylase level to be which value?

1. 45 units/L
2. 100 units/L
3. 300 units/L
4. 500 units/L

75. An adult female client has a hemoglobin level of 10.8 g/dL. The nurse interprets that this result is **most likely** caused by which condition noted in the client's history?

1. Dehydration
2. Heart failure
3. Iron deficiency anemia
4. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

76. A client with a history of gastrointestinal bleeding has a platelet count of 300,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. The nurse should take which action after seeing the laboratory results?

1. Report the abnormally low count.
2. Report the abnormally high count.
3. Place the client on bleeding precautions.
4. Place the normal report in the client's medical record.

## ANSWERS

63. 2

**Rationale:** The normal PT is 9.6 to 11.8 seconds (male adult) or 9.5 to 11.3 seconds (female adult). A therapeutic PT level is 1.5 to 2 times higher than the normal level. Because the value of 35 seconds is high (and perhaps near the critical range), the nurse should anticipate that the client would not receive further doses at this time. Therefore the prescriptions noted in the remaining options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a PT of 35 seconds. Recall that the normal PT is 9.6 to 11.8 seconds (male adult) or 9.5 to 11.3 seconds (female adult) and that a therapeutic PT level is 1.5 to 2 times higher than the normal level. Remember that a PT greater than 30 seconds places the client at risk for bleeding; this will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The **normal prothrombin time**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting;

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 865; Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 672.

64. 2

**Rationale:** The normal therapeutic range for digoxin is 0.5 to 2 ng/mL. A level of 2.4 ng/mL exceeds the therapeutic range and indicates toxicity. The nurse should notify the HCP, who may give further prescriptions about

holding further doses of digoxin. The option that indicates to record the normal value on the client's flow sheet is incorrect because the level is not normal. The next dose should not be administered because the serum digoxin level exceeds the therapeutic range. Checking the client's last pulse rate may have limited value in this situation.

Depending on the time that has elapsed since the last assessment, a current assessment of the client's status may be more useful.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediate*. To choose correctly, you must be familiar with the therapeutic range for this medication and note that the level of 2.4 ng/mL is a toxic one. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The immediate nursing interventions if the client has a toxic **digoxin** level

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

Priority Concept:

Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 623.

## 65. 2

**Rationale:** The normal blood urea nitrogen level is 8 to 25 mg/dL. Values of 29 mg/dL and 35 mg/dL reflect continued dehydration. A value of 3 mg/dL reflects a lower than normal value, which may occur with fluid volume overload, among other conditions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, adequate fluid replacement and the normal blood urea nitrogen level. The correct option is the only option that identifies a normal value.

**Review:** The normal **blood urea nitrogen** level

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1115; Pagana, Pagana (2010), p. 533.

### 66. 3

**Rationale:** Troponin is a regulatory protein found in striated muscle. The troponins function together in the contractile apparatus for striated muscle in skeletal muscle and in the myocardium. Increased amounts of troponins are released into the bloodstream when an infarction causes damage to the myocardium. A troponin T value that is higher than 0.1 to 0.2 ng/mL is consistent with a myocardial infarction. A normal troponin I level is lower than 0.6 ng/mL.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the **subject** of the question relates to troponin T. Knowing the normal level and that a level higher than 0.1 to 0.2 ng/mL is consistent with a myocardial infarction will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal **troponin T** and **troponin I** levels

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 780-781.

#### 67. 4

**Rationale:** The normal aPTT varies between 20 and 36 seconds, depending on the type of activator used in testing. The therapeutic dose of heparin for treatment of deep vein thrombosis is to keep the aPTT between 1.5 and 2.5 times normal. This means that the client's value should not be less than 30 seconds or greater than 90 seconds. Thus the client's aPTT is within the therapeutic range and the dose should remain unchanged.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the expected aPTT for a client receiving a heparin sodium infusion. Remember that the normal range is 20 to 36 seconds and that the aPTT should be between 1.5 and 2.5 times normal when the client is receiving heparin therapy. Simple multiplication of 1.5 and 2.5 by 20 and 30 will yield a range of 30 to 90 seconds. This client's value is 65 seconds.

**Review:** The **aPTT level** and the expected level if the client is receiving **heparin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**References:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 702; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 249.

#### 68. 1

**Rationale:** The normal serum potassium level in the adult is 3.5 to 5.0 mEq/L. The correct option is the only value that falls below the therapeutic range. Administering furosemide to a client with a low potassium level and a history

of cardiac problems could precipitate ventricular dysrhythmias. The remaining options are within the normal range.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject** of the question, the level that should be reported. This indicates that you are looking for an abnormal level. Remember, the normal serum potassium level in the adult is 3.5 to 5.0 mEq/L.

This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The normal **serum potassium** level

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**References:** Lewis et al (2013), p. 314; Pagana, Pagana (2010), p. 421.

❖ **69. 1, 2, 4, 6**

**Rationale:** The normal values include the following: calcium, 8.6 to 10 mg/dL; magnesium, 1.6 to 2.6 mg/dL; phosphorus, 2.7 to 4.5 mg/dL; neutrophils, 1800 to 7800 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>; serum creatinine, 0.6 to 1.3 mg/dL; and white blood cells, 4500 to 11,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. The calcium level noted is low; the magnesium level noted is low; the phosphorus level noted is normal; the neutrophil level noted is low; the serum creatinine level noted is normal; and the white blood cell level is low.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the abnormal laboratory values. Recalling the normal laboratory values for the blood studies identified in the options will assist in answering this question.

**Review:** The normal **laboratory values** if you had difficulty with this question

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Collaboration

**References:** Copstead, Banasik (2009), p. 603; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 249; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1115, 1214.

### 70. 3

**Rationale:** The normal range for total serum protein level in the adult client is 6 to 8 g/dL. The client with cirrhosis often has low total protein levels as a result of inadequate nutrition. Excess protein is not helpful, though, because a function of the liver is to metabolize protein. A diseased liver may not metabolize protein well. The options of 0.4 g/dL and 3.7 g/dL identify low values, and 9.8 g/dL identifies a high protein value.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Recalling the normal total protein level will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Total serum **protein level**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Nutrition

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 918; Pagana, Pagana (2010), p. 441.

### 71. 4

**Rationale:** In the test result for glycosylated hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub>, 7% or less indicates good control, 7% to 8% indicates

fair control, and 8% or higher indicates poor control. This test measures the amount of glucose that has become permanently bound to the red blood cells from circulating glucose. Elevations in the blood glucose level will cause elevations in the amount of glycosylation. Thus the test is useful in identifying clients who have periods of hyperglycemia that are undetected in other ways. Elevations indicate continued need for teaching related to the prevention of hyperglycemic episodes.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a glycosylated hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> level of 9%. Recalling the normal value and that an elevated value indicates hyperglycemia will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Glycosylated hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub>

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1216; Pagana, Pagana (2010), p. 280.

## 72. 1

**Rationale:** The normal white blood cell count ranges from 4500 to 11,000/mm<sup>3</sup>. The client who has a decrease in the number of circulating white blood cells is immunosuppressed. The nurse implements neutropenic precautions when the client's values fall sufficiently below the normal level. The specific value for implementing neutropenic precautions usually is determined by agency policy. The remaining options are normal values.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the need to implement neutropenic precautions. Recalling that the normal white blood cell count is 4500 to 11,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The **normal adult white blood cell differential count**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 865.

### 73. 4

**Rationale:** The next action is to draw a sample for PT and INR level to determine the client's anticoagulation status and risk for bleeding. These results will provide information as to how to best treat this client (e.g., if an antidote such as vitamin K or a blood transfusion is needed). The aPTT monitors the effects of heparin therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a client who has taken an excessive dose of warfarin. Eliminate the option with aPTT first because it is unrelated to warfarin therapy and relates to heparin therapy. Next, eliminate the options indicating to administer an antidote and to transfuse the client because these therapies would not be implemented unless the PT and INR levels were known.

**Review:** Care to the client receiving **warfarin (Coumadin)** therapy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 674, 676-677.

### 74. 3

**Rationale:** The normal serum amylase level is 25 to 151 units/L. With chronic cases of pancreatitis, the rise in serum amylase levels usually does not exceed three times the normal value. In acute pancreatitis, the value may exceed five times the normal value. The options of 45 units/L and 100 units/L are within normal limits. The option of 500 units/L is an extremely elevated level seen in acute pancreatitis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a client with chronic pancreatitis. Recalling the normal amylase level will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The normal serum **amylase** level and the findings in chronic **pancreatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 916; Swearingen (2012), p. 431.

### 75. 3

**Rationale:** The normal hemoglobin level for an adult female client is 12 to 15 g/dL. Iron deficiency anemia can result in lower hemoglobin levels. Dehydration may increase the hemoglobin level by hemoconcentration. Heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease may increase the hemoglobin level as a result of the body's need for more oxygen-carrying capacity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Evaluate each of the options in terms of whether each is likely to raise or lower the hemoglobin level. Also, note the relationship between hemoglobin level in the question and the correct option.

**Review:** The normal **hemoglobin** level

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 513.

## 76.4

**Rationale:** A normal platelet count ranges from 150,000 to 400,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. The nurse should place the report containing the normal laboratory value in the client's medical record. A platelet count of 300,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> is not an elevated count. The count also is not low; therefore bleeding precautions are not needed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a platelet count of 300,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. Remember that options that are **comparable or alike** are not likely to be correct. With this in mind, eliminate options indicating to report the abnormally low count and placing the client on bleeding precautions first. From the remaining options, recalling the normal range for this laboratory test will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The normal **platelet count**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Laboratory Values

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 655-656.



## CHAPTER 12

# Nutrition

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A client has been placed on a fluid restriction due to acute kidney injury. The client complains of thirst and asks what can be done to relieve this discomfort. What measures should the nurse tell the client to take to relieve thirst while adhering to the fluid restriction?

*Answer located on p. 135.*

### I. Nutrients

#### A. Carbohydrates (Box 12-1)

#### BOX 12-1 Food Sources of Carbohydrates

Cellulose

Apples

Beans

Bran

Cabbage

### **Fructose**

Fruits

Honey

### **Glucose**

Carrots

Corn

Dates

Grapes

Oranges

### **Lactose**

Milk

### **Starch**

Barley

Beets, carrots, and peas

Corn

Oats

Potatoes and pasta

Rye

Wheat

## Sucrose

Apricots

Granulated table sugar

Honeydew and cantaloupe

Molasses

Peaches

Peas and corn

Plums

1. Carbohydrates are the preferred source of energy.
2. Sugars, starches, and cellulose provide 4 cal/g.
3. Carbohydrates promote normal fat **metabolism**, spare protein, and enhance lower gastrointestinal function.
4. Major food sources of carbohydrates include milk, grains, fruits, and vegetables.
5. Inadequate carbohydrate intake affects metabolism.

## B. Fats (Box 12-2)

### BOX 12-2 Food Sources of Fats

#### Cholesterol

Animal products

Egg yolks

Liver and organ meats

Shellfish

### **Monounsaturated Fats**

Duck and goose

Eggs

Olive and peanut oils

### **Polyunsaturated Fats**

Corn oil

Safflower oil

Sunflower oil

### **Saturated Fats**

Beef

Butter

Hard yellow cheeses

Luncheon meats

### **Trans Fats**

Cookies, cakes, candy

Chips and crackers

Fried foods

Frozen pies, pot pies, waffles, pizza

Margarine

Packaged cake mixes and other mixes

Soups

1. Fats provide a concentrated source and a stored form of energy.
2. Fats protect internal organs and maintain body temperature.
3. Fats enhance absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins.
4. Fats provide 9 cal/g.
5. Inadequate intake of essential fatty acids leads to clinical manifestations of sensitivity to cold, skin lesions, increased risk of infection, and amenorrhea in women. ▲
6. Diets high in fat can lead to obesity and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers. ▲

### C. Proteins (Box 12-3)

#### **BOX 12-3** Food Sources of Protein

Bread and cereal products

Dairy products

Dried beans

Eggs

Meats, fish, and poultry

1. Amino acids, which make up proteins, are critical to all aspects of growth and

development of body tissues, and provide 4 cal/g.

2. Proteins build and repair body tissues, regulate fluid balance, maintain acid-base balance, produce antibodies, provide energy, and produce enzymes and hormones.
3. Essential amino acids are required in the diet because the body cannot manufacture them. ▲
4. Complete proteins contain all essential amino acids; incomplete proteins lack some of the essential fatty acids. ▲
5. Inadequate protein can cause protein energy **malnutrition** and severe wasting of fat and muscle tissue.

#### D. Vitamins (Box 12-4)

### BOX 12-4 Food Sources of Vitamins

#### Water-Soluble Vitamins

Folic acid: Green leafy vegetables; liver, beef, and fish; legumes; grapefruit and oranges

Niacin: Meats, poultry, fish, beans, peanuts, grains

Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (thiamine): Pork and nuts, whole-grain cereals, and legumes

Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> (riboflavin): Milk, lean meats, fish, grains

Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (pyridoxine): Yeast, corn, meat, poultry, fish

Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> (cobalamin): Meat, liver

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid): Citrus fruits, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage

## Fat-Soluble Vitamins

Vitamin A: Liver, egg yolk, whole milk, green or orange vegetables, fruits

Vitamin D: Fortified milk, fish oils, cereals

Vitamin E: Vegetable oils; green leafy vegetables; cereals; apricots, apples, and peaches

Vitamin K: Green leafy vegetables; cauliflower and cabbage

1. Vitamins facilitate metabolism of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates and act as catalysts for metabolic functions.
2. Vitamins promote life and growth processes, and maintain and regulate body functions.
3. Fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K can be stored in the body, so an excess can cause toxicity. 🟩
4. The B vitamins and vitamin C are water-soluble vitamins, are not stored in the body, and can be excreted in the urine.

## E. Minerals (Box 12-5)

### BOX 12-5 Food Sources of Minerals

#### Calcium

Broccoli

Carrots

Cheese

Collard greens

Green beans

Milk

Rhubarb

Spinach

Tofu

Yogurt

### **Chloride**

Salt

### **Iron**

Breads and cereals

Dark green vegetables

Dried fruits

Egg yolk

Legumes

Liver

Meats

### **Magnesium**

Avocado

Canned white tuna

Cauliflower

Cooked rolled oats

Green leafy vegetables

Milk

Peanut butter

Peas

Pork, beef, chicken

Potatoes

Raisins

Yogurt

### **Phosphorus**

Fish

Nuts

Organ meats

Pork, beef, chicken

Whole-grain breads and cereals

### **Potassium**

Avocado

Bananas

Cantaloupe

Carrots

Fish

Mushrooms

Oranges

Pork, beef, veal

Potatoes

Raisins

Spinach

Strawberries

Tomatoes

### **Sodium**

American cheese

Bacon

Butter

Canned food

Cottage cheese

Cured pork

Hot dogs

Ketchup

Lunch meat

Milk

Mustard

Processed food

Snack food

Soy sauce

Table salt

White and whole-wheat bread

### Zinc

Eggs

Leafy vegetables

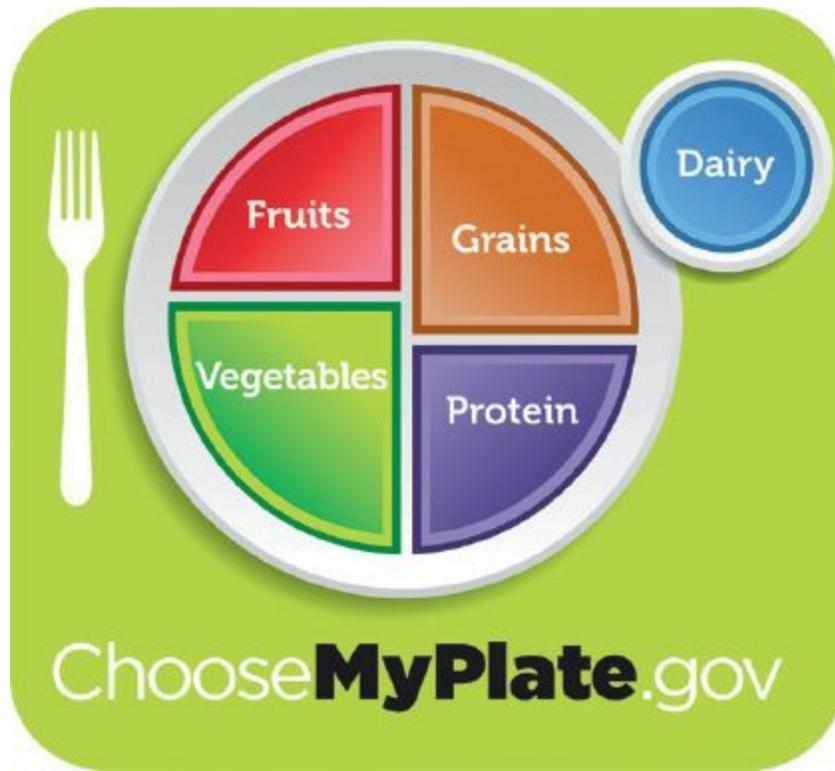
Meats

Protein-rich foods

1. Minerals are components of hormones, cells, tissues, and bones.
2. Minerals act as catalysts for chemical reactions and enhancers of cell function.
3. Almost all foods contain some form of minerals.
4. A deficiency of minerals can develop in chronically ill or hospitalized clients.
5. Electrolytes play a major role in osmolality and body water regulation, acid-base balance, enzyme reactions, and neuromuscular activity (see [Chapter 9](#) for additional information regarding electrolytes).

 Always assess the client's ability to eat and swallow and promote independence in eating as much as is possible.

## II. MyPlate (Fig. 12-1)



**FIGURE 12-1** MyPlate. (From U.S. Department of Agriculture. Available at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>.)

- A. Provides a description of a balanced diet that includes grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and protein foods (refer to: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>)
- B. A nutritionist should be consulted for individualized dietary recommendations.
- C. Guidelines
  1. Avoid eating oversized portions of foods.
  2. Fill half of the plate with fruits and vegetables.
  3. Vary the type of vegetables and fruits eaten.
  4. Select at least half of the grains as whole grains.
  5. Ensure that foods from the dairy group are high in **calcium**.
  6. Drink milk that is fat-free or low fat (1%).

7. Eat protein foods that are lean.
8. Select fresh foods over frozen or canned foods.
9. Drink water rather than liquids that contain sugar

 Always consider the client's cultural and personal choices when planning nutritional intake.

### III. Therapeutic Diets

#### A. Clear liquid diet

##### 1. Indications

- a. Clear liquid diet provides fluids and some electrolytes to prevent dehydration.
- b. Clear liquid diet is used as an initial feeding after complete bowel rest.
- c. Clear liquid diet is used initially to feed a malnourished person or a person who has not had any oral intake for some time.
- d. Clear liquid diet is used for bowel preparation for surgery or tests, as well as postoperatively and in clients with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- e. Clear liquid diet is used in gastroenteritis.

##### 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Clear liquid diet is deficient in energy (calories) and many **nutrients**.
- b. Clear liquid diet is easily digested and absorbed.
- c. Minimal residue is left in the gastrointestinal tract.
- d. Clients may find a clear liquid diet unappetizing and boring.
- e. As a transition diet, clear liquids are intended for short-term use.

- f. Clear liquids and foods that are relatively transparent to light and are liquid at body temperature are considered “clear liquids,” such as water, bouillon, clear broth, carbonated beverages, gelatin, hard candy, lemonade, ice pops, and regular or decaffeinated coffee or tea. ▲
- g. By limiting caffeine intake, upset stomach and sleeplessness may be prevented.
- h. The client may consume salt and sugar.
- i. Dairy products and fruit juices with pulp are not clear liquids.

▲ Monitor the client’s hydration status by assessing intake and output, weight, monitoring for edema, and monitoring for signs of dehydration.

## **B. Full liquid diet**

1. Indication: May be used as a transition diet after clear liquids following surgery or for clients who have difficulty chewing, swallowing, or tolerating solid foods
2. Nursing considerations
  - a. A full liquid diet is nutritionally deficient in energy (calories) and many nutrients.
  - b. The diet includes clear and opaque liquid foods, and those that are liquid at body temperature.
  - c. Foods include all clear liquids and items such as plain ice cream, sherbet, breakfast drinks, milk, pudding and custard, soups that are strained, refined cooked cereals, fruit juices, and strained vegetable juices. ▲
  - d. Use of a complete nutritional liquid supplement is often necessary to meet

nutrient needs for clients on a full liquid diet for more than 3 days.

 Provide nutritional supplements such as those high in protein, as prescribed, for the client on a liquid diet.

## C. Mechanical diet

### 1. Indications

- a. Provides foods that have been mechanically altered in texture to require minimal chewing
- b. Used for clients who have difficulty chewing but can tolerate more variety in texture than a liquid diet offers
- c. Used for clients who have dental problems, surgery of the head or neck, or dysphagia (requires swallowing evaluation and may require thickened liquids if the client has swallowing difficulties)

### 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Degree of texture modification depends on individual need, including pureed, mashed, ground, or chopped.
- b. Foods to be avoided in mechanically altered diets include nuts; dried fruits; raw fruits and vegetables; fried foods; tough, smoked, or salted meats; and foods with coarse textures. 

## D. Soft diet

### 1. Indications

- a. Used for clients who have difficulty chewing or swallowing
- b. Used for clients who have ulcerations of the mouth or gums, oral surgery,

broken jaw, plastic surgery of the head or neck, or dysphagia, or for the client who has had a stroke

## 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Clients with mouth sores should be served foods at cooler temperatures.
- b. Clients who have difficulty chewing and swallowing because of dry mouth can increase salivary flow by sucking on sour candy.
- c. Encourage the client to eat a variety of foods.
- d. Provide plenty of fluids with meals to ease chewing and swallowing of foods.
- e. Drinking fluids through a straw may be easier than drinking from a cup or glass.
- f. All foods and seasonings are permitted; however, liquid, chopped, or pureed foods or regular foods with a soft consistency are tolerated best.
- g. Foods that contain nuts or seeds, which easily can become trapped in the mouth and cause discomfort, should be avoided. 🟢
- h. Raw fruits and vegetables, fried foods, and whole grains should be avoided.

 Consider the client's disease or illness and how it may impact on nutritional status.

## E. Low-residue, low-fiber diet

### 1. Indications

- a. Supplies foods that are least likely to form an obstruction when the intestinal tract is narrowed by inflammation or scarring or when gastrointestinal motility is slowed

- b.** Used for inflammatory bowel disease, partial obstructions of the intestinal tract, gastroenteritis, diarrhea, or other gastrointestinal disorders

## 2. Nursing considerations ▲

- a.** Foods that are low in residue include white bread, refined cooked cereals, cooked potatoes without skins, white rice, and refined pasta.
- b.** Foods to limit or avoid are raw fruits (except bananas), vegetables, nuts and seeds, plant fiber, and whole grains.
- c.** Dairy products should be limited to two servings a day.

## F. High-residue, high-fiber diet

- 1.** Indication: Used for constipation, irritable bowel syndrome when the primary symptom is alternating constipation and diarrhea, and asymptomatic diverticular disease
- 2.** Nursing considerations
  - a.** High-residue diet provides 20 to 35 g of dietary fiber daily.
  - b.** Volume and weight are added to the stool, speeding the movement of undigested materials through the intestine.
  - c.** High-residue foods are fruits and vegetables and whole-grain products. ▲
  - d.** Increase fiber gradually and provide adequate fluids to reduce possible undesirable side effects such as abdominal cramps, bloating, diarrhea, and dehydration.
  - e.** Gas-forming foods should be limited ([Box 12-6](#)).

Apples

Artichokes

Barley

Beans

Bran

Broccoli

Brussels sprouts

Cabbage

Celery

Cherries

Coconuts

Eggplant

Figs

Honey

Melons

Milk

Molasses

Nuts

Onions

Radishes

Soybeans

Wheat

Yeast

**G. Cardiac diet** ([Box 12-7](#); and see [Box 12-2](#))

**BOX 12-7** Sodium-Free Spices and Flavorings

Allspice

Almond extract

Bay leaves

Caraway seeds

Cinnamon

Curry powder

Garlic powder or garlic

Ginger

Lemon extract

Maple extract

Marjoram

Mustard powder

Nutmeg

**1. Indications**

- a.** Indicated for atherosclerosis, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, hypertension,

myocardial infarction, nephrotic syndrome, and renal failure

**b.** Reduces the risk of heart disease

**2.** Nursing consideration: Restricts total amounts of fat, including saturated, trans, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated; cholesterol; and **sodium** ▲

## **H.** Fat-restricted diet

### **1.** Indications

**a.** Used to reduce symptoms of abdominal pain, steatorrhea, flatulence, and diarrhea associated with high intakes of dietary fat, and to decrease nutrient losses caused by ingestion of dietary fat in individuals with malabsorption disorders

**b.** Used for clients with malabsorption disorders, pancreatitis, gallbladder disease, and gastroesophageal reflux

### **2.** Nursing considerations

**a.** Restrict total amount of fat, including saturated, trans, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated. ▲

**b.** Clients with malabsorption may also have difficulty tolerating fiber and lactose.

**c.** Vitamin and mineral deficiencies may occur in clients with diarrhea or steatorrhea.

**d.** A fecal fat test indicates fat malabsorption with excretion of more than 6 to 8 g of fat (or more than 10% of fat consumed) per day during the 3 days of specimen collection.

## **I.** High-calorie, high-protein diet

1. Indication: Used for severe stress, burns, wound healing, cancer, human immunodeficiency virus, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, respiratory failure, or any other type of debilitating disease

2. Nursing considerations 

- a. Encourage nutrient-dense, high-calorie, high-protein foods such as whole milk and milk products, peanut butter, nuts and seeds, beef, chicken, fish, pork, and eggs.
- b. Some high-calorie foods include sugar, cream, gravy, oil, butter, mayonnaise, dried fruit, avocado, and honey.
- c. Encourage snacks between meals, such as milkshakes, instant breakfasts, and nutritional supplements.

 Calorie counts assist in determining the client's total nutritional intake and can identify a deficit or excess intake.

**J. Carbohydrate-consistent diet**

1. Indication: Used for clients with diabetes mellitus, hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia, and obesity

2. Nursing considerations 

- a. The Exchange System for Meal Planning, developed by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the American Diabetes Association, is a food guide that may be recommended.

- b. The Exchange System groups foods according to the amounts of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins they contain.
- c. Major food groups include the carbohydrate, meat and meat substitute, and fat groups.
- d. The MyPlate diet may also be recommended.

**K. Sodium-restricted diet (see [Box 12-7](#))**

1. Indication: Used for hypertension, heart failure, renal disease, cardiac disease, and liver disease
2. Nursing considerations 
  - a. Individualized; can include 4 g of sodium daily (no-added salt diet), 2 to 3 g of sodium daily (moderate restriction), 1 g of sodium daily (strict restriction), or 500 mg of sodium daily (severe restriction and seldom prescribed)
  - b. Encourage intake of fresh foods, rather than processed foods, which contain higher amounts of sodium.
  - c. Canned, frozen, instant, smoked, pickled, and boxed foods usually contain higher amounts of sodium. Lunch meats, soy sauce, salad dressings, fast foods, soups, and snacks such as potato chips and pretzels also contain large amounts of sodium.
  - d. Certain medications contain significant amounts of sodium.
  - e. Salt substitutes may be used to improve palatability; most salt substitutes contain large amounts of **potassium** and should not be used by clients with renal disease.

## **L. Protein-restricted diet**

**1. Indication:** Used for renal disease and liver disease

**2. Nursing considerations**

- a.** Provide enough protein to maintain nutritional status but not an amount that will allow the buildup of waste products from protein metabolism (40 to 60 g of protein daily).
- b.** The less protein allowed, the more important it becomes that all protein in the diet be of high biological value (contain all essential amino acids in recommended proportions). ▲
- c.** An adequate total energy intake from foods is critical for clients on protein-restricted diets (protein will be used for energy, rather than for protein synthesis).
- d.** Special low-protein products, such as pastas, bread, cookies, wafers, and gelatin made with wheat starch, can improve energy intake and add variety to the diet.
- e.** Carbohydrates in powdered or liquid forms can provide additional energy.
- f.** Vegetables and fruits contain some protein and, for very low-protein diets, these foods must be calculated into the diet.
- g.** Foods are limited from the milk, meat, bread, and starch groups.

**M. Gluten-free Diet:** See [Chapter 40](#) for information on this diet.

**N. Renal diet** (see [Boxes 12-3](#) and [12-5](#))

**1. Indication:** Used for the client with acute kidney injury or chronic kidney disease

and those requiring hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis

## 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Controlled amounts of protein, sodium, **phosphorus**, calcium, potassium, and fluids may be prescribed; may also need modification in fiber, cholesterol, and fat based on individual requirements
- b. Most clients receiving dialysis need to restrict fluids ([Box 12-8](#)).

### **BOX 12-8** Measures to Relieve Thirst

- Chew gum or suck hard candy.
- Freeze fluids so they take longer to consume.
- Add lemon juice to water to make it more refreshing.
- Gargle with refrigerated mouthwash.

 An initial assessment includes identifying allergies and food and medication interactions.

## O. Potassium-modified diet (see [Box 12-5](#))

### 1 Indications

- a. Low-potassium diet is indicated for hyperkalemia, which may be caused by impaired renal function, hypoaldosteronism, Addison's disease, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor medications, immunosuppressive medications, potassium-sparing diuretics, and chronic hyperkalemia.
- b. High-potassium diet is indicated for hypokalemia, which may be caused by

renal tubular acidosis, gastrointestinal losses (diarrhea, vomiting), intracellular shifts, potassium-wasting diuretics, antibiotics, mineralocorticoid or glucocorticoid excess resulting from primary or secondary aldosteronism, Cushing's syndrome, or exogenous corticosteroid use.

## 2. Nursing considerations ▲

- a. Foods that are low in potassium include applesauce, green beans, cabbage, lettuce, peppers, grapes, blueberries, cooked summer squash, cooked turnip greens, pineapple, and raspberries.
- b. [Box 12-5](#) lists foods that are high in potassium.

## P. High-calcium diet

1. Indication: Calcium is needed during bone growth and in adulthood to prevent osteoporosis and to facilitate vascular contraction, vasodilation, muscle contraction, and nerve transmission.

## 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Primary dietary sources of calcium are dairy products (see [Box 9-5](#) for food items high in calcium).
- b. Lactose-intolerant clients should incorporate nondairy sources of calcium into their diet regularly. ▲

## Q. Low-purine diet

1. Indication: Used for gout, kidney stones, and elevated uric acid levels

## 2. Nursing considerations

- a. Purine is a precursor for uric acid, which forms stones and crystals.

- b. Foods to restrict include anchovies, herring, mackerel, sardines, scallops, organ meats, gravies, meat extracts, wild game, goose, and sweetbreads. ▲

## R. High-iron diet

1. Indication: Used for clients with anemia
2. Nursing considerations
  - a. The high-iron diet replaces iron deficit from inadequate intake or loss.
  - b. The diet includes organ meats, meat, egg yolks, whole-wheat products, dark green leafy vegetables, dried fruit, and legumes. ▲

S. Miscellaneous diets: See [Boxes 9-2, 9-3, 9-6, and 9-7](#), for foods high in sodium, potassium, **magnesium**, and phosphorus, respectively.

## IV. Vegetarian and Flexitarian (Semivegetarian) Diets

### A. Types ([Box 12-9](#))

#### **BOX 12-9** Types of Vegetarian and Semivegetarian Diets

##### **Pescatarian**

Abstains from eating all meat and animal flesh with the exception of fish

##### **Flexitarian/Semivegetarian**

Consumes mostly a vegetarian diet, but occasionally eats meat

##### **Vegetarian (Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian)**

Does not consume beef, pork, poultry, fish, shellfish, or animal flesh of any kind, but does eat eggs and dairy products

A lacto-vegetarian does not eat eggs, but does eat dairy products.

An ovo-vegetarian does not eat meat or dairy products but does eat eggs.

## **Vegan**

Does not consume meat of any kind and also does not eat eggs, dairy products, or processed foods containing these or other animal-derived ingredients such as gelatin

## **Raw Vegan/Raw Food Diet**

Consumes unprocessed vegan foods that have not been heated above 115 ° F (46 ° C)

## **Macrobiotic**

Consumes unprocessed vegan foods, such as whole grains and fruits and vegetables, and occasionally consumes fish; also consumes Asian vegetables, such as daikon, and sea vegetables, such as seaweed

## **B. Nursing considerations**

1. Ensure that the client eats a sufficient amount of varied foods to meet nutrient and energy needs. ▲
2. Clients should be educated about consuming complementary proteins over the course of each day to ensure that all essential amino acids are provided.
3. Potential deficiencies in vegetarian diets include energy, protein, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, zinc, iron, **calcium**, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamin D (if limited exposure to sunlight).

4. To enhance absorption of iron, vegetarians should consume a good source of iron and vitamin C with each meal.
5. Foods commonly eaten include tofu, tempeh, soy milk and soy products, meat analogues, legumes, nuts and seeds, sprouts, and a variety of fruits and vegetables.
6. Soy protein is considered equivalent in quality to animal protein.

 Body mass index (BMI) can be calculated by dividing the client's weight in kilograms by height in meters squared. For example, a client who weighs 75 kg (165 pounds) and is 1.8 m (5 feet 9 inches) tall has a BMI of 23.15 (75 divided by  $1.8^2 = 23.15$ ) (Perry et al, 2009, p. 1098).

## V. Enteral Nutrition

A. Description: Provides liquefied foods into the gastrointestinal tract via a tube

### B. Indications

1. When the gastrointestinal tract is functional but oral intake is not meeting estimated nutrient needs
2. Used for clients with swallowing problems, burns, major trauma, liver or other organ failure, or severe **malnutrition**

### C. Nursing considerations

1. Clients with lactose intolerance need to be placed on lactose-free formulas. 
2. See [Chapter 21](#) for information regarding the administration of gastrointestinal tube feedings and associated complications.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The client with acute kidney injury may be placed on fluid restriction because of decreased renal function and glomerular filtration rate, resulting in fluid volume excess. To allow the kidneys to rest, decreased fluid consumption may be indicated. When a client is placed on this restriction, increased thirst may be a problem for them. The nurse should instruct the client in measures to relieve thirst in order to promote adherence to the fluid restriction. These measures include chewing gum or sucking hard candy, freezing fluids so they take longer to consume, adding lemon juice to water to make it more refreshing, and gargling with refrigerated mouthwash.

### ***References***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 175; Nix (2009), p. 445.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

77. The nurse is teaching a client who has iron deficiency anemia about foods she should include in her diet. The nurse determines that the client understands the dietary modifications if she selects which items from her menu?
1. Nuts and milk
  2. Coffee and tea
  3. Cooked rolled oats and fish
  4. Oranges and dark green leafy vegetables
78. The nurse is planning to teach a client with malabsorption syndrome about the necessity of following a low-fat diet. The nurse develops a list of high-fat foods to avoid and should include which food item on the list?
1. Oranges
  2. Broccoli
  3. Cream cheese
  4. Broiled haddock
79. The nurse instructs a client with chronic kidney disease who is receiving hemodialysis about dietary modifications. The nurse determines that the client understands these dietary modifications if the client selects which items from the dietary menu?
1. Cream of wheat, blueberries, coffee
  2. Sausage and eggs, banana, orange juice

3. Bacon, cantaloupe melon, tomato juice
4. Cured pork, grits, strawberries, orange juice

80. The nurse is conducting a dietary assessment on a client who is on a vegan diet.

The nurse provides dietary teaching and should focus on foods high in which vitamin that may be lacking in a vegan diet?

1. Vitamin A
2. Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>
3. Vitamin C
4. Vitamin E

81. A client with hypertension has been told to maintain a diet low in sodium. The nurse who is teaching this client about foods that are allowed should include which food item in a list provided to the client?

1. Tomato soup
2. Boiled shrimp
3. Instant oatmeal
4. Summer squash

82. A postoperative client has been placed on a clear liquid diet. The nurse should provide the client with which item(s) that are allowed to be consumed on this diet? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Broth
2. Coffee

3. Gelatin
4. Pudding
5. Vegetable juice
6. Pureed vegetables

**83.** The nurse is instructing a client with hypertension on the importance of choosing foods low in sodium. The nurse should teach the client to limit intake of which food?

1. Apples
2. Bananas
3. Smoked sausage
4. Steamed vegetables

**84.** A client who is recovering from surgery has been advanced from a clear liquid diet to a full liquid diet. The client is looking forward to the diet change because he has been “bored” with the clear liquid diet. The nurse should offer which full liquid item to the client?

1. Tea
2. Gelatin
3. Custard
4. Ice pop

**85.** A client is recovering from abdominal surgery and has a large abdominal wound. The nurse should encourage the client to eat which food item that is naturally high

in vitamin C to promote wound healing?

1. Milk
2. Oranges
3. Bananas
4. Chicken

86. The nurse is caring for a client with cirrhosis of the liver. To minimize the effects of the disorder, the nurse teaches the client about foods that are high in thiamine. The nurse determines that the client has the **best** understanding of the dietary measures to follow if the client states an intention to increase the intake of which food?

1. Pork
2. Milk
3. Chicken
4. Broccoli

## ANSWERS

77. 4

**Rationale:** Dark green leafy vegetables are a good source of iron and oranges are a good source of vitamin C, which enhances iron absorption. All other options are not food sources that are high in iron and vitamin C.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, foods high in iron. Use knowledge of foods high in iron and vitamin C and recall that vitamin C enhances iron absorption. Remember that green leafy vegetables are high in iron and

oranges are high in vitamin C.

**Review:** Food sources of **vitamin C** and **iron**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Schlenker, Roth (2011), pp. 151-153.

### 78. 3

**Rationale:** Fruits and vegetables tend to be lower in fat because they do not come from animal sources. Broiled haddock is also naturally lower in fat. Cream cheese is a high-fat food.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, the high-fat food. Oranges and broccoli (fruit and vegetable) can be eliminated first. From the remaining options, remember that cheese is high in fat content.

**Review:** **High-fat foods**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Schlenker, Roth (2011), p. 67.

### 79. 1

**Rationale:** The diet for a client with chronic kidney disease who is receiving hemodialysis should include controlled amounts of sodium, phosphorus, calcium, potassium, and fluids, which is indicated in the correct option. The food items in the remaining options are high in sodium, phosphorus, or potassium.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, dietary modification for a client with chronic kidney disease. Think about the pathophysiology of this disorder to recall that sodium needs to be limited. Noting the items sausage, bacon, and cured pork will assist in eliminating these options.

**Review:** **Dietary guidelines** for the client with **chronic kidney disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1617; Lewis et al (2011), p. 809.

## 80. 2

**Rationale:** Vegans do not consume any animal products. Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> is found in animal products and therefore would most likely be lacking in a vegan diet. Vitamins A, C, and E are found in fresh fruits and vegetables, which are consumed in a vegan diet.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a vegan diet. Recalling the food items eaten and restricted in this diet will direct you to the correct option. Remember that vegans do not consume any animal products.

**Review:** The **vegan diet** and sources of **vitamins**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Nutrition

**Reference:** Peckenpaugh (2010), pp. 11-12.

#### 81. 4

**Rationale:** Foods that are lower in sodium include fruits and vegetables (summer squash), because they do not contain physiological saline. Highly processed or refined foods (tomato soup, instant oatmeal) are higher in sodium unless their food labels specifically state “low sodium.” Saltwater fish and shellfish are high in sodium.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, foods low in sodium. Begin to answer this question by eliminating boiled shrimp, recalling that saltwater fish and shellfish are high in sodium. Next, eliminate tomato soup and instant oatmeal because they are processed foods.

**Review:** Foods high in **sodium**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Nutrition

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 746, 809.

#### ❖ 82. 1, 2, 3

**Rationale:** A clear liquid diet consists of foods that are relatively transparent to light and are clear and liquid at

room and body temperature. These foods include items such as water, bouillon, clear broth, carbonated beverages, gelatin, hard candy, lemonade, ice pops, and regular or decaffeinated coffee or tea. The incorrect food items are items that are allowed on a full liquid diet.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a clear liquid diet. Recalling that a clear liquid diet consists of foods that are relatively transparent to light and are clear will assist in answering the question.

**Review:** **Clear** and **full liquid diet**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Nutrition

**Reference:** Schlenker, Roth (2011), p. 376.

### 83. 3

**Rationale:** Smoked foods are high in sodium, which is noted in the correct option. The remaining options are fruits and vegetables that are low in sodium.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, the food item that is high in sodium. Remember that smoked foods are high in sodium. Also eliminate options 1, 2, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and are non-processed foods.

**Review:** Food items high in **sodium**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Nutrition

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 181.

**84. 3**

**Rationale:** Full liquid food items include items such as plain ice cream, sherbet, breakfast drinks, milk, pudding and custard, soups that are strained, refined cooked cereals, and strained vegetable juices. A clear liquid diet consists of foods that are relatively transparent. The food items in the incorrect options are clear liquids.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a full liquid item. Remember that a clear liquid diet consists of foods that are relatively transparent. This will assist you in eliminating tea, gelatin, and ice pops; in addition these are **comparable or alike** options.

**Review:** **Clear liquid diet** and **full liquid diet**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Nutrition

**Reference:** Schlenker, Roth (2011), p. 376.

**85. 2**

**Rationale:** Citrus fruits and juices are especially high in vitamin C. Bananas are high in potassium. Meats and dairy products are two food groups that are high in the B vitamins.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, food items naturally high in vitamin C. Recalling that citrus fruits and

juices are high in vitamin C will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Food items high in **vitamin C**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Nutrition; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Peckenpaugh (2010), p. 85.

## 86. 1

**Rationale:** The client with cirrhosis needs to consume foods high in thiamine. Thiamine is present in a variety of foods of plant and animal origin. Pork products are especially rich in this vitamin. Other good food sources include nuts, whole grain cereals, and legumes. Milk contains vitamins A, D, and B<sub>2</sub>. Poultry contains niacin. Broccoli contains vitamins C, E, and K and folic acid.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. This may indicate that more than one option may be a food that contains thiamine. Remembering that pork products are especially rich in thiamine will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Food items high in **thiamine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Nutrition

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1080; Schlenker, Roth (2011), p. 115.



## CHAPTER 13

# Parenteral Nutrition

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A client has a triple-lumen central venous catheter that is being used for the administration of parenteral nutrition, medications, and laboratory draws. The nurse is preparing to administer medication through the catheter, and the port being used for medication administration is sluggish and is not flushing properly. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 144.*

## **I. Parenteral Nutrition (PN)**

### **A. Description**

1. Parenteral nutrition (also termed total parenteral nutrition or TPN) supplies nutrients via the veins.
2. PN supplies carbohydrates in the form of dextrose, fats in an emulsified form, proteins in the form of amino acids, vitamins, minerals, electrolytes, and water.

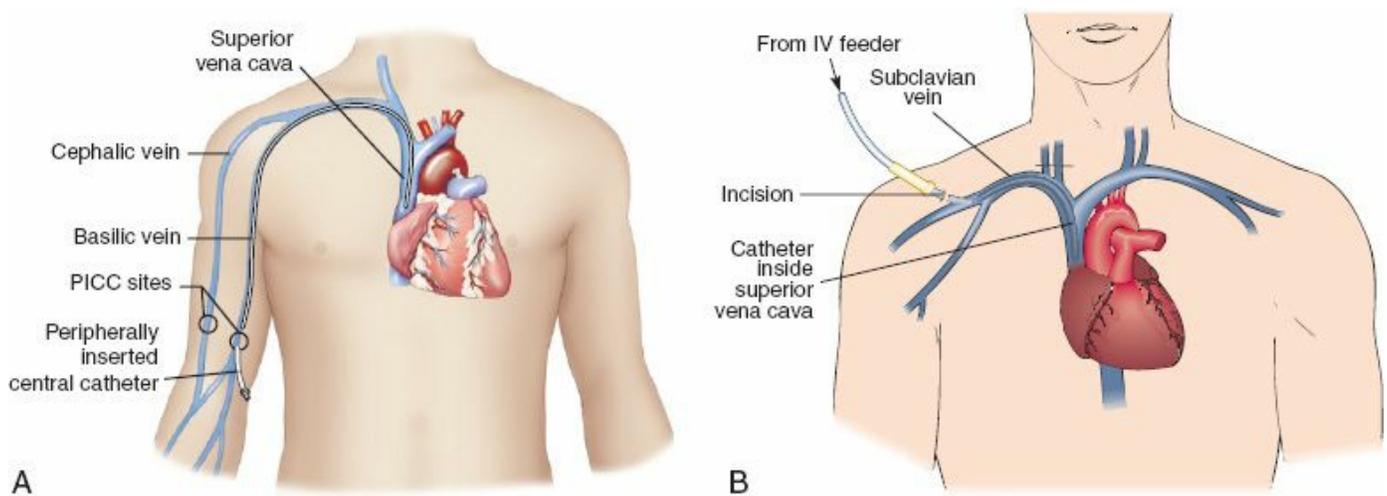
3. PN prevents subcutaneous fat and muscle protein from being catabolized by the body for energy. ▲

## B. Indications

1. Clients with severely dysfunctional or nonfunctional gastrointestinal tracts who are unable to process nutrients may benefit from PN.
2. Clients who can take some oral nutrition, but not enough to meet their nutrient requirements, may benefit from PN.
3. Clients with multiple gastrointestinal surgeries, gastrointestinal trauma, severe intolerance to enteral feedings, or intestinal obstructions, or who need to rest the bowel for healing, may benefit from PN.
4. Clients with severe nutritionally deficient conditions such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, cancer, burn injuries, or **malnutrition**, or clients receiving chemotherapy, may benefit from PN.

⚠ PN is a form of nutrition and is used when there is no other nutritional alternative. Other forms of administering nutrition such as orally or via a gastrointestinal tube are initiated first.

## C. Administration of PN (Fig. 13-1)



**FIGURE 13-1** **A**, Placement of peripherally inserted central catheter through antecubital fossa. **B**, Placement of central venous catheter inserted into subclavian vein. *IV*, Intravenous; *PICC*, peripherally inserted central catheter. (**A**, From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby. **B**, From Christensen BL, Kockrow EO: *Foundations of nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

## 1. Central vein

- a. PN is administered through a central vein when the client requires a larger concentration of carbohydrates (greater than 10% glucose concentration). ▲
- b. The subclavian or internal jugular vein is the insertion site for central access normally used when PN is a short-term intervention (less than 4 weeks).
- c. When PN is anticipated for an extended period (longer than 4 weeks), a more permanent catheter, such as a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) line, a tunneled catheter, or an implanted vascular access device, is used.

## 2. Peripheral vein

- a. PN can be administered through a peripheral vein, typically in the arm through a traditional intravenous catheter, or through a midline catheter, which is placed in an upper arm vein such as the brachial or cephalic vein with the tip ending below the level of the axillary line. ▲
- b. PN administered through a peripheral vein delivers isotonic or mildly hypertonic solutions as compared to the solutions administered through a central vein.

⚠ The delivery of hypertonic solutions into peripheral veins can cause sclerosis, phlebitis, or swelling. Monitor closely for these complications.

## II. Components of Parenteral Nutrition

### A. Carbohydrates

1. The strength of the dextrose solution depends on the client's nutritional needs, the route of administration (central or peripheral), and agency protocols.
2. Carbohydrates typically provide 60% to 70% of calorie (energy) needs.

### B. Amino acids (protein)

1. Concentrations range from 3.5% to 20%; lower concentrations are most commonly used for peripheral vein administration and higher concentrations are most often administered through a central vein.
2. About 15% to 20% of total energy needs should come from protein.

### C. Fat emulsion (lipids) ▲

1. Lipids provide up to 30% of calorie (energy) needs.

2. Lipids provide nonprotein calories and prevent or correct fatty acid deficiency.
3. Lipid solutions are isotonic and therefore can be administered through a peripheral or central vein; the solution may be administered through a separate intravenous (IV) line below the filter of the main IV administration set by a Y-connector or as an admixture to the PN solution (3-in-1 admixture consisting of dextrose, amino acids, and lipids).
4. Most fat emulsions are prepared from soybean or safflower oil, with egg yolk to provide emulsification; the primary components are linoleic, oleic, palmitic, linolenic, and stearic acids.
5. Glucose-intolerant clients or clients with diabetes mellitus may benefit from receiving a larger percentage of their PN from lipids, which helps control blood glucose levels and lower insulin requirements caused by infused dextrose.
6. Examine the bottle for separation of emulsion into layers or fat globules or for the accumulation of froth; if observed, do not use and return the solution to the pharmacy.
7. Additives should not be put into the fat emulsion solution.
8. Follow agency policy regarding the filter size that should be used; usually a 1.2- $\mu\text{m}$  filter or larger should be used because the lipid particles are too large to pass through a 0.22- $\mu\text{m}$  filter.
9. Infuse solution at the flow rate prescribed—usually slowly at 1 mL/minute initially—monitor vital signs every 10 minutes, and observe for adverse reactions for the first 30 minutes of the infusion. If signs of an adverse reaction occur, stop

the infusion and notify the health care provider (HCP) (Box 13-1).

### **BOX 13-1** Signs of an Adverse Reaction to Lipids

- Chest and back pain
- Chills
- Cyanosis
- Diaphoresis
- Dyspnea
- Fever
- Flushing
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Pressure over the eyes
- Thrombophlebitis
- Vertigo

**10.** If no adverse reaction occurs, adjust the flow rate to the prescribed rate.

**11.** Monitor serum lipids 4 hours after discontinuing the infusion.

 **Fat emulsions (lipids) contain egg yolk phospholipids and should not be given to clients with egg allergies.**

#### **D. Vitamins**

**1.** PN solutions usually contain a standard multivitamin preparation to meet most

vitamin needs and prevent deficiencies.

2. Individual vitamin preparations can be added, as needed and as prescribed.

E. Minerals and trace elements: Commercial mineral and trace element preparations are available in various concentrations to promote normal **metabolism**.

F. Electrolytes: Electrolyte requirements for individuals receiving PN therapy vary, depending on body weight, presence of malnutrition or catabolism, degree of electrolyte depletion, changes in organ function, ongoing electrolyte losses, and the disease process.

G. Water: The amount of water needed in a PN solution is determined by electrolyte balance and fluid requirements.

H. Regular insulin: May be added to control the blood glucose level because of the high concentration of glucose in the PN solution. ▲

I. Heparin: May be added to reduce the buildup of a fibrinous clot at the catheter tip. ▲

### **III. Administration and Discontinuation**

A. Types of administration

1. Continuous PN

- a. Infused continuously over 24 hours
- b. Most commonly used in a hospital setting

2. Intermittent PN

- a. In general, 12-hour infusions are usually given at night
- b. Allows client requiring PN on a long-term basis to participate in activities of

daily living during the day without the inconvenience of an IV bag and pump set

c. Monitor glucose levels closely because of the risk of hypoglycemia ▲

**B. Discontinuing PN therapy** ▲

1. Evaluation of nutritional status by a nutritionist is done before PN is discontinued.
2. If discontinuation is prescribed, gradually decrease the flow rate for 1 to 2 hours while increasing oral intake (this assists in preventing hypoglycemia).
3. After removing the IV catheter, change the dressing daily until the insertion site heals.
4. Encourage oral nutrition.
5. Record oral intake, body weight, and laboratory results of serum electrolyte and glucose levels.

▲ **Abrupt discontinuation of a PN solution can result in hypoglycemia. The flow rate should be decreased gradually when the PN is discontinued.**

**IV. Complications (Table 13-1)**

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**TABLE 13-1 Complications of Parenteral Nutrition**

Complication	Possible Cause	Signs or Symptoms	Intervention	Prevention
Air embolism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Catheter system opened or IV tubing disconnected</li> <li>■ Air entry on IV tubing changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Apprehension</li> <li>■ Chest pain</li> <li>■ Dyspnea</li> <li>■ Hypotension</li> <li>■ Loud churning sound heard over pericardium on auscultation</li> <li>■ Rapid and weak pulse</li> <li>■ Respiratory distress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clamp the catheter</li> <li>■ Place the client in a left side-lying position with the head lower than the feet</li> <li>■ Notify the health care provider (HCP)</li> <li>■ Administer oxygen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make sure all catheter connections are secure</li> <li>■ Clamp the catheter when not in use (follow agency protocol for flushing and clamping the catheter)</li> <li>■ Instruct the client in the Valsalva maneuver for tubing and cap changes</li> <li>■ For tubing and cap changes, place the client in the Trendelenburg position (if not contraindicated), with the head turned in the opposite direction of the insertion site; client should hold breath and bear down</li> </ul>
Hyperglycemia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Client receiving solution too quickly</li> <li>■ Not enough insulin</li> <li>■ Infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Restlessness</li> <li>■ Weakness</li> <li>■ Confusion</li> <li>■ Diaphoresis</li> <li>■ Elevated blood glucose level (&gt;200 mg/dL)</li> <li>■ Excessive thirst</li> <li>■ Fatigue</li> <li>■ Kussmaul's respirations</li> <li>■ Coma (when severe)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notify the HCP</li> <li>■ The infusion rate may need to be slowed</li> <li>■ Administer regular insulin as prescribed</li> <li>■ Monitor blood glucose levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assess the client for a history of glucose intolerance</li> <li>■ Assess the client's medication history</li> <li>■ Begin infusion at a slow rate as prescribed</li> <li>■ Monitor blood glucose levels</li> <li>■ Use strict aseptic technique</li> </ul>
Hypervolemia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Excessive fluid administration or administration of fluid too rapidly</li> <li>■ Renal dysfunction</li> <li>■ Heart failure</li> <li>■ Hepatic failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bounding pulse</li> <li>■ Crackles on lung auscultation</li> <li>■ Headache</li> <li>■ Increased blood pressure</li> <li>■ Jugular vein distention</li> <li>■ Weight gain greater than desired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Slow or stop IV infusion</li> <li>■ Restrict fluids</li> <li>■ Administer diuretics</li> <li>■ Use dialysis (in extreme cases)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assess client's history for risk for hypervolemia</li> <li>■ Ensure proper function of the electronic infusion device</li> <li>■ Monitor intake and output</li> <li>■ Monitor weight daily</li> </ul>
Hypoglycemia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PN abruptly discontinued</li> <li>■ Too much insulin being administered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Anxiety</li> <li>■ Diaphoresis</li> <li>■ Hunger</li> <li>■ Low blood glucose level (&lt;70 mg/dL)</li> <li>■ Shakiness</li> <li>■ Weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Administer IV dextrose</li> <li>■ Notify the HCP</li> <li>■ Monitor blood glucose level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gradually decrease PN solution when discontinued</li> <li>■ Infuse 10% dextrose at same rate as the PN to prevent hypoglycemia when the PN solution is discontinued</li> <li>■ Monitor glucose levels when insulin is being given</li> </ul>
Infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Poor aseptic technique</li> <li>■ Catheter contamination</li> <li>■ Contamination of solution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Chills</li> <li>■ Fever</li> <li>■ Elevated white blood cell count</li> <li>■ Redness or drainage at insertion site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notify the HCP</li> <li>■ Remove catheter</li> <li>■ Send catheter tip to the laboratory for culture</li> <li>■ Prepare to obtain blood cultures</li> <li>■ Prepare for antibiotic administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use strict aseptic techniques</li> <li>■ Monitor temperature</li> <li>■ Assess IV site for signs of infection</li> <li>■ Change site dressing, solution, and tubing as specified by agency policy</li> <li>■ Do not disconnect tubing unnecessarily</li> </ul>

Pneumothorax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inexact catheter placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Chest or shoulder pain</li> <li>■ Sudden shortness of breath</li> <li>■ Cyanosis</li> <li>■ Tachycardia</li> <li>■ Absence of breath sounds on affected side</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notify the HCP</li> <li>■ Prepare to obtain a chest x-ray</li> <li>■ Small pneumothorax may resolve</li> <li>■ Larger pneumothorax may require chest tube</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Monitor for signs of pneumothorax</li> <li>■ Obtain a chest x-ray after insertion of the catheter to ensure proper catheter placement</li> <li>■ PN is not initiated until correct catheter placement is verified and the absence of pneumothorax is confirmed</li> </ul>
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*IV*, Intravenous; *PN*, parenteral nutrition.

Adapted from Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.

## A. Description

1. Pneumothorax and air embolism are associated with central line placement; air embolism is also associated with tubing changes.
2. Other complications include infection (catheter-related), hypervolemia, and metabolic alterations such as hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia; these complications are usually caused by the PN solution itself.

## B. Air embolism

1. Air embolism occurs because of the entry of air into the catheter system.
2. Instruct the client in the Valsalva maneuver for IV tubing and cap changes.
3. For tubing and cap changes, place the client in the Trendelenburg position (if not contraindicated) with the head turned in the opposite direction of the insertion site (increases intrathoracic venous pressure); also, ask the client to take a deep breath, hold it, and bear down.
4. Check all catheter connections and secure (use tape per agency protocol) tubing

connections.

5. If an air embolism is suspected, do the following: 
  - a. Clamp the IV catheter.
  - b. Place the client in a left side-lying position with the head lower than the feet (to trap air in right side of the heart).
  - c. Notify the HCP.
  - d. Administer oxygen as prescribed.

### C. Hyperglycemia

1. Hyperglycemia occurs because of the high concentration of dextrose (glucose) in the solution. If the client receives the solution too rapidly, does not receive enough insulin, or contracts an infection, hyperglycemia can occur.
2. Assess the client for a history of glucose intolerance.
3. Assess the client's medication history (cortico-steroids may increase the blood glucose level).
4. Begin infusion at a slow rate (usually 40 to 60 mL/hour) as prescribed.
5. Monitor blood glucose levels every 4 to 6 hours until stable, then check every 24 hours (agency protocol for monitoring blood glucose levels is followed). 
6. Administer regular insulin as prescribed.

### D. Hypervolemia

1. Hypervolemia occurs if the client receives the IV solution too rapidly; the client with cardiac, renal, or hepatic dysfunction is at high risk.
2. PN is always delivered via an electronic infusion device.

3. Never increase the infusion rate to “catch up” if the IV infusion gets behind. ▲
4. Monitor intake and output.
5. Weigh the client daily (ideal weight gain is 1 to 2 lb/week). ▲

#### E. Hypoglycemia

1. Hypoglycemia occurs when the PN is abruptly discontinued or when too much insulin is administered.
2. Monitor the blood glucose level.
3. Gradually decrease the infusion rate when discontinuing PN.
4. When an infusion of hypertonic glucose is stopped, an infusion of 10% dextrose should be instituted and maintained for 1 to 2 hours to prevent hypoglycemia. ▲
5. Assess the blood glucose level 1 hour after discontinuing PN.
6. Prepare for the administration of glucose or IV dextrose if hypoglycemia occurs.

#### F. Infection

1. Infection can occur as a result of poor aseptic technique or via catheter or solution contamination.
2. Use strict aseptic technique. Because the PN solution has a high concentration of glucose, it is a medium for bacterial growth. ▲
3. Monitor temperature. If the client has a fever, suspect sepsis.
4. Assess the IV site for redness, swelling, tenderness, or drainage.
5. Change the PN solution every 12 to 24 hours as prescribed or according to agency protocol.
6. Change the IV tubing every 24 hours or according to agency protocol.

7. Change the dressing at the IV site every 48 hours or according to agency protocol (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

## **PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS**

### **Actions to Take if an Infection Is Suspected at a Central Venous Catheter Site**

1. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
2. Remove the catheter and prepare for possible restart at a different location.
3. Remove the tip of the catheter and send it to the laboratory for culture if prescribed by the HCP.
4. Prepare the client for obtaining blood cultures.
5. Prepare for antibiotic administration.
6. Document the occurrence, the actions taken, and the client's response.

Signs of infection at the catheter site include redness or drainage. The client will also exhibit chills, fever, and an elevated white blood cell count. If the nurse suspects infection, the HCP is notified because of the risk for sepsis. The catheter is removed and the client is prepared for a possible restart at a different location as prescribed. Also, intravenous (IV) antibiotics may be prescribed and an IV site will be needed for administration. If requested the catheter tip may be sent to the laboratory for culture to identify the bacteria present so that the effective antibiotic is prescribed. Blood cultures are also performed to determine the presence of bacteria

in the blood. Antibiotics are not started until blood cultures are obtained; otherwise the results of the cultures may not be accurate. Finally, the nurse documents the occurrence, actions taken, and the client's response.

### **Reference**

Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders, p. 232.

## **G. Pneumothorax**

1. Pneumothorax can occur as a result of inexact catheter placement that results in puncture of the pleural space.
2. After insertion of the catheter, obtain a portable chest x-ray film to confirm correct catheter placement and to detect the presence of a pneumothorax. PN is not initiated until correct catheter placement is verified and the absence of pneumothorax is confirmed. ▲

## **V. Additional Nursing Considerations ▲**

- A. Check the PN solution with the HCP's prescription to ensure that the prescribed components are contained in the solution; some health care agencies require validation of the prescription by two registered nurses).
- B. To prevent infection and solution incompatibility, IV medications and blood are not given through the PN line.

- C. Monitor partial thromboplastin time and prothrombin time for clients receiving anticoagulants.
- D. Monitor electrolyte and albumin levels and liver and renal function studies, as well as any other prescribed laboratory studies.
- E. In severely dehydrated clients, the albumin level may drop initially after initiating PN, because the treatment restores hydration.
- F. With severely malnourished clients, monitor for “refeeding syndrome” (a rapid drop in **potassium**, **magnesium**, and phosphate serum levels).
- G. Abnormal liver function values may indicate intolerance to or an excess of fat emulsion or problems with metabolism with glucose and protein.
- H. Abnormal renal function tests may indicate an excess of amino acids.
- I. PN solutions should be stored under refrigeration and administered within 24 hours from the time they are prepared (remove from refrigerator 0.5 to 1 hour before use).
- J. PN solutions that are cloudy or darkened should not be used and should be returned to the pharmacy.
- K. Additions of substances such as nutrients to PN solutions should be made in the pharmacy and not on the nursing unit.
- L. Consultation with the nutritionist should be done on a regular basis (as prescribed or per agency protocol).

## VI. Home Care Instructions (Box 13-2)

Teach the client and caregiver how to obtain, administer, and maintain parenteral nutrition fluids.

Teach the client and caregiver how to change a sterile dressing.

Obtain a daily weight at the same time of day in the same clothes.

Stress that if a weight gain of more than 3 lb/week is noted, this may indicate excessive fluid intake and should be reported.

Monitor the blood glucose level and report abnormalities immediately.

Teach the client and caregiver about the signs and symptoms of side or adverse effects such as infection, thrombosis, air embolism, and catheter displacement.

Teach the client and caregiver the actions to take if a complication arises and about the importance of reporting complications to the health care provider.

For symptoms of thrombosis, the client should report edema of the arm or at the catheter insertion site, neck pain, and jugular vein distention.

Leaking of fluid from the insertion site or pain or discomfort as the fluids are infused may indicate displacement of the catheter; this must be reported immediately.

Encourage the client and caregiver to contact the health care provider if they have questions about administration or any other questions.

Inform the client and caregiver about the importance of follow-up care.

Teach the client to keep electronic infusion devices fully charged in case of electrical power failure.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Difficulty with flushing the catheter indicates that the catheter is blocked. Possible causes of a blockage include a clamped or kinked catheter, the tip of the catheter against the vein wall, thrombosis, or a precipitate buildup in the lumen. The nurse should not try to force the flushing because this could dislodge a clot or disrupt the integrity of the catheter. If the catheter becomes fully blocked, it may not be usable. The nurse should assess for and alleviate clamping or kinking. The nurse should also instruct the client to change position, raise the arm, and cough. If the blockage is due to a positional issue, this intervention will correct it. The nurse should attempt to flush again to see if the problem has been corrected. If it has not, this difficulty should be reported to the necessary personnel (i.e., health care provider or intravenous [IV] nurse) so that full functionality can be regained. Fluoroscopy may be performed to determine the cause of the blockage and anticoagulant or thrombolytic medications may be instilled into the catheter as prescribed to alleviate blockage.

### ***References***

Baird, Bethel (2011), p. 128; Lewis et al (2011), p. 330.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**87.** A client is being weaned from parenteral nutrition (PN) and is expected to begin taking solid food today. The ongoing solution rate has been 100 mL/hour. The nurse anticipates that which prescription regarding the PN solution will accompany the diet prescription?

1. Discontinue the PN.
2. Decrease PN rate to 50 mL/hour.
3. Start 0.9% normal saline at 25 mL/hour.
4. Continue current infusion rate prescriptions for PN.

**88.** The nurse is preparing to change the parenteral nutrition (PN) solution bag and tubing. The client's central venous line is located in the right subclavian vein. The nurse asks the client to take which **essential** action during the tubing change?

1. Breathe normally.
2. Turn the head to the right.
3. Exhale slowly and evenly.
4. Take a deep breath, hold it, and bear down.

**89.** A client with parenteral nutrition (PN) infusing has disconnected the tubing from the central line catheter. The nurse assesses the client and suspects an air embolism. The nurse should **immediately** place the client in which position?

1. On the left side, with the head lower than the feet

2. On the left side, with the head higher than the feet
3. On the right side, with the head lower than the feet
4. On the right side, with the head higher than the feet

90. Which nursing action is **essential** prior to initiating a new prescription for 500 mL of fat emulsion (lipids) to infuse at 50 mL/hour?

1. Ensure that the client does not have diabetes.
2. Determine whether the client has an allergy to eggs.
3. Add regular insulin to the fat emulsion, using aseptic technique.
4. Contact the health care provider (HCP) to have a central line inserted for fat emulsion infusion.

91. A client is receiving parenteral nutrition (PN). The nurse monitors the client for complications of the therapy and should assess the client for which manifestations of hyperglycemia?

1. Fever, weak pulse, and thirst
2. Nausea, vomiting, and oliguria
3. Sweating, chills, and abdominal pain
4. Weakness, thirst, and increased urine output

92. The nurse is changing the central line dressing of a client receiving parenteral nutrition (PN) and notes that the catheter insertion site appears reddened. The nurse should **next** assess which item?

1. Client's temperature

2. Expiration date on the bag
3. Time of last dressing change
4. Tightness of tubing connections

93. The nurse is preparing to hang fat emulsion (lipids) and notes that fat globules are visible at the top of the solution. The nurse should take which action?

1. Rolls the bottle of solution gently
2. Obtains a different bottle of solution
3. Shakes the bottle of solution vigorously
4. Runs the bottle of solution under warm water

94. A client receiving parenteral nutrition (PN) suddenly develops a fever. The nurse notifies the health care provider (HCP), and the HCP initially prescribes that the solution and tubing be changed. What should the nurse do with the discontinued materials?

1. Discard them in the unit trash.
2. Return them to the hospital pharmacy.
3. Send them to the laboratory for culture.
4. Save them for return to the manufacturer.

95. A client has been discharged to home on parenteral nutrition (PN). With each visit, the home care nurse should assess which parameter **most** closely in monitoring this therapy?

1. Pulse and weight

2. Temperature and weight
3. Pulse and blood pressure
4. Temperature and blood pressure

96. The nurse is caring for a group of adult clients on an acute care medical-surgical nursing unit. The nurse understands that which client would be the **least likely** candidate for parenteral nutrition (PN)?

1. A 66-year-old client with extensive burns
2. A 42-year-old client who has had an open cholecystectomy
3. A 27-year-old client with severe exacerbation of Crohn's disease
4. A 35-year-old client with persistent nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy

97. The nurse is preparing to hang the first bag of parenteral nutrition (PN) solution via the central line of an assigned client. The nurse should obtain which **most essential** piece of equipment before hanging the solution?

1. Urine test strips
2. Blood glucose meter
3. Electronic infusion pump
4. Noninvasive blood pressure monitor

98. The nurse is making initial rounds at the beginning of the shift and notes that the parenteral nutrition (PN) bag of an assigned client is empty. Which solution readily available on the nursing unit should the nurse hang until another PN solution is mixed and delivered to the nursing unit?

1. 5% dextrose in water
2. 10% dextrose in water
3. 5% dextrose in Ringer's lactate
4. 5% dextrose in 0.9% sodium chloride

**99.** The nurse is monitoring the status of a client's fat emulsion (lipid) infusion and notes that the infusion is 1 hour behind. Which action should the nurse take?

1. Adjust the infusion rate to catch up over the next hour.
2. Increase the infusion rate to catch up over the next 2 hours.
3. Ensure that the fat emulsion infusion rate is infusing at the prescribed rate.
4. Adjust the infusion rate to run wide open until the solution is back on time.

**100.** A client receiving parenteral nutrition (PN) in the home setting has a weight gain of 5 lb in 1 week. The nurse should **next** assess the client for the presence of which condition?

1. Thirst
2. Polyuria
3. Decreased blood pressure
4. Crackles on auscultation of the lungs

**101.** The nurse is caring for a restless client who is beginning nutritional therapy with parenteral nutrition (PN). The nurse should plan to ensure that which action is taken to prevent the client from sustaining injury?

1. Calculate daily intake and output.

2. Monitor the temperature once daily.
3. Secure all connections in the PN system.
4. Monitor blood glucose levels every 12 hours.

**102.** A client receiving parenteral nutrition (PN) complains of a headache. The nurse notes that the client has an increased blood pressure, bounding pulse, jugular vein distention, and crackles bilaterally. The nurse determines that the client is experiencing which complication of PN therapy?

1. Sepsis
2. Air embolism
3. Hypervolemia
4. Hyperglycemia

## ANSWERS

**87. 2**

**Rationale:** When a client begins eating a regular diet after a period of receiving PN, the PN is decreased gradually. PN that is discontinued abruptly can cause hypoglycemia. Clients often have anorexia after being without food for some time, and the digestive tract also is not used to producing the digestive enzymes that will be needed. Gradually decreasing the infusion rate allows the client to remain adequately nourished during the transition to a normal diet and prevents the occurrence of hypoglycemia. Even before clients are started on a solid diet, they are given clear liquids followed by full liquids to further ease the transition. A solution of normal saline does not provide the glucose needed during the transition of discontinuing the PN and could cause the client to experience hypoglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, weaning the client from the PN. Recalling the effects of PN and the complications that occur will direct you to the correct option. Remember that hypoglycemia can occur if the PN is discontinued abruptly.

**Review: Parenteral nutrition**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Glucose Regulation; Nutrition

**References:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 336-337; Lewis et al (2011), p. 939.

## 88. 4

**Rationale:** The client should be asked to perform the Valsalva maneuver during tubing changes. This helps avoid air embolism during tubing changes. The nurse asks the client to take a deep breath, hold it, and bear down. If the intravenous line is on the right, the client turns his or her head to the left. This position increases intrathoracic pressure. Breathing normally and exhaling slowly and evenly are inappropriate and could enhance the potential for an air embolism during the tubing change.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *essential*. Recalling that air embolism is a complication that can occur during tubing changes and thinking about the measures that will prevent this complication will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The procedure for **parenteral nutrition** bag and tubing change.

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Nutrition; Safety

**References:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 152-153; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 225; Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 252.

## 89. 1

**Rationale:** Air embolism occurs when air enters the catheter system, such as when the system is opened for intravenous (IV) tubing changes or when the IV tubing disconnects. Air embolism is a critical situation; if it is suspected, the client should be placed in a left side-lying position. The head should be lower than the feet. This position is used to minimize the effect of the air traveling as a bolus to the lungs by trapping it in the right side of the heart. The positions in the remaining options are inappropriate if an air embolism is suspected.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the occurrence of an air embolism. Recall that the goal in this emergency situation is to trap air in the right side of the heart. Think about the position that will achieve this goal; this will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Actions to take if an **air embolism** is suspected

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 231.

## 90. 2

**Rationale:** The client beginning infusions of fat emulsions must be first assessed for known allergies to eggs to prevent anaphylaxis. Egg yolk is a component of the solution and provides emulsification. The remaining options are unnecessary and are not related to the administration of fat emulsion.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic word** *essential* when examining each option and recall knowledge of fat emulsions. Recall the components of fat emulsion to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Fat emulsion** and **parenteral nutrition**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 596.

## 91. 4

**Rationale:** The high glucose concentration in PN places the client at risk for hyperglycemia. Signs of hyperglycemia include excessive thirst, fatigue, restlessness, confusion, weakness, Kussmaul's respirations, diuresis, and coma when hyperglycemia is severe. If the client has these symptoms, the blood glucose level should be checked immediately. The remaining options do not identify signs specific to hyperglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of hyperglycemia. For an option to be correct, all of the parts of that option must be correct. Begin to answer this question by eliminating options that include fever and chills

because they are indicative of infection. Choose the correct option over the option that includes oliguria because the client with hyperglycemia has increased urine output rather than decreased urine output.

**Review:** Signs of **hyperglycemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Glucose Regulation; Nutrition

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), p. 338.

**92. 1**

**Rationale:** Redness at the catheter insertion site is a possible indication of infection. The nurse would next assess for other signs of infection. Of the options given, the temperature is the next item to assess. The tightness of tubing connections should be assessed each time the PN is checked; loose connections would result in leakage, not skin redness. The expiration date on the bag is a viable option, but this also should be checked at the time the solution is hung and with each shift change. The time of the last dressing change should be checked with each shift change.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *next*. This question requires that you prioritize based on the information provided in the question. Also note the relationship between *site appears reddened* in the question and the word *temperature* in the correct option. Focusing on the **subject** of infection will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of **infection** and **parenteral nutrition**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Nutrition

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), pp. 529-530.

## 93. 2

**Rationale:** Fat emulsion (lipids) is a white, opaque solution administered intravenously during parenteral nutrition therapy to prevent fatty acid deficiency. The nurse should examine the bottle of fat emulsion for separation of emulsion into layers of fat globules or for the accumulation of froth. The nurse should not hang a fat emulsion if any of these are observed and should return the solution to the pharmacy. Therefore the remaining options are inappropriate actions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Remember that options that are **comparable or alike** are not likely to be correct. With this in mind, eliminate rolling the bottle and shaking the bottle first. Select between the remaining options by recalling the significance of fat globules in the solution. Also, think about the potential adverse effect of fat globules entering the client's bloodstream.

**Review:** Administration of **fat emulsion**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 594; Lewis et al (2011), p. 939.

### 94. 3

**Rationale:** When the client who is receiving PN develops a fever, a catheter-related infection should be suspected. The solution and tubing should be changed, and the discontinued materials should be cultured for infectious organisms. The other options are incorrect. Because culture for infectious organisms is necessary, the discontinued materials are not discarded or returned to the pharmacy or manufacturer.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Identifying the **subject** of the question, infection, and correlating the fever with infection associated with the intravenous line should direct you to the correct option. Remember that the discontinued materials need to be cultured.

**Review:** Parenteral nutrition and infection

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 227.

### 95. 2

**Rationale:** The client receiving PN at home should have her or his temperature monitored as a means of detecting infection, which is a potential complication of this therapy. An infection also could result in sepsis because the catheter is in a blood vessel. The client's weight is monitored as a measure of the effectiveness of this nutritional therapy and to detect hypervolemia. The pulse and blood pressure are important parameters to assess, but they do not relate specifically to the effects of PN.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*, which tell you that more than one or all the options may be

partially or totally correct. Remember also that when there are multiple parts to an option, all the parts must be correct for that option to be correct. Recalling that infection and hypervolemia are complications of PN and that weight is monitored as a measure of the effectiveness of this nutritional therapy will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Parenteral nutrition

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Nutrition

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 939-940.

## 96. 2

**Rationale:** Parenteral nutrition is indicated in clients whose gastrointestinal tracts are not functional or must be rested, cannot take in a diet enterally for extended periods, or have increased metabolic need. Examples of these conditions include those clients with burns, exacerbation of Crohn's disease, and persistent nausea and vomiting due to chemotherapy. Other clients would be those who have had extensive surgery, have multiple fractures, are septic, or have advanced cancer or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The client with the open cholecystectomy is not a candidate because this client would resume a regular diet within a few days following surgery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *least likely*, which tell you that the correct option is the client who does not require this type of nutritional support. Use nursing knowledge of these various conditions and baseline knowledge of the purposes of PN to make your selection.

**Review:** Parenteral nutrition

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Nutrition

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1347.

### 97. 3

**Rationale:** The nurse obtains an electronic infusion pump before hanging a PN solution. Because of the high glucose content, use of an infusion pump is necessary to ensure that the solution does not infuse too rapidly or fall behind. Because the client's blood glucose level is monitored every 4 to 6 hours during administration of PN, a blood glucose meter also will be needed, but this is not the most essential item needed before hanging the solution. Urine test strips (to measure glucose) rarely are used because of the advent of blood glucose monitoring. Although the blood pressure will be monitored, a noninvasive blood pressure monitor is not the most essential piece of equipment needed for this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most essential*. They tell you that the correct option identifies the item needed to start the infusion. Visualizing the procedure for initiating PN and focusing on the **strategic words** will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Parenteral nutrition**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 525.

## 98. 2

**Rationale:** The client is at risk for hypoglycemia; therefore the solution containing the highest amount of glucose should be hung until the new PN solution becomes available. Because PN solutions contain high glucose concentrations, the 10% dextrose in water solution is the best of the choices presented. The solution selected should be one that minimizes the risk of hypoglycemia. The remaining options will not be as effective in minimizing the risk of hypoglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, that the client is at risk for hypoglycemia. With this in mind, you would then select the solution that minimizes this risk to the client. Also, remember that options that are **comparable or alike** are not likely to be correct. Each of the incorrect options represents a solution that contains 5% dextrose.

**Review:** The nursing actions to prevent **hypoglycemia** in the client receiving **parenteral nutrition**.

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Glucose Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), p. 338.

## 99. 3

**Rationale:** The nurse should not increase the rate of a fat emulsion to make up the difference if the infusion timing falls behind. Doing so could place the client at risk for fat overload. In addition, increasing the rate suddenly can cause fluid overload. The same principle (not increasing the rate) applies to PN or any intravenous (IV) infusion. Therefore the remaining options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the data in the question. Remember also that options that are **comparable or alike** are not likely to be correct. This guides you to eliminate the options referring to *catching up*. Choose the correct option over running the infusion wide open, recalling that the nurse never increases the infusion rate or adjusts an infusion rate if an infusion is behind.

**Review:** Safety principles related to **intravenous (IV) therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Nutrition; Safety

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), pp. 595-596.

#### **100. 4**

**Rationale:** Optimal weight gain when the client is receiving PN is 1 to 2 lb/week. The client who has a weight gain of 5 lb/week while receiving PN is likely to have fluid retention. This can result in hypervolemia. Signs of hypervolemia include increased blood pressure, crackles on lung auscultation, a bounding pulse, jugular vein distention, headache, and weight gain more than desired. Thirst and polyuria are associated with hyperglycemia. A decreased blood pressure is likely to be noted in deficient fluid volume.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, a weight gain of 5 lb in 1 week, and note the **strategic word**, *next*. This should direct your thinking to the potential for hypervolemia. With this in mind, select the option that identifies the sign of hypervolemia.

**Review:** Signs and symptoms of **hypervolemia** associated with the **administration of PN**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Nutrition

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1348.

### 101. 3

**Rationale:** The nurse should plan to secure all connections in the tubing (tape is used per agency protocol). This helps prevent the restless client from pulling the connections apart accidentally. The nurse should also monitor intake and output, but this does not relate specifically to a risk for injury as presented in the question. Also, monitoring the temperature and blood glucose levels does not relate to a risk for injury as presented in the question. In addition, the client's temperature and blood glucose levels are monitored more frequently than the time frames identified in the options to detect signs of infection and hyperglycemia, respectively.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, safety, and note the words *restless*, *ensure*, *prevent*, and *injury*. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Precautions related to **parenteral nutrition**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety/Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Nutrition; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1346.

### 102. 3

**Rationale:** Hypervolemia is a critical situation and occurs from excessive fluid administration or administration of fluid too rapidly. Clients with cardiac, renal, or hepatic dysfunction are also at increased risk. The client's signs and symptoms presented in the question are consistent with hypervolemia. The increased intravascular volume increases the blood pressure, whereas the pulse rate increases as the heart tries to pump the extra fluid volume. The increased volume also causes neck vein distention and shifting of fluid into the alveoli, resulting in lung crackles. The signs and symptoms presented in the question do not indicate sepsis, air embolism, or hyperglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a complication of PN, and on the signs and symptoms presented in the question. Recalling the signs of hypervolemia will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Signs of hypervolemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Parenteral Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 185-186.





## CHAPTER 14

# Intravenous Therapy

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A client with a peripherally inserted central venous catheter (PICC) in the right upper extremity suddenly exhibits chest pain, dyspnea, hypotension, and tachycardia. The nurse suspects an embolism related to the PICC line. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 163.*

## I. Intravenous Therapy

### A. Purpose and uses

1. Used to sustain clients who are unable to take substances orally
2. Replaces water, electrolytes, and **nutrients** more rapidly than oral administration
3. Provides immediate access to the vascular system for the rapid delivery of specific solutions without the time required for gastrointestinal tract absorption
4. Provides a vascular route for the administration of medication or blood components

## B. Types of solutions (Table 14-1)

**TABLE 14-1** Types of Intravenous Solutions

Solution	Tonicity
0.9% sodium chloride (normal saline); (0.9% NS)	Isotonic
5% dextrose in water (D <sub>5</sub> W)	Isotonic (physiologically hypotonic)
5% dextrose in 0.225% saline (D <sub>5</sub> W/¼ NS)	Isotonic
Lactated Ringer's (LR)	Isotonic
0.45% sodium chloride (normal saline); (½ NS)	Hypotonic
0.225% sodium chloride (normal saline); (¼ NS)	Hypotonic
0.33% sodium chloride (normal saline); (⅓ NS)	Hypotonic
3% sodium chloride (normal saline); (3% NS)	Hypertonic
5% sodium chloride (normal saline); (5% NS)	Hypertonic
10% dextrose in water (D <sub>10</sub> W)	Hypertonic
5% dextrose in 0.9% sodium chloride (normal saline); D <sub>5</sub> W/NS	Hypertonic
5% dextrose in 0.45% sodium chloride (normal saline); (D <sub>5</sub> W/½ NS)	Hypertonic
5% dextrose in lactated Ringer's (D <sub>5</sub> LR)	Hypertonic
Dextran	Colloid
Albumin	Colloid

### 1. Isotonic solutions

- a. Have the same osmolality as body fluids
- b. Increase extracellular fluid volume
- c. Do not enter the cells because no osmotic force exists to shift the fluids

### 2. Hypotonic solutions

- a. Are more dilute solutions and have a lower osmolality than body fluids
- b. Cause the movement of water into cells by osmosis
- c. Should be administered slowly to prevent cellular edema

### 3. Hypertonic solutions

- a. Are more concentrated solutions and have a higher osmolality than body fluids

b. Cause movement of water from cells into the extracellular fluid by osmosis

#### 4. Colloids

a. Also called *plasma expanders*

b. Pull fluid from the interstitial compartment into the vascular compartment

c. Used to increase the vascular volume rapidly, such as in hemorrhage or severe hypovolemia

 Administration of an intravenous (IV) solution or medication provides immediate access to the vascular system. This is a benefit of administering solutions or medications via this route but can also present a risk. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that the health care provider's prescriptions are checked carefully and that the correct solution or medication is administered as prescribed. Always follow the six rights for medication administration.

## II. Intravenous Devices

### A. IV cannulas

#### 1. Butterfly sets

a. The set is a wing-tip needle with a metal cannula, plastic or rubber wings, and a plastic catheter or hub.

b. The needle is 0.5 to 1.5 inches in length, with needle gauge sizes from 16 to 26.

c. **Infiltration** is more common with these devices. 

d. The butterfly infusion set is used commonly in children and older clients, whose veins are likely to be small or fragile.

#### 2. Plastic cannulas

- a. Plastic cannulas may be an over-the-needle device or an in-needle catheter and are used primarily for short-term therapy.
- b. The over-the-needle device is preferred for rapid infusion and is more comfortable for the client.
- c. The in-needle catheter can cause **catheter embolism** if the tip of the cannula breaks.

## B. IV gauges

1. The gauge refers to the diameter of the lumen of the needle or cannula.
2. The smaller the gauge number, the larger the diameter of the lumen; the larger the gauge number, the smaller the diameter of the lumen.
3. The size of the gauge used depends on the solution to be administered and the diameter of the available vein.
4. Large-diameter lumens (smaller gauge numbers) allow a higher fluid rate than smaller diameter lumens and allow the administration of higher concentrations of solutions. ▲
5. For rapid emergency fluid administration, blood products, or anesthetics, large-diameter lumen needles or cannulas are used, such as a 14-, 16-, 18-, or 19-gauge.
6. For peripheral **fat emulsion (lipids)** infusions a 20- or 21-gauge lumen or cannula is used.
7. For standard IV fluid and clear liquid IV medications, a 22- or 24-gauge lumen or cannula is used.

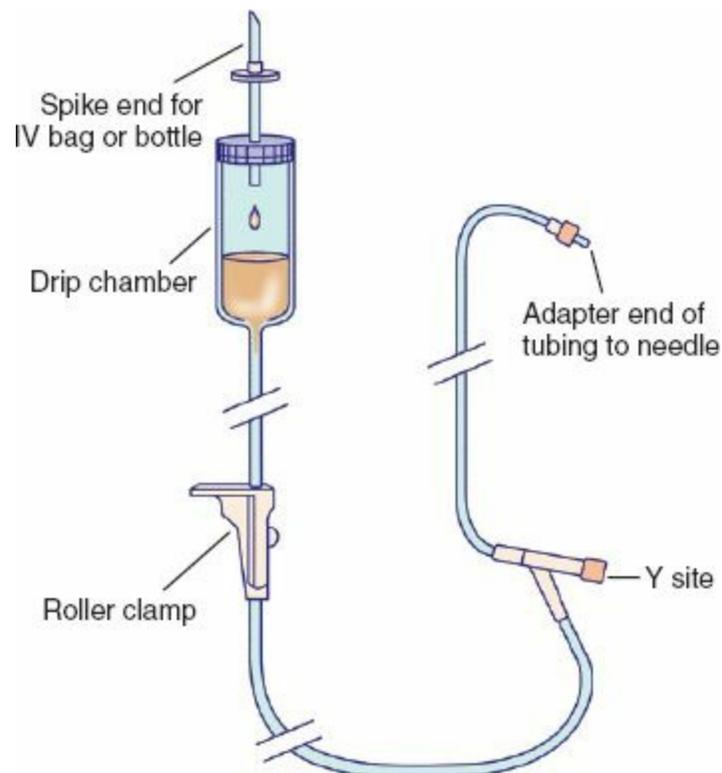
8. If the client has very small veins, a 24- to 25-gauge lumen or cannula is used.

### C. IV containers ▲

1. Container may be glass or plastic.
2. Squeeze the plastic bag to ensure intactness and assess the glass bottle for any cracks before hanging.

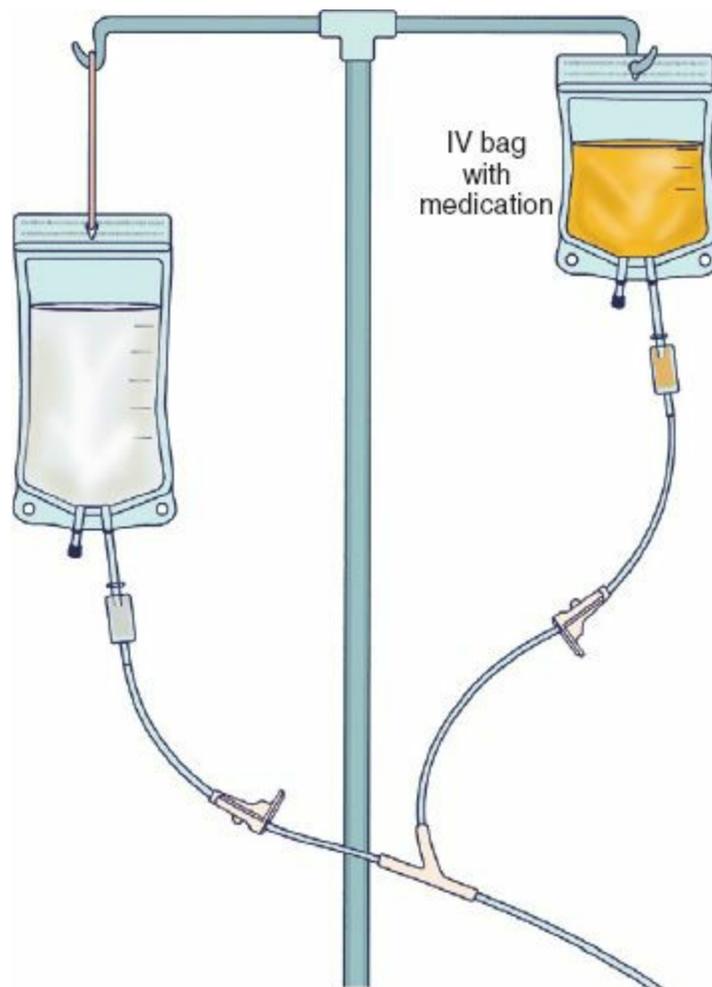
⚠ Do not write on a plastic IV bag with a marking pen because the ink may be absorbed through the plastic into the solution. Use a label and a ballpoint pen for writing on the label, placing the label onto the bag.

### D. IV tubing (Fig. 14-1)



**FIGURE 14-1** Intravenous tubing. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. IV tubing contains a spike end for the bag or bottle, drip chamber, roller clamp, Y site, and adapter end for attachment to the cannula or needle that is inserted into the client's vein.
2. Shorter, secondary tubing is used for piggyback solutions, connecting them to the injection sites nearest to the drip chamber (Fig. 14-2).



**FIGURE 14-2** Secondary bag with medication. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

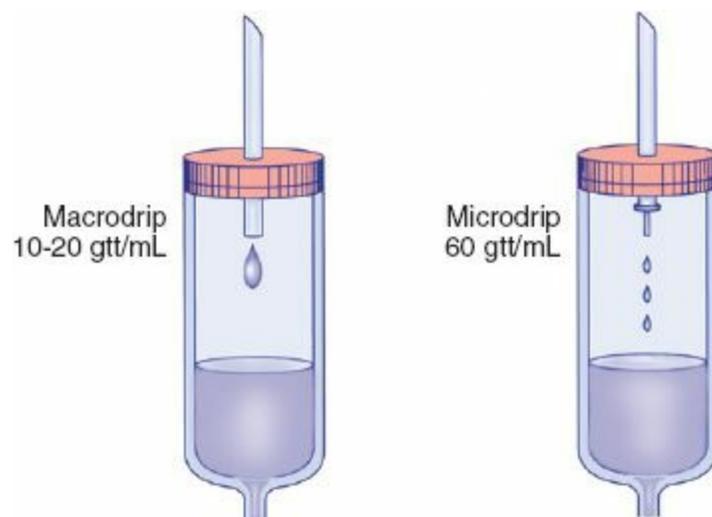
3. Special tubing is used for medication that absorbs into plastic (check specific

medication administration guidelines when administering IV medications).

4. Vented and nonvented tubing are available.
  - a. A vent allows air to enter the IV container as the fluid leaves.
  - b. A vented adapter can be used to add a vent to a nonvented IV tubing system.
  - c. Use nonvented tubing for flexible containers.
  - d. Use vented tubing for glass or rigid plastic containers to allow air to enter and displace the fluid as it leaves; fluid will not flow from a rigid IV container unless it is vented. ▲

▲ Extension tubing can be added to an IV tubing set to provide extra length to the tubing. Add extension tubing to the IV tubing set for children, clients who are restless, or clients who have special mobility needs.

#### E. Drip chambers (Fig. 14-3)



**FIGURE 14-3** Macro drip and microdrip sizes. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

## 1. Macro drip chamber

- a. The chamber is used if the solution is thick or is to be infused rapidly. ▲
- b. The drop factor varies from 10 to 20 drops (gtt)/mL, depending on the manufacturer.
- c. Read the tubing package to determine how many drops per milliliter are delivered (drop factor).

## 2. Micro drip chamber

- a. Normally, the chamber has a short vertical metal piece (stylet) where the drop forms.
- b. The chamber delivers about 60 gtt/mL. ▲
- c. Read the tubing package to determine the drop factor (gtt/mL).
- d. Micro drip chambers are used if fluid will be infused at a slow rate (less than 50 mL/hour) or if the solution contains potent medication that needs to be titrated, such as in a critical care setting or in pediatric clients. ▲

## F. Filters

1. Filters provide protection by preventing particles from entering the client's veins.
2. They are used in IV lines to trap small particles such as undissolved substances, or medications that have precipitated in solution.
3. Assess the agency policy regarding the use of filters. ▲
4. A 0.22- $\mu$ m filter is used for most solutions; a 1.2- $\mu$ m filter is used for solutions containing lipids or albumin; and a special filter is used for blood components.
5. Change filters every 24 to 72 hours (depending on agency policy) to prevent

bacterial growth. ▲

## G. Needleless infusion devices

1. Needleless infusion devices include recessed needles, plastic cannulas, and one-way valves; these systems decrease the exposure to contaminated needles.
2. Do not administer **parenteral nutrition** or blood products through a one-way valve.

## H. Intermittent infusion devices

1. Intermittent infusion devices are used when intravascular accessibility is desired for intermittent administration of medications by IV push or IV piggyback.
2. Patency is maintained by periodic flushing with normal saline solution (*sodium chloride* and *normal saline* are interchangeable names).
3. Depending on agency policy, when administering medication, flush with 1 to 2 mL of normal saline to confirm placement of the IV cannula; administer the prescribed medication and then flush the cannula again with 1 to 2 mL of normal saline to maintain patency. ▲

## I. Electronic IV infusion devices

1. IV infusion pumps control the amount of fluid infusing and should be used with central venous lines, arterial lines, solutions containing medication, and parenteral nutrition infusions. Most agencies use IV pumps for the infusion of any IV solution.
2. A syringe pump is used when a small volume of medication is administered; the syringe that contains the medication and solution fits into a pump and is set to

deliver the medication at a controlled rate.

3. Patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) is a device that allows the client to self-administer IV medication, such as an analgesic; the client can administer bolus doses at set intervals and the pump can be set to lock out bolus doses that are not within the preset time frame to prevent overdose. The PCA regimen may include a basal rate of infusion along with the demand dosing.

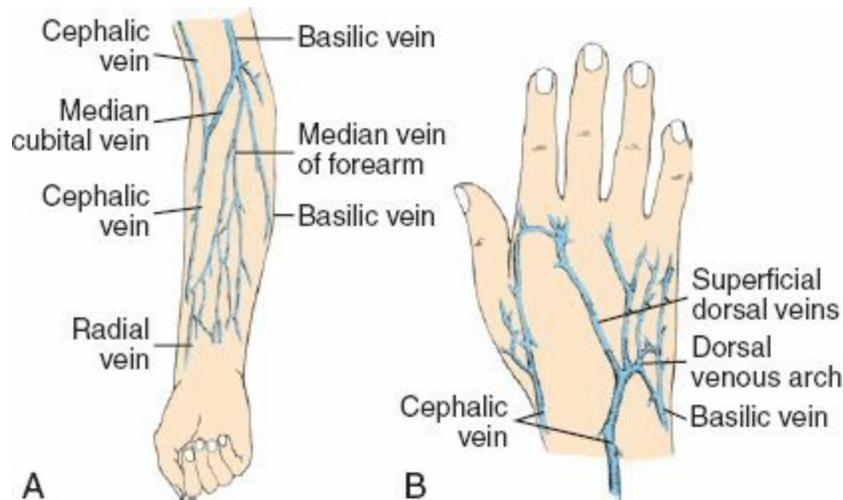
**⚠️ Check electronic IV infusion devices frequently. Although these devices are electronic, this does not ensure that they are infusing solutions and medications accurately.**

### III. Latex Allergy

- A. Assess the client for an allergy to latex.
- B. IV supplies, including IV catheters, IV tubing, IV ports (particularly IV rubber injection ports), rubber stoppers on multidose vials, and adhesive tape, may contain latex.
- C. Latex-safe IV supplies need to be used for clients with a latex allergy.
- D. A three-way stopcock, rather than a rubber injection port, needs to be used on plastic tubing.
- E. See [Chapter 70](#) for additional information regarding latex allergy.

### IV. Selection of a Peripheral IV Site

- A. Veins in the hand, forearm, and antecubital fossa are suitable sites ([Fig. 14-4](#)).



**FIGURE 14-4** Common intravenous sites. **A**, Inner arm. **B**, Dorsal surface of hand. (From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

**B.** Veins in the lower extremities (legs and feet) are not suitable for an adult client because of the risk of thrombus formation and the possible pooling of medication in areas of decreased venous return ([Box 14-1](#)).

### **BOX 14-1** Peripheral Intravenous Sites to Avoid

- Edematous extremity
- An arm that is weak, traumatized, or paralyzed
- The arm on the same side as a mastectomy
- An arm that has an arteriovenous fistula or shunt for dialysis
- A skin area that is infected

**C.** Veins in the scalp and feet may be suitable sites for infants (see [Fig. 14-4](#)).

**D.** Assess the veins of both arms closely before selecting a site.

- E. Start the IV infusion distally to provide the option of proceeding up the extremity if the vein is ruptured or **infiltration** occurs; if infiltration occurs from the antecubital vein, the lower veins in the same arm usually cannot be used for further puncture sites.
- F. Determine the client's dominant side, and select the opposite side for a **venipuncture** site.
- G. Bending the elbow on the arm with an IV may easily obstruct the flow of solution, causing infiltration that could lead to thrombophlebitis.
- H. Avoid checking the blood pressure on the arm receiving the IV infusion if possible.
- I. Do not place restraints over the venipuncture site.
- J. Use an armboard as needed when the venipuncture site is located in an area of flexion.

 In an adult, the most frequently used sites for inserting an IV cannula/needle are the veins of the forearm because the bones of the forearm act as a natural support and splint.

## **V. Addition of Medication to an IV Solution**

- A. Assess for compatibility of medication and solution.
- B. When adding medication to the IV bag, mix the bag end over end several times before hanging it to disperse the medication.
- C. Manufacturer-prepared IV medication systems are available; these systems are similar to a secondary IV with medication or a piggyback system.

**D.** Ensure that the medication can be mixed in soft plastic because some medications absorb into the soft plastic and should be mixed only in glass.

## **VI. Initiation and Administration of IV Solutions** ▲

**A.** Check the IV solution against the health care provider's (HCP's) prescription for the type, amount, percentage of solution, and rate of flow; follow the six rights for medication administration.

**B.** Assess the health status and medical disorders of the client and identify client conditions that contraindicate use of a particular IV solution or IV equipment such as an allergy to cleansing solution, adhesive materials, or latex.

**C.** Check client's identification and explain the procedure to the client; assess client's previous experience with IV therapy and preference for insertion site.

**D.** Wash hands thoroughly before inserting an IV line and before working with an IV line; wear gloves.

**E.** Use sterile technique when inserting an IV line and when changing the dressing over the IV site.

**F.** Change the venipuncture site every 72 to 96 hours in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations and agency policy.

**G.** Change the IV dressing when the dressing is wet or contaminated, or as specified by the agency policy.

**H.** Change the IV tubing every 96 hours in accordance with CDC recommendations and agency policy or with change of venipuncture site.

- I. Do not let an IV bag or bottle of solution hang for more than 24 hours to diminish the potential for bacterial contamination and possibly sepsis.
- J. Do not allow the IV tubing to touch the floor to prevent potential bacterial contamination.
- K. Before adding medications to solutions, swab access ports with 70% alcohol, an equally effective solution, or as specified by the agency policy.
- L. See [Priority Nursing Actions](#) for instructions on inserting an IV.

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions for Inserting a Peripheral Intravenous Line

Refer to Section VI, Initiation and Administration of IV Solutions, for additional preprocedure and postprocedure interventions.

1. Check the health care provider's (HCP's) prescription, determine the type and size of infusion device, and prepare intravenous (IV) tubing and solution; prime IV tubing to remove air from the system; explain procedure to the client.
2. Select the vein for insertion; apply tourniquet and palpate the vein for resilience (see [Fig. 14-4](#)).
3. Clean the skin with an antimicrobial solution, using an inner to outer circular motion, or as specified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and agency policy.
4. Stabilize the vein below the insertion site and puncture the skin and vein,

observing for blood in the flashback chamber; when observed, advance the catheter into the vein (if unsuccessful, a new sterile device is used for the next attempt at insertion).

5. Apply pressure above the insertion site with the middle finger of the nondominant hand and retract the stylet from the catheter; connect the end of the IV tubing to the catheter tubing, secure it, and begin IV flow.
6. Tape and secure insertion site with a dressing as specified by agency procedure; label the tubing, dressing, and solution bags clearly, indicating the date and time.
7. Document the specifics about the procedure such as number of attempts at insertion; the insertion site, type and size of device, solution and flow rate, and time; and the client's response. In addition, follow agency procedure for documentation of procedure.

The nurse checks the HCP's prescription for the IV line and then determines the type and size of infusion device. The type and size are important to ensure adequate flow of the prescribed solution. For example, if a blood product is prescribed, then the nurse would need to insert an appropriate catheter gauge size for blood delivery. The nurse also considers the client's size, age, mobility, and other factors in selecting the type and size of the infusion device. The nurse prepares the appropriate IV tubing and primes the IV tubing to remove air from the system. The appropriate vein is selected, the tourniquet is applied, and the vein is checked and palpated for resilience. Strict surgical asepsis is employed and the skin is cleaned with an antimicrobial solution (as specified by the agency policy), using an inner to outer

circular motion. The vein is stabilized to prevent its movement and the skin is punctured. Blood in the flashback chamber indicates that the device is in the vein and when noted the catheter is carefully advanced to avoid puncture of the back wall of the vein. The stylet is removed from the catheter device, the IV tubing is connected, and the IV flow is started. The nurse tapes and secures the site and labels the tubing, dressing, and solution bag appropriately and according to agency policy. The nurse checks the site and ensures that the solution is flowing. Finally, the nurse documents the specifics about the procedure.

### ***Reference***

Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby, pp. 916-917.

**M.** See [Priority Nursing Actions](#) for instructions on removing an IV.

## **PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS**

### **Actions for Removing a Peripheral Intravenous Line**

- 1.** Check the health care provider's (HCP's) prescription and explain the procedure to the client; ask the client to hold the extremity still during cannula/needle removal.
- 2.** Turn off the intravenous (IV) tubing clamp and remove the dressing and tape

covering the site, while stabilizing the catheter.

3. Apply light pressure with sterile gauze or other material as specified by agency procedure over the site and withdraw the catheter using a slow, steady movement, keeping the hub parallel to the skin.
4. Apply pressure for 2 to 3 minutes, using dry sterile gauze (apply pressure for a longer period of time if the client has a bleeding disorder or is taking anticoagulant medication).
5. Inspect the site for redness, drainage, or swelling; check the catheter for intactness.
6. Document the procedure and the client's response.

The nurse checks for a HCP's prescription to remove the IV line and then explains the procedure to the client. The nurse asks the client to hold the extremity still during removal. The IV tubing clamp is placed in the *off* position and the dressing and tape is removed. The nurse is careful to stabilize the catheter so that it is not pulled, resulting in vein trauma. Light pressure is applied over the site to stabilize the catheter and it is removed using a slow, steady movement, keeping the hub parallel to the skin. Pressure is applied until hemostasis occurs. The site is inspected for redness, drainage, or swelling and the catheter is checked for intactness to ensure that no part of it has broken off. Finally, the nurse documents the procedure and the client's response.

### ***Reference***

Perry A, Potter P, Elkin M: *Nursing interventions and clinical skills*, ed 5, St.

## VII. Precautions for IV Lines

- A. On insertion, an IV line can cause initial pain and discomfort for the client.
- B. An IV puncture provides a route of entry for microorganisms into the body. ▲
- C. Medications administered by the IV route enter the blood immediately, and any adverse reactions or allergic responses can occur immediately.
- D. Fluid (circulatory) overload or electrolyte imbalances can occur from excessive or too rapid infusion of IV fluids. ▲
- E. Incompatibilities between certain solutions and medications can occur.

⚠ A client with heart failure usually is not given a solution containing saline because this type of fluid promotes the retention of water and would therefore exacerbate heart failure by increasing the fluid overload.

## VIII. Complications (Table 14-2)

**TABLE 14-2 Signs of Complications of Intravenous Therapy**

Complication	Signs
Air embolism	Tachycardia Chest pain and dyspnea Hypotension Cyanosis Decreased level of consciousness
Catheter embolism	Decrease in blood pressure Pain along the vein Weak, rapid pulse

	Cyanosis of the nail beds Loss of consciousness
Circulatory overload	Increased blood pressure  Distended jugular veins Rapid breathing Dyspnea Moist cough and crackles
Electrolyte overload	Signs depend on the specific electrolyte overload imbalance
Hematoma	Ecchymosis, immediate swelling and leakage of blood at the site, and hard and painful lumps at the site
Infection	Local—redness, swelling, and drainage at the site Systemic—chills, fever, malaise, headache, nausea, vomiting, backache, tachycardia
Infiltration	Edema, pain, and coolness at the site; may or may not have a blood return
Phlebitis	Heat, redness, tenderness at the site Not swollen or hard Intravenous infusion sluggish
Thrombophlebitis	Hard and cordlike vein Heat, redness, tenderness at site Intravenous infusion sluggish
Tissue damage	Skin color changes, sloughing of the skin, discomfort at the site

## A. Air embolism

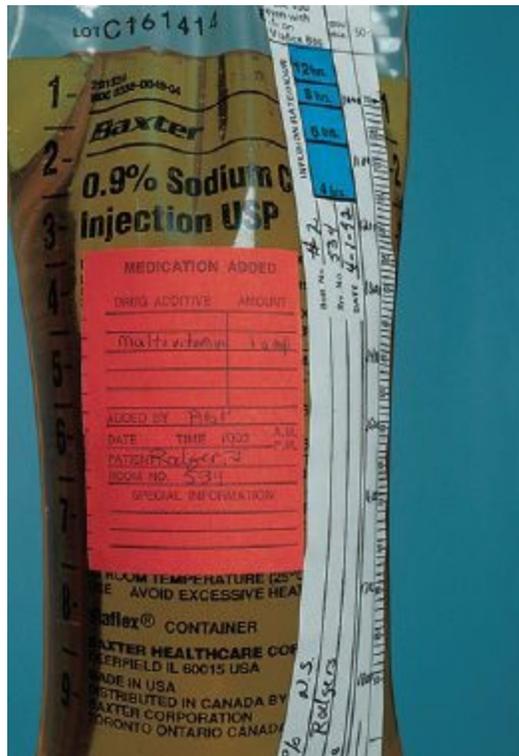
1. Description: A bolus of air enters the vein through an inadequately primed IV line, from a loose connection, during tubing change, or during removal of the IV.
2. Prevention and interventions ▲
  - a. Prime tubing with fluid before use, and monitor for any air bubbles in the tubing.
  - b. Secure all connections.
  - c. Replace the IV fluid before the bag or bottle is empty.
  - d. Monitor for signs of air embolism; if suspected, clamp the tubing, turn the client on the left side with the head of the bed lowered (Trendelenburg's position) to trap the air in the right atrium, and notify the HCP.

## B. Catheter embolism

1. Description: An obstruction that results from breakage of the catheter tip during IV line insertion or removal
2. Prevention and interventions
  - a. Remove the catheter carefully.
  - b. Inspect the catheter when removed.
  - c. If the catheter tip has broken off, place a tourniquet as proximally as possible to the IV site on the affected limb, notify the HCP immediately, prepare to obtain a radiograph, and prepare the client for surgery to remove the catheter piece(s), if necessary.

## C. Circulatory overload

1. Description: Also known as *fluid overload*; results from the administration of fluids too rapidly, especially in a client at risk for fluid overload
2. Prevention and interventions 
  - a. Identify clients at risk for circulatory overload.
  - b. Calculate and monitor the drip (flow) rate frequently.
  - c. Use an electronic IV infusion device and frequently check the drip rate or setting (at least every hour for an adult).
  - d. Add a time tape (label) to the IV bag or bottle next to the volume markings. Mark on the tape the expected hourly decrease in volume based upon the mL/hour calculation (Fig. 14-5).



**FIGURE 14-5** Intravenous fluid bag with medication label and time tape. (From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

- e. Monitor for signs of circulatory overload. If circulatory overload occurs, decrease the flow rate to a minimum, at a keep-vein-open rate; elevate the head of the bed; keep the client warm; assess lung sounds; assess for edema; and notify the HCP.

**⚠** Clients with respiratory, cardiac, renal, or liver disease; older clients; and very young persons are at risk for circulatory overload and cannot tolerate an excessive fluid volume.

#### D. Electrolyte overload

- 1. Description: An electrolyte imbalance is caused by too rapid or excessive

infusion or by use of an inappropriate IV solution

2. Prevention and interventions ▲

- a. Assess laboratory value reports.
- b. Verify the correct solution.
- c. Calculate and monitor the flow rate.
- d. Use an electronic IV infusion device and frequently check the drip rate or setting (at least every hour for an adult).
- e. Add a time tape (label) to the IV bag or bottle (see Fig. 14-5).
- f. Place a red medication sticker on the bag or bottle if a medication, such as **potassium** chloride, has been added to the IV solution (see Fig. 14-5).
- g. Monitor for signs of an electrolyte imbalance, and notify the HCP if they occur.

**⚠ Lactated Ringer's solution contains potassium and should not be administered to clients with acute kidney injury or chronic kidney disease.**

E. Hematoma

1. Description: The collection of blood in the tissues after an unsuccessful venipuncture or after the venipuncture site is discontinued and blood continues to ooze into the tissue
2. Prevention and interventions ▲
  - a. When starting an IV, avoid piercing the posterior wall of the vein.
  - b. Do not apply a tourniquet to the extremity immediately after an unsuccessful venipuncture.
  - c. When discontinuing an IV, apply pressure to the site for 2 to 3 minutes and

elevate the extremity; apply pressure longer for clients with a bleeding disorder or who are taking anticoagulants.

- d.** If a hematoma develops, elevate the extremity and apply pressure and ice as prescribed.

## **F. Infection**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Infection occurs from the entry of microorganisms into the body through the venipuncture site.
- b.** **Venipuncture** interrupts the integrity of the skin, the first line of defense against infection.
- c.** The longer the therapy continues, the greater the risk for infection.
- d.** Infection can occur locally at the IV insertion site or systemically from the entry of microorganisms into the body.

### **2. At-risk clients**

- a.** Immunocompromised clients with diseases such as cancer, human immunodeficiency virus, or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome are at risk for infection.
- b.** Clients receiving treatments such as chemotherapy who have an altered or lowered white blood cell count are at risk for infection.
- c.** Older clients, because aging alters the effectiveness of the immune system, are at risk for infection.
- d.** Clients with diabetes mellitus are at risk for infection.

### 3. Prevention and interventions ▲

- a. Assess the client for predisposition to or risk for infection.
- b. Maintain strict asepsis when caring for the IV site.
- c. Monitor for signs of local or systemic infection.
- d. Monitor white blood cell counts.
- e. Check fluid containers for cracks, leaks, cloudiness, or other evidence of contamination.
- f. Change IV tubing no more frequently than every 96 hours and agency policy; change IV site dressing when soiled or contaminated and according to agency policy.
- g. Label the IV site, bag or bottle, and tubing with the date and time to ensure that these are changed on time according to agency policy.
- h. Ensure that the IV solution is not hanging for more than 24 hours.
- i. If infection occurs, the HCP is notified; discontinue the IV, and place the venipuncture device in a sterile container for possible culture.
- j. Prepare to obtain blood cultures as prescribed if infection occurs.
- k. Restart an IV in the opposite arm to differentiate sepsis (systemic infection) from local infection at the IV site.

**⚠** A client with diabetes mellitus usually does not receive dextrose (glucose) solutions because the solution can increase the blood glucose level.

### G. Infiltration

## 1. Description

- a. Infiltration is seepage of the IV fluid out of the vein and into the surrounding interstitial spaces.
- b. Infiltration occurs when an access device has become dislodged or perforates the wall of the vein or when venous backpressure occurs because of a clot or venospasm.

## 2. Prevention and interventions ▲

- a. Avoid venipuncture over an area of flexion.
- b. Anchor the cannula and a loop of tubing securely with tape.
- c. Use an armboard or splint as needed if the client is restless or active.
- d. Monitor the IV rate for a decrease or a cessation of flow.
- e. Evaluate the IV site for infiltration by occluding the vein proximal to the IV site.  
If the IV fluid continues to flow, the cannula is probably outside the vein (infiltrated); if the IV flow stops after occlusion of the vein, the IV device is still in the vein.
- f. Lower the IV fluid container below the IV site, and monitor for the appearance of blood in the IV tubing; if blood appears, the IV device is most likely in the vein.
- g. If infiltration has occurred, remove the IV device immediately; elevate the extremity and apply compresses (warm or cool, depending on the IV solution that was infusing and the HCP's prescription) over the affected area.
- h. Do not rub an infiltrated area, which can cause hematoma.

## **H. Phlebitis** and thrombophlebitis

### **1. Description**

- a.** Phlebitis is an inflammation of the vein that can occur from mechanical or chemical (medication) trauma or from a local infection.
- b.** Phlebitis can cause the development of a clot (thrombophlebitis).

### **2. Prevention and interventions** ▲

- a.** Use an IV cannula smaller than the vein, and avoid using very small veins when administering irritating solutions.
- b.** Avoid using the lower extremities (legs and feet) as an access area for the IV.
- c.** Avoid venipuncture over an area of flexion.
- d.** Anchor the cannula and a loop of tubing securely with tape.
- e.** Use an armboard or splint as needed if the client is restless or active.
- f.** Change the venipuncture site every 72 to 96 hours in accordance with CDC recommendations and agency policy.
- g.** If phlebitis occurs, remove the IV device immediately and restart it in the opposite extremity; notify the HCP if phlebitis is suspected, and apply warm, moist compresses, as prescribed.
- h.** If thrombophlebitis occurs, do not irrigate the IV catheter; remove the IV, notify the HCP, and restart the IV in the opposite extremity.

## **I. Tissue damage**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Tissues most commonly damaged include the skin, veins, and subcutaneous

tissue.

- b.** Tissue damage can be uncomfortable and can cause permanent negative effects.
- c.** Extravasation is a form of tissue damage caused by the seepage of vesicant or irritant solutions into the tissues; this occurrence requires immediate health care provider notification so that treatment can be prescribed to prevent tissue necrosis.

## 2. Prevention and interventions ▲

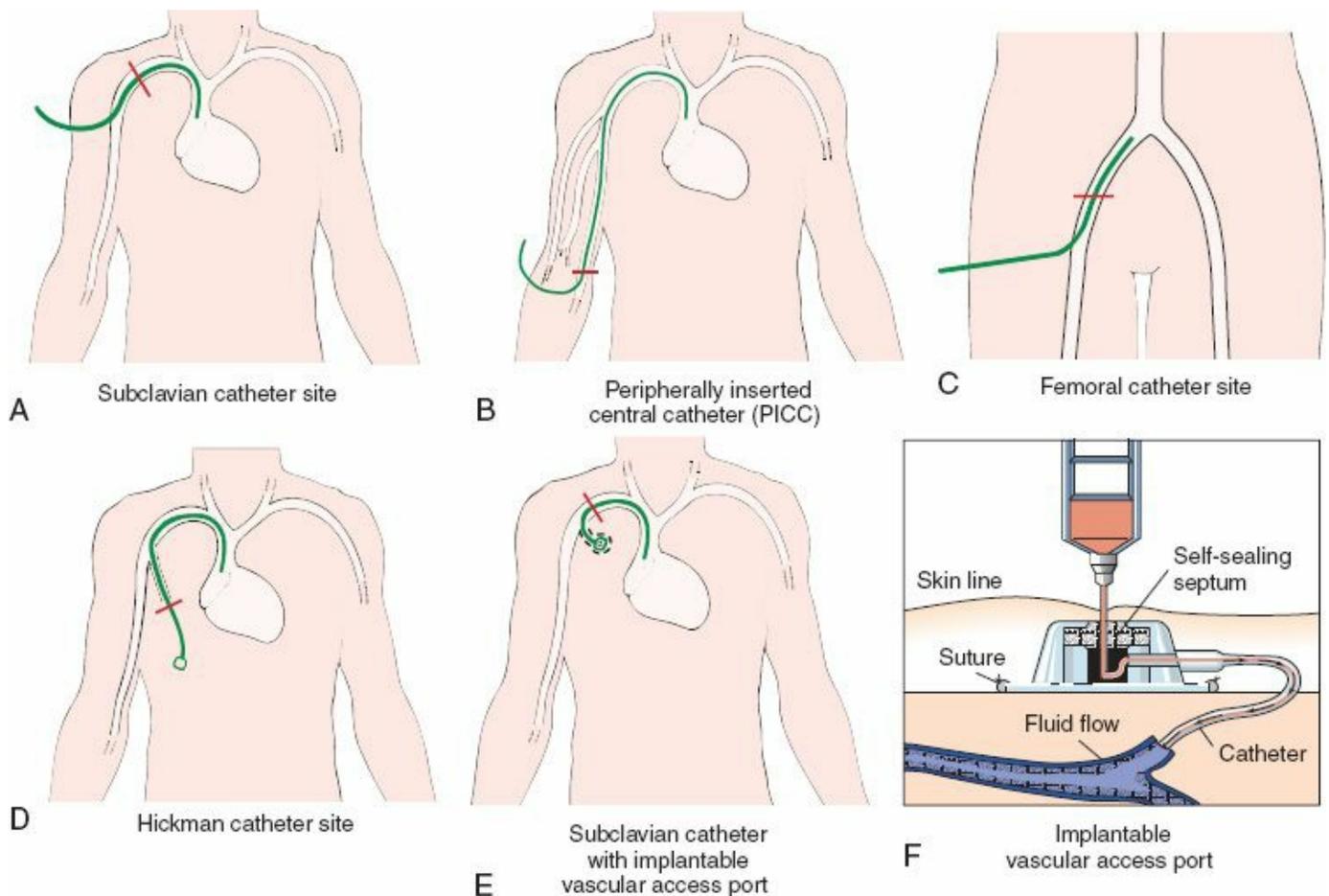
- a.** Use a careful and gentle approach when applying a tourniquet.
- b.** Avoid tapping the skin over the vein when starting an IV.
- c.** Monitor for ecchymosis when penetrating the skin with the cannula.
- d.** Assess for allergies to tape or dressing adhesives.
- e.** Monitor for skin color changes, sloughing of the skin, or discomfort at the IV site.
- f.** Notify the HCP if tissue damage is suspected.

**⚠** Always document the occurrence of a complication, assessment findings, actions taken, and the client's response.

## IX. Central Venous Catheters

### A. Description

- 1.** Central venous catheters (Fig. 14-6) are used to deliver hyperosmolar solutions, measure central venous pressure, infuse parenteral nutrition, or infuse multiple IV solutions or medications.



**FIGURE 14-6** Central venous access sites. **A**, Subclavian catheter. **B**, Peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC). **C**, Femoral catheter. **D**, Hickman catheter. **E**, Subclavian catheter with implantable vascular access port. **F**, Implantable vascular access port. (**A-E**, From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders. **F**, Based on figure originally appearing in Winters V: Implantable vascular access devices, *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 11(6):26, 1984. Reused with permission of Oncology Nursing Society.)

2. Catheter position is determined by radiography after insertion. ▲
3. The catheter may have a single, double, or triple lumen.
4. The catheter may be inserted peripherally and threaded through the basilic or

cephalic vein into the superior vena cava, inserted centrally through the internal jugular or subclavian veins, or surgically tunneled through subcutaneous tissue.

5. With multilumen catheters, more than one medication can be administered at the same time without incompatibility problems, and only one insertion site is present.

 For central line insertion, tubing change, and line removal, place the client in the Trendelenburg's position if not contraindicated or in the supine position, and instruct the client to perform the Valsalva maneuver to increase pressure in the central veins when the IV system is open.

## B. Tunneled central venous catheters

1. A more permanent type of catheter, such as the Hickman, Broviac, or Groshong catheter, is used for long-term IV therapy.
2. The catheter may be single lumen or multilumen.
3. The catheter is inserted in the operating room, and the catheter is threaded into the lower part of the vena cava at the entrance of the right atrium.
4. The catheter is fitted with an intermittent infusion device to allow access as needed and to keep the system closed and intact.
5. Patency is maintained by flushing with a diluted heparin solution or normal saline solution, depending on the type of catheter, per agency policy. 

## C. Vascular access ports (implantable port)

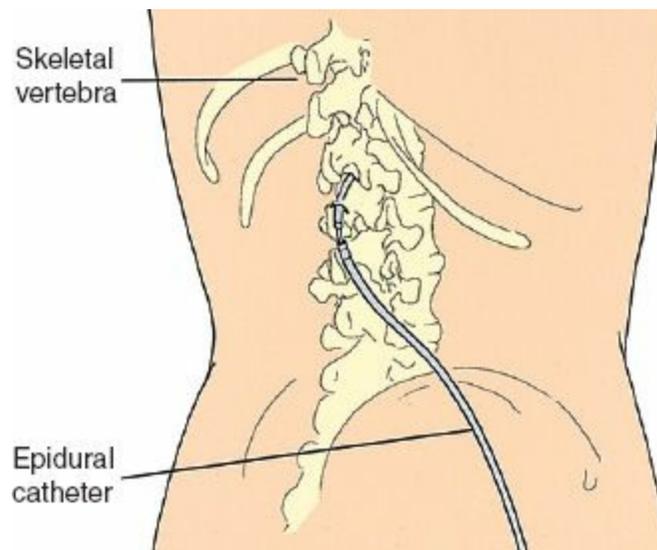
1. Surgically implanted under the skin, ports such as a Port-a-Cath, Mediport, or Infusaport are used for long-term administration of repeated IV therapy.

2. For access, the port requires palpation and injection through the skin into the self-sealing port with a noncoring needle, such as a Huber-point needle. ▲
3. Patency is maintained by periodic flushing with a diluted heparin solution as prescribed and as per agency policy.

#### D. PICC line

1. The catheter is used for long-term IV therapy, frequently in the home.
2. The basilic vein usually is used, but the median cubital and cephalic veins in the antecubital area also can be used.
3. The catheter is threaded so that the catheter tip may terminate in the subclavian vein or superior vena cava.
4. A small amount of bleeding may occur at the time of insertion and may continue for 24 hours, but bleeding thereafter is not expected.
5. **Phlebitis** is a common complication.
6. Insertion is below the heart level; therefore **air embolism** is not common.

#### X. Epidural Catheter (Fig. 14-7)



**FIGURE 14-7** Tunneled epidural catheter. (From Elkin M, Perry A, Potter P: *Nursing interventions and clinical skills*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2008, Mosby.)

- A.** Catheter is placed in the epidural space for the administration of analgesics; this method of administration reduces the amount of medication needed to control pain; therefore, the client experiences fewer side effects.
- B.** Assess client's vital signs, level of consciousness, and motor and sensory function.
- C.** Monitor insertion site for signs of infection and be sure that the catheter is secured to the client's skin and that all connections are taped to prevent disconnection.
- D.** Check HCP's prescription regarding solution and medication administration.
- E.** For continuous infusion, monitor the electronic infusion device for proper rate of flow.
- F.** For bolus dose administration, follow the procedure for administering bolus doses through the catheter and follow agency procedure.
- G.** Aspiration is done before injecting medication; if more than 1 mL of clear fluid or blood returns, the medication is not injected and the HCP or anesthesiologist is

notified immediately (catheter may have migrated into the subarachnoid space or a blood vessel).

 **Contraindications to an epidural catheter and administration of epidural analgesia include skeletal and spinal abnormalities, bleeding disorders, use of anticoagulants, history of multiple abscesses, and sepsis.**

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* When a client has any type of central venous catheter, there is a risk for breaking of the catheter, dislodgement of a thrombus, or entry of air into the circulation, all of which can lead to an embolism. Signs and symptoms that this complication is occurring include sudden chest pain, dyspnea, tachypnea, hypoxia, cyanosis, hypotension, and tachycardia. If this occurs, the nurse should clamp the catheter, place the client on the left side with the head lower than the feet (to trap the embolism in the right atrium of the heart), administer oxygen, and notify the health care provider.

### *Reference*

Lewis et al (2011), p. 330.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 103.** A client had a 1000-mL bag of 5% dextrose in 0.9% sodium chloride hung at 3 PM. The nurse making rounds at 3:45 PM finds that the client is complaining of a pounding headache and is dyspneic, is experiencing chills, and is apprehensive, with an increased pulse rate. The intravenous (IV) bag has 400 mL remaining. The nurse should take which action **first**?
1. Slow the IV infusion.
  2. Sit the client up in bed.
  3. Remove the IV catheter.
  4. Call the health care provider (HCP).
- 104.** The nurse has a prescription to hang a 1000-mL intravenous (IV) bag of 5% dextrose in water with 20 mEq of potassium chloride and needs to add the medication to the IV bag. The nurse should plan to take which action **immediately** after injecting the potassium chloride into the port of the IV bag?
1. Rotate the bag gently.
  2. Attach the tubing to the client.
  3. Prime the tubing with the IV solution.
  4. Check the solution for yellowish discoloration.
- 105.** The nurse is completing a time tape for a 1000-mL IV bag that is scheduled to infuse over 8 hours. The nurse has just placed the 11:00 AM marking at the 500-

mL level. The nurse would place the mark for noon at which numerical level (mL) on the time tape? **Fill in the blank.** ❖

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL

**106.** The nurse is making initial rounds on the nursing unit to assess the condition of assigned clients. The nurse notes that a client's intravenous (IV) site is cool, pale, and swollen, and the solution is not infusing. The nurse concludes that which complication has occurred?

1. Infection
2. Phlebitis
3. Infiltration
4. Thrombosis

**107.** The nurse is inserting an intravenous line into a client's vein. After the initial stick, the nurse would continue to advance the catheter in which situation?

1. The catheter advances easily.
2. The vein is distended under the needle.
3. The client does not complain of discomfort.
4. Blood return shows in the backflash chamber of the catheter.

**108.** The nurse notes that the site of a client's peripheral intravenous (IV) catheter is reddened, warm, painful, and slightly edematous proximal to the insertion point of the IV catheter. After taking appropriate steps to care for the client, the nurse should document in the medical record that the client experienced which

condition?

1. Phlebitis of the vein
2. Infiltration of the IV line
3. Hypersensitivity to the IV solution
4. Allergic reaction to the IV catheter material

**109.** The nurse is preparing a continuous intravenous (IV) infusion at the medication cart. As the nurse goes to insert the spike end of the IV tubing into the IV bag, the tubing drops and the spike end hits the top of the medication cart. The nurse should take which action?

1. Obtain a new IV bag.
2. Obtain new IV tubing.
3. Wipe the spike end of the tubing with Betadine.
4. Scrub the spike end of the tubing with an alcohol swab.

**110.** A health care provider has written a prescription to discontinue an intravenous (IV) line. The nurse should obtain which item from the unit supply area for applying pressure to the site after removing the IV catheter?

1. Elastic wrap
2. Betadine swab
3. Adhesive bandage
4. Sterile 2 × 2 gauze

**111.** A client rings the call bell and complains of pain at the site of an intravenous

(IV) infusion. The nurse assesses the site and determines that phlebitis has developed. The nurse should take which action(s) in the care of this client?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
2. Remove the IV catheter at that site.
3. Apply warm moist packs to the site.
4. Start a new IV line in a proximal portion of the same vein.
5. Document the occurrence, actions taken, and the client's response.

**112.** A client involved in a motor vehicle crash presents to the emergency department with severe internal bleeding. The client is severely hypotensive and unresponsive. The nurse anticipates that which intravenous (IV) solution will **most likely** be prescribed to increase intravascular volume, replace immediate blood loss volume, and increase blood pressure?

1. 5% dextrose in lactated Ringer's
2. 0.33% sodium chloride ( $\frac{1}{3}$  normal saline)
3. 0.225% sodium chloride ( $\frac{1}{4}$  normal saline)
4. 0.45% sodium chloride ( $\frac{1}{2}$  normal saline)

**113.** The nurse provides a list of instructions to a client being discharged to home with a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC). The nurse determines that the client **needs further instructions** if the client made which statement?

1. "I need to wear a Medic-Alert tag or bracelet."

2. "I need to restrict my activity while this catheter is in place."
3. "I need to have a repair kit available in the home for use if needed."
4. "I need to keep the insertion site protected when in the shower or bath."

114. A client has just undergone insertion of a central venous catheter at the bedside.

The nurse would be sure to check which results before initiating the flow rate of the client's intravenous (IV) solution at 100 mL/hour?

1. Serum osmolality
2. Serum electrolyte levels
3. Portable chest x-ray film
4. Intake and output record

115. A client with the recent diagnosis of myocardial infarction and impaired renal function is recuperating on the step-down cardiac unit. The client's blood pressure has been borderline low and intravenous (IV) fluids have been infusing at 100 mL/hour via a central line catheter in the right internal jugular for approximately 24 hours to increase renal output and maintain the blood pressure.

Upon entering the client's room, the nurse notes that the client is breathing rapidly and is coughing. The nurse determines that the client is **most likely** experiencing which complication of IV therapy?

1. Hematoma
2. Air embolism
3. Systemic infection

## 4. Circulatory overload

# ANSWERS

103. 1

**Rationale:** The client's symptoms are compatible with circulatory overload. This may be verified by noting that 600 mL has infused in the course of 45 minutes. The first action of the nurse is to slow the infusion. Other actions may follow in rapid sequence. The nurse may elevate the head of the bed to aid the client's breathing, if necessary. The nurse also notifies the HCP. The IV catheter is not removed; it may be needed for the administration of medications to resolve the complication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. This tells you that more than one or all of the options are likely to be correct actions and that the nurse needs to prioritize them according to a time sequence. You must be able to recognize the signs of circulatory overload. From this point, select the option that provides the intervention specific to circulatory overload.

**Review:** Nursing actions for **circulatory overload**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership and Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), p. 256.

104. 1

**Rationale:** After adding a medication to a bag of IV solution, the nurse should agitate or rotate the bag gently to mix the medication evenly in the solution. The nurse should then attach a completed medication label. The nurse can then prime the tubing. The IV solution should have been checked for discoloration before the medication was added to the solution. The tubing is attached to the client last.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediately*. This implies a correct time sequence, and you need to prioritize. Visualize and think through the steps of adding medication to an IV bag, and make your choice accordingly.

**Review:** **Reconstitution** of an intravenous (IV) solution

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 316; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 568; Potter et al (2013), p. 635.

## ❖ 105. 375

**Rationale:** If the IV is scheduled to run over 8 hours, then the hourly rate is 125 mL/hour. Using 500 mL as the reference point, the next hourly marking would be at 375 mL, which is 125 mL less than 500.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, intravenous infusion calculations. Use basic principles related to pharmacology math and IV administration to answer this question. Subtract 125 from 500 to yield 375.

**Review:** Administration of **intravenous medications**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

Reference:

Alexander et al (2010), p. 272.

### 106. 3

**Rationale:** An infiltrated IV is one that has dislodged from the vein and is lying in subcutaneous tissue. Pallor, coolness, and swelling are the results of IV fluid being deposited in the subcutaneous tissue. When the pressure in the tissues exceeds the pressure in the tubing, the flow of the IV solution will stop. The corrective action is to remove the catheter and start a new IV line at another site. Infection, phlebitis, and thrombosis are likely to be accompanied by warmth at the site, not coolness.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, clinical manifestations at the IV site. Noting the word *cool* in the question will direct you to the correct option. Remember that pallor, coolness, and swelling are signs of infiltration.

**Review:** Signs of **infiltration**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 470-471.

#### 107. 4

**Rationale:** The IV catheter has entered the lumen of the vein successfully when blood backflash shows in the IV catheter. The vein should have been distended by the tourniquet before the vein was cannulated. Client discomfort varies with the client, the site, and the nurse's insertion technique and is not a reliable measure of catheter placement. The nurse should not advance the catheter until placement in the vein is verified by blood return.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question: correct placement of an IV catheter. Noting the words *blood return* in the correct option will direct you to this option because a blood return is expected if the catheter is in a vein.

**Review:** Insertion of an **intravenous catheter**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 662-663.

#### 108. 1

**Rationale:** Phlebitis at an IV site can be distinguished by client discomfort at the site and by redness, warmth, and swelling proximal to the catheter. If phlebitis occurs, the nurse should discontinue the IV line and insert a new IV line at a different site. Coolness at the site would be noted if the IV catheter was infiltrated. An allergic reaction produces a rash, redness, and itching. A major reaction, such as hypersensitivity, can cause dyspnea, a swollen tongue, and cyanosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Hypersensitivity and allergic reaction are **comparable or alike** and therefore are eliminated first. Choose the correct option over infiltration after recalling that warmth is noted with phlebitis and coolness is noted with infiltration.

**Review:** Signs and symptoms of **phlebitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Communication

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 228.

## 109. 2

**Rationale:** The nurse should obtain new IV tubing because contamination has occurred and could cause systemic infection to the client. There is no need to obtain a new IV bag because the bag was not contaminated. Wiping with Betadine or alcohol is insufficient and is contraindicated because the spike will be inserted into the IV bag.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, that the tubing was contaminated. Use knowledge of basic infection control measures and IV therapy concepts to answer this question. Clearly, only one option is correct. Remember that if an item is contaminated, discard it and obtain a new sterile item.

**Review:** **Surgical aseptic technique**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 421-422.

#### 110. 4

**Rationale:** A dry sterile dressing such as a sterile  $2 \times 2$  is used to apply pressure to the discontinued IV site. This material is absorbent, sterile, and nonirritating. A Betadine swab would irritate the opened puncture site and would not stop the blood flow. An adhesive bandage or elastic wrap may be used to cover the site once hemostasis has occurred.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care to the IV site after removal of the catheter, and note the words *applying pressure*. Visualize this procedure, thinking about each of the items identified in the options to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Intravenous catheter removal**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

Priority Concept:

Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 226.

❖ 111. 1, 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** Phlebitis is an inflammation of the vein that can occur from mechanical or chemical (medication) trauma or from a local infection and can cause the development of a clot (thrombophlebitis). The nurse should remove the IV at the phlebotic site and apply warm moist compresses to the area to speed resolution of the inflammation.

Because phlebitis has occurred, the nurse also notifies the HCP about the IV complication. The nurse should restart the IV in a vein other than the one that has developed phlebitis. Finally, the nurse documents the occurrence, actions taken, and the client's response.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, actions to take if phlebitis occurs. Recall that phlebitis is an inflammation of the vein. This will assist in eliminating the option that indicates to use the same vein because an IV should be restarted in a vein other than the one that has developed phlebitis.

**Review:** **Phlebitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 228.

## 112. 1

**Rationale:** The goal of therapy with this client is to expand intravascular volume as quickly as possible. The 5% dextrose in lactated Ringer's (hypertonic solution) would increase intravascular volume and immediately replace lost fluid volume until a transfusion could be administered, resulting in an increase in the client's blood pressure. The solutions in the remaining options would not be given to this client because they are hypotonic solutions and, instead

of increasing intravascular space, the solutions would move into the cells via osmosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, that the client requires increased intravascular volume. Also, note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Recalling IV fluid types and how hypotonic and hypertonic solutions function within the intravascular space will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Intravenous fluids**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

Priority Concept:

Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 211.

### 113. 2

**Rationale:** The client should be taught that only minor activity restrictions apply with this type of catheter. The client should protect the site during bathing and should carry or wear a Medic-Alert identification. The client should have a repair kit in the home for use as needed because the catheter is for long-term use.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *needs further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select the incorrect client statement. Recalling that the PICC is for long-term use will assist in directing you to the correct option. To restrict activity with such a catheter is unreasonable.

**Review: Peripherally inserted intravenous catheters**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Functional Ability

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 658, 667.

### 114. 3

**Rationale:** Before beginning administration of IV solution, the nurse should assess whether the chest radiograph reveals that the central catheter is in the proper place. This is necessary to prevent infusion of IV fluid into pulmonary or subcutaneous tissues. The other options represent items that are useful for the nurse to be aware of in the general care of this client, but they do not relate to this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, care to the client with a central venous catheter. Note the words *insertion of a central venous catheter at the bedside*. Recalling the potential complications associated with the insertion of central venous catheters will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing actions related to **central venous catheters**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 216.

### 115. 4

**Rationale:** Circulatory (fluid) overload is a complication of intravenous therapy. Signs include rapid breathing,

dyspnea, a moist cough, and crackles. When circulatory overload is present, the client's blood pressure also increases. Hematoma is characterized by ecchymosis, swelling, and leakage at the IV insertion site, as well as hard and painful lumps at the site. Air embolism is characterized by tachycardia, dyspnea, hypotension, cyanosis, and decreased level of consciousness. Systemic infection is characterized by chills, fever, malaise, headache, nausea, vomiting, backache, and tachycardia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the data in the question and note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Noting that the client is experiencing rapid breathing and is coughing will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of **circulatory overload**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Medications and Intravenous Therapy

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Alexander et al (2010), p. 256; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 708-709.



## CHAPTER 15

# Administration of Blood Products

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse is administering 1 unit of packed red blood cells (PRBCs) to a client who has never received a blood transfusion. The client suddenly becomes apprehensive and complains of back pain after the first 10 minutes of administration. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 169.*

## **I. Types of Blood Components**

### **A. Packed red blood cells (PRBCs)**

1. Packed red blood cells are a blood product used to replace erythrocytes; infusion time for 1 unit is usually between 2 and 4 hours.
2. Each unit increases the hemoglobin level by 1 g/dL and hematocrit by 3%; the change in laboratory values takes 4 to 6 hours after completion of the blood transfusion.

3. Evaluation of an effective response is based on the resolution of the symptoms of anemia and an increase in the erythrocyte, hemoglobin, and hematocrit count. ▲

▲ Washed red blood cells (depleted of plasma, platelets, and leukocytes) may be prescribed for a client with a history of allergic transfusion reactions or those who underwent hematopoietic stem cell transplant.

## B. Platelet transfusion

1. Platelets are used to treat thrombocytopenia and platelet dysfunctions.
2. **Crossmatching** is not required but usually is done (platelet concentrates contain few red blood cells).
3. The volume in a unit of platelets may vary; always check the bag for the volume of the blood component (in milliliters).
4. Platelets are administered immediately upon receipt from the blood bank and are given rapidly, usually over 15 to 30 minutes.
5. Evaluation of an effective response is based on improvement in the platelet count, and platelet counts normally are evaluated 1 hour and 18 to 24 hours after the transfusion; for each unit of platelets administered, an increase of 5000 to 10,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> is expected. ▲

## C. Fresh-frozen plasma

1. Fresh-frozen plasma may be used to provide clotting factors or volume expansion; it contains no platelets.
2. Fresh-frozen plasma is infused within 2 hours of thawing, while clotting factors are still viable, and is infused over a period of 15 to 30 minutes.

3. Rh **compatibility** and **ABO** compatibility are required for the transfusion of **plasma** products.
4. Evaluation of an effective response is assessed by monitoring coagulation studies, particularly the prothrombin time and the partial thromboplastin time, and resolution of hypovolemia. ▲

#### **D. Cryoprecipitates**

1. Prepared from fresh-frozen plasma, cryoprecipitates can be stored for 1 year. Once thawed, the product must be used; 1 unit is administered over 15 to 30 minutes.
2. Used to replace clotting factors, especially factor VIII and fibrinogen
3. Evaluation of an effective response is assessed by monitoring coagulation studies and fibrinogen levels. ▲

#### **E. Granulocytes**

1. May be used to treat a client with sepsis or a neutropenic client with an infection that is unresponsive to antibiotics.
2. Evaluation of an effective response is assessed by monitoring the white blood cell and differential counts.

**⚠** Document the necessary information about the blood transfusion in the client's medical record (follow agency guidelines). Include the client's tolerance and response to the transfusion and the effectiveness of the transfusion.

## **II. Types of Blood Donations**

## A. Autologous

1. A donation of the client's own blood before a scheduled procedure is an autologous donation; it reduces the risk of disease transmission and potential transfusion complications.
2. Autologous donation is not an option for a client with leukemia or bacteremia.
3. A donation can be made every 3 days as long as the hemoglobin remains within a safe range.
4. Donations should begin within 5 weeks of the transfusion date and end at least 3 days before the date of transfusion.

## B. Blood salvage

1. Blood salvage is an autologous donation that involves suctioning blood from body cavities, joint spaces, or other closed body sites.
2. Blood may need to be "washed," a special process that removes tissue debris before reinfusion.

## C. Designated donor

1. Designated donation occurs when recipients select their own compatible donors.
2. Donation does not reduce the risk of contracting infections transmitted by the blood; however, recipients feel more comfortable identifying their donors.

## III. Compatibility (Table 15-1)

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**TABLE 15-1** Compatibility Chart for Red Blood Cell Transfusions

Donor	RECIPIENT			
	A	B	AB	O
A	X		X	
B		X	X	
AB			X	
O	X	X	X	X

The ABO type of the donor should be compatible with the recipient's. Type A can receive from type A or O; type B from type B or O; type AB can receive from type A, B, AB, or O; type O only from type O.

From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

- A. Client (the recipient) **blood** samples are drawn and labeled at the client's bedside at the time the blood samples are drawn; the client is asked to state his or her name, which is compared with the name on the client's identification band or bracelet. ▲
- B. The recipient's **ABO** type and **Rh** type are identified.
- C. An antibody screen is done to determine the presence of antibodies other than anti-A and anti-B.
- D. To determine compatibility, **crossmatching** is done, in which donor **red blood cells** are combined with the recipient's **serum** and Coombs' serum; the crossmatch is compatible if no red blood cell agglutination occurs.
- E. The universal red blood cell donor is O negative; the universal recipient is AB positive. ▲
- F. Clients with Rh-positive blood can receive RBC transfusion from an Rh-negative

donor if necessary; however, an Rh-negative client should not receive Rh-positive blood. ▲

⚠ The donor's blood and the recipient's blood must be tested for compatibility. If the blood is not compatible, a life-threatening transfusion reaction can occur.

#### IV. Infusion Pumps

- A. Infusion pumps may be used to administer **blood** products if they are designed to function with opaque solutions; special intravenous tubing is used specifically for blood products to prevent hemolysis of **red blood cells**.
- B. Always consult manufacturer guidelines for how to use the pump and **compatibility** for use with blood transfusions.
- C. Special manual pressure cuffs designed specifically for blood product administration may be used to increase the flow rate, but it should not exceed 300 mm Hg.
- D. Standard sphygmomanometer cuffs are not to be used to increase the flow rate because they do not exert uniform pressure against all parts of the bag. ▲

#### V. Blood Warmers

- A. Blood warmers may be used to prevent hypothermia and adverse reactions when several units of blood are being administered.
- B. Special warmers have been designed for this purpose, and only devices specifically approved for this use can be used.

⚠ If blood warming is necessary, use only warming devices specifically

designed and approved for warming blood products. Do not warm blood products in a microwave oven or in hot water.

## VI. Precautions and Nursing Responsibilities (Box 15-1)

### **BOX 15-1** Precautions and Nursing Responsibilities

#### **General Precautions**

A large volume of refrigerated blood infused rapidly through a central venous catheter into the ventricle of the heart can cause cardiac dysrhythmias.

No solution other than normal saline should be added to blood components.

Medications are never added to blood components or piggybacked into a blood transfusion.

To avoid the risk of septicemia, infusions (1 unit) should not exceed the prescribed time for administration (2 to 4 hours for packed red blood cells); follow evidence-based practice guidelines and agency procedure.

The blood administration set should be changed with each unit of blood, or according to agency policy, to reduce the risk of septicemia.

Check the blood bag for the date of expiration; components expire at midnight on the day marked on the bag unless otherwise specified.

Inspect the blood bag for leaks, abnormal color, clots, and bubbles.

Blood must be administered as soon as possible (within 20 to 30 minutes) from its being received from the blood bank, because this is the maximal allowable time out of monitored storage.

Never refrigerate blood in refrigerators other than those used in blood banks; if the blood is not administered within 20 to 30 minutes, return it to the blood bank.

The recommended rate of infusion varies with the blood component being transfused and depends on the client's condition; generally blood is infused as quickly as the client's condition allows.

Components containing few red blood cells and platelets may be infused rapidly, but caution should be taken to avoid circulatory overload.

The nurse should measure vital signs and assess lung sounds before the transfusion and again after the first 15 minutes and every hour until 1 hour after the transfusion is completed.

### **Blood Bank Precautions**

Blood will be released from the blood bank only to personnel specified by agency policy.

The name and identification number of the intended recipient must be provided to the blood bank, and a documented permanent record of this information must be maintained.

Blood should be transported from the blood bank to only one client at a time to prevent blood delivery to the wrong client.

### **Client Identity and Compatibility**

Check the health care provider's (HCP's) prescription for the administration of the blood product.

The most critical phase of the transfusion is confirming product compatibility and verifying client identity.

Two licensed nurses (follow agency policy) need to check the HCP's prescription, the client's identity, and the client's identification band or bracelet and number, verifying that the name and number are identical to those on the blood component tag.

At the bedside, the nurse asks the client to state his or her name, and the nurse compares the name with the name on the identification band or bracelet.

The nurse checks the blood bag tag, label, and blood requisition form to ensure that ABO and Rh types are compatible.

If the nurse notes any inconsistencies when verifying client identity and compatibility, the nurse notifies the blood bank immediately.

### **Client Assessment**

Assess for any cultural or religious beliefs regarding blood transfusions.

A Jehovah's Witness cannot receive blood or blood products; this group believes that blood transfusions have eternal consequences.

Ensure that an informed consent has been obtained.

Explain the procedure to the client and determine whether the client has ever received a blood transfusion or experienced any previous reactions to blood transfusions.

Check the client's vital signs; assess renal, circulatory, and respiratory status and the client's ability to tolerate intravenously administered fluids.

If the client's temperature is elevated, notify the HCP before beginning the transfusion; a fever may be a cause for delaying the transfusion in addition to masking a possible symptom of an acute transfusion reaction.

### **Administration of the Transfusion**

Maintain standard and transmission-based precautions and surgical asepsis as necessary.

Insert an intravenous (IV) line and infuse normal saline; maintain the infusion at a keep-vein-open rate.

An 18- or 19-gauge IV needle will be needed to achieve a maximum flow rate of blood products and to prevent damage to red blood cells; if a smaller gauge needle must be used, red blood cells may be diluted with normal saline (check agency procedure).

A central venous catheter is an acceptable venous access option for blood transfusions; for a multilumen catheter, use the largest catheter port available or check the port size to ensure that it is adequate for blood administration.

Always check the bag for the volume of the blood component.

Blood products should be infused through administration sets designed specifically for blood; use a Y-tubing or straight tubing blood administration set that contains a filter designed to trap fibrin clots and other debris that accumulate during blood storage (Fig. 15-1).



**FIGURE 15-1** Tubing for blood administration has an in-line filter. (From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

Premedicate the client with acetaminophen (Tylenol) or diphenhydramine (Benadryl), as prescribed, if the client has a history of adverse reactions; if prescribed, oral medications should be administered 30 minutes before the transfusion is started, and intravenously administered medications may be given immediately before the transfusion is started.

Instruct the client to report anything unusual immediately.

Determine the rate of infusion by the HCP's prescription or, if not specified, by agency policy.

Begin the transfusion slowly under close supervision; if no reaction is noted within

the first 15 minutes, the flow can be increased to the prescribed rate.

During the transfusion, monitor the client for signs and symptoms of a transfusion reaction; the first 15 minutes of the transfusion are the most critical, and the nurse must stay with the client.

If a major ABO incompatibility exists or a severe allergic reaction occurs, the reaction is usually evident within the first 50 mL of the transfusion.

Document the client's tolerance to the administration of the blood product.

Monitor appropriate laboratory values and document effectiveness of treatment related to the specific type of blood product.

### Reactions to the Transfusion

If a transfusion reaction occurs, stop the transfusion, change the IV tubing down to the IV site, keep the IV line open with normal saline, notify the HCP and blood bank, and return the blood bag and tubing to the blood bank.

Do not leave the client alone, and monitor the client for any life-threatening symptoms.

Obtain appropriate laboratory samples according to agency policies, such as blood and urine samples (free hemoglobin indicates that red blood cells were hemolyzed).



Check the client's identity before administering a blood product. Be sure to check the health care provider's prescription, that the client has an appropriate venous access site, that crossmatching procedures have been completed, that an informed consent has been obtained, and that the correct client is receiving the correct type of blood.

## VII. Complications (Box 15-2)

### BOX 15-2 Complications of a Blood Transfusion

- Transfusion reactions
- Circulatory overload
- Septicemia
- Iron overload
- Disease transmission
- Hypocalcemia
- Hyperkalemia
- Citrate toxicity

 Stay with the client for the first 15 minutes of the infusion of blood and monitor the client for signs and symptoms of a transfusion reaction; the first 15 minutes of the transfusion are the most critical, and the nurse must stay with the client.

5. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) 

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

Actions to Take in the Care of a Client Experiencing a Transfusion Reaction

1. Stop the transfusion.
2. Change the intravenous (IV) tubing down to the IV site and keep the IV line open with normal saline.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP) and blood bank.
4. Stay with the client, observing signs and symptoms and monitoring vital signs as often as every 5 minutes.
5. Prepare to administer emergency medications as prescribed.
6. Obtain a urine specimen for laboratory studies (perform any other laboratory studies as prescribed).
7. Return blood bag, tubing, attached labels, and transfusion record to the blood bank.
8. Document the occurrence, actions taken, and the client's response.

If the client exhibits signs of a transfusion reaction, the nurse immediately stops the transfusion and changes the IV tubing down to the IV site to prevent the entrance of additional blood solution into the client. Normal saline solution is hung and infused to keep the IV line open in the event that emergency medications need to be administered. The HCP is notified and the nurse also notifies the blood bank of the occurrence. The nurse stays with the client and monitors the client closely while other personnel obtain needed supplies to treat the client. As prescribed by the HCP, the nurse administers emergency medications such as antihistamines, vasopressors, fluids, and corticosteroids. The nurse then obtains a urine specimen for laboratory studies and any other laboratory studies as prescribed to check for free hemoglobin indicating that red blood cells were hemolyzed. The blood bag, tubing, attached

labels, and transfusion record are returned to the blood bank so that the blood bank can check the items to determine the reason that the reaction occurred. Finally the nurse documents the occurrence, actions taken, and the client's response.

### ***Reference***

Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby, p. 912.

 Stop the transfusion immediately if a blood transfusion reaction is suspected.

### **B. Circulatory overload**

1. Description: Caused by the infusion of blood at a rate too rapid for the client to tolerate
2. Assessment
  - a. Cough, dyspnea, chest pain, and wheezing on auscultation of the lungs
  - b. Headache
  - c. Hypertension
  - d. Tachycardia and a bounding pulse
  - e. Distended neck veins
3. Interventions 
  - a. Slow the rate of infusion.
  - b. Place the client in an upright position, with the feet in a dependent position.

## A. Transfusion reactions ▲

### 1. Description

- a. A transfusion reaction is an adverse reaction that happens as a result of receiving a **blood** transfusion
- b. Types of transfusion reactions include hemolytic, allergic, febrile or bacterial reactions (**septicemia**), or transfusion-associated graft-versus-host disease (GVHD).

### 2. Signs of an immediate transfusion reaction ▲

- a. Chills and diaphoresis
- b. Muscle aches, back pain, or chest pain
- c. Rashes, hives, itching, and swelling
- d. Rapid, thready pulse
- e. Dyspnea, cough, or wheezing
- f. Pallor and cyanosis
- g. Apprehension
- h. Tingling and numbness
- i. Headache
- j. Nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea

### 3. Signs of a transfusion reaction in an unconscious client

- a. Weak pulse
- b. Fever

- c. Tachycardia or bradycardia
  - d. Hypotension
  - e. Visible hemoglobinuria
  - f. Oliguria or anuria
4. Delayed transfusion reactions
- a. Reactions can occur days to years after a transfusion.
  - b. Signs include fever, mild jaundice, and a decreased hematocrit level.
  - c. Notify the HCP.
  - d. Administer oxygen, diuretics, and morphine sulfate, as prescribed.
  - e. Monitor for dysrhythmias.
  - f. Phlebotomy also may be a method of prescribed treatment in a severe case.

 If circulatory overload is suspected, immediately slow the rate of infusion and place the client in an upright position, with the feet in a dependent position.

### C. Septicemia

1. Description: Occurs with the transfusion of blood that is contaminated with microorganisms
2. Assessment
  - a. Rapid onset of chills and a high fever
  - b. Vomiting
  - c. Diarrhea
  - d. Hypotension

e. Shock

3. Interventions ▲

- a. Notify the HCP.
- b. Obtain blood cultures and cultures of the blood bag.
- c. Administer oxygen, intravenous fluids, antibiotics, vasopressors, and corticosteroids as prescribed.

**D. Iron overload**

1. Description: A delayed transfusion complication that occurs in clients who receive multiple blood transfusions, such as clients with anemia or thrombocytopenia

2. Assessment

- a. Vomiting
- b. Diarrhea
- c. Hypotension
- d. Altered hematological values

3. Interventions ▲

- a. Deferoxamine (Desferal) administered intravenously or subcutaneously, removes accumulated iron via the kidneys.
- b. Urine turns red as iron is excreted after the administration of deferoxamine; treatment is discontinued when **serum** iron levels return to normal.

 **Contact the HCP immediately if a transfusion reaction or a complication of blood administration arises.**

## E. Disease transmission

1. A disease most commonly transmitted is hepatitis C, which is manifested by anorexia, nausea, vomiting, dark urine, and jaundice; the symptoms usually occur within 4 to 6 weeks after the transfusion.
2. Other infectious agents and diseases transmitted by blood transfusion include hepatitis B virus, human immunodeficiency virus, human herpesvirus type 6, Epstein-Barr virus, human T-cell leukemia, cytomegalovirus, and malaria.
3. Donor screening has greatly reduced the risk of transmission of infectious agents; in addition, antibody testing of donors for human immunodeficiency virus has greatly reduced the risk of transmission.

## F. Hypocalcemia

1. Citrate in transfused blood binds with **calcium** and is excreted.
2. Assess serum calcium level before and after the transfusion.
3. Monitor for signs of hypocalcemia (hyperactive reflexes, paresthesias, tetany, muscle cramps, positive Trousseau's sign, positive Chvostek's sign). ▲
4. Slow the transfusion and notify the HCP if signs of hypocalcemia occur.

## G. Hyperkalemia

1. Stored blood liberates **potassium** through hemolysis.
2. The older the blood, the greater the risk of hyperkalemia; therefore clients at risk for hyperkalemia, such as those with renal insufficiency or renal failure, should receive fresh blood.
3. Assess the date on the blood and the serum potassium level before and after the

transfusion.

4. Monitor the potassium level and for signs of hyperkalemia (paresthesias, weakness, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and dysrhythmias). ▲
5. Slow the transfusion and notify the HCP if signs of hyperkalemia occur.

#### H. Citrate toxicity

1. Citrate, the anticoagulant used in blood products, is metabolized by the liver.
2. Rapid administration of multiple units of stored blood may cause hypocalcemia and hypomagnesemia when citrate binds calcium and **magnesium**; this results in citrate toxicity causing myocardial depression and coagulopathy.
3. Those most at risk include individuals with liver dysfunction or neonates with immature liver function.
4. Treatment includes slowing or stopping the transfusion to allow the citrate to be metabolized; hypocalcemia and hypomagnesemia are also treated with replacement therapy.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Signs of an immediate transfusion reaction include the following: chills and diaphoresis; muscle aches, back pain, or chest pain; rash, hives, itching, and swelling; rapid, thready pulse; dyspnea, cough, or wheezing; pallor and cyanosis; apprehension; tingling and numbness; headache; and nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea. In the event that a transfusion reaction is suspected, the nurse should first stop the infusion. The nurse should then change the intravenous (IV)

tubing down to the IV site, keep the IV line open with normal saline, notify the health care provider and the blood bank, and return the blood bag and the tubing to the blood bank. The nurse should also collect a urine specimen. The nurse implements prescriptions and stays with the client and monitors the client closely until the client is stabilized.

### ***Reference***

Lewis et al (2011), p. 707.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 116.** Packed red blood cells have been prescribed for a client with low hemoglobin and hematocrit levels. The nurse takes the client's temperature before hanging the blood transfusion and records 100.6 ° F orally. Which action should the nurse take?
1. Begin the transfusion as prescribed.
  2. Administer an antihistamine and begin the transfusion.
  3. Delay hanging the blood and notify the health care provider (HCP).
  4. Administer two tablets of acetaminophen (Tylenol) and begin the transfusion.
- 117.** The nurse has received a prescription to transfuse a client with a unit of packed red blood cells. Before explaining the procedure to the client, the nurse should ask which **initial** question?
1. "Have you ever had a transfusion before?"
  2. "Why do you think that you need the trans- fusion?"
  3. "Have you ever gone into shock for any reason in the past?"
  4. "Do you know the complications and risks of a transfusion?"
- 118.** A client receiving a transfusion of packed red blood cells (PRBCs) begins to vomit. The client's blood pressure is 90/50 mm Hg from a baseline of 125/78 mm Hg. The client's temperature is 100.8 ° F orally from a baseline of 99.2 ° F orally. The nurse determines that the client may be experiencing which complication of a blood transfusion?

1. Septicemia
2. Hyperkalemia
3. Circulatory overload
4. Delayed transfusion reaction

**119.** The nurse determines that a client is having a transfusion reaction. After the nurse stops the transfusion, which action should be taken **next**?

1. Remove the intravenous (IV) line.
2. Run a solution of 5% dextrose in water.
3. Run normal saline at a keep-vein-open rate.
4. Obtain a culture of the tip of the catheter device removed from the client.

**120.** The nurse has just received a unit of packed red blood cells from the blood bank for transfusion to an assigned client. The nurse is careful to select tubing especially made for blood products, knowing that this tubing is manufactured with which item?

1. An air vent
2. Tinted tubing
3. An in-line filter
4. A microdrip chamber

**121.** A client has received a transfusion of platelets. The nurse evaluates that the client is benefiting most from this therapy if the client exhibits which finding?

1. Increased hematocrit level

2. Increased hemoglobin level
3. Decline of elevated temperature to normal
4. Decreased oozing of blood from puncture sites and gums

122. The nurse has obtained a unit of blood from the blood bank and has checked the blood bag properly with another nurse. Just before beginning the transfusion, the nurse should assess which **priority** item?

1. Vital signs
2. Skin color
3. Urine output
4. Latest hematocrit level

123. The nurse has just received a prescription to transfuse a unit of packed red blood cells for an assigned client. Approximately how long will the nurse need to stay with the client to ensure that a transfusion reaction is not occurring?

1. 5 minutes
2. 15 minutes
3. 30 minutes
4. 45 minutes

124. Following infusion of a unit of packed red blood cells, the client has developed new onset of tachycardia, bounding pulses, crackles, and wheezes. Which action should the nurse implement **first**?

1. Maintain bed rest with legs elevated.

2. Place the client in high-Fowler's position.
3. Increase the rate of infusion of intravenous fluids.
4. Consult with the health care provider (HCP) regarding initiation of oxygen therapy.

125. The nurse, listening to the morning report, learns that an assigned client received a unit of granulocytes the previous evening. The nurse makes a note to assess the results of which daily serum laboratory studies to assess the **effectiveness** of the transfusion?

1. Hematocrit level
2. Erythrocyte count
3. Hemoglobin level
4. White blood cell count

126. A client is brought to the emergency department having experienced blood loss related to an arterial laceration. Fresh-frozen plasma is prescribed and transfused to replace fluid and blood loss. The nurse understands that which is the rationale for transfusing fresh-frozen plasma to this client?

1. To treat the loss of platelets
2. To promote rapid volume expansion
3. Because a transfusion must be done slowly
4. Because it will increase the hemoglobin and hematocrit levels

127. The nurse who is about to begin a blood transfusion knows that blood cells start

to deteriorate after a certain period of time. Which item is important to check regarding the age of blood cells before the transfusion is begun?

1. Expiration date
2. Presence of clots
3. Blood group and type
4. Blood identification number

**128.** A client requiring surgery is anxious about the possible need for a blood transfusion during or after the procedure. The nurse suggests to the client to take which action(s) to reduce the risk of possible transfusion complications? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Ask a family member to donate blood ahead of time.
2. Give an autologous blood donation before the surgery.
3. Take iron supplements before surgery to boost hemoglobin levels.
4. Request that any donated blood be screened twice by the blood bank.
5. Take adequate amounts of vitamin C several days prior to the surgery date.

**129.** A client with severe blood loss resulting from multiple trauma requires rapid transfusion of several units of blood. The nurse asks another health team member to obtain which device for use during the transfusion procedure to help reduce the risk of cardiac dysrhythmias?

1. Infusion pump
2. Pulse oximeter

3. Cardiac monitor
4. Blood-warming device

**130.** A client has a prescription to receive a unit of packed red blood cells. The nurse should obtain which intravenous (IV) solution from the IV storage area to hang with the blood product at the client's bedside?

1. Lactated Ringer's
2. 0.9% sodium chloride
3. 5% dextrose in 0.9% sodium chloride
4. 5% dextrose in 0.45% sodium chloride

## ANSWERS

**116. 3**

**Rationale:** If the client has a temperature higher than 100 ° F, the unit of blood should not be hung until the HCP is notified and has the opportunity to give further prescriptions. The HCP likely will prescribe that the blood be administered regardless of the temperature, but the decision is not within the nurse's scope of practice to make. The nurse needs an HCP's prescription to administer medications to the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate all options that indicate to begin the transfusion noting they are **comparable or alike**. In addition, the options including antihistamine and acetaminophen indicate administering medication to the client, which is not done without an HCP's prescription.

**Review:** Nursing responsibilities related to **blood transfusion**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 707.

### 117. 1

**Rationale:** Asking the client about personal experience with transfusion therapy provides a good starting point for client teaching about this procedure. Questioning about previous history of shock and knowledge of complications and risks of transfusion are not helpful because they may elicit a fearful response from the client. Although determining whether the client knows the reason for the transfusion is important, it is not an appropriate statement in terms of eliciting information from the client regarding an understanding of the need for the transfusion.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the **strategic word** in the question is *initial*. This tells you that the correct option is the best starting point for discussion about the transfusion therapy. Eliminate options that have emotionally laden trigger words, including *gone into shock* and *risks*, respectively, which make them incorrect. From the remaining options, focus on the **strategic word** and use **therapeutic communication techniques** to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Blood transfusion** procedures

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Communication

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 899-900; Potter et al (2013), pp. 911-912, 320-322.

**118. 1**

**Rationale:** Septicemia occurs with the transfusion of blood contaminated with microorganisms. Signs include chills, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, hypotension, and the development of shock. Hyperkalemia causes weakness, paresthesias, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and dysrhythmias. Circulatory overload causes cough, dyspnea, chest pain, wheezing, tachycardia, and hypertension. A delayed transfusion reaction can occur days to years after a transfusion. Signs include fever, mild jaundice, and a decreased hematocrit level.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a complication of a blood transfusion. Noting that the client's temperature is elevated will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Complications of blood transfusions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 708.

**119. 3**

**Rationale:** If the nurse suspects a transfusion reaction, the nurse stops the transfusion and infuses normal saline at a keep-vein-open rate pending further health care provider prescriptions. This maintains a patent IV access line and aids in maintaining the client's intravascular volume. The nurse would not remove the IV line because then there would be no IV access route. Obtaining a culture of the tip of the catheter device removed from the client is

incorrect. First, the catheter should not be removed. Second, cultures are performed when infection, not transfusion reaction, is suspected. Normal saline is the solution of choice over solutions containing dextrose because saline does not cause red blood cells to clump.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *next*. Knowing that the IV line should not be removed assists in eliminating the options directing the nurse to discontinue the device. Recalling that normal saline, not dextrose, is used when administering a unit of blood will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Transfusion reactions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 707.

### 120. 3

**Rationale:** The tubing used for blood administration has an in-line filter. The filter helps ensure that any particles larger than the size of the filter are caught in the filter and are not infused into the client. Tinted tubing is incorrect because blood does not need to be protected from light. The tubing should be macrodrip, not microdrip, to allow blood to flow freely through the drip chamber. An air vent is unnecessary because the blood bag is not made of glass.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, intravenous tubing used to administer blood. Read each option carefully and visualize the process of blood administration. Remember that tubing used for blood administration has an in-line filter.

**Review: Blood administration**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 686.

#### 121. 4

**Rationale:** Platelets are necessary for proper blood clotting. The client with insufficient platelets may exhibit frank bleeding or oozing of blood from puncture sites, wounds, and mucous membranes. Increased hemoglobin and hematocrit levels would occur when the client has received a transfusion of red blood cells. An elevated temperature would decline to normal after infusion of granulocytes if those cells were instrumental in fighting infection in the body.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge regarding the potential uses and benefits of the various types of blood product transfusions. Eliminate increased hematocrit and increased hemoglobin first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, recalling that platelets are necessary for proper blood clotting will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Types of blood products**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 895-896.

**122. 1**

**Rationale:** A change in vital signs during the transfusion from baseline may indicate that a transfusion reaction is occurring. This is why the nurse assesses vital signs before the procedure and again after the first 15 minutes. The other options do not identify assessments that are a priority just before beginning a transfusion.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. This tells you that more than one of the options may be partially or totally correct and that the correct option needs to be assessed for possible comparison during the transfusion. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Blood transfusions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 707.

**123. 2**

**Rationale:** The nurse must remain with the client for the first 15 minutes of a transfusion, which is usually when a transfusion reaction may occur. This enables the nurse to detect a reaction and intervene quickly. The nurse engages in safe nursing practice by obtaining coverage for the other assigned clients during this time. Therefore, the

remaining options are incorrect time frames.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, monitoring a client receiving a blood transfusion, and use knowledge regarding blood transfusion procedures to answer this question. Remember that the client must be monitored directly for the first 15 minutes of the transfusion.

**Review:** **Blood transfusions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 898.

## 124. 2

**Rationale:** New onset of tachycardia, bounding pulses, and crackles and wheezes posttransfusion are evidence of fluid overload, a complication associated with blood transfusions. Placing the client in a high-Fowler's (upright) position will facilitate breathing. Measures that increase blood return to the heart, such as leg elevation and administration of intravenous fluids, should be avoided at this time. In addition, administration of fluids cannot be initiated without a prescription. Consulting with the health care provider regarding administration of oxygen may be necessary, but positional changes take a short amount of time to do and should be initiated first.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Apply knowledge of signs and symptoms of circulatory overload and use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to assist you with selecting the priority action. Remember that placing the client in a high-Fowler's (upright) position will facilitate breathing.

**Review:** **Signs of circulatory overload** and associated nursing actions

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 708-709.

125. 4

**Rationale:** The client who has neutropenia may receive a transfusion of granulocytes, or white blood cells. These clients often have severe infections and are unresponsive to antibiotic therapy. The nurse notes the results of follow-up white blood cell counts and differential to evaluate the effectiveness of the therapy. The nurse also continues to monitor the client for signs and symptoms of infection. Erythrocyte count and hemoglobin and hematocrit levels are determined after transfusion of packed red blood cells.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *effectiveness*. Recalling that granulocytes are a component of white blood cells will assist in directing you to the correct option. In addition, note that the remaining options are **comparable or alike** in that these options all refer to red blood cells.

**Review:** **Types of blood products**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 900.

**126. 2**

**Rationale:** Fresh-frozen plasma is often used for volume expansion as a result of fluid and blood loss. It does not contain platelets, so it is not used to treat any type of low platelet count disorder. It is rich in clotting factors and can be thawed quickly and transfused quickly. It will not specifically increase the hemoglobin and hematocrit level.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, the purpose for transfusing fresh frozen plasma. Note the relationship between the words *experienced blood loss* and the correct option.

**Review:** **Fresh-frozen plasma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 897, 900.

**127. 1**

**Rationale:** The nurse notes the expiration date on the unit of blood to ensure that the blood is fresh. Blood cells begin to deteriorate over time, so safe storage usually is limited to 35 days. Careful notation of the expiration date by the nurse is an essential part of the verification process before hanging a unit of blood. The nurse also notes the blood identification (unit) number, blood group and type, and client's name. The nurse also inspects the unit of blood for leaks, abnormal color, clots, and bubbles and returns the unit to the blood bank if clots are noted.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, measures to verify prior to blood administration. Note the word

*deteriorate*. To answer this question correctly, you must know which part of the pretransfusion verification procedure relates to the *freshness* of the unit of blood. Keeping this in mind should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Blood transfusion

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 898.

❖ 128. 1, 2

**Rationale:** A donation of the client's own blood before a scheduled procedure is autologous. Donating autologous blood to be reinfused as needed during or after surgery reduces the risk of disease transmission and potential transfusion complications. The next most effective way is to ask a family member to donate blood before surgery. Blood banks do not provide extra screening on request. Preoperative iron supplements are helpful for iron deficiency anemia but are not helpful in replacing blood lost during the surgery. Vitamin C enhances iron absorption, but also is not helpful in replacing blood lost during surgery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, reducing the risk of possible transfusion complications. Recalling that an autologous transfusion is the collection of the client's own blood and also that family donation of blood is usually effective will direct you to the correct options.

**Review:** Blood donation procedures

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 244-246; Potter et al (2013), pp. 910-911.

## 129. 4

**Rationale:** If several units of blood are to be administered, a blood warmer should be used. Rapid transfusion of cool blood places the client at risk for cardiac dysrhythmias. To prevent this, the nurse warms the blood with a blood-warming device. Pulse oximetry and cardiac monitoring equipment are useful for the early assessment of complications but do not reduce the occurrence of cardiac dysrhythmias. Electronic infusion devices are not helpful in this case because the infusion must be rapid, and infusion devices generally are used to control the flow rate. In addition, not all infusion devices are made to handle blood or blood products.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the words *rapid* and *reduce the risk*. These words tell you that the infusions will infuse quickly and that the correct option is the one that will minimize the risk of cardiac dysrhythmias. Eliminate the pulse oximeter and cardiac monitor first because these items are **comparable or alike** and are used to assess for rather than reduce the risk of complications. From the remaining options, use knowledge related to the complications of transfusion therapy and note the relationship between the words *several units of blood* in the question and *blood-warming device* in the correct option.

**Review:** **Blood transfusions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), p. 249.

### 130. 2

**Rationale:** Sodium chloride 0.9% (normal saline) is a standard isotonic solution used to precede and follow infusion of blood products. Dextrose is not used because it could result in clumping and subsequent hemolysis of red blood cells. Lactated Ringer's is not the solution of choice with this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options that contain dextrose first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, remember that normal saline is an isotonic solution and the solution compatible with red blood cells.

**Review:** **Blood transfusion** procedures

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Blood Administration

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Alexander et al (2010), pp. 234-235.

# UNIT IV



## Fundamental Skills

### PYRAMID TERMS

**abdominal thrust maneuver** Method to relieve a foreign body airway obstruction.

**automated external defibrillator (AED)** Machine that converts ventricular fibrillation into a perfusing rhythm and allows for early defibrillation by first responders.

**basic life support (BLS)** Provision of oxygen to the brain, heart, and other vital organs until help arrives.

**body mechanics** The coordinated efforts of the musculoskeletal and nervous systems to maintain balance, posture, and body alignment during lifting, bending, and moving to perform activities safely.

**cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)** An interchangeable term for basic life support.

**chest tube** Tube that returns negative pressure to the intrapleural space; used to remove abnormal accumulations of air and fluid from the pleural space.

**conversion** The first step in the calculation of a medication problem.

**endotracheal tube** Tube used to maintain a patent airway; indicated when a client needs mechanical ventilation.

**ergonomic principles** The anatomical, physiological, psychological, and mechanical principles affecting the efficient and safe use of an individual's energy.

**extended postoperative stage** The period of at least 1 to 4 days after surgery.

**Fowler's position** The client is supine and the head of the bed is elevated to 45 to 60 degrees.

**generic name** Also known as the nonproprietary name of a medication, or the U.S. adopted name; each medication has only one generic name.

**health care–associated (nosocomial) infections** Infections acquired in the hospital or other health care facility that were not present or incubating at the time of the client's admission; also referred to as hospital-acquired infections.

**high Fowler's position** The client is supine and the head of the bed is elevated to 90 degrees.

**home safety** Removing items from the home environment and avoiding situations or events that place the client at risk for accident or injury.

**immediate postoperative stage** The period of 1 to 4 hours after surgery.

**intermediate postoperative stage** The period of 4 to 24 hours after surgery.

**lateral (side-lying) position** The client is lying on the side and the head and shoulders are aligned with the hips and the spine and are parallel to the edge of the mattress. The head, neck, and upper arm are supported by a pillow. The lower shoulder is

pulled forward slightly and, along with the elbow, flexed at 90 degrees. The legs are flexed or extended. A pillow is placed to support the back.

**lithotomy position** The client is lying on the back with the hips and knees flexed at right angles and the feet in stirrups.

**medication reconciliation** An organized process to avoid medication errors by comparing the client's medication prescriptions with all the medications that the client was previously taking.

**parenteral** Given by injection, such as by the intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous, or intradermal route.

**perioperative nursing** Nursing care given before (preoperative), during (intraoperative), and after surgery (postoperative).

**physical hazard** Any situation or event that places the client at risk for accident, injury, or death.

**poison** Any substance that impairs health or destroys life when ingested, inhaled, or otherwise absorbed by the body.

**prone position** The client is lying on the abdomen with head turned to the side.

**restraints (safety devices)** Physical devices (that the client is unable to remove) applied to restrict a client's movement are known as physical restraints. Medications given to inhibit a specific behavior or movement are known as chemical restraints.

**reverse Trendelenburg's position** The bed is tilted so that the client's foot of the bed is down.

**semi-Fowler's position (low Fowler's)** The client is supine and the head of the bed is

elevated about 30 degrees.

**Sims' position** The client is lying on the side with the body turned prone at 45 degrees.

The lower leg is extended, with the upper leg flexed at the hip and knee to a 45- to 90-degree angle.

**standard precautions** Guidelines used by all health care providers for all clients to reduce the risk of infection for clients and caregivers.

**supine position** The client is lying on the back. The head and shoulders usually are elevated slightly (depending on the client's condition) with a small pillow. The arms and legs are extended, and the legs are slightly abducted.

**tracheostomy** An opening made surgically directly into the trachea to establish an airway. A tracheostomy tube is inserted into the opening and the tube attaches to the mechanical ventilator or another type of oxygen delivery device.

**trade name** Also known as the proprietary or brand name of a medication. The trade name is the name under which a medication is marketed. A medication can have many trade names; therefore trade names must be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that no two trade names are alike.

**transmission-based precautions** Guidelines used in addition to standard precautions for specific syndromes that are highly suggestive of infections until a diagnosis is confirmed.

**Trendelenburg's position** The bed is tilted so that the client's head of the bed is down. This position is contraindicated in clients with head injuries, increased intracranial pressure, spinal cord injuries, and certain respiratory and cardiac disorders.

**unit** A measurement of a medication in terms of its action, not its physical weight.

**warfare agent** Biological or chemical substance that can cause mass destruction or fatality.

## Pyramid to Success

On the NCLEX-RN<sup>®</sup>, safety and infection control concepts including standard precautions and transmission-based precautions related to client care are a priority focus. Medication or intravenous calculation questions are also a focus on the NCLEX-RN examination. Fill-in-the-blank questions may require that you calculate a medication dose or an intravenous (IV) flow rate. Use the on-screen calculator for these medication and IV problems and then recheck the calculation before selecting an option or typing the answer.

The Pyramid to Success also focuses on emergency care guidelines and procedures performed by the health care provider (HCP), such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the abdominal thrust maneuver, and use of the automated external defibrillator (AED). Perioperative nursing care and monitoring for postoperative complications is a priority. Client safety—related to positioning and ambulation, and care to the client with a tube such as a gastrointestinal tube or chest tube are important concepts addressed on the NCLEX. Because many surgical procedures are performed through ambulatory care units (1-day stay units), Pyramid Points also focus on preparing the client for discharge, teaching related to the prescribed treatments and medications, follow-up care, and the mobilization of home care support services.

## Client Needs

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Acting as an advocate regarding the client's wishes

Collaborating with health care members in other disciplines

Ensuring environmental, personal, and home safety

Ensuring that client's rights are upheld, including informed consent

Establishing priorities of assessments and interventions

Following advance directives regarding the client's documented requests

Following guidelines regarding the use of safety devices

Handling hazardous and infectious materials safely

Informing the client of the surgical process and obtaining informed consent for a surgical procedure and other procedures

Knowing the emergency response plan and actions to take for exposure to biological and chemical warfare agents

Maintaining confidentiality

Maintaining continuity of care and initiating referrals to home care and other support services

Maintaining precautions to prevent errors, accidents, and injury

Positioning the client appropriately and safely

Preparing and administering medications, using rights of medication administration

Preventing a surgical infection

Protecting the medicated client from injury

Upholding client's rights

Using equipment safely

Using ergonomic principles and body mechanics when moving a client

Using standard and transmission-based precautions and surgical asepsis procedures

## **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Assisting clients and families to identify environmental hazards in the home

Performing home safety assessments

Performing the techniques of physical assessment

Providing health and wellness teaching to prevent complications

Respecting lifestyle choices

Teaching clients and families about accident prevention

Teaching clients and families about measures to be implemented in an emergency or disaster

Teaching clients and families about preventing the spread of infection and preventing diseases

Teaching the client about prescribed medication(s) or IV therapy

Teaching significant others to perform Lay Rescuer CPR and the abdominal thrust maneuver

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing and managing the client with sensory and perception alterations

Discussing expected body image changes and situational role changes

Facilitating client and family coping

Identifying support systems

Identifying the cultural, religious, and spiritual factors influencing health

Keeping the family informed of client progress

Providing emotional support to significant others

Providing end-of-life care

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering medications and IV therapy safely

Assessing for expected and unexpected effects of pharmacological therapy

Assessing the mobility and immobility level of the client

Assisting the client with activities of daily living

Calculating medication doses and intravenous flow rates

Documenting the client's response to basic life support (BLS) measures

Handling medical emergencies

Identifying client allergies/sensitivities

Identifying the adverse effects of and contraindications to medication or IV therapy

Implementing priority nursing actions in an emergency or disaster

Initiating nursing interventions when surgical complications arise

Managing and providing care to clients with infectious diseases

Monitoring for alterations in body systems

Monitoring for surgical complications

Monitoring for wound infection

Performing CPR or the abdominal thrust maneuver

Preparing for diagnostic tests to confirm accurate placement of a tube

Preventing the complications of immobility

Promoting an environment that will allow the client to express concerns

Providing comfort and assistance to the client

Providing nutrition and oral intake

Providing personal hygiene as needed

Recognizing changes in the client's condition that indicate a potential complication and  
intervening appropriately

Using assistive devices to prevent injury

Using special equipment



## CHAPTER 16

# Provision of a Safe Environment

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is working in a long-term care facility that has a “no restraint policy.” An assigned client is disoriented and unsteady and continually attempts to climb out of bed. What should the nurse do with regard to instituting safety precautions for this client?

*Answer located on p. 183.*

### I. Environmental Safety

A. Fire safety (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ▲

### PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

#### Actions to Take in the Event of a Fire

1. Rescue clients who are in immediate danger.

2. Activate the fire alarm.
3. Confine the fire.
4. Extinguish the fire: Obtain the fire extinguisher.
5. Pull the pin on the fire extinguisher.
6. Aim at the base of the fire.
7. Squeeze the extinguisher handle.
8. Sweep extinguisher from side to side to coat the area of the fire evenly.

Remember the mnemonic *RACE* to prioritize in the event of a fire. *R* is rescue clients in immediate danger, *A* is alarm (sound the alarm), *C* is confine the fire by closing all doors, and *E* is extinguish. To properly use the fire extinguisher, remember the mnemonic *PASS* to prioritize in the use of a fire extinguisher. *P* is pull the pin, *A* is aim at the base of the fire, *S* is squeeze the handle, and *S* is sweep from side to side to coat the area evenly.

### ***Reference***

Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby, p. 386.

1. Keep open spaces free of clutter.
2. Clearly mark fire exits.
3. Know the locations of all fire alarms, exits, and extinguishers ([Table 16-1](#)); also

see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

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**TABLE 16-1 Types of Fire Extinguishers**

Type	Class of Fire
A	Wood, cloth, upholstery, paper, rubbish, plastic
B	Flammable liquids or gases, grease, tar, oil-based paint
C	Electrical equipment

4. Know the telephone number for reporting fires.
5. Know the fire drill and evacuation plan of the agency.
6. Never use the elevator in the event of a fire.
7. Turn off oxygen and appliances in the vicinity of the fire.
8. In the event of a fire, if a client is on life support, maintain respiratory status manually with an Ambu bag (resuscitation bag) until the client is moved away from the threat of the fire and can be placed back on life support.
9. In the event of a fire, ambulatory clients can be directed to walk by themselves to a safe area and, in some cases, may be able to assist in moving clients in wheelchairs.
10. Bedridden clients generally are moved from the scene of a fire by stretcher, their bed, or wheelchair.
11. If a client must be carried from the area of a fire, appropriate transfer techniques need to be used.
12. If fire department personnel are at the scene of the fire, they will help evacuate clients.

 Remember the mnemonic *RACE* to set priorities in the event of a fire and the mnemonic *PASS* to use a fire extinguisher.

## B. Electrical safety

1. Electrical equipment must be maintained in good working order and should be grounded; otherwise, it presents a **physical hazard**.
2. Use a three-pronged electrical cord.
3. In a three-pronged electrical cord, the third, longer prong of the cord is the ground; the other two prongs carry the power to the piece of electrical equipment.
4. Check electrical cords and outlets for exposed, frayed, or damaged wires. 
5. Avoid overloading any circuit.
6. Read warning labels on all equipment; never operate unfamiliar equipment.
7. Use safety extension cords only when absolutely necessary, and tape them to the floor with electrical tape.
8. Never run electrical wiring under carpets.
9. Never pull a plug by using the cord; always grasp the plug itself.
10. Never use electrical appliances near sinks, bathtubs, or other water sources. 
11. Always disconnect a plug from the outlet before cleaning equipment or appliances.
12. If a client receives an electrical shock, turn off the electricity before touching the client. 

 Any electrical equipment that the client brings into the health care facility must be inspected for safety before use.

## C. Radiation safety

1. Know the protocols and guidelines of the health care agency.
2. Label potentially radioactive material.
3. To reduce exposure to radiation, do the following: 
  - a. Limit the time spent near the source.
  - b. Make the distance from the source as great as possible.
  - c. Use a shielding device such as a lead apron.
4. Monitor radiation exposure with a film (dosimeter) badge.
5. Place the client who has a radiation implant in a private room.
6. Never touch dislodged radiation implants.
7. Keep all linens in the client's room until the implant is removed.

## D. Disposal of infectious wastes

1. Handle all infectious materials as a hazard.
2. Dispose of waste in designated areas only, using proper containers for disposal.
3. Ensure that infectious material is labeled properly.
4. Dispose of all sharps immediately after use in closed, puncture-resistant disposal containers that are leak-proof and labeled or color-coded.

 **Needles (sharps) should not be recapped, bent, or broken because of the risk of accidental injury (needle stick).**

## E. Physiological changes in the older client that increase the risk of accidents (Box 16-

1)

**BOX 16-1****Physiological Changes in Older Clients That Increase the Risk of Accidents****Musculoskeletal Changes**

Strength and function of muscles decrease.

Joints become less mobile and bones become brittle.

Postural changes and limited range of motion occur.

**Nervous System Changes**

Voluntary and autonomic reflexes become slower.

Decreased ability to respond to multiple stimuli occurs.

Decreased sensitivity to touch occurs.

**Sensory Changes**

Decreased vision and lens accommodation and cataracts develop.

Delayed transmission of hot and cold impulses occurs.

Impaired hearing develops, with high-frequency tones less perceptible.

**Genitourinary Changes**

Increased nocturia and occurrences of incontinence may occur.

Adapted from Potter A, Perry P, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby; and Touhy T, Jett K: *Ebersole and Hess' toward healthy aging*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.

## F. Measures to prevent falls (Box 16-2) ▲

### **BOX 16-2** Measures to Prevent Falls

- Assess the client's risk for falling.
- Assign the client at risk for falling to a room near the nurses' station.
- Alert all personnel to the client's risk for falling.
- Assess the client frequently.
- Orient the client to physical surroundings.
- Instruct the client to seek assistance when getting up.
- Explain the use of the call bell system.
- Use safety devices such as bed or chair alarms that alert health care personnel.
- Keep the bed in the low position with side rails adjusted to a safe position (follow agency policy).
- Lock all beds, wheelchairs, and stretchers.
- Keep clients' personal items within their reach.
- Eliminate clutter and obstacles in the client's room.
- Provide adequate lighting.
- Reduce bathroom hazards.
- Maintain the client's toileting schedule throughout the day.

## G. Measures to promote safety in ambulation for the client

1. Gait belt may be used to keep the center of gravity midline

- a. Place the belt on the client prior to ambulation
- b. Encircle the client's waist with the belt
- c. Hold onto the side or back of the belt so that the client does not lean to one side
- d. Return the client to bed or a nearby chair if the client develops dizziness or becomes unsteady.

## H. Steps to prevent injury to the health care worker (Box 16-3) ▲

### BOX 16-3 Steps to Prevent Injury to the Health Care Worker

- Keep the weight to be lifted as close to the body as possible.
- Bend at the knees.
- Tighten abdominal muscles and tuck the pelvis.
- Maintain the trunk erect and knees bent so that multiple muscle groups work together in a coordinated manner.

Adapted from Potter A, Perry P, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

## I. Restraints (safety devices) ▲

1. Restraints (safety devices) are protective devices used to limit the physical activity of a client or to immobilize a client or an extremity.
2. *Physical restraints* restrict client movement through the application of a device.
3. *Chemical restraints* are medications given to inhibit a specific behavior or movement.

#### 4. Interventions

- a. Use alternative devices whenever possible, such as pressure-sensitive beds or chair pads with alarms or other types of bed or chair alarms.
- b. If safety devices are necessary, the health care provider's (HCP's) prescriptions should state the type of restraint, identify specific client behaviors for which restraints are to be used, and identify a limited time frame for use.
- c. HCP's prescriptions for safety devices should be renewed within a specific time frame according to the policy of the agency.
- d. Safety devices are not to be prescribed PRN, that is, as needed.
- e. The reason for the safety device should be given to the client and the family, and their permission should be sought.
- f. Safety devices should not interfere with any treatments or affect the client's health problem.
- g. Use a half-bow or safety knot (quick release tie) to secure the device to the bed frame or chair, not to the side rails.
- h. Ensure that enough slack is on the straps to allow some movement of the body part.
- i. Assess skin integrity and neurovascular and circulatory status every 30 minutes and remove the safety device at least every 2 hours to permit muscle exercise and to promote circulation (follow agency policies).
- j. Continually assess and document the need for safety devices (Box 16-4).

- Reason for safety device
- Method of use for safety device
- Date and time of application of safety device
- Duration of use of safety device and client's response
- Release from safety device with periodic exercise and circulatory, neurovascular, and skin assessment
- Assessment of continued need for safety device
- Evaluation of client's response

 **An HCP's prescription for use of a safety device is needed. Alternative measures for safety devices should always be used first.**

### **5. Alternatives to safety devices**

- a.** Orient the client and family to the surroundings.
- b.** Explain all procedures and treatments to the client and family.
- c.** Encourage family and friends to stay with the client, and use sitters for clients who need supervision.
- d.** Assign confused and disoriented clients to rooms near the nurses' station.
- e.** Provide appropriate visual and auditory stimuli to the client, such as clocks, calendars, television, and a radio.
- f.** Place familiar items, such as family pictures, near the client's bedside.

- g.** Maintain toileting routines.
- h.** Eliminate bothersome treatments, such as tube feedings, as soon as possible.
- i.** Evaluate all medications that the client is receiving.
- j.** Use relaxation techniques with the client.
- k.** Institute exercise and ambulation schedules as the client's condition allows.

## **J. Poisons**

- 1.** A poison is any substance that impairs health or destroys life when ingested, inhaled, or otherwise absorbed by the body.
- 2.** Specific antidotes or treatments are available only for some types of poisons.
- 3.** The capacity of body tissue to recover from a poison determines the reversibility of the effect.
- 4.** Poison can impair the respiratory, circulatory, central nervous, hepatic, gastrointestinal, and renal systems of the body.
- 5.** The toddler, the preschooler, and the young school-age child must be protected from accidental poisoning. ▲
- 6.** In older adults, diminished eyesight and impaired memory may result in accidental ingestion of poisonous substances or an overdose of prescribed medications. ▲
- 7.** A Poison Control Center phone number should be visible on the telephone in homes with small children; in all cases of suspected poisoning, the number should be called immediately. ▲
- 8.** Interventions ▲
  - a.** Remove any obvious materials from the mouth, eyes, or body area immediately.

- b. Identify the type and amount of substance ingested.
- c. Call the Poison Control Center before attempting an intervention.
- d. If the victim vomits or vomiting is induced, save the vomitus if requested to do so, and deliver it to the Poison Control Center.
- e. If instructed by the Poison Control Center to take the person to the emergency department, call an ambulance.
- f. Never induce vomiting following ingestion of lye, household cleaners, grease, or petroleum products.
- g. Never induce vomiting in an unconscious victim.

 The Poison Control Center should be called first before attempting an intervention.

## II. Health Care–Associated (Nosocomial) Infections

- A. Health care–associated (nosocomial) infections also are referred to as *hospital-acquired infections*.
- B. These infections are acquired in a hospital or other health care facility and were not present or incubating at the time of a client’s admission.
- C. *Clostridium difficile* is spread mainly by hand-to-hand contact in a health care setting. Clients taking multiple antibiotics for a prolonged period are most at risk. 
- D. Common drug-resistant infections: Vancomycin-resistant enterococci, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE).

- E. Illness impairs the normal defense mechanisms.
- F. The hospital environment provides exposure to a variety of virulent organisms that the client has not been exposed to in the past; therefore, the client has not developed resistance to these organisms.
- G. Infections can be transmitted by health care personnel who fail to practice proper handwashing procedures or fail to change gloves between client contacts.
- H. At many health care agencies, dispensers containing an alcohol-based solution for hand rubs are mounted at the entrance to each client's room.

### III. Standard Precautions

#### A. Description

1. Nurses must practice standard precautions with all clients in any setting, regardless of the diagnosis or presumed infectiousness.
2. Standard precautions include hand washing and the use of gloves, masks, eye protection, and gowns, when appropriate, for client contact.
3. These precautions apply to blood, all body fluids (whether or not they contain blood), secretions and excretions, nonintact skin, and mucous membranes.

#### B. Interventions

1. Wash hands between client contacts; after contact with blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions, nonintact skin, or mucous membranes; after contact with equipment or contaminated articles; and immediately after removing gloves.
2. Wear gloves when touching blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, nonintact

skin, mucous membranes, or contaminated items; remove gloves and wash hands between client care contacts.

3. For routine decontamination of hands use alcohol-based hand rubs when hands are not visibly soiled. For more information on hand hygiene from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, please see [www.cdc.gov/nceh/vsp/cruiselines/hand\\_hygiene\\_general.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/vsp/cruiselines/hand_hygiene_general.htm).
4. Wear masks, eye protection, or face shields if client care activities may generate splashes or sprays of blood or body fluid.
5. Wear gowns if soiling of clothing is likely from blood or body fluid; wash hands after removing a gown.
6. Clean and reprocess client care equipment properly and discard single-use items.
7. Place contaminated linen in leak-proof bags and limit handling to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure.
8. Use needleless devices or special needle safety devices whenever possible to reduce the risk of needle sticks and sharps injuries to health care workers.
9. Discard all sharp instruments and needles in a puncture-resistant container; dispose of needles uncapped or use a mechanical device for recapping the needle, if necessary and available.
10. Clean spills of blood or body fluids with a solution of bleach and water (diluted 1:10) or agency-approved disinfectant.

 **Handle all blood and body fluids from all clients as if they were contaminated.**

## **IV. Transmission-Based Precautions**

**A.** Transmission-based precautions include airborne, droplet, and contact precautions.

**B.** Airborne precautions

**1.** Diseases

- a.** Measles
- b.** Chickenpox (varicella)
- c.** Disseminated varicella zoster
- d.** Tuberculosis

**2.** Barrier protection ▲

- a.** Single room is maintained under negative pressure; door remains closed except upon entering and exiting.
- b.** Negative airflow pressure is used in the room, with a minimum of 6 to 12 air exchanges per hour depending on health care agency protocol.
- c.** Ultraviolet germicide irradiation or high-efficiency particulate air filter is used in the room.
- d.** Health care workers wear a mask or personal respiratory protection device.
- e.** Mask is placed on the client when the client needs to leave the room; client leaves the room only if necessary.

**C.** Droplet precautions

**1.** Diseases

- a.** Adenovirus
- b.** Diphtheria (pharyngeal)

- c. Epiglottitis
- d. Influenza (flu)
- e. Meningitis
- f. Mumps
- g. Mycoplasmal pneumonia or meningococcal pneumonia
- h. Parvovirus B19
- i. Pertussis
- j. Pneumonia
- k. Rubella
- l. Scarlet fever
- m. Sepsis
- n. Streptococcal pharyngitis

## 2. Barrier protection

- a. Private room or cohort client (a client whose body cultures contain the same organism)
- b. Wear a surgical mask when within 3 feet of a client.
- c. Place a mask on the client when the client needs to leave the room.

## D. Contact precautions

### 1. Diseases

- a. Colonization or infection with a multidrug-resistant organism
- b. Enteric infections, such as *Clostridium difficile*
- c. Respiratory infections, such as respiratory syncytial virus

- d. Influenza: Infection can occur by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching the mouth or nose.
  - e. Wound infections
  - f. Skin infections, such as cutaneous diphtheria, herpes simplex, impetigo, pediculosis, scabies, staphylococci, and varicella zoster
  - g. Eye infections, such as conjunctivitis
  - h. Indirect contact transmission may occur when contaminated object or instrument, or hands, are encountered.
2. Barrier protection 
- a. Private room or cohort client
  - b. Use of gloves and a gown when in contact with the client

## V. Emergency Response Plan and Disasters

- A. Know the emergency response plan of the agency.
- B. *Internal disasters* are those in which the agency is in danger.
- C. *External disasters* occur in the community, and victims are brought to the health care facility for care.
- D. When the health care agency is notified of a disaster, the nurse would follow the guidelines specified in the emergency response plan of the agency. 
- E. See [Chapter 8](#) for additional information on disaster planning.

 In the event of a disaster, the emergency response plan is immediately activated.

## VI. Biological Warfare Agents

A. A warfare agent is a biological or chemical substance that can cause mass destruction or fatality.

B. Anthrax (Fig. 16-1)



**FIGURE 16-1** Anthrax. (From Swartz M: *Textbook of physical diagnosis*, ed 6, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

1. The disease is caused by *Bacillus anthracis* and can be contracted through the digestive system, abrasions in the skin, or inhalation through the lungs.
2. Anthrax is transmitted by direct contact with bacteria and spores; spores are dormant encapsulated bacteria that become active when they enter a living host (no person-to-person spread) (Box 16-5). ▲

### BOX 16-5 Anthrax: Transmission and Symptoms

#### Skin

Spores enter the skin through cuts and abrasions and are contracted by handling contaminated animal skin products.

Infection starts with an itchy bump like a mosquito bite that progresses to a small

liquid-filled sac.

The sac becomes a painless ulcer with an area of black, dead tissue in the middle.

Toxins destroy surrounding tissue.

### **Gastrointestinal**

Infection occurs following the ingestion of contaminated undercooked meat.

Symptoms begin with nausea, loss of appetite, and vomiting.

The disease progresses to severe abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea.

### **Inhalation**

Infection is caused by the inhalation of bacterial spores, which multiply in the alveoli.

The disease begins with the same symptoms as the flu, including fever, muscle aches, and fatigue.

Symptoms suddenly become more severe with the development of breathing problems and shock.

Toxins cause hemorrhage and destruction of lung tissue.

3. The infection is carried to the lymph nodes and then spreads to the rest of the body by way of the blood and lymph; high levels of toxins lead to shock and death.
4. In the lungs, anthrax can cause buildup of fluid, tissue decay, and death (fatal if untreated).

5. A blood test is available to detect anthrax (detects and amplifies *Bacillus anthracis* DNA if present in the blood sample).
6. Anthrax is usually treated with antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin (Cipro), doxycycline, or penicillin.
7. The vaccine for anthrax has limited availability.

### C. Smallpox (Fig. 16-2)



**FIGURE 16-2** Smallpox. (Courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]: *Evaluating patients for smallpox*. Atlanta, 2002, CDC.)

1. Smallpox is transmitted in air droplets and by handling contaminated materials and is highly contagious. ▲
2. Symptoms begin 7 to 17 days after exposure and include fever, back pain, vomiting, malaise, and headache.
3. Papules develop 2 days after symptoms develop and progress to pustular vesicles that are abundant on the face and extremities initially.
4. A vaccine is available to those at risk for exposure to smallpox.

### D. Botulism

1. Botulism is a serious paralytic illness caused by a nerve toxin produced by the

bacterium *Clostridium botulinum* (death can occur within 24 hours).

2. Its spores are found in the soil and can spread through the air or food (improperly canned food) or via a contaminated wound. ▲
3. Botulism cannot be spread from person to person. ▲
4. Symptoms include abdominal cramps, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, double vision, blurred vision, drooping eyelids, difficulty swallowing or speaking, dry mouth, and muscle weakness.
5. Neurological symptoms begin 12 to 36 hours after ingestion of food-borne botulism and 24 to 72 hours after inhalation and can progress to paralysis of the arms, legs, trunk, or respiratory muscles (mechanical ventilation is necessary).
6. If diagnosed early, food-borne and wound botulism can be treated with an antitoxin that blocks the action of toxin circulating in the blood.
7. Other treatments include induction of vomiting, enemas, and penicillin.
8. No vaccine is available.

## E. Plague

1. Plague is caused by *Yersinia pestis*, a bacteria found in rodents and fleas.
2. Plague is contracted by being bitten by a rodent or flea that is carrying the plague bacterium, by the ingestion of contaminated meat, or by handling an animal infected with the bacteria. ▲
3. Transmission is by direct person-to-person spread. ▲
4. Forms include bubonic (most common), pneumonic, and septicemic (most deadly).
5. Symptoms usually begin within 1 to 3 days and include fever, chest pain, lymph

node swelling, and a productive cough (hemoptysis).

6. The disease rapidly progresses to dyspnea, stridor, and cyanosis; death occurs from respiratory failure, shock, and bleeding.
7. Antibiotics are effective only if administered immediately; the usual medications of choice include streptomycin or gentamicin.
8. A vaccine is available.

#### F. Tularemia

1. Tularemia (also called *deer fly fever* or *rabbit fever*) is an infectious disease of animals caused by the bacillus *Francisella tularensis*.
2. The disease is transmitted by ticks, deer flies, or contact with an infected animal. ▲
3. Symptoms include fever, headache, and an ulcerated skin lesion with localized lymph node enlargement, eye infections, gastrointestinal ulcerations, or pneumonia.
4. Treatment is with antibiotics.
5. Recovery produces lifelong immunity (a vaccine is available).

#### G. Hemorrhagic fever

1. Hemorrhagic fever is caused by several viruses, including Marburg, Lassa, Junin, and Ebola.
2. The virus is carried by rodents and mosquitoes. ▲
3. The disease can be transmitted directly by person-to-person spread via body fluids. ▲
4. Symptoms include fever, headache, malaise, conjunctivitis, nausea, vomiting,

hypotension, hemorrhage of tissues and organs, and organ failure.

5. No known specific treatment is available; treatment is symptomatic.

 Anthrax is transmitted by direct contact with bacteria and spores and can be contracted through the digestive system, abrasions in the skin, or inhalation through the lungs.

## VII. Chemical Warfare Agents

### A. Sarin

1. Sarin is a highly toxic nerve gas that can cause death within minutes of exposure.
2. It enters the body through the eyes and skin and acts by paralyzing the respiratory muscles.

**B.** Phosgene is a colorless gas normally used in chemical manufacturing that if inhaled at high concentrations for a long-enough period will lead to severe respiratory distress, pulmonary edema, and death.

**C.** Mustard gas is yellow to brown and has a garlic-like odor that irritates the eyes and causes skin burns and blisters.

### D. Ionizing radiation

1. Acute radiation exposure develops after a substantial exposure to radiation.
2. Exposure can occur from external radiation or internal absorption.
3. Symptoms depend on the amount of exposure to the radiation and range from nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, fever, electrolyte imbalances, and neurological and cardiovascular impairment to leukopenia, purpura, hemorrhage, and death.

## VIII. Nurse's Role in Exposure to Warfare Agents ▲

- A. Be aware that initially, a bioterrorism attack may resemble a naturally occurring outbreak of an infectious disease.
- B. Nurses and other health care workers must be prepared to assess and determine what type of event occurred, the number of clients who may be affected, and how and when clients will be expected to arrive at the health care agency.
- C. It is essential to determine any changes in the microorganism that may increase its virulence or make it resistant to conventional antibiotics or vaccines.
- D. See [Chapter 8](#) for additional information on disasters and emergency response planning.

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Many facilities implement a “no restraint policy,” which requires health care workers to implement other safety strategies for clients who pose a risk for falls. These strategies include orienting the client and family to the surroundings; explaining all procedures and treatments to the client and family; encouraging family and friends to stay with the client as appropriate and using sitters for clients who need supervision; assigning confused and disoriented clients to rooms near the nurses’ station; providing appropriate visual and auditory stimuli to the client, such as clocks, calendars, television, and a radio; maintaining toileting routines; eliminating bothersome treatments, such as tube feedings, as soon as possible; evaluating all

medications that the client is receiving; using relaxation techniques with the client; and instituting exercise and ambulation schedules as the client's condition allows.

### ***Reference***

Potter et al (2013), pp. 384-386.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 131.** The nurse is preparing to initiate an intravenous line containing a high dose of potassium chloride and plans to use an intravenous infusion pump. The nurse brings the pump to the bedside, prepares to plug the pump cord into the wall, and notes that no receptacle is available in the wall socket. The nurse should take which action?
1. Initiate the intravenous line without the use of a pump.
  2. Contact the electrical maintenance department for assistance.
  3. Plug in the pump cord in the available plug above the room sink.
  4. Use an extension cord from the nurses' lounge for the pump plug.
- 132.** The nurse obtains a prescription from a health care provider to restrain a client and instructs an unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) to apply the safety device to the client. Which observation by the nurse indicates unsafe application of the safety device by the UAP?
1. Placing a safety knot in the safety device straps
  2. Safely securing the safety device straps to the side rails
  3. Applying safety device straps that do not tighten when force is applied against them
  4. Securing so that two fingers can slide easily between the safety device and the client's skin
- 133.** The community health nurse is providing a teaching session about terrorism to

members of the community and is discussing information regarding anthrax. The nurse tells those attending that anthrax can be transmitted by which route(s)?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Bites from ticks or deer flies
2. Inhalation of bacterial spores
3. Through a cut or abrasion in the skin
4. Direct contact with an infected individual
5. Sexual contact with an infected individual
6. Ingestion of contaminated undercooked meat

**134.** The nurse is giving a report to an unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) who will be caring for a client who has hand restraints (safety devices). The nurse instructs the UAP to check the skin integrity of the restrained hands how frequently?

1. Every 2 hours
2. Every 3 hours
3. Every 4 hours
4. Every 30 minutes

**135.** The nurse is reviewing a plan of care for a client with an internal radiation implant. Which intervention if noted in the plan indicates the need for revision of the plan?

1. Wearing gloves when emptying the client's bedpan

2. Keeping all linens in the room until the implant is removed
3. Wearing a lead apron when providing direct care to the client
4. Placing the client in a semiprivate room at the end of the hallway

136. Contact precautions are initiated for a client with a health care–associated (nosocomial) infection caused by methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

The nurse prepares to provide colostomy care and should obtain which protective items to perform this procedure?

1. Gloves and gown
2. Gloves and goggles
3. Gloves, gown, and shoe protectors
4. Gloves, gown, goggles, and face shield

137. The nurse enters a client’s room and finds that the wastebasket is on fire. The nurse immediately assists the client out of the room. What is the **next** nursing action?

1. Call for help.
2. Extinguish the fire.
3. Activate the fire alarm.
4. Confine the fire by closing the room door.

138. A mother calls a neighbor who is a nurse and tells the nurse that her 3-year-old child has just ingested liquid furniture polish. The nurse would direct the mother to take which **immediate** action?

1. Induce vomiting.
2. Call an ambulance.
3. Call the Poison Control Center.
4. Bring the child to the emergency department.

139. The emergency department nurse receives a telephone call and is informed that a tornado has hit a local residential area and that numerous casualties have occurred. The victims will be brought to the emergency department. The nurse should take which **initial** action?

1. Prepare the triage rooms.
2. Activate the emergency response plan.
3. Obtain additional supplies from the central supply department.
4. Obtain additional nursing staff to assist in treating the casualties.

140. The nurse is caring for a client with meningitis and implements which transmission-based precautions for this client?

1. Private room or cohort client
2. Personal respiratory protection device
3. Private room with negative airflow pressure
4. Mask worn by staff when the client needs to leave the room

## ANSWERS

**Rationale:** Electrical equipment must be maintained in good working order and should be grounded; otherwise it presents a physical hazard. An intravenous line that contains a dose of potassium chloride should be administered by an infusion pump. The nurse needs to use hospital resources for assistance. A regular extension cord should not be used because it poses a risk for fire. Use of electrical appliances near a sink also presents a hazard.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, electrical safety. Recalling safety issues will direct you to the correct option. Contacting the maintenance department is the only correct option since the other options are not considered safe practice when implementing electrical actions. In addition, since potassium chloride is in the IV solution, a pump must be used.

**Review:** **Electrical safety**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 382, 387.

## 132. 2

**Rationale:** The safety device straps are secured to the bed frame and never to the side rail to avoid accidental injury in the event that the side rail is released. A half-bow or safety knot should be used for applying a safety device because it does not tighten when force is applied against it and it allows quick and easy removal of the safety device in case of an emergency. The safety device should be secure, and one or two fingers should slide easily between the safety device and the client's skin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the unsafe intervention. Read each option carefully. The words *securing the safety device straps to the side rails* in the correct option should direct your attention to this as an incorrect and unsafe action.

**Review:** Safety device application

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Quality; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 47.

❖ 133. 2, 3, 6

**Rationale:** Anthrax is caused by *Bacillus anthracis* and can be contracted through the digestive system or abrasions in the skin, or inhaled through the lungs. It cannot be spread from person to person or from animal to person, and it is not contracted via bites from ticks or deer flies.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, routes of transmission of anthrax. Knowledge regarding the methods of contracting anthrax is needed to answer this question. Remember that it is not spread by person-to-person contact or contracted via tick or deer fly bites.

**Review:** Anthrax

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Client Teaching; Infection

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1781-1782.

**134. 4**

**Rationale:** The nurse should instruct the UAP to check safety devices and skin integrity every 30 minutes. The neurovascular and circulatory status of the extremity should also be checked every 30 minutes. In addition, the safety device should be removed at least every 2 hours to permit muscle exercise and to promote circulation. Agency guidelines regarding the use of safety devices should always be followed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, checking skin integrity of a client with safety devices. In this situation, selecting the option that identifies the most frequent time frame is best.

**Review:** **Safety device** guidelines

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Quality; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 48.

**135. 4**

**Rationale:** A private room with a private bath is essential if a client has an internal radiation implant. This is necessary to prevent accidental exposure of other clients to radiation. The remaining options identify accurate interventions for a client with an internal radiation implant and protect the nurse from exposure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the need for revision in the plan of care. These words indicate the need to select the incorrect nursing intervention. Remember that the client with an internal radiation implant needs to be placed in a private room.

**Review:** **Radiation safety** principles

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 413.

#### 136. 4

**Rationale:** Splashes of body secretions can occur when providing colostomy care. Goggles and a face shield are worn to protect the face and mucous membranes of the eyes during interventions that may produce splashes of blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions. In addition, contact precautions require the use of gloves, and a gown should be worn if direct client contact is anticipated. Shoe protectors are not necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, protective items needed to perform colostomy care. Also, note the words *contact precautions*. Visualize care for this client to determine the necessary items required for self-protection. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Transmission-based precautions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 68-69.

### 137. 3

**Rationale:** The order of priority in the event of a fire is to rescue the clients who are in immediate danger. The next step is to activate the fire alarm. The fire then is confined by closing all doors and, finally, the fire is extinguished.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *next*. Remember the mnemonic *RACE* to prioritize in the event of a fire. *R* is rescue clients in immediate danger, *A* is alarm (sound the alarm), *C* is confine the fire by closing all doors, and *E* is extinguish or evacuate.

**Review:** Fire safety

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 53.

### 138. 3

**Rationale:** If a poisoning occurs, the Poison Control Center should be contacted immediately. Vomiting should not be induced if the victim is unconscious or if the substance ingested is a strong corrosive or petroleum product.

Bringing the child to the emergency department or calling an ambulance would not be the initial action because this

would delay treatment. The Poison Control Center may advise the mother to bring the child to the emergency department and, if this is the case, the mother should call an ambulance.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediate*. Calling the Poison Control Center is the first action since they will direct the mother on the next step to take based on the type of poisoning. The other options are unsafe or could cause a delay in treatment.

**Review:** **Poison control** measures

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1779-1780; Potter et al (2013), p. 367.

## 139. 2

**Rationale:** In an external disaster (a disaster that occurs outside of the institution or agency), many victims may be brought to the emergency department for treatment. The initial nursing action must be to activate the emergency response plan. Once the emergency response plan is activated, the actions in the other options will occur.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* and determine the priority action. Note that the correct option is the **umbrella option**. The emergency response plan includes all the other options.

**Review:** **Disaster preparedness**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1783-1785.

**140. 1**

**Rationale:** Meningitis is transmitted by droplet infection. Precautions for this disease include a private room or cohort client and use of a standard precaution mask. Private negative airflow pressure rooms and personal respiratory protection devices are required for clients with airborne disease such as tuberculosis. When appropriate, a mask must be worn by the client and not the staff when the client leaves the room.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the correct precaution needs for a client with meningitis. Recalling that meningitis is transmitted by droplets will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Transmission-based precautions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1455.



## CHAPTER 17

# Calculation of Medication and Intravenous Prescriptions

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse is preparing to administer 30 mL of a liquid medication to an assigned client. What should the nurse do when preparing this medication?

*Answer located on p. 193.*

### **I. Medication Administration** (Box 17-1)

#### **BOX 17-1** Medication Administration

Assess the medication prescription.

Compare the client's medication prescription with all the medications that the client was previously taking (medication reconciliation).

Ask the client about a history of allergies.

Assess the client's current condition and the purpose for the medication or

intravenous solution.

Determine the client's understanding regarding the purpose of the prescribed medication or need for intravenous solution.

Teach the client about the medication and about self-administration at home.

Identify and address concerns (social, cultural, religious) that the client may have about taking the medication.

Assess the need for conversion when preparing a dose of medication for administration to the client.

Assess the six rights of medication administration: right medication, right dose, right client, right route, right time, and right documentation.

Assess the vital signs, check significant laboratory results, and identify any potential interactions (food or medication interactions) before administering medication, when appropriate.

Document the administration of the prescribed therapy and client's response to the therapy.

## II. Drug Measurement Systems

### A. Metric system (Box 17-2)

#### **BOX 17-2** Metric System

##### Abbreviations

meter: m

liter: L

milliliter: mL

kilogram: kg

gram: g

milligram: mg

microgram: mcg

### Equivalents

1 mcg = 0.000001 g

1 mg = 1000 mcg or 0.001 g

1 g = 1000 mg

1 kg = 1000 g

1 kg = 2.2 lb

1 mL = 0.001 L

1. The basic units of metric measures are the meter, liter, and gram.

2. Meter measures length; liter measures volume; gram measures mass.

### B. Apothecary and household systems ([Box 17-3](#))

#### **BOX 17-3** Apothecary and Household Systems

##### Abbreviations

##### *Apothecary (Weight)*

grain: gr

ounce: oz

### ***Household (Volume)***

drops: gtt

teaspoon: t or tsp

tablespoon: T or tbs

fluid ounce: fl oz

cup: C

pint: pt

quart: qt

### ***Household (Weight)***

pound: lb

### **Equivalents**

1 gr = 60 or 65 mg

5 gr = 300 or 325 mg

15 gr = 1000 mg or 1 g

$\frac{1}{150}$  gr = 0.4 mg

1 fl oz = 30 mL

1 T = 15 mL or 3 tsp

1 t or tsp = 5 mL

1 C = 8 fl oz

1 qt = 946 mL or 0.946 L

1 qt = 2 pt or 32 fl oz

1 pt = 16 fl oz

16 oz = 1 lb

1 kg = 2.2 lb

1. The apothecary and household systems are the oldest of the medication measurement systems.
2. Apothecary measures such as grain, dram, minim, and ounce are not commonly used in the clinical setting.
3. Commonly used household measures include drop, teaspoon, tablespoon, ounce, pint, and cup.

#### C. Additional common drug measures

##### 1. Milliequivalent

- a. Milliequivalent is abbreviated mEq.
- b. The milliequivalent is an expression of the number of grams of a medication contained in 1 mL of a solution.
- c. For example, the measure of serum potassium is given in milliequivalents.

##### 2. Unit

- a. Unit measures a medication in terms of its action, not its physical weight.
- b. For example, penicillin, heparin sodium, and insulin are measured in units.

### III. Conversions

## A. Conversion between metric units (Box 17-4)

### BOX 17-4 Conversion between Metric Units

#### Problem 1

Convert 2 g to milligrams.

#### *Solution*

Change a larger unit to a smaller unit:

$$2 \text{ g} = 2000\text{mg (moving decimalpoint three places to right)}$$

#### Problem 2

Convert 250 mL to liters.

#### *Solution*

$$250\text{mL} = 0.25 \text{ L (moving decimalpoint three places to left)}$$

1. The metric system is a decimal system; therefore conversions between the units in this system can be done by dividing or multiplying by 1000 or by moving the decimal point three places to the right or three places to the left. ▲
2. In the metric system, to convert larger to smaller, multiply by 1000 or move the decimal point three places to the right.
3. In the metric system, to convert smaller to larger, divide by 1000 or move the decimal point three places to the left.

## B. Conversion between household and metric systems

1. Household and metric measures are equivalent and not equal measures.
2. Conversion to equivalent measures between systems is necessary when a medication prescription is written in one system but the medication label is stated in another.
3. Medications are not always prescribed and prepared in the same system of measurement; therefore conversion of units from one system to another is necessary.
4. Calculating equivalents between two systems may be done by using the method of ratio and proportion (Boxes 17-5 and 17-6).

### **BOX 17-5**      **Ratio and Proportion**

*Ratio:* The relationship between two numbers, separated by a colon; for example, 1:2 (1 to 2).

*Proportion:* The relationship between two ratios, separated by a double colon (::) or an equal sign (=).

#### **Formula:**

H(on hand) : V(vehicle) :: (=)(desired dose): X(unknown)

*To solve a ratio and proportion problem:* The middle numbers (means) are multiplied and the end numbers (extremes) are multiplied.

#### **Sample Problem**

H = 1

$$V = 2$$

$$\text{Desired dose} = 3$$

$$X = \text{unknown}$$

Set up the formula:  $1 : 2 :: 3 : X$

*Solve:* Multiply means and extremes:

$$1X = 6$$

$$X = 6$$

### **BOX 17-6** Calculating Equivalents between Two Systems

Calculating equivalents between two systems may be done by using the method of ratio and proportion.

#### **Problem**

The health care provider prescribes nitroglycerin, grain (gr)  $\frac{1}{150}$ .

The medication label reads 0.4 milligrams (mg) per tablet.

The nurse prepares to administer how many tablets to the client?

If you knew that  $\frac{1}{150}$  gr was equal to 0.4 mg you would know that you need to administer 1 tablet. Otherwise, use the ratio and proportion formula.

#### **Ratio and Proportion Formula**

H(on hand):V(vehicle)::(=)(desired dose):X

$$1 \text{ gr} : 60\text{mg} :: \frac{1}{150} \text{ gr} : X \text{ mg}$$

$$60 \times \frac{1}{150} = X$$

$$X = 0.4\text{mg (1 tablet)}$$

 Conversion is the first step in the calculation of dosages.

## IV. Celsius and Fahrenheit Temperature (Box 17-7)

### BOX 17-7 Celsius and Fahrenheit Temperature Conversion

#### Fahrenheit to Celsius

To convert Fahrenheit to Celsius, subtract 32 and divide the result by 1.8.

**Formula:**

$$C = \frac{(F - 32)}{1.8}$$

#### Celsius to Fahrenheit

To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, multiply by 1.8 and add 32.

**Formula:**

$$F = (1.8 \times C) + 32$$

- A. To convert Fahrenheit to Celsius, subtract 32 and divide the result by 1.8.
- B. To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, multiply by 1.8 and add 32.

## V. Medication Labels

- A. A medication label contains the **generic name** and the **trade name** of the medication.
- B. Always check expiration dates on medication labels. ▲

## VI. Medication Prescriptions (Box 17-8)

### BOX 17-8 Medication Prescriptions

- Name of client
- Date and time when prescription is written
- Name of medication to be given
- Dosage of medication
- Medication route
- Time and frequency of administration
- Signature of person writing the prescription

- A. In a medication prescription, the name of the medication is written first, followed by the dosage, route, and frequency (depending on the frequency of the prescription, times of administration are usually established by the health care agency and written in an agency policy).
- B. Medication prescriptions need to be written using accepted abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols approved by The Joint Commission; also follow agency guidelines. ▲

 **If the nurse has any questions about or sees inconsistencies in the written**

prescription, the nurse must contact the person who wrote the prescription immediately and must verify the prescription.

## VII. Oral Medications

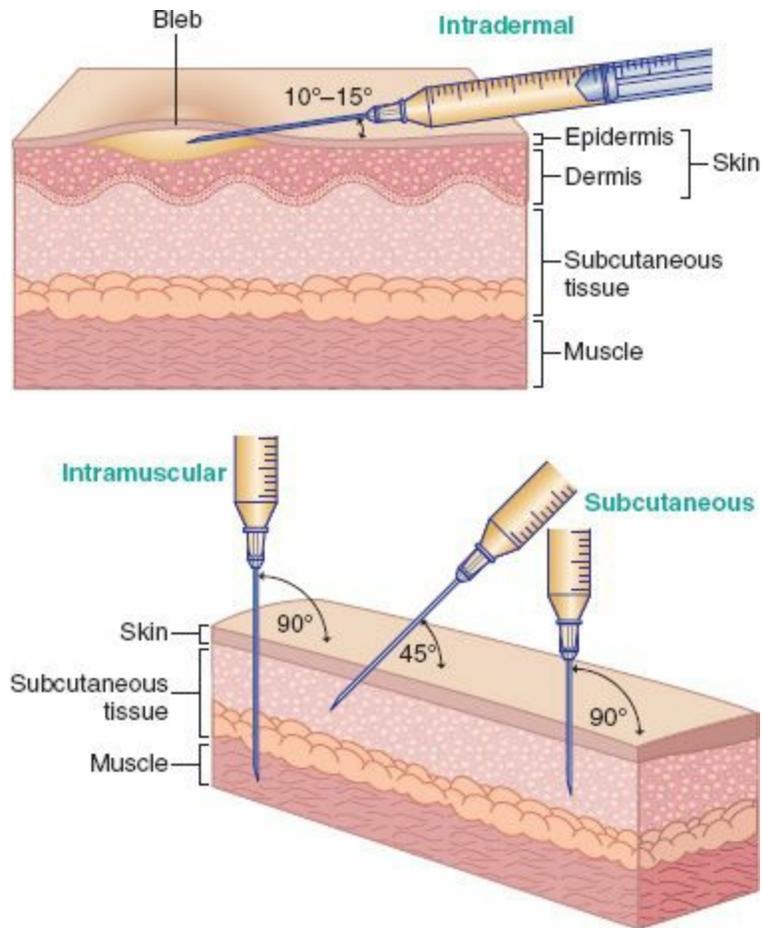
- A. Scored tablets contain an indented mark to be used for possible breakage into partial doses; when necessary, scored tablets (those marked for division) can be divided into halves or quarters.
- B. Enteric-coated tablets and sustained-released capsules delay absorption until the medication reaches the small intestine; these medications should not be crushed.
- C. Capsules contain a powdered or oily medication in a gelatin cover.
- D. Orally administered liquids are supplied in solution form and contain a specific amount of medication in a given amount of solution, as stated on the label. ▲
- E. The medicine cup
  - 1. The medicine cup has a capacity of 30 mL or 1 oz and is used for orally administered liquids.
  - 2. The medicine cup is calibrated to measure teaspoons, tablespoons, and ounces.
  - 3. To pour accurately, place the medication cup on a level surface at eye level and then pour the liquid while reading the measuring markings.
- F. Volumes of less than 5 mL are measured by using a syringe with the needle removed.

▲ A calibrated syringe is used for giving medicine to children.

## VIII. Parenteral Medications

- A. Parenteral always means an injection route and parenteral medications are

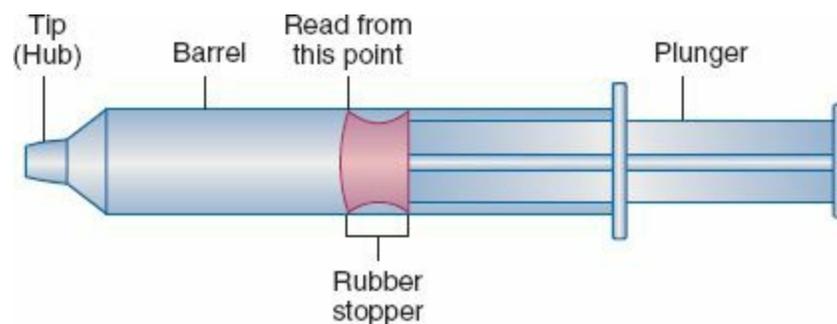
administered by intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous, or intradermal injection (see Fig. 17-1 for angles of injection).



**FIGURE 17-1** Angles of injection. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

- B.** Parenteral medications are packaged in single-use ampules, in single- and multiple-use rubber-stoppered vials, and in premeasured syringes and cartridges.
- C.** The nurse should not administer more than 3 mL per intramuscular or 1 mL per subcutaneous injection site; larger volumes are difficult for an injection site to absorb and, if prescribed, need to be verified. Variations for pediatric clients are discussed in the pediatric sections of this book. ▲

- D.** The standard 3-mL syringe is used to measure most injectable medications and is calibrated in tenths (0.1) of a milliliter.
- E.** The syringe is filled by drawing in solution until the top ring on the plunger (i.e., the ring closest to the needle), not the middle section nor the bottom ring of the plunger, is aligned with the desired calibration (Fig. 17-2).



**FIGURE 17-2** Parts of a syringe. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

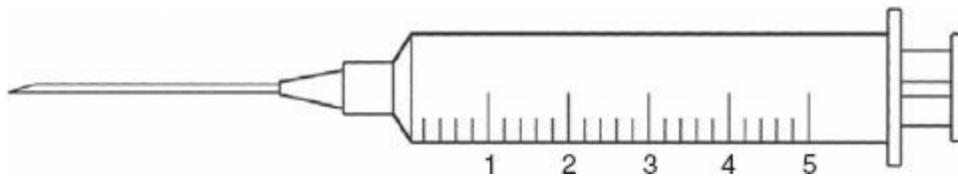
**⚠** Always question and verify excessively large or small volumes of medication.

**F. Prefilled medication cartridge**

1. The medication cartridge slips into the cartridge holder, which provides a plunger for injection of the medication.
2. The cartridge is designed to provide sufficient capacity to allow for the addition of a second medication when combined dosages are prescribed.
3. The prefilled medication cartridge is to be used once and discarded; if a nurse is to give less than the full single dose provided, the nurse needs to discard the extra amount before giving the client the injection, in accordance with agency policies

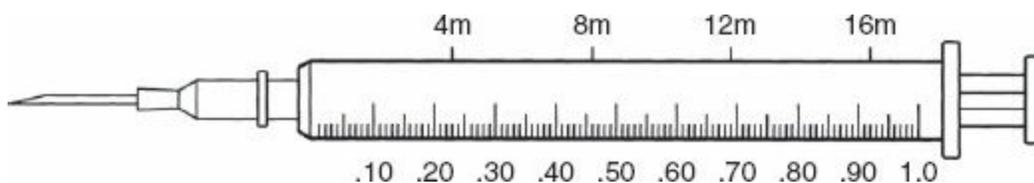
and procedures. ▲

- G.** In general, standard medication doses for adults are to be rounded to the nearest tenth (0.1 mL) of a milliliter and measured on the milliliter scale; for example, 1.28 mL is rounded to 1.3 mL (follow agency policy for rounding medication doses).
- H.** When volumes larger than 3 mL are required, the nurse may use a 5-mL syringe; these syringes are calibrated in fifths (0.2 mL) (Fig. 17-3).



**FIGURE 17-3** Five-milliliter syringe. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

- I.** Other syringe sizes may be available (10, 20, and 50 mL) and may be used for medication administration requiring dilution.
- J.** Tuberculin syringe (Fig. 17-4)



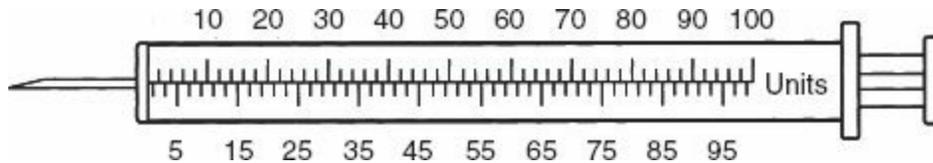
**FIGURE 17-4** Tuberculin syringe. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. The tuberculin syringe holds 1 mL and is used to measure small or critical

amounts of medication, such as allergen extract, vaccine, or a child's medication.

2. The syringe is calibrated in hundredths (0.01) of a milliliter, with each one tenth (0.1) marked on the metric scale. ▲

#### K. Insulin syringe (Fig. 17-5)



**FIGURE 17-5** A 100-unit insulin syringe. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. The standard 100-unit insulin syringe is calibrated for 100 units of insulin (100 units = 1 mL); low-dose insulin syringes (1/2- and 3/10-mL sizes) may also be used when administering smaller insulin doses.
2. Insulin should not be measured in any other type of syringe.

⚠ If the insulin prescription states to administer regular and NPH insulin, combine both types of insulin in the same syringe. Use the mnemonic *RN*: Draw Regular insulin into the insulin syringe first, and then draw the NPH insulin.

- #### L. Safety needles contain shielding devices that are attached to the needle and slipped over the needle to reduce the incidence of needle stick injuries.

## IX. Injectable Medications in Powder Form

- #### A. Some medications become unstable when stored in solution form and are therefore

packaged in powder form.

**B.** Powders must be dissolved with a sterile diluent before use; usually, sterile water or normal saline is used. The dissolving procedure is called reconstitution ([Box 17-9](#)).



### **BOX 17-9** Reconstitution

In reconstituting a medication, locate the instructions on the label or in the vial package insert, and read and follow the directions carefully.

Instructions will state the volume of diluent to be used and the resulting volume of the reconstituted medication.

Often, the powdered medication adds volume to the solution in addition to the amount of diluent added.

The total volume of the prepared solution will exceed the volume of the diluent added.

When reconstituting a multiple-dose vial, label the medication vial with the date and time of preparation, your initials, and the date of expiration.

Indicating the strength per volume on the medication label also is important.

**X. Calculating the Correct Dosage** (see [Box 17-10](#) for the standard formula)

### **BOX 17-10** Standard Formula for Calculating a Medication Dosage

$$\frac{D}{A} \times Q = X$$

D (desired) is the dosage that the health care provider prescribed.

A (available) is the dosage strength as stated on the medication label.

Q (quantity) is the volume or form in which the dosage strength is available, such as tablets, capsules, or milliliters.

- A. When calculating dosages of oral medications, check the calculation and question the prescription if the calculation calls for more than three tablets. ▲
- B. When calculating dosages of parenteral medications, check the calculation and question the prescription if the amount to be given is too large a dose.
- C. Be sure that all measures are in the same system, and that all units are in the same size, converting when necessary; carefully consider what the reasonable amount of the medication that should be administered is. ▲
- D. Round standard injection doses to tenths and measure in a 3-mL syringe (follow agency policy).
- E. Round small, critical amounts or children's doses to hundredths and measure in a 1-mL tuberculin syringe (follow agency policy).
- F. In addition to using the standard formula (see [Box 17-10](#)), calculations can be done through the use of dimensional analysis; the required elements of a dimensional analysis equation include the desired answer units, conversion formula that includes the desired answer units and the units that need to be converted, and the original factors to convert including quantity and units.

 Regardless of the source or cause of a medication error, if a nurse gives an incorrect dose, the nurse is legally responsible for the action.

## XI. Percentage and Ratio Solutions

### A. Percentage solutions

1. Express the number of grams of the medication per 100 mL of solution.
2. For example, calcium gluconate 10% is 10 g of pure medication per 100 mL of solution.

### B. Ratio solutions

1. Express the number of grams of the medication per total milliliters of solution.
2. For example, epinephrine 1:1000 is 1 g of pure medication per 1000 mL of solution.

## XII. Intravenous Flow Rates (Box 17-11)

### BOX 17-11

### Formulas for Intravenous Calculations

#### Flow Rates

$$\frac{\text{Total volume} \times \text{Drop factor}}{\text{Time in minutes}} = \text{Drops per minute}$$

#### Infusion Time

$$\frac{\text{Total volume to infuse}}{\text{Milliliters per hour being infused}} = \text{Infusion time}$$

#### Number of Milliliters per Hour

$$\frac{\text{Total volume in milliliters}}{\text{Number of hours}} = \text{Number of milliliters per hour}$$

- A. Monitor intravenous (IV) flow rate frequently even if the IV solution is being administered through an electronic infusion device (follow agency policy regarding frequency).
  - B. If an IV is running behind schedule, collaborate with the health care provider to determine the client's ability to tolerate an increased flow rate, particularly for clients with cardiac, pulmonary, renal, or neurological conditions. ▲
- ⚠ The nurse should never increase the rate of (i.e., speed up) an IV infusion to catch up if the infusion is running behind schedule.
- C. Whenever a prescribed IV rate is increased, the nurse should assess the client for increased heart rate, increased respirations, and increased lung congestion, which could indicate fluid overload. ▲
  - D. Intravenously administered fluids are prescribed most frequently based on milliliters per hour to be administered.
  - E. The volume per hour prescribed is administered by setting the flow rate, which is counted in drops per minute.
  - F. Most flow rate calculations involve changing milliliters per hour into drops per minute.
  - G. Intravenous tubing
    - 1. Intravenous tubing sets are calibrated in drops per milliliter; this calibration is

needed for calculating flow rates.

2. A standard or macrodrip set is used for routine adult IV administrations; depending on the manufacturer and type of tubing, the set will require 10, 15, or 20 drops (gtt) to equal 1 mL.
3. A minidrip or microdrip set is used when more exact measurements are needed, such as in intensive care units and pediatric units.
4. In a minidrip or microdrip set, 60 gtt is usually equal to 1 mL.
5. The calibration, in drops per milliliter, is written on the IV tubing package.

### **XIII. Calculation of Infusions Prescribed by Unit Dosage per Hour**

- A. The most common medications that will be prescribed by unit dosage per hour and run by continuous infusion are heparin sodium and regular insulin.
- B. Calculation of these infusions can be done by a two-step process ([Box 17-12](#)).

#### **BOX 17-12**

#### **Infusions Prescribed by Unit Dosage per Hour**

Calculation of these problems can be done by a two-step process:

1. Determine the amount of medication per 1 mL.
2. Determine the infusion rate or milliliters per hour.

#### **Problem 1**

*Prescription:* Continuous heparin sodium by IV at 1000 units per hour

*Available:* IV bag of 500 mL D<sub>5</sub>W with 20,000 units of heparin sodium

How many milliliters per hour are required to administer the correct dose?

## ***Solution***

*Step 1:* Calculate the amount of medication (units) per milliliter (mL):

$$\frac{\text{Known amount of medication in solution}}{\text{Total volume of diluent}} = \text{Amount of medication per milliliter}$$

$$\frac{20,000 \text{ units}}{500 \text{ mL}} = 40 \text{ units / mL}$$

*Step 2:* Calculate milliliters per hour:

$$\frac{\text{Dose per hour desired}}{\text{Concentration per milliliter}} = \text{Infusion rate, or mL / hour}$$

$$\frac{1000 \text{ units}}{40 \text{ units}} = 25 \text{ mL / hour}$$

## **Problem 2**

*Prescription:* Continuous regular insulin by IV at 10 units per hour

*Available:* IV bag of 100 mL NS with 50 units regular insulin

How many milliliters per hour are required to administer the correct dose?

## ***Solution***

*Step 1:* Calculate the amount of medication (units) per milliliter:

$$\frac{\text{Known amount of medication in solution}}{\text{Total volume of diluent}} = \text{Amount of medication per milliliter}$$

$$\frac{50 \text{ units}}{100 \text{ mL}} = 0.5 \text{ units / mL}$$

*Step 2:* Calculate milliliters per hour:

$$\frac{\text{Dose per hour desired}}{\text{Concentration per milliliter}} = \text{Infusion rate, or mL / hour}$$

$$\frac{10 \text{ units}}{0.5 \text{ units / mL}} = 20 \text{ mL / hour}$$

1. Determine the amount of medication per 1 mL.
2. Determine the infusion rate or milliliters per hour.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** When preparing to administer a liquid medication, the nurse should use a medicine cup, pouring the liquid into it after placing it on a flat surface at eye level with the thumbnail at the medicine cup line indicating the desired amount. Liquids should not be mixed with tablets or with other liquids in the same container. The nurse should be sure not to return poured medication to its container and should properly discard poured medication if not used. The nurse should pour liquids from the side opposite the bottle's label to avoid spilling medicine on the label.

Medications that irritate the gastric mucosa such as potassium products should be diluted or be taken with meals. Ice chips should be offered before administering unpleasant-tasting medications in order to numb the client's taste buds.

### **Reference**

Kee, Marshall (2013), pp. 110, 370.



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS: ALTERNATE ITEM FORMAT (FILL-IN-THE-BLANK)

**141.** A health care provider's prescription reads 1000 mL of normal saline (NS) to infuse over 12 hours. The drop factor is 15 drops (gtt)/1 mL. The nurse prepares to set the flow rate at how many drops per minute? **Fill in the blank. Record your answer to the nearest whole number.** ❖

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ drops per minute

**142.** A health care provider's prescription reads to administer an intravenous (IV) dose of 400,000 units of penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin). The label on the 10-mL ampule sent from the pharmacy reads penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin), 300,000 units/mL. The nurse prepares how much medication to administer the correct dose? **Fill in the blank. Record your answer using one decimal place.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL

**143.** A health care provider's prescription reads potassium chloride 30 mEq to be added to 1000 mL normal saline (NS) and to be administered over a 10-hour period. The label on the medication bottle reads 40 mEq/20 mL. The nurse prepares how many milliliters of potassium chloride to administer the correct dose of medication? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL

**144.** A health care provider's prescription reads clindamycin phosphate (Cleocin

Phosphate) 0.3 g in 50 mL normal saline (NS) to be administered intravenously over 30 minutes. The medication label reads clindamycin phosphate (Cleocin Phosphate) 900 mg in 6 mL. The nurse prepares how many milliliters of the medication to administer the correct dose? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL

**145.** A health care provider's prescription reads phenytoin (Dilantin) 0.2 g orally twice daily. The medication label states that each capsule is 100 mg. The nurse prepares how many capsule(s) to administer one dose? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ capsule(s)

**146.** A health care provider prescribes 1000 mL of normal saline 0.9% to infuse over 8 hours. The drop factor is 15 drops (gtt)/1 mL. The nurse sets the flow rate at how many drops per minute? **Fill in the blank. Record your answer to the nearest whole number.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ drops per minute

**147.** A health care provider prescribes heparin sodium, 1300 units/hour by continuous intravenous (IV) infusion. The pharmacy prepares the medication and delivers an IV bag labeled heparin sodium 20,000 units/250 mL D<sub>5</sub>W. An infusion pump must be used to administer the medication. The nurse sets the infusion pump at how many milliliters per hour to deliver 1300 units/hour? **Fill in the blank. Record your answer to the nearest whole number.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL per hour

**148.** A health care provider prescribes 3000 mL of D<sub>5</sub>W to be administered over a 24-hour period. The nurse determines that how many milliliters per hour will be administered to the client? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL per hour

**149.** Gentamicin sulfate, 80 mg in 100 mL normal saline (NS), is to be administered over 30 minutes. The drop factor is 10 drops (gtt)/mL. The nurse sets the flow rate at how many drops per minute? **Fill in the blank. Record your answer to the nearest whole number.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ drops per minute

**150.** A health care provider's prescription reads levothyroxine (Synthroid), 150 mcg orally daily. The medication label reads Synthroid, 0.1 mg/tablet. The nurse administers how many tablet(s) to the client? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ tablet(s)

**151.** Cefuroxime sodium, 1 g in 50 mL normal saline (NS), is to be administered over 30 minutes. The drop factor is 15 drops (gtt)/mL. The nurse sets the flow rate at how many drops per minute? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ drops per minute

**152.** A health care provider prescribes 1000 mL D<sub>5</sub>W to infuse at a rate of 125 mL/hour. The nurse determines that it will take how many hours for 1 L to infuse? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s)

- 153.** A health care provider prescribes 1 unit of packed red blood cells to infuse over 4 hours. The unit of blood contains 250 mL. The drop factor is 10 drops (gtt)/1 mL. The nurse prepares to set the flow rate at how many drops per minute? **Fill in the blank. Record your answer to the nearest whole number.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ drops per minute

- 154.** A health care provider's prescription reads morphine sulfate, 8 mg stat. The medication ampule reads morphine sulfate, 10 mg/mL. The nurse prepares how many milliliters to administer the correct dose? **Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL

- 155.** A health care provider prescribes regular insulin, 8 units/hour by continuous intravenous (IV) infusion. The pharmacy prepares the medication and then delivers an IV bag labeled 100 units of regular insulin in 100 mL normal saline (NS). An infusion pump must be used to administer the medication. The nurse sets the infusion pump at how many milliliters per hour to deliver 8 units/hour?

**Fill in the blank.**

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL/hour

**ANSWERS: ALTERNATE ITEM FORMAT (FILL-IN-THE-BLANK)**

❖ 141. 21

**Rationale:** Use the intravenous (IV) flow rate formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Total volume} \times \text{Drop factor}}{\text{Time in minutes}} = \text{Drops per minute}$$
$$\frac{1000 \text{ mL} \times 15 \text{ gtt}}{720 \text{ minutes}} = \frac{15,000}{720} = 20.8, \text{ or } 21 \text{ gtt/minute}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, IV flow rates. Use the formula for calculating IV flow rates when answering the question. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense. Remember to round the answer to the nearest whole number.

**Review:** Intravenous infusion calculations

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 89, 93-94; Potter et al (2013), pp. 925-928.

142. 1.3

**Rationale:** Use the medication dose formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired} \times \text{mL}}{\text{Available}} = \text{Milliliters per dose}$$

$$\frac{400,000 \text{ units} \times 1 \text{ mL}}{300,000 \text{ units}} = \text{Milliliters per dose}$$

$$\frac{400,000}{300,000} = 1.33 = 1.3 \text{ mL}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a dosage calculation. Follow the formula for the calculation of the correct medication dose. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense. Remember to record your answer using one decimal place.

**Review:** Medication calculations

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 574-577.

143. 15

**Rationale:** Use the medication calculation formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired} \times \text{mL}}{\text{Available}} = \text{Milliliters per dose}$$

$$\frac{30 \text{ mEq} \times 20 \text{ mL}}{40 \text{ mEq}} = 15 \text{ mL}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a dosage calculation. Follow the formula for the calculation of the correct medication dose. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make

sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review: Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 574-577.

#### 144. 2

**Rationale:** You must convert 0.3 g to milligrams. In the metric system, to convert larger to smaller, multiply by 1000 or move the decimal three places to the right. Therefore 0.3 g = 300 mg. Following conversion from grams to milligrams, use the formula to calculate the correct dose.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired} \times \text{mL}}{\text{Available}} = \text{Milliliters per dose}$$
$$\frac{300 \text{ mg} \times 6 \text{ mL}}{900 \text{ mg}} = \frac{1800}{900} = 2 \text{ ml}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a dosage calculation. In this medication calculation problem, first you must convert grams to milligrams. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review: Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 51-52; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 494-495.

145. 2

**Rationale:** You must convert 0.2 g to milligrams. In the metric system, to convert larger to smaller, multiply by 1000 or move the decimal point three places to the right. Therefore 0.2 g equals 200 mg. After conversion from grams to milligrams, use the formula to calculate the correct dose.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired} \times \text{Capsule}}{\text{Available}} = \text{Capsule(s) per dose}$$
$$\frac{200 \text{ mg} \times 1 \text{ Capsule}}{100 \text{ mg}} = 2 \text{ Capsules}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a dosage calculation. In this medication calculation problem, first you must convert grams to milligrams. Once you have done the conversion and reread the medication calculation problem, you will know that two capsules is the correct answer. Recheck your work using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review:** Medication calculations

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 51-52; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 494-495.

**146. 31**

**Rationale:** Use the intravenous (IV) flow rate formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Total volume} \times \text{Drop factor}}{\text{Time in minutes}} = \text{Drops per minute}$$
$$\frac{1000 \text{ mL} \times 15 \text{ gtt}}{480 \text{ minutes}} = \frac{15,000}{480} = 31.2, \text{ or } 31 \text{ gtt/minute}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous flow rate. Use the formula for calculating IV flow rates when answering the question. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense. Remember to round the answer to the nearest whole number.

**Review:** **Intravenous infusion calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 89, 93-94; Potter et al (2013), pp. 925-928.

**147. 16**

**Rationale:** Calculation of this problem can be done using a two-step process. First, you need to determine the amount of heparin sodium in 1 mL. The next step is to determine the infusion rate, or milliliters per hour.

**Step 1:**

$$\frac{\text{Known amount of medication in solution}}{\text{Total volume of diluent}} = \text{Amount of medication per milliliter}$$

$$\frac{20,000 \text{ units}}{250 \text{ mL}} = 80 \text{ units/mL}$$

*Step 2:*

$$\frac{\text{Dose per hour desired}}{\text{Concentration per milliliter}} = \text{Infusion rate, or mL/hour}$$

$$\frac{1300 \text{ units}}{80 \text{ units/mL}} = 16.25, \text{ or } 16 \text{ mL/hour}$$

***Test-Taking Strategy:*** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous flow rate. Read the question carefully, noting that two steps can be used to solve this medication problem. Follow the formula, verify your answer using a calculator, and make sure that the answer makes sense. Remember to round the answer to the nearest whole number.

***Review:*** **Intravenous infusion calculations**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Analyzing

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Implementation

***Content Area:*** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

***Priority Concept:*** Clinical Judgment; Safety

***References:*** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 89, 93-94; Potter et al (2013), pp. 925-928.

**148. 125**

***Rationale:*** Use the intravenous (IV) formula to determine milliliters per hour.

***Formula:***

$$\frac{\text{Total volume in milliliters}}{\text{Number of hours}} = \text{Milliliters per hour}$$

$$\frac{3000 \text{ mL}}{24 \text{ hours}} = 125 \text{ mL/hour}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous infusion calculation. Read the question carefully, noting that the question is asking about milliliters per hour to be administered to the client. Use the formula for calculating milliliters per hour. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review:** **Intravenous infusion calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 669-670.

**149. 33**

**Rationale:** Use the intravenous (IV) flow rate formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Total volume} \times \text{Drop factor}}{\text{Time in minutes}} = \text{Drops per minute}$$

$$\frac{100 \text{ mL} \times 10 \text{ gtt}}{30 \text{ minutes}} = \frac{1000}{30} = 33.3, \text{ or } 33 \text{ gtt/minute}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous infusion calculation. Use the formula for calculating IV flow rates when answering the question. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a

calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense. Remember to round the answer to the nearest whole number.

**Review: Intravenous infusion calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 669-670.

**150. 1.5**

**Rationale:** You must convert 150 mcg to milligrams. In the metric system, to convert smaller to larger, divide by 1000 or move the decimal three places to the left. Therefore 150 mcg equals 0.15 mg. Next, use the formula to calculate the correct dose.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Tablet} = \text{Tablets per dose}$$
$$\frac{0.15 \text{ mg}}{0.1 \text{ mg}} \times 1 \text{ tablet} = 1.5 \text{ tablets}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a dosage calculation. In this medication calculation problem, first you must convert micrograms to milligrams. Next, follow the formula for the calculation of the correct dose, verify your answer using a calculator, and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review: Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 51-52; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 494-495.

**151. 25**

**Rationale:** Use the intravenous (IV) flow rate formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Total volume} \times \text{Drop factor}}{\text{Time in minutes}} = \text{Drops per minute}$$

$$\frac{50 \text{ mL} \times 15 \text{ gtt}}{30 \text{ minutes}} = \frac{750}{30} = 25 \text{ gtt/minute}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous infusion calculation. Use the formula for calculating IV flow rates when answering the question. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review:** **Intravenous infusion calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 925-928.

**152. 8**

**Rationale:** You must determine that 1 L equals 1000 mL. Next, use the formula for determining infusion time in hours.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Total volume to infuse}}{\text{Milliliters per hour being infused}} = \text{Infusion time}$$
$$\frac{1000 \text{ mL}}{125 \text{ mL/hour}} = 8 \text{ hours}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous infusion calculation. Read the question carefully, noting that the question is asking about infusion time in hours. First, convert 1 L to milliliters. Next, use the formula for determining infusion time in hours. Verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review:** **Intravenous infusion calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 669-670; Potter et al (2013), pp. 925-928.

**153. 10**

**Rationale:** Use the IV flow rate formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Total volume} \times \text{Drop factor}}{\text{Time in minutes}} = \text{Drops per minute}$$

$$\frac{250 \text{ mL} \times 10 \text{ gtt}}{240 \text{ minutes}} = \frac{2500}{240} = 10.4, \text{ or } 10 \text{ gtt/minute}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous infusion calculation. Use the formula for calculating IV flow rates when answering the question. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense. Remember to round the answer to the nearest whole number.

**Review:** Intravenous infusion calculations

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 669-670.

**154. 0.8**

**Rationale:** Use the formula to calculate the correct dose.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired} \times \text{mL}}{\text{Available}} = \text{Milliliters}$$

$$\frac{8 \text{ mg} \times 1 \text{ mL}}{10 \text{ mg}} = 0.8 \text{ mL}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a dosage calculation. Follow the formula for the calculation of the correct dose. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review: Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 574-577.

**155. 8**

**Rationale:** Calculation of this problem can be done using a two-step process. First, you need to determine the amount of regular insulin in 1 mL. The next step is to determine the infusion rate, or milliliters per hour.

**Formula:**

**Step 1:**

$$\frac{\text{Known amount of medication in solution}}{\text{Total volume of diluent}} = \frac{\text{Amount of medication}}{\text{per milliliter}}$$

$$\frac{100 \text{ units}}{100 \text{ mL}} = 1 \text{ unit / mL}$$

**Step 2:**

$$\frac{\text{Dose per hour desired}}{\text{Concentration per milliliter}} = \frac{\text{Infusion rate, or milliliters}}{\text{per hour}}$$

$$\frac{8 \text{ units}}{1 \text{ unit/mL}} = 8 \text{ mL/hour}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an intravenous flow rate. Read the question carefully, noting that two steps can be used to solve this medication problem. Once you have performed the calculation, verify your answer

using a calculator and make sure that the answer makes sense. These steps can be used for similar medication problems related to the administration of heparin sodium or regular insulin by IV infusion.

**Review: Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

Client Need:

Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 80-81, 84-86; Potter et al (2013), pp. 590, 603.



## CHAPTER 18

# Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Guidelines for Health Care Providers

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse working in the long-term care facility enters a client's room and finds the client unconscious, not breathing, and without a pulse. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 203.*

### **I. Basic Life Support (Box 18-1)**

#### **BOX 18-1** The CABs of Basic Life Support for the Health Care Provider

**C:** Compressions

**A:** Airway

**B:** Breathing

*Note:* Each step of the CABs of basic life support begins with assessment.

## II. General CAB Guidelines (Table 18-1; see Priority Nursing Actions)

**TABLE 18-1 Summary of Basic Life Support Maneuvers for Infants, Children, and Adults**

Maneuver*	Adult†	Child‡	Infant§
Activate (call) emergency response number (one rescuer)	Call when victim is found unresponsive HCP: If asphyxial arrest is likely, call after five cycles (2 min) of CPR	Call after performing five cycles of CPR For sudden, unwitnessed collapse, call after verifying that victim is unresponsive	Call after performing five cycles of CPR For sudden, unwitnessed collapse, call after verifying that victim is unresponsive
<b>Airway Breaths</b>	Head tilt–chin lift (HCP: If trauma is suspected, use jaw thrust) Two effective breaths at 1 sec/breath	Head tilt–chin lift (HCP: If trauma is suspected, use jaw thrust) Two effective breaths at 1 sec/breath	Head tilt–chin lift (HCP: If trauma is suspected, use jaw thrust) Two effective breaths at 1 sec/breath
HCP: Rescue breathing without chest compressions	1 breath every 6–8 sec	1 breath every 6–8 sec	1 breath every 6–8 sec
HCP: Rescue breathing for CPR for client with an advanced airway	1 breath every 5–6 sec	1 breath every 5–6 sec	1 breath every 5–6 sec
Foreign-body airway obstruction	Abdominal thrusts	Back slaps and chest thrusts	Back slaps and chest thrusts
<b>Circulation</b>			
HCP: Pulse check (10 sec or less)	Carotid artery	HCP can use femoral artery in child	Brachial or femoral artery
Compression landmarks	Center of chest, between nipples	Center of chest, between nipples	Just below nipple line
Compression method: Push hard and fast, and allow for complete recoil	Two hands: Heel of one hand, other hand on top	Two hands: Heel of one hand with second on top or One hand: Heel of one hand only	One rescuer: Two fingers HCP or two rescuers: Two-thumb/encircling hands technique
Compression depth	2 inches	2 inches	1½ inches
Compression rate	Approximately 100/min	Approximately 100/min	Approximately 100/min
Compression-to-ventilation ratio	30:2 (one or two rescuers)	30:2 (single rescuer) HCP: 15:2 (two rescuers)	30:2 (single rescuer) HCP: 15:2 (two rescuers)
<b>Defibrillation</b>			
AED	Use adult pads; do not use child pads or a child system. HCP: For out-of-hospital response, you may provide five cycles (2 min) of CPR before shock if response time is longer than 4–5 min and arrest was not witnessed.	HCP: Use AED as soon as possible for sudden and in-hospital collapse. All: Use AED after five cycles of CPR (out of hospital); use child pads and system for child 1–8 years old, if available; if child pads and system are not available, use adult AED and pads.	Use manual defibrillator if available or a pediatric dose attenuator system. If neither is available, use an AED.

*ABCD*, Airway, breathing, circulation, defibrillation; *AED*, automatic external defibrillator; *CPR*, cardiopulmonary resuscitation; *HCP*, health care provider.

\*Maneuver performed only by the HCP.

†For lay rescuers, adults are defined as those 8 years of age or older; for HCPs, adolescent or older.

‡For lay rescuers, children are those 1 to 8 years of age; for HCPs, 1 year to adolescent.

§For all rescuers, infants are defined as those younger than 1 year old.

Adapted with permission from the 2005 American Heart Association guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiovascular care, part 3: Overview of CPR, *Circulation*, 112, IV-12 -IV-18, 2005.

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions for the Health Care Provider for Performing Adult CPR

1. Determine unconsciousness.
2. Check for pulse at carotid artery.
3. Perform chest compressions.
4. Open the airway, using the head tilt–chin lift method.
5. Check breathing and deliver breaths.

The sequence for basic CPR for health care providers (HCPs) follows the CAB (compressions, airway, breathing) sequence and is as follows: After determining unresponsiveness, the HCP assesses the carotid artery for the presence of a pulse. In the absence of any pulse, chest compressions are provided at an adequate rate and depth that will allow adequate chest recoil, with minimal interruptions in chest compressions. The HCP next opens the airway and checks for breathing. In the

absence of breathing, the HCP delivers breaths.

## ***References***

Perry A, Potter P, Elkin M: *Nursing interventions and clinical skills*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, p. 718; Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby, p. 594.

**A. Basic life support (BLS)** is providing oxygen to the brain, heart, and other vital organs until help arrives. ▲

**B.** It is also known as **CPR**.

⚠ **For the health care provider, determining unresponsiveness of the victim is the first action.**

**A. Description:** **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation**, known by most as CPR, is the process of providing oxygen to the brain, heart, and other vital organs in a victim who cannot do so for him- or herself.

**B.** Rescuers should follow the CAB formula:

1. C: Compressions

2. A: Airway

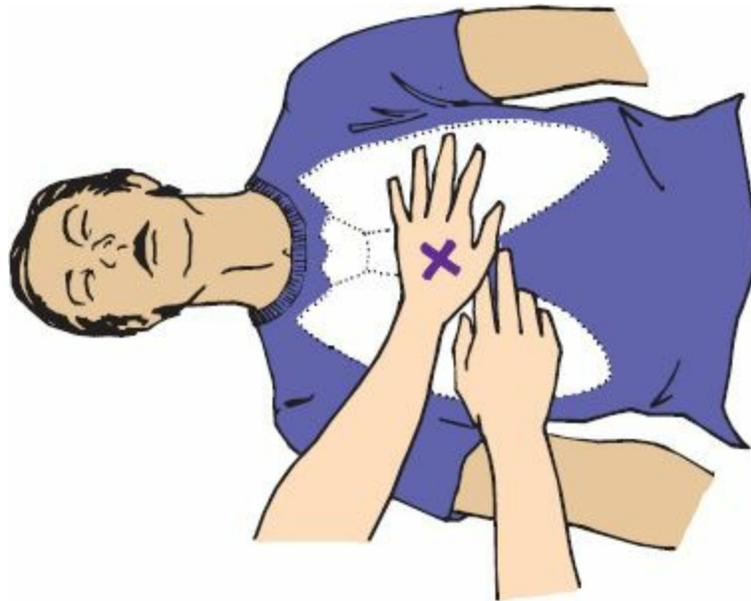
3. B: Breathing

**C.** Basic steps include immediate recognition of the sudden cardiac arrest

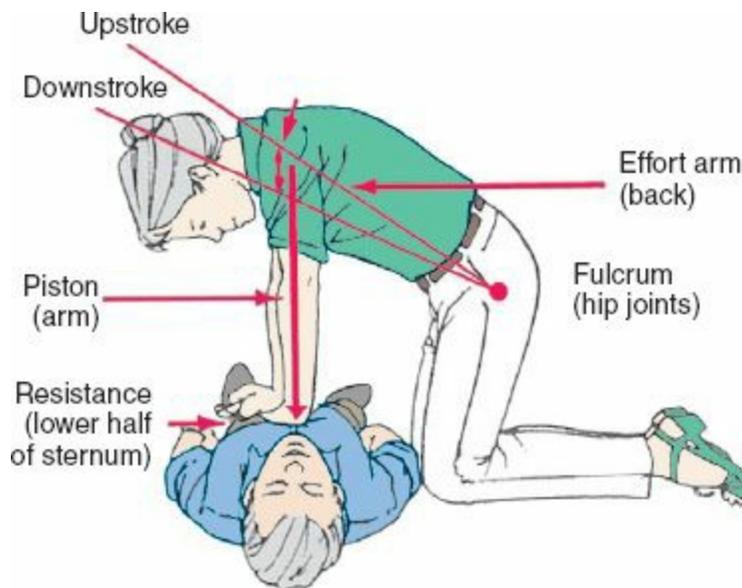
(unresponsiveness and absence of normal breathing) and activation of the emergency

response system, early CPR, and rapid defibrillation with an automated external defibrillator (AED).

**D. Chest compressions (Figs. 18-1 and 18-2) ▲**



**FIGURE 18-1** Chest compression—proper hand position for an adult. (From Perry A, Potter P: *Clinical nursing skills & techniques*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 18-2** Positioning for proper compression techniques. (From Christensen B, Kockrow E: *Foundations of adult health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

1. Description: Chest compressions are used to keep blood moving through the victim's body, delivering oxygen to crucial areas, such as the brain.

 When performing chest compressions, push hard and fast, and avoid interrupted compressions.

## 2. Nursing considerations

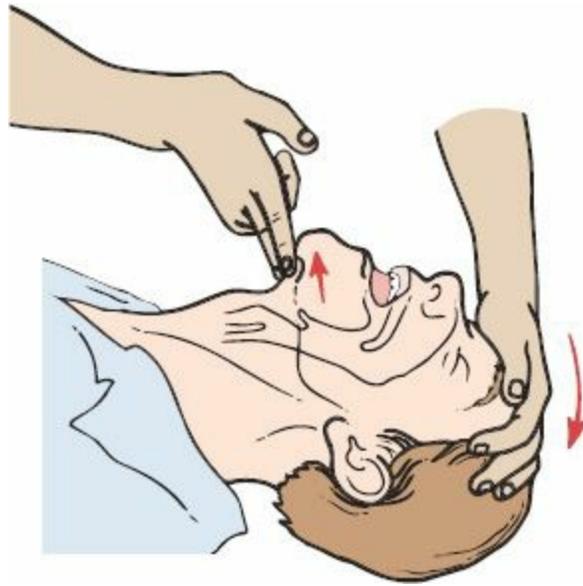
- a. Stand or kneel beside the victim's chest; ensure that the victim is lying supine on a firm surface (if possible); air-filled mattresses should be deflated before performing CPR.
- b. Place the heel of one hand on the lower half of the sternum, which is the center or middle part of the victim's chest, while the heel of the other hand is placed on top of the first hand so that the hands are overlapped and parallel.
- c. The adult chest is compressed to a depth of at least 2 inches and compressions should be hard and fast at a rate of at least 100 compressions per minute.
- d. Allow complete recoil of the chest after each compression to allow the heart to refill completely before the next compression.
- e. A compression-to-ventilation ratio of 30:2 is recommended.
- f. If two rescuers are present, to prevent rescuer fatigue, rescuers may switch positions (compressor and ventilator) after 2 minutes (or after 5 cycles of compression and ventilation at a ratio of 30:2).
- g. Interruptions in chest compressions need to be minimized.
- h. Chest compressions and ventilations are continued until spontaneous circulation

returns or resuscitative efforts are terminated.

**!** To produce as much blood flow as possible, allow the chest to recoil (return to normal position) completely after delivery of each breath and each compression.

## E. Airway

1. Description: Before effective rescue breathing can be administered, a patent airway must be confirmed, or if not present, opened manually.
2. Nursing considerations
  - a. After delivering 30 compressions, the rescuer opens the victim's airway (after donning gloves and a face shield, if they are available).
  - b. The head-tilt is the preferred method of opening an airway.
  - c. To perform the head tilt–chin lift, one hand is placed on the client's forehead, and firm pressure is applied to tilt the head backwards; using the first and second fingers of the other hand, pressure is applied under the bony part of the jaw, taking care not to block the airway and ensuring the tongue is not obstructing the airway (Fig. 18-3).



**FIGURE 18-3** Opening the airway, using the head tilt–chin lift maneuver. (From Lewis SM, Heitkemper MM, Dirksen SR: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

- d. If the victim has sustained a head, neck, or spinal cord injury, the jaw thrust maneuver is used to open the airway.
- e. The jaw thrust maneuver is performed by placing the first and second fingers of both hands on the corner point of the mandible, and both thumbs on the chin, then pushing the mandible upwards; this prevents obstruction of the airway by the tongue (Fig. 18-4).



**FIGURE 18-4** Opening the airway, using the jaw thrust maneuver. (From Perry A, Potter P: *Nursing Interventions and clinical skills*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.)

 If a neck injury is suspected, the jaw thrust maneuver is used to open the victim's airway.

## F. Breathing

1. Description: Once the airway has been secured, the rescuer delivers breaths to keep oxygen moving through the victim's body.
2. Nursing considerations
  - a. A victim who is breathing is log-rolled onto his or her side as a unit (without twisting) with the lower arm in front of the body (recovery position) to help maintain an open airway; if a spinal cord injury is suspected, however, the victim should not be moved.
  - b. Occasional gasps from a victim may not result in adequate ventilation and this victim should be treated as if he or she is not breathing.
  - c. If the victim is not breathing, give two ventilations (breaths) of 1 second per breath (mouth-to-mouth, mouth-to-barrier device, or bag mask if available, ensuring an adequate seal). Allow the victim to exhale between breaths (avoid excessive ventilation).
  - d. Each rescue breath is delivered over 1 second; ventilations are delivered at a rate of 1 breath every 6 to 8 seconds (8 to 10 ventilations per minute).
  - e. While giving ventilations watch for a visible chest rise; be alert to gastric distention, which indicates the airway has not been properly opened and air from ventilations is entering the stomach rather than the lungs; this can result in regurgitation and aspiration.

- f. A sufficient tidal volume is needed when delivering breaths to produce a visible chest rise.
- g. A compression-to-ventilation ratio of 30:2 is recommended until an advanced airway is placed.
- h. In special situations, an alternative breathing method may be used ([Box 18-2](#)).

### **BOX 18-2**      **Alternative Breathing Methods**

Mouth-to-nose breathing may be used when it is impossible to ventilate a victim through the mouth (e.g., the mouth cannot be opened, the mouth is seriously injured, or a tight mouth-to-mouth seal is difficult to achieve).

Mouth-to-stoma breathing is used for the victim who has a tracheal stoma; a round pediatric face mask is used to create an adequate seal.

## **III. Guidelines for the Adult**

**A. Description:** Adult **CPR** consists of life-support measures that include early recognition of the cardiac arrest and activation of the emergency response system (EMS), early CPR using the CAB procedure, rapid defibrillation if necessary, advanced life support, and post-cardiac arrest care.

### **B. Nursing considerations**

1. The rescuer should ensure that the scene is safe before approaching the victim.
2. The health care provider should first determine whether the victim is unresponsive with no breathing or breathing normally (by tapping the victim on

the shoulder and shouting “Are you OK?”); activate the EMS system; obtain the AED if alone and, if easily accessible, attach and use the AED; and then begin CPR using the C-A-B procedure. If two rescuers are present then one can obtain the AED while the other begins CPR.

3. The rescuer should check for a pulse and if no pulse is felt within 10 seconds, the rescuer should begin chest compressions (see [Fig. 18-1](#)).
4. If a pulse is definitely felt, the rescuers should give 1 breath every 6 to 8 seconds if the victim is not breathing and recheck the pulse every 2 minutes.

## IV. Variations in CPR ▲

### A. Child

#### 1. Description

- a. A child is defined as a person between 1 and 8 years of age.
- b. The procedure is basically the same as that done for an adult; variations are listed below under nursing considerations.

#### 2. Nursing considerations

- a. If the rescuer is alone, 5 cycles of compressions and breaths (which will take about 2 minutes) are done before activating the emergency response system and obtaining an AED.
- b. One hand may be used for chest compressions and ventilations are delivered more gently than in an adult.
- c. Adjust chest compressions to the child’s age and size (usually 2 inches in depth), the compression-to-breath ratio is 30:2 (single rescuer).

- d. If the child is breathing, ensure that the airway stays open.
- e. If the child is not breathing, take the appropriate measures (mouth-to-mouth ventilation).
- f. After 5 cycles of CPR, if there is no response and an AED is available, apply it and follow the AED prompts; use pediatric pads if available. If pediatric pads are not available, use adult pads.
- g. Continue CPR until the child responds or help arrives.

## **B. Infant**

1. Description: An infant is defined as a person younger than 1 year of age.
2. Nursing considerations
  - a. Determine unresponsiveness; stroke the infant and watch for a response, such as movement, but don't shake the infant.
  - b. If there is no response, follow the CAB procedures.
  - c. If the rescuer is alone, 5 cycles of compressions and breaths (which will take about 2 minutes) are done before activating emergency response system and obtaining an AED. If a second rescuer is present, that person activates the emergency response system while the first attends to the infant.
  - d. The compression-to-breath ratio is 30:2.
  - e. Use the brachial pulse to assess circulation.
  - f. The breastbone is compressed 1.5 inches at a rate of 100 times per minute with the use of two fingers.
  - g. In an infant, provide mouth-to-nose ventilation when delivering breaths.

 The chest compression landmark for a child is in the center of the chest between the nipples. For the infant, the landmark is just below the nipple line.

## V. Automated External Defibrillator Used by the Health Care Provider

### A. Description

1. This device, known by many as an AED, is used to convert ventricular fibrillation into a perfusing rhythm.
2. The AED differentiates nonventricular from ventricular fibrillation rhythms and allows for early defibrillation by laypersons and first responders.

 When using the AED on an adult, do not use the child pads; these pads will not provide an effective shock.

### B. Nursing considerations

1. Attach the AED leads to the victim per the AED instructions.
2. Turn on the AED and follow the AED prompts.
3. Ensure that no one is touching the victim prior to when the shock is delivered.
4. Shockable rhythm: Resume CPR immediately for 2 minutes after the shock so as to minimize interruptions.
5. Nonshockable rhythm: Resume CPR immediately for 2 minutes and check rhythm every 2 minutes.

## VI. Foreign Body Airway Obstruction (FBAO)

A. Description: A variety of foreign bodies may become lodged in a person's airway,

but the most frequently encountered is food.

 Blind finger sweeps in the mouth of a victim with a foreign body airway obstruction (FBAO) should not be performed because of the risk of pushing the object further into the airway.

## **B. Nursing considerations for the adult**

1. Ask the victim, “Are you choking?” The victim will not be able to speak or cough if he or she is choking; if the victim nods “yes,” help is needed.
2. If the victim’s airway is partially obstructed, a crowing sound is heard; encourage the victim to cough.
3. If the victim is having difficulty breathing, activate the emergency response system.
4. Relieve the obstruction with the use of the **abdominal thrust maneuver** (Fig. 18-5 and **Box 18-3**) in rapid succession until the obstruction is dislodged or the victim becomes unconscious.



**FIGURE 18-5** Abdominal thrust maneuver. (From Christensen B, Kockrow E: *Foundations of adult health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

### **BOX 18-3** Abdominal Thrust Maneuver

1. Stand behind the victim.
2. Place arms around the victim's waist.
3. Make a fist.
4. Place the thumb side of the fist just above the umbilicus (belly button) and well below the xiphoid process.
5. Perform five quick in and up abdominal thrusts (between the umbilicus and the xiphoid process).
6. Use chest thrusts for the obese or the advanced pregnancy victim.

5. If the victim becomes unconscious, place in a supine position and begin CPR for 2 minutes and then activate the EMS.
6. Each time the airway is opened during CPR, the rescuer should look in the victim's mouth for an object and, if found, remove it.

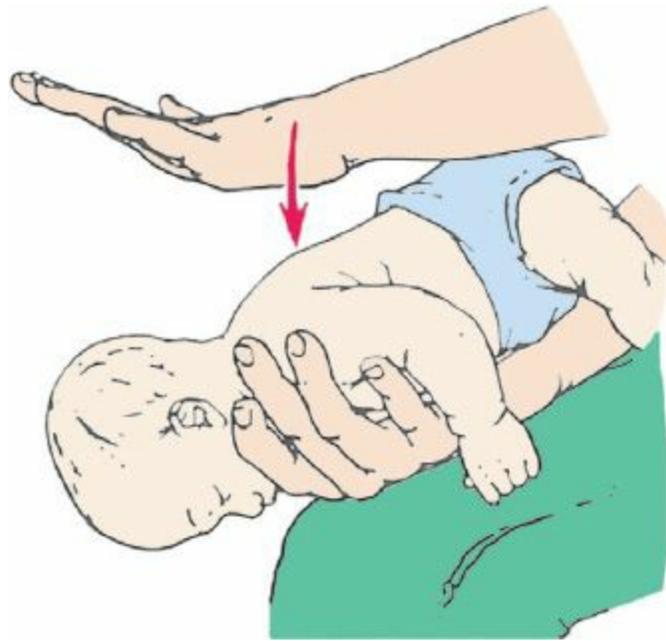
 To perform the abdominal thrust maneuver on an adult, straddle the victim's thighs, place the heel of one hand on top of the other, between the umbilicus and xiphoid process, and give five abdominal thrusts in and up with the heel of the bottom hand.

#### C. Nursing considerations for the child

1. Choking is suspected in the infant or child experiencing respiratory distress associated with coughing, gagging, or stridor (high-pitched, noisy breathing).
2. Allow the victim to continue coughing if the cough is forceful.
3. If the cough is ineffective or the victim demonstrates increased respiratory difficulty accompanied by a high-pitched noise while inhaling, help is needed.
4. In a conscious child, the abdominal thrust maneuver should be performed until the obstruction is dislodged.

#### D. Nursing considerations for the infant

1. Assess the victim for obstruction and note breathing problems.
2. Place the infant over an arm or on the lap, position the head lower than the trunk, and support the head firmly, holding the jaw.
3. Deliver five back slaps with the heel of the hand between the shoulder blades (Fig. 18-6).



**FIGURE 18-6** Clearing airway obstruction in an infant. (From Christensen B, Kockrow E: *Foundations of adult health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

4. Turn the infant over, positioning the head lower than the trunk.
5. Deliver five chest thrusts at the same location used for chest compressions.
6. Check for a foreign object and remove it, only if one is seen; blind finger sweeps are avoided because the object can be forced back further into the throat.
7. Repeat the sequence until the object has been removed.

**⚠ In an infant, deliver five back slaps and then five chest thrusts to remove the foreign body from the airway.**

#### **E. Pregnant or obese victim**

1. Chest thrusts are used for obese victims or a victim in the late stage of pregnancy.
2. The rescuer places his or her arms under the victim's axillae and across the chest.
3. The thumb side of a clenched fist is placed against the middle of the sternum, and

the other hand is placed over the fist.

4. Backward chest thrusts are performed until the foreign body is expelled or the victim loses consciousness.
5. If a pregnant victim loses consciousness, the rescuer places her on her back, and then inserts a wedge (e.g., a pillow or rolled blanket) under the woman's right flank and hip to displace the uterus to the right side of the abdomen.
6. The rescuer then attempts ventilations; if ventilation is unsuccessful, the rescuer positions the hands as for chest compressions and delivers firm chest thrusts to remove the obstruction.
7. If defibrillation is needed in a pregnant victim, the paddles are placed one rib interspace higher than usual because the heart is displaced slightly by the enlarged uterus.

 If the victim of FBAO is pregnant, and it is necessary to place the client supine, remember to place a wedge, such as a pillow or rolled blanket, under the right abdominal flank and hip to displace the uterus to the left side of the abdomen. This prevents supine hypotension.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* In an unwitnessed event, after determining unconsciousness and no pulse or breathing, the nurse should follow the CAB (compressions, airway, breathing) guidelines and begin chest compressions at a compression-to-ventilation ratio of 30:2. To produce as much blood flow as possible, the nurse should allow the chest to

recoil (return to normal position) completely after delivery of each compression and each breath. Since the nurse is working in a long-term care facility, assistance should be obtained in activating the emergency response system, obtaining an automated external defibrillator, and performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

### ***References***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 737; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1768.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 156.** The nurse on the day shift walks into a client's room and finds the client unresponsive. The client is not breathing and does not have a pulse, and the nurse immediately calls out for help. Which is the **next** nursing action?
1. Open the airway.
  2. Give the client oxygen.
  3. Start chest compressions.
  4. Ventilate with a mouth-to-mask device.
- 157.** The nurse witnesses a neighbor's husband sustain a fall from the roof of his house. The nurse rushes to the victim and determines the need to open the airway. The nurse opens the airway in this victim by using which method?
1. Flexed position
  2. Head tilt–chin lift
  3. Jaw thrust maneuver
  4. Modified head tilt–chin lift
- 158.** The nurse understands that which is a correct guideline for adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for a health care provider (HCP)?
1. One breath should be given for every five compressions.
  2. Two breaths should be given for every 15 compressions.
  3. Initially, two quick breaths should be given as rapidly as possible.
  4. Each rescue breath should be given over 1 second and should produce a

visible chest rise.

**159.** The nurse attempts to relieve an airway obstruction in a 3-year-old conscious child. The nurse performs the abdominal thrust maneuver correctly by standing behind the child, placing her arms under the child's axillae and around the child, and positioning her hands to deliver the thrusts between which areas?

1. Groin and the abdomen
2. Umbilicus and the groin
3. Lower abdomen and the chest
4. Umbilicus and the xiphoid process

**160.** The nurse is performing rescue breathing on a 7-year-old child. The nurse delivers one breath per how many seconds to the child?

1. 6-8
2. 8-10
3. 10-12
4. 12-14

**161.** The nurse is performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on an infant. When performing chest compressions, the nurse compresses at least how many times?

1. 60 times per minute
2. 80 times per minute
3. 100 times per minute
4. 160 times per minute

**162.** The nurse is teaching cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to a group of nursing students. The nurse asks a student to describe the reason why blind finger sweeps are avoided in infants. The nurse determines that the student understands this reason if the student makes which statement?

1. "The object may have been swallowed."
2. "The infant may bite down on the finger."
3. "The mouth is too small to see the object."
4. "The object may be forced back farther into the throat."

**163.** The nurse witnesses the collapse of a victim in her neighborhood and suspects cardiac arrest. Which action should the nurse take **first**?

1. Initiate rescue breathing.
2. Begin giving chest compressions.
3. Activate the emergency response system.
4. Obtain an automated external defibrillator.

**164.** The nursing instructor asks a nursing student to describe the procedure for performing abdominal thrusts on an unconscious pregnant woman at 32 weeks' gestation. The student describes a component of the procedure correctly if the student states that he will take which action?

1. Place his hands on the pelvis to perform the thrusts.
2. Perform abdominal thrusts until the object is dislodged.
3. Perform left lateral abdominal thrusts until the object is dislodged.

4. Place a rolled blanket under the right abdominal flank and hip area.

165. The nurse is performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on an adult client.

When performing chest compressions, the nurse should depress the sternum by how many inch(es)?

1.  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch
2. 1 inch
3. 2 inches
4. 3 inches

## ANSWERS

156. 3

**Rationale:** The next nursing action would be to start chest compressions. Chest compressions are used to keep blood moving through the body and to the vital areas, such as the brain. After 2 minutes of compressions the rescuer opens the victim's airway.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *next*. Visualize the steps of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to answer the question. Recalling CAB—compressions, airway, breathing— will assist you in answering this question.

**Review:** **Basic life support**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 737; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1768.

### 157. 3

**Rationale:** If a neck injury is suspected, the jaw thrust maneuver is used to open the airway. The head tilt–chin lift maneuver produces hyperextension of the neck and could cause complications if a neck injury is present. A flexed position is an inappropriate position for opening the airway.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, basic life support measures for the client with a suspected neck injury. Recall the concerns associated with a neck injury. The head tilt–chin lift is not used if there is a suspected neck injury. A flexed position does not open the airway.

**Review:** **Basic life support**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1767.

### 158. 4

**Rationale:** In adult CPR, each rescue breath should be given over 1 second and should produce a visible chest rise. Excessive ventilation (too many breaths per minute or breaths that are too large or forceful) may be harmful and should not be performed. HCPs should employ a 30:2 compression-to-ventilation ratio for the adult victim.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, rescue breathing. Read each option carefully. Noting the words *visible chest rise* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** **Basic life support**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1771; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 722.

#### 159. 4

**Rationale:** To perform abdominal thrusts on a child, the rescuer stands behind the victim and places the arms directly under the victim's axillae and around the victim. The rescuer places the thumb side of one fist against the victim's abdomen in the midline, slightly above the umbilicus and well below the tip of the xiphoid process. The rescuer grasps the fist with the other hand and delivers up to five thrusts. One must take care not to touch the xiphoid process or the lower margins of the rib cage because force applied to these structures may damage internal organs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, abdominal thrust maneuver in the child. Note the age of the child. Consider the anatomical location and the effect of the maneuver in dislodging an obstruction to answer correctly.

**Review:** **Abdominal thrust maneuver** in a child.

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1216-1217; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 718.

### 160. 1

**Rationale:** In a child between the ages of 1 and 8 years, one breath every 6-8 seconds is delivered.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, rescue breathing and breaths per second. Note the age of the child.

Recalling the normal respiratory rate in a child at this age and focusing on the **subject**, breaths per second, will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Basic life support** measures for the child

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 718.

### 161. 3

**Rationale:** In an infant, the rate of chest compressions is at least 100 times per minute.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, chest compressions in an infant. Think about the normal heart rate of an infant to answer correctly.

**Review:** **Basic life support** measures for the infant

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1213.

#### 162. 4

**Rationale:** Blind finger sweeps are not recommended for infants and children because of the risk of forcing the object farther down into the airway. The other options do not identify reasons for avoiding blind finger sweeps.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a blocked airway. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to answer correctly. The correct option addresses the concern of airway patency.

**Review:** **Foreign body airway obstruction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1215.

#### 163. 3

**Rationale:** If a collapse is witnessed and the nurse suspects cardiac arrest, the nurse should first activate the emergency response system. Next, the nurse should obtain an automated external defibrillator, followed by initiation

of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, beginning with chest compressions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Note that the nurse witnesses the collapse of the victim, and therefore should activate the emergency response system before initiating other life-saving measures.

**Review:** **Basic life support**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 853.

#### 164. 4

**Rationale:** If an unconscious woman in an advanced gestational stage of pregnancy has a foreign body airway obstruction, the woman is placed on her back. A wedge, such as a pillow or rolled blanket, is placed under the right abdominal flank and hip to displace the uterus to the left side of the abdomen. This prevents supine hypotension that can occur if the gravid uterus rests on the vena cava. The rescuer then attempts ventilations; if ventilation is unsuccessful, the rescuer positions the hands as for chest compressions and delivers firm chest thrusts to remove the obstruction. Placing the hands on the pelvis or abdomen and performing left lateral abdominal thrusts are ineffective and could be harmful.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an unconscious pregnant woman at 32 weeks' gestation. Recall that firm chest thrusts are used and the causes associated with supine hypotension and vena cava syndrome to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** The principles associated with performing **abdominal thrusts** on a pregnant woman

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Critical Care/Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lowdermilk, Cashion, Perry (2012), pp. 719-720.

**165. 3**

**Rationale:** When performing CPR on an adult client, the sternum is depressed 2 inches. The depth for the adult and the child is 2 inches whereas for the infant it is 1 1/2 inches.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for adult CPR. Consider the normal body structure of an adult to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** The procedure for performing adult **cardiopulmonary resuscitation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care/Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 718.



## CHAPTER 19

# Perioperative Nursing Care

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is assisting the surgeon in obtaining informed consent from a client for a scheduled surgical procedure. The client signs the consent and after the surgeon leaves the nursing unit the client informs the nurse that he is unclear about certain aspects of the surgical procedure. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 216.*

### I. Preoperative Care

**!** A client may return home shortly after having a surgical procedure because many surgical procedures are done through ambulatory care or 1-day stay surgical units. Perioperative care procedures apply even when the client returns home the same day of the surgical procedure.

#### A. Obtaining informed consent

1. The surgeon is responsible for obtaining the consent for surgery.

2. Minors (clients younger than 18 years old) may need a parent or legal guardian to sign the consent form.
3. Older clients may need a legal guardian to sign the consent form.
4. Psychiatric clients have a right to refuse treatment until a court has legally determined that they are unable to make decisions for themselves.
5. No sedation should be administered to the client before the client signs the consent form.
6. The nurse may witness the client's signing of the consent form, but the nurse must be sure that the client has understood the surgeon's explanation of the surgery.
7. The nurse needs to document the witnessing of the signing of the consent form after the client acknowledges understanding the procedure.

## B. Nutrition

1. Review the health care provider's (HCP's) prescriptions regarding the NPO status before surgery. ▲
2. Withhold solid foods and liquids as prescribed to avoid aspiration; usually for 6 to 8 hours before general anesthesia and for approximately 3 hours before surgery with local anesthesia.
3. Insert an intravenous (IV) line and administer IV fluids, if prescribed; IV catheter size should be large enough to administer blood products if they are required.
4. Administer **parenteral** nutrition (PN) as prescribed (also known as *total parenteral nutrition*); usually PN is prescribed for clients who are malnourished, have protein or metabolic deficiencies from underlying disease, or cannot ingest

foods.

### C. Elimination

1. If the client is to have intestinal or abdominal surgery, then an enema, laxative, or both may be prescribed the day or night before surgery.
2. The client should void immediately before surgery. ▲
3. Insert a Foley catheter, if prescribed; Foley catheters should be emptied immediately before surgery, and the nurse should document the amount and characteristics of the urine.

### D. Surgical site

1. Clean the surgical site with a mild antiseptic or antibacterial soap the night before surgery, as prescribed.
2. Shave the operative site, as prescribed; shaving may be done in the operative area.

▲ Hair on the head or face (including the eyebrows) should be shaved only if prescribed.

### E. Preoperative client teaching

1. Inform the client about what to expect postoperatively.
2. Inform the client to notify the nurse if the client experiences any pain postoperatively and that pain medication will be prescribed and given as the client requests.
3. Demonstrate the use of a patient-controlled analgesia pump (PCA) if prescribed.
4. Inform the client that requesting an opioid after surgery will not make the client a

drug addict.

5. Instruct the client to use noninvasive pain relief techniques such as relaxation, distraction techniques, and guided imagery before the pain occurs and as soon as the pain is noticed.
6. The nurse should instruct the client not to smoke (for at least 24 hours before surgery); discuss smoking cessation treatments and programs.
7. Instruct the client in deep-breathing and coughing techniques, use of incentive spirometry, and the importance of performing the techniques postoperatively to prevent the development of pneumonia and atelectasis ([Box 19-1](#)). ▲

## **BOX 19-1** Client Teaching

### **Deep-Breathing and Coughing Exercises**

Instruct the client that a sitting position gives the best lung expansion for coughing and deep-breathing exercises.

Instruct the client to breathe deeply three times, inhaling through the nostrils and exhaling slowly through pursed lips.

Instruct the client that the third breath should be held for 3 seconds; then the client should cough deeply three times.

The client should perform this exercise every 1 to 2 hours.

### **Incentive Spirometry**

Instruct the client to assume a sitting or upright position.

Instruct the client to place the mouth tightly around the mouthpiece.

Instruct the client to inhale slowly to raise and maintain the flow rate indicator, usually between the 600 and 900 marks on the device.

Instruct the client to hold the breath for 5 seconds and then to exhale through pursed lips.

Instruct the client to repeat this process 10 times every hour.

### **Leg and Foot Exercises**

Gastrocnemius (calf) pumping: Instruct the client to move both ankles by pointing the toes up and then down.

Quadriceps (thigh) setting: Instruct the client to press the back of the knees against the bed and then to relax the knees; this contracts and relaxes the thigh and calf muscles to prevent thrombus formation.

Foot circles: Instruct the client to rotate each foot in a circle.

Hip and knee movements: Instruct the client to flex the knee and thigh and to straighten the leg, holding the position for 5 seconds before lowering (not performed if the client is having abdominal surgery or if the client has a back problem).

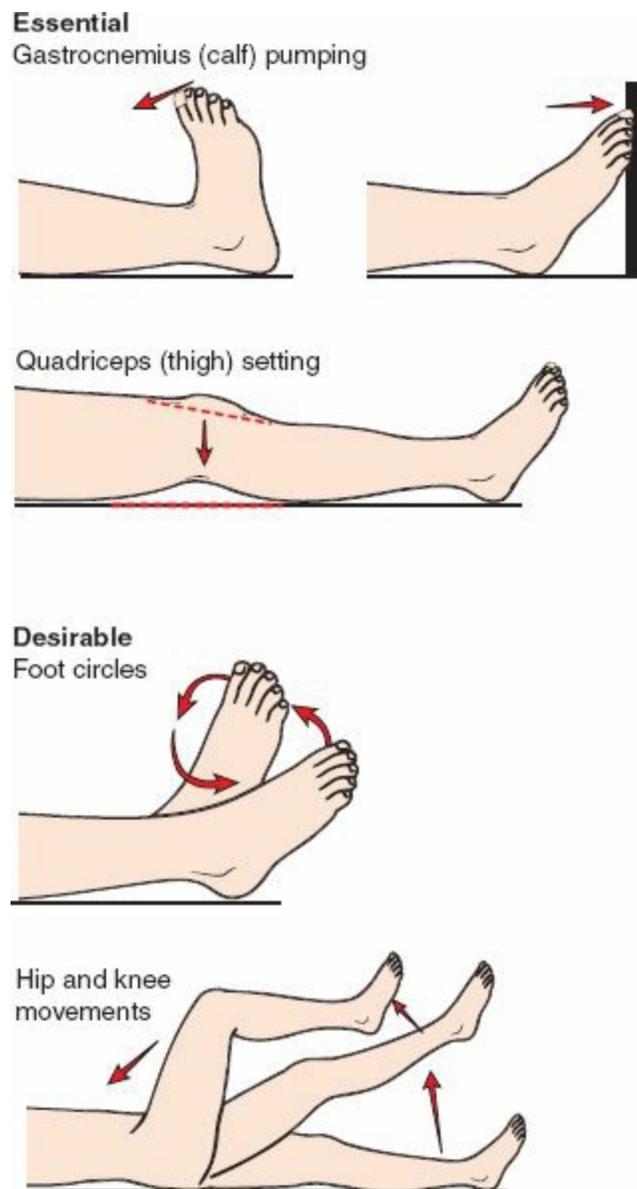
### **Splinting the Incision**

If the surgical incision is abdominal or thoracic, instruct the client to place a pillow, or one hand with the other hand on top, over the incisional area.

During deep breathing and coughing, the client presses gently against the incisional

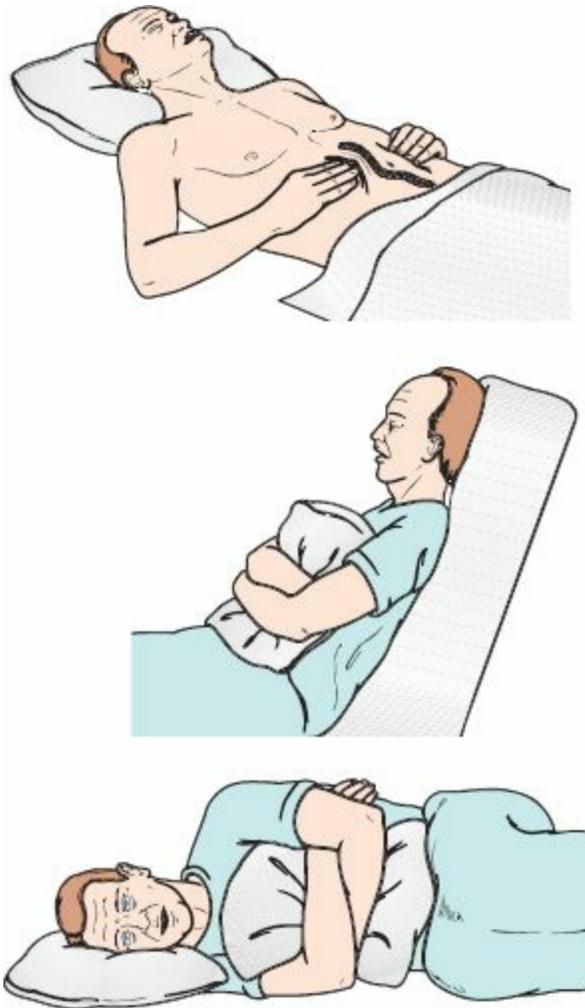
area to splint or support it.

8. Instruct the client in leg and foot exercises to prevent venous stasis of blood and to facilitate venous blood return (Fig. 19-1; and see Box 19-1).



**FIGURE 19-1** Postoperative leg exercises. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

9. Instruct the client in how to splint an incision, turn, and reposition (Fig. 19-2; and see Box 19-1).



**FIGURE 19-2** Techniques for splinting a wound when coughing. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

10. Inform the client of any invasive devices that may be needed after surgery, such as a nasogastric tube, drain, Foley catheter, epidural catheter, or IV or subclavian lines.
11. Instruct the client not to pull on any of the invasive devices; they will be removed

as soon as possible.

## F. Psychosocial preparation

1. Be alert to the client's level of anxiety.
2. Answer any questions or concerns that the client may have regarding surgery.
3. Allow time for privacy for the client to prepare for surgery psychologically.
4. Provide support and assistance as needed.
5. Take cultural aspects into consideration when providing care ([Box 19-2](#))

### **BOX 19-2** Cultural Aspects of Perioperative Nursing Care

Cultural assessment includes questions related to:

- Primary language spoken
- Feelings related to surgery and pain
- Pain management
- Expectations
- Support systems
- Feelings toward self
- Cultural practices and beliefs

Allow a family member to be present if appropriate.

Secure the help of a professional interpreter to communicate with non-English-speaking clients.

Use pictures or phrase cards to communicate and assess the non-English-speaking client's perception of pain or other feelings.

Provide preoperative and postoperative educational materials in the appropriate language.

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

### G. Preoperative checklist

1. Ensure that the client is wearing an identification bracelet. ▲
2. Assess for allergies, including an allergy to latex (see [Chapter 70](#) for information on latex allergy). ▲
3. Review the preoperative checklist to be sure that each item is addressed before the client is transported to surgery.
4. Follow agency policies regarding preoperative procedures including informed consents, preoperative checklists, prescribed laboratory or radiological tests, or any other preoperative procedure.
5. Ensure that informed consent forms have been signed for the operative procedure, any blood transfusions, disposal of a limb, or surgical sterilization procedures.
6. Ensure that a history and physical examination have been completed and documented in the client's record ([Box 19-3](#)).

#### **BOX 19-3** Medical Conditions That Increase Risk during Surgery

- Bleeding disorders such as thrombocytopenia, hemophilia
- Diabetes mellitus

- Chronic pain
- Heart disease, such as a recent myocardial infarction, dysrhythmia, heart failure, or peripheral vascular disease
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Upper respiratory infection
- Liver disease
- Fever
- Chronic respiratory disease, such as emphysema, bronchitis, or asthma
- Immunological disorders, such as leukemia, infection with human immunodeficiency virus, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, bone marrow depression, or use of chemotherapy or immunosuppressive agents
- Abuse of street drugs

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

7. Ensure that consultation requests have been completed and documented in the client's record.
8. Ensure that prescribed laboratory results are documented in the client's record.
9. Ensure that electrocardiogram and chest radiography reports are documented in the client's record.
10. Ensure that a blood type, screen, and crossmatch are performed and documented in the client's record.

11. Remove jewelry, makeup, dentures, hairpins, nail polish (depending on agency procedures), glasses, and prostheses.
12. Document that valuables have been given to the client's family members or locked in the hospital safe.
13. Document the last time that the client ate or drank.
14. Document that the client voided before surgery.
15. Document that the prescribed preoperative medications were given (Box 19-4).

#### **BOX 19-4** Substances That Can Affect the Client in Surgery

##### ***Antibiotics***

Antibiotics potentiate the action of anesthetic agents.

##### ***Anticholinergics***

Medications with anticholinergic effects increase the potential for confusion.

##### ***Anticoagulants***

Anticoagulants alter normal clotting factors and increase the risk of hemorrhaging.

Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs are commonly used medications that can alter clotting mechanisms.

These medications should be discontinued at least 48 hours before surgery or as specified by the surgeon.

##### ***Anticonvulsants***

Long-term use of certain anticonvulsants can alter the metabolism of anesthetic

agents.

### ***Antidepressants***

Antidepressants may lower the blood pressure during anesthesia.

### ***Antidysrhythmics***

Antidysrhythmic medications reduce cardiac contractility and impair cardiac conduction during anesthesia.

### ***Antihypertensives***

Antihypertensive medications can interact with anesthetic agents and cause bradycardia, hypotension, and impaired circulation.

### ***Corticosteroids***

Corticosteroids cause adrenal atrophy and reduce the ability of the body to withstand stress.

Before and during surgery, dosages may be increased temporarily.

### ***Diuretics***

Diuretics potentiate electrolyte imbalances after surgery.

### ***Herbal Substances***

Herbal substances can interact with anesthesia and cause a variety of adverse effects. These substances may need to be stopped at a specific time before surgery. During the preoperative period, the client needs to be asked if he or she is taking an herbal substance.

## ***Insulin***

The need for insulin after surgery in a diabetic may be reduced because the client's nutritional intake is decreased, or the need for insulin may be increased because of the stress response and intravenous administration of glucose solutions.

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

16. Monitor and document the client's vital signs.

### **H. Preoperative medications**

1. Prepare to administer preoperative medications as prescribed before surgery.
2. Instruct the client about the desired effects of the preoperative medication.

 After administering the preoperative medications, keep the client in bed with the side rails up (per agency policy). Place the call bell next to the client; instruct the client not to get out of bed and to call for assistance if needed.

### **I. Arrival in the operating room**

1. Guidelines to eliminate wrong site and wrong procedure surgery 
  - a. The surgeon meets with the client in the preoperative area and uses indelible ink to mark the operative site.
  - b. In the operating room, the nurse and surgeon ensure and reconfirm that the operative site has been appropriately marked.
  - c. Just before starting the surgical procedure, a time-out is conducted with all members of the operative team present to identify the appropriate surgical site

again.

2. When the client arrives in the operating room, the operating room nurse will verify the identification bracelet with the client's verbal response and will review the client's chart.
3. The client's chart will be checked for completeness and reviewed for informed consent forms, history and physical examination, and allergic reaction information.
4. HCPs' prescriptions will be verified and implemented.
5. The IV line may be initiated at this time (or in the preoperative area), if prescribed.
6. The anesthesia team will administer the prescribed anesthesia.

 Verification of the client and the surgical operative site is critical.

## II. Postoperative Care

### A. Description

1. **Immediate postoperative stage**: The period of 1 to 4 hours after surgery
2. **Intermediate postoperative stage**: The period of 4 to 24 hours after surgery
3. **Extended postoperative stage**: The period of at least 1 to 4 days after surgery

### B. Respiratory system

 Assess breath sounds; stridor, wheezing, or a crowing sound can indicate partial obstruction, bronchospasm, or laryngospasm, while crackles or rhonchi may indicate pulmonary edema.

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor airway patency and ensure adequate ventilation (prolonged mechanical ventilation during anesthesia may affect postoperative lung function).
3. Remember that extubated clients who are lethargic may not be able to maintain an airway.
4. Monitor for secretions; if the client is unable to clear the airway by coughing, suction the secretions from the client's airway. ▲
5. Observe chest movement for symmetry and the use of accessory muscles.
6. Monitor oxygen administration if prescribed.
7. Monitor pulse oximetry.
8. Encourage deep breathing and coughing exercises as soon as possible after surgery.
9. Note the rate, depth, and quality of respirations; the respiratory rate should be greater than 10 and less than 30 breaths/minute. ▲
10. Monitor for signs of respiratory distress, atelectasis, or other respiratory complications. ▲

### C. Cardiovascular system

1. Monitor circulatory status, such as skin color, peripheral pulses, and capillary refill, and for the absence of edema, numbness, and tingling. ▲
2. Monitor for bleeding.
3. Assess the pulse for rate and rhythm (a bounding pulse may indicate hypertension, fluid overload, or client anxiety). ▲

4. Monitor for signs of hypertension and hypotension.
5. Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias.
6. Monitor for signs of thrombophlebitis, particularly in clients who were in the lithotomy position during surgery.
7. Encourage the use of antiembolism stockings, if prescribed, to promote venous return, strengthen muscle tone, and prevent pooling of blood in the extremities.

#### **D. Musculoskeletal system**

1. Assess the client for movement of the extremities.
2. Review HCP's prescriptions regarding client positioning or restrictions.
3. Encourage ambulation if prescribed; before ambulation, instruct the client to sit at the edge of the bed with his or her feet supported to assume balance. ▲
4. Unless contraindicated, place the client in a low Fowler's position after surgery to increase the size of the thorax for lung expansion. ▲
5. Avoid positioning the postoperative client in a supine position until pharyngeal reflexes have returned; if the client is comatose or semicomatose, position on the side (in addition, an oral airway may be needed).
6. If the client is unable to get out of bed, turn the client every 1 to 2 hours.

#### **E. Neurological system**

1. Assess level of consciousness.
2. Make frequent periodic attempts to awaken the client until the client awakens.
3. Orient the client to the environment.
4. Speak in a soft tone; filter out extraneous noises in the environment. ▲

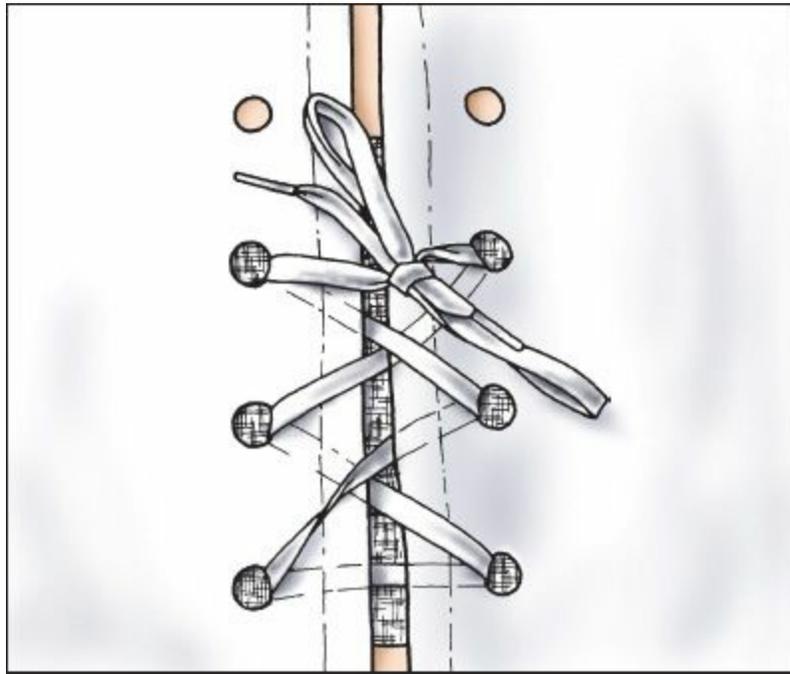
5. Maintain the client's body temperature and prevent heat loss by providing the client with warm blankets and raising the room temperature as necessary.

#### F. Temperature control

1. Monitor temperature.
2. Monitor for signs of hypothermia that may result from anesthesia, a cool operating room, or exposure of the skin and internal organs during surgery.
3. Apply warm blankets and continue oxygen as prescribed if the client experiences shivering. ▲

#### G. Integumentary system

1. Assess surgical site, drains, and wound dressings (serous drainage may occur from an incision, but if excessive bleeding occurs from the site, notify the HCP). ▲
2. Assess the skin for redness, abrasions, or breakdown that may have resulted from surgical positioning.
3. Monitor body temperature and wound for signs of infection.
4. Maintain a dry, intact dressing.
5. Change dressings as prescribed, noting the amount of bleeding or drainage, odor, and intactness of sutures or staples (Fig. 19-3).



**FIGURE 19-3** Montgomery straps may be used when frequent dressing changes are anticipated to help prevent skin irritation from frequent tape removal. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

6. Wound drains should be patent; prepare to assist with the removal of drains (as prescribed by the HCP) when the drainage amount becomes insignificant.
7. An abdominal binder may be prescribed for obese and debilitated individuals to prevent dehiscence of the incision.

#### **H. Fluid and electrolyte balance**

1. Monitor IV fluid administration as prescribed.
2. Record intake and output.
3. Monitor for signs of fluid or electrolyte imbalances. ▲

#### **I. Gastrointestinal system**

1. Monitor intake and output and for nausea and vomiting.
2. Maintain patency of the nasogastric tube if present.
3. Monitor for abdominal distention.
4. Monitor for passage of flatus and return of bowel sounds. ▲
5. Administer frequent oral care, at least every 2 hours.
6. Maintain the NPO status until the gag reflex and peristalsis return. ▲
7. When oral fluids are permitted, start with ice chips and water.
8. Ensure that the client advances to clear liquids and then to a regular diet, as prescribed and as the client can tolerate.

**▲** To prevent aspiration, turn the client to a side-lying position if vomiting occurs; have suctioning equipment available and ready to use.

## **J. Renal system**

1. Assess the bladder for distention.
2. Monitor urine output (urinary output should be at least 30 mL/hour). ▲
3. If the client does not have a Foley catheter, the client is expected to void within 6 to 8 hours postoperatively depending on the type of anesthesia administered; ensure that the amount is at least 200 mL. ▲

## **K. Pain management**

1. Assess the type of anesthetic used and preoperative medication that the client received, and note whether the client received any pain medications in the postanesthesia period. ▲

2. Assess for pain and inquire about the type and location of pain; ask the client to rate the degree of pain on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most severe.
3. If the client is unable to rate the pain with a numerical pain scale, then use a descriptor scale that lists words that describe different levels of pain intensity, such as *no pain*, *mild pain*, *moderate pain*, and *severe pain*.
4. Monitor for objective data related to pain, such as facial expressions, body gestures, increased pulse rate, increased blood pressure, and increased respirations. ▲
5. Inquire about the effectiveness of the last pain medication.
6. Administer pain medication as prescribed.
7. Ensure that the client with a PCA pump understands how to use it.
8. If an opioid has been prescribed, after administration, assess the client every 30 minutes for respiratory rate and pain relief.
9. Use noninvasive measures to relieve postoperative pain, including provision of distraction, comfort measures, positioning, backrubs, and a quiet and restful environment.
10. Document effectiveness of the pain medication and noninvasive pain relief measures.

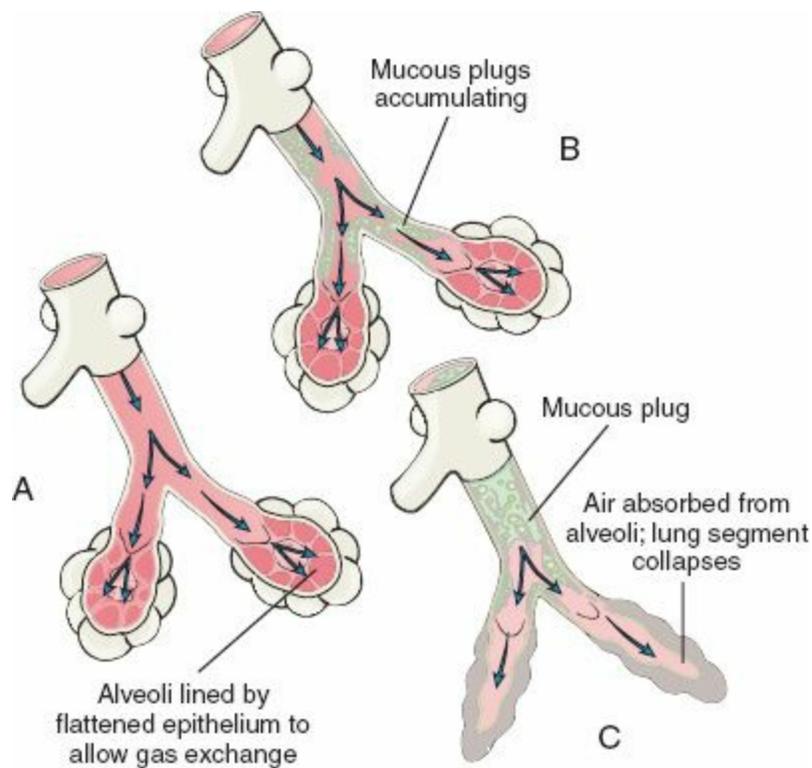
▲ Consider cultural practices and beliefs when planning pain management.

### III. Pneumonia and Atelectasis

#### A. Description (Box 19-5 and Fig. 19-4)

**BOX 19-5****Postoperative Complications**

- Pneumonia and atelectasis
- Hypoxemia
- Pulmonary embolism
- Hemorrhage
- Shock
- Thrombophlebitis
- Urinary retention
- Constipation
- Paralytic ileus
- Wound infection
- Wound dehiscence
- Wound evisceration



**FIGURE 19-4** Postoperative atelectasis. **A**, Normal bronchiole and alveoli. **B**, Mucous plug in bronchiole. **C**, Collapse of alveoli caused by atelectasis following absorption of air. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

1. Pneumonia: An inflammation of the alveoli caused by an infectious process that may develop 3 to 5 days postoperatively as a result of infection, aspiration, or immobility
2. Atelectasis: A collapsed or airless state of the lung that may be the result of airway obstruction caused by accumulated secretions or failure of the client to deep-breathe or ambulate about after surgery; a postoperative complication that usually occurs 1 to 2 days after surgery

**B. Assessment** ▲

1. Assess for factors that may increase the risk of pneumonia and atelectasis.
2. Assess for dyspnea and increased respiratory rate.
3. Assess for crackles over involved lung area.
4. Assess for elevated temperature.
5. Assess for productive cough and chest pain.

#### C. Interventions

1. Assess lung and breath sounds.
2. Reposition the client every 1 to 2 hours.
3. Encourage the client to deep-breathe, cough, and use the incentive spirometer as prescribed. ▲
4. Provide chest physiotherapy and postural drainage, as prescribed.
5. Encourage fluid intake and early ambulation.
6. Use suction to clear secretions if the client is unable to cough.

## IV. Hypoxemia

**A. Description:** An inadequate concentration of oxygen in arterial blood; in the postoperative client, hypoxemia can be due to shallow breathing from the effects of anesthesia or medications.

#### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Restlessness
2. Dyspnea
3. Diaphoresis

4. Tachycardia
5. Hypertension
6. Cyanosis

#### C. Interventions

1. Monitor for signs of hypoxemia.
2. Notify the HCP.
3. Monitor lung sounds and pulse oximetry.
4. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
5. Encourage deep breathing and coughing and use of the incentive spirometer.
6. Turn and reposition the client frequently; encourage ambulation. ▲

## V. Pulmonary Embolism

**A. Description:** An embolus blocking the pulmonary artery and disrupting blood flow to one or more lobes of the lung.

#### B. Assessment ▲

1. Sudden dyspnea
2. Sudden sharp chest or upper abdominal pain
3. Cyanosis
4. Tachycardia
5. A drop in blood pressure

#### C. Interventions ▲

1. Notify the HCP immediately because pulmonary embolism may be life-threatening

and requires emergency action.

2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Administer oxygen and medications as prescribed.

## VI. Hemorrhage

**A. Description:** The loss of a large amount of blood externally or internally in a short time period.

**B. Assessment** ▲

1. Restlessness
2. Weak and rapid pulse
3. Hypotension
4. Tachypnea
5. Cool, clammy skin
6. Reduced urine output

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Provide pressure to the site of bleeding.
2. Notify the HCP.
3. Administer oxygen, as prescribed.
4. Administer IV fluids and blood, as prescribed.
5. Prepare the client for a surgical procedure, if necessary.

## VII. Shock

**A. Description:** Loss of circulatory fluid volume, which usually is caused by

hemorrhage.

**B. Assessment:** Similar to assessment findings in hemorrhage

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. If shock develops, elevate the legs.
2. Notify the HCP.
3. Determine and treat the cause of shock.
4. Administer oxygen, as prescribed.
5. Monitor level of consciousness.
6. Monitor vital signs for increased pulse or decreased blood pressure.
7. Monitor intake and output.
8. Assess color, temperature, turgor, and moisture of the skin and mucous membranes.
9. Administer IV fluids, blood, and colloid solutions, as prescribed.

**⚠** If the client had spinal anesthesia, do not elevate the legs any higher than placing them on the pillow; otherwise, the diaphragm muscles needed for effective breathing could be impaired.

## **VIII. Thrombophlebitis**

**A. Description**

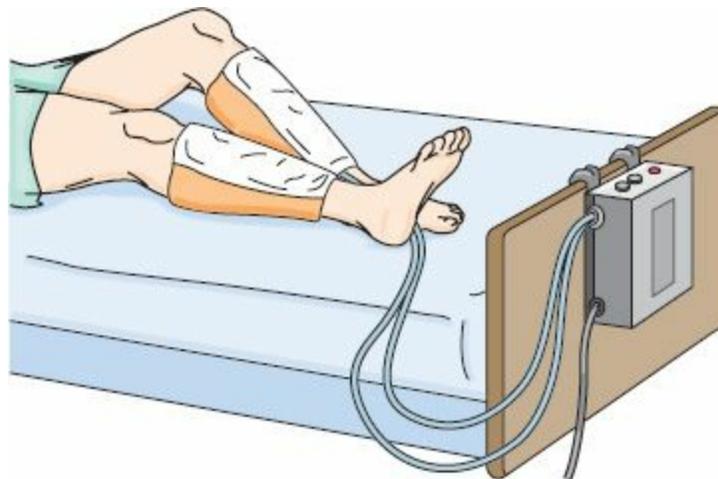
1. Thrombophlebitis is an inflammation of a vein, often accompanied by clot formation.
2. Veins in the legs are affected most commonly.

**B. Assessment** ▲

1. Vein inflammation
2. Aching or cramping pain
3. Vein feels hard and cord-like and is tender to touch
4. Elevated temperature

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor legs for swelling, inflammation, pain, tenderness, venous distention, and cyanosis; notify the HCP if any of these signs are present.
2. Elevate the extremity 30 degrees without allowing any pressure on the popliteal area.
3. Encourage the use of antiembolism stockings as prescribed; remove stockings twice a day to wash and inspect the legs.
4. Use an intermittent pulsatile compression device as prescribed (Fig. 19-5).



**FIGURE 19-5** Intermittent pulsatile compression device. (From Monahan F, Sands J, Neighbors M, Marek J, Green C. *Phipps' medical-surgical nursing: Health and illness perspectives*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

5. Perform passive range-of-motion exercises every 2 hours if the client is confined to bed rest.
6. Encourage early ambulation, as prescribed.
7. Do not allow the client to dangle the legs.
8. Instruct the client not to sit in one position for an extended period of time.
9. Administer anticoagulants such as heparin sodium or warfarin (Coumadin), as prescribed.

## **IX. Urinary Retention**

### **A. Description**

1. Urinary retention is an involuntary accumulation of urine in the bladder as a result of loss of muscle tone.
2. It is caused by the effects of anesthetics or opioid analgesics and appears 6 to 8 hours after surgery.

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Inability to void
2. Restlessness and diaphoresis
3. Lower abdominal pain
4. Distended bladder
5. Hypertension
6. On percussion, bladder sounds like a drum

### **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor for voiding.
2. Assess for a distended bladder.
3. Encourage ambulation when prescribed.
4. Encourage fluid intake unless contraindicated.
5. Assist the client to void by helping to stand.
6. Provide privacy.
7. Pour warm water over the perineum or allow the client to hear running water to promote voiding.
8. Contact the HCP and catheterize the client as prescribed after all noninvasive techniques have been attempted.

## **X. Constipation**

### **A. Description**

1. Constipation is an abnormal infrequent passage of stool.
2. When the client resumes a solid diet postoperatively, failure to pass stool within 48 hours may indicate constipation.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Absence of bowel movements
2. Abdominal distention
3. Anorexia, headache, and nausea

### **C. Interventions**

1. Assess bowel sounds.

2. Encourage fluid intake up to 3000 mL/day unless contraindicated. ▲
3. Encourage early ambulation. ▲
4. Encourage consumption of fiber foods unless contraindicated. ▲
5. Provide privacy and adequate time for bowel elimination.
6. Administer stool softeners and laxatives, as prescribed.

## **XI. Paralytic Ileus**

### **A. Description**

1. Paralytic ileus is failure of appropriate forward movement of bowel contents.
2. The condition may occur as a result of anesthetic medications or of manipulation of the bowel during the surgical procedure.

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Vomiting postoperatively
2. Abdominal distention
3. Absence of bowel sounds, bowel movement, or flatus

### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor intake and output.
2. Maintain NPO status until bowel sounds return. ▲
3. Maintain patency of a nasogastric tube if in place.
4. Encourage ambulation.
5. Administer IV fluids or PN, as prescribed.
6. Administer medications as prescribed to increase gastrointestinal motility and

secretions.

7. If ileus occurs, it is treated first nonsurgically with bowel decompression by insertion of a nasogastric tube attached to intermittent or constant suction.

 Vomiting postoperatively, abdominal distention, and absence of bowel sounds may be signs of paralytic ileus.

## **XII. Wound Infection**

### **A. Description**

1. Wound infection may be caused by poor aseptic technique or a contaminated wound before surgical exploration; existing client conditions such as diabetes mellitus or immunocompromise may place the client at risk.
2. Infection usually occurs 3 to 6 days after surgery.
3. Purulent material may exit from the drains or separated wound edges.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Fever and chills
2. Warm, tender, painful, and inflamed incision site
3. Edematous skin at the incision and tight skin sutures
4. Elevated white blood cell count

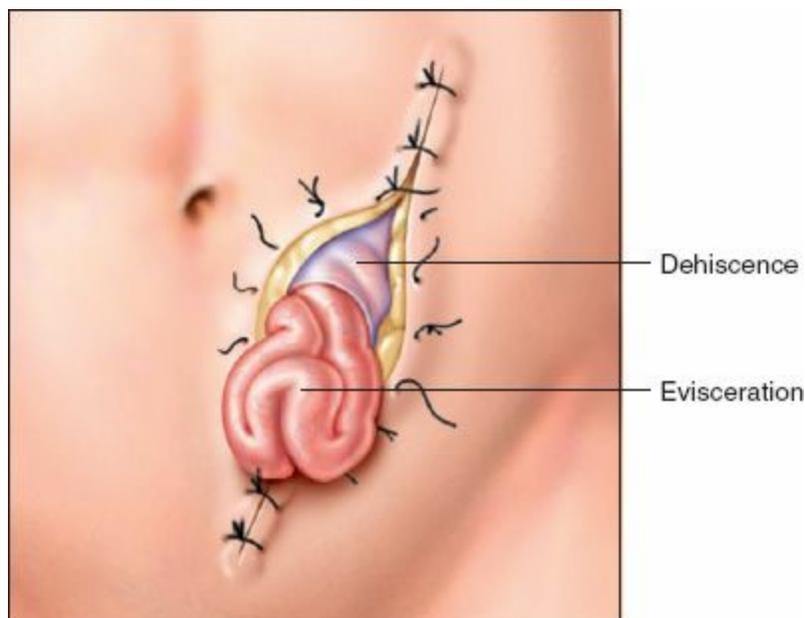
### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor temperature.
2. Monitor incision site for approximation of suture line, edema, or bleeding, and signs of infection (*REEDA*: redness, erythema, ecchymosis, drainage, approximation of the wound edges); notify the HCP if signs of wound infection

are present.

3. Maintain patency of drains, and assess drainage amount, color, and consistency.
4. Maintain asepsis and change the dressing, as prescribed.
5. Administer antibiotics, as prescribed.

### XIII. Wound Dehiscence and Evisceration (Fig. 19-6)



**FIGURE 19-6** Complications of wound healing. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

#### A. Description

1. Wound dehiscence is separation of the wound edges at the suture line; it usually occurs 6 to 8 days after surgery.
2. Wound evisceration is protrusion of the internal organs through an incision; it usually occurs 6 to 8 days after surgery.

3. Evisceration is most common among obese clients, clients who have had abdominal surgery, or those who have poor wound-healing ability.

4. Wound evisceration is an emergency. ▲

**B. Assessment: Dehiscence** ▲

1. Increased drainage

2. Opened wound edges

3. Appearance of underlying tissues through the wound

**C. Assessment: Evisceration**

1. Discharge of serosanguineous fluid from a previously dry wound

2. The appearance of loops of bowel or other abdominal contents through the wound

3. Client reports feeling a popping sensation after coughing or turning

**D. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))** ▲

## **PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS**

### **Actions to Take if Evisceration Occurs**

1. Call for help; ask that the surgeon be notified and that needed supplies be brought to the client's room.
2. Stay with the client.
3. While waiting for supplies to arrive, place the client in a low Fowler's position with the knees bent.
4. Cover the wound with a sterile normal saline dressing and keep the dressing moist.

5. Take vital signs and monitor the client closely for signs of shock.
6. Prepare the client for surgery as necessary.
7. Document the occurrence, actions taken, and the client's response.

Wound evisceration is protrusion of the internal organs through an incision; it usually occurs 6 to 8 days after surgery. Evisceration is most common among obese clients, clients who have had abdominal surgery, or those who have poor wound-healing ability. Wound evisceration is an emergency. The nurse immediately calls for help and asks that the surgeon be notified and that needed supplies (vital sign measurement devices, sterile normal saline, and dressings) be brought to the client's room. The nurse stays with the client and while waiting for supplies to arrive, places the client in a low Fowler's position with the knees bent to prevent abdominal tension on an abdominal suture line. The nurse covers the wound with a sterile normal saline dressing as soon as supplies are available and keeps the dressing moist. Vital signs are monitored closely, and the client is monitored for signs of shock. The client is prepared for surgery if necessary. The nurse also documents the occurrence, actions taken, and client's response.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, p. 296.

1. Place the client in a low Fowler's position with the knees bent to prevent

- abdominal tension on an abdominal suture line.
2. Cover the wound with a sterile normal saline dressing.
  3. Notify the HCP.
  4. Prevent wound infection through strict asepsis.
  5. Administer antiemetics as prescribed to prevent vomiting and further strain on the abdominal incision.
  6. Instruct the client to splint the abdominal incision when coughing; this action assists in preventing or worsening these complications.
  7. Prepare the client for surgery as necessary.

#### **XIV. Ambulatory Surgery** ▲

##### **A. General criteria for client discharge**

1. Client is alert and oriented.
2. Client has voided.
3. Client has no respiratory distress.
4. Client is able to ambulate, swallow, and cough.
5. Client has minimal pain.
6. Client is not vomiting.
7. Client has minimal, if any, bleeding from the incision site.
8. Client has a responsible adult available to drive the client home.
9. The surgeon has signed a release form.

##### **B. Discharge teaching (Box 19-6)**

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Assess the client's readiness to learn, educational level, and desire to change or modify lifestyle.

Assess the need for resources needed for home care.

Demonstrate care of the incision and how to change the dressing.

Instruct the client to cover the incision with plastic if showering is allowed.

Be sure the client is provided with a 48-hour supply of dressings for home use.

Instruct the client on the importance of returning to the health care provider's (HCP's) office for follow-up.

Instruct the client that sutures usually are removed in the HCP's office 7 to 10 days after surgery.

Inform the client that staples are removed 7 to 14 days after surgery and that the skin may become slightly reddened when they are ready to be removed.

Sterile adhesive strips (e.g., Steri-Strips) may be applied to provide extra support after the sutures are removed.

Instruct the client on the use of medications, their purpose, dosages, administration, and side effects.

Instruct the client on diet and to drink six to eight glasses of liquid a day.

Instruct the client about activity levels and to resume normal activities gradually.

Instruct the client to avoid lifting for 6 weeks if a major surgical procedure was performed.

Instruct the client with an abdominal incision not to lift anything weighing 10 pounds

or more and not to engage in any activities that involve pushing or pulling.

The client usually can return to work in 6 to 8 weeks depending on the procedure and as prescribed by the HCP.

Instruct the client about the signs and symptoms of complications and when to call the HCP.

1. Discharge teaching should be performed before the date of the scheduled procedure.
2. Provide written instructions to the client and family regarding the specifics of care.
3. Instruct the client and family about postoperative complications that can occur.
4. Provide appropriate resources for home care support.
5. Instruct the client not to drive, make important decisions, or sign any legal documents for 24 hours after receiving general anesthesia.
6. Instruct the client to call the surgeon, ambulatory center, or emergency department if postoperative problems occur.
7. Instruct the client to keep follow-up appointments with the surgeon.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Nursing responsibilities with regard to informed consent for a surgical procedure include witnessing the client's signing of the consent form, but the nurse

must be sure that the client has understood the surgeon's explanation of the surgery. The nurse needs to document the witnessing of the signing of the consent form after the client acknowledges understanding of the procedure. If the client informs the nurse that the explanation was not fully understood, the nurse must notify the surgeon and the surgeon will need to clarify anything that was not understood by the client.

### ***Reference***

Lewis et al (2011), pp. 335-336.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 166.** The nurse has just reassessed the condition of a postoperative client who was admitted 1 hour ago to the surgical unit. The nurse plans to monitor which parameter **most** carefully during the next hour?
1. Urinary output of 20 mL/hour
  2. Temperature of 37.6 ° C (99.6 ° F)
  3. Blood pressure of 100/70 mm Hg
  4. Serous drainage on the surgical dressing
- 167.** A postoperative client asks the nurse why it is so important to deep-breathe and cough after surgery. When formulating a response, the nurse incorporates the understanding that retained pulmonary secretions in a postoperative client can lead to which condition?
1. Pneumonia
  2. Hypoxemia
  3. Fluid imbalance
  4. Pulmonary embolism
- 168.** The nurse is developing a plan of care for a client scheduled for surgery. The nurse should include which activity in the nursing care plan for the client on the day of surgery?
1. Avoid oral hygiene and rinsing with mouthwash.
  2. Verify that the client has not eaten for the last 24 hours.

3. Have the client void immediately before going into surgery.
4. Report immediately any slight increase in blood pressure or pulse.

**169.** A client with a perforated gastric ulcer is scheduled for surgery. The client cannot sign the operative consent form because of sedation from opioid analgesics that have been administered. The nurse should take which **most appropriate** action in the care of this client?

1. Obtain a court order for the surgery.
2. Have the charge nurse sign the informed consent immediately.
3. Send the client to surgery without the consent form being signed.
4. Obtain a telephone consent from a family member, following agency policy.

**170.** A preoperative client expresses anxiety to the nurse about upcoming surgery. Which response by the nurse is **most likely** to stimulate further discussion between the client and the nurse?

1. "If it's any help, everyone is nervous before surgery."
2. "I will be happy to explain the entire surgical procedure to you."
3. "Can you share with me what you've been told about your surgery?"
4. "Let me tell you about the care you'll receive after surgery and the amount of pain you can anticipate."

**171.** The nurse is conducting preoperative teaching with a client about the use of an incentive spirometer. The nurse should include which piece of information in discussions with the client?

1. Inhale as rapidly as possible.
2. Keep a loose seal between the lips and the mouthpiece.
3. After maximum inspiration, hold the breath for 15 seconds and exhale.
4. The best results are achieved when sitting up or with the head of the bed elevated 45 to 90 degrees.

172. The nurse has conducted preoperative teaching for a client scheduled for surgery in 1 week. The client has a history of arthritis and has been taking acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin). The nurse determines that the client **needs additional teaching** if the client makes which statement?

1. "Aspirin can cause bleeding after surgery."
2. "Aspirin can cause my ability to clot blood to be abnormal."
3. "I need to continue to take the aspirin until the day of surgery."
4. "I need to check with my health care provider about the need to stop the aspirin before the scheduled surgery."

173. The nurse assesses a client's surgical incision for signs of infection. Which finding by the nurse would be interpreted as a normal finding at the surgical site?

1. Red, hard skin
2. Serous drainage
3. Purulent drainage
4. Warm, tender skin

174. The nurse is monitoring the status of a postoperative client. The nurse would

become **most** concerned with which sign that could indicate an evolving complication?

1. Increasing restlessness
2. A pulse of 86 beats/minute
3. Blood pressure of 110/70 mm Hg
4. Hypoactive bowel sounds in all four quadrants

**175.** A client who has had abdominal surgery complains of feeling as though “something gave way” in the incisional site. The nurse removes the dressing and notes the presence of a loop of bowel protruding through the incision. Which nursing interventions should the nurse take? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Contact the surgeon.
2. Instruct the client to remain quiet.
3. Prepare the client for wound closure.
4. Document the findings and actions taken
5. Place a sterile saline dressing and ice packs over the wound.
6. Place the client in a supine position without a pillow under the head.

**176.** A client who has undergone preadmission testing has had blood drawn for serum laboratory studies, including a complete blood count, coagulation studies, and electrolytes and creatinine levels. Which laboratory result should be reported to the surgeon’s office by the nurse, knowing that it could cause surgery to be postponed?

1. Sodium, 141 mEq/L
2. Hemoglobin, 8.0 g/dL
3. Platelets, 210,000/mm<sup>3</sup>
4. Serum creatinine, 0.8 mg/dL

**177.** The nurse receives a telephone call from the postanesthesia care unit stating that a client is being transferred to the surgical unit. The nurse plans to take which action **first** on arrival of the client?

1. Assess the patency of the airway.
2. Check tubes or drains for patency.
3. Check the dressing to assess for bleeding.
4. Assess the vital signs to compare with preoperative measurements.

**178.** The nurse is reviewing a health care provider's (HCP's) prescription sheet for a preoperative client that states that the client must be NPO after midnight. The nurse would telephone the HCP to clarify that which medication should be given to the client and not withheld?

1. Prednisone
2. Ferrous sulfate
3. Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)
4. Conjugated estrogen (Premarin)

**166. 1**

**Rationale:** Urine output should be maintained at a minimum of 30 mL/hour for an adult. An output of less than 30 mL for each of 2 consecutive hours should be reported to the health care provider. A temperature higher than 37.7 ° C (100 ° F) or lower than 36.1 ° C (97 ° F) and a falling systolic blood pressure, lower than 90 mm Hg, are usually considered reportable immediately. The client's preoperative or baseline blood pressure is used to make informed postoperative comparisons. Moderate or light serous drainage from the surgical site is considered normal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Focus on the **subject**, expected postoperative assessment findings. To answer this question correctly, you must know the normal ranges for temperature, blood pressure, urinary output, and wound drainage. Note that the urinary output is the only observation that is not within the normal range.

**Review:** **Postoperative assessment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 290.

**167. 1**

**Rationale:** Postoperative respiratory problems are atelectasis, pneumonia, and pulmonary emboli. Pneumonia is the inflammation of lung tissue that causes productive cough, dyspnea, and lung crackles and can be caused by retained pulmonary secretions. Hypoxemia is an inadequate concentration of oxygen in arterial blood. Fluid imbalance can be

a deficit or excess related to fluid loss or overload. Pulmonary embolus occurs as a result of a blockage of the pulmonary artery that disrupts blood flow to one or more lobes of the lung; this is usually due to clot formation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a postoperative complication caused by retained pulmonary secretions. Focus on the relationship between the words *deep-breathe* and *cough* in the question and pneumonia.

**Review: Postoperative complications**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concept:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 370-371.

### 168. 3

**Rationale:** The nurse would assist the client to void immediately before surgery so that the bladder will be empty. Oral hygiene is allowed, but the client should not swallow any water. The client usually has a restriction of food and fluids for 6 to 8 hours before surgery instead of 24 hours. A slight increase in blood pressure and pulse is common during the preoperative period and is usually the result of anxiety.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, preoperative care measures. Think about the measures that may be helpful and promote comfort. Oral hygiene should be administered since it may make the client feel more comfortable. A client should be NPO for 6 to 8 hours before surgery rather than 24 hours. A slight increase in blood pressure or pulse is insignificant in this situation.

**Review: Preoperative care**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Palliation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 260.

#### 169. 4

**Rationale:** Every effort should be made to obtain permission from a responsible family member to perform surgery if the client is unable to sign the consent form. A telephone consent must be witnessed by two persons who hear the family member's oral consent. The two witnesses then sign the consent with the name of the family member, noting that an oral consent was obtained. Consent is not informed if it is obtained from a client who is confused, unconscious, mentally incompetent, or under the influence of sedatives. In an emergency, a client may be unable to sign and family members may not be available. In this situation, a health care provider is permitted legally to perform surgery without consent, but in this case it is not an emergency. Options 1 and 3 are not appropriate in this situation. Also, agency policies regarding informed consent should always be followed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the data in the question. Eliminate 1 and 3 first. Option 1 will delay necessary surgery and option 3 is inappropriate. Select the correct option over option 2 because it is the most appropriate of the options presented and it is legally acceptable to obtain a telephone permission from a family member if it is witnessed by two persons.

**Review:** The procedures for obtaining **informed consent**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Health Care Law

**References:** Biard, Bethel (2011), p. 216; Lewis et al (2011), p. 344.

### 170. 3

**Rationale:** Explanations should begin with the information that the client knows. By providing the client with individualized explanations of care and procedures, the nurse can assist the client in handling anxiety and fear for a smooth preoperative experience. Clients who are calm and emotionally prepared for surgery withstand anesthesia better and experience fewer postoperative complications. Option 1 does not focus on the client's anxiety. Explaining the entire surgical procedure may increase the client's anxiety. Option 4 avoids the client's anxiety and is focuses on postoperative care.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the client expresses anxiety. Use knowledge of **therapeutic communication techniques**. Note that the question contains the **strategic words** *most likely* and also note the words *stimulate further discussion*. Also use the **steps of the nursing process**. The correct option addresses assessment and is the only therapeutic response.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Communication

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 250; Lewis et al (2011), p. 336.

**171. 4**

**Rationale:** For optimal lung expansion with the incentive spirometer, the client should assume the semi-Fowler's or high Fowler's position. The mouthpiece should be covered completely and tightly while the client inhales slowly, with a constant flow through the unit. The breath should be held for 5 seconds before exhaling slowly.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**. correct use of an incentive spirometer and visualize the procedure. Note the words *rapidly*, *loose*, and *15 seconds* in the incorrect options. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect steps regarding incentive spirometer use.

**Review:** **Incentive spirometry**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 696-697.

**172. 3**

**Rationale:** Anticoagulants alter normal clotting factors and increase the risk of bleeding after surgery. Aspirin has properties that can alter the clotting mechanism and should be discontinued at least 48 hours before surgery. However, the client should always check with his or her health care provider regarding when to stop taking the aspirin when a surgical procedure is scheduled. Options 1, 2, and 4 are accurate client statements.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *needs additional teaching*. These words indicate a **negative**

**event query** and that you need to select the incorrect client statement. Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, recalling that aspirin has properties that can alter the clotting mechanism will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Anticoagulants**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluation

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Clotting

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 253.

**173. 2**

**Rationale:** Serous drainage is an expected finding at a surgical site. The other options indicate signs of wound infection. Signs and symptoms of infection include warm, red, and tender skin around the incision. Wound infection usually appears 3 to 6 days after surgery. The client also may have a fever and chills. Purulent material may exit from drains or from separated wound edges. Infection may be caused by poor aseptic technique or a contaminated wound before surgical exploration; existing client conditions such as diabetes mellitus or immunocompromise may place the client at risk.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, normal findings in the postoperative period. Eliminate options 1, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and are manifestations of infection.

**Review: Postoperative assessment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 291.

174. 1

**Rationale:** Increasing restlessness is a sign that requires continuous and close monitoring because it could indicate a potential complication, such as hemorrhage, shock, or pulmonary embolism. A blood pressure of 110/70 mm Hg with a pulse of 86 beats/minute is within normal limits. Hypoactive bowel sounds heard in all four quadrants are a normal occurrence.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, most. Focus on the **subject**, *a manifestation of an evolving complication*. Eliminate each of the incorrect options because they are **comparable or alike** and are normal expected findings.

**Review:** Postoperative assessment

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 292.

❖ 175. 1, 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** Wound dehiscence is the separation of the wound edges. Wound evisceration is protrusion of the

internal organs through an incision. If wound dehiscence or evisceration occurs, the nurse should call for help, stay with the client, and ask another nurse to contact the surgeon and obtain needed supplies to care for the client. The nurse places the client in a low Fowler's position, and the client is kept quiet, and instructed not to cough. Protruding organs are covered with a sterile saline dressing. Ice is not applied because of its vasoconstrictive effect. The treatment for evisceration is usually immediate wound closure under local or general anesthesia. The nurse also documents the findings and actions taken.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, that the client is experiencing wound evisceration. Visualizing this occurrence will assist you in determining that the client would not be placed supine and that ice packs would not be placed on the incision.

**Review: Evisceration**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 291.

**176. 2**

**Rationale:** Routine screening tests include a complete blood count, serum electrolyte analysis, coagulation studies, and a serum creatinine test. The complete blood count includes the hemoglobin analysis. All these values are within normal range except for hemoglobin. If a client has a low hemoglobin level, the surgery likely could be postponed by the surgeon.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an abnormal laboratory result that needs to be reported. Use

knowledge of the normal laboratory values to assist in answering correctly. The hemoglobin value is the only incorrect laboratory finding.

**Review:** Normal laboratory values

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concept:** Clinical Judgment; Collaboration

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 335.

177. 1

**Rationale:** The first action of the nurse is to assess the patency of the airway and respiratory function. If the airway is not patent, the nurse must take immediate measures for the survival of the client. The nurse then takes vital signs followed by checking the dressing and the tubes or drains. The other nursing actions should be performed after a patent airway has been established.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Use the principles of prioritization when answering this question. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. Ensuring airway patency is the first action to be taken, directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Postoperative care

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concept:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013) pp. 286, 288.

178. 1

**Rationale:** Prednisone is a corticosteroid. With prolonged use, corticosteroids cause adrenal atrophy, which reduces the ability of the body to withstand stress. When stress is severe, corticosteroids are essential to life. Before and during surgery, dosages may be increased temporarily. Ferrous sulfate is an oral iron preparation used to treat iron deficiency anemia. Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) is a skeletal muscle relaxant. Conjugated estrogen (Premarin) is an estrogen used for hormone replacement therapy in postmenopausal women. These last three medications may be withheld before surgery without undue effects on the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the medication that should be administered in the preoperative period. Use knowledge about medications that may have special implications for the surgical client. Remember that when stress is severe, corticosteroids are essential to life.

**Review:** **Corticosteroids** in the preoperative period

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Collaboration

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 253; Lewis et al (2011), p. 337.



## CHAPTER 20

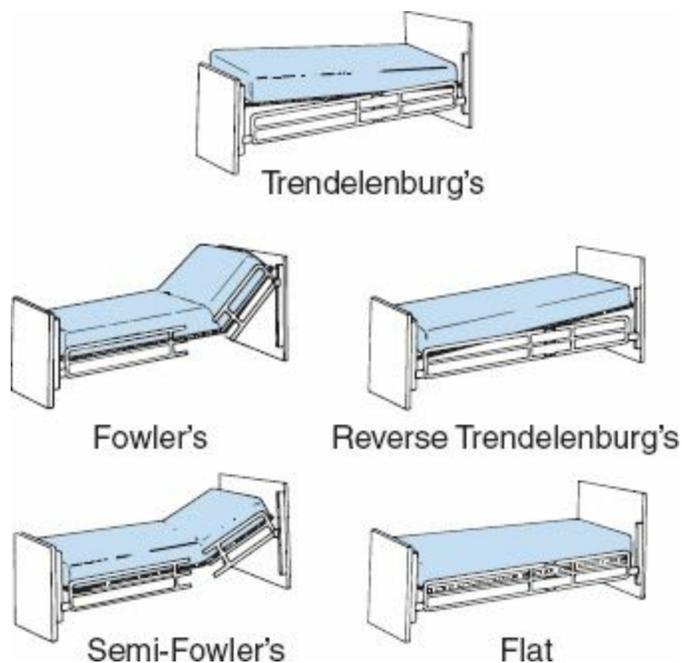
# Positioning Clients

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

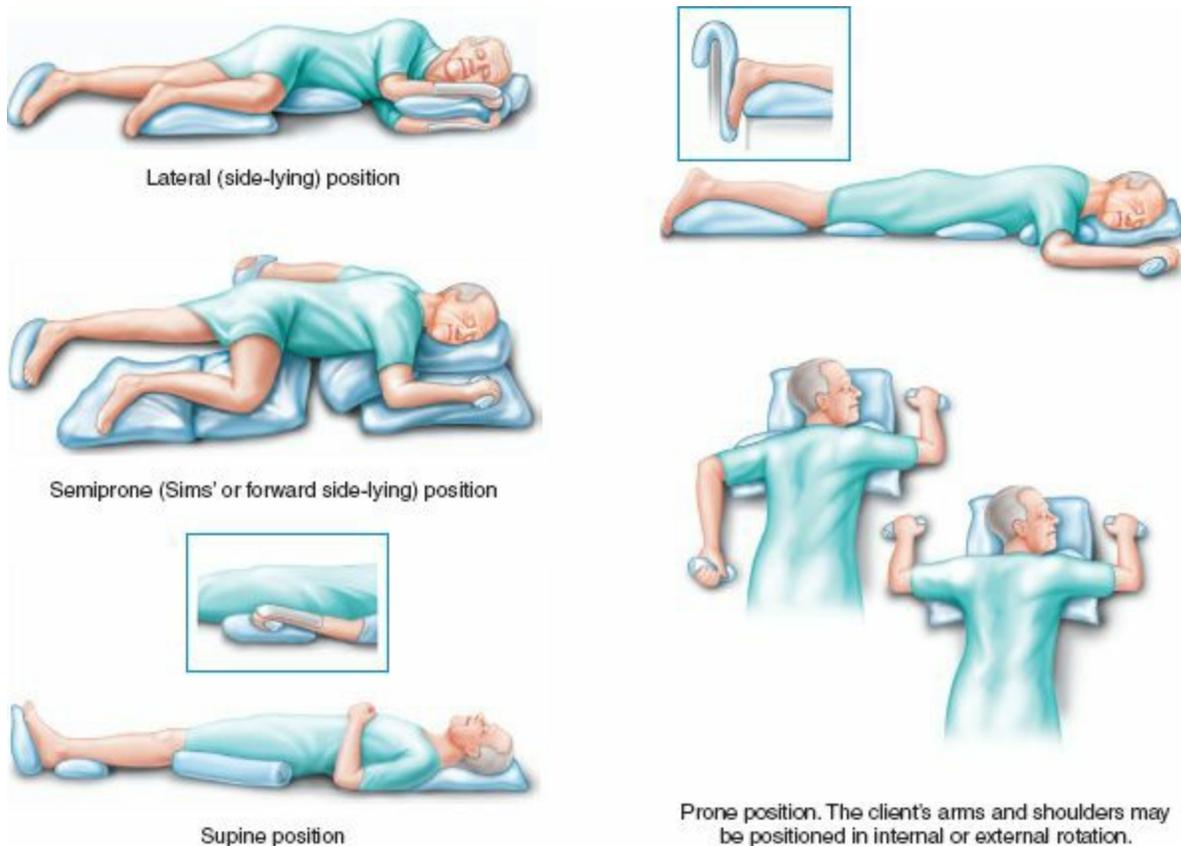
The nurse is caring for a client who is receiving intermittent tube feedings via a nasogastric tube. In maintaining proper positioning for this client, what actions should the nurse take?

*Answer located on p. 226.*

For reference throughout the chapter, please see [Figs. 20-1, 20-2, 20-3, and 20-4](#).

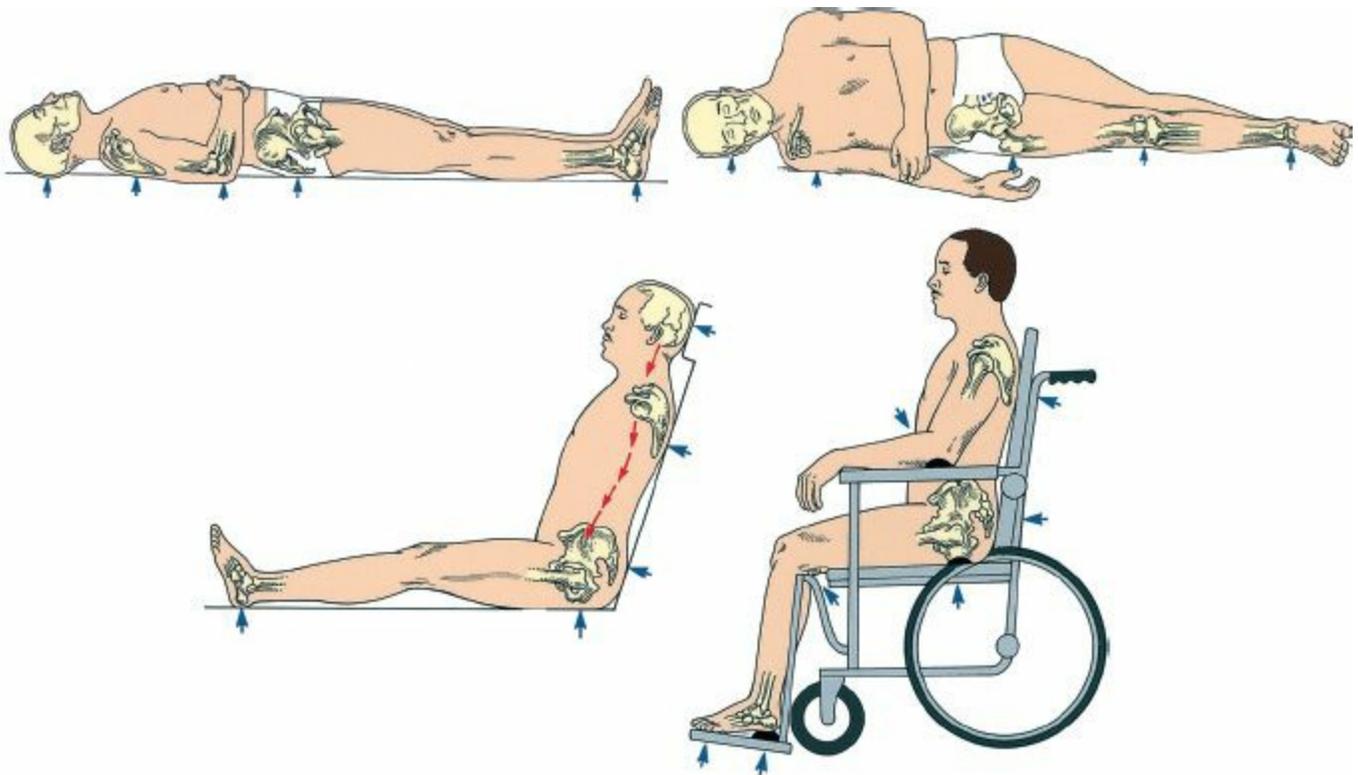


**FIGURE 20-1** Common bed positions. (From Potter P, Perry A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 20-2** Common client positions. (From Harkreader H, Hogan MA:

*Fundamentals of nursing: Caring and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)



**FIGURE 20-3** Pressure points in lying and sitting positions. (From Elkin M, Perry A, Potter, P: *Nursing interventions and clinical skills*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2008, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 20-4** Lithotomy position for examination. (From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

## I. Guidelines for Positioning

### A. Client safety and comfort

1. Position client in a safe and appropriate manner to provide safety and comfort.

2. Select a position that will prevent the development of complications related to an existing condition, prescribed treatment, or medical or surgical procedure.

**B. Ergonomic principles related to body mechanics (Box 20-1) ▲**

**BOX 20-1**      **Body Mechanics (Ergonomic Principles) for Health Care Workers**

When planning to move a client, arrange for adequate help. Use mechanical aids if help is unavailable.

Encourage the client to assist as much as possible.

Keep the back, neck and pelvis, and feet aligned. Avoid twisting.

Flex knees, and keep feet wide apart.

Position self close to the client (or object being lifted).

Use arms and legs (not back).

Slide client toward yourself, using a pull sheet. When transferring a client onto a stretcher, a slide board is more appropriate.

Set (tighten) abdominal and gluteal muscles in preparation for the move.

Person with the heaviest load coordinates efforts of the team involved by counting to three.

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

 Always review the health care provider's prescription, especially after

treatments or procedures, and take note of instructions regarding positioning and mobility.

## II. Positions to Ensure Safety and Comfort

### A. Integumentary system

1. Autograft: After surgery, the site is immobilized usually for 3 to 7 days to provide the time needed for the graft to adhere and attach to the wound bed.
2. Burns of the face and head: Elevate the head of the bed to prevent or reduce facial, head, and tracheal edema.
3. Circumferential burns of the extremities: Elevate the extremities above the level of the heart to prevent or reduce dependent edema. ▲
4. Skin graft: Elevate and immobilize the graft site to prevent movement and shearing of the graft and disruption of tissue; avoid weight-bearing.

### B. Reproductive system

1. Mastectomy
  - a. Position the client with the head of the bed elevated at least 30 degrees (**semi-Fowler's position**), with the affected arm elevated on a pillow to promote lymphatic fluid return after the removal of axillary lymph nodes.
  - b. Turn the client only to the back and unaffected side.
2. Perineal and vaginal procedures: Place the client in the **lithotomy position**.

### C. Endocrine system

1. Hypophysectomy: Elevate the head of the bed to prevent increased intracranial pressure.

## 2. Thyroidectomy

- a. Place the client in the semi-Fowler's to **Fowler's position** to reduce swelling and edema in the neck area. ▲
- b. Sandbags or pillows may be used to support the client's head or neck.
- c. Avoid neck extension to decrease tension on the suture line.

## D. Gastrointestinal system

1. Hemorrhoidectomy: Assist the client to a **lateral (side-lying) position** to prevent pain and bleeding.
2. Gastroesophageal reflux disease: **Reverse Trendelenburg's position** may be prescribed to promote gastric emptying and prevent esophageal reflux.
3. Liver biopsy (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ▲

# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take for a Client Undergoing a Liver Biopsy

1. Explain the procedure to the client.
2. Ensure that informed consent has been obtained.
3. Position the client supine, with the right side of the upper abdomen exposed; the client's right arm is raised and extended behind the head and over the left shoulder.
4. Remain with the client during the procedure.
5. After the procedure, assist the client into a right lateral (side-lying) position and place a small pillow or folded towel under the puncture site.

6. Monitor vital signs closely after the procedure and monitor for signs of bleeding.
7. Document appropriate information about the procedure, client's tolerance, and postprocedure assessment findings.

For the client undergoing a liver biopsy (or any invasive procedure), the procedure is explained to the client and informed consent is obtained. The client is positioned supine, with the right side of the upper abdomen exposed (liver is located on the right side), and the right arm is raised and extended behind the head and over the left shoulder. This position provides for maximal exposure of the right intercostal spaces. The nurse remains with the client during the procedure to provide emotional support and comfort. After the procedure, the client is assisted into a right lateral (side-lying) position and a small pillow or folded towel is placed under the puncture site for at least 3 hours to provide pressure to the site and prevent bleeding. Vital signs are monitored closely after the procedure and the client is monitored for signs of bleeding. The nurse documents appropriate information about the procedure, the client's tolerance, and postprocedure assessment findings.

### ***Reference***

Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby, pp. 916-917.

**a.** During the procedure, do the following:

- (1) Position the client supine, with the right side of the upper abdomen exposed.
- (2) The client's right arm is raised and extended behind the head and over the left shoulder.
- (3) The liver is located on the right side; this position provides for maximal exposure of the right intercostal spaces.

**b.** After the procedure, do the following:

- (1) Assist the client into a right lateral (side-lying) position.
- (2) Place a small pillow or folded towel under the puncture site for at least 3 hours to provide pressure to the site and prevent bleeding.

**4.** Paracentesis: Client is usually positioned in a semi-Fowler's position in bed, or sitting upright on the side of the bed or in a chair with the feet supported; client is assisted to a position of comfort following the procedure.

**5.** Nasogastric tube

**a.** Insertion

- (1) Position the client in a **high Fowler's position** with the head tilted forward.
- (2) This position will assist to close the trachea and open the esophagus.

**b.** Irrigations and tube feedings

- (1) Elevate the head of the bed 30 to 45 degrees (semi-Fowler's to Fowler's position) to prevent aspiration. ▲
- (2) Maintain head elevation for 1 hour after an intermittent feeding.

(3) The head of the bed should remain elevated for continuous feedings.

**⚠** If the client receiving a continuous tube feeding needs to be placed in a supine position when providing care, such as when giving a bed bath or changing linens, shut off the feeding to prevent aspiration. Remember to turn the feeding back on and check the rate of flow when the client is placed back into the semi-Fowler's or Fowler's position.

6. Rectal enema and irrigations: Place the client in the left **Sims' position** to allow the solution to flow by gravity in the natural direction of the colon.

7. Sengstaken-Blakemore and Minnesota tubes

- a. Not commonly used because they are uncomfortable for the client and can cause complications, but their use may be necessary when other interventions are not feasible.
- b. If prescribed, maintain elevation of the head of the bed to enhance lung expansion and reduce portal blood flow, permitting effective esophagogastric balloon tamponade.

E. Respiratory system **▲**

1. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: In advanced disease, place the client in a sitting position, leaning forward, with the client's arms over several pillows or an overbed table; this position will assist the client to breathe easier.
2. Laryngectomy (radical neck dissection): Place the client in a semi-Fowler's or Fowler's position to maintain a patent airway and minimize edema.
3. Bronchoscopy postprocedure: Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position to

prevent choking or aspiration resulting from an impaired ability to swallow.

4. Postural drainage: The lung segment to be drained should be in the uppermost position; **Trendelenburg's position** may be used.

#### 5. Thoracentesis

- a. During the procedure, to facilitate removal of fluid from the pleural space, position the client sitting on the edge of the bed and leaning over the bedside table with the feet supported on a stool, or lying in bed on the unaffected side with the head of the bed elevated about 45 degrees (Fowler's position).
- b. After the procedure, assist the client to a position of comfort.

 Always check the health care provider's prescription regarding positioning for the client who had a thoracotomy, lung wedge resection, lobectomy of the lung, or pneumonectomy.

### F. Cardiovascular system

#### 1. Abdominal aneurysm resection

- a. After surgery, limit elevation of the head of the bed to 45 degrees (Fowler's position) to avoid flexion of the graft.
- b. The client may be turned from side to side.

#### 2. Amputation of the lower extremity

- a. During the first 24 hours after amputation, elevate the foot of the bed (the stump is supported with pillows but not elevated because of the risk of flexion contractures) to reduce edema.
- b. Consult with the health care provider (HCP) and, if prescribed, position the

client in a **prone position** twice a day for a 20- to 30-minute period to stretch muscles and prevent flexion contractures of the hip.

### 3. Arterial vascular grafting of an extremity

- a. To promote graft patency after the procedure, bed rest usually is maintained for approximately 24 hours and the affected extremity is kept straight.
- b. Limit movement and avoid flexion of the hip and knee.

### 4. Cardiac catheterization ▲

- a. If the femoral artery was accessed for the procedure, the client is maintained on bed rest for 4 to 6 hours (time for bed rest may vary depending on HCP preference and if a vascular closure device was used); the client may turn from side to side.
- b. The affected extremity is kept straight and the head is elevated no more than 30 degrees (some HCPs prefer the flat position) until hemostasis is adequately achieved.

### 5. Heart failure and pulmonary edema: Position the client upright, preferably with the legs dangling over the side of the bed, to decrease venous return and lung congestion. ▲

**⚠ Most often, clients with respiratory and cardiac disorders should be positioned with the head of the bed elevated.**

### 6. Peripheral arterial disease

- a. Obtain the HCP's prescription for positioning. ▲
- b. Because swelling can prevent arterial blood flow, clients may be advised to

elevate their feet at rest, but they should not raise their legs above the level of the heart because extreme elevation slows arterial blood flow; some clients may be advised to maintain a slightly dependent position to promote perfusion.

#### **7. Deep vein thrombosis**

- a.** If the extremity is red, edematous, and painful, traditional heparin sodium therapy may be initiated. Bed rest with leg elevation may also be prescribed for the client.
- b.** Clients receiving low-molecular-weight heparin usually can be out of bed after 24 hours if pain level permits.

**8. Varicose veins:** Leg elevation above heart level usually is prescribed; the client also is advised to minimize prolonged sitting or standing during daily activities.

**9. Venous insufficiency and leg ulcers:** Leg elevation usually is prescribed.

#### **G. Sensory system**

**1. Cataract surgery:** Postoperatively, elevate the head of the bed (semi-Fowler's to Fowler's position) and position the client on the back or the nonoperative side to prevent the development of edema at the operative site. 🟩

#### **2. Retinal detachment**

- a.** If the detachment is large, bed rest and bilateral eye patching may be prescribed to minimize eye movement and prevent extension of the detachment.
- b.** Restrictions in activity and positioning following repair of the detachment depends on the HCP's preference and the surgical procedure performed.

#### **H. Neurological system**

1. Autonomic dysreflexia: Elevate the head of the bed to a high Fowler's position to assist with adequate ventilation and assist in the prevention of hypertensive stroke. ▲

**⚠ If autonomic dysreflexia occurs, immediately place the client in a high Fowler's position.**

2. Cerebral aneurysm: Bed rest is maintained with the head of the bed elevated 30 to 45 degrees (semi-Fowler's to Fowler's position) to prevent pressure on the aneurysm site. ▲

3. Cerebral angiography

a. Maintain bed rest for the length of time as prescribed.

b. The extremity into which the contrast medium was injected is kept straight and immobilized for about 6 to 8 hours.

4. Brain attack (stroke) ▲

a. In clients with hemorrhagic strokes, the head of the bed is usually elevated to 30 degrees to reduce intracranial pressure and to facilitate venous drainage.

b. For clients with ischemic strokes, the head of the bed is usually kept flat.

c. Maintain the head in a midline, neutral position to facilitate venous drainage from the head.

d. Avoid extreme hip and neck flexion; extreme hip flexion may increase intrathoracic pressure, whereas extreme neck flexion prohibits venous drainage from the brain.

## 5. Craniotomy

- a. The client should not be positioned on the site that was operated on, especially if the bone flap has been removed, because the brain has no bony covering on the affected site.
- b. Elevate the head of the bed 30 to 45 degrees (semi-Fowler's to Fowler's position) and maintain the head in a midline, neutral position to facilitate venous drainage from the head.
- c. Avoid extreme hip and neck flexion.

## 6. Laminectomy

- a. Logroll the client.
- b. When the client is out of bed, the client's back is kept straight (the client is placed in a straight-backed chair) with the feet resting comfortably on the floor.

## 7. Increased intracranial pressure

- a. Elevate the head of the bed 30 to 45 degrees (semi-Fowler's to Fowler's position) and maintain the head in a midline, neutral position to facilitate venous drainage from the head.
- b. Avoid extreme hip and neck flexion.

 **Do not place a client with a head injury in a flat or Trendelenburg's position because of the risk of increased intracranial pressure.**

## 8. Lumbar puncture

- a. During the procedure, assist the client to the lateral (side-lying) position, with

the back bowed at the edge of the examining table, the knees flexed up to the abdomen, and the neck flexed so that the chin is resting on the chest.

- b.** After the procedure, place the client in the **supine position** for 4 to 12 hours, as prescribed.

## 9. Spinal cord injury

- a.** Immobilize the client on a spinal backboard, with the head in a neutral position, to prevent incomplete injury from becoming complete. ▲
- b.** Prevent head flexion, rotation, or extension; the head is immobilized with a firm, padded cervical collar.
- c.** Logroll the client; no part of the body should be twisted or turned, nor should the client be allowed to assume a sitting position.

## I. Musculoskeletal system

### 1. Total hip replacement

- a.** Positioning depends on the surgical techniques used (anterior or posterior approach), the method of implantation, and the prosthesis. ▲
- b.** Avoid extreme internal and external rotation.
- c.** Avoid adduction; in most cases side-lying is permissible as long as an abduction pillow is in place; some surgeons allow turning to only one side.
- d.** Maintain abduction when the client is in a supine position or positioned on the nonoperative side.
- e.** Place a pillow between the client's legs to maintain abduction; instruct the client not to cross the legs ([Box 20-2](#)).

***Bed Boards***

These plywood boards are placed under the entire surface area of the mattress and are useful for increasing back support and body alignment.

***Foot Boots***

Foot boots are made of rigid plastic or heavy foam and keep the foot flexed at the proper angle. They should be removed two or three times a day to assess skin integrity and joint mobility.

***Hand Rolls***

Hand rolls maintain the fingers in a slightly flexed and functional position and keep the thumb slightly adducted in opposition to the fingers.

***Hand-Wrist Splints***

These splints are individually molded for the client to maintain proper alignment of the thumb in slight adduction and the wrist in slight dorsiflexion.

***Pillows***

Pillows provide support, elevate body parts, splint incisional areas, and reduce postoperative pain during activity, coughing, or deep breathing. They should be of the appropriate size for the body part to be positioned.

***Sandbags***

Sandbags are soft devices filled with a substance that can be shaped to body contours to provide support. They immobilize extremities and maintain specific body alignment.

### ***Side Rails***

These bars, positioned along the sides of the length of the bed, ensure client safety and are useful for increasing mobility. They also provide assistance in rolling from side to side or sitting up in bed.

### ***Trapeze Bar***

This bar descends from a securely fastened overhead bar attached to the bed frame. It allows the client to use the upper extremities to raise the trunk off the bed, assists in transfer from the bed to a wheelchair, and helps the client perform upper arm-strengthening exercises.

### ***Trochanter Rolls***

These rolls prevent external rotation of the legs when the client is in the supine position. To form a roll, use a cotton bath blanket or a sheet folded lengthwise to a width extending from the greater trochanter of the femur to the lower border of the popliteal space.

### ***Wedge Pillow***

This triangular pillow is made of heavy foam and is used to maintain the legs in abduction following total hip replacement surgery.

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

f. Check the HCP's prescriptions regarding elevation of the head of the bed and hip flexion.

2. Devices used to promote proper positioning (see [Box 20-2](#))

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** For the client receiving intermittent tube feedings via a nasogastric tube, the nurse should position the client in an upright (semi-Fowler's or high-Fowler's) position during the feeding and for 1 hour following the feeding, per agency policy. Positioning the client in an upright position prevents aspiration of the formula. For the client receiving a continuous tube feeding, an upright position should be maintained at all times.

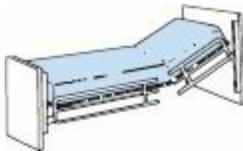
#### **Reference**

Potter et al (2013), p. 1118.

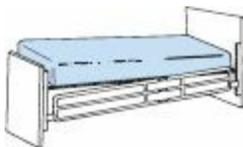
## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

179. A client is being prepared for a thoracentesis. The nurse should assist the client to which position for the procedure?
1. Lying in bed on the affected side
  2. Lying in bed on the unaffected side
  3. Sims' position with the head of the bed flat
  4. Prone with the head turned to the side and supported by a pillow
180. The nurse is caring for a client following a supratentorial craniotomy, in which a large tumor was removed from the left side. In which position can the nurse safely place the client? **Refer to the figures in choices 1 to 4.** ❖

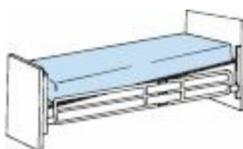
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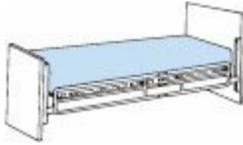
2.



3.



4.



(Figures 1-4 from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

**181.** The nurse develops a plan of care for a client with deep vein thrombosis. Which client position or activity in the plan should be included?

1. Out-of-bed activities as desired
2. Bed rest with the affected extremity kept flat
3. Bed rest with elevation of the affected extremity
4. Bed rest with the affected extremity in a dependent position

**182.** The nurse is caring for a client who is 1 day postoperative for a total hip replacement. Which is the **best** position in which the nurse should place the client?

1. Side-lying on the operative side
2. On the nonoperative side with the legs abducted
3. Side-lying with the affected leg internally rotated
4. Side-lying with the affected leg externally rotated

**183.** The nurse is providing instructions to a client and the family regarding home care after right eye cataract removal. Which statement by the client would indicate an

understanding of the instructions?

1. "I should not sleep on my left side."
2. "I should not sleep on my right side."
3. "I should not sleep with my head elevated."
4. "I should not wear my glasses at any time."

**184.** The nurse is administering a cleansing enema to a client with a fecal impaction.

Before administering the enema, the nurse should place the client in which position?

1. Left Sims' position
2. Right Sims' position
3. On the left side of the body, with the head of the bed elevated 45 degrees
4. On the right side of the body, with the head of the bed elevated 45 degrees

**185.** A client has just returned to a nursing unit after an above-knee amputation of the right leg. The nurse should place the client in which position?

1. Prone
2. Reverse Trendelenburg's
3. Supine, with the amputated limb flat on the bed
4. Supine, with the amputated limb supported with pillows

**186.** The nurse is caring for a client with a severe burn who is scheduled for an autograft to be placed on the lower extremity. The nurse develops a postoperative plan of care for the client and should include which intervention in

the plan?

1. Maintain the client in a prone position.
2. Elevate and immobilize the grafted extremity.
3. Maintain the grafted extremity in a flat position.
4. Keep the grafted extremity covered with a blanket.

**187.** The nurse is preparing to care for a client who has returned to the nursing unit following cardiac catheterization performed through the femoral artery. The nurse checks the health care provider's (HCP's) prescription and plans to allow which client position or activity following the procedure?

1. Bed rest in high Fowler's position
2. Bed rest with bathroom privileges only
3. Bed rest with head elevation at 60 degrees
4. Bed rest with head elevation no greater than 30 degrees

**188.** The nurse is preparing to insert a nasogastric tube into a client. The nurse should place the client in which position for insertion?

1. Right side
2. Low Fowler's
3. High Fowler's
4. Supine with the head flat

**179. 2**

**Rationale:** To facilitate removal of fluid from the chest, the client is positioned sitting at the edge of the bed leaning over the bedside table, with the feet supported on a stool; or lying in bed on the unaffected side with the head of the bed elevated 30 to 45 degrees. The prone and Sims' positions are inappropriate positions for this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning for thoracentesis. In order to perform a thoracentesis safely, the site must be visible to the HCP performing the procedure. The client should be placed in a position where they are as comfortable as possible with access to the affected side. A prone position would not give the HCP access to the chest. Lying on the affected side would eliminate access to the site.

**Review:** Positioning for **thoracentesis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Diagnostic Tests

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 514, 576; Pagana, Pagana (2010), pp. 718-719.

❖ **180. 1**

**Rationale:** Clients who have undergone supratentorial surgery should have the head of the bed elevated 30 degrees to promote venous drainage from the head. The client is positioned to avoid extreme hip or neck flexion and the head is maintained in a midline neutral position. If a large tumor has been removed, the client should be placed on the nonoperative side to prevent displacement of the cranial contents. A flat position or Trendelenburg's position would increase intracranial pressure. A reverse Trendelenburg's position would not be helpful and may be

uncomfortable for the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning following craniotomy. Remember that a primary concern is the risk for increased intracranial pressure. Therefore, use concepts related to preventing increased intracranial pressure to answer this question. Also remember that with *supratentorial* surgery, the head is usually kept “up” and that the client is placed on the nonoperative side.

**Review:** Positioning following **craniotomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1034; Potter et al (2013), p. 794.

### 181. 3

**Rationale:** For the client with deep vein thrombosis, elevation of the affected leg facilitates blood flow by the force of gravity and also decreases venous pressure, which in turn relieves edema and pain. Bed rest is indicated to prevent emboli and to prevent pressure fluctuations in the venous system that occur with walking.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the safe position or activity for the client with deep vein thrombosis.

Think about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder and the principles related to gravity flow and edema to answer the question.

**Review:** Positioning for a **venous disorder**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 800.

## 182. 2

**Rationale:** Positioning following a total hip replacement depends on the surgical techniques used, the method of implantation, the prosthesis, and health care provider's (HCP's) preference. Abduction is maintained when the client is in a supine position or positioned on the nonoperative side. Internal and external rotation, adduction, or side-lying on the operative side (unless specifically prescribed by the HCP) is avoided.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic word** *best*. Use knowledge regarding care of clients following total hip replacement to answer this question. A client, after a total hip replacement, should never have the extremity internally or externally rotated. Lying on the surgical side can cause damage to the surgical replacement site.

**Review:** Positioning after **total hip replacement**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1607.

## 183. 2

**Rationale:** After cataract surgery, the client should not sleep on the side of the body that was operated on to

prevent edema formation and intraocular pressure. The client also should be placed in a semi-Fowler's position to assist in minimizing edema and intraocular pressure. During the day, the client may wear glasses or a protective shield; at night, the protective shield alone is sufficient.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, right cataract surgery. Remember to instruct the client to remain off the operative side and to rest with the head elevated to minimize edema formation. This will assist you when answering questions related to cataract surgery.

**Review:** Positioning following **cataract surgery**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Client Teaching; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 414-415.

## 184. 1

**Rationale:** For administering an enema, the client is placed in a left Sims' position so that the enema solution can flow by gravity in the natural direction of the colon. The head of the bed is not elevated in the Sims' position.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning for enema administration. Use knowledge regarding the anatomy of the bowel to answer the question. The descending colon is located on the lower left side of the body. The head of the bed should be flat during enema administration.

**Review:** **Enema** administration

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 1113.

#### 185. 4

**Rationale:** The amputated limb is usually supported on pillows for the first 24 hours following surgery to promote venous return and decrease edema. After the first 24 hours, the amputated limb usually is placed flat on the bed to reduce hip contracture. Edema also is controlled by limb-wrapping techniques. In addition, it is important to check health care provider prescriptions regarding positioning following amputation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning following amputation, and note that the client has just returned from surgery. Using basic principles related to immediate postoperative care and preventing edema will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Positioning following **amputation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1612.

#### 186. 2

**Rationale:** Autografts placed over joints or on lower extremities are elevated and immobilized following surgery for

3 to 7 days, depending on the surgeon's preference. This period of immobilization allows the autograft time to adhere and attach to the wound bed, and the elevation minimizes edema. Keeping the client in a prone position and covering the extremity with a blanket can disrupt the graft site.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning following autograft. Use general postoperative principles; elevating the graft site will decrease edema to the graft. The client should not be placed in a prone position or have it covered after surgery since it can disrupt a graft easily.

**Review:** Positioning following **autograft**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 533; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 488-489.

#### 187. 4

**Rationale:** After cardiac catheterization, the extremity into which the catheter was inserted is kept straight for 4 to 6 hours. The client is maintained on bed rest for 4 to 6 hours (time for bed rest may vary depending on the HCP's preference and on whether a vascular closure device was used) and the client may turn from side to side. The head is elevated no more than 30 degrees (although some HCPs prefer the flat position) until hemostasis is adequately achieved.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning following cardiac catheterization. Think about this diagnostic procedure and what it entails. Understanding that the head of the bed is never elevated more than 30 degrees and bathroom privileges are restricted in the immediate postcatheterization period will assist in answering

this question.

**Review:** Positioning following **cardiac catheterization**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Diagnostic Tests

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 705

### 188. 3

**Rationale:** During insertion of a nasogastric tube, the client is placed in a sitting or high Fowler's position to facilitate insertion of the tube and reduce the risk of pulmonary aspiration if the client should vomit. The right side, and low Fowler's and supine positions place the client at risk for aspiration; in addition, these positions do not facilitate insertion of the tube.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, insertion of a nasogastric tube. Visualize each position and think about how it may facilitate insertion of the tube. Also, recall that a concern with insertion of a nasogastric tube is pulmonary aspiration. Placing the client in a high Fowler's position with their chin to their chest will decrease the risk of aspiration.

**Review:** Positioning for **nasogastric tube** insertion

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

***Content Area:*** Fundamental Skills—Safety

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Safety

***Reference:*** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 466.



## CHAPTER 21

# Care of a Client with a Tube

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse assesses a client with a closed chest tube drainage system. On inspection, the nurse notes that the system is cracked. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 242.*

### **I. Nasogastric Tubes**

#### **A. Description**

1. These are tubes used to intubate the stomach.
2. The tube is inserted from the nose to the stomach.

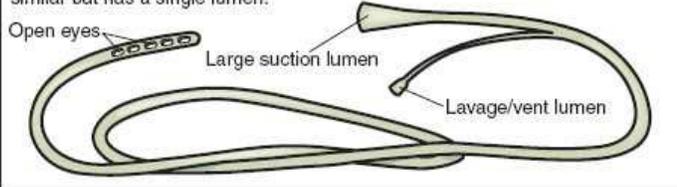
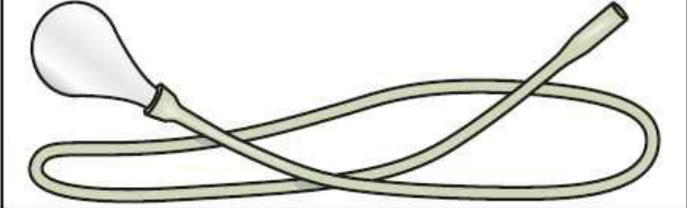
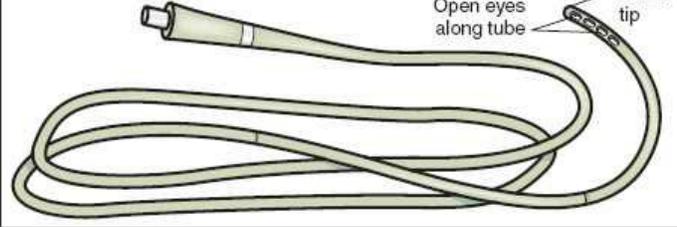
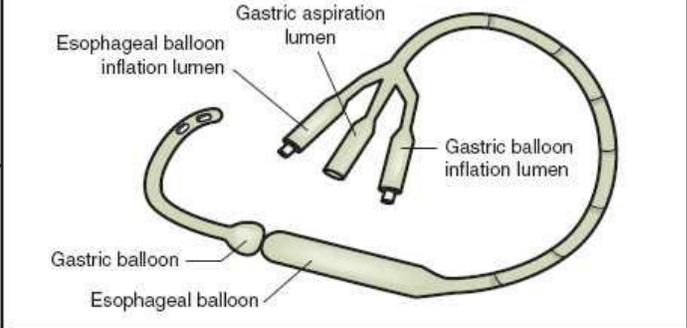
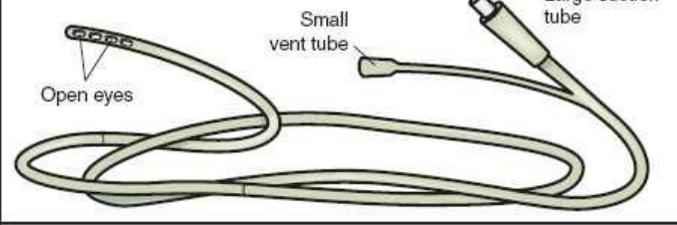
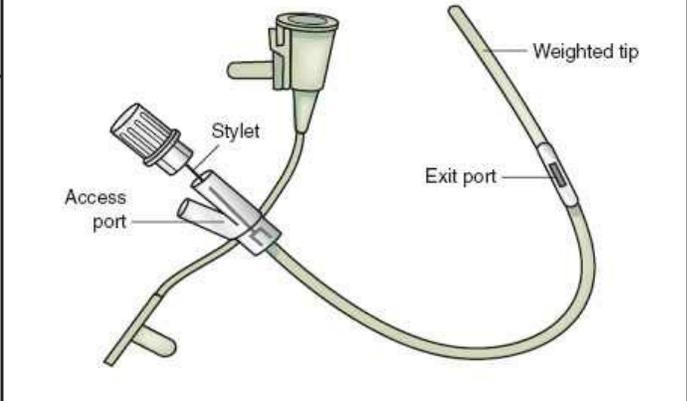
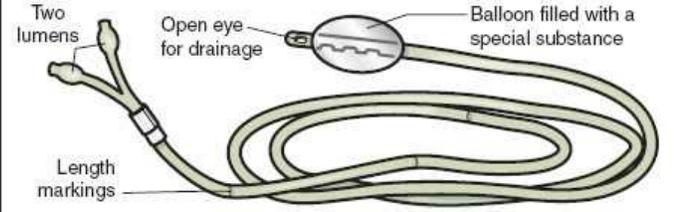
#### **B. Purpose**

1. To decompress the stomach by removing fluids or gas to promote abdominal comfort
2. To allow surgical anastomoses to heal without distention
3. To decrease the risk of aspiration ▲

4. To administer medications to clients who are unable to swallow
5. To provide nutrition by acting as a temporary feeding tube
6. To irrigate the stomach and remove toxic substances, such as in poisoning

### C. Types of tubes

#### 1. Levin tube (Fig. 21-1)

<p><b>Lavacuator tube</b> An orogastric tube with a large suction lumen and a smaller lavage/vent lumen that provides continuous suction because irrigating solution enters the lavage lumen while stomach contents are removed through the suction lumen. Used to remove toxic substances from the stomach. An ewald tube is similar but has a single lumen.</p>  <p>Open eyes Large suction lumen Lavage/vent lumen</p>	<p><b>Cantor tube</b> A single-lumen long tube with a small inflatable bag at the distal end. A special substance (tungsten) is injected with a needle (gauge 21 or smaller or balloon may leak) and syringe into the bag of the tube.</p> 
<p><b>Levin tube</b> A plastic or rubber single-lumen tube with a solid tip that may be inserted into the stomach via the nose or mouth. Used to drain fluid and gas from the stomach.</p>  <p>Open eyes along tube Solid tip</p>	<p><b>Sengstaken-Blakemore tube</b> A three-lumen tube. Two ports inflate an esophageal and a gastric balloon for tamponade, and the third is used for nasogastric suction. This tube does not provide esophageal suction, but a nasogastric tube may be inserted in the opposite naris or the mouth and allowed to rest on top of the esophageal balloon. Esophageal suction is then possible, reducing the risk of aspiration.</p>  <p>Esophageal balloon inflation lumen Gastric aspiration lumen Gastric balloon inflation lumen Gastric balloon Esophageal balloon</p>
<p><b>Salem sump tube</b> A double-lumen tube. The small vent tube within the large suction tube prevents mucosal suction damage by maintaining the pressure in open eyes at the distal end of the tube at less than 25 mm Hg.</p>  <p>Open eyes Small vent tube Large suction tube</p>	<p><b>Weighted flexible feeding tube with stylet</b> Access port with irrigation adaptor allows maintenance of the tube without disconnecting the feeding set.</p>  <p>Access port Stylet Exit port Weighted tip</p>
<p><b>Miller-Abbott tube</b> A long double-lumen tube used to drain and decompress the small intestine. One lumen leads to a balloon that is filled with a special substance (tungsten) once it is in the stomach; the second is for irrigation and drainage.</p>  <p>Two lumens Open eye for drainage Balloon filled with a special substance Length markings</p>	

**FIGURE 21-1** Comparison of design and function of selected gastrointestinal tubes.

- a. Single-lumen nasogastric tube
  - b. Used to remove gastric contents via intermittent suction or to provide tube feedings
2. Salem sump tube: A Salem sump is a double-lumen nasogastric tube with an air vent (pigtail) used for decompression with intermittent continuous suction (see Fig. 21-1).

 The air vent on a Salem sump tube is not to be clamped and is to be kept above the level of the stomach. If leakage occurs through the air vent, instill 30 mL of air into the air vent and irrigate the main lumen with normal saline (NS).

**D.** Intubation procedures (Box 21-1)

**BOX 21-1** Nasogastric Tubes: Intubation Procedures

1. Follow agency procedures.
2. Explain the procedure and its potential discomfort to the client.
3. Position the client with pillows behind the shoulders.
4. Determine which nostril is more patent.
5. Measure the length of the tube from the bridge of the nose to the earlobe to the xiphoid process and indicate this length with a piece of tape on the tube.
6. If the client is conscious and alert, have him or her swallow or drink water

(follow agency procedure).

7. Lubricate the tip of the tube with water-soluble lubricant.
8. Gently insert the tube into the nasopharynx and advance the tube.
9. When the tube nears the back of the throat (first black measurement on the tube) instruct the client to swallow or drink sips of water (unless contraindicated). If resistance is met, then slowly rotate and aim the tube downward and toward the closer ear; in the intubated or semiconscious client, flex the head toward the chest while passing the tube.
10. Immediately withdraw the tube if any change is noted in the client's respiratory status.
11. Following insertion, obtain an abdominal x-ray study to confirm placement of the tube.
12. Connect the tube to suction, to either the intermittent or continuous suction setting, as prescribed.
13. Secure the tube to the client's nose with adhesive tape and to the client's gown (follow agency procedure and check for client allergy to tape).
14. Observe the client for nausea, vomiting, abdominal fullness, or distention and monitor output.
15. Check residual volumes every 4 hours, before each feeding, and before giving medications. Aspirate all stomach contents (residual) and measure the amount. Reinstill residual contents to prevent excessive fluid and electrolyte losses, unless the residual contents appear abnormal and the volume is large (follow

agency procedure). Withhold the feeding if the amount is more than 100 mL or according to agency or nutritional consult recommendations.

16. Before the instillation of any substance through the tube (i.e., irrigation solution, feeding, medications) aspirate stomach contents and test the pH (a pH of 3.5 or lower indicates that the tip of the tube is in a gastric location).
17. If irrigation is indicated, use normal saline solution (check agency procedure).
18. Observe the client for fluid and electrolyte balance.
19. Instruct the client about movement to prevent nasal irritation and dislodgment of the tube.
20. On a daily basis, remove the adhesive tape that is securing the tube to the nose and clean and dry the skin, assessing for excoriation; then reapply the tape.

*Note:* Gastrostomy or jejunostomy tubes are surgically inserted. A dressing is placed at the site of insertion. The dressing needs to be removed, the skin needs to be cleansed (with a solution determined by the health care provider or agency procedure), and a new sterile dressing needs to be applied every 8 hours (or as specified by agency policy). The skin at the insertion site is checked for signs of excoriation, infection, or other abnormalities, such as leakage of the feeding solution.

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

## E. Irrigation

1. Assess placement before irrigating (see [Box 21-1](#)).

2. Perform irrigation every 4 hours to assess and maintain the patency of the tube.
  3. Gently instill 30 to 50 mL of water or NS (depending on agency policy) with an irrigation syringe.
  4. Pull back on the syringe plunger to withdraw the fluid to check patency; repeat if the tube flow is sluggish.
- F.** Removal of a nasogastric tube: Ask the client to take a deep breath and hold; remove the tube slowly and evenly over the course of 3 to 6 seconds (coil the tube around the hand while removing it). ▲

## **II. Gastrointestinal Tube Feedings**

### **A.** Types of tubes and anatomical placement

1. Nasogastric: Nose to stomach
2. Nasoduodenal-nasojejunal: Nose to duodenum or jejunum
3. Gastrostomy: Stomach
4. Jejunostomy: Jejunum

### **B.** Types of administration

1. Bolus
  - a. A bolus resembles normal meal feeding patterns.
  - b. Formula is administered over a 30- to 60-minute period every 3 to 6 hours; the amount of formula and frequency is prescribed by the health care provider (HCP).
2. Continuous

- a. Feeding is administered continually for 24 hours.
- b. An infusion feeding pump regulates the flow.

### 3. Cyclical

- a. Feeding is administered in the daytime or nighttime for approximately 8 to 16 hours.
- b. An infusion feeding pump regulates the flow.
- c. Feedings at night allow for more freedom during the day.

## C. Administration of feedings

1. Check the HCP's prescription and agency policy regarding residual amounts; usually, if the residual is less than 100 mL, feeding is administered; large-volume aspirates indicate delayed gastric emptying and place the client at risk for aspiration.
2. Assess bowel sounds; hold the feeding and notify the HCP if bowel sounds are absent.
3. Position the client in a high Fowler's position; if comatose, place in high Fowler's and on the right side.
4. Assess tube placement by aspirating gastric contents and measuring the pH (should be 3.5 or lower).
5. Aspirate all stomach contents (residual), measure the amount, and return the contents to the stomach to prevent electrolyte imbalances.
6. Warm the feeding to room temperature to prevent diarrhea and cramps.
7. Use an infusion feeding pump for continuous or cyclic feedings.

8. For bolus feeding, maintain the client in a high Fowler's position for 30 minutes after the feeding.
9. For a continuous feeding, keep the client in a semi-Fowler's position at all times.

#### D. Precautions

 Always assess the placement of a gastrointestinal tube before instilling feeding solutions, medications, or any other solution. If the tube is incorrectly placed the client is at risk for aspiration.

1. Change the feeding container and tubing every 24 hours.
2. Do not hang more solution than required for a 4-hour period; this prevents bacterial growth.
3. Check the expiration date on the formula before administering.
4. Shake the formula well before pouring it into the container (feeding bag).
5. Always assess bowel sounds; do not administer any feedings if bowel sounds are absent.
6. Administer the feeding at the prescribed rate or via gravity flow (intermittent bolus feedings) with a 50- to 60-mL syringe with the plunger removed.
7. Gently flush with 30 to 50 mL of water or normal saline (depending on agency policy) with the irrigation syringe after the feeding.

#### E. Prevention of complications

1. Diarrhea
  - a. Assess the client for lactose intolerance.
  - b. Use fiber-containing feedings.

c. Administer feeding slowly and at room temperature.

## 2. Aspiration

a. Verify tube placement.

b. Do not administer the feeding if residual is more than 100 mL (check HCP's prescription and agency policy).

c. Keep the head of the bed elevated.

d. If aspiration occurs, suction as needed, assess respiratory rate, auscultate lung sounds, monitor temperature for aspiration pneumonia, and prepare to obtain chest radiograph.

## 3. Clogged tube

a. Use liquid forms of medication, if possible.

b. Flush the tube with 30 to 50 mL of water or NS (depending on agency policy) before and after medication administration and before and after bolus feeding.

c. Flush with water every 4 hours for continuous feeding.

## 4. Vomiting

a. Administer feedings slowly and, for bolus feedings, make feeding last for at least 30 minutes.

b. Measure abdominal girth.

c. Do not allow the feeding bag to empty.

d. Do not allow air to enter the tubing.

e. Administer the feeding at room temperature.

f. Elevate the head of the bed.

g. Administer antiemetics as prescribed.

 If the client vomits, stop the tube feeding and place the client in a side-lying position; suction the client as needed.

F. Administration of medications (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) 

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions for Administering Medications via a Nasogastric or Gastrostomy Tube

1. Check the health care provider's (HCP's) prescription.
2. Prepare the medication for administration.
3. Ensure that the medication prescribed can be crushed or if it is a capsule that it can be opened; use elixir forms of medications if available.
4. Dissolve crushed medication or capsule contents in 15 to 30 mL of water.
5. Verify the client's identity and explain the procedure to the client.
6. Check tube placement and residual contents before instilling the medication; check for bowel sounds.
7. Draw up the medication into a catheter-tip syringe, clear excess air from the syringe, and insert the medication into the tube.
8. Flush with 30 to 50 mL of water or normal saline (NS), depending on agency policy.
9. Clamp the tube for 30 to 60 minutes, depending on medication and agency policy.

**10.** Document the administration of the medication and any other appropriate information.

The nurse always checks the HCP's prescription before administering any medication to a client. Once the prescription is verified, the medication is prepared for administration. The nurse determines the reason for administration, checks for any contraindications to administering the medication, and for any potential interactions. When preparing medications for administration through a nasogastric or gastrostomy tube, the nurse needs to ensure that the medication prescribed can be crushed or if it is a capsule that it can be opened. Whole tablets or capsules cannot be administered through a tube because they can cause a tube blockage. Elixir forms of medications can also be used if available. The nurse then dissolves the crushed medication or capsule contents in 15 to 30 mL of water. Client identity is always verified before medication administration and the procedure is explained to the client. The nurse checks tube placement and residual contents before instilling the medication and checks for bowel sounds. The nurse also performs any additional assessments, such as checking the apical heart rate for cardiac medications or checking the blood pressure for antihypertensives. The medication is drawn up into a catheter-tip syringe, excess air is removed from the syringe, and the medication is inserted into the tube. The tube is flushed with 30 to 50 mL of water or NS (depending on agency policy) to ensure that all medication has been instilled. The tube is then clamped for 30 to 60 minutes (depending on the medication and agency policy) to ensure it is absorbed (if the tube is not clamped and is reattached to

suction then the medication will be aspirated out with the suction). The nurse then documents the administration of the medication and any other appropriate information.

### ***Reference***

Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby, p. 594.

## **III. Intestinal Tubes**

### **A. Description**

1. The intestinal tube is passed nasally into the small intestine.
2. May be used to decompress the bowel or to remove accumulated intestinal secretions when other interventions to decompress the bowel are not effective.
3. The tube enters the small intestine through the pyloric sphincter because of the weight of a small bag containing tungsten at the end.

**B.** Types of tubes include the Cantor tube (single lumen) and the Miller-Abbott tube (double lumen) (see [Fig. 21-1](#)).

### **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Assess the HCP's prescriptions and agency policy for advancement and removal of the tube and tungsten.
2. Position the client on the right side to facilitate passage of the weighted bag in the

tube through the pylorus of the stomach and into the small intestine.

3. Do not secure the tube to the face with tape until it has reached final placement (may take several hours) in the intestines.
4. Assess the abdomen during the procedure by monitoring drainage from the tube and the abdominal girth.
5. If the tube becomes blocked, notify the HCP.
6. To remove the tube, the tungsten is removed from the balloon portion of the tube with a syringe; the tube is removed gradually (6 inches every hour) as prescribed by the HCP.

## IV. Esophageal and Gastric Tubes

### A. Description

1. May be used to apply pressure against bleeding esophageal veins to control the bleeding when other interventions are not effective or they are contraindicated.
2. Not used if the client has ulceration or necrosis of the esophagus or has had previous esophageal surgery because of the risk of rupture

### B. Sengstaken-Blakemore tube and Minnesota tube (see [Fig. 21-1](#))

1. The Sengstaken-Blakemore tube, used only occasionally, is a triple-lumen gastric tube with an inflatable esophageal balloon (compresses esophageal varices), an inflatable gastric balloon (applies pressure at the cardioesophageal junction), and a gastric aspiration lumen. A nasogastric tube also is inserted in the opposite naris to collect secretions that accumulate above the esophageal balloon.
2. More commonly used is the Minnesota tube, which is a modified Sengstaken-

Blakemore tube with an additional lumen (a four-lumen gastric tube) for aspirating esophagopharyngeal secretions.

3. A radiograph of the upper abdomen and chest confirms placement.

### C. Interventions

1. Check patency and integrity of all balloons before insertion.
2. Label each lumen.
3. Place the client in the upright or Fowler's position for insertion.
4. Immediately after insertion, prepare for radiography to verify placement.
5. Maintain head elevation once the tube is in place.
6. Double-clamp the balloon ports to prevent air leaks.
7. Keep scissors at the bedside at all times; monitor for respiratory distress, and if it occurs, cut the tubes to deflate balloons. ▲
8. To prevent ulceration or necrosis of the esophagus, release esophageal pressure at intervals as prescribed and per agency policy.
9. Monitor for increased bloody drainage, which may indicate persistent bleeding.
10. Monitor for signs of esophageal rupture, which includes a drop in blood pressure, increased heart rate, and back and upper abdominal pain. (Esophageal rupture is an emergency, and signs of esophageal rupture must be reported to the HCP immediately.)

## V. Lavage Tubes

- A. Description: Used to remove toxic substances from the stomach

## **B. Types of tubes**

### **1. Lavacuator (see Fig. 21-1)**

- a.** The Lavacuator is an orogastric tube with a large suction lumen and a smaller lavage–vent lumen that provides continuous suction.
- b.** Irrigation solution enters the lavage lumen while stomach contents are removed through the suction lumen.

### **2. Ewald tube: A single-lumen large tube used for rapid one-time irrigation and evacuation**

## **VI. Urinary and Renal Tubes**

### **A. Types of urinary catheters**

- 1. Single lumen:** Usually used for straight catheterization to empty the client's bladder, obtain sterile urine specimens, or to check the residual amount of urine after the client voids.
- 2. Double lumen:** Used when an indwelling catheter is needed for continuous bladder drainage; one lumen is for drainage and the other is for balloon inflation.
- 3. Triple lumen:** Used when bladder irrigation and drainage is necessary; one lumen is for instilling the bladder irrigant solution, one lumen is for continuous bladder drainage, and one lumen is for balloon inflation.
- 4. Strict aseptic technique is necessary for insertion and care of the catheter.**

### **B. Routine urinary catheter care**

- 1. Use gloves and wash the perineal area with warm soapy water.**

2. With the nondominant hand, pull back the labia or foreskin to expose the meatus (in the adult male, return the foreskin to its normal position).
3. Cleanse along the catheter with soap and water.
4. Anchor the catheter to the thigh.
5. Maintain the catheter bag below the level of the bladder.

#### C. Ureteral and nephrostomy tubes ▲

1. Never clamp the tube.
2. Maintain patency.
3. Irrigate only if prescribed by a HCP, using strict aseptic technique; a maximum of 5 mL of sterile normal saline is instilled slowly and gently.
4. If patency cannot be established with the prescribed irrigation, immediately notify the HCP.

#### D. Catheter insertion and removal (Box 21-2)

### **BOX 21-2** Urinary Catheters: Insertion and Removal Procedures

#### Urinary Catheters: Insertion Procedure

1. Follow agency procedures.
2. Explain the procedure and its potential discomfort to the client.
3. Place in position for catheterization:

*Female:* Assist to dorsal

recumbent position (supine with knees flexed). Support legs with pillows to reduce muscle tension and promote comfort.

*Male:* Assist to supine position with thighs slightly abducted.

4. Wearing clean gloves, wash perineal area with soap and water as needed; dry thoroughly. Remove and discard gloves; perform hand hygiene.
5. Open outer wrapping of the catheter kit, remembering that all components of the catheterization tray are sterile (all supplies are arranged in the box in order of sequence of use).
6. Apply waterproof sterile drape (when packed as first item in tray).
7. Foley catheter procedure with specifics for male and female:
  - a. Place sterile drape  
with plastic side down under the client's buttocks.
  - b. Don sterile gloves.
  - c. Pick up fenestrated drape out of tray. Allow it to unfold without touching nonsterile surface. Apply drape over perineum, exposing labia or penis.
  - d. Catheter insertion

*Female:* With nondominant hand, fully expose urethral meatus by spreading labia. Using forceps in sterile dominant hand, pick up cotton ball or swab sticks saturated with antiseptic solution, wiping from front to back (from clitoris toward anus). Using a new cotton ball or swab for each area you clean, wipe far labial fold, near labial fold, and directly over center of urethral meatus. Open packet containing lubricant and lubricate catheter tip. Advance catheter a total of 7.5 cm (3 inches) in adult or until urine flows out of catheter end. When urine appears, advance catheter another 2.5 to

5 cm (1 to 2 inches). Do not use force to insert catheter.

*Male:* Use of square sterile drape is optional; you may apply fenestrated drape with fenestrated slit resting over penis. Open package of sterile antiseptic solution. Pour solution over sterile cotton balls. Grasp penis at shaft just below glans. (If client is not circumcised, retract foreskin with nondominant hand). With dominant hand, pick up antiseptic-soaked cotton ball with forceps or swab stick and clean penis. Move cotton ball or swab in circular motion from urethral meatus down to base of glans. Repeat cleaning three more times, using clean cotton ball/stick each time. Pick up catheter with gloved dominant hand and insert catheter by lifting penis to position perpendicular to patient's body and apply light traction. Advance catheter 17 to 22.5 cm (7 to 9 inches) in adult or until urine flows out of catheter end. Lower penis and hold catheter securely in nondominant hand.

8. Inflate balloon fully per manufacturer's directions.
9. Secure catheter tubing to inner thigh with strip of nonallergenic tape (use paper tape if allergic to silk tape or a multipurpose tube holder with a Velcro strap).
10. Record type and size of catheter inserted, amount of fluid used to inflate the balloon, characteristics and amount of urine, specimen collection if appropriate, client's response to procedure, and that teaching was completed.

### **Urinary Catheters: Removal Procedure**

1. Follow agency procedures.
2. Explain the procedure and its potential discomfort to the client.

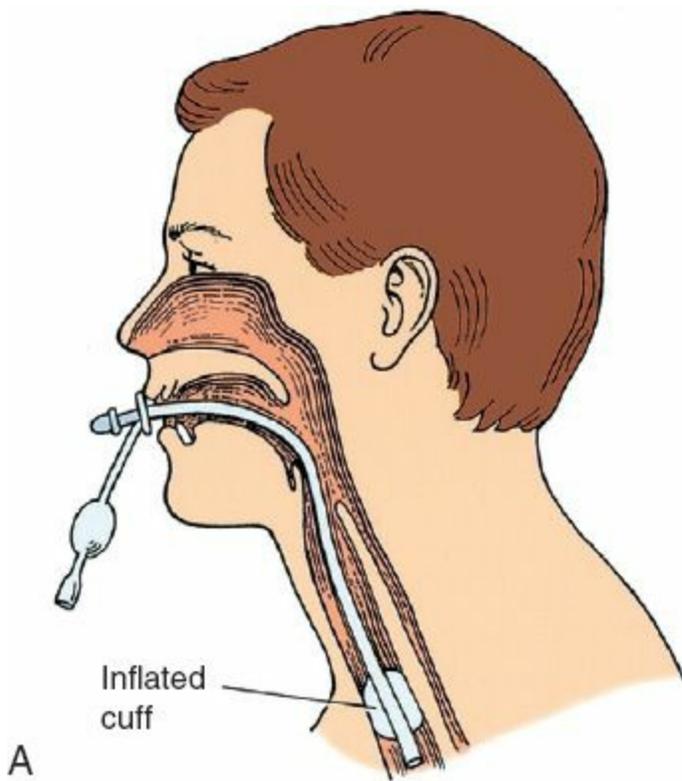
3. Position the client in the same position as during catheterization.
4. Remove the tape and place the towel between a female client's thighs or over a male client's thighs.
5. Insert a 10-mL syringe into the balloon injection port. Slowly withdraw all of the solution to deflate the balloon totally.
6. After deflation, explain to the client that they may feel a burning sensation as the catheter is withdrawn. Pull the catheter out smoothly and slowly.
7. Assess the client's urinary function by noting the first voiding after catheter removal and documenting the time and amount of voiding for the next 24 hours.

Adapted from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

 If the client has a ureteral or nephrostomy tube, monitor output closely; urine output of less than 30 mL/hour or lack of output for more than 15 minutes should be reported to the HCP immediately.

## VII. Respiratory System Tubes

### A. Endotracheal tubes (Fig. 21-2)



**FIGURE 21-2** **A**, Endotracheal (ET) tube with inflated cuff. **B**, ET tubes with uninflated and inflated cuffs and syringe for inflation. (From Perry A, Potter P, Elkin M: *Nursing interventions and clinical skills*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.)

## 1. Description

- a. The **endotracheal tube** is used to maintain a patent airway.
- b. Endotracheal tubes are indicated when the client needs mechanical ventilation.
- c. If the client requires an artificial airway for longer than 10 to 14 days, a **tracheostomy** may be created to avoid mucosal and vocal cord damage that can be caused by the endotracheal tube.
- d. The cuff (located at the distal end of the tube), when inflated, produces a seal between the trachea and the cuff to prevent aspiration and ensure delivery of a set tidal volume when mechanical ventilation is used; an inflated cuff also

prevents air from passing to the vocal cords, nose, or mouth.

- e. The pilot balloon permits air to be inserted into the cuff, prevents air from escaping, and is used as a guideline for determining the presence or absence of air in the cuff.
- f. The universal adapter enables attachment of the tube to mechanical ventilation tubing or other types of oxygen delivery systems.
- g. Types of tubes: Orotracheal and nasotracheal

## 2. Orotracheal tubes

- a. Inserted through the mouth; allows use of a larger diameter tube and reduces the work of breathing.
- b. Indicated when the client has a nasal obstruction or a predisposition to epistaxis.
- c. Uncomfortable and can be manipulated by the tongue, causing airway obstruction; an oral airway may be needed to keep the client from biting on the tube.

## 3. Nasotracheal tubes

- a. Inserted through a nostril; this smaller tube increases resistance and the client's work of breathing.
- b. Its use is avoided in clients with bleeding disorders.
- c. It is more comfortable for the client, and the client is unable to manipulate the tube with the tongue.

## 4. Interventions

- a.** Placement is confirmed by chest x-ray film (correct placement is 1 to 2 cm above the carina).
- b.** Assess placement by auscultating both sides of the chest while manually ventilating with a resuscitation (Ambu) bag (if breath sounds and chest wall movement are absent in the left side, the tube may be in the right main stem bronchus).
- c.** Perform auscultation over the stomach to rule out esophageal intubation.
- d.** If the tube is in the stomach, louder breath sounds will be heard over the stomach than over the chest, and abdominal distention will be present.
- e.** Secure the tube with adhesive tape immediately after intubation.
- f.** Monitor the position of the tube at the lip or nose.
- g.** Monitor skin and mucous membranes.
- h.** Suction the tube only when needed.
- i.** The oral tube needs to be moved to the opposite side of the mouth daily to prevent pressure and necrosis of the lip and mouth area, prevent nerve damage, and facilitate inspection and cleaning of the mouth; moving the tube to the opposite side of the mouth should be done by two HCPs.
- j.** Prevent dislodgment and pulling or tugging on the tube; suction, coughing, and speaking attempts by the client place extra stress on the tube and can cause dislodgment.
- k.** Assess the pilot balloon to ensure that the cuff is inflated; maintain cuff inflation, which creates a seal and allows complete mechanical control of

respiration.

- I. Monitor cuff pressures at least every 8 hours per agency procedure to ensure that they do not exceed 20 mm Hg (an aneroid pressure manometer is used to measure cuff pressures); minimal leak and occlusive techniques are used for cuff inflation to check cuff pressures.

 A resuscitation (Ambu) bag needs to be kept at the bedside of a client with an endotracheal tube or a tracheostomy tube at all times.

#### 5. Minimal leak technique

- a. This is used for cuff inflation and checking cuff pressures for cuffs without pressure relief valves.
- b. Inflate the cuff until a seal is established; no harsh sound should be heard through a stethoscope placed over the trachea when the client breathes in, but a slight air leak on peak inspiration is present and can be heard.
- c. The client cannot make verbal sounds, and no air is felt coming out of the client's mouth.

#### 6. Occlusive technique

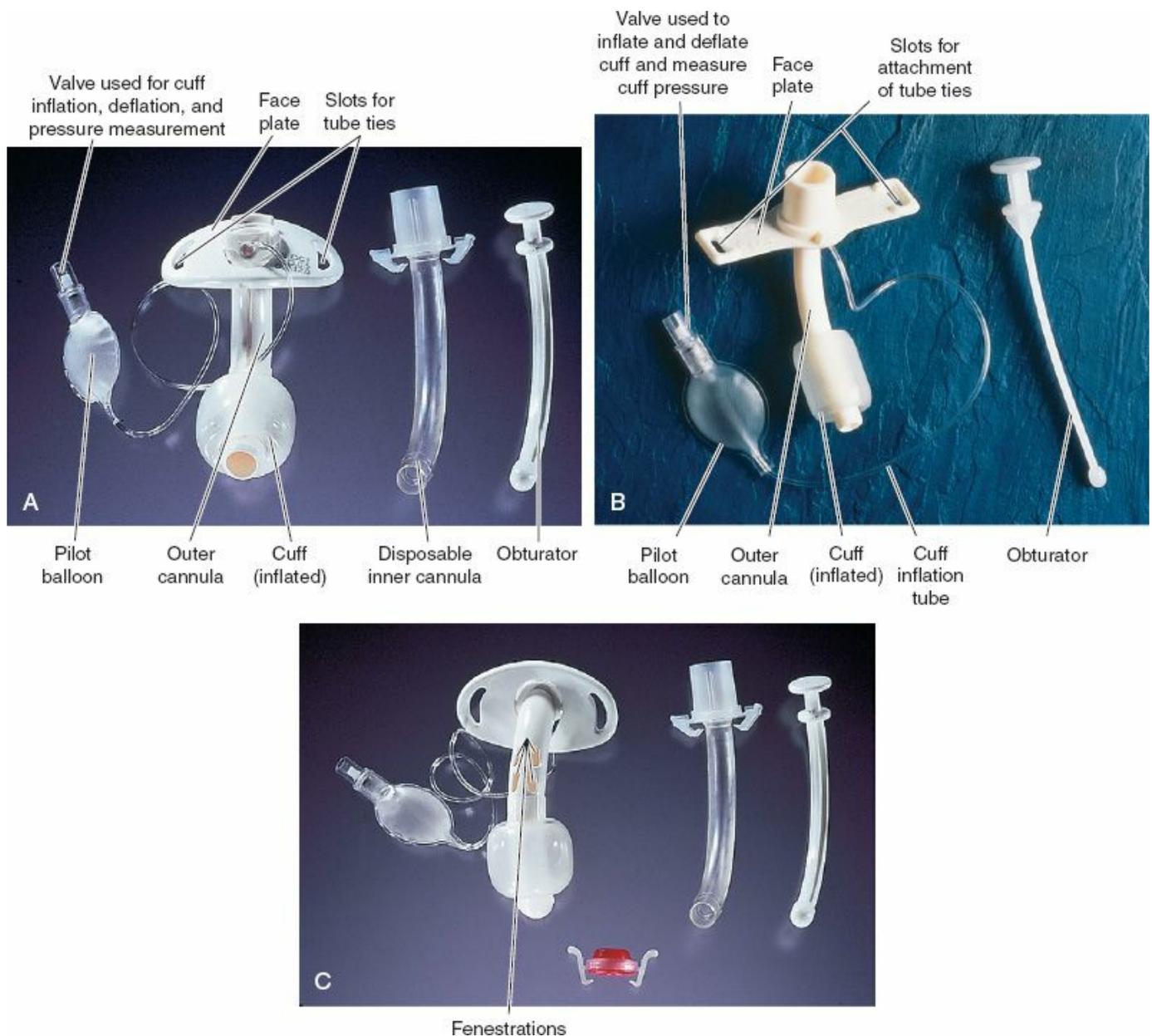
- a. This is used for cuff inflation and checking cuff pressures for cuffs with pressure relief valves.
- b. Provides an adequate seal in the trachea at the lowest possible cuff pressure.
- c. Uses same procedure as minimal leak technique, without an air leak.

#### 7. Extubation

- a. Hyperoxygenate the client and suction the endotracheal tube and the oral cavity.

- b.** Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position.
- c.** Deflate the cuff; have the client inhale and, at peak inspiration, remove the tube, suctioning the airway through the tube while pulling it out.
- d.** After removal, instruct the client to cough and deep-breathe to assist in removing accumulated secretions in the throat.
- e.** Apply oxygen therapy, as prescribed.
- f.** Monitor for respiratory difficulty; contact the HCP if respiratory difficulty occurs.
- g.** Inform the client that hoarseness or a sore throat is normal and that the client should limit talking if it occurs.

**B.** Tracheostomy ([Fig. 21-3](#))



**FIGURE 21-3** Tracheostomy tubes. **A**, Double-lumen cuffed tracheostomy tube with disposable inner cannula. **B**, Single-lumen cannula cuffed tracheostomy tube. **C**, Double-lumen cuffed fenestrated tracheostomy tube with plug (red cap). (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

## 1. Description

- a. A tracheostomy is an opening made surgically directly into the trachea to

establish an airway; a tracheostomy tube is inserted into the opening and the tube attaches to the mechanical ventilator or another type of oxygen delivery device.

- b. The tracheostomy can be temporary or permanent. (See [Box 21-3](#) for types of tracheostomy tubes.)

### **BOX 21-3** Some Types of Tracheostomy Tubes

#### **Double-Lumen Tube**

The double-lumen tube has the following parts:

*Outer cannula*—fits into the stoma and keeps the airway open. The face plate indicates the size and type of tube and has small holes on both sides for securing the tube with tracheostomy ties or another device.

*Inner cannula*—fits snugly into the outer cannula and locks into place. It provides the universal adaptor for use with the ventilator and other respiratory therapy equipment. Some may be removed, cleaned, and reused; others are disposable.

*Obturator*—a stylet with a smooth end used to facilitate the direction of the tube when inserting or changing a tracheostomy tube. The obturator is removed immediately after tube placement and is always kept with the client and at the bedside in case of accidental decannulation.

*Cuff*—when inflated, seals the airway. The cuffed tube is used for mechanical ventilation, preventing aspiration of oral or gastric secretions, or for the client receiving a tube feeding to prevent aspiration. A pilot balloon attached to the

outside of the tube indicates the presence or absence of air in the cuff.

### **Single-Lumen Tube**

The single-lumen tube is similar to the double-lumen tube except that there is no inner cannula. More intensive nursing care is required with this tube because there is no inner cannula to ensure a patent lumen.

### **Fenestrated Tube**

The fenestrated tube has a precut opening (fenestration) in the upper posterior wall of the outer cannula. The tube is used to wean the client from a tracheostomy by ensuring that the client can tolerate breathing through his or her natural airway before the entire tube is removed. This tube allows the client to speak.

### **Cuffed Fenestrated Tube**

The cuffed fenestrated tube facilitates mechanical ventilation and speech and often is used for clients with spinal cord paralysis or neuromuscular disease who do not require ventilation at all times. When not on the ventilator, the client can have the cuff deflated and the tube capped (see [Fig. 21-3](#) for fenestrated cuffed tube with red cap) for speech. A cuffed fenestrated tube is never used in weaning from a tracheostomy because the cuff, even fully deflated, may partially obstruct the airway.

## **2. Interventions** ▲

- a.** Assess respirations and for bilateral breath sounds.
- b.** Monitor arterial blood gases and pulse oximetry.

- c.** Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
- d.** Maintain a semi-Fowler's to high Fowler's position.
- e.** Monitor for bleeding, difficulty with breathing, absence of breath sounds, and crepitus (subcutaneous emphysema), which are indications of hemorrhage or pneumothorax.
- f.** Provide respiratory treatments as prescribed.
- g.** Suction fluids as needed; hyperoxygenate the client before suctioning.
- h.** If the client is allowed to eat, sit the client up for meals and ensure that the cuff is inflated (if the tube is not capped) for meals and for 1 hour after meals to prevent aspiration.
- i.** Monitor cuff pressures as prescribed.
- j.** Assess the stoma and secretions for blood or purulent drainage.
- k.** Follow the HCP's prescriptions and agency policy for cleaning the tracheostomy site and inner cannula (many inner cannulas are disposable); usually, half-strength hydrogen peroxide is used.
- l.** Administer humidified oxygen as prescribed, because the normal humidification process is bypassed in a client with a tracheostomy.
- m.** Obtain assistance in changing tracheostomy ties; after placing the new ties, cut and remove the old ties holding the tracheostomy in place (some securing devices are soft and made with Velcro to hold the tube in place).
- n.** Keep a resuscitation (Ambu) bag, obturator, clamps, and a spare tracheostomy tube of the same size at the bedside.

### 3. Complications of a tracheostomy (Table 21-1)

**TABLE 21-1** Complications of a Tracheostomy

Complications and Description	Manifestations	Management	Prevention
Tracheomalacia: Constant pressure exerted by the cuff causes tracheal dilation and erosion of cartilage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increased amount of air is required in the cuff to maintain the seal</li> <li>A larger tracheostomy tube is required to prevent an air leak at the stoma</li> <li>Food particles are seen in tracheal secretions</li> <li>The client does not receive the set tidal volume on the ventilator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No special management is needed unless bleeding or airway problems occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use an uncuffed tube as soon as possible</li> <li>Monitor cuff pressure and air volume closely to detect changes</li> </ul>
Tracheal stenosis: Narrowed tracheal lumen is the result of scar formation from irritation of tracheal mucosa by the cuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stenosis is usually seen after the cuff is deflated or the tracheostomy tube is removed</li> <li>The client has increased coughing, inability to expectorate secretions, or difficulty in breathing and talking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracheal dilation or surgical intervention is used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevent pulling of and traction on the tracheostomy tube</li> <li>Properly secure the tube in the midline position</li> <li>Maintain cuff pressure</li> <li>Minimize oronasal intubation time</li> </ul>
Tracheoesophageal fistula (TEF): Excessive cuff pressure causes erosion of the posterior wall of the trachea. A hole is created between the trachea and the anterior esophagus. The client at highest risk also has a nasogastric tube present	<p>Similar to tracheomalacia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food particles are seen in tracheal secretions</li> <li>Increased air in cuff is needed to achieve a seal</li> <li>The client has increased coughing and choking while eating</li> <li>The client does not receive the set tidal volume on the ventilator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manually administer oxygen by mask to prevent hypoxemia</li> <li>Use a small soft feeding tube instead of a nasogastric tube for tube feedings</li> <li>A gastrostomy or jejunostomy may be performed</li> <li>Monitor the client with a nasogastric tube closely; assess for TEF and aspiration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain cuff pressure</li> <li>Monitor the amount of air needed for inflation to detect changes</li> <li>Progress to a deflated or cuffless tube as soon as possible</li> </ul>
Trachea–innominate artery fistula: A malpositioned tube causes its distal tip to push against the lateral wall of the trachea. Continued pressure causes necrosis and erosion of the innominate artery. <i>This is a medical emergency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The tracheostomy tube pulsates in synchrony with the heartbeat</li> <li>There is heavy bleeding from the stoma</li> <li>This is a life-threatening complication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove the tracheostomy tube immediately</li> <li>Apply direct pressure to the innominate artery at the stoma site</li> <li>Prepare the client for immediate repair surgery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the correct tube size and length, and maintain the tube in midline position</li> <li>Prevent pulling or tugging of the tracheostomy tube</li> <li>Immediately notify the health care provider of a pulsating tube</li> </ul>
Tube obstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>Noisy respirations</li> <li>Difficulty in inserting the suction catheter</li> <li>Thick, dry secretions</li> <li>Unexplained peak pressures if client is on a mechanical ventilator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The health care provider repositions or replaces the tube if obstruction occurs as a result of cuff prolapse over the end of the tube</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist the client to cough and deep-breathe</li> <li>Provide humidification and suctioning</li> <li>Clean the inner cannula regularly</li> </ul>
Tube dislodgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>Noisy respirations</li> <li>Restlessness</li> <li>Excessive coughing</li> <li>Audible wheeze or stridor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be familiar with institutional policy regarding replacement of a tracheostomy tube as a nursing procedure</li> <li>During the first 72 hours following surgical placement of the tracheostomy, the nurse manually ventilates the client by using a manual resuscitation (Ambu) bag while another nurse calls the Rapid Response team for help</li> <li>72 hours following surgical placement of the tracheostomy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the client's neck and open the tissues of the stoma to secure the airway</li> <li>Grasp the retention sutures (if they are present) to spread the opening</li> <li>Use a tracheal dilator (curved clamp) to hold the stoma open</li> <li>Prepare to insert a tracheostomy tube; place the obturator into the tracheostomy tube, replace the tube, and remove the obturator</li> <li>Maintain ventilation by resuscitation (Ambu) bag</li> <li>Assess airflow and bilateral breath sounds</li> <li>If unable to secure an airway, call the Rapid Response team and the anesthesiologist</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure the tube in place</li> <li>Minimize manipulation and traction on the tube</li> <li>Ensure that the client does not pull on the tube</li> <li>Ensure that a tracheostomy tube of the same type and size is at the client's bedside</li> </ul>

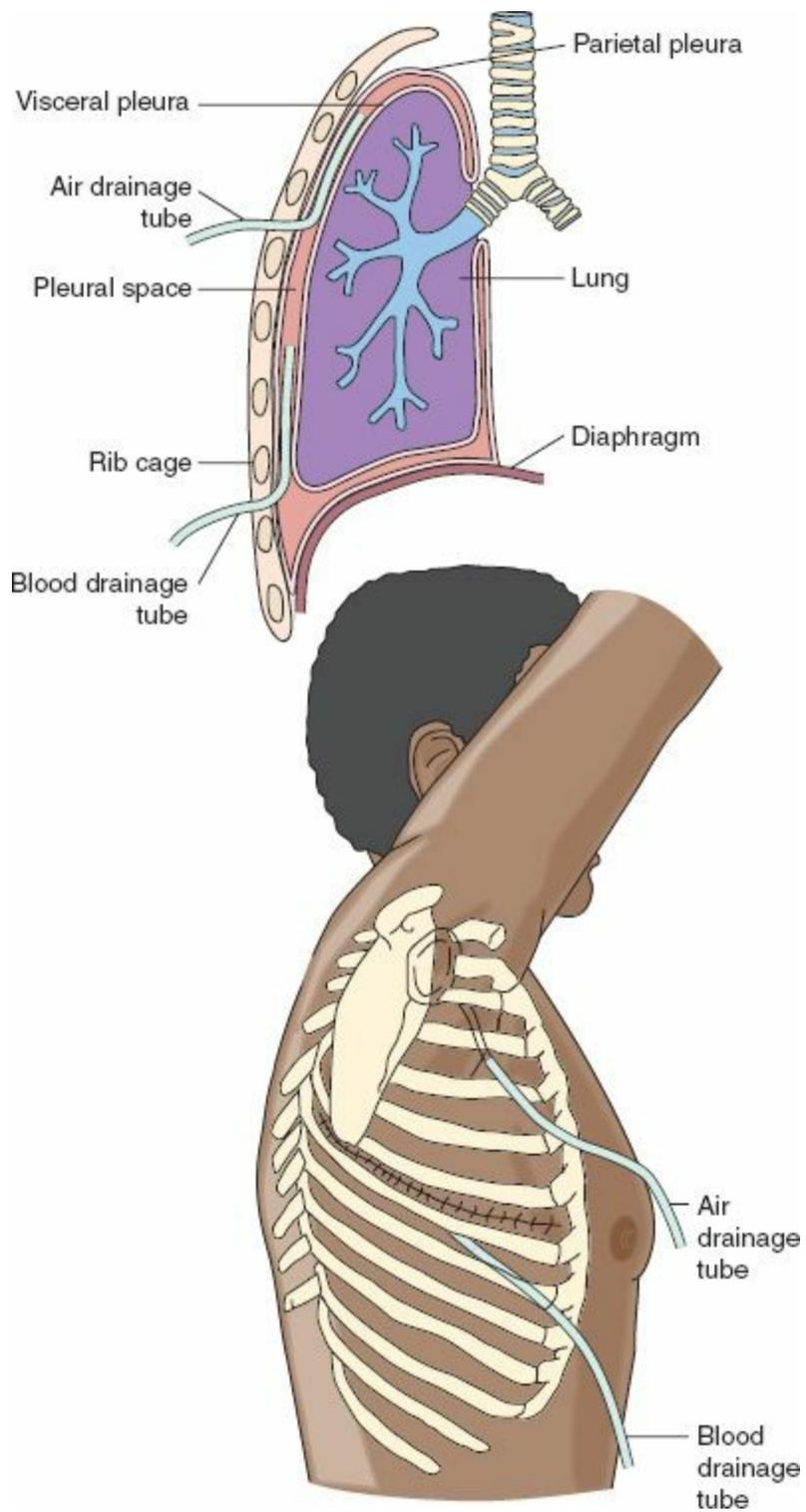
From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

 Never insert a plug (cap) into a tracheostomy tube until the cuff is deflated and the inner cannula is removed; prior insertion prevents airflow to the client.

## VIII. Chest Tube Drainage System

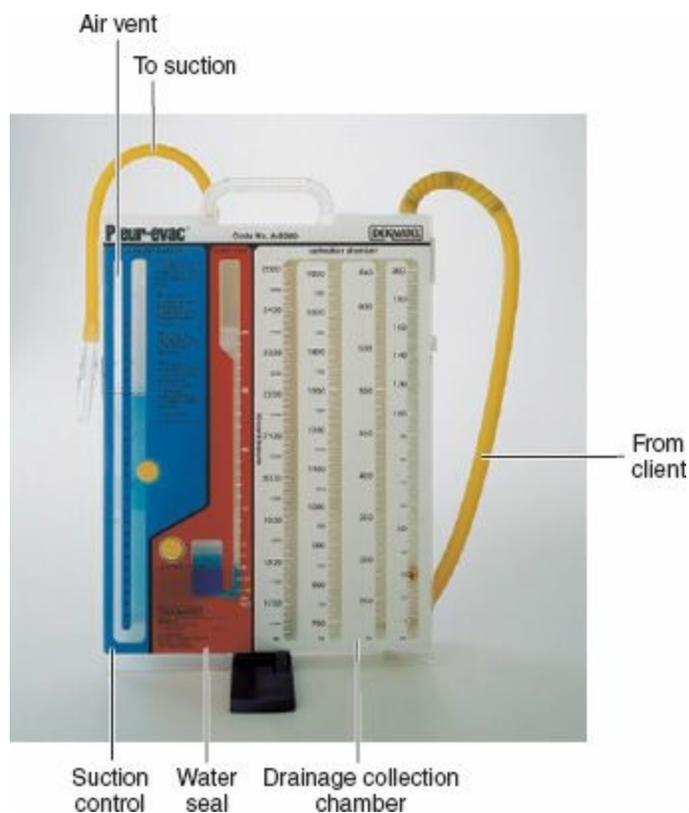
### A. Description

1. The **chest tube** drainage system returns negative pressure to the intrapleural space.
2. The system is used to remove abnormal accumulations of air and fluids from the pleural space ([Fig. 21-4](#)).



**FIGURE 21-4** Chest tube placement. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

## B. Drainage collection chamber (Fig. 21-5)



**FIGURE 21-5** The Pleur-Evac drainage system, a commercial three-bottle chest drainage device. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. The drainage collection chamber is located where the chest tube from the client connects to the system.
2. Drainage from the tube drains into and collects in a series of calibrated columns in this chamber.

## C. Water seal chamber (see Fig. 21-5)

1. The tip of the tube is underwater, allowing fluid and air to drain from the pleural space and preventing air from entering the pleural space.

2. Water oscillates (moves up as the client inhales and moves down as the client exhales).

3. Excessive bubbling indicates an air leak in the chest tube system.

**D. Suction control chamber (see [Fig. 21-5](#))**

1. The suction control chamber provides the suction, which can be controlled to provide negative pressure to the chest.

2. This chamber is filled with various levels of water to achieve the desired level of suction; without this control, lung tissue could be sucked into the chest tube.

3. Gentle bubbling in this chamber indicates that there is suction and does not indicate that air is escaping from the pleural space.

**E. Dry suction system**

1. This is another type of chest drainage system and because this is a dry suction system, absence of bubbling is noted in the suction control chamber.

2. A knob on the collection device is used to set the prescribed amount of suction; then the wall suction source dial is turned until a small orange floater valve appears in the window on the device (when the orange floater valve is in the window, the correct amount of suction is applied).

**F. Portable chest drainage system:** Small and portable chest drainage systems are also available and are dry systems that use a control flutter valve to prevent the backflow of air into the client's lung; principles of gravity and pressure, and the nursing care involved, are the same for all types of systems and these systems allow greater ambulation and allow the client to go home with the chest tubes in place.

## G. Interventions ▲

### 1. Collection chamber

- a. Monitor drainage; notify the HCP if drainage is more than 70 to 100 mL/hour or if drainage becomes bright red or increases suddenly.
- b. Mark the chest tube drainage in the collection chamber at 1- to 4-hour intervals, using a piece of tape.

### 2. Water seal chamber

- a. Monitor for fluctuation of the fluid level in the water seal chamber.
- b. Fluctuation in the water seal chamber stops if the tube is obstructed, if a dependent loop exists, if the suction is not working properly, or if the lung has reexpanded.
- c. If the client has a known pneumothorax, intermittent bubbling in the water seal chamber is expected as air is drained from the chest, but continuous bubbling indicates an air leak in the system.
- d. Notify the HCP if there is continuous bubbling in the water seal chamber.

3. Suction control chamber: Gentle (not vigorous) bubbling should be noted in the suction control chamber.

4. An occlusive sterile dressing is maintained at the insertion site.

5. A chest radiograph assesses the position of the tube and determines whether the lung has reexpanded.

6. Assess respiratory status and auscultate lung sounds.

7. Monitor for signs of extended pneumothorax or hemothorax.

8. Keep the drainage system below the level of the chest and the tubes free of kinks, dependent loops, or other obstructions.
9. Ensure that all connections are secure.
10. Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
11. Change the client's position frequently to promote drainage and ventilation.
12. Do not strip or milk a chest tube unless specifically directed to do so by a HCP and if agency policy allows it.
13. Keep a clamp (may be needed if the system needs to be changed) and a sterile occlusive dressing at the bedside at all times.
14. Never clamp a chest tube without a written prescription from the HCP; also, determine agency policy for clamping a chest tube.
15. If the drainage system cracks or breaks, insert the chest tube into a bottle of sterile water, remove the cracked or broken system, and replace it with a new system.
16. When the chest tube is removed, the client is asked to take a deep breath and hold it, and the tube is removed; a dry sterile dressing, petroleum gauze dressing, or Telfa dressing (depending on the HCP's preference) is taped in place after removal of the chest tube.
17. Depending on the HCP's preference, when the chest tube is removed, the client may be asked to take a deep breath, exhale, and bear down (Valsalva maneuver).

 If the chest tube is pulled out of the chest accidentally, pinch the skin opening together, apply an occlusive sterile dressing, cover the dressing with overlapping pieces of 2-inch tape, and call the HCP immediately.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** If the nurse notes that the chest tube drainage system is cracked, the chest tube should be disconnected from the system and submerged in a bottle of sterile water in order to maintain the water seal. The system will then need to be replaced. A clamp should be kept at the bedside in case the system needs to be changed. However, the nurse should never clamp a chest tube without a written prescription from the health care provider and per agency policy. The drainage system (chest tube and bottle of sterile water) should also be maintained below the level of the chest if this complication occurs.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 637.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**189.** The nurse is preparing to instill medication into a client's nasogastric tube.

Which actions should the nurse take before instilling the medication? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Check the residual volume.
2. Aspirate the stomach contents.
3. Turn off the suction to the nasogastric tube.
4. Remove the tube and place it in the other nostril.
5. Test the stomach contents for a pH of less than 3.5.

**190.** The nurse is preparing to administer medication through a nasogastric tube that is connected to suction. To administer the medication, the nurse should take which action?

1. Position the client supine to assist in medication absorption.
2. Aspirate the nasogastric tube after medication administration to maintain patency.
3. Clamp the nasogastric tube for 30 to 60 minutes following administration of the medication.
4. Change the suction setting to low intermittent suction for 30 minutes after medication administration.

**191.** The nurse is assessing for correct placement of a nasogastric tube. The nurse aspirates the stomach contents and checks the gastric pH. The nurse verifies

correct tube placement if which pH value is noted?

1. 3.5
2. 7.0
3. 7.35
4. 7.5

**192.** The nurse caring for a client with a chest tube turns the client to the side and the chest tube accidentally disconnects from the water seal chamber. Which **initial** nursing action should the nurse take?

1. Call the health care provider (HCP).
2. Place the tube in a bottle of sterile water.
3. Immediately replace the chest tube system.
4. Place a sterile dressing over the disconnection site.

**193.** The registered nurse is preparing to insert a nasogastric tube in an adult client. To determine the accurate measurement of the length of the tube to be inserted, the nurse should take which action?

1. Mark the tube at 10 inches.
2. Mark the tube at 32 inches.
3. Place the tube at the tip of the nose and measure by extending the tube to the earlobe and then down to the xiphoid process.
4. Place the tube at the tip of the nose and measure by extending the tube to the earlobe and then down to the top of the sternum.

**194.** The nurse is assessing the functioning of a chest tube drainage system in a client who has just returned from the recovery room following a thoracotomy with wedge resection. Which are the expected assessment findings? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Excessive bubbling in the water seal chamber
2. Vigorous bubbling in the suction control chamber
3. Drainage system maintained below the client's chest
4. 50 mL of drainage in the drainage collection chamber
5. Occlusive dressing in place over the chest tube insertion site
6. Fluctuation of water in the tube in the water seal chamber during inhalation and exhalation

**195.** The nurse is assisting a health care provider with the removal of a chest tube.

The nurse should instruct the client to take which action?

1. Exhale slowly.
2. Stay very still.
3. Inhale and exhale quickly.
4. Perform the Valsalva maneuver.

**196.** While changing the tapes on a tracheostomy tube, the client coughs and the tube is dislodged. Which is the **initial** nursing action?

1. Call the health care provider to reinsert the tube.
2. Grasp the retention sutures to spread the opening.

3. Call the respiratory therapy department to reinsert the tracheotomy.
4. Cover the tracheostomy site with a sterile dressing to prevent infection.

197. The nurse is caring for a client immediately after removal of the endotracheal tube. The nurse should report which sign **immediately** if experienced by the client?

1. Stridor
2. Occasional pink-tinged sputum
3. Respiratory rate of 24 breaths/minute
4. A few basilar lung crackles on the right

198. The nurse checks for residual before administering a bolus tube feeding to a client with a nasogastric tube and obtains a residual amount of 150 mL. What is the **most appropriate** action for the nurse to take?

1. Hold the feeding.
2. Reinstill the amount and continue with administering the feeding.
3. Elevate the client's head at least 45 degrees and administer the feeding.
4. Discard the residual amount and proceed with administering the feeding.

199. The nurse caring for a client with a pneumothorax and who has had a chest tube inserted notes continuous gentle bubbling in the suction control chamber. What action is **most appropriate**?

1. Do nothing, because this is an expected finding.
2. Check for an air leak because the bubbling should be intermittent.

3. Increase the suction pressure so that the bubbling becomes vigorous.
4. Immediately clamp the chest tube and notify the health care provider.

**200.** The nurse is inserting a nasogastric tube in an adult client. During the procedure, the client begins to cough and has difficulty breathing. What is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

1. Quickly insert the tube.
2. Notify the health care provider immediately.
3. Remove the tube and reinsert when the respiratory distress subsides.
4. Pull back on the tube and wait until the respiratory distress subsides.

## ANSWERS

❖ **189. 1, 2, 3, 5**

**Rationale:** By aspirating stomach contents the residual volume can be determined and the pH checked. A pH less than 3.5 verifies gastric placement. The suction should be turned off before the tubing is disconnected to check for residual volume; in addition, suction should remain off for 30 to 60 minutes following medication administration to allow for medication absorption. There is no need to remove the tube and place it in the other nostril in order to administer a feeding; in fact, this is an invasive procedure and is unnecessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, instilling medication into the nasogastric tube, and visualize the procedure when answering this question. Read each option carefully and eliminate option 4 because it is not necessary and is an invasive procedure.

**Review:** Medication administration via a **nasogastric tube**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 594.

### 190. 3

**Rationale:** If a client has a nasogastric tube connected to suction, the nurse should wait 30 to 60 minutes before reconnecting the tube to the suction apparatus to allow adequate time for medication absorption. The client should not be placed in the supine position because of the risk for aspiration. Aspirating the nasogastric tube will remove the medication just administered. Low intermittent suction also will remove the medication just administered.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because these actions are **comparable or alike** and will produce the same effect of removing medication administered. The client should not be placed in a supine position due to the risk of reflux and aspiration.

**Review:** Medication administration via a **nasogastric tube**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 510.

### 191. 1

**Rationale:** If the nasogastric tube is in the stomach, the pH of the contents will be acidic. Gastric aspirates have acidic pH values and should be 3.5 or lower. Option 2 indicates a slightly acidic pH. Option 3 indicates a neutral pH. Option 4 indicates an alkaline pH.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, verifying correct tube placement. Recalling that gastric contents are acidic will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Assessing placement of a **nasogastric tube**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 468, 511.

### 192. 2

**Rationale:** If the chest drainage system is disconnected, the end of the tube is placed in a bottle of sterile water held below the level of the chest. The HCP may need to be notified, but this is not the initial action. The system is replaced if it breaks or cracks or if the collection chamber is full. Placing a sterile dressing over the disconnection site will not prevent complications resulting from the disconnection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* in the question. This indicates that a nursing action is required that will prevent a serious complication as a result of the disconnection. Eliminate options 1 and 3 because these actions delay required and immediate intervention. From the remaining options, recalling the complications that

can occur from a disconnection and the purpose of a chest tube system will direct you to option 2.

**Review:** Nursing actions related to **chest tube** complications

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 572.

### 193. 3

**Rationale:** Measuring the length of a nasogastric tube needed is done by placing the tube at the tip of the client's nose and extending the tube to the earlobe and then down to the xiphoid process. The average length for an adult is about 22 to 26 inches. The remaining options identify incorrect procedures for measuring the length of the tube.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, insertion of a nasogastric tube and visualize this procedure. Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because 10 inches is short and 32 inches is too long. Also, remember the abbreviation NEX, which stands for nose, earlobe, and xiphoid process, to assist in answering questions similar to this one.

**Review:** **Nasogastric tube** insertion procedure

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 466.

❖ 194. 3, 4, 5, 6

**Rationale:** The bubbling of water in the water seal chamber indicates air drainage from the client and usually is seen when intrathoracic pressure is higher than atmospheric pressure, and may occur during exhalation, coughing, or sneezing. Excessive bubbling in the water seal chamber may indicate an air leak, an unexpected finding. Fluctuation of water in the tube in the water seal chamber during inhalation and exhalation is expected. An absence of fluctuation may indicate that the chest tube is obstructed or that the lung has reexpanded and that no more air is leaking into the pleural space. Gentle (not vigorous) bubbling should be noted in the suction control chamber. A total of 50 mL of drainage is not excessive in a client returning to the nursing unit from the recovery room. Drainage that is more than 70 to 100 mL/hour is considered excessive and requires health care provider notification. The chest tube insertion site is covered with an occlusive (airtight) dressing to prevent air from entering the pleural space. Positioning the drainage system below the client's chest allows gravity to drain the pleural space.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, expected findings associated with chest tube drainage systems. Thinking about the physiology associated with the functioning of a chest tube drainage system will assist in answering this question. The words *excessive bubbling* and *vigorous bubbling* will assist in eliminating these assessment findings.

**Review:** **Chest tubes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 636-637.

**195. 4**

**Rationale:** When the chest tube is removed, the client is asked to perform the Valsalva maneuver (take a deep breath, exhale, and bear down). The tube is quickly withdrawn, and an airtight dressing is taped in place. An alternative instruction is to ask the client to take a deep breath and hold the breath while the tube is removed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, removal of a chest tube. Visualize the procedure, client instructions, and the effect of each of the actions in the options to answer correctly.

**Review:** Chest tube removal

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 351.

**196. 2**

**Rationale:** If the tube is dislodged accidentally, the initial nursing action is to grasp the retention sutures and spread the opening. If agency policy permits, the nurse then attempts immediately to replace the tube. Calling ancillary services or the HCP will delay treatment in this emergency situation. Covering the tracheostomy site will block the airway.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial*. Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are

**comparable or alike** and will delay the immediate intervention needed. Covering the tracheostomy opening will

block the airway.

**Review:** Management of complications of **tracheostomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 531.

### 197. 1

**Rationale:** Following removal of the endotracheal tube the nurse monitors the client for respiratory distress. The nurse reports stridor to the health care provider (HCP) immediately. This is a high-pitched, coarse sound that is heard with the stethoscope over the trachea. Stridor indicates airway edema and places the client at risk for airway obstruction. Although the findings identified in the remaining options require monitoring, they do not require immediate notification of the health care provider.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediately*. Recall that the prime danger after removal of an artificial airway is the client's inability to maintain a patent airway and breathe independently. Because stridor indicates laryngeal edema and possible airway obstruction, it is the symptom that must be reported immediately.

**Review:** **Endotracheal tube** removal

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 682.

**198. 1**

**Rationale:** Unless specifically indicated, residual amounts more than 100 mL require holding the feeding. In addition, the feeding is not discarded unless its contents are abnormal in color or characteristics.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Note that the residual amount is 150 mL. Also note that options 2, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and indicate administering the feeding.

**Review:** **Nasogastric tubes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 276.

**199. 1**

**Rationale:** Continuous gentle bubbling should be noted in the suction control chamber. Bubbling should be continuous in the suction control chamber and not intermittent. Increasing the suction pressure only increases the rate of evaporation of water in the drainage system; in addition, increasing the suction can be harmful and is not done without a specific prescription to do so. Chest tubes should only be clamped to check for an air leak or when changing drainage devices (according to agency policy).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Think about the physiology associated with

each chamber of the chest tube drainage system. Remember that continuous gentle bubbling in the suction control chamber is expected.

**Review:** Expected assessment findings associated with **chest tubes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 572; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 351.

## 200. 4

**Rationale:** During the insertion of a nasogastric tube, if the client experiences difficulty breathing or any respiratory distress, withdraw the tube slightly, stop the tube advancement, and wait until the distress subsides. It is not necessary to notify the health care provider immediately or remove the tube completely. Quickly inserting the tube is not an appropriate action because, in this situation, it may be likely that the tube has entered the bronchus.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate option 1 because of the word *quickly*. Visualizing the procedure and anticipating potential complications will assist in eliminating options 2 and 3 as necessary actions at this time. If a client has respiratory distress the tube has entered the bronchus and insertion should not be continued. It is not necessary to remove the tube completely at this time.

**Review:** **Nasogastric tubes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

***Content Area:*** Fundamental Skills—Safety

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Safety

***Reference:*** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 467.

# UNIT V



## Growth and Development across the Life Span

### PYRAMID TERMS

**abuse** The willful infliction of pain, injury, mental anguish, or unreasonable confinement. Abuse can include verbal assaults, the demand to perform demeaning tasks, theft, or mismanagement of personal belongings (exploitation). Abuse inflicted can be physical, emotional, or sexual.

**auscultation** The physical assessment technique that involves listening to sounds within the body. Special equipment such as a stethoscope may be needed to perform this technique.

**dementia** An organic syndrome identified by gradual and progressive deterioration in intellectual functioning. Long- and short-term memory losses occur with impairment in judgment, abstract thinking, problem-solving ability, and behavior, resulting in a

self-care deficit. A common type of dementia is Alzheimer's disease.

**depression** A mood disorder that can be identified by feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness, and a decreased interest in activities.

**health history** The collection of subjective data when interviewing the client. It includes information such as the client's current state of health, the medications taken, previous illnesses and surgeries, family histories, and a review of systems.

**inspection** The first physical assessment technique, which begins the moment the examiner meets the client. It involves a visual assessment of the client during the health history and making observations during the physical examination of specific body systems.

**neglect** The failure to provide services necessary for physical or mental health; includes failure to prevent injury.

**objective data** Information about the client that is obtained by the examiner through the physical examination and the review of results of laboratory, radiological, or other diagnostic studies.

**palpation** A physical assessment technique that involves using the hands to feel certain parts of the client's body, including some organs. The examiner uses this technique to assess texture, size, and consistency of the body part being examined.

**percussion** A physical assessment technique that involves tapping the body to assess the size, borders, and consistency of some organs and to assess for the presence of fluid within body cavities. Direct percussion is performed by striking the fingers directly on the body surface. Indirect percussion is performed by striking a finger of

one hand on a finger of the other hand as it is placed on the body surface, such as over an organ.

**play** An activity that is spontaneous or organized and provides entertainment or diversion. It is a part of childhood that is necessary for the development of a normal personality and social, physical, and intellectual skills.

**polypharmacy** Taking multiple prescription and/or over-the-counter medications together.

**safety measures** Interventions that ensure protection of the client and the prevention of an accident or injury.

**self-neglect** The choice to avoid medical care or other services that could improve optimal function. Unless declared legally incompetent, an individual has the right to refuse care.

**subjective data** Information obtained from the client during history-taking. It is what the client says about himself or herself.

## Pyramid to Success

Normal growth and development proceed in an orderly, systematic, and predictable pattern, which provides a basis for identifying and assessing an individual's abilities. Understanding the normal path of growth and development across the life span assists the nurse in identifying appropriate and expected human behavior. The Pyramid to Success focuses on Sigmund Freud's theory of psychosexual development, Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, and Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Growth and development concepts also focus on the health and physical assessment of the adult client; on the aging process; and on physical characteristics, nutritional behaviors, skills, play, and specific safety measures relevant to a particular age group that will ensure a safe and hazard-free environment. When a question is presented on the NCLEX-RN examination, if an age is identified in the question, note the age and think about the associated growth and developmental concepts to answer the question correctly.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Acting as a client advocate

Consulting with members of the health care team

Delegation

Ensuring home safety and security plans

Error prevention

Establishing priorities

Maintaining confidentiality

Preventing accidents

Providing care in accordance with ethical and legal standards

Providing care using a nonjudgmental approach

Respecting client and family needs, based on their preferences

Standard precautions/transmission-based precautions/surgical asepsis

Upholding client's rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing high-risk behaviors and lifestyle choices

Identifying changes that occur as a result of the aging process

Identifying developmental stages and transitions

Maintaining health and wellness and self-care measures

Monitoring growth and development

Performing the techniques associated with the health and physical assessment of the client

Providing client and family education

Respecting health care beliefs and preferences

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing for abuse and neglect

Considering grief and loss issues and end-of life care

Identifying coping mechanisms

Identifying cultural practices and beliefs of the client and appropriate support systems

Identifying loss of quantity and quality of relationships with the older client

Monitoring for adjustment to potential deterioration in physical and mental health and well-being in the older client

Monitoring for changes and adjustment in role function in the older client (threat to independent functioning)

Monitoring for sensory and perceptual alterations

Providing resources for the client and family

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering medication safely and teaching the client about prescribed medications

Identifying practices or restrictions related to procedures and treatments

Monitoring for alterations in body systems and the related risks associated with the client's age

Providing basic care and comfort needs

Providing interventions compatible with the client's age; cultural, religious, and health care beliefs; education level; and language



## CHAPTER 22

# Theories of Growth and Development

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse employed in a day care center notes that a 6-year-old child does not recognize that objects exist even when outside of the visual field. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 252.*

### I. Psychosocial Development: Erik Erikson

#### A. The theory

1. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development describes the human life cycle as a series of eight ego developmental stages from birth to death.
2. Each stage presents a psychosocial crisis, the goal of which is to integrate physical, maturation, and societal demands.
3. The result of one stage may not be permanent, but can be changed by experience(s) later in life.

4. The theory focuses on psychosocial tasks that are accomplished throughout the life cycle. 

**B.** Psychosocial development: Occurs through a lifelong series of crises affected by social and cultural factors

 According to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, each psychosocial crisis must be resolved for the child or adult to progress emotionally. Unsuccessful resolution leaves the person emotionally disabled.

**C.** Stages of psychosocial development ([Table 22-1](#))

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**TABLE 22-1 Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development**

Age	Psychosocial Crisis	Task	RESOLUTION OF CRISIS	
			Successful	Unsuccessful
Infancy (birth to 18 mo)	Trust versus mistrust	Attachment to the mother	Trust in persons; faith and hope about the environment and future	General difficulties relating to persons effectively; suspicion; trust-fear conflict, fear of the future
Early childhood (18 mo to 3 yr)	Autonomy versus shame and doubt	Gaining some basic control over self and environment	Sense of self-control and adequacy; will power	Independence-fear conflict; severe feelings of self-doubt
Late childhood (3-6yr)	Initiative versus guilt	Becoming purposeful and directive	Ability to initiate one's own activities; sense of purpose	Aggression-fear conflict; sense of inadequacy or guilt
School age (6-12yr)	Industry versus inferiority	Developing social, physical, and learning skills	Competence; ability to learn and work	Sense of inferiority; difficulty learning and working
Adolescence (12-20yr)	Identity versus role confusion	Developing sense of identity	Sense of personal identity	Confusion about who one is; identity submerged in relationships or group memberships
Early adulthood (20-35yr)	Intimacy versus isolation	Establishing intimate bonds of love and friendship	Ability to love deeply and commit oneself	Emotional isolation, egocentricity
Middle adulthood (35-65yr)	Generativity versus stagnation	Fulfilling life goals that involve family, career, and society	Ability to give and care for others	Self-absorption; inability to grow as a person
Later adulthood (65yr to death)	Integrity versus despair	Looking back over one's life and accepting its meaning	Sense of integrity and fulfillment	Dissatisfaction with life

Modified from Varcarolis E: *Foundations of psychiatric mental health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.

**D. Interventions to assist the client in achieving Erikson's stages of development (Box 22-1) ▲**

**BOX 22-1 Interventions to Assist the Client in Achieving Erikson's Stages of Development**

***Infancy***

Hold the infant often

Offer comfort after painful procedures

Meet the infant's needs for food and hygiene

Encourage parents to room in while hospitalized

### ***Early Childhood***

Allow self-feeding opportunities

Encourage child to remove and put on own clothes

Allow for choice

### ***Late Childhood***

Offer medical equipment for play

Accept the child's choices and expressions of feelings

### ***School Age***

Encourage the child to continue school work while hospitalized

Encourage the child to bring favorite pastimes to the hospital

### ***Adolescence***

Take the health history and perform examinations without parents present

Introduce the adolescent to other teens with the same health condition

### ***Early Adulthood***

Include support from client's partner or significant other.

Assist with rehabilitation needed before returning to work

### ***Middle Adulthood***

Assist in choosing creative ways to foster social development

Encourage volunteer activities

### ***Later Adulthood***

Listen attentively to reminiscence stories about their life's accomplishments

Assist with making changes to living arrangements

## **II. Cognitive Development: Jean Piaget**

### **A. The theory**

1. Piaget's theory of cognitive development defines cognitive acts as ways in which the mind organizes and adapts to its environment (i.e., "mental mapping"). ▲
2. Schema refers to an individual's cognitive structure or framework of thought.
3. Schemata
  - a. Schemata are categories that an individual forms in his or her mind to organize and understand the world.
  - b. A young child has only a few schemata with which to understand the world, and gradually these are increased.
  - c. Adults use a wide variety of schemata to understand the world.
4. Assimilation
  - a. Assimilation is the ability to incorporate new ideas, objects, and experiences into the framework of one's thoughts.
  - b. The growing child will perceive and give meaning to new information according to what is already known and understood.

## 5. Accommodation

- a. Accommodation is the ability to change a schema to introduce new ideas, objects, or experiences.
- b. Accommodation changes the mental structure so that new experiences can be added.

## B. Stages of cognitive development ▲

### 1. Sensorimotor stage

- a. Birth to 2 years
- b. Development proceeds from reflex activity to imagining and solving problems through the senses and movement.
- c. The infant or toddler learns about reality and how it works.
- d. The infant or toddler does not recognize that objects continue to be in existence, even if out of the visual field.

### 2. Preoperational stage

- a. 2 to 7 years
- b. The child learns to think in terms of past, present, and future.
- c. The child moves from knowing the world through sensation and movement to prelogical thinking and finding solutions to problems.
- d. The child is egocentric.
- e. The child is unable to conceptualize and requires concrete examples.

### 3. Concrete operational

- a. 7 to 11 years

- b. The child is able to classify, order, and sort facts.
- c. The child moves from prelogical thought to solving concrete problems through logic.
- d. The child begins to develop abstract thinking.

#### 4. Formal operations

- a. 11 years to adulthood
- b. The person is able to think abstractly and logically.
- c. Logical thinking is expanded to include solving abstract and concrete problems.

### III. Moral Development: Lawrence Kohlberg

#### A. Moral development

- 1. Moral development is a complicated process involving the acceptance of the values and rules of society in a way that shapes behavior. ▲
- 2. Moral development is classified in a series of levels and behaviors.
- 3. Moral development is sequential but people do not automatically go from one stage or level to the next as they mature.
- 4. Stages or levels of moral development cannot be skipped.

#### B. Levels of moral development (Box 22-2)

#### **BOX 22-2** Moral Development: Lawrence Kohlberg

##### **Level One: Preconventional Morality**

##### ***Stage 0 (Birth to 2 Years): Egocentric Judgment***

The infant has no awareness of right or wrong.

### ***Stage 1 (2 to 3 Years): Punishment-Obedience Orientation***

At this stage, children cannot reason as mature members of society.

Children view the world in a selfish way, with no real understanding of right or wrong.

The child obeys rules and demonstrates acceptable behavior to avoid punishment and to avoid displeasing those who are in power, and because the child fears punishment from a superior force, such as a parent.

A toddler typically is at the first substage of the preconventional stage, involving punishment and obedience orientation, in which the toddler makes judgments based on avoiding punishment or obtaining a reward.

Physical punishment and withholding privileges tend to give the toddler a negative view of morals.

Withdrawing love and affection as punishment leads to feelings of guilt in the toddler.

Appropriate discipline includes providing simple explanations why certain behaviors are unacceptable, praising appropriate behavior, and using distractions when the toddler is headed for an unsafe action.

### ***Stage 2 (4 to 7 Years): Instrumental Relativist Orientation***

The child conforms to rules to obtain rewards or have favors returned.

The child's moral standards are those of others, and the child observes them either to avoid punishment or obtain rewards.

A preschooler is in the preconventional stage of moral development.

In this stage, conscience emerges and the emphasis is on external control.

### **Level Two: Conventional Morality**

The child conforms to rules to please others.

The child has increased awareness of others' feelings.

A concern for social order begins to emerge.

A child views good behavior as that which those in authority will approve.

If the behavior is not acceptable, the child feels guilty.

### ***Stage 3 (7 to 10 Years): Good Boy—Nice Girl Orientation***

Conformity occurs to avoid disapproval or dislike by others.

This stage involves living up to what is expected by individuals close to the child or what individuals generally expect of others in their roles such as daughter, son, brother, sister, and friend.

Being good is important and is interpreted as having good motives and showing concern about others.

Being good also means maintaining mutual relationships, such as trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude.

### ***Stage 4 (10 to 12 Years): Law and Order Orientation***

The child has more concern with society as a whole.

Emphasis is on obeying laws to maintain social order.

Moral reasoning develops as the child shifts the focus of living to society.

The school-age child is at the conventional level of the conformity stage and has an increased desire to please others.

The child observes and to some extent internalizes the standards of others.

The child wants to be considered “good” by those individuals whose opinions matter to her or him.

### **Level Three: Postconventional Morality**

The individual focuses on individual rights and principles of conscience.

The focus is on concerns regarding what is best for all.

#### ***Stage 5: Social Contract and Legalistic Orientation***

The person is aware that others hold a variety of values and opinions and that most values and rules are relative to the group.

The adolescent in this stage gives and takes and does not expect to get something without paying for it.

#### ***Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principles Orientation***

Conformity is based on universal principles of justice and occurs to avoid self-condemnation.

This stage involves following self-chosen ethical principles.

The development of the postconventional level of morality occurs in the adolescent at about age 13 years, marked by the development of an individual conscience and a defined set of moral values.

The adolescent can now acknowledge a conflict between two socially accepted standards and try to decide between them.

Control of conduct is now internal in standards observed and in reasoning about right and wrong.

## IV. Psychosexual Development: Sigmund Freud

### A. Components of the theory (Box 22-3)

#### **BOX 22-3** Components of Sigmund Freud's Psychosexual Development Theory

- Levels of awareness
- Agencies of the mind (id, ego, superego)
- Concept of anxiety and defense mechanisms
- Psychosexual stages of development

### B. Levels of awareness

#### 1. Unconscious level of awareness

- a. The unconscious is not logical and is governed by the Pleasure Principle, which refers to seeking immediate tension reduction.
- b. Memories, feelings, thoughts, or wishes are repressed and are not available to the conscious mind.
- c. These repressed memories, thoughts, or feelings, if made prematurely conscious, can cause anxiety.

#### 2. Preconscious level of awareness

- a. The preconscious is called the *subconscious*.

- b. The preconscious includes experiences, thoughts, feelings, or desires that might not be in immediate awareness but can be recalled to consciousness.
- c. The subconscious can help repress unpleasant thoughts or feelings and can examine and censor certain wishes and thinking.

### 3. Conscious level of awareness

- a. The conscious mind is logical and is regulated by the Reality Principle.
- b. Consciousness includes all experiences that are within an individual's awareness and that the individual is able to control and includes all information that is remembered easily and is immediately available to an individual.

## C. Agencies of the mind: Id, ego, and superego

 The id, ego, and superego are the three systems of personality. These psychological processes follow different operating principles. In a mature and well-adjusted personality, they work together as a team under the leadership of the ego.

### 1. The id

- a. Source of all drives, present at birth, operates according to the Pleasure Principle
- b. Does not tolerate uncomfortable states and seeks to discharge the tension and return to a more comfortable, constant level of energy
- c. Acts immediately in an impulsive, irrational way and pays no attention to the consequences of its actions; therefore often behaves in ways harmful to self and others

- d. The primary process is a psychological activity in which the id attempts to reduce tension.
- e. The primary process by itself is not capable of reducing tension; therefore a secondary psychological process must develop if the individual is to survive. When this occurs, the structure of the second system of the personality, the ego, begins to take form.

## 2. The ego ▲

- a. Functions include reality testing and problem solving; follows the Reality Principle
- b. Begins its development during the fourth or fifth month of life
- c. Emerges out of the id and acts as an intermediary between the id and the external world
- d. Emerges because the needs, wishes, and demands of the id require appropriate exchanges with the outside world of reality
- e. The ego distinguishes between things in the mind and things in the external world.

## 3. The superego ▲

- a. Necessary part of socialization that develops during the phallic stage at 3 to 6 years of age
- b. Develops from interactions with the child's parents during the extended period of childhood dependency
- c. Includes internalization of the values, ideals, and moral standards of parents and

society

d. Superego consists of the conscience and the ego ideal.

e. Conscience refers to capacity for self-evaluation and criticism; when moral codes are violated, the conscience punishes the individual by instilling guilt.

#### D. Anxiety and defense mechanisms

1. The ego develops defenses or defense mechanisms to fight off anxiety.
2. Defense mechanisms operate on an unconscious level, except for suppression, so the individual is not aware of their operation.
3. Defense mechanisms deny, falsify, or distort reality to make it less threatening.
4. An individual cannot survive without defense mechanisms; however, if the individual becomes too extreme in distorting reality, then interference with healthy adjustment and personal growth may occur. ▲

#### E. Psychosexual stages of development (Box 22-4)

##### **BOX 22-4** Freud's Psychosexual Stages of Development

##### **Oral Stage (Birth to 1 Year)**

During this stage, the infant is concerned with self-gratification.

The infant is all id, operating on the Pleasure Principle and striving for immediate gratification of needs.

When the infant experiences gratification of basic needs, a sense of trust and security begins.

The ego begins to emerge as the infant begins to see self as separate from the mother;

this marks the beginning of the development of a sense of self.

### **Anal Stage (1 to 3 Years)**

Toilet training occurs during this period, and the child gains pleasure from the elimination of the feces and from their retention.

The conflict of this stage is between those demands from society and the parents and the sensations of pleasure associated with the anus.

The child begins to gain a sense of control over instinctive drives and learns to delay immediate gratification to gain a future goal.

### **Phallic Stage (3 to 6 Years)**

The child experiences pleasurable and conflicting feelings associated with the genital organs.

The pleasures of masturbation and the fantasy life of children set the stage for the Oedipus complex.

The child's unconscious sexual attraction to and wish to possess the parent of the opposite gender, the hostility and desire to remove the parent of the same gender, and the subsequent guilt about these wishes is the conflict the child faces.

The conflict is resolved when the child identifies with the parent of the same gender.

The emergence of the superego is the solution to and the result of these intense impulses.

### **Latency Stage (6 to 12 Years)**

The latency stage is a tapering off of conscious biological and sexual urges.

The sexual impulses are channeled and elevated into a more culturally accepted level of activity.

Growth of ego functions and the ability to care about and relate to others outside the home is the task of this stage of development.

### **Genital Stage (12 Years and Beyond)**

The genital stage emerges at adolescence with the onset of puberty, when the genital organs mature.

The individual gains gratification from his or her own body.

During this stage, the individual develops satisfying sexual and emotional relationships with members of the opposite gender.

The individual plans life goals and gains a strong sense of personal identity.

1. Human development proceeds through a series of stages from infancy to adulthood. ▲
2. Each stage is characterized by the inborn tendency of all individuals to reduce tension and seek pleasure.
3. Each stage is associated with a particular conflict that must be resolved before the child can move successfully to the next stage.
4. Experiences during the early stages determine an individual's adjustment patterns and the personality traits that the individual has as an adult.

## CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

**Answer:** According to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, if a 5-year-old child does not recognize that objects still exist even when outside the visual field, the child is not progressing normally through the developmental stages. The nurse should report this finding to the health care provider. It is normal for the infant or toddler not to recognize that objects continue to be in existence, even if out of the visual field; however, this is abnormal for the 5-year-old.

### *Reference*

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 473.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 201.** The clinic nurse is preparing to discuss the concepts of Kohlberg's theory of moral development with a parent. What motivates good and bad actions for the child at the preconventional level?
1. Peer pressure
  2. Social pressure
  3. Parents' behavior
  4. Punishment and reward
- 202.** The maternity nurse is providing instructions to a new mother regarding the psychosocial development of the newborn infant. Using Erikson's psychosocial

development theory, the nurse instructs the mother to take which measure?

1. Allow the newborn infant to signal a need.
2. Anticipate all the needs of the newborn infant.
3. Attend to the newborn infant immediately when crying.
4. Avoid the newborn infant during the first 10 minutes of crying.

**203.** The mother of a 4-year-old child calls the clinic nurse and expresses concern because the child has been masturbating. Using Freud's psychosexual stages of development, the nurse should make which response?

1. "This is a normal behavior at this age."
2. "Children usually begin this behavior at age 8 years."
3. "The child is very young to begin this behavior and should be brought to the clinic."
4. "This is not normal behavior, and the child should be seen by the health care provider."

**204.** The nursing instructor asks a nursing student to present a clinical conference to peers regarding Freud's psychosexual stages of development, specifically the anal stage. The student plans the conference, knowing that which characteristic relates to this stage of development?

1. This stage is associated with toilet training.
2. This stage is characterized by the gratification of self.
3. This stage is characterized by a tapering off of conscious biological and sexual

urges.

4. This stage is associated with pleasurable and conflicting feelings about the genital organs.

**205.** The nursing instructor asks a nursing student to describe the formal operations stage of Piaget's cognitive developmental theory. The correct response by the nursing student is which statement?

1. "The child has the ability to think abstractly."
2. "The child begins to understand the environment."
3. "The child is able to classify, order, and sort facts."
4. "The child learns to think in terms of past, present, and future."

**206.** The mother of an 8-year-old child tells the clinic nurse that she is concerned about the child because the child seems to be more attentive to friends than anything else. Using Erikson's psychosocial development theory, the nurse should make which response?

1. "You need to be concerned."
2. "You need to monitor the child's behavior closely."
3. "At this age, the child is developing his own personality."
4. "You need to provide more praise to the child to stop this behavior."

**207.** The nurse educator is preparing to conduct a teaching session for the nursing staff regarding the theories of growth and development and plans to discuss Kohlberg's theory of moral development. What information should the nurse

include in the session? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Individuals move through all six stages in a sequential fashion.
2. Moral development progresses in relationship to cognitive development.
3. A person's ability to make moral judgments develops over a period of time.
4. The theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals determine a moral code to guide their behavior.
5. In stage 1 (punishment-obedience orientation), children are expected to reason as mature members of society.
6. In stage 2 (instrumental-relativist orientation), the child conforms to rules to obtain rewards or have favors returned.

**208.** A parent of a 3-year-old tells a clinic nurse that the child is rebelling constantly and having temper tantrums. Using Erikson's psychosocial development theory, which instruction(s) should the nurse provide to the parent? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Set limits on the child's behavior.
2. Ignore the child when this behavior occurs.
3. Allow the behavior, because this is normal at this age period.
4. Provide a simple explanation of why the behavior is unacceptable.
5. Punish the child every time the child says "no" to change the behavior.

**ANSWERS**

## 201. 4

**Rationale:** In the preconventional stage, morals are thought to be motivated by punishment and reward. If the child is obedient and is not punished, then the child is being moral. The child sees actions as good or bad. If the child's actions are good, the child is praised. If the child's actions are bad, the child is punished. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect for this stage of moral development.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2; they are **comparable or alike** because peer pressure is the same as social pressure. To select from the remaining options, recalling that the preconventional stage occurs between birth and 7 years will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Kohlberg's theory of moral development

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Development

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 588, 650.

## 202. 1

**Rationale:** According to Erikson, the caregiver should not try to anticipate the newborn infant's needs at all times but must allow the newborn infant to signal needs. If a newborn infant is not allowed to signal a need, the newborn will not learn how to control the environment. Erikson believed that a delayed or prolonged response to a newborn infant's signal would inhibit the development of trust and lead to mistrust of others.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2, 3, and 4 because of the **closed-ended words** *all*, *immediately*, and

avoid in these options.

**Review: Erikson's stage of psychosocial development**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Development

**Reference:** Perry et al (2010), pp. 957-958.

**203. 1**

**Rationale:** According to Freud's psychosexual stages of development, between the ages of 3 and 6 the child is in the phallic stage. At this time, the child devotes much energy to examining his or her genitalia, masturbating, and expressing interest in sexual concerns. Therefore options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike**, indicating that the child's behavior is abnormal. Next, focus on the **subject**, that a 4-year-old child is masturbating and note the words *age 8 years* in option 2 to assist in eliminating this option.

**Review: Freud's psychosocial stages of development**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Development

**Reference:** Perry et al (2010), p. 849.

**204. 1**

**Rationale:** In general, toilet training occurs during the anal stage. According to Freud, the child gains pleasure from the elimination of feces and from their retention. Option 2 relates to the oral stage. Option 3 relates to the latency period. Option 4 relates to the phallic stage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the anal stage. Note the relationship between the words *anal* in the question and *toilet training* in the correct option.

**Review:** Freud's psychosocial stages of development

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Development Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Perry et al (2010), p. 849.

**205. 1**

**Rationale:** In the formal operations stage, the child has the ability to think abstractly and logically. Option 2 identifies the sensorimotor stage. Option 3 identifies the concrete operational stage. Option 4 identifies the preoperational stage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the formal operations stage of Piaget's cognitive developmental theory, and note the relationship between the **subject** and the description in the correct option. Remember that in the formal operations stage, the child has the ability to think abstractly and logically.

**Review:** Piaget's cognitive developmental theory

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Perry et al (2010), pp. 850-851.

### 206. 3

**Rationale:** According to Erikson, during school-age years (6 to 12 years of age), the child begins to move toward peers and friends and away from the parents for support. The child also begins to develop special interests that reflect his or her own developing personality instead of the parents. Therefore options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect responses.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of Erikson's psychosocial development theory related to middle childhood. Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated first because they are **comparable or alike** and indicate that the mother should be concerned about the child. Eliminate option 4 next because, although praising the child for accomplishments is important at this age, the behavior that the child is exhibiting is normal.

**Review:** Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Perry et al (2010), p. 1079.

❖ 207. 2, 3, 4, 6

**Rationale:** Kohlberg's theory states that individuals move through the six stages of development in a sequential fashion but that not everyone reaches stages 5 and 6 in his or her development of personal morality. The theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals determine a moral code to guide their behavior. It states that moral development progresses in relationship to cognitive development and that a person's ability to make moral judgments develops over a period of time. In stage 1, ages 2 to 3 years (punishment-obedience orientation), children cannot reason as mature members of society. In stage 2, ages 4 to 7 years, (instrumental-relativist orientation), the child conforms to rules to obtain rewards or have favors returned.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Read each option carefully. Recalling that the theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals determine a moral code to guide their behavior and recalling the ages associated with each stage will assist in answering the question. Also noting the **closed-ended word** *all* in option 1 and the word *mature* in option 5 will assist in eliminating these options.

**Review:** Kohlberg's theory of moral development

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 559, 588, 650, 747.

❖ 208. 1, 4

**Rationale:** According to Erikson, the child focuses on gaining some basic control over self and the environment and independence between ages 1 and 3 years. Gaining independence often means that the child has to rebel against the parents' wishes. Saying things like "no" or "mine" and having temper tantrums are common during this period of development. Being consistent and setting limits on the child's behavior are necessary elements. Providing a simple explanation of why certain behaviors are unacceptable is an appropriate action. Options 2 and 3 do not address the child's behavior. Option 5 is likely to produce a negative response during this normal developmental pattern.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 2 and 3 can be eliminated first because they are **comparable or alike**, indicating that the mother should not address the child's behavior. Next, eliminate option 5 because this action is likely to produce a negative response during this normal developmental pattern.

**Review:** Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Development

**Reference:** Perry et al (2010), pp. 848, 1019.



## CHAPTER 23

# Developmental Stages

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is caring for a hospitalized preschool child who is very apprehensive.

What should the nurse do to assist in promoting comfort in the child?

*Answer located on p. 266.*

### I. The Hospitalized Infant and Toddler

#### A. Separation anxiety ▲

##### 1. Protest

- a. Crying, screaming, searching for a parent; avoidance and rejection of contact with strangers
- b. Verbal attacks on others
- c. Physical fighting: Kicking, biting, hitting, pinching

##### 2. Despair

- a. Withdrawn, depressed, uninterested in the environment

**b.** Loss of newly learned skills

### **3.** Detachment

**a.** Detachment is uncommon and occurs only after lengthy separations from the parent.

**b.** Superficially, the toddler appears to have adjusted to the loss.

**c.** During the detachment phase, the toddler again becomes more interested in the environment, plays with others, and seems to form new relationships; this behavior is a form of resignation and is not a sign of contentment.

**d.** The toddler detaches from the parents in an effort to escape the emotional pain of desiring the parent's presence.

**e.** During the detachment phase, the toddler copes by forming shallow relationships with others, becoming increasingly self-centered, and attaching primary importance to material objects.

**f.** Detachment is the most serious phase because reversal of the potential adverse effects is less likely to occur once detachment is established.

**g.** In most situations, the temporary separation imposed by hospitalization does not cause such prolonged parental absence that the toddler enters into detachment.

**B.** Fear of injury and pain: Affected by previous experiences, separation from parents, and preparation for the experience

### **C.** Loss of control

**1.** Hospitalization, with its own set of rituals and routines, can severely disrupt the life of a toddler.

2. The lack of control often is exhibited in behaviors related to feeding, toileting, playing, and bedtime.
3. The toddler may demonstrate regression.

#### D. Interventions ▲

1. Provide cuddling and touch and talk softly to the infant.
2. Provide opportunities for sucking and oral stimulation for the infant, using a pacifier if the infant is NPO (not to receive anything by mouth).
3. Provide stimulation, if appropriate, for the infant, using objects of contrasting colors and textures.
4. Provide choices as much as possible to the toddler to enable him or her to have some control.
5. Approach the toddler with a positive attitude.
6. Allow the toddler to express feelings of protest.
7. Encourage the toddler to talk about parents or others in their lives.
8. Accept regressive behavior without ridiculing the toddler.
9. Provide the toddler with favorite and comforting objects.
10. Allow the toddler as much mobility as possible.
11. Anticipate temper tantrums from the toddler, and maintain a safe environment for physical acting out.
12. Employ pain reduction techniques, as appropriate.

⚠ For the hospitalized toddler, provide routines and rituals as close as possible to what he or she is used to at home.

## II. The Hospitalized Preschooler

### A. Separation anxiety

1. Separation anxiety is generally less obvious and less serious than in the toddler.
2. As stress increases, the preschooler's ability to separate from the parents decreases.
3. Protest
  - a. Protest is less direct and aggressive than in the toddler.
  - b. The preschooler may displace feelings onto others.
4. Despair
  - a. The preschooler reacts in a manner similar to that of the toddler.
  - b. The preschooler is quietly withdrawn, depressed, and uninterested in the environment.
  - c. The child exhibits loss of newly learned skills.
  - d. The preschooler becomes generally uncooperative, refusing to eat or take medication.
  - e. The preschooler repeatedly asks when the parents will be visiting.
5. Detachment: Similar to the toddler

### B. Fear of injury and pain

1. The preschooler has a general lack of understanding of body integrity.
2. The child fears invasive procedures and mutilation.
3. The child imagines things to be much worse than they are.
4. Preschoolers believe that they are ill because of something they did or thought.

### C. Loss of control

1. The preschooler likes familiar routines and rituals and may show regression if not allowed to maintain some control.
2. Preschoolers' egocentric and magical thinking limits their ability to understand events because they view all experiences from their own self-referenced (egocentric) perspective.
3. The child has attained a good deal of independence and self-care at home and may expect that to continue in the hospital.

### D. Interventions ▲

1. Provide a safe and secure environment.
2. Take time for communication.
3. Allow the preschooler to express anger.
4. Acknowledge fears and anxieties.
5. Accept regressive behavior; assist the preschooler in moving from regressive to appropriate behaviors according to age.
6. Encourage rooming-in or leaving a favorite toy.
7. Allow mobility and provide **play** and diversional activities.
8. Place the preschooler with other children of the same age if possible.
9. Encourage the preschooler to be independent.
10. Explain procedures simply, on the preschooler's level.
11. Avoid intrusive procedures when possible.
12. Allow wearing of underpants.

### III. The Hospitalized School-Age Child

#### A. Separation anxiety ▲

1. The school-age child is accustomed to periods of separation from the parents, but as stressors are added, the separation becomes more difficult.
2. The child is more concerned with missing school and the fear that friends will forget her or him.
3. Usually, the stages of behavior of protest, despair, and detachment do not occur with school-age children.

#### B. Fear of injury and pain

1. The school-age child fears bodily injury and pain.
2. The child fears illness itself, disability, death, and intrusive procedures in genital areas.
3. The child is uncomfortable with any type of sexual examination.
4. The child groans or whines, holds rigidly still, and communicates about pain.

#### C. Loss of control

1. The child is usually highly social, independent, and involved with activities.
2. The child seeks information and asks relevant questions about tests and procedures and the illness.
3. The child associates his or her actions with the cause of the illness.
4. The child may feel helpless and dependent if physical limitations occur.

#### D. Interventions ▲

1. Encourage rooming-in.

2. Focus on the school-age child's abilities and needs.
3. Encourage the school-age child to become involved with his or her own care.
4. Accept regression but encourage independence.
5. Provide choices to the school-age child.
6. Allow expression of feelings verbally and nonverbally.
7. Acknowledge fears and concerns and allow for discussion.
8. Explain all procedures, using body diagrams or outlines.
9. Provide privacy.
10. Avoid intrusive procedures if possible.
11. Allow the school-age child to wear underpants.
12. Involve the school-age child in activities appropriate to developmental level and illness.
13. Encourage the school-age child to contact friends.
14. Provide for educational needs.
15. Use appropriate interventions to relieve pain.

#### **IV. The Hospitalized Adolescent**

##### **A. Separation anxiety**

1. Adolescents are not sure whether they want their parents with them when they are hospitalized.
2. Adolescents become upset if friends go on with their lives, excluding them.

 For the hospitalized adolescent, separation from friends is a source of

anxiety.

**B. Fear of injury and pain**

1. Adolescents fear being different from others and their peers.
2. Adolescents may give the impression that they are not afraid, even though they are terrified.
3. Adolescents become guarded when any areas related to sexual development are examined.

**C. Loss of control**

1. Behaviors exhibited include anger, withdrawal, and uncooperativeness.
2. Adolescents seek help and then reject it.

**D. Interventions** ▲

1. Encourage questions about appearance and effects of the illness on the future.
2. Explore feelings about the hospital and the significance that the illness might have for relationships.
3. Encourage adolescents to wear their own clothes and carry out normal grooming activities.
4. Allow favorite foods to be brought in to the hospital if possible.
5. Provide privacy.
6. Use body diagrams to prepare for procedures.
7. Introduce them to other adolescents in the nursing unit.
8. Encourage maintaining contact with peer groups.
9. Provide for educational needs.

10. Identify formation of future plans.
11. Help develop positive coping mechanisms.

## V. Communication Approaches

### A. General guidelines (Box 23-1) ▲

#### **BOX 23-1** General Guidelines for Communication

Allow the child to feel comfortable with the nurse.

Communicate through the use of objects.

Allow the child to express fears and concerns.

Speak clearly and in a quiet, unhurried voice.

Offer choices when possible.

Be honest with the child.

Set limits with the child as appropriate.

### B. Infant

1. Infants respond to nonverbal communication behaviors of adults, such as holding, rocking, patting, cuddling, and touching.
2. Use a slow approach and allow the infant to get to know the nurse.
3. Use a calm, soft, soothing voice.
4. Be responsive to cries.
5. Talk and read to infants.
6. Allow security objects such as blankets and pacifiers if the infant has them.

### C. Toddler

1. Approach the toddler cautiously.
2. Remember that toddlers accept verbal communications of others literally.
3. Learn the toddler's words for common items and use them in conversations.
4. Use short, concrete terms.
5. Prepare the toddler for procedures immediately before the event.
6. Repeat explanations and descriptions.
7. Use **play** for demonstrations.
8. Use visual aids such as picture books, puppets, and dolls.
9. Allow the toddler to handle the equipment or instruments; explain what the equipment or instrument does and how it feels.
10. Encourage the use of comfort objects.

### D. Preschooler

1. Seek opportunities to offer choices.
2. Speak in simple sentences.
3. Be concise and limit the length of explanations.
4. Allow asking questions.
5. Describe procedures as they are about to be performed.
6. Use play to explain procedures and activities.
7. Allow handling the equipment or instruments, which will ease fear and help answer questions.

### E. School-age child

1. Establish limits.
2. Provide reassurance to help in alleviating fears and anxieties.
3. Engage in conversations that encourage thinking.
4. Use medical play techniques.
5. Use photographs, books, dolls, and videos to explain procedures.
6. Explain in clear terms.
7. Allow time for composure and privacy.

#### **F. Adolescent**

1. Remember that the adolescent may be preoccupied with body image.
2. Encourage and support independence.
3. Provide privacy.
4. Use photographs, books, and videos to explain procedures.
5. Engage in conversations about adolescent's interests.
6. Avoid becoming too abstract, too detailed, and too technical.
7. Avoid responding by prying, confrontation, condescending or judgmental attitudes.

## **VI. Car Safety Seats and Guidelines** ▲

- A.** The safest place for all children to ride, regardless of age, is in the back seat of the car.
- B.** Lock the car doors; four-door cars should be equipped with child safety locks on the back doors.
- C.** There are different types of car safety seats and the manufacturer's guidelines need to

be followed.

- D.** For specific information regarding car safety, refer to *Car safety seats: Information for families for 2012* (copyright © 2012 American Academy of Pediatrics), found at <https://www.pedcarecorner.com/documents/10406/98b4ae05-8c37-40f0-9449-a2a84c98c321>.

## VII. Developmental Characteristics

### A. Infant

#### 1. Physical

- a. Height increases by 1 inch per month in the first 6 months and by 1 year the length has increased by 50%.
- b. Weight is doubled at 5 to 6 months and tripled at 12 months.
- c. At birth, head circumference is 33 to 35 cm (13.2 to 14 inches), approximately 2 to 3 cm more than chest circumference.
- d. By 1 to 2 years of age, head circumference and chest circumference are equal.
- e. Anterior fontanel (soft and flat in a normal infant) closes by 12 to 18 months of age. ▲
- f. Posterior fontanel (soft and flat in a normal infant) closes by the end of the second month. ▲
- g. The first primary teeth to erupt are the lower central incisors at approximately 6 to 10 months of age.
- h. Sleep patterns vary among infants; in general, by 3 to 4 months of age, most infants have developed a nocturnal pattern of sleep that lasts 9 to 11 hours.

## 2. Vital signs (Box 23-2) ▲

### BOX 23-2

### Vital Signs: Newborn and 1-Year-Old Infant

#### Newborn

**Temperature:** Axillary, 96.8° F to 99° F

**Apical Heart Rate:** 120 to 160 beats/minute

**Respirations:** 30 to 60 (average 40) breaths/minute

**Blood Pressure:** 80-90/40-50 mm Hg

#### 1-Year-Old Infant

**Temperature:** Axillary, 97° F to 99° F

**Apical Heart Rate:** 90 to 130 beats/minute

**Respirations:** 20 to 40 breaths/minute

**Blood Pressure:** 90/56 mm Hg

## 3. Nutrition ▲

- a. The infant may breast-feed or bottle-feed (with iron-fortified formula), depending on the mother's choice; however, human milk is the preferred form of nutrition for all infants, especially during the first 6 months.
- b. Exclusively breast-fed infants and infants ingesting less than 1000 mL of vitamin D–fortified formula or milk per day should receive daily vitamin D supplementation (400 IU) starting in the first few days of life to prevent rickets and vitamin D deficiency.

- c.** Iron stores from birth are depleted by 4 months of age; if the infant is being only breast-fed, iron supplementation usually with iron-fortified cereal is needed.
- d.** Whole milk, low-fat milk, skim milk, other animal milk, or imitation milk should not be given to infants as a primary source of nutrition because these food sources lack the necessary components needed for growth and have limited digestibility.
- e.** Fluoride supplementation may be needed at about 6 months of age, depending on the infant's intake of fluoridated tap water.
- f.** Solid foods (strained, pureed, or finely mashed) are introduced at about 5 to 6 months of age; introduce solid foods one at a time, usually at intervals of 4 to 5 days, to identify food allergens.
- g.** Sequence of the introduction of solid foods varies depending on health care provider's preference and usually is as follows: iron-fortified rice cereal, fruits, vegetables, then meats.
- h.** At 12 months of age, eggs can be given (introduce egg whites in small quantities to detect an allergy); cheese may be used as a substitute for meat.
- i.** Avoid solid foods that place the infant at risk for choking, such as nuts, foods with seeds, raisins, popcorn, grapes, and hot dog pieces.
- j.** Avoid microwaving baby bottles and baby food.
- k.** Never mix food or medications with formula.
- l.** Avoid adding honey to formula, water, or other fluid to prevent botulism.
- m.** Offer fruit juice from a cup (12 to 13 months or at a prescribed age) rather than

a bottle to prevent nursing (bottle-mouth) caries; fruit juice is limited because of its high sugar content.

#### 4. Skills (Box 23-3)

### **BOX 23-3** Infant Skills

#### **2 to 3 Months**

- Smiles
- Turns head side to side
- Cries
- Follows objects
- Holds head in midline

#### **4 to 5 Months**

- Grasps objects
- Switches objects from hands
- Rolls over for the first time
- Enjoys social interaction
- Begins to show memory
- Aware of unfamiliar surroundings

#### **6 to 7 Months**

- Creeps
- Sits with support

- Imitates
- Exhibits fear of strangers
- Holds arms out
- Frequent mood swings
- Waves “bye-bye”

### **8 to 9 Months**

- Sits steadily unsupported
- Crawls
- May stand while holding on
- Begins to stand without help

### **10 to 11 Months**

- Can change from prone to sitting position
- Walks while holding on to furniture
- Stands securely
- Entertains self for periods of time

### **12 to 13 Months**

- Walks with one hand held
- Can take a few steps without falling
- Can drink from a cup

### **14 to 15 Months**

- Walks alone

- Can crawl up stairs
- Shows emotions such as anger and affection
- Will explore away from mother in familiar surroundings

## 5. Play ▲

- a. Solitary
- b. Birth to 3 months: Verbal, visual, and tactile stimuli
- c. 4 to 6 months: Initiation of actions and recognition of new experiences
- d. 6 to 12 months: Awareness of self, imitation, repetition of pleasurable actions
- e. Enjoyment of soft stuffed animals, crib mobiles with contrasting colors, squeeze toys, rattles, musical toys, water toys during the bath, large picture books, and push toys after he or she begins to walk

## 6. Safety ▲

- a. Parents must baby-proof the home.
- b. Guard the infant when on a bed or changing table.
- c. Use gates to protect the infant from stairs.
- d. Be sure that bath water is not hot; do not leave the infant unattended in the bath.
- e. Do not hold the infant while drinking or working near hot liquids or items such as a stove.
- f. Cool vaporizers should be used if needed, instead of steam, to prevent burn injuries.
- g. Avoid offering food that is round and similar to the size of the airway to prevent

choking.

- h.** Be sure toys have no small pieces.
- i.** Toys or mobiles hanging over the crib should be well out of reach to prevent strangulation.
- j.** Avoid placing large toys in the crib because an older infant may use them as steps to climb.
- k.** Cribs should be positioned away from curtains and blind cords.
- l.** Cover electrical outlets.
- m.** Remove hazardous objects from low, reachable places.
- n.** Remove chemicals such as cleaning or other household products, medications, poisons, and plants from the infant's reach.
- o.** Keep the Poison Control Center number available.

 **Never shake an infant because of the risk of causing a closed head injury known as *shaken baby syndrome*.**

## **B. Toddler**

### **1. Physical**

- a.** Height and weight increase in phases, reflecting growth spurts and lags.
- b.** Head circumference increases about 1 inch between ages 1 and 2; thereafter head circumference increases about 1/2 inch per year until age 5.
- c.** Anterior fontanel closes between ages 12 and 18 months.
- d.** Weight gain is slower than in infancy; by age 2, the average weight is 22 to 27

pounds.

- e. Normal height changes include a growth of about 3 inches per year; the average height of the toddler is 34 inches at age 2 years.
- f. Lordosis (pot belly) is noted.
- g. The toddler should see a dentist soon after the first teeth erupt, usually around 1 year of age, and oral hygiene measures should be instituted; regular dental care is essential, and the toddler will require assistance with brushing and flossing of teeth (fluoride supplements may be necessary if the water is not fluoridated).
- h. A toddler should never be allowed to fall asleep with a bottle containing milk, juice, soda pop, sweetened water, or any other sweet liquid because of the risk of nursing (bottle-mouth) caries.
- i. Typically, the toddler sleeps through the night and has one daytime nap; the daytime nap is normally discontinued at about age 3.
- j. A consistent bedtime ritual helps prepare the toddler for sleep.
- k. Security objects at bedtime may assist in sleep.

## 2. Vital signs (Box 23-4)

### **BOX 23-4** The Toddler's Vital Signs

**Temperature:** Axillary, 97.5° F to 98.6° F

**Apical Heart Rate:** 80 to 120 beats/minute

**Respirations:** 20 to 30 breaths/minute

**Blood Pressure:** Average, 92/55 mm Hg

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### 3. Nutrition

- a. The MyPlate food guide (see [Figure 12-1](#)) provides dietary guidelines and applies to children as young as 2 years of age (see [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)).
- b. The toddler should average an intake of two to three servings of milk daily (24 to 30 oz) to ensure an adequate amount of calcium and phosphorus (low-fat milk may be given after 2 years of age).
- c. Trans-fatty acids and saturated fats need to be restricted; otherwise fat restriction is not appropriate for a toddler (mothers should be taught about the types of food that contain fat that should be selected).
- d. Iron-fortified cereal and a high-iron diet, adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D, and vitamin C (4 to 6 oz of juice daily) are essential components for the toddler's diet.
- e. Most toddlers prefer to feed themselves.
- f. The toddler generally does best by eating several small nutritious meals each day rather than three large meals.
- g. Offer a limited number of foods at any one time.
- h. Offer finger foods and avoid concentrated sweets and empty calories. ▲
- i. The toddler is at risk for aspiration of small foods that are not chewed easily, such as nuts, foods with seeds, raisins, popcorn, grapes, and hot dog pieces. ▲
- j. Physiological anorexia may occur and is normal because of the alternating stages of fast and slow growth.

- k. Sit the toddler in a high chair at the family table for meals.
- l. Allow sufficient time to eat, but remove food when the toddler begins to play with it.
- m. The toddler drinks well from a cup held with both hands.
- n. Avoid using food as a reward or punishment.

#### 4. Skills

- a. The toddler begins to walk with one hand held by age 12 to 13 months.
- b. The toddler runs by age 2 years and walks backward and hops on one foot by age 3 years.
- c. The toddler usually cannot alternate feet when climbing stairs.
- d. The toddler begins to master fine motor skills for building, undressing, and drawing lines.
- e. The young toddler often uses “no” even when he or she means “yes” to assert independence. ▲
- f. The toddler begins to use short sentences and has a vocabulary of about 300 words by age 2.

#### 5. Bowel and bladder control

- a. Certain signs indicate that a toddler is ready for toilet training ([Box 23-5](#)). ▲

### **BOX 23-5** Signs of Readiness for Toilet Training

Child is able to stay dry for 2 hours.

Child is waking up dry from a nap.

Child is able to sit, squat, and walk.

Child is able to remove clothing.

Child recognizes the urge to defecate or urinate.

Child expresses willingness to please a parent.

Child is able to sit on the toilet for 5 to 10 minutes without fussing or getting off.

Data from Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

**b.** Bowel control develops before bladder control.

**c.** By age 3, the toddler achieves fairly good bowel and bladder control.

**d.** The toddler may stay dry during the day but may need a diaper at night until about age 4.

## 6. Play

**a.** The major socializing mechanism is parallel play, and therapeutic play can begin at this age.

**b.** The toddler has a short attention span, causing the toddler to change toys often.

**c.** The toddler explores body parts of self and others.

**d.** Typical toys include push-pull toys, blocks, sand, finger paints and bubbles, large balls, crayons, trucks and dolls, containers, Play-Doh, toy telephones, cloth books, and wooden puzzles. ▲

## 7. Safety ▲

 **Toddlers are eager to explore the world around them; they need to be**

supervised at play to ensure safety.

- a. Use back burners on the stove to prepare a meal; turn pot handles inward and toward the middle of the stove.
- b. Keep dangling cords from small appliances or other items away from the toddler.
- c. Place inaccessible locks on windows and doors, and keep furniture away from windows.
- d. Secure screens on all windows.
- e. Place safety gates at stairways.
- f. Do not allow the toddler to sleep or play in an upper bunk bed.
- g. Never leave the toddler alone near a bathtub, pail of water, swimming pool, or any other body of water.
- h. Keep toilet lids closed.
- i. Keep all medicines, poisons, household plants, and toxic products in high areas and locked out of reach.
- j. Keep the Poison Control Center number available.

## C. Preschooler

### 1. Physical

- a. The preschooler grows  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 inches per year.
- b. Average height is 37 inches at age 3,  $40\frac{1}{2}$  inches at age 4, and 43 inches at age 5.
- c. The preschooler gains approximately 5 pounds per year; average weight is 40

pounds at age 5.

- d. The preschooler requires about 12 hours of sleep each day.
- e. A security object and a nightlight help with sleeping.
- f. At the beginning of the preschool period, the eruption of the deciduous (primary) teeth is complete.
- g. Regular dental care is essential, and the preschooler may require assistance with brushing and flossing of teeth; fluoride supplements may be necessary if the water is not fluoridated. ▲

## 2. Vital signs (Box 23-6)

### **BOX 23-6**      The Preschooler's Vital Signs

**Temperature:** Axillary, 97.5° to 98.6° F

**Apical Heart Rate:** 70 to 110 beats/minute

**Respirations:** 16 to 22 breaths/minute

**Blood Pressure:** Average, 95/57 mm Hg

## 3. Nutrition

- a. Nutritional needs are similar to those required for the toddler although the daily amounts of minerals, vitamins, and protein may increase with age.
- b. The MyPlate food guide is appropriate for preschoolers (see [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)).
- c. The preschooler exhibits food fads and certain taste preferences and may

exhibit finicky eating.

- d. By 5 years old, the child tends to focus on social aspects of eating, table conversations, manners, and willingness to try new foods.

#### 4. Skills

- a. The preschooler has good posture.
- b. The child develops fine motor coordination.
- c. The child can hop, skip, and run more smoothly.
- d. Athletic abilities begin to develop.
- e. The preschooler demonstrates increased skills in balancing.
- f. The child alternates feet when climbing stairs.
- g. The child can tie shoelaces by age 6.
- h. The child may talk continuously and ask many “why” questions.
- i. Vocabulary increases to about 900 words by age 3 and to 2100 words by age 5.
- j. By age 3, the preschooler usually talks in three- or four-word sentences and speaks in short phrases.
- k. By age 4, the preschooler speaks five- or six-word sentences and, by age 5, speaks in longer sentences that contain all parts of speech.
- l. The child can be understood readily by others and can understand clearly what others are saying.

#### 5. Bowel and bladder control

- a. By age 4, the preschooler has daytime control of bowel and bladder but may experience bed-wetting accidents at night.

**b.** By age 5, the preschooler achieves bowel and bladder control, although accidents may occur in stressful situations.

## **6.** Play

**a.** The preschooler is cooperative.

**b.** The preschooler has imaginary playmates.

**c.** The child likes to build and create things, and play is simple and imaginative.

**d.** The child understands sharing and is able to interact with peers.

**e.** The child requires regular socialization with mates of similar age.

**f.** Play activities include a large space for running and jumping.

**g.** The preschooler likes dress-up clothes, paints, paper, and crayons for creative expression.

**h.** Swimming and sports aid in growth development.

**i.** Puzzles and toys aid with fine motor development.

## **7.** Safety ▲

**a.** Preschoolers are active and inquisitive.

**b.** Because of their magical thinking, they may believe that daring feats seen in cartoons are possible and may attempt them.

**c.** The preschooler can learn simple safety practices because they can follow simple verbal directions and their attention span is longer.

**d.** Teach the preschooler basic safety rules to ensure safety when playing in a playground such as near swings and ladders.

**e.** Teach the preschooler never to play with matches or lighters.

- f. The preschooler should be taught what to do in the event of a fire or if clothes catch fire; fire drills should be practiced with the preschooler.
- g. Guns should be stored unloaded and secured under lock and key (ammunition should be locked in a separate place).
- h. Teach the preschooler his or her full name, address, parents' names, and telephone number.
- i. Teach the preschooler how to dial 911 in an emergency situation.
- j. Keep the Poison Control Center number available.

 Teach a preschooler and school-age child to leave an area immediately if a gun is visible and to tell an adult. The preschooler should also be taught never to point a toy gun at another person.

## **D. School-age child**

### **1. Physical**

- a. Girls usually grow faster than boys.
- b. Growth is about 2 inches per year between ages 6 and 12.
- c. Height ranges from 45 inches at age 6 to 59 inches at age 12.
- d. School-age children gain weight at a rate of about 4 1/2 to 6 1/2 pounds per year.
- e. Average weight is 46 pounds at age 6 and 88 pounds at age 12.
- f. The first permanent (secondary) teeth erupt around age 6, and deciduous teeth are lost gradually.
- g. Regular dentist visits are necessary, and the school-age child needs to be supervised with brushing and flossing teeth; fluoride supplements may be

necessary if the water is not fluoridated. ▲

**h.** For school-age children with primary and permanent dentition, the best toothbrush is one with soft nylon bristles and an overall length of about 6 inches.

**i.** Sleep requirements range from 10 to 12 hours a night.

## 2. Vital signs (Box 23-7)

### **BOX 23-7** The School-Age Child's Vital Signs

**Temperature:** Oral, 97.5° to 98.6° F

**Apical Heart Rate:** 60 to 100 beats/minute

**Respirations:** 18 to 20 breaths/minute

**Blood Pressure:** Average, 107/64 mm Hg

## 3. Nutrition

**a.** School-age children will have increased growth needs as they approach adolescence.

**b.** Children require a balanced diet from foods in the MyPlate food guide; healthy snacks should continue to be emphasized to prevent childhood obesity (see [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)).

**c.** Children still may be picky eaters but are usually willing to try new foods.

## 4. Skills

**a.** School-age children exhibit refinement of fine motor skills.

**b.** Development of gross motor skills continues.

**c.** Strength and endurance increase.

## **5.** Play

**a.** Play is more competitive.

**b.** Rules and rituals are important aspects of play and games.

**c.** The school-age child enjoys drawing, collecting items, dolls, pets, guessing games, board games, listening to the radio, TV, reading, watching videos or DVDs, and computer games. ▲

**d.** The child participates in team sports.

**e.** The child may participate in secret clubs, group peer activities, and scout organizations.

## **6.** Safety

**a.** The school-age child experiences less fear in play activities and frequently imitates real life by using tools and household items. ▲

**b.** Major causes of injuries include bicycles, skateboards, and team sports as the child increases in motor abilities and independence.

**c.** Children should always wear a helmet when riding a bike or using in-line skates or skateboards. ▲

**d.** Teach the child water safety rules.

**e.** Instruct the child to avoid teasing or playing roughly with animals.

**f.** Teach the child never to play with matches or lighters.

**g.** The child should be taught what to do in the event of a fire or if clothes catch

fire; fire drills should be practiced with the child.

- h.** Guns should be stored unloaded and secured under lock and key (ammunition should be locked in a separate place).
- i.** Teach the child traffic safety rules.
- j.** Teach the child how to dial 911 in an emergency situation.
- k.** Keep the Poison Control Center number available.

 Teach the preschooler and school-age child that if another person touches his or her body in an inappropriate way, an adult should be told. Also teach the child to avoid speaking to strangers and never to accept a ride, toys, or gifts from a stranger.

## **E. Adolescent**

### **1. Physical**

- a.** Puberty is the maturational, hormonal, and growth process that occurs when the reproductive organs begin to function and the secondary sex characteristics develop.
- b.** Body mass increases to adult size.
- c.** Sebaceous and sweat glands become active and fully functional.
- d.** Body hair distribution occurs.
- e.** Increases in height, weight, breast development, and pelvic girth occur in girls.
- f.** Menstrual periods occur about 2 1/2 years after the onset of puberty.
- g.** In boys, increases in height, weight, muscle mass, and penis and testicle size occur.

- h. The voice deepens in boys.
- i. Normal weight gain during puberty: Girls gain 15 to 55 pounds; boys gain 15 to 65 pounds.
- j. Careful brushing and care of the teeth are important, and many adolescents need to wear braces. ▲
- k. Sleep patterns include a tendency to stay up late; therefore, in an attempt to catch up on missed sleep, adolescents sleep late whenever possible; an overall average of 8 hours per night is recommended. ▲

## 2. Vital signs (Box 23-8)

### **BOX 23-8**      The Adolescent's Vital Signs

**Temperature:** Oral, 97.5° to 98.6° F

**Apical Heart Rate:** 55 to 90 beats/minute

**Respirations:** 12 to 20 breaths/minute

**Blood Pressure:** Average, 121/70 mm Hg

## 3. Nutrition ▲

- a. Teaching about the MyPlate food guide is important (see [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov))
- b. Adolescents typically eat whenever they have a break in activities.
- c. Calcium, zinc, iron, folic acid, and protein are especially important nutritional needs.

**d.** Adolescents tend to snack on empty calories, and the importance of adequate and healthy nutrition needs to be stressed.

**e.** Body image is important.

#### **4.** Skills

**a.** Gross and fine motor skills are well developed.

**b.** Strength and endurance increase.

#### **5.** Play

**a.** Games and athletic activities are the most common forms of play.

**b.** Competition and strict rules are important.

**c.** Adolescents enjoy activities such as sports, videos, movies, reading, parties, dancing, hobbies, computer games, music, communicating via the Internet, and experimenting, such as with makeup and hairstyles. ▲

**d.** Friends are important, and adolescents like to gather in small groups.

#### **6.** Safety ▲

**a.** Adolescents are risk takers.

**b.** Adolescents have a natural urge to experiment and to be independent.

**c.** Reinforce instructions about the dangers related to cigarette smoking, caffeine ingestion, alcohol, and drugs. ▲

**d.** Help adolescents recognize that they have choices when difficult or potentially dangerous situations arise.

**e.** Ensure that the adolescent uses a seat belt. ▲

**f.** Instruct adolescents in the consequences of injuries that motor vehicle accidents

can cause. ▲

- g.** Instruct adolescents in water safety and emphasize that they should enter the water feet first as opposed to diving, especially when the depth of the water is unknown.
- h.** Instruct adolescents about the dangers associated with guns, violence, and gangs.
- i.** Instruct adolescents about the complications associated with body piercing, tattooing, and sun tanning.

**▲** Discuss issues such as date rape, sexual relationships, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections with the adolescent. Also discuss the dangers of the Internet related to communicating and setting up meetings (dates) with unknown persons.

## **F.** Early adulthood

- 1.** Description: Period between the late teens and mid to late 30s
- 2.** Physical changes
  - a.** Person has completed physical growth by the age of 20.
  - b.** Person is active.
  - c.** Severe illnesses are less common than in older age groups.
  - d.** Person tends to ignore physical symptoms and postpone seeking health care.
  - e.** Lifestyle habits such as smoking, stress, lack of exercise, poor personal hygiene, and family history of disease increase the risk of future illness. ▲
- 3.** Cognitive changes

- a. Person has rational thinking habits.
- b. Conceptual, problem-solving, and motor skills increase.
- c. Person identifies preferred occupational areas.

#### 4. Psychosocial changes

- a. Person separates from family of origin.
- b. Person gives much attention to occupational and social pursuits to improve socioeconomic status. ▲
- c. Person makes decisions regarding career, marriage, and parenthood.
- d. Person needs to adapt to new situations.

#### 5. Sexuality ▲

- a. Person has the emotional maturity to develop mature sexual relationships.
- b. Person is at risk for sexually transmitted infections.

### G. Middle adulthood

1. Description: Period between the mid to late 30s and mid 60s

#### 2. Physical changes

- a. Physical changes occur between 40 and 65 years of age.
- b. Individual becomes aware that changes in reproductive and physical abilities signify the beginning of another stage in life.
- c. Menopause occurs in women and climacteric occurs in men.
- d. Physiological changes often have an impact on self-concept and body image. ▲
- e. Physiological concerns include stress, level of wellness, and the formation of positive health habits.

### 3. Cognitive changes

- a. Person may be interested in learning new skills.
- b. Person may become involved in educational or vocational programs for entering the job market or for changing careers.

### 4. Psychosocial changes

- a. Changes may include expected events, such as children moving away from home (postparental family stage), or unexpected events, such as the death of a close friend. ▲
- b. Time and financial demands decrease as children move away from home, and couples face redefining their relationship.
- c. Adults may become grandparents.
- d. Adults are achieving generativity.

### 5. Sexuality

- a. Many couples renew their relationships and find increased marital and sexual satisfaction.
- b. The onset of menopause and climacteric may affect sexual health.
- c. Stress, health, and medications can affect sexuality.

**H.** Later adulthood (period between 65 years to death): refer to [Chapter 24](#).

## VIII. End-of-Life Care

**A.** Description: End-of-life care relates to death and dying.

**B.** Cultural and religious issues (see [Chapter 6](#) and [Box 6-2](#) for information regarding cultural and religious issues)

### C. Legal and ethical issues ▲

1. Outcomes related to care during illness and the dying experience should be based on the client's wishes.
2. Issues for consideration may include organ and tissue donations, advance directives or other legal documents, withholding or withdrawing treatment, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

### D. Palliative care ▲

1. Palliative care focuses on caring interventions and symptom management rather than cure for diseases or conditions that no longer respond to treatment.
2. Pain and symptoms are controlled; the dying client should be as pain-free and as comfortable as possible.
3. Hospice care provides support and care for clients in the last phases of incurable diseases so that they might live as fully and as comfortably as possible; client and family needs are the focus of any intervention.

### E. Near-death physiological manifestations

1. As death approaches, metabolism is reduced, and the body gradually slows down until all functions end.
2. Sensory: The client experiences blurred vision, decreased sense of taste and smell, decreased pain and touch perception, loss of blink reflex, and appears to stare (hearing is believed to be the last sense lost).
3. Respirations
  - a. Respirations may be rapid or slow, shallow, and irregular.

- b. Respirations may be noisy and wet sounding (death rattle).
- c. Cheyne-Stokes respiration is alternating periods of apnea and deep, rapid breathing.

#### 4. Circulation

- a. Heart rate slows, and blood pressure falls progressively.
- b. Skin is cool to touch, and the extremities become pale, mottled, and cyanotic.
- c. Skin is waxlike very near death.

5. Urinary output decreases; incontinence may occur.

6. Gastrointestinal motility and peristalsis diminish, leading to constipation, gas accumulation, and distention; incontinence may occur.

7. Musculoskeletal system: The client gradually loses ability to move, has difficulty speaking and swallowing, and loses the gag reflex.

### F. Death

1. Death occurs when all vital organs and body systems cease to function.

2. In general, respirations cease first, and then the heartbeat stops a few minutes thereafter.

3. Brain death occurs when the cerebral cortex stops functioning or is irreversibly damaged.

### G. Nursing care ▲

1. Frequency of assessment depends on the client's stability (at least every 4 hours); as changes occur, assessment needs to be done more frequently.

2. Physical care ([Box 23-9](#))

**Pain**

Administer pain medication.

Do not delay or deny pain medication.

**Dyspnea**

Elevate the head of the bed or position the client on his or her side.

Administer supplemental oxygen.

Suction fluids from the airway as needed.

**Skin**

Assess color and temperature.

Assess for breakdown.

Implement measures to prevent breakdown.

**Dehydration**

Maintain regular oral care.

Encourage taking ice chips and sips of fluid.

Do not force the client to eat or drink.

Use moist cloths to provide moisture to the mouth.

Apply lubricant to the lips and oral mucous membranes.

**Anorexia, Nausea, and Vomiting**

Provide antiemetics before meals.

Have family members provide the client's favorite foods.

Provide frequent small portions of favorite foods.

## **Elimination**

Monitor urinary and bowel elimination.

Place absorbent pads under the client and check frequently.

## **Weakness and Fatigue**

Provide rest periods.

Assess tolerance for activities.

Provide assistance and support as needed for maintaining bed or chair positions.

## **Restlessness**

Maintain a calm, soothing environment.

Do not restrain.

Limit the number of visitors at the client's bedside (consider cultural practices).

Allow a family member to stay with the client.

### **3. Psychosocial care**

**a.** Monitor for anxiety and depression.

**b.** Monitor for fear ([Box 23-10](#)).

## **BOX 23-10**

### **Fear Associated with Dying**

#### **Fear of Pain**

Fear of pain may occur, based on anxieties related to dying.

Do not delay or deny pain relief measures to a terminally ill client.

#### **Fear of Loneliness and Abandonment**

Allow family members to stay with the client.

Holding hands, touching (if culturally acceptable), and listening to the client are important.

### **Fear of Being Meaningless**

Client may feel hopeless and powerless.

Encourage life reviews and focus on the positive aspects of the client's life.

Adapted from Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I:

*Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

c. Encourage the client and family to express feelings.

d. Provide support and advocacy for the client and family.

e. Provide privacy for the client and family.

f. Provide a private room for the client.

#### 4. Postmortem care ([Box 23-11](#))

### **BOX 23-11**

### **General Postmortem Procedures**

Close the client's eyes.

Replace dentures.

Wash the body.

Place pads under the perineum.

Remove tubes and dressings.

Straighten the body and place a pillow under the head in preparation for family viewing.

- a. Maintain respect and dignity for the client.
- b. Determine whether the client is an organ donor; if so, follow appropriate procedures related to the donation.
- c. Consider cultural rituals, state laws, and agency procedures when performing postmortem care.
- d. Prepare the body for immediate viewing by the family.
- e. Provide privacy and time for the family to be with the deceased person.
- f. Medical examiner jurisdiction guidelines are determined by each state and usually include nonnatural, traumatic, or question of criminal involvement deaths; any forensic evidence is preserved and the body is not cleaned or prepared prior to transfer to the morgue.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** When caring for a child who is apprehensive, the nurse should provide a safe and secure environment. The nurse should also take time for communication with the child; allow the child to express feelings such as anxiety, fear, or anger; accept any regressive behavior and assist the preschooler in moving from regressive to appropriate behaviors. Additional interventions include encouraging rooming-in with the parents or leaving a favorite toy; allowing mobility and providing play and

diversional activities; placing the preschooler with other children of the same age if possible; and encouraging the preschooler to be independent. The nurse should also explain procedures simply, on the preschooler's level, avoid intrusive procedures when possible, and allow the child to wear their underpants.

***Reference***

Hockenberry, Wilson, (2011), p. 118.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 209.** A 4-year-old child diagnosed with leukemia is hospitalized for chemotherapy. The child is fearful of the hospitalization. Which nursing intervention should be implemented to alleviate the child's fears?
1. Encourage the child's parents to stay with the child.
  2. Encourage play with other children of the same age.
  3. Advise the family to visit only during the scheduled visiting hours.
  4. Provide a private room, allowing the child to bring favorite toys from home.
- 210.** A 16-year-old is admitted to the hospital for acute appendicitis and an appendectomy is performed. Which nursing intervention is **most appropriate** to facilitate normal growth and development postoperatively?
1. Encourage the child to rest and read.
  2. Encourage the parents to room in with the child.
  3. Allow the family to bring in the child's favorite computer games.
  4. Allow the child to interact with others in his or her same age group.
- 211.** Which car safety device should be used for a child who is 8 years old and is 4 feet tall?
1. Seat belt
  2. Booster seat
  3. Rear-facing convertible seat
  4. Front-facing convertible seat

**212.** The nurse assesses the vital signs of a 12-month-old infant with a respiratory infection and notes that the respiratory rate is 35 breaths/minute. On the basis of this finding, which action is **most appropriate**?

1. Administer oxygen.
2. Document the findings.
3. Notify the health care provider.
4. Reassess the respiratory rate in 15 minutes.

**213.** The nurse is monitoring a 3-month-old infant for signs of increased intracranial pressure. On palpation of the fontanel, the nurse notes that the anterior fontanel is soft and flat. On the basis of this finding, which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Increase oral fluids.
2. Document the finding.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Elevate the head of the bed to 90 degrees.

**214.** The nurse is evaluating the developmental level of a 2-year-old. Which does the nurse expect to observe in this child?

1. Uses a fork to eat
2. Uses a cup to drink
3. Pours own milk into a cup
4. Uses a knife for cutting food

**215.** The 2-year-old child is treated in the emergency department for a burn to the chest and abdomen. The child sustained the burn by grabbing a cup of hot coffee that was left on the kitchen counter. The nurse reviews safety principles with the parents before discharge. Which statement by the parents indicates an understanding of measures to provide safety in the home?

1. “We will be sure not to leave hot liquids unattended.”
2. “I guess my children need to understand what the word *hot* means.”
3. “We will be sure that the children stay in their rooms when we work in the kitchen.”
4. “We will install a safety gate as soon as we get home so the children cannot get into the kitchen.”

**216.** A mother arrives at a clinic with her toddler and tells the nurse that she has a difficult time getting the child to go to bed at night. What measure is **most appropriate** for the nurse to suggest to the mother?

1. Allow the child to set bedtime limits.
2. Allow the child to have temper tantrums.
3. Avoid letting the child nap during the day.
4. Inform the child of bedtime a few minutes before it is time for bed.

**217.** The mother of a 3-year-old is concerned because her child still is insisting on a bottle at nap time and at bedtime. Which is the **most appropriate** suggestion to the mother?

1. Allow the bottle if it contains juice.
2. Allow the bottle if it contains water.
3. Do not allow the child to have the bottle.
4. Allow the bottle during naps but not at bedtime.

**218.** The nurse is preparing to care for a 5-year-old who has been placed in traction following a fracture of the femur. The nurse plans care, knowing that which is the **most appropriate** activity for this child?

1. A radio
2. A sports video
3. Large picture books
4. Crayons and a coloring book

**219.** A mother of a 3-year-old asks a clinic nurse about appropriate and safe toys for the child. The nurse should tell the mother that the **most appropriate** toy for a 3-year-old is which?

1. A wagon
2. A golf set
3. A farm set
4. A jack set with marbles

**220.** Which intervention(s) are appropriate for the care of an infant? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Provide swaddling.

2. Talk in a loud voice.
3. Provide the infant with a bottle of juice at nap time.
4. Hang mobiles with black and white contrast designs.
5. Caress the infant while bathing or during diaper changes.
6. Allow the infant to cry for at least 10 minutes before responding.

**221.** The nurse is preparing to care for a dying client, and several family members are at the client's bedside. Which therapeutic techniques should the nurse use when communicating with the family? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Discourage reminiscing.
2. Make the decisions for the family.
3. Encourage expression of feelings, concerns, and fears.
4. Explain everything that is happening to all family members.
5. Touch and hold the client's or family member's hand if appropriate.
6. Be honest and let the client and family know that they will not be abandoned by the nurse.

## ANSWERS

**209. 1**

**Rationale:** Although the preschooler already may be spending some time away from parents at a day care center or preschool, illness adds a stressor that makes separation more difficult. The child may ask repeatedly when parents will be coming for a visit or may constantly want to call the parents. Options 3 and 4 increase stress related

to separation anxiety. Option 2 is unrelated to the subject of the question and, in addition, may not be appropriate for a child who may be immunocompromised and at risk for infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the **subject** relates to the child's fear. Options 3 and 4 will increase anxiety and fear further and should be eliminated. Bearing the **subject** of the question in mind and considering the child's diagnosis will assist you in eliminating option 2.

**Review:** Measures to alleviate **separation anxiety**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Development

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 965-966.

## 210. 4

**Rationale:** Adolescents often are not sure whether they want their parents with them when they are hospitalized. Because of the importance of their peer group, separation from friends is a source of anxiety. Ideally, the members of the peer group will support their ill friend. Options 1, 2, and 3 isolate the child from the peer group.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Consider the psychosocial needs of the adolescent and remember that the peer group is very important. Options 1, 2, and 3 are **comparable or alike** in that they isolate the child from his or her own peer group.

**Review:** Psychosocial needs of the **adolescent**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 968-969.

## 211. 2

**Rationale:** All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their car safety seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age. Infants should ride in a car in a semireclined, rear-facing position in an infant-only seat or a convertible seat until they weigh at least 20 pounds and are at least 1 year of age. The transition point for switching to the forward-facing position is defined by the manufacturer of the convertible car safety seat but is generally at a body weight of 9 kg (20 pounds) and 1 year of age.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, car safety, and note the age and height of the child to identify the appropriate safety device. Remember that children should remain in a booster seat until they are 8 to 12 years old and at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall.

**Review:** Car safety

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 676; <https://www.pedcarecorner.com/documents/10406/98b4ae05-8c37-40f0-9449-a2a84c98c321>.

**212. 2**

**Rationale:** The normal respiratory rate in a 12-month-old infant is 20 to 40 breaths/minute. The normal apical heart rate is 90 to 130 beats/minute, and the average blood pressure is 90/56 mm Hg. The nurse would document the findings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the data in the question and note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*.

Recalling the normal vital signs of an infant and noting that the respiratory rate identified in the question is within the normal range will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal **vital signs** for the **infant**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 238, 243.

**213. 2**

**Rationale:** The anterior fontanel is diamond-shaped and located on the top of the head. The fontanel should be soft and flat in a normal infant, and it normally closes by 12 to 18 months of age. The nurse would document the finding because it is normal. There is no useful reason to increase oral fluids, notify the HCP, or elevate the head of the bed to 90 degrees.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*, and the words *soft* and *flat*. This should provide you with the clue that this is a normal finding. A bulging or tense fontanel may result from crying or increased intracranial pressure.

**Review:** Assessment of the **fontanel**s

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 1418.

## 214. 2

**Rationale:** By age 2 years, the child can use a cup and spoon correctly but with some spilling. By age 3 to 4, the child begins to use a fork. By the end of the preschool period, the child should be able to pour milk into a cup and begin to use a knife for cutting.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the developmental level of a 2-year-old. Option 4 can be eliminated first because of the word *knife*. Next, think about the fine motor skills that need to be developed in selecting the correct option. With this in mind, eliminate options 1 and 3.

**Review:** Developmental skills of the **toddler**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Development

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 555-556.

**215. 1**

**Rationale:** Toddlers, with their increased mobility and development of motor skills, can reach hot water or hot objects placed on counters and stoves and can reach open fires or stove burners above their eye level. The nurse should encourage parents to remain in the kitchen when preparing a meal, use the back burners on the stove, and turn pot handles inward and toward the middle of the stove. Hot liquids should never be left unattended or within the child's reach, and the toddler should always be supervised. The statements in options 2, 3, and 4 do not indicate an understanding of the principles of safety.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the words, *indicates an understanding*. Option 2 can be eliminated because it is mandating that the toddler understand what is and what is not safe. The toddler is not developmentally able to understand danger. Options 3 and 4 are **comparable or alike** in that they isolate the child from the environment. The correct option is the only one that reflects an understanding of safety principles by the parents.

**Review:** Safety measures for the **toddler**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 516.

**216. 4**

**Rationale:** Toddlers often resist going to bed. Bedtime protests may be reduced by establishing a consistent before-bedtime routine and enforcing consistent limits regarding the child's bedtime behavior. Informing the child of bedtime a few minutes before it is time for bed is the most appropriate option. Most toddlers take an afternoon nap and, until their second birthday, also may require a morning nap. Firm, consistent limits are needed for temper tantrums or when toddlers try stalling tactics.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and focus on the **subject**, the toddler.

Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 by using concepts related to growth and development. Remember that preparing the toddler for an event will minimize resistive behavior.

**Review:** Sleep patterns for the **toddler**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Development

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 572.

**217. 2**

**Rationale:** A toddler should never be allowed to fall asleep with a bottle containing milk, juice, soda pop, sweetened water, or any other sweet liquid because of the risk of nursing (bottle-mouth) caries. If a bottle is allowed at nap time or bedtime, it should contain only water.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they

are **comparable or alike** statements. From the remaining options, recalling that nursing (bottle-mouth) caries is a concern in a child will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Instructions for the child who is **bottle-feeding**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 575.

**218. 4**

**Rationale:** In the preschooler, play is simple and imaginative, and includes activities such as crayons and coloring books, puppets, felt and magnetic boards, and Play-Doh. A radio or sports video are most appropriate for the adolescent. Large picture books are most appropriate for the infant.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Note the age of the child, and think about the age-related activity that would be most appropriate. Eliminate options 1 and 2, knowing that they are most appropriate for the adolescent. From the remaining options, the word *large* in option 3 should provide you with the clue that this activity would be more appropriate for a child younger than age 5.

**Review:** **Age-appropriate activities**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Coping; Development

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 590-591.

**219. 1**

**Rationale:** Toys for the toddler must be strong, safe, and too large to swallow or place in the ear or nose. Toddlers need supervision at all times. Push-pull toys, large balls, large crayons, large trucks, and dolls are some of the appropriate toys. A farm set, a golf set, and jacks with marbles may contain items that the child could swallow.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and focus on the **subject**, the appropriate toy for a 3-year-old. Options 2, 3, and 4 can be eliminated because they are **comparable or alike** and could contain items that the child could swallow. Remember that large and strong toys are safest for the toddler.

**Review:** **Age-appropriate activities**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 563.

❖ **220. 1, 4, 5**

**Rationale:** Holding, caressing, and swaddling provide warmth and tactile stimulation for the infant. To provide auditory stimulation, the nurse should talk to the infant in a soft voice and should instruct the mother to do so also. Additional interventions include playing a music box, radio, or television, or having a ticking clock or metronome nearby. Hanging a bright shiny object in midline within 20 to 25 cm of the infant's face and hanging mobiles with

contrasting colors, such as black and white, provide visual stimulation. Crying is an infant's way of communicating; therefore the nurse would respond to the infant's crying. The mother is taught to do so also. An infant or child should never be allowed to fall asleep with a bottle containing milk, juice, soda pop, sweetened water, or another sweet liquid because of the risk of nursing (bottle-mouth) caries.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the infant. Noting the word *loud* and the words *at least 10 minutes before responding* will assist in eliminating these interventions. Also, recalling the concerns related to dental caries will assist in eliminating option 3.

**Review:** Care of an **infant**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 251.

❖ **221. 3, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** The nurse must determine whether there is a spokesperson for the family and how much the client and family want to know. The nurse needs to allow the family and client the opportunity for informed choices and assist with the decision-making process if asked. The nurse should encourage expression of feelings, concerns, and fears and reminiscing. The nurse needs to be honest and let the client and family know that they will not be abandoned. The nurse should touch and hold the client's or family member's hand, if appropriate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use **therapeutic communication techniques** and recall client and family rights to assist in directing you to the correct options.

**Review:** End-of-life care

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages: End-of-Life Care

**Priority Concepts:** Family Dynamics; Palliation

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 720, 722-723.



## CHAPTER 24

# Care of the Older Client

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The home care nurse is caring for an older female client who lives with her son and is physically and financially dependent on her son. The nurse notes multiple bruises on the client's arms and asks the client how these bruises occurred. The client confides in the nurse that her son takes out his anger on her sometimes. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 274.*

### **I. Aging and Gerontology**

- A. Aging is the biopsychosocial process of change that occurs in a person between birth and death.
- B. Gerontology is the study of the aging process.

### **II. Physiological Changes**

## A. Integumentary system

1. Loss of pigment in hair and skin
2. Wrinkling of the skin
3. Thinning of the epidermis and easy bruising and tearing of the skin (Fig. 24-1) ▲



**FIGURE 24-1** Paper-thin, transparent skin. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

4. Decreased skin turgor, elasticity, and subcutaneous fat
5. Increased nail thickness and decreased nail growth
6. Decreased perspiration
7. Dry, itchy, scaly skin
8. Seborrheic dermatitis and keratosis formation (overgrowth and thickening of the skin)

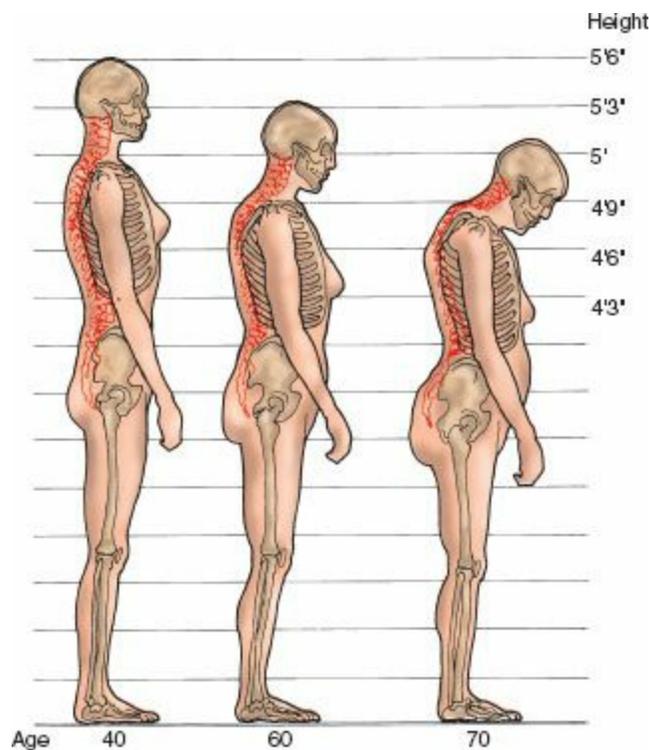
## B. Neurological system

1. Slowed reflexes ▲
2. Slight tremors and difficulty with fine motor movement

3. Loss of balance ▲
4. Increased incidence of awakening after sleep onset
5. Increased susceptibility to hypothermia and hyperthermia
6. Short-term memory decline possible
7. Long-term memory usually maintained

### C. Musculoskeletal system

1. Decreased muscle mass and strength and atrophy of muscles
2. Decreased mobility, range of motion, flexibility, coordination, and stability ▲
3. Change of gait, with shortened step and wider base
4. Posture and stature changes causing a decrease in height (Fig. 24-2)



**FIGURE 24-2** A normal spine at age 40 years of age and osteoporotic changes at 60 and 70 years of age. These changes can cause a loss of as much as 6 inches in height

and can result in the so-called dowager's hump (*far right*) in the upper thoracic vertebrae. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

5. Increased brittleness of the bones
6. Deterioration of joint capsule components
7. Kyphosis of the dorsal spine (increased convexity in the curvature of the spine)

 The older client is at risk for falls because of the changes that occur in the neurological and musculoskeletal systems.

#### D. Cardiovascular system

1. Diminished energy and endurance, with lowered tolerance to exercise
2. Decreased compliance of the heart muscle, with heart valves becoming thicker and more rigid
3. Decreased cardiac output and decreased efficiency of blood return to the heart
4. Decreased compensatory response, so less able to respond to increased demands on the cardiovascular system 
5. Decreased resting heart rate 
6. Weak peripheral pulses
7. Increased blood pressure but susceptibility to postural hypotension

#### E. Respiratory system

1. Decreased stretch and compliance of the chest wall
2. Decreased strength and function of respiratory muscles 

3. Decreased size and number of alveoli
4. The respiratory rate usually remains unchanged ▲
5. Decreased depth of respirations and oxygen intake
6. Decreased ability to cough and expectorate sputum

#### F. Hematological system

1. Hemoglobin and hematocrit average levels toward the low end of normal
2. Prone to increased blood clotting
3. Decreased protein available for protein-bound medications ▲

#### G. Immune system

1. Tendency for lymphocyte counts to be low with altered immunoglobulin production
2. Decreased resistance to infection and disease ▲

#### H. Gastrointestinal system

1. Decreased need for calories because of lowered basal metabolic rate
2. Decreased appetite, thirst, and oral intake
3. Decreased lean body weight
4. Decreased stomach emptying time
5. Increased tendency toward constipation ▲
6. Increased susceptibility for dehydration
7. Tooth loss
8. Difficulty in chewing and swallowing food

#### I. Endocrine system

1. Decreased secretion of hormones, with specific changes related to each hormone's function
2. Decreased metabolic rate
3. Decreased glucose tolerance, with resistance to insulin in peripheral tissues

#### **J. Renal system**

1. Decreased kidney size, function, and ability to concentrate urine
2. Decreased glomerular filtration rate
3. Decreased capacity of the bladder
4. Increased residual urine and increased incidence of infection and possibly incontinence ▲
5. Impaired medication excretion ▲

#### **K. Reproductive system**

1. Decreased testosterone production and decreased size of the testes
2. Changes in the prostate gland, leading to urinary problems
3. Decreased secretion of hormones with the cessation of menses
4. Vaginal changes, including decreased muscle tone and lubrication
5. Impotence or sexual dysfunction for both genders; sexual function varies and depends on general physical condition, mental health status, and medications ▲

#### **L. Special senses**

1. Decreased visual acuity ▲
2. Decreased accommodation in eyes, requiring increased adjustment time to changes in light

3. Decreased peripheral vision and increased sensitivity to glare
4. Presbyopia and cataract formation
5. Possible loss of hearing ability; low-pitched tones are heard more easily ▲
6. Inability to discern taste of food
7. Decreased sense of smell
8. Changes in touch sensation
9. Decreased pain awareness ▲

### III. Psychosocial Concerns

- A. Adjustment to deterioration in physical and mental health and well-being
- B. Threat to independent functioning and fear of becoming a burden to loved ones
- C. Adjustment to retirement and loss of income
- D. Loss of skills and competencies developed early in life
- E. Coping with changes in role function and social life
- F. Diminished quantity and quality of relationships and coping with loss
- G. Dependence on governmental and social systems
- H. Access to social support systems
- I. Costs of health care and medications

### IV. Mental Health Concerns

- A. **Depression:** The increased dependency that older adults may experience can lead to hopelessness, helplessness, lowered sense of self-control, and decreased self-esteem and self-worth; these changes can interfere with daily functioning and lead to

depression.

**B. Grief:** Client reacts to the perception of loss, including physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects.

**C. Isolation:** Client is alone and desires contact with others but is unable to make that contact.

**D. Suicide:** Depression can lead to thoughts of self-harm.

**E. Depression differs from delirium and dementia** ([Table 24-1](#))

**TABLE 24-1 Differentiating Delirium, Depression, and Dementia**

Characteristic	Delirium	Depression	Dementia
Onset	Sudden, abrupt	Recent, may relate to life change	Insidious, slow, over years and often unrecognized until deficits obvious
Course over 24 hr	Fluctuating, often worse at night	Fairly stable, may be worse in the morning	Fairly stable, may see changes with stress
Consciousness	Reduced	Clear	Clear
Alertness	Increased, decreased, or variable	Normal	Generally normal
Psychomotor activity	Increased, decreased, or mixed	Variable; agitation or retardation	Normal; may have apraxia or agnosia
Duration	Hours to weeks	Variable and may be chronic	Years
Attention	Disordered, fluctuates	Little impairment	Generally normal but may have trouble focusing
Orientation	Usually impaired, fluctuates	Usually normal, may answer “I don’t know” to questions or may not try to answer	Often impaired, may make up answers or answer close to the right thing, or may confabulate, but tries to answer
Speech	Often incoherent, slow or rapid, may call out repeatedly or repeat the same phrase	May be slow	Difficulty finding word, perseveration
Affect	Variable but may look disturbed, frightened	Flat	Slowed response, may be labile

Modified from Sendelbach S, Guthrie PF, Schoenfelder DP: Acute confusion/delirium, *J Gerontol Nurse*, 35(11):11-18, 2009.

 Any suicide threat from an older client should be taken seriously.

## V. Pain

### A. Description

1. Pain can occur from numerous causes and most often occurs from degenerative changes in the musculoskeletal system.
2. The failure to alleviate pain in the older client can lead to functional limitations affecting his or her ability to function independently.

### B. Assessment

1. Restlessness
2. Verbal reporting of pain
3. Agitation
4. Moaning
5. Crying

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor the client for signs of pain.
2. Identify the pattern of pain.
3. Identify the precipitating factor(s) for the pain.
4. Monitor the impact of the pain on activities of daily living.
5. Provide pain relief through measures such as distraction, relaxation, massage, and biofeedback.
6. Administer pain medication as prescribed, and instruct the client in its use.

7. Evaluate the effects of pain-reducing measures.

## VI. Infection (Box 24-1)

### BOX 24-1 Nonspecific Symptoms That Possibly Indicate Illness or Infection

- Apathy
- Anorexia
- Changes in functional status
- Confusion
- Dyspnea
- Falling
- Fatigue
- Incontinence
- Self-neglect
- Shortness of breath
- Tachypnea
- Vital sign changes

- A. Confusion is a common sign of infection in the older adult, especially infection of the urinary tract. ▲
- B. Carefully monitor the older adult with infection because of the diminished and altered immune response.
- C. Nonspecific symptoms may indicate illness or infection (see [Box 24-1](#)).

## VII. Medications

- A. Major problems with prescriptive medications include adverse effects, medication interactions, medication errors, noncompliance, and cost.
- B. Determine the use of over-the-counter medications. ▲
- C. **Polypharmacy** ▲
  1. Routinely monitor the number of prescription and nonprescription medications used and determine whether any can be eliminated or combined.
  2. Keep the use of medications to a minimum.
  3. Overprescribing medications leads to increased problems with more side effects, increased interaction between medications, replication of medication treatment, diminished quality of life, and increased costs.
- D. Medication dosages normally are prescribed at one third to one half of normal adult dosages.
- E. Closely monitor the client for adverse effects and response to therapy because of the increased risk for medication toxicity.
- F. Assess for medication interactions in the client taking multiple medications.
- G. Advise the client to use one pharmacy and notify the consulting health care provider(s) of the medications taken. ▲

**▲** A common sign of an adverse reaction to a medication in the older client is a sudden change in mental status.

- H. Administration of medications

1. The client should be in a sitting position when taking medication.
2. The mouth is checked for dryness because medication may stick and dissolve in the mouth.
3. Liquid preparations can be used if the client has difficulty swallowing tablets.
4. Tablets can be crushed if necessary and given with textured food (nectar, applesauce) if not contraindicated.
5. Enteric-coated tablets are not crushed and capsules are not opened.
6. If administering a suppository, avoid inserting the suppository immediately after removing it from the refrigerator; a suppository may take a while to dissolve because of decreased body core temperature.
7. When administering parenteral solution or medication, monitor the site, because it may ooze or bleed because of decreased tissue elasticity; an immobile limb is not used for administering parenteral medication.
8. Monitor client compliance with taking prescribed medications.
9. Monitor the client for **safety** in correctly taking medications, including an assessment of their ability to read the instructions and discriminate among the pills and their color and shape.
10. Use a medication cassette to facilitate proper administration of medication.

## **VIII. Abuse of the Older Adult** ▲

- A. Domestic mistreatment takes place in the home of the older adult and is usually carried out by a family member or significant other; this can include physical

maltreatment, **neglect**, or abandonment.

- B.** Institutional mistreatment takes place when an older adult experiences **abuse** when hospitalized or living somewhere other than home (e.g., long-term care facility).
- C.** **Self-neglect** is the choice by a mentally competent individual to avoid medical care or other services that could improve optimal function, to not care for oneself, and engage in actions that negatively affect his or her personal safety; unless declared legally incompetent, an individual has the right to refuse care.

 **Individuals at most risk for abuse include those who are dependent because of their immobility or altered mental status.**

- D.** For additional information on abuse of the older client, see [Chapter 76](#).

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* If the nurse suspects or knows for certain that elder abuse is occurring, the nurse should report this abuse to the appropriate authorities and follow state and agency guidelines in doing so. The nurse should then perform a thorough assessment of physical injuries, while providing confidentiality during the assessment with an empathetic and nonjudgmental approach. The nurse should reassure the victim that they have done nothing wrong. The nurse should also assist the victim in developing self-protective and problem-solving skills. Even if the victim is not ready to leave the situation, encourage the victim to develop a specific safety plan (a fast escape if the violence returns) and where to obtain help (hotlines, safe houses, and shelters); an

abused person is usually reluctant to call the police.

### ***Reference***

Potter et al (2013), pp. 496-497.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**222.** The nurse is providing medication instructions to an older client who is taking digoxin (Lanoxin) daily. The nurse notes that which age-related body change could place the client at risk for digoxin toxicity?

1. Decreased muscle strength and loss of bone density
2. Decreased cough efficiency and decreased vital capacity
3. Decreased salivation and decreased gastrointestinal motility
4. Decreased lean body mass and decreased glomerular filtration rate

**223.** The nurse is caring for an older client in a long-term care facility. Which action contributes to encouraging autonomy in the client?

1. Planning meals
2. Decorating the room
3. Scheduling hair-cut appointments
4. Allowing the client to choose social activities

**224.** The home care nurse is visiting an older client whose spouse died 6 months ago. Which behavior by the client indicates ineffective coping?

1. Neglecting personal grooming

2. Looking at old snapshots of family
3. Participating in a senior citizens' program
4. Visiting their spouse's grave once a month

225. The nurse is providing instructions to the unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) regarding care of an older client with hearing loss. Which should the nurse tell the UAP about older clients with hearing loss?

1. They are often distracted
2. They have middle ear changes
3. They respond to low-pitched tones
4. They develop moist cerumen production

226. The nurse is providing an educational session to new employees, and the topic is abuse of the older client. The nurse helps the employees identify which client as **most** typically a victim of abuse?

1. A 75-year-old man who has moderate hypertension
2. A 68-year-old man who has newly diagnosed cataracts
3. A 90-year-old woman who has advanced Parkinson's disease
4. A 70-year-old woman who has early diagnosed Lyme disease

227. The nurse is performing an assessment on an older client who is having difficulty sleeping at night. Which statement by the client indicates the **need for further teaching** regarding measures to improve sleep?

1. "I swim three times a week."

2. "I have stopped smoking cigars."
3. "I drink hot chocolate before bedtime."
4. "I read for 40 minutes before bedtime."

**228.** The visiting nurse observes that the older male client is confined by his daughter-in-law to his room. When the nurse suggests that he walk to the den and join the family, he says, "I'm in everyone's way; my daughter-in-law needs me to stay here." Which is the **most important** action for the nurse to take?

1. Say to the daughter-in-law, "Confining your father-in-law to his room is inhumane."
2. Suggest to the client and daughter-in-law that they consider a nursing home for the client.
3. Say nothing, because it is best for the nurse to remain neutral and wait to be asked for help.
4. Suggest appropriate resources to the client and daughter-in-law, such as respite care and a senior citizens' center.

**229.** The nurse is performing an assessment on an older adult client. Which assessment data would indicate a potential complication associated with the skin?

1. Crusting
2. Wrinkling
3. Deepening of expression lines

4. Thinning and loss of elasticity in the skin

**230.** The home health nurse is visiting a client for the first time. While assessing the client's medication history, it is noted that there are 19 prescriptions and several over-the-counter medications that the client has been taking. Which intervention should the nurse take **first**?

1. Check for medication interactions.
2. Determine whether there are medication duplications.
3. Call the prescribing health care provider (HCP) and report polypharmacy.
4. Determine whether a family member supervises medication administration.

**231.** The long-term care nurse is performing assessments on several of the residents. Which are normal age-related physiological change(s) the nurse expects to note?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Increased heart rate
2. Decline in visual acuity
3. Decreased respiratory rate
4. Decline in long-term memory
5. Increased susceptibility to urinary tract infections
6. Increased incidence of awakening after sleep onset

## ANSWERS

**Rationale:** The older client is at risk for medication toxicity because of decreased lean body mass and an age-associated decreased glomerular filtration rate. Although options 1, 2, and 3 identify age-related changes that occur in the older client, they are not associated specifically with this risk.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, age-related body changes that could place the client at risk for medication toxicity. Note that the correct option is the only one that addresses renal excretion.

**Review:** Risks for **medication toxicity** in the **older client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Early Adulthood to Later Adulthood

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 76.

## 223. 4

**Rationale:** Autonomy is the personal freedom to direct one's own life as long as it does not impinge on the rights of others. An autonomous person is capable of rational thought. This individual can identify problems, search for alternatives, and select solutions that allow continued personal freedom as long as others and their rights and property are not harmed. Loss of autonomy, and therefore independence, is a real fear of older clients. The correct option is the only one that allows the client to be a decision maker.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, encouraging autonomy. Recalling the definition of autonomy will direct you to the correct option. Remember that giving the client choices is essential to promote independence.

**Review:** **Autonomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Early Adulthood to Later Adulthood

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Quality; Professionalism

**Reference:** Meiner, Lueckenotte (2011), pp. 36-40.

224. 1

**Rationale:** Coping mechanisms are behaviors used to decrease stress and anxiety. In response to a death, ineffective coping is manifested by an extreme behavior that in some cases may be harmful to the individual physically or psychologically. The correct option is indicative of a behavior that identifies an ineffective coping behavior in the grieving process.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, an ineffective coping behavior. Eliminate options 2, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and are positive activities in which the individual is engaging to get on with her life.

**Review:** Coping mechanisms

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Coping; Family Dynamics

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), pp. 702-703.

225. 3

**Rationale:** Presbycusis refers to the age-related irreversible degenerative changes of the inner ear that lead to decreased hearing ability. As a result of these changes, the older client has a decreased response to high-frequency sounds. Low-pitched voice tones are heard more easily and can be interpreted by the older client. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not accurate characteristics related to aging.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, age-related changes related to hearing. Recalling that the client with a hearing loss responds to low-pitched tones will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Presbycusis and hearing loss

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Early Adulthood to Later Adulthood

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Meiner, Lueckenotte (2011), pp. 639-640.

### 226. 3

**Rationale:** Elder abuse includes physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, misuse of property, and violation of rights. The typical abuse victim is a woman of advanced age with few social contacts and at least one physical or mental impairment that limits her ability to perform activities of daily living. In addition, the client usually lives alone or with the abuser and depends on the abuser for care.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, elder abuse. Read each option carefully and identify the client who is most defenseless as the result of the disease process. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Elder abuse

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills: Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Interpersonal Violence; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 497.

**227. 3**

**Rationale:** Many nonpharmacological sleep aids can be used to influence sleep. However, the client should avoid caffeinated beverages and stimulants such as tea, cola, and chocolate. The client should exercise regularly, because exercise promotes sleep by burning off tension that accumulates during the day. A 20- to 30-minute walk, swim, or bicycle ride three times a week is helpful. The client should sleep on a bed with a firm mattress. Smoking and alcohol should be avoided. The client should avoid large meals; peanuts, beans, fruit, raw vegetables, and other foods that produce gas; and snacks that are high in fat because they are difficult to digest.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Options 1, 2, and 4 are positive statements indicating that the client understands the methods of improving sleep.

**Review:** Sleep in the **older client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Early Adulthood to Later Adulthood

**Priority Concept:** Client Education; Palliation

**Reference:** Meiner, Lueckenotte (2011), pp. 197-198.

**228. 4**

**Rationale:** Assisting clients and families to become aware of available community support systems is a role and responsibility of the nurse. Observing that the client has begun to be confined to his room makes it necessary for the nurse to intervene legally and ethically, so option 3 is not appropriate and is passive in terms of advocacy. Option 2 suggests committing the client to a nursing home and is a premature action on the nurse's part. Although the data provided tell the nurse that this client requires nursing care, the nurse does not know the extent of the nursing care required. Option 1 is incorrect and judgmental.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most important*. Using principles related to the ethical and legal responsibility of the nurse and knowledge of the nurse's role will direct you to the correct option. Option 1 is a nontherapeutic statement, option 2 is a premature action, and option 3 avoids the situation.

**Review:** **Ethical and legal principles** related to the **older adult**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Early Adulthood to Later Adulthood

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Health Care Law

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 173.

**229. 1**

**Rationale:** The normal physiological changes that occur in the skin of older adults include thinning of the skin, loss

of elasticity, deepening of expression lines, and wrinkling. Crusting noted on the skin would indicate a potential complication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, a potential complication. Think about the normal physiological changes that occur in the aging process to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Age-related skin changes

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Early Adulthood to Later Adulthood

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Meiner, Lueckenotte (2011), pp. 597-598.

## 230. 2

**Rationale:** Polypharmacy is a concern in the older client. Duplication of medications needs to be identified before medication interactions can be determined because the nurse needs to know what the client is taking. Asking about medication administration supervision may be part of the assessment but is not a first action. The phone call to the HCP is the intervention after all other information has been collected.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Also note that the nurse is visiting the client for the first time. Options 1, 3, and 4 should be done after possible medication duplication has been identified.

**Review:** Polypharmacy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills: Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 185, 591-592.

❖ **231. 2, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** Anatomical changes to the eye affect the individual's visual ability, leading to potential problems with activities of daily living. Light adaptation and visual fields are reduced. Although lung function may decrease, the respiratory rate usually remains unchanged. Heart rate decreases and heart valves thicken. Age-related changes that affect the urinary tract increase an older client's susceptibility to urinary tract infections. Short-term memory may decline with age, but long-term memory usually is maintained. Change in sleep patterns is a consistent, age-related change. Older persons experience an increased incidence of awakening after sleep onset.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, normal age-related changes. Read each characteristic carefully and think about the physiological changes that occur with aging to select the correct items.

**Review:** **Normal age-related changes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Early Adulthood to Later Adulthood

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 176-178.



## CHAPTER 25

# Health and Physical Assessment of the Adult Client

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse is performing a cardiovascular assessment and notes the presence of a blowing, swishing sound over the carotid artery. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 293.*

### **I. Environment/Setting**

- A.** Establish a relationship and explain the procedure to the client.
- B.** Ensure privacy and make the client feel comfortable (comfortable room temperature, sufficient lighting; remove distractions such as noise or objects, and avoid interruptions).
- C.** Sit down for the interview (avoid barriers such as a desk), maintain an appropriate social distance, and maintain eye level.
- D.** Use therapeutic communication techniques and open-ended questions to obtain

information about the client's symptoms and concerns; allow time for the client to ask questions.

E. Consider religious and cultural characteristics such as language (the need for an interpreter), values and beliefs, health practices, eye contact, and touch. ▲

F. Keep note-taking to a minimum so the client is the focus of attention.

G. Types of health and physical assessments ([Box 25-1](#))

### **BOX 25-1** Types of Health and Physical Assessments

**Complete Assessment:** Includes a complete health history and physical examination and forms a baseline database.

**Focused Assessment:** Focuses on a limited or short-term problem, such as the client's complaint.

**Episodic/Follow-up Assessment:** Focuses on evaluating a client's progress.

**Emergency Assessment:** Involves the rapid collection of data, often during the provision of lifesaving measures.

## **II. Health History**

A. General state of health: Body features and physical characteristics, body movements, body posture, level of consciousness, nutritional status, speech

B. Chief complaint and history of present illness (direct client quotes) that directs the client to seek care ▲

C. Family history: The health status of direct blood relatives as well as the client's

spouse

#### D. Social history

1. Data about the client's lifestyle, with a focus on factors that may impact health
2. Information about alcohol, drug, and tobacco use; sexual practices; tattoos; body piercing; travel history; and work setting to identify occupational hazards

#### E. Domestic violence screening ▲

1. Done to determine whether the client is experiencing any form of domestic violence
2. Conducted during a one-to-one interview with client while obtaining the health history

### III. Mental Status Exam

A. The mental status can be assessed while obtaining **subjective data** from the client during the health history interview.

#### B. Appearance

1. Note appearance, including posture, body movements, dress, and hygiene and grooming.
2. An inappropriate appearance and poor hygiene may be indicative of **depression**, manic disorder, **dementia**, organic brain disease, or another disorder. ▲

#### C. Behavior

1. Level of consciousness: Assess alertness and awareness and the client's ability to interact appropriately with the environment.

2. Facial expression and body language: Check for appropriate eye contact and determine whether facial expression and body language are appropriate to the situation; this assessment also provides information regarding the client's mood and affect.
3. Speech: Assess speech pattern for articulation and appropriateness of conversation.

**D. Cognitive level of functioning (Box 25-2)**

**BOX 25-2 The Mental Status Examination: Cognitive Level of Functioning**

**Orientation:** Assess client's orientation to person, place, and time.

**Attention Span:** Assess client's ability to concentrate.

**Recent Memory:** Assessed by asking the client to recall a recent occurrence (e.g., the means of transportation used to get to the health care agency for the physical assessment).

**Remote Memory:** Assessed by asking the client about a verifiable past event (e.g., a vacation).

**New Learning:** Used to assess the client's ability to recall unrelated words identified by the nurse; nurse selects four words and asks the client to recall the words 5, 10, and 30 minutes later.

**Judgment:** Determine whether the client's actions or decisions regarding discussions during the interview are realistic.

**Thought Processes and Perceptions:** The way the client thinks and what the client

says should be logical, coherent, and relevant; the client should be consistently aware of reality.

## IV. Physical Exam

### A. Overview

1. Gather equipment needed for the examination.
2. Use the senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing to collect data.
3. Assessment includes **inspection**, **palpation**, **percussion**, and **auscultation**; these skills are performed one at a time, in this order (except the abdominal assessment). ▲

### B. Assessment techniques ▲

#### 1. Inspection

- a. The first assessment technique, which uses vision and smell senses while observing the client
- b. Requires good lighting, adequate exposure, and possibly the use of certain instruments such as an otoscope or ophthalmoscope

#### 2. Palpation

- a. Uses the sense of touch; warm the hands before touching the client.
- b. Identify tender areas and palpate them last.
- c. Start with light palpation to detect surface characteristics, and then perform deeper palpation.
- d. Assess texture, temperature, and moisture of the skin, as well as organ location

and size.

- e. Assess for swelling, vibration or pulsation, rigidity or spasticity, and crepitation.
- f. Assess for the presence of lumps or masses, as well as the presence of tenderness or pain.

### 3. Percussion

- a. Involves tapping the client's skin to assess underlying structures and to determine the presence of vibrations and sounds and, if present, their intensity, duration, pitch, quality, and location
- b. Provides information related to the presence of air, fluid, or solid masses as well as organ size, shape, and position

4. Auscultation: Involves listening to sounds produced by the body, such as heart, lung, or bowel sounds

### C. Vital signs

- 1. Includes temperature, radial pulse (apical pulse may be measured during the cardiovascular assessment), respirations, blood pressure, pulse oximetry, and presence of pain
- 2. Height and weight and nutritional status are also assessed.

## V. Body Systems Assessment

A. Integumentary system: Involves inspection and palpation of skin, hair, and nails.

- 1. Subjective data: Self-care behaviors, history of skin disease, medications being taken, environmental or occupational hazards and exposure to toxic substances,

changes in skin color or pigmentation, change in a mole or a sore that does not heal ▲

2. **Objective data:** Color, temperature (hypothermia or hyperthermia); excessive dryness or moisture; skin turgor; texture (smoothness, firmness); excessive bruising, itching, rash; hair loss (alopecia) or nail abnormalities such as pitting; lesions (may be inspected with a magnifier and light or with the use of a Wood's light [ultraviolet light used in a darkened room]); scars or birthmarks; edema; capillary filling time (Boxes 25-3 and 25-4; Table 25-1) ▲

### BOX 25-3 Characteristics of Skin Color

**Cyanosis:** Mottled bluish coloration

**Erythema:** Redness

**Pallor:** Pale, whitish coloration

**Jaundice:** Yellow coloration

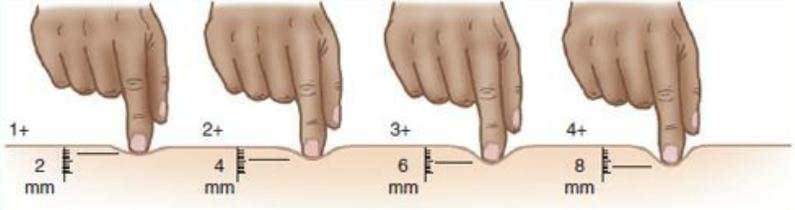
### BOX 25-4 Assessing Capillary Filling Time

1. Depress the nail bed to produce blanching.
2. Release and observe for the return of color.
3. Color will return within 3 seconds if arterial capillary perfusion is normal.

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## TABLE 25-1 Pitting Edema Scale

Scale	Description	"Measurement"*
1+	A barely perceptible pit	2 mm ( $\frac{1}{32}$ in)
2+	A deeper pit, rebounds in a few seconds	4 mm ( $\frac{1}{8}$ in)
3+	A deep pit, rebounds in 10-20 sec	6 mm ( $\frac{3}{16}$ in)
4+	A deeper pit, rebounds in >30 sec	8 mm ( $\frac{1}{4}$ in)



\*"Measurement" is in quotation marks because depth of edema is rarely actually measured but is included as a frame of reference.

Data from Wilson AF, Giddens JF: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby. Illustration from Seidel HM et al: *Mosby's guide to physical examination*, ed 7, St Louis, 2011, Mosby. Description column data from Kirton C: Assessing edema, *Nursing* 96 26(7):54, 1996.

### 3. Dark-skinned client

- a. Cyanosis: Check lips and tongue for a gray color; nailbeds, palms, and soles for a blue color; and conjunctivae for pallor.
- b. Jaundice: Check oral mucous membranes for a yellow color; check the sclera nearest to the iris for a yellow color.
- c. Bleeding: Look for skin swelling and darkening and compare the affected side with the unaffected side.
- d. Inflammation: Check for warmth, a shiny or taut and pitting skin area, and compare with the unaffected side.

**!** To test skin turgor, pinch a large fold of skin and assess the ability of the skin to return to its place when released. Poor turgor occurs in severe

dehydration or extreme weight loss.

#### 4. Client teaching

- a. Provide information about factors that can be harmful to the skin, such as sun exposure.
- b. Encourage performing self-examination of the skin monthly.

**B. Head, neck, and lymph nodes:** Involves inspection and palpation of the head, neck, and lymph nodes

1. Ask the client about headaches; episodes of dizziness (lightheadedness) or vertigo (spinning sensation); history of head injury; loss of consciousness; seizures; episodes of neck pain; limitations of range of motion; numbness or tingling in the shoulders, arms, or hands; lumps or swelling in the neck; difficulty swallowing; medications being taken; and history of surgery in the head and neck region.

#### 2. Head

- a. Inspect and palpate: Size, shape, masses or tenderness, and symmetry of the skull
- b. Palpate temporal arteries, located above the cheekbone between the eye and the top of the ear.
- c. Temporomandibular joint: Ask the client to open his or her mouth; note any crepitation, tenderness, or limited range of motion.
- d. Face: Inspect facial structures for shape, symmetry, involuntary movements, or swelling, such as periorbital edema (swelling around the eyes).

#### 3. Neck

- a. Inspect for symmetry of accessory neck muscles.
- b. Assess range of motion.
- c. Test cranial nerve XI (spinal accessory nerve) to assess muscle strength: Ask the client to rotate the head forcibly against resistance applied to the side of the chin; also ask the client to shrug the shoulders against resistance. ▲
- d. Palpate the trachea: It should be midline, without any deviations.
- e. Thyroid gland: Inspect the neck as the client takes a sip of water and swallows (thyroid tissue moves up with a swallow); palpate using an anterior-posterior approach (usually the normal adult thyroid cannot be palpated); if it is enlarged, auscultate for a bruit.

#### 4. Lymph nodes

- a. Palpate using a gentle pressure and a circular motion of the finger pads.
- b. Begin with the preauricular lymph nodes (in front of the ear); move to the posterior auricular lymph nodes and then downward toward the supraclavicular lymph nodes.
- c. Palpate with both hands, comparing the two sides for symmetry.
- d. If nodes are palpated, note their size, shape, location, mobility, consistency, and tenderness.

- 5. Client teaching: Instruct the client to notify the health care provider if persistent headache, dizziness, or neck pain occurs, if swelling or lumps are noted in the head and neck region, or if a neck or head injury occurs. ▲

 Neck movements are never performed if the client has sustained a neck injury or a neck injury is suspected.

C. Eyes: Includes inspection, palpation, vision-testing procedures, and the use of an ophthalmoscope

1. Subjective data: Difficulty with vision (e.g., decreased acuity, double vision, blurring, blind spots); pain, redness, swelling, watery or other discharge from the eye; use of glasses or contact lenses; medications being taken; history of eye problems 
2. Objective data 
  - a. Inspect the external eye structures, including eyebrows, for symmetry; eyelashes for even distribution; eyelids for ptosis (drooping); eyeballs for exophthalmos (protrusion) or enophthalmos (recession into the orbit; sunken eye).
  - b. Inspect the conjunctiva (should be clear), sclera (should be white), and lacrimal apparatus (check for excessive tearing, redness, tenderness, or swelling); cornea and lens (should be smooth and clear); iris (should be flat, with a round regular shape and even coloration); eyelids, and pupils
3. Snellen eye chart 
  - a. The Snellen eye chart is a simple tool to measure distance vision.
  - b. Position the client in a well-lit spot 20 feet from the chart, with the chart at eye level, and ask the client to read the smallest line that he or she can discern.
  - c. Instruct the client to leave on glasses or leave in contact lenses; if the glasses are for reading only, they are removed because they blur distance vision.

- d.** Test one eye at a time
- e.** Record result using the fraction at the end of the last line successfully read on the chart.
- f.** Normal visual acuity is 20/20 (distance in feet at which the client is standing from the chart/distance in feet at which a normal eye could have read that particular line).

#### **4. Near vision**

- a.** Use a hand-held vision screener (held about 14 inches from the eye) that contains various sizes of print or ask the client to read from a magazine.
- b.** Test each eye separately with the client's glasses on or contact lenses in.
- c.** Normal result is 14/14 (distance in inches at which the subject holds the card from the eye/distance in inches at which a normal eye could have read that particular line).

#### **5. Confrontation test**

- a.** Used to measure peripheral vision and compare the client's peripheral vision with the nurse's (assuming that the nurse's peripheral vision is normal)
- b.** The client covers one eye and looks straight ahead; the nurse, positioned 2 feet away, covers his or her eye opposite the client's covered eye.
- c.** The nurse advances a finger or other small object from the periphery from several directions; the client should see the object at the same time the nurse does.

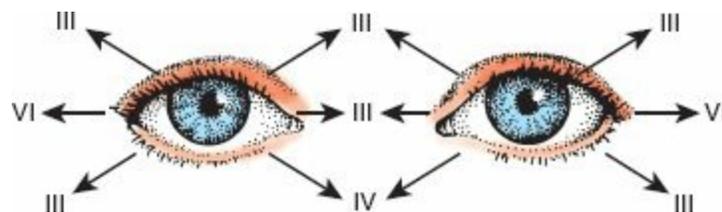
#### **6. Corneal light reflex**

- a. Used to assess for parallel alignment of the axes of the eyes
- b. Client is asked to gaze straight ahead as the nurse holds a light about 12 inches from the client.
- c. The nurse looks for reflection of the light on the corneas in exactly the same spot in each eye.

#### 7. Cover test

- a. Used to check for slight degrees of deviated alignment
- b. Each eye is tested separately.
- c. The nurse asks the client to gaze straight ahead and cover one eye.
- d. The nurse examines the uncovered eye, expecting to note a steady, fixed gaze.

#### 8. Extraocular muscle function (six cardinal positions of gaze) (Fig. 25-1)



**FIGURE 25-1** Checking extraocular muscles in the six cardinal positions. This indicates the functioning of cranial nerves III, IV, and VI. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. The six muscles that attach the eyeball to its orbit and serve to direct the eye to points of interest are tested.
- b. Client holds head still and is asked to move his or her eyes and follow a small

object.

- c. The examiner notes any parallel movements of the eye or nystagmus, an involuntary, rhythmic, rapid twitching of the eyeballs.

## 9. Color vision

- a. Tests for color vision involve picking numbers or letters out of a complex and colorful picture.
- b. The Ishihara chart is used for testing and consists of numbers composed of colored dots located within a circle of colored dots.
- c. The client is asked to read the numbers on the chart.
- d. Each eye is tested separately.
- e. Reading the numbers correctly indicates normal color vision
- f. The test is sensitive for the diagnosis of red-green blindness but cannot detect discrimination of blue.

 The first slide on the Ishihara chart is one that everyone can discriminate; failure to identify numbers on this slide suggests a problem with performing the test, not a problem with color vision.

## 10. Pupils (Box 25-5)

### BOX 25-5 Assessing and Documenting Pupillary Responses

#### Pupillary Light Reflex

1. Darken the room (to dilate the client's pupils) and ask the client to look forward.
2. Test each eye.

3. Advance a light in from the side to note constriction of the same-side pupil (direct light reflex) and simultaneous constriction of the other pupil (consensual light reflex).

### Accommodation

1. Ask the client to focus on a distant object (dilates the pupil).
2. Ask the client to shift gaze to a near object held about 3 inches from the nose.
3. Normal response includes pupillary constriction and convergence of the axes of the eyes.

### Documenting Normal Findings: PERRLA

P = pupils

E = equal

R = round

RL = reactive to light

A = reactive to accommodation

- a. The pupils are round and of equal size.
- b. Increasing light causes pupillary constriction.
- c. Decreasing light causes pupillary dilation.
- d. Constriction of both pupils is a normal response to direct light.

### 11. Sclera and cornea

- a. Normal sclera color is white.

- b.** A yellow color to the sclera may indicate jaundice or systemic problems.
- c.** In a dark-skinned person, the sclera may normally appear yellow; pigmented dots may be present.
- d.** The cornea is transparent, smooth, shiny, and bright.
- e.** Cloudy areas or specks on the cornea may be the result of an accident or eye injury.

## **12. Ophthalmoscopy**

- a.** The ophthalmoscope is an instrument used to examine the external structures and the interior of the eye.
- b.** The room is darkened so that the pupil will dilate.
- c.** The instrument is held with the right hand when examining the right eye and with the left hand when examining the left eye.
- d.** The client is asked to look straight ahead at an object on the wall.
- e.** The examiner should approach the client's eye from about 12 to 15 inches away and 15 degrees lateral to the client's line of vision.
- f.** As the instrument is directed at the pupil, a red glare (red reflex) is seen in the pupil.
- g.** The red reflex is the reflection of light on the vascular retina.
- h.** Absence of the red reflex may indicate opacity of the lens.
- i.** The retina, optic disc, optic vessels, fundus, and macula can be examined.

## **13. Client teaching**

- a.** Instruct the client to notify the health care provider if alterations in vision occur

or any redness, swelling, or drainage from the eye is noted.

**b.** Inform the client of the importance of regular eye examinations.

**D. Ears:** Includes inspection, palpation, hearing tests, vestibular assessment, and the use of an otoscope

**1.** Subjective data: Difficulty hearing, earaches, drainage from the ears, dizziness, ringing in the ears, exposure to environmental noise, use of a hearing aid, medications being taken, history of ear problems or infections ▲

**2.** Objective data ▲

**a.** Inspect and palpate the external ear, noting size, shape, symmetry, skin color, and the presence of pain.

**b.** Inspect the external auditory meatus for size, swelling, redness, discharge, and foreign bodies; some cerumen (ear wax) may be present.

**3.** Auditory assessment

**a.** Sound is transmitted by air conduction and bone conduction.

**b.** Air conduction takes two or three times longer than bone conduction.

**c.** Hearing loss is categorized as conductive, sensorineural, or mixed conductive and sensorineural.

**d.** Conductive hearing loss is caused by any physical obstruction to the transmission of sound waves.

**e.** Sensorineural hearing loss is caused by a defect in the cochlea, eighth cranial nerve, or the brain itself.

**f.** A mixed conductive-sensorineural hearing loss results in profound hearing loss.

- g.** Pure-tone audiometry testing: Provides a precise quantitative measure of hearing by assessing the client's ability to hear sounds of varying frequencies (done by a person skilled in performing audiometry testing)

#### **4. Voice test**

- a.** Used to determine whether hearing loss has occurred
- b.** One ear is tested at a time (the ear not being tested is occluded by the client).
- c.** The nurse stands 1 to 2 feet from the client, covers his or her mouth so that the client cannot read the lips, exhales fully, and softly whispers two-syllable words in the direction of the unoccluded ear; the client points a finger up during the test when the nurse's voice is heard (a ticking watch may also be used to test hearing acuity).

#### **5. Watch test**

- a.** A ticking watch is used to test for high- frequency sounds.
- b.** The examiner holds a ticking watch about 5 inches from each ear and asks the client if the ticking is heard.

#### **6. Tuning fork tests**

- a.** Used to measure hearing on the basis of air conduction or bone conduction; includes the Weber and Rinne tests
- b.** To activate the tuning fork, the nurse holds the base and lightly taps the tines against the other hand, setting the fork in vibration.

#### **7. Weber test**

- a.** Stem of the vibrating tuning fork is placed in the midline of the client's skull and

the client is asked if the tone sounds the same in both ears or better in one ear.

- b. The client hears the tone by bone conduction and the sound should be heard equally in both ears.

#### 8. Rinne test

- a. Stem of the vibrating tuning fork is placed on the client's mastoid process.
- b. When the client no longer hears the sound, the tuning fork is quickly inverted and placed near the ear canal; the client should still hear a sound.
- c. Normally the sound is heard twice as long by way of air conduction (near the ear canal) than by way of bone conduction (at the mastoid process).

#### 9. Vestibular assessment ([Box 25-6](#))

### **BOX 25-6** Vestibular Assessment

#### **Test for Falling**

1. The examiner asks the client to stand with the feet together, arms hanging loosely at the sides, and eyes closed.
2. The client normally remains erect, with only slight swaying.
3. A significant sway is a positive Romberg sign.

#### **Test for Past Pointing**

1. The client sits in front of the examiner.
2. The client closes the eyes and extends the arms in front, pointing both index fingers at the examiner.
3. The examiner holds and touches his or her own extended index fingers under the

client's extended index fingers to give the client a point of reference.

4. The client is instructed to raise both arms and then lower them, attempting to return to the examiner's extended index fingers.
5. The normal test response is that the client can easily return to the point of reference.
6. The client with a vestibular function problem lacks a normal sense of position and cannot return the extended fingers to the point of reference; instead, the fingers deviate to the right or left of the reference point.

### **Gaze Nystagmus Evaluation**

1. The client's eyes are examined as the client looks straight ahead, 30 degrees to each side, upward and downward.
2. Any spontaneous nystagmus—an involuntary, rhythmic, rapid twitching of the eyeballs—represents a problem with the vestibular system.

### **Dix-Hallpike Maneuver**

1. The client starts in a sitting position; the examiner lowers the client to the exam table and rather quickly turns the client's head to the 45-degree position.
2. If after about 30 seconds there is no nystagmus, the client is returned to a sitting position and the test is repeated on the other side.

## **10. Otoscope exam**

- a. The client's head is tilted slightly away and the otoscope is held upside down

as if it were a large pen; this permits the examiner's hand to lay against the client's head for support.

- b.** In an adult, pull the pinna up and back to straighten the external canal.
- c.** Visualize the external canal while slowly inserting the speculum.
- d.** The normal external canal is pink and intact, without lesions and with varying amounts of cerumen and fine little hairs.
- e.** Assess the tympanic membrane for intactness; the normal tympanic membrane is intact, without perforations, and should be free from lesions.
- f.** The tympanic membrane is transparent, opaque, pearly gray, and slightly concave.
- g.** A fluid line or the presence of air bubbles is not normally visible.
- h.** If the tympanic membrane is bulging or retracting, the edges of the light reflex will be fuzzy (diffuse) and may spread over the tympanic membrane.

 The otoscope is never introduced blindly into the external canal because of the risk of perforating the tympanic membrane.

 Before performing an otoscopic exam and inserting the speculum, check the auditory canal for foreign bodies. Instruct the client not to move the head during the examination to avoid damage to the canal and tympanic membrane.

## 11. Client teaching

- a.** Instruct the client to notify the health care provider if an alteration in hearing or ear pain or ringing in the ears occurs, or if redness, swelling, or drainage from the ear is noted.

- b.** Instruct the client in the proper method of cleaning the ear canal.
- c.** The client should cleanse the ear canal with the corner of a moistened washcloth and should never insert sharp objects or cotton-tipped applicators into the ear canal.

**E.** Nose, mouth, and throat: Includes inspection and palpation

**1.** Subjective data ▲

- a.** Nose: Ask about discharge or nosebleed (epistaxis), facial or sinus pain, history of frequent colds, altered sense of smell, allergies, medications being taken, history of nose trauma or surgery.
- b.** Mouth and throat: Ask about the presence of sores or lesions; bleeding from the gums or elsewhere; altered sense of taste; toothaches; use of dentures or other appliances; tooth and mouth care hygiene habits; at-risk behaviors (e.g., smoking, alcohol consumption); history of infection, trauma, or surgery.

**2.** Objective data ▲

- a.** External nose should be midline and in proportion to other facial features.
- b.** Patency of the nostrils can be tested by pushing each nasal cavity closed and asking the client to sniff inward through the other nostril.
- c.** A nasal speculum and penlight or a short, wide-tipped speculum attached to an otoscope head is used to inspect for redness, swelling, discharge, bleeding, or foreign bodies; the nasal septum is assessed for deviation.
- d.** The nurse presses the frontal sinuses (located below the eyebrows) and over the maxillary sinuses (located below the cheekbones); the client should feel firm

pressure but no pain.

- e. The external and inner surfaces of the lips are assessed for color, moisture, cracking, or lesions.
- f. The teeth are inspected for condition and number (should be white, spaced evenly, straight, and clean, free of debris and decay).
- g. The alignment of the upper and lower jaw is assessed by having the client bite down.
- h. The gums are inspected for swelling, bleeding, discoloration, and retraction of gingival margins (gums normally appear pink).
- i. The tongue is inspected for color, surface characteristics, moisture, white patches, nodules, and ulcerations (dorsal surface is normally rough; ventral surface is smooth and glistening, with visible veins).
- j. The nurse retracts the cheek with a tongue depressor to check the buccal mucosa for color and the presence of nodules or lesions; normal mucosa is glistening, pink, soft, moist, and smooth.
- k. Using a penlight and tongue depressor, the nurse inspects the hard and soft palates for color, shape, texture, and defects; the hard palate (roof of the mouth), which is located anteriorly, should be white and dome-shaped, and the soft palate, which extends posteriorly, should be light pink and smooth.
- l. The uvula is inspected for midline location; the nurse asks the client to say “ahhh” and watches for the soft palate and uvula to rise in the midline (this tests one function of cranial nerve X, the vagus nerve).

- m. Using a penlight and tongue depressor, the nurse inspects the throat for color, presence of tonsils, and the presence of exudate or lesions; cranial nerve XII (the hypoglossal nerve) is tested by asking the client to stick out the tongue (should protrude in the midline).
- n. To test the gag reflex, touch the posterior pharynx with the end of a tongue blade; the client should gag momentarily.

### 3. Client teaching ▲

- a. Emphasize the importance of hygiene and tooth care, as well as regular dental examinations and the use of fluoridated water or fluoride supplements.
- b. Encourage the client to avoid at-risk behaviors (e.g., smoking, alcohol consumption).
- c. Stress the importance of reporting pain or abnormal occurrence (e.g., nodules, lesions, signs of infection).

## F. Lungs

1. Subjective data: Cough; expectoration of sputum; shortness of breath or dyspnea; chest pain on breathing; smoking history; environmental exposure to pollution or chemicals; medications being taken; history of respiratory disease or infection; last tuberculosis test, chest radiograph, pneumonia, and any influenza immunizations including the H1N1 vaccine (H and N, which refer to *hemagglutinin* and *neuraminidase*, respectively, are surface antigens, and the number 1 refers to the specific subtype of those antigens). Record the **smoking history** in pack-years (the number of packs per day times the number of years

smoked). For example, a client who has smoked one-half pack a day for 20 years has a 10-pack-year smoking history. ▲

2. Objective data: Includes inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation
3. Inspection of the anterior and posterior chest: Note skin color and condition and the rate and quality of respirations, look for lumps or lesions, note the shape and configuration of the chest wall, note the position the client takes to breathe.
4. Palpation: Palpate the entire chest wall, noting skin temperature and moisture and looking for areas of tenderness and lumps, lesions, or masses; assess chest excursion and tactile or vocal fremitus (Box 25-7).

## **BOX 25-7** Palpation of the Chest

### **Chest Excursion**

*Posterior:* The nurse places the thumbs along the spinal processes at the 10th rib, with the palms in light contact with the posterolateral surfaces.

The nurse's thumbs should be about 2 inches apart, pointing toward the spine, with the fingers pointing laterally

*Anterior:* The nurse places the hands on the anterolateral wall with the thumbs along the costal margins, pointing toward the xiphoid process.

The nurse instructs the client to take a deep breath after exhaling.

The nurse should note movement of the thumbs and chest excursion should be symmetrical, separating the thumbs approximately 2 inches.

### **Tactile or Vocal Fremitus**

The nurse places the ball or lower palm of the hand over the chest, starting at the lung apices and palpating from side to side.

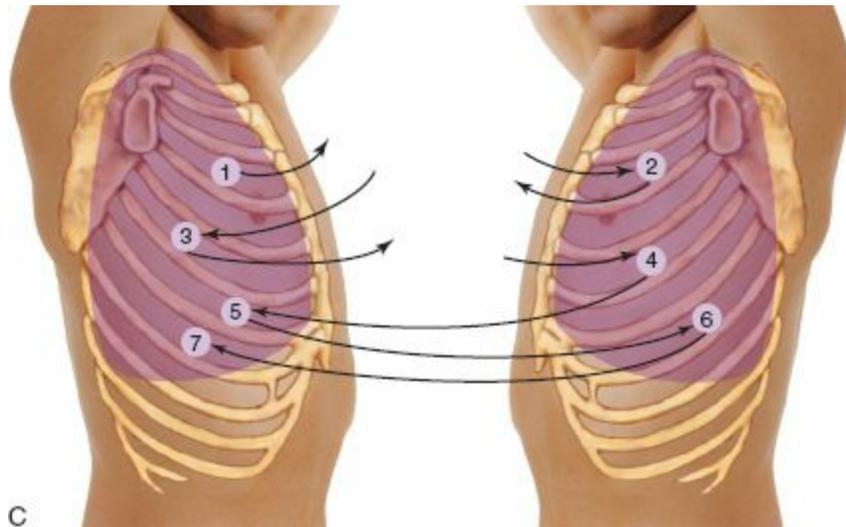
The nurse asks the client to repeat the words “ninety-nine.”

Symmetrical palpable vibration should be felt by the nurse.

## 5. Percussion

- a. Starting at the apices, percuss across the top of the shoulders, moving to the interspaces, making a side-to-side comparison all the way down the lung area (Fig. 25-2).





**FIGURE 25-2** Landmarks for chest auscultation and percussion. **A**, Posterior view. **B**, Anterior view. **C**, Lateral view. (From Wilson AF, Giddens JF: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

b. Determine the predominant note; resonance is noted in healthy lung tissue.

c. Hyperresonance is noted when excessive air is present and a dull note indicates lung density.

## 6. Auscultation ▲

a. Using the flat diaphragm end piece of the stethoscope, hold it firmly against the chest wall, and listen to at least one full respiration in each location (anterior, posterior, and lateral).

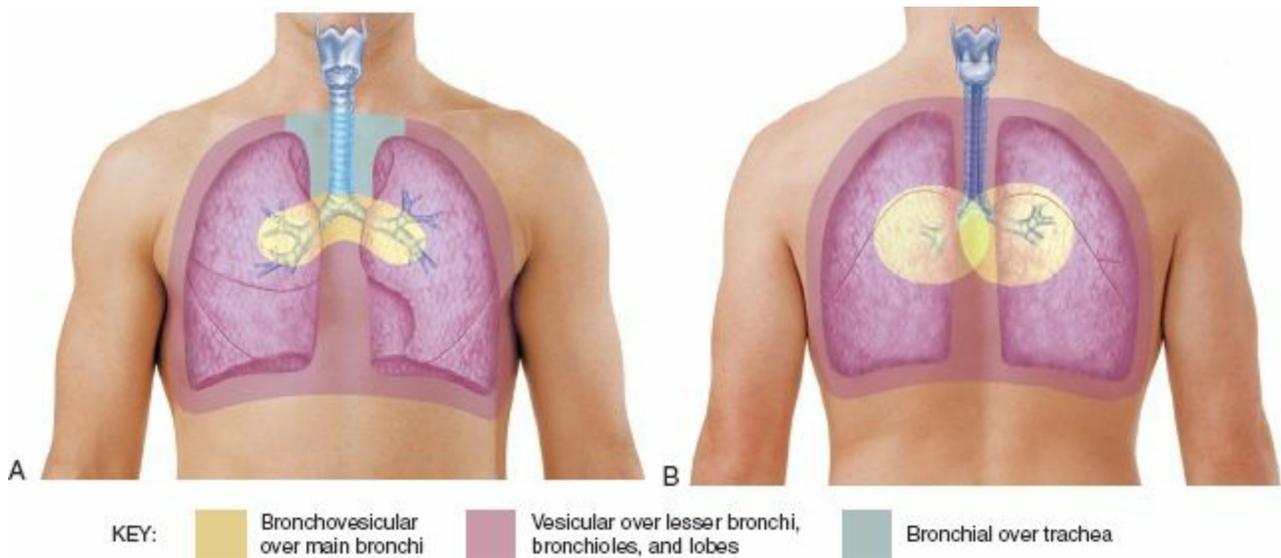
b. Posterior: Start at the apices and move side to side for comparison (see [Fig. 25-2](#))

c. Anterior: Auscultate the lung fields from the apices in the supraclavicular area down to the sixth rib; avoid percussion and auscultation over female breast tissue (displace this tissue) because a dull sound will be produced (see [Fig.](#)

25-2).

d. Compare findings on each side.

7. Normal breath sounds: Three types of breath sounds are considered normal in certain parts of the thorax, including vesicular, bronchovesicular, and bronchial; breath sounds should be clear to auscultation (Fig. 25-3).



**FIGURE 25-3** Auscultatory sounds. **A**, Anterior thorax. **B**, Posterior thorax. (From Wilson AF, Giddens JF: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

8. Abnormal breath sounds: Also known as *adventitious sounds* (Table 25-2)

**TABLE 25-2** Characteristics of Adventitious Sounds

Adventitious Sound	Characteristics	Clinical Examples
Crackles (previously called <i>rales</i> )		
Fine crackles	High-pitched crackling and popping noises	May be heard in pneumonia, heart failure,

Medium crackles	(discontinuous sounds) heard during the end of inspiration. Not cleared by cough Medium-pitched, moist sound heard about halfway through inspiration. Not cleared by cough	asthma, and restrictive pulmonary diseases Same as above, but condition is worse
Coarse crackles	Low-pitched, bubbling or gurgling sounds that start early in inspiration and extend into the first part of expiration	Same as above, but condition is worse or may be heard in terminally ill clients with diminished gag reflex. Also heard in pulmonary edema and pulmonary fibrosis
Wheeze (also called <i>sibilant wheeze</i> )	High-pitched, musical sound similar to a squeak. Heard more commonly during expiration, but may also be heard during inspiration. Occurs in small airways	Heard in narrowed airway diseases such as asthma
Rhonchi (also called <i>sonorous wheeze</i> )	Low-pitched, coarse, loud, low snoring or moaning tone. Actually sounds like snoring. Heard primarily during expiration, but may also be heard during inspiration. Coughing may clear	Heard in disorders causing obstruction of the trachea or bronchus, such as chronic bronchitis
Pleural friction rub	A superficial, low-pitched, coarse rubbing or grating sound. Sounds like two surfaces rubbing together. Heard throughout inspiration and expiration. Loudest over the lower anterolateral surface. Not cleared by cough	Heard in individuals with pleurisy (inflammation of the pleural surfaces)

Data from Wilson AF, Giddens JF: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

## 9. Voice sounds (Box 25-8)

### BOX 25-8 Voice Sounds

#### Bronchophony

1. Ask the client to repeat the words “ninety-nine.”
2. Normal voice transmission is soft, muffled, and indistinct.

#### Egophony

1. Ask the client to repeat a long “ee-ee-ee” sound.
2. Normally the nurse would hear the “ee-ee-ee” sound.

#### Whispered Pectoriloquy

1. Ask the client to whisper the word “ninety-nine.”

2. Normal voice transmission is faint, muffled, and almost inaudible.

- a. Performed when a pathological lung condition is suspected
- b. Auscultate over the chest wall; the client is asked to vocalize words or a phrase while the nurse listens to the chest.
- c. Normal voice transmission is soft and muffled; the nurse can hear the sound but is unable to distinguish exactly what is being said.

 When auscultating breath sounds, instruct the client to breathe through the mouth and monitor the client for dizziness.

#### 10. Client teaching

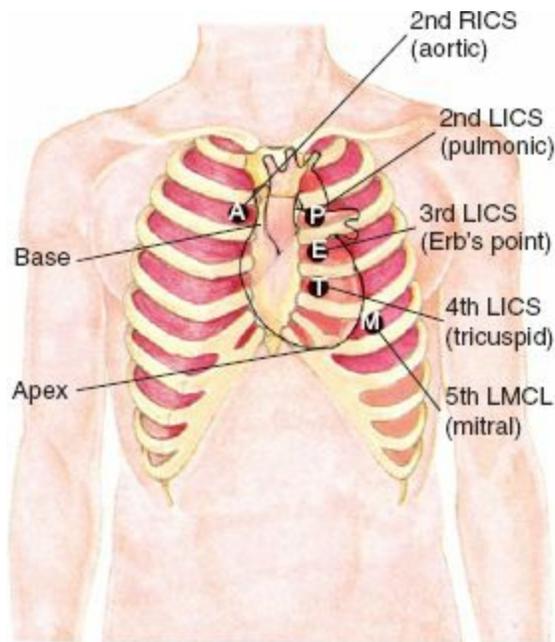
- a. Encourage the client to avoid exposure to environmental hazards, including smoking (discuss smoking cessation programs as appropriate).
- b. Client should undergo periodic examinations as prescribed (e.g., chest x-ray study, tuberculosis skin testing).
- c. Encourage the client to obtain pneumonia and influenza immunizations.
- d. Health care provider should be notified if client experiences persistent cough, shortness of breath, or other respiratory symptoms.

#### G. Heart and peripheral vascular system

- 1. Subjective data: Chest pain, dyspnea, cough, fatigue, edema, nocturia, leg pain or cramps (claudication), changes in skin color, obesity, medications being taken, cardiovascular risk factors, family history of cardiac or vascular problems,

personal history of cardiac or vascular problems ▲

2. Objective data: May include inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation
3. Inspection: Inspect the anterior chest for pulsations (apical impulse) created as the left ventricle rotates against the chest wall during systole; not always visible.
4. Palpation
  - a. Palpate the apical impulse at the fourth or fifth interspace, or medial to the midclavicular line (not palpable in obese clients or clients with thick chest walls).
  - b. Palpate the apex, left sternal border, and base for pulsations; normally none are present.
5. Percussion: May be performed to outline the heart's borders and to check for cardiac enlargement (denoted by resonance over the lung and dull notes over the heart).
6. Auscultation ▲
  - a. Areas of the heart ([Fig. 25-4](#))



**FIGURE 25-4** Auscultation areas of the heart. *LICS*, Left intercostal space; *LMCL*, left midclavicular line; *RICS*, right intercostal space. (From Wilson AF, Giddens JF: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2009, Mosby.)

- b.** Auscultate heart rate and rhythm; check for a pulse deficit (auscultate the apical heartbeat while palpating an artery) if an irregularity is noted.
- c.** Assess S1 (“lub”) and S2 (“dub”) sounds, and listen for extra heart sounds, as well as the presence of murmurs (gentle blowing or swooshing noise).

## 7. Peripheral vascular system

- a.** Assess adequacy of blood flow to the extremities by palpating arterial pulses for equality and symmetry and checking the condition of the skin and nails.
- b.** Check for pretibial edema and measure calf circumference (see [Table 25-1](#)).
- c.** Measure blood pressure.
- d.** Palpate superficial inguinal nodes (using firm but gentle pressure), beginning in the inguinal area and moving down toward the inner thigh.

- e. An ultrasonic stethoscope may be needed to amplify the sounds of a pulse wave if the pulse cannot be palpated.
- f. Carotid artery: Located in the groove between the trachea and sternocleidomastoid muscle, medial to and alongside the muscle
- g. Palpate one carotid artery at a time to avoid compromising blood flow to the brain.
- h. Auscultate each carotid artery for the presence of a bruit (a blowing, swishing, or buzzing, humming sound), which indicates blood flow turbulence); normally a bruit is not present.
- i. Palpate the arteries in the extremities ([Box 25-9](#)).

### **BOX 25-9** Arterial Pulse Points and Grading the Force of Pulses

#### **Arteries in the Arms and Hands**

**Radial Pulse:** Located at the radial side of the forearm at the wrist

**Ulnar Pulse:** Located on the opposite side of the location of the radial pulse at the wrist

**Brachial Pulse:** Located above the elbow at the antecubital fossa, between the biceps and triceps muscles

#### **Arteries in the Legs**

**Femoral Pulse:** Located below the inguinal ligament, midway between the symphysis pubis and the anterosuperior iliac spine

**Popliteal Pulse:** Located behind the knee

***Dorsalis Pedis Pulse:*** Located at the top of the foot, in line with the groove between the extensor tendons of the great and first toes

***Posterior Tibial Pulse:*** Located inside of the ankle, behind and below the medial malleolus (ankle bone)

### **Grading the Force**

4 + = Strong and bounding

3 + = Full pulse, increased

2 + = Normal, easily palpable

1 + = Weak, barely palpable

## **8. Client teaching**

- a. Advise client to modify lifestyle for risk factors associated with heart and vascular disease.
- b. Encourage the client to seek regular physical examinations.
- c. Client should seek medical assistance for signs of heart or vascular disease.

## **H. Breasts**

1. Subjective data: Pain or tenderness, lumps or thickening, swollen axillary lymph nodes, nipple discharge, rash or swelling, medications being taken, personal or family history of breast disease, trauma or injury to the breasts, previous surgery on the breasts, breast self-examination compliance, mammograms as prescribed 
2. Objective data: Inspection and palpation 

### 3. Inspection

- a. Performed with the client's arms raised above the head, the hands pressed against the hips, and the arms extended straight ahead while the client sits and leans forward
- b. Assess size and symmetry (one breast is often larger than the other); masses, flattening, retraction, or dimpling; color and venous pattern; size, color, shape, and discharge in the nipple and areola; and the direction in which nipples point.

### 4. Palpation

- a. Client lies supine, with the arm on the side being examined behind the head and a small pillow under the shoulder.
- b. The nurse uses the pads of the first three fingers to compress the breast tissue gently against the chest wall, noting tissue consistency.
- c. Palpation is performed systematically, ensuring that the entire breast and tail are palpated.
- d. The nurse notes the consistency of the breast tissue, which normally feels dense, firm, and elastic.
- e. The nurse gently palpates the nipple and areola and compresses the nipple, noting any discharge.

### 5. Axillary lymph nodes

- a. The nurse faces the client and stands on the side being examined, supporting the client's arm in a slightly flexed position, and abducts the arm away from the chest wall.

b. The nurse places the free hand against the client's chest wall and high in the axillary hollow, then, with the fingertips, gently presses down, rolling soft tissue over the surface of the ribs and muscles.

c. Lymph nodes are normally not palpable.

## 6. Client teaching ▲

a. Encourage and teach the client to perform breast self-examination (BSE) (refer to [Chapter 52](#) for information on performing the BSE).

b. Client should report lumps or masses to the health care provider immediately.

c. Regular physical examinations and mammograms should be obtained as prescribed.

## I. Abdomen

1. Subjective data: Changes in appetite or weight, difficulty swallowing, dietary intake, intolerance to certain foods, nausea or vomiting, pain, bowel habits, medications currently being taken, history of abdominal problems or abdominal surgery ▲

### 2. Objective data ▲

a. Ask the client to empty the bladder.

b. Be sure to warm the hands and the end piece of the stethoscope.

c. Examine painful areas last.

**▲** When performing an abdominal assessment, the specific order for assessment techniques is inspection, auscultation, percussion, and palpation.

### 3. Inspection

- a. Contour: Look down at the abdomen and then across the abdomen from the rib margin to the pubic bone; describe as flat, rounded, concave, or protuberant.
- b. Symmetry: Note any bulging or masses.
- c. Umbilicus: Should be midline and inverted
- d. Skin surface: Should be smooth and even
- e. Pulsations from the aorta may be noted in the epigastric area, and peristaltic waves may be noted across the abdomen.

### 4. Auscultation

- a. Performed before percussion and palpation, which can increase peristalsis.
- b. Hold the stethoscope lightly against the skin and listen for bowel sounds in all four quadrants; begin in the right lower quadrant (bowel sounds are normally heard here).
- c. Note the character and frequency of normal bowel sounds: high-pitched gurgling sounds occurring irregularly from 5 to 30 times a minute.
- d. Identify as normal, hypoactive, or hyperactive (borborygmus).
- e. Absent sounds: Auscultate for 5 minutes before determining that sounds are absent.
- f. Auscultate over the aorta, renal arteries, iliac arteries, and femoral arteries for vascular sounds or bruits.

### 5. Percussion

- a. All four quadrants are percussed lightly.

- b.** Borders of the liver and spleen are percussed.
- c.** Tympany should predominate over the abdomen, with dullness over the liver and spleen.
- d.** Percussion over the kidney at the 12th rib (costovertebral angle) should produce no pain.

## **6.** Palpation

- a.** Begin with light palpation of all four quadrants, using the fingers to depress the skin about 1 cm; next perform deep palpation, depressing 5 to 8 cm.
- b.** Palpate the liver and spleen (may not be palpable).
- c.** Palpate the aortic pulsation in the upper abdomen slightly to the left of midline; normally it pulsates in a forward direction (pulsation expands laterally if an aneurysm is present).

## **7.** Client teaching ▲

- a.** Encourage the client to consume a balanced diet.
- b.** Substances that can cause gastric irritation should be avoided.
- c.** The regular use of laxatives is discouraged.
- d.** Lifestyle behaviors that can cause gastric irritation (e.g., spicy foods) should be modified.
- e.** Regular physical examinations are important.
- f.** The client should report gastrointestinal problems to the health care provider.

## **J.** Musculoskeletal system

- 1.** Subjective data: Joint pain or stiffness; redness, swelling, or warm joints; limited

motion of joints; muscle pain, cramps, or weakness; bone pain; limitations in activities of daily living; exercise patterns; exposure to occupational hazards (e.g., heavy lifting, prolonged standing or sitting); medications being taken; history of joint, muscle, or bone injuries; history of surgery of the joints, muscles, or bones ▲

2. Objective data: Inspection and palpation
3. Inspection: Inspect gait and posture, and for cervical, thoracic, and lumbar curves (Box 25-10).

#### BOX 25-10

#### Common Postural Abnormalities

**Lordosis (Swayback):** Increased lumbar curvature

**Kyphosis (Hunchback):** Exaggeration of the posterior curvature of the thoracic spine

**Scoliosis:** Lateral spinal curvature

4. Palpation: Palpate all bones, joints, and surrounding muscles.
5. Range of motion
  - a. Perform active and passive range-of-motion exercises of each major joint.
  - b. Check for pain, limited mobility, spastic movement, joint instability, stiffness, and contractures.
  - c. Normally joints are nontender, without swelling, and move freely.
6. Muscle tone and strength

- a. Assess during measurement of range of motion.
- b. Ask client to flex the muscle to be examined and then to resist while applying opposing force against the flexion.
- c. Assess for increased tone (hypertonicity) or little tone (hypotonicity).

7. Grading muscle strength (Table 25-3)

**TABLE 25-3 Criteria for Grading and Recording Muscle Strength**

Functional Level	Lovett Scale	Grade	Percentage of Normal
No evidence of contractility	Zero (0)	0	0
Evidence of slight contractility	Trace (T)	1	10
Complete range of motion with gravity eliminated	Poor (P)	2	25
Complete range of motion with gravity	Fair (F)	3	50
Complete range of motion against gravity with some resistance	Good (G)	4	75
Complete range of motion against gravity with full resistance	Normal (N)	5	100

Data from Wilson AF, Giddens JF: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.

8. Client teaching 

- a. The client should consume a balanced diet, including foods high in calcium and vitamin D.
- b. Activities that cause muscle strain or stress to the joints should be avoided.
- c. Encourage the client to maintain a normal weight.
- d. Participation in a regular exercise program is beneficial.
- e. The client should contact the health care provider if joint or muscle pain or problems occur or if limitations in range of motion or muscle strength develop.

## K. Neurological system

1. Subjective data: Headaches, dizziness or vertigo, tremors, weakness, incoordination, numbness or tingling in any area of the body, difficulty speaking or swallowing, medications being taken, history of seizures, history of head injury or surgery, exposure to environmental or occupational hazards (e.g., chemicals, alcohol, drugs) ▲
2. Objective data: Assessment of cranial nerves, level of consciousness, pupils, motor function, cerebellar function, coordination, sensory function, and reflexes ▲
3. Note mental and emotional status, behavior and appearance, language ability, and intellectual functioning, including memory, knowledge, abstract thinking, association, and judgment.
4. Vital signs: Check temperature, pulse, respirations, and blood pressure; monitor for blood pressure or pulse changes, which may indicate increased intracranial pressure (see [Chapter 66](#) for abnormal respiratory patterns).
5. Cranial nerves ([Table 25-4](#)) ▲

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**TABLE 25-4** Assessment of the Cranial Nerves

Cranial Nerve	Test
<b>Cranial Nerve I: Olfactory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Sensory</li><li>■ Controls the sense of smell</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Have the client close the eyes and occlude one nostril with a finger</li><li>■ Ask the client to identify nonirritating and familiar odors (e.g., coffee, tea, cloves, soap, chewing gum, peppermint)</li><li>■ Repeat the test on the other nostril</li></ul>
<b>Cranial Nerve II: Optic</b>	

- Sensory
- Controls vision

- Assess visual acuity with a Snellen chart and perform an ophthalmoscopic exam
- Check peripheral vision by confrontation
- Check color vision

### Cranial Nerves III, IV, and VI

#### Cranial Nerve III: Oculomotor

- Motor
- Controls pupillary constriction, upper-eyelid elevation, and most eye movement

#### Cranial Nerve IV: Trochlear

- Motor
- Controls downward and inward eye movement

#### Cranial Nerve VI: Abducens

- Motor
- Controls lateral eye movement

- The motor functions of cranial nerves III, IV, and VI overlap; therefore they should be tested together
- Inspect the eyelids for ptosis (drooping); then assess ocular movements and note any eye deviation
- Test accommodation and direct and consensual light reflexes

### Cranial Nerve V: Trigeminal

- Sensory and motor
- Controls sensation in the cornea, nasal and oral mucosa, and facial skin, as well as mastication

- To test motor function, ask the client to clench the teeth and assess the muscles of mastication; then try to open the client's jaws after asking the client to keep them tightly closed
- Test the corneal reflex by lightly touching the client's cornea with a cotton wisp (this test may be omitted if the client is alert and blinking normally)
- Check sensory function by asking the client to close the eyes; lightly touch forehead, cheeks, and chin, noting whether the touch is felt equally on the two sides

### Cranial Nerve VII: Facial

- Sensory and motor
- Controls movement of the face and taste sensation

- Test taste perception on the anterior two thirds of the tongue; the client should be able to taste salty and sweet tastes
- Have the client smile, frown, and show the teeth
- Ask the client to puff out the cheeks
- Attempt to close the client's eyes against resistance

### Cranial Nerve VIII: Acoustic or Vestibulocochlear

- Sensory
- Controls hearing and vestibular function

- Assessing the client's ability to hear tests the cochlear portion
- Assessing the client's sense of equilibrium tests the vestibular portion
- Check the client's hearing, using acuity tests
- Observe the client's balance and watch for swaying when he or she is walking or standing
- Assessment of sensorineural hearing loss may be done with the Weber or Rinne test

### Cranial Nerves IX and X

#### Cranial Nerve IX: Glossopharyngeal

- Sensory and motor
- Controls swallowing ability, sensation in the

- Usually cranial nerves IX and X are tested together
- Test taste perception on the posterior one third of the tongue or pharynx; the client should be able to taste bitter and sour tastes
- Inspect the soft palate and watch for symmetrical

pharyngeal soft palate and tonsillar mucosa, taste perception on the posterior third of the tongue, and salivation

elevation when the client says “aaah”

- Touch the posterior pharyngeal wall with a tongue depressor to elicit the gag reflex

### Cranial Nerve X: Vagus

- Sensory and motor
- Controls swallowing and phonation, sensation in the exterior ear’s posterior wall, and sensation behind the ear
- Controls sensation in the thoracic and abdominal viscera

### Cranial Nerve XI: Spinal Accessory

- Motor
- Controls strength of neck and shoulder muscles

- The nurse palpates and inspects the sternocleidomastoid muscle as the client pushes the chin against the nurse’s hand
- The nurse palpates and inspects the trapezius muscle as the client shrugs the shoulders against the nurse’s resistance

### Cranial Nerve XII: Hypoglossal

- Motor
- Controls tongue movements involved in swallowing and speech

- Observe the tongue for asymmetry, atrophy, deviation to one side, and fasciculations (uncontrollable twitching)
- Ask the client to push the tongue against a tongue depressor, and then have the client move the tongue rapidly in and out and from side to side

## 6. Level of consciousness

- Assess the client’s behavior to determine level of consciousness (e.g., alertness, confusion, delirium, unconsciousness, stupor, coma); assessment becomes increasingly invasive as the client is less responsive.
- Speak to client.
- Assess appropriateness of behavior and conversation.
- Lightly touch the client (as culturally appropriate).

## 7. Pupils

- Assess size, equality, and reaction to light (brisk, slow, or fixed) and note any unusual eye movements (check direct light and consensual light reflex).
- This component of the neurological examination may be performed during

assessment of the eye.

## **8. Motor function**

- a.** Assess muscle tone, including strength and equality.
- b.** Assess for voluntary and involuntary movements and purposeful and nonpurposeful movements.
- c.** This component of the neurological examination may be performed during assessment of the musculoskeletal system.

## **9. Cerebellar function**

- a.** Monitor gait as the client walks in a straight line, heel to toe (tandem walking).
- b.** Romberg test: Client is asked to stand with the feet together and the arms at the sides and to close the eyes and hold the position; normally the client can maintain posture and balance.
- c.** If appropriate, ask the client to perform a shallow knee bend or to hop in place on one leg and then the other.

## **10. Coordination**

- a.** Assess by asking the client to perform rapid alternating movements of the hands (e.g., turning the hands over and patting the knees continuously).
- b.** The nurse asks the client to touch the nurse's finger, then his or her own nose; the client keeps the eyes open and the nurse moves the finger to different spots to ensure that the client's movements are smooth and accurate.
- c.** Heel-to-shin test: Assist the client into a supine position, then ask the client to place the heel on the opposite knee and run it down the shin; normally the client

moves the heel down the shin in a straight line.

## **11. Sensory function**

- a.** Pain: Assess by applying an object with a sharp point and one with a dull point to the client's body in random order; ask the client to identify the sharp and dull feelings.
- b.** Light touch: Brush a piece of cotton over the client's skin at various locations in a random order and ask the client to say when the touch is felt.
- c.** Vibration: Use a tuning fork to test the client's ability to feel vibrations over bony prominences; ask the client to announce when the vibration starts and stops.
- d.** Position sense (kinesthesia): Move the client's finger or toe up or down and ask the client which way it has been moved; this tests the client's ability to perceive passive movement.
- e.** Stereognosis: Tests the client's ability to recognize objects placed in his or her hand
- f.** Graphesthesia: Tests the client's ability to identify a number traced on the client's hand
- g.** Two-point discrimination: Tests the client's ability to discriminate two simultaneous pinpricks on the skin

## **12. Deep tendon reflexes**

- a.** Includes testing the following reflexes: Biceps, triceps, brachioradialis, patella, Achilles

- b. Limb should be relaxed.
- c. The tendon is tapped quickly with a reflex hammer, which should cause contraction of muscle.
- d. Scoring deep tendon reflex activity ([Box 25-11](#))

**BOX 25-11****Scoring Deep Tendon Reflex Activity**

0 =	No response
1 + =	Sluggish or diminished
2 + =	Active or expected response
3 + =	Slightly hyperactive, more brisk than normal; not necessarily pathological
4 + =	Brisk, hyperactive with intermittent clonus associated with disease

Data from Wilson AF, Giddens JF: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

### 13. Plantar reflex

- a. A cutaneous (superficial) reflex is tested with a pointed but not sharp object.
- b. The sole of the client's foot is stroked from the heel, up the lateral side, and then across the ball of the foot to the medial side.
- c. The normal response is plantar flexion of all toes.

 Dorsiflexion of the great toe and fanning of the other toes (Babinski's sign) is abnormal in anyone older than 2 years and indicates the presence of central nervous system disease.

### 14. Testing for meningeal irritation

- a. A positive Brudzinski's sign or Kernig's sign indicate meningeal irritation.
- b. Brudzinski's sign is tested with the client in the supine position. The nurse flexes the client's head (gently moves the head to the chest) and there should be no reports of pain or resistance to the neck flexion; a positive Brudzinski's sign is observed if the client passively flexes the hip and knee in response to neck flexion and reports pain in the vertebral column.
- c. Kernig's sign is positive when the client flexes the legs at the hip and knee and complains of pain along the vertebral column when the leg is extended.

#### 15. Client teaching ▲

- a. Client should avoid exposure to environmental hazards (e.g., insecticides, lead).
- b. High-risk behaviors that can result in head and spinal cord injuries should be avoided.
- c. Protective devices (e.g., a helmet, body pads) should be worn when participating in high-risk behaviors.

#### L. Female genitalia and reproductive tract

- 1. Subjective data: Urinary difficulties or symptoms such as frequency, urgency, or burning; vaginal discharge; pain; menstrual and obstetrical histories; onset of menopause; medications being taken; sexual activity and the use of contraceptives; history of sexually transmitted infections ▲
- 2. Objective data ▲
  - a. Use a calm and relaxing approach; the examination is embarrassing for many

women and may be a difficult experience for an adolescent.

- b.** Consider the client's cultural background and her beliefs regarding examination of the genitalia. ▲
- c.** A complete examination will include the external genitalia and a vaginal examination.
- d.** The nurse's role is to prepare the client for the examination and to assist the health care provider (HCP), nurse practitioner, or nurse midwife.
- e.** The client is asked to empty her bladder before the examination.
- f.** The client is placed in the lithotomy position, and a drape is placed across the client.

### **3. External genitalia**

- a.** Quantity and distribution of hair
- b.** Characteristics of labia majora and minora (make note of any inflammation, edema, lesions, or lacerations)
- c.** Urethral orifice is observed for color and position.
- d.** Vaginal orifice (introitus) is inspected for inflammation, edema, discoloration, discharge, and lesions.
- e.** The examiner may check Skene's and Bartholin's glands for tenderness or discharge (if discharge is present, color, odor, and consistency are noted and a culture of the discharge is obtained).
- f.** The client is assessed for the presence of a cystocele (in which a portion of the vaginal wall and bladder prolapse, or fall, into the orifice anteriorly) or a

rectocele (bulging of the posterior wall of the vagina caused by prolapse of the rectum).

#### 4. Speculum examination of the internal genitalia

- a. Performed by the HCP, nurse practitioner, or nurse midwife
- b. Permits visualization of the cervix and vagina
- c. Papanicolaou smear: A painless screening test for cervical cancer is done; the specimen is obtained during the speculum examination, and the nurse helps prepare the specimen for laboratory analysis.

#### 5. Client teaching ▲

- a. Stress the importance of personal hygiene.
- b. Explain the purpose and recommended frequency of Papanicolaou (Pap) tests.
- c. Explain the signs of sexually transmitted infections.
- d. Educate the client on measures to prevent a sexually transmitted infection.
- e. Inform the client with a sexually transmitted infection that she must inform her sexual partner of the need for an examination.

### M. Male genitalia

1. Subjective data: Urinary difficulty (e.g., frequency, urgency, hesitancy or straining, dysuria, nocturia), pain, lesions, or discharge on or from the penis, pain or lesions in the scrotum, medications being taken, sexual activity and the use of contraceptives, history of sexually transmitted infections ▲

#### 2. Objective data ▲

- a. Includes assessment (inspection and palpation) of the external genitalia and

inguinal ring and canal

- b.** Client may stand or lie down for this examination.
  - c.** Genitalia are manipulated gently to avoid causing erection or discomfort.
  - d.** Sexual maturity is assessed by noting the size and shape of the penis and testes, the color and texture of the scrotal skin, and the character and distribution of pubic hair.
  - e.** The penis is checked for the presence of lesions or discharge; a culture is obtained if a discharge is present.
  - f.** The scrotum is inspected for size, shape, and symmetry (normally the left testicle hangs lower than the right) and is palpated for the presence of lumps.
  - g.** Inguinal ring and canal; inspection (asking the client to bear down) and palpation are performed to assess for the presence of a hernia.
- 3.** Client teaching 
- a.** Stress the importance of personal hygiene.
  - b.** Teach the client how to perform testicular self-examination (TSE); a day of the month is selected and the exam is performed on the same day each month after a shower or bath when the hands are warm and soapy and the scrotum is warm.  
(Refer to [Chapter 52](#) for information on performing the TSE.)
  - c.** Explain the signs of sexually transmitted infections.
  - d.** Educate the client on measures to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
  - e.** Inform the client with a sexually transmitted infection that he must inform his sexual partner of the need for an examination.

## **N. Rectum and anus**

- 1. Subjective data:** Usual bowel pattern; any change in bowel habits; rectal pain, bleeding from the rectum, or black or tarry stools; dietary habits; problems with urination; previous screening for colorectal cancer; medications being taken; history of rectal or colon problems; family history of rectal or colon problems ▲
- 2. Objective data** ▲
  - a.** Examination can detect colorectal cancer in its early stages; in men, the rectal examination can also detect prostate tumors.
  - b.** Women may be examined in the lithotomy position after examination of the genitalia.
  - c.** A man is best examined by having the client bend forward with his hips flexed and upper body resting over the examination table.
  - d.** A nonambulatory client may be examined in the left lateral (Sims') position.
  - e.** The external anus is inspected for lumps or lesions, rashes, inflammation or excoriation, scars, or hemorrhoids.
  - f.** Digital examination will most likely be performed by the HCP or nurse practitioner.
  - g.** Digital examination is performed to assess sphincter tone; to check for tenderness, irregularities, polyps, masses, or nodules in the rectal wall; and to assess the prostate gland.
  - h.** The prostate gland is normally firm, without boggy, tenderness, or nodules (hardness or nodules may indicate the presence of a cancerous lesion).

### 3. Client teaching ▲

- a. Diet should include high-fiber and low fat foods and plenty of liquids.
- b. The client should obtain regular digital examinations.
- c. The client should be able to identify the symptoms of colorectal cancer or prostatic cancer (men).
- d. The client should follow the American Cancer Society's guidelines for screening for colorectal cancer.

## VI. Documenting Health and Physical Assessment Findings ▲

- A. Documentation of findings may be either written or recorded electronically (depending on agency protocol).
- B. Whether written or electronic, the documentation is a legal document and a permanent record of the client's health status.
- C. Principles of documentation need to be followed and data need to be recorded accurately, concisely, completely, legibly, and objectively without bias or opinions; always follow agency protocol for documentation.
- D. Documentation findings serve as a source of client information for other health care providers.
- E. Record findings about the client's health history and physical examination as soon as possible after completion of the health assessment.
- F. Refer to [Chapter 7](#) for additional information about documentation guidelines.

## CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The carotid arteries are located in the groove between the trachea and sternocleidomastoid muscle, medial to and alongside the muscle. On assessment, the nurse should palpate one carotid artery at a time to avoid compromising blood flow to the brain. On auscultation, the nurse listens for the presence of a bruit (a blowing, swishing sound), which indicates blood flow turbulence. Normally a bruit is not present, so this finding necessitates the need for follow-up. Both carotid arteries should be auscultated. The nurse should notify the health care provider if a bruit is detected. The nurse should also document the findings.

### *Reference*

Lewis et al (2011), p. 723.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**232.** A Spanish-speaking client arrives at the triage desk in the emergency department and states to the nurse, “No speak English, need interpreter.” Which is the **best** action for the nurse to take?

1. Have one of the client’s family members interpret.
2. Have the Spanish-speaking triage receptionist interpret.
3. Page an interpreter from the hospital’s interpreter services.
4. Obtain a Spanish-English dictionary and attempt to triage the client.

**233.** The nurse is performing a neurological assessment on a client and elicits a positive Romberg's sign. The nurse makes this determination based on which observation?

1. An involuntary rhythmic, rapid, twitching of the eyeballs.
2. A dorsiflexion of the ankle and great toe with fanning of the other toes.
3. A significant sway when the client stands erect with feet together, arms at the side, and the eyes closed.
4. A lack of normal sense of position when the client is unable to return extended fingers to a point of reference.

**234.** The nurse notes documentation that a client is exhibiting Cheyne-Stokes respirations. On assessment of the client, the nurse should expect to note which finding?

1. Rhythmic respirations with periods of apnea
2. Regular rapid and deep, sustained respirations
3. Totally irregular respiration in rhythm and depth
4. Irregular respirations with pauses at the end of inspiration and expiration

**235.** The nurse notes documentation that a client has conductive hearing loss. The nurse understands that this type of hearing loss is caused by which problem?

1. A defect in the cochlea
2. A defect in the 8th cranial nerve
3. A physical obstruction to the transmission of sound waves

4. A defect in the sensory fibers that lead to the cerebral cortex

236. While performing a cardiac assessment on a client with an incompetent heart valve, the nurse auscultates a murmur. Which describes the sound of a heart murmur?

1. Lub-dub sounds
2. Scratchy, leathery heart noise
3. Gentle blowing or swooshing noise
4. Abrupt, high-pitched snapping noise

237. The nurse is testing the extraocular movements in a client to assess for muscle weakness in the eyes. The nurse should implement which assessment technique to assess for muscle weakness in the eye?

1. Tests the corneal reflexes
2. Tests the six cardinal positions of gaze
3. Tests visual acuity, using a Snellen eye chart
4. Tests sensory function by asking the client to close eyes and then lightly touching the forehead, cheeks, and chin

238. The nurse is instructing a client how to perform a testicular self-examination (TSE). The nurse should explain that which is the **best** time to perform this exam?

1. After a shower or bath
2. While standing to void

3. After having a bowel movement
4. While lying in bed before arising

**239.** The nurse is assessing a client for meningeal irritation and elicits a positive Brudzinski's sign. Which finding did the nurse observe?

1. The client rigidly extends the arms with pronated forearms and plantar flexion of the feet.
2. The client flexes a leg at the hip and knee and reports pain in the vertebral column when the leg is extended.
3. The client passively flexes the hip and knee in response to neck flexion and reports pain in the vertebral column.
4. The client's upper arms are flexed and held tightly to the sides of the body and the legs are extended and internally rotated.

**240.** A client with a diagnosis of asthma is admitted to the hospital with respiratory distress. Which type of adventitious lung sounds should the nurse expect to hear when performing a respiratory assessment on this client?

1. Stridor
2. Crackles
3. Wheezes
4. Diminished

**241.** The clinic nurse prepares to perform a focused assessment on a client who is complaining of symptoms of a cold, a cough, and lung congestion. Which should

the nurse include for this type of assessment? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Auscultating lung sounds
2. Obtaining the client's temperature
3. Assessing the strength of peripheral pulses
4. Obtaining information about the client's respirations
5. Performing a musculoskeletal and neurological examination
6. Asking the client about a family history of any illness or disease

## ANSWERS

232. 3

**Rationale:** The best action is to have a professional hospital-based interpreter translate for the client. English-speaking family members may not appropriately understand what is asked of them and may paraphrase what the client is actually saying. Also, client confidentiality as well as accurate information may be compromised when a family member or a non-health care provider acts as interpreter.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Initially focus on what the client needs. In this case the client needs and asks for an interpreter. Next keep in mind the issue of confidentiality and making sure that information is obtained in the most efficient and accurate way. This will assist in eliminating options 1, 2, and 4.

**Review:** Actions to take to address **language barriers**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Culture

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), pp. 45-47.

233. 3

**Rationale:** In Romberg's test, the client is asked to stand with the feet together and the arms at the sides, and to close the eyes and hold the position; normally the client can maintain posture and balance. A positive Romberg's sign is a vestibular neurological sign that is found when a client exhibits a loss of balance when closing the eyes. This may occur with cerebellar ataxia, loss of proprioception, and loss of vestibular function. A lack of normal sense of position coupled with an inability to return extended fingers to a point of reference is a finding that indicates a problem with coordination. A positive gaze nystagmus evaluation results in an involuntary rhythmic, rapid, twitching of the eyeballs. A positive Babinski's test results in dorsiflexion of the ankle and great toe with fanning of the other toes; if this occurs in anyone older than 2 years it indicates the presence of central nervous system disease.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, Romberg's test. You can easily answer this question if you can recall that the client's balance is tested in this test.

**Review:** Romberg's test

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mobility

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1418.

**234. 1**

**Rationale:** Cheyne-Stokes respirations are rhythmic respirations with periods of apnea and can indicate a metabolic dysfunction in the cerebral hemisphere or basal ganglia. Neurogenic hyperventilation is a regular, rapid and deep, sustained respiration that can indicate a dysfunction in the low midbrain and middle pons. Ataxic respirations are totally irregular in rhythm and depth and indicate a dysfunction in the medulla. Apneustic respirations are irregular respirations with pauses at the end of inspiration and expiration and can indicate a dysfunction in the middle or caudal pons.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of Cheyne-Stokes respirations. Recalling that periods of apnea occur with this type of respiration will help direct you to the correct answer.

**Review:** **Cheyne-Stokes respirations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), p. 442.

**235. 3**

**Rationale:** A conductive hearing loss occurs as a result of a physical obstruction to the transmission of sound waves. A sensorineural hearing loss occurs as a result of a pathological process in the inner ear, a defect in the 8th cranial nerve, or a defect of the sensory fibers that lead to the cerebral cortex.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a conductive hearing loss. Noting the relationship of the word

*conductive* in the question and *transmission* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** **Conductive hearing loss** and **sensorineural hearing loss**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1084, 1097.

### 236. 3

**Rationale:** A heart murmur is an abnormal heart sound and is described as a gentle, blowing, swooshing sound.

Lub-dub sounds are normal and represent the S1 (first) heart sound and S2 (second) heart sound, respectively. A pericardial friction rub is described as a scratchy, leathery heart sound. A click is described as an abrupt, high-pitched snapping sound.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, characteristics of a murmur. Eliminate option 1 because it describes normal heart sounds. Next recall that a murmur occurs as a result of the manner in which the blood is flowing through the cardiac chambers and valves. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Heart murmur**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), p. 461.

**237. 2**

**Rationale:** Testing the six cardinal positions of gaze is done to assess for muscle weakness in the eyes. The client is asked to hold the head steady, and then to follow movement of an object through the positions of gaze. The client should follow the object in a parallel manner with the two eyes. A Snellen eye chart assesses visual acuity and cranial nerve II (optic). Testing sensory function by having the client close his or her eyes and then lightly touching areas of the face and testing the corneal reflexes assess cranial nerve V (trigeminal).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessing for muscle weakness in the eyes. Note the relationship between the words *extraocular movements* in the question and *positions of gaze* in the correct option.

**Review:** **Physical assessment techniques** for muscle weakness in the eyes

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1047.

**238. 1**

**Rationale:** The nurse needs to teach the client how to perform a testicular self-examination (TSE). The nurse should instruct the client to perform the exam on the same day each month. The nurse should also instruct the client that the best time to perform a TSE is after a shower or bath when the hands are warm and soapy and the scrotum is warm. Palpation is easier and the client will be better able to identify any abnormalities. The client would stand to

perform the exam, but it would be difficult to perform the exam while voiding. Having a bowel movement is unrelated to performing the TSE.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, *best*. Think about the purpose of this test and visualize this assessment technique to answer correctly.

**Review: Testicular self-examination**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Sexuality

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), pp. 693-694.

### 239. 3

**Rationale:** Brudzinski's sign is tested with the client in the supine position. The nurse flexes the client's head (gently moves the head to the chest) and there should be no reports of pain or resistance to the neck flexion. A positive Brudzinski's sign is observed if the client passively flexes the hip and knee in response to neck flexion and reports pain in the vertebral column. Kernig's sign also tests for meningeal irritation and is positive when the client flexes the legs at the hip and knee and complains of pain along the vertebral column when the leg is extended. Decorticate posturing is abnormal flexion and is noted when the client's upper arms are flexed and held tightly to the sides of the body and the legs are extended and internally rotated. Decerebrate posturing is abnormal extension and occurs when the arms are fully extended, forearms pronated, wrists and fingers flexed, jaws clenched, neck extended, and feet plantar-flexed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a positive Brudzinski's sign. Recalling that a positive sign is elicited if

the client reports pain will assist in eliminating options 1 and 4. Next it is necessary to know that a positive Brudzinski's sign is observed if the client passively flexes the hip and knee in response to neck flexion and reports pain in the vertebral column.

**Review:** Brudzinski's sign

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), p. 677.

### 240. 3

**Rationale:** Asthma is a respiratory disorder characterized by recurring episodes of dyspnea, constriction of the bronchi, and wheezing. Wheezes are described as high-pitched musical sounds heard when air passes through an obstructed or narrowed lumen of a respiratory passageway. Stridor is a harsh sound noted with an upper airway obstruction and often signals a life-threatening emergency. Crackles are produced by air passing over retained airway secretions or fluid, or the sudden opening of collapsed airways. Diminished lung sounds are heard over lung tissue where poor oxygen exchange is occurring.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, assessment of abnormal lung sounds. Note the client's diagnosis and think about the pathophysiology that occurs in this disorder. Recalling that bronchial constriction occurs will assist in directing you to the correct option. Also, thinking about the definition of each adventitious lung sound identified in the options will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adventitious lung sounds

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 510.

❖ 241. 1, 2, 4

**Rationale:** A focused assessment focuses on a limited or short-term problem, such as the client's complaint.

Because the client is complaining of symptoms of a cold, a cough, and lung congestion, the nurse would focus on the respiratory system and the presence of an infection. A complete assessment includes a complete health history and physical examination and forms a baseline database. Assessing the strength of peripheral pulses relates to a vascular assessment, which is not related to this client's complaints. A musculoskeletal and neurological examination also is not related to this client's complaints. However, strength of peripheral pulses and a musculoskeletal and neurological examination would be included in a complete assessment. Likewise, asking the client about a family history of any illness or disease would be included in a complete assessment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and note the words *focused assessment*: Noting that the client's symptoms relate to the respiratory system and the presence of an infection will direct you to the correct options.

**Review:** Focused assessments

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

***Reference:*** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 45-46.

# UNIT VI



## Maternity Nursing

### PYRAMID TERMS

**amniotic fluid** Pale, straw-colored fluid in which the fetus floats. It serves as a cushion against injury from sudden blows or movements and helps maintain a constant body temperature for the fetus. The fetus modifies the amniotic fluid through the processes of swallowing, urinating, and movement through the respiratory tract.

**ballottement** Rebounding of the fetus against the examiner's finger on palpation. When the examiner taps the cervix, the fetus floats upward in the amniotic fluid. The examiner feels a rebound when the fetus falls back.

**Chadwick's sign** Violet coloration of the mucous membranes of the cervix, vagina, and vulva that occurs at about 4 weeks of pregnancy; caused by increased vascularity. This is considered a probable sign of pregnancy.

**delivery** Actual event of birth; the expulsion or extraction of the neonate.

**embryo** Stage of fetal development that lasts from day 15 until approximately 8 weeks after conception or until the embryo measures 3 cm from crown to rump.

**fertilization** Uniting of the sperm and ovum, which occurs within 12 hours of ovulation and within 2 to 3 days of insemination, the average duration of viability for the ovum and sperm.

**Goodell's sign** Softening of the cervix that occurs at the beginning of the second month of gestation. This is considered a probable sign of pregnancy.

**gravida** A pregnant woman; called gravida I (primigravida) during the first pregnancy, gravida II during the second pregnancy, and so on.

**Hegar's sign** Compressibility and softening of the lower uterine segment that occurs at about week 6 of gestation. This is considered a probable sign of pregnancy.

**implantation** Embedding of the fertilized ovum in the uterine mucosa 6 to 10 days after conception.

**infant** A human born alive; also, a human from 28 days of age until the first birthday.

**labor** Coordinated sequence of rhythmic involuntary uterine contractions resulting in effacement and dilation of the cervix, followed by expulsion of the products of conception.

**lecithin-to-sphingomyelin (L/S) ratio** Ratio of two components of amniotic fluid, used for predicting fetal lung maturity; normal L/S ratio in amniotic fluid is 2:1 or greater when the fetal lungs are mature.

**lochia** Discharge from the uterus that consists of blood from the vessels of the placental site and debris from the decidua; lasts for 2 to 6 weeks after delivery.

**Nägele's rule** Determines the estimated date of birth based on the premise that the woman has a 28-day menstrual cycle. Subtract 3 months and add 7 days to the first day of the last menstrual period; then add 1 year. Alternatively, add 7 days to the last menstrual period and count forward 9 months.

**newborn; neonate** A human from the time of birth to the twenty-eighth day of life.

**parity** Number of pregnancies that have reached viability regardless of whether the fetus was born alive or stillborn.

**placenta** Organ that provides for the exchange of nutrients and waste products between the fetus and the mother and produces hormones to maintain pregnancy. The placenta develops by the third month of gestation. Is also called *afterbirth*.

**quickening** Maternal perception of fetal movement for the first time, occurring usually in the sixteenth to twentieth week of pregnancy.

**surfactant** Phospholipid that is necessary to keep the fetal lung alveoli from collapsing; amount is usually sufficient after 32 weeks' gestation.

**uterus** Organ located behind the symphysis pubis, between the bladder and the rectum. It has four parts—fundus (upper part), corpus (body), isthmus (lower segment), and cervix.

**vagina** Tubular structure located behind the bladder and in front of the rectum; it extends from the cervix to the vaginal opening in the perineum. It functions as the outflow tract for menstrual fluid and for vaginal and cervical secretions, as the birth canal, and as the organ for coitus.

## Pyramid to Success

The Pyramid to Success focuses on the physiological and psychosocial aspects related to the experience of pregnancy, delivery, and the postpartum period. Pyramid Points begin with the assessment and knowledge of expected findings of the pregnant client and fetus during the antepartum period. Instructing the pregnant client in measures that promote a healthy environment for the mother and the fetus is included. The focus is on the importance of antepartum follow-up, nutrition, and interventions for common discomforts that occur during pregnancy. Knowledge of the purpose of the commonly prescribed diagnostic tests and procedures in the antepartum period is also part of the Pyramid to Success. The focus is on disorders that can occur during pregnancy, particularly gestational hypertension and diabetes mellitus. The labor and delivery process and the immediate interventions for conditions in which the maternal or fetal status is compromised, such as prolapsed cord or altered fetal heart rate, is part of the Pyramid to Success. Review of the fetus of a mother with human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or a substance-abusing mother is recommended. The Pyramid to Success also includes a focus on the normal expectations of the postpartum period and the complications that can occur during this time. The next Pyramid Point focuses on the normal physical assessment findings and early identification of disorders in the neonate. The last Pyramid Point in this unit focuses on maternity and newborn medications.

# Client Needs

## **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Consulting with other health care team members

Establishing priorities of care

Handling hazardous and infectious materials safely

Maintaining confidentiality

Obtaining informed consent for diagnostic tests and procedures

Providing continuity of client care

Upholding client's rights

Using surgical asepsis when providing care

Using standard and transmission-based precautions when providing care

## **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Assessing for growth and development

Discussing expected body image changes with the client

Discussing family planning and birthing and parenting issues

Identifying at-risk clients during pregnancy

Identifying health and wellness concepts and providing health care screening

Identifying lifestyle choices and high-risk behaviors

Performing techniques of physical assessment

Providing antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn care

Teaching regarding antepartum, intrapartum, and postpartum care, and care to the

newborn

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Considering cultural, religious, and spiritual influences regarding birth and motherhood

Discussing situational role changes in the family

Ensuring therapeutic interactions within the family

Identifying available support systems

Identifying coping mechanisms

## **Physiological Integrity**

Instructing the client about prescribed diagnostic tests and procedures

Monitoring for normal expectations during pregnancy

Providing interventions for unexpected events during pregnancy

Monitoring the client during the labor and delivery process

Providing nonpharmacological comfort interventions and pharmacological pain management during labor

Monitoring for side effects and adverse effects related to prescribed pharmacological and parenteral therapies

Monitoring for expected outcomes and effects related to pharmacological and parenteral therapies

Teaching the client about nutrition during pregnancy and in the postpartum period

Teaching the client about the physiological changes that occur during pregnancy



## CHAPTER 26

# Reproductive System

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is conducting an intake assessment on a pregnant adolescent who reports consuming small amounts of alcohol on a daily basis. On the basis of the information provided, what should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 303.*

### I. Female Reproductive Structures

#### A. Ovaries

1. Form and expel ova
2. Secrete estrogen and progesterone

#### B. Fallopian tubes

1. Muscular tubes (oviducts) lying near the ovaries and connected to the **uterus**
2. Tubes that propel the ova from the ovaries to the uterus

#### C. Uterus

1. Muscular, pear-shaped cavity in which the fetus develops
2. Cavity from which menstruation occurs

#### D. Cervix

1. The internal os of the cervix opens into the body of the uterine cavity.
2. The cervical canal is located between the internal os and the external os.
3. The external cervical os opens into the vagina.

#### E. Vagina

1. Muscular tube that extends from the cervix to the vaginal opening in the perineum
2. Known as the *birth canal*
3. Passageway for menstrual blood flow, for penis for intercourse, and for the fetus

## II. Male Reproductive Structures

#### A. Penis

1. Structures include the body or shaft, glans penis, and urethra.
2. Primary functions include pathway for urination and is the organ for intercourse.

#### B. Scrotum

1. Structures include the testes, epididymis, and vas deferens.
2. Normal temperature is slightly cooler than body temperature.

#### C. Prostate gland

1. Secretes a milky alkaline fluid
2. Enhances sperm movement and neutralizes acidic vaginal secretions

## III. Menstrual Cycle (Box 26-1)

## Ovarian Changes

### *Preovulatory Phase*

Hypothalamus releases gonadotropin-releasing hormone through the portal system to the anterior pituitary system.

Secretion of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) by the anterior lobe of the pituitary gland stimulates growth of follicles.

Most follicles die, leaving one to mature into a large graafian follicle.

Estrogen produced by the follicle stimulates increased secretions of luteinizing hormone (LH) by the anterior lobe of the pituitary gland.

The follicle ruptures and releases an ovum into the peritoneal cavity.

### *Luteal Phase*

Begins with ovulation.

Body temperature decreases and then increases by 0.5 ° F to 1 ° F around the time of ovulation.

Corpus luteum is formed from follicle cells that remain in the ovary after ovulation.

Corpus luteum secretes estrogen and progesterone during the remaining 14 days of the cycle.

Corpus luteum degenerates if the ovum is not fertilized, and secretion of estrogen and progesterone declines.

Decline of estrogen and progesterone stimulates the anterior pituitary to secrete more

FSH and LH, initiating a new reproductive cycle.

## **Uterine Changes**

### ***Menstrual Phase***

Consists of 4 to 6 days of bleeding as the endometrium breaks down because of the decreased levels of estrogen and progesterone.

The level of FSH increases, enabling the beginning of a new cycle.

### ***Proliferative Phase***

Lasts about 9 days.

Estrogen stimulates proliferation and growth of the endometrium.

As estrogen increases, it suppresses secretion of FSH and increases secretion of LH.

Secretion of LH stimulates ovulation and the development of the corpus luteum.

Ovulation occurs between days 12 and 16.

Estrogen level is high, and progesterone level is low.

### ***Secretory Phase***

Lasts about 12 days and follows ovulation.

This phase is initiated in response to the increase in LH level.

The graafian follicle is replaced by the corpus luteum.

The corpus luteum secretes progesterone and estrogen.

Progesterone prepares the endometrium for pregnancy if a fertilized ovum is implanted.

## A. Ovarian hormones

1. Ovarian hormones, released by the anterior pituitary gland, include follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH).
2. The hormones produce changes in the ovaries and in the endometrium.
3. The menstrual cycle, the regularly recurring physiological changes in the endometrium that culminate in its shedding, may vary in length, with the average length being about 28 days.

## B. Ovarian and uterine phases (see [Box 26-1](#))

# IV. Female Pelvis and Measurements

## A. True pelvis

1. Lies below the pelvic brim
2. Consists of the pelvic inlet, midpelvis, and pelvic outlet

## B. False pelvis

1. Is the shallow portion above the pelvic brim
2. Supports the abdominal viscera

## C. Types of pelvis

1. Gynecoid
  - a. Normal female pelvis
  - b. Transversely rounded or blunt

 The gynecoid pelvis is most favorable for successful labor and birth.

2. Anthropoid

- a. Oval shape
- b. Adequate outlet, with a narrow pubic arch

### 3. Android

- a. Heart-shaped or angulated
- b. Resembles a male pelvis
- c. Not favorable for **labor** and birth
- d. Narrow pelvic planes can cause slow descent and midpelvic arrest.

### 4. Platypelloid

- a. Flat with an oval inlet
- b. Wide transverse diameter, but short anteroposterior diameter, making labor and birth difficult

## D. Pelvic inlet diameters

### 1. Anteroposterior diameters

- a. Diagonal conjugate: Distance from the lower margin of the symphysis pubis to the sacral promontory
- b. True conjugate or conjugate vera: Distance from the upper margin of the symphysis pubis to the sacral promontory
- c. Obstetric conjugate: Extends from the sacral promontory to the top of the symphysis pubis. It is the smallest front-to-back distance through which the fetal head must pass in moving through the pelvic inlet.

- 2. Transverse diameter: The largest of the pelvic inlet diameters; located at right angles to the true conjugate

3. Oblique (diagonal) diameter: Not clinically measurable
4. Posterior sagittal diameter: Distance from the point where the anteroposterior and transverse diameters cross each other to the middle of the sacral promontory

#### E. Pelvic midplane diameters

1. Transverse diameter (interspinous diameter)
2. Midplane normally is the largest plane and has the longest diameter.

#### F. Pelvic outlet diameters

1. Transverse (intertuberous diameter)
2. Outlet presents the smallest plane of the pelvic canal.

## V. Fertilization and Implantation

### A. Fertilization ▲

1. Fertilization occurs in the ampulla of the fallopian (uterine) tube when sperm and ovum unite.
2. When fertilized, the membrane of the ovum undergoes changes that prevent entry of other sperm.
3. Each reproductive cell carries 23 chromosomes.
4. Sperm carry an X or a Y chromosome—XY, male; XX, female.

### B. Implantation ▲

1. The zygote is propelled toward the uterus and implants 6 to 8 days after ovulation.
2. The blastocyst secretes chorionic gonadotropin to ensure that the corpus luteum remains viable and secretes estrogen and progesterone for the first 2 to 3 months

of gestation.

## VI. Fetal Development (Box 26-2) ▲

### BOX 26-2 Fetal Development

#### *Preembryonic Period*

First 2 weeks after conception

#### *Embryonic Period*

Beginning day 15 through approximately week 8 after conception

#### *Fetal Period*

Week 9 after conception to birth

#### *Week 1*

Blastocyst is free-floating.

#### *Weeks 2 to 3*

Embryo is 1.5 to 2 mm in length.

Lung buds appear

Blood circulation begins.

Heart is tubular and begins to beat.

Neural plate becomes brain and spinal cord.

#### *Week 5*

Embryo is 0.4 to 0.5 cm in length.

Embryo is 0.4 g.

Double heart chambers are visible.

Heart is beating.

Limb buds form.

### ***Week 8***

Embryo is 3 cm in length.

Embryo is 2 g.

Eyelids begin to fuse.

Circulatory system through umbilical cord is well established.

Every organ system is present.

### ***Week 12***

Fetus is 6 to 9 cm in length.

Fetus is 19 g.

Face is well formed.

Limbs are long and slender.

Kidneys begin to form urine.

Spontaneous movements occur.

Heartbeat is detected by Doppler transducer between 10 and 12 weeks.

Gender is visually recognizable.

### ***Week 16***

Fetus is 11.5 to 13.5 cm in length.

Fetus is 100 g.

Active movements are present.

Fetal skin is transparent.

Lanugo hair begins to develop.

Skeletal ossification occurs.

### ***Week 20***

Fetus is 16 to 18.5 cm in length.

Fetus is 300 g.

Lanugo covers the entire body.

Fetus has nails.

Muscles are developed.

Enamel and dentin are depositing.

Heartbeat is detected by regular (nonelectronic) fetoscope.

### ***Week 24***

Fetus is 23 cm in length.

Fetus is 600 g.

Hair on head is well formed.

Skin is reddish and wrinkled.

Reflex hand grasp functions

Vernix caseosa covers entire body.

Fetus has ability to hear.

### ***Week 28***

Fetus is 27 cm in length.

Fetus is 1100 g.

Limbs are well flexed.

Brain is developing rapidly.

Eyelids open and close.

Lungs are developed sufficiently to provide gas exchange (lecithin forming).

If born, neonate can breathe at this time.

### ***Week 32***

Fetus is 31 cm in length.

Fetus is 1800 to 2100 g.

Bones are fully developed.

Subcutaneous fat has collected.

Lecithin-to-sphingomyelin (L/S) ratio is 1.2:1.

### ***Week 36***

Fetus is 35 cm in length.

Fetus is 2200 to 2900 g.

Skin is pink and body is rounded.

Skin is less wrinkled.

Lanugo is disappearing.

L/S ratio is greater than 2:1.

## ***Week 40***

Fetus is 40 cm in length.

Fetus is more than 3200 g.

Skin is pinkish and smooth.

Lanugo is present on upper arms and shoulders.

Vernix caseosa decreases.

Fingernails extend beyond fingertips.

Sole (plantar) creases run down to the heel.

Testes are in the scrotum.

Labia majora are well developed.

- A. Preembryonic period: First 2 weeks after conception
- B. Embryonic period: Beginning on day 15 through approximately the eighth week after conception
- C. Fetal period: Beginning at the ninth week after conception and ending with birth

## **VII. Fetal Environment**

### **A. Amnion**

1. Encloses the amniotic cavity
2. Is the inner membrane that forms about the second week of embryonic development
3. Forms a fluid-filled sac that surrounds the **embryo** and later the fetus

### **B. Chorion**

1. Is the outer membrane enclosing the amniotic cavity
2. Becomes vascularized and forms the fetal part of the placenta

### C. Amniotic fluid ▲

1. Consists of 800 to 1200 mL by the end of pregnancy
2. Surrounds, cushions, and protects the fetus and allows for fetal movement
3. Maintains the body temperature of the fetus
4. Contains fetal urine and is a measure of fetal kidney function
5. The fetus modifies the amniotic fluid through the processes of swallowing, urinating, and movement of fluid through the respiratory tract.

### D. Placenta ▲

1. The **placenta** provides for exchange of nutrients and waste products between the fetus and mother.
2. The placenta begins to form at implantation; the structure is complete by week 12.
3. It produces hormones to maintain pregnancy and assumes full responsibility for the production of these hormones by the twelfth week of gestation.
4. In the third trimester, transfer of maternal immunoglobulin provides the fetus with passive immunity to certain diseases for the first few months after birth.
5. By week 10 to 12, genetic testing can be done via chorionic villus sampling (CVS).

▲ Large particles such as bacteria cannot pass through the placenta, but nutrients, drugs, alcohol, antibodies, and viruses can pass through the placenta.

## VIII. Fetal Circulation

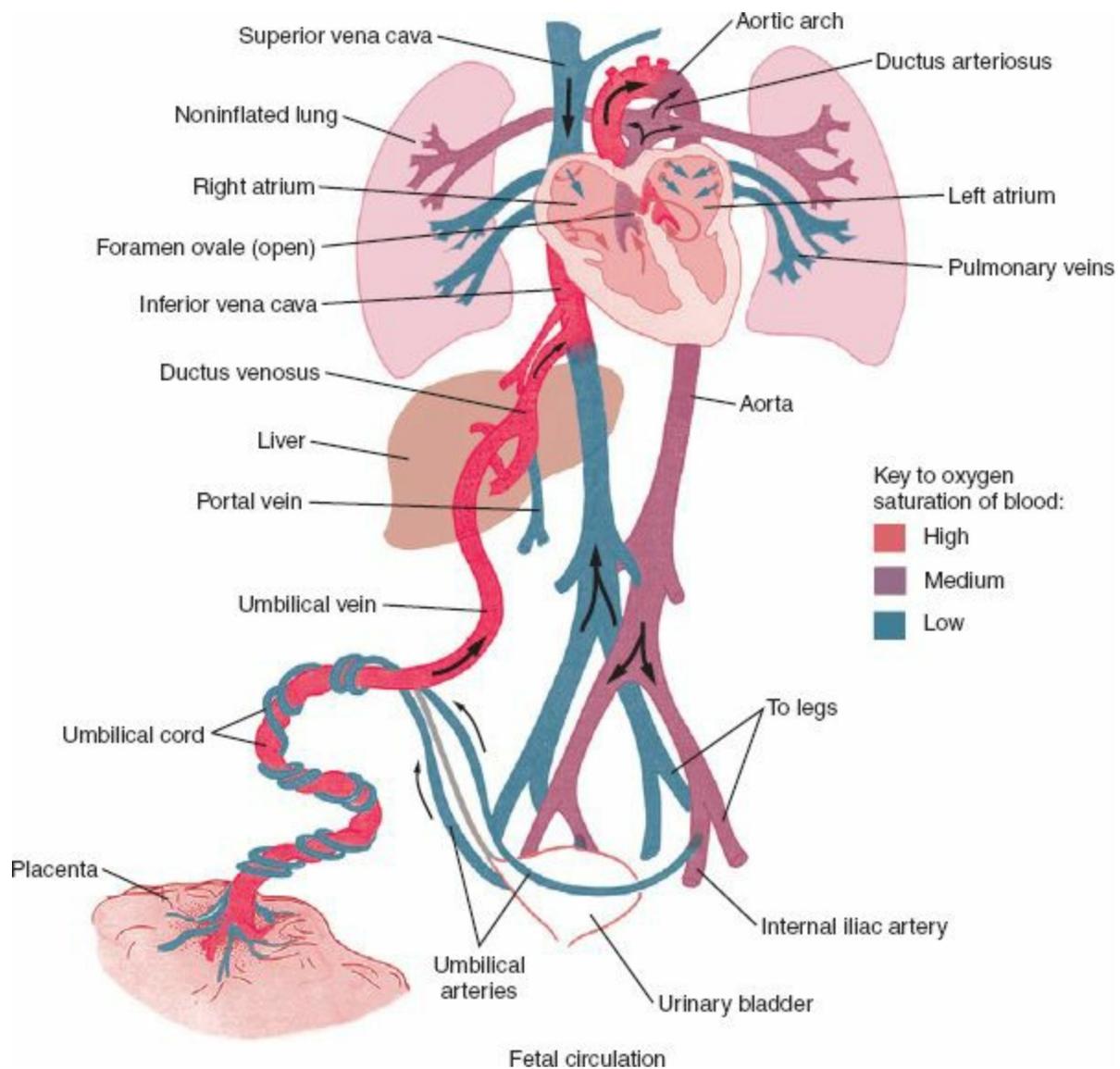
### A. Umbilical cord

1. It contains two arteries and one vein.
2. The arteries carry deoxygenated blood and waste products from the fetus.
3. The vein carries oxygenated blood and provides oxygen and nutrients to the fetus.

### B. Fetal heart rate (FHR)

1. FHR depends on gestational age; FHR is 160 to 170 beats/minute in the first trimester, but slows with fetal growth to 110 to 160 beats/minute near or at term.
2. FHR is about twice the maternal heart rate.

### C. Fetal circulation bypass ([Fig. 26-1](#))



**FIGURE 26-1** Fetal circulation. Three shunts (ductus venosus, ductus arteriosus, and foramen ovale) allow most blood from the placenta to bypass the fetal lungs and liver. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Fetal circulation bypass is present because of nonfunctioning lungs.
2. Bypasses must close after birth to allow blood to flow through the lungs and the liver.
3. The ductus arteriosus connects the pulmonary artery to the aorta, bypassing the

lungs.

4. The ductus venosus connects the umbilical vein and the inferior vena cava, bypassing the liver.
5. The foramen ovale is the opening between the right and left atria of the heart, bypassing the lungs.

## **IX. Family Planning**

### **A. Description**

1. Involves choosing when to have children
2. Includes contraception, prevention of pregnancy, and methods to achieve pregnancy

### **B. Birth control**

1. The focus of counseling on contraception must meet the needs and feelings of the woman and her partner.
2. Several factors should be considered when choosing a method of birth control, including effectiveness, safety, and personal preference.
3. The woman's preferences are most important, and cultural practices and beliefs and religious or other personal beliefs may affect the choice of contraceptives. ▲
4. Other factors that bear on selection of a contraceptive method include family-planning goals, age, frequency of intercourse, and the individual's capacity for compliance.
5. If planning goals have already been met, sterilization of either the male or female

partner may be desirable (it is important for the couple to understand that tubal reconstruction may be unsuccessful).

6. For women who frequently engage in coitus, oral contraceptives or a long-term method such as implants or an intrauterine device (IUD) may be considered.
7. When sexual activity is limited, use of spermicide, condoms, or a diaphragm may be most appropriate.
8. Because some methods have adverse effects, a signed informed consent form may be needed.
9. For additional information on the use of contraceptives, see [Chapter 55](#).

### C. Infertility

1. Infertility is the involuntary inability to conceive when desired.
2. Some factors contributing to infertility in men include abnormalities of the sperm, abnormal erections or ejaculations, or abnormalities of the seminal fluid.
3. Some factors that contribute to infertility in women include disorders of ovulation or abnormalities of the fallopian tubes or cervix.
4. Several diagnostic tests are available to determine the probable cause of infertility, and the therapy recommended may depend on the cause of the infertility.
5. Infertility options
  - a. Options include medication, surgical procedures, and therapeutic insemination.
  - b. Other therapies are available, such as in vitro fertilization, surrogate mothers, and embryo hosts.

- c. Adoption may also be an option.
- 6. The nurse needs to provide support to the couple in their decision-making process and during therapy.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Adolescent pregnancies are considered high risk due to the immaturity of the reproductive system, as well as the high-risk behaviors that some adolescents engage in. The nurse should provide information to the adolescent regarding the risks associated with drug and alcohol consumption during pregnancy. The nurse should explain to the adolescent that large particles such as bacteria cannot pass through the placenta, but nutrients, drugs, alcohol, antibodies, and viruses can pass through; therefore, measures should be taken to minimize exposure to substances that can cross the placental barrier and affect the health of the fetus. Follow-up regarding this high-risk behavior is also necessary.

### **Reference**

Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 277-279.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**242.** The nursing student is preparing to teach a prenatal class about fetal circulation.

Which statement should be included in the teaching plan?

1. “One artery carries oxygenated blood from the placenta to the fetus.”
2. “Two arteries carry oxygenated blood from the placenta to the fetus.”
3. “Two arteries carry deoxygenated blood and waste products away from the fetus to the placenta.”
4. “Two veins carry blood that is high in carbon dioxide and other waste products away from the fetus to the placenta.”

**243.** A nursing student is assigned to care for a client in labor. The nursing instructor asks the student to describe fetal circulation, specifically the ductus venosus.

Which statement is correct regarding the ductus venosus?

1. Connects the pulmonary artery to the aorta
2. Is an opening between the right and left atria
3. Connects the umbilical vein to the inferior vena cava
4. Connects the umbilical artery to the inferior vena cava

**244.** A pregnant client tells the clinic nurse that she wants to know the gender of her baby as soon as it can be determined. The nurse understands that the client should be able to find out the gender at 12 weeks’ gestation because of which factor?

1. The appearance of the fetal external genitalia
2. The beginning of differentiation in the fetal groin

3. The fetal testes are descended into the scrotal sac
4. The internal differences in males and females become apparent

**245.** The nurse is performing an assessment on a client who is at 38 weeks' gestation and notes that the fetal heart rate is 174 beats/minute. On the basis of this finding, what is the **priority** nursing action?

1. Document the finding.
2. Check the mother's heart rate.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Tell the client that the fetal heart rate is normal.

**246.** The nurse is conducting a prenatal class on the female reproductive system.

When a client in the class asks why the fertilized ovum stays in the fallopian tube for 3 days, what is the nurse's **best** response?

1. "It promotes the fertilized ovum's chances of survival."
2. "It promotes the fertilized ovum's exposure to estrogen and progesterone."
3. "It promotes the fertilized ovum's normal implantation in the top portion of the uterus."
4. "It promotes the fertilized ovum's exposure to luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone."

**247.** The nursing instructor asks a nursing student to list the characteristics of the amniotic fluid. The student responds correctly by listing which as characteristics of amniotic fluid? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Allows for fetal movement
2. Surrounds, cushions, and protects the fetus
3. Maintains the body temperature of the fetus
4. Can be used to measure fetal kidney function
5. Prevents large particles such as bacteria from passing to the fetus
6. Provides an exchange of nutrients and waste products between the mother and the fetus

**248.** A couple comes to the family planning clinic and asks about sterilization procedures. Which question by the nurse would determine whether this method of family planning would be **most appropriate**?

1. "Has either of you ever had surgery?"
2. "Do you plan to have any other children?"
3. "Do either of you have diabetes mellitus?"
4. "Do either of you have problems with high blood pressure?"

**249.** The nurse should include which statement to a pregnant client found to have a gynecoid pelvis?

1. "Your type of pelvis has a narrow pubic arch."
2. "Your type of pelvis is the most favorable for labor and birth."
3. "Your type of pelvis is a wide pelvis, but has a short diameter."
4. "You will need a cesarean section because this type of pelvis is not favorable for a vaginal delivery."

**250.** Which explanation should the nurse provide to the prenatal client about the purpose of the placenta?

1. It cushions and protects the baby.
2. It maintains the temperature of the baby.
3. It is the way the baby gets food and oxygen.
4. It prevents all antibodies and viruses from passing to the baby.

**251.** A 55-year-old male client confides in the nurse that he is concerned about his sexual function. What is the nurse's **best** response?

1. "How often do you have sexual relations?"
2. "Please share with me more about your concerns."
3. "You are still young and have nothing to be concerned about."
4. "You should not have a decline in testosterone until you are in your 80s."

## ANSWERS

**242. 3**

**Rationale:** Blood pumped by the embryo's heart leaves the embryo through two umbilical arteries. When oxygenated, the blood is returned by one umbilical vein. Arteries carry deoxygenated blood and waste products from the fetus, and the umbilical vein carries oxygenated blood and provides oxygen and nutrients to the fetus.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, fetal circulation. Recall that three umbilical vessels are within the umbilical cord (two arteries and one vein) and that the vein carries oxygenated blood and the arteries carry deoxygenated blood.

**Review:** Fetal circulation

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 382-383.

243. 3

**Rationale:** The ductus venosus connects the umbilical vein to the inferior vena cava. The foramen ovale is a temporary opening between the right and left atria. The ductus arteriosus joins the aorta and the pulmonary artery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the description of the ductus venosus. Note the relationship of the word *venosus* in the question and *vein* in the correct option.

**Review:** Fetal circulation

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 279-280; Perry et al (2010), p. 180.

244. 1

**Rationale:** By the end of the twelfth week, the external genitalia of the fetus have developed to such a degree that

the gender of the fetus can be determined visually. Differentiation of the external genitalia occurs at the end of the ninth week. Testes descend into the scrotal sac at the end of the thirty-eighth week. Internal differences in the male and female occur at the end of the seventh week.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, gender of the fetus. Remember that the gender of the fetus can be recognizable visually by the appearance of the external genitalia by gestational week 12.

**Review:** **Fetal development**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Murray, McKinney (2010), p. 100.

**245. 3**

**Rationale:** The fetal heart rate (FHR) depends on gestational age and ranges from 160 to 170 beats/minute in the first trimester, but slows with fetal growth to 110 to 160 beats/minute near or at term. At or near term, if the FHR is less than 110 beats/minute or more than 160 beats/minute with the uterus at rest, the fetus may be in distress.

Because the FHR is increased from the reference range, the nurse should notify the HCP. Options 2 and 4 are inappropriate actions based on the information in the question. Although the nurse documents the findings, based on the information in the question, the HCP needs to be notified.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, “priority.” Also note the FHR and that the client is at 38 weeks of gestation. Remember that the normal FHR at or near term is 110 to 160 beats/minute.

**Review:** Normal **fetal heart rate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Murray, McKinney (2010), p. 125.

**246. 3**

**Rationale:** The tubal isthmus remains contracted until 3 days after conception to allow the fertilized ovum to develop within the tube. This initial growth of the fertilized ovum promotes its normal implantation in the fundal portion of the uterine corpus. Estrogen is a hormone produced by the ovarian follicles, corpus luteum, adrenal cortex, and placenta during pregnancy. Progesterone is a hormone secreted by the corpus luteum of the ovary, adrenal glands, and placenta during pregnancy. Luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone are excreted by the anterior pituitary gland. The survival of the fertilized ovum does not depend on it staying in the fallopian tube for 3 days.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** “best” and use knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the female reproductive system. Remember that fertilization occurs in the fallopian tube and the fertilized ovum remains in the fallopian tube for about 3 days. This promotes its normal implantation.

**Review:** Anatomy and physiology of the **reproductive system**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 273.

❖ 247. 1, 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** The amniotic fluid surrounds, cushions, and protects the fetus. It allows the fetus to move freely and maintains the body temperature of the fetus. In addition, the amniotic fluid contains urine from the fetus and can be used to assess fetal kidney function. The placenta prevents large particles such as bacteria from passing to the fetus and provides an exchange of nutrients and waste products between the mother and the fetus.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question: the characteristics of amniotic fluid. Visualizing the location of the amniotic fluid will assist in answering this question.

**Review:** Characteristics of the **amniotic fluid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 275-276; Perry et al (2010), p. 175.

248. 2

**Rationale:** Sterilization is a method of contraception for couples who have completed their families. It should be considered a permanent end to fertility because reversal surgery is not always successful. The nurse would ask the couple about their plans for having children in the future. Options 1, 3, and 4 are unrelated to this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words**, *most appropriate*. Focus on the **subject**, sterilization procedure. Noting the relationship between the word *sterilization* and the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Effects of **sterilization**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 186-189; Perry et al (2010), p. 154.

249. 2

**Rationale:** A gynecoid pelvis is a normal female pelvis and is the most favorable for successful labor and birth. An android pelvis (resembling a male pelvis) would be unfavorable for labor because of the narrow pelvic planes. An anthropoid pelvis has an outlet that is adequate, with a normal or moderately narrow pubic arch. A platypelloid pelvis (flat pelvis) has a wide transverse diameter, but the anteroposterior diameter is short, making the outlet inadequate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, female pelvis types. Recalling that the gynecoid pelvis is the normal female pelvis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Female pelvic types**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 374, 376.

### 250. 3

**Rationale:** The placenta provides an exchange of oxygen, nutrients, and waste products between the mother and the fetus. The amniotic fluid surrounds, cushions, and protects the fetus and maintains the body temperature of the fetus. Nutrients, drugs, antibodies, and viruses can pass through the placenta.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the purpose of the placenta. Remember that the placenta provides oxygen and nutrients.

**Review:** Structure and function of the **placenta** and **amniotic fluid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 277-279.

### 251. 2

**Rationale:** The nurse needs to establish trust when discussing sexual relationships with men. Open the conversation with broad statements to determine the true nature of the client's concerns. The frequency of intercourse is not a relevant first question to establish trust. Testosterone declines with the aging process.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Determine whether further assessment or validation is needed. In this case, more information is needed to determine the nature of the client's concerns. Keeping these concepts in mind and focusing on the subject will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Sexual function** in the male client

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Reproductive

**Priority Concepts:** Reproduction; Sexuality

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1578-1579.



## CHAPTER 27

# Obstetrical Assessment

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is preparing to perform a physical assessment on a pregnant client suspected of substance (drug) abuse. What signs should the nurse assess for?

*Answer located on p. 310.*

### I. Gestation

- A. Time from **fertilization** of the ovum until the estimated date of confinement or estimated date of **delivery**
- B. About 280 days
- C. **Nägele's rule** for estimating the date of confinement (delivery) (**Box 27-1**)

**BOX 27-1** Nägele's Rule for Estimating the Date of Confinement (Delivery)

*First day of last menstrual period:* September 12, 2014

***Subtract 3 months:*** June 12, 2014

***Add 7 days:*** June 19, 2014

***Add 1 year:*** June 19, 2015

***Estimated date of confinement (delivery):*** June 19, 2015

1. Use of Nägele's rule requires that the woman have a regular 28-day menstrual cycle.
2. Subtract 3 months and add 7 days to the first day of the last menstrual period; then add 1 year. Alternatively, add 7 days to the last menstrual period and count forward 9 months. ▲

## II. **Gravidity and Parity**

### A. **Gravidity**

1. **Gravida** refers to a pregnant woman.
2. *Gravidity* refers to the number of pregnancies.
3. A nulligravida is a woman who has never been pregnant.
4. A primigravida is a woman who is pregnant for the first time.
5. A multigravida is a woman in at least her second pregnancy.

### B. **Parity**

1. **Parity** is the number of births (not the number of fetuses, e.g., twins) carried past 20 weeks' gestation, whether or not the fetus was born alive.
2. A nullipara is a woman who has not had a birth at more than 20 weeks of

gestation.

3. A primipara is a woman who has had one birth that occurred after the twentieth week of gestation.

4. A multipara is a woman who has had two or more pregnancies to the stage of fetal viability.

C. Use of GTPAL: Pregnancy outcomes can be described with the acronym *GTPAL*

(Box 27-2). ▲

### **BOX 27-2** Describing Pregnancy Outcome with GTPAL

G = Gravidity

T = Term births

P = Preterm births

A = Abortions or miscarriages

L = Current living children

#### ***Example:***

A woman is pregnant for the fourth time. She had one elective abortion in the first trimester, a daughter who was born at 40 weeks' gestation, and a son who was born at 36 weeks' gestation. She is gravida (G), 4; parity (number of births carried past 20 weeks), 2; term (T), 1 (the daughter born at 40 weeks); preterm (P), 1 (the son born at 36 weeks); abortion (A), 1 (the abortion is counted in the gravidity, but is not included in the parity because it occurred before 20 weeks); living children (L), 2.

GTPAL = 4, 1, 1, 1, 2

- 
1. *G* is gravidity, the number of pregnancies, including the present one.
  2. *T* is term births, the number born at term (longer than 37 weeks' gestation).
  3. *P* is preterm births, the number born before 37 weeks' gestation.
  4. *A* is abortions or miscarriages, the number of abortions or miscarriages (included in gravida if before 20 weeks' gestation; included in parity if past 20 weeks' gestation). A termination of the pregnancy after 20 weeks is referred to as a "therapeutic termination."
  5. *L* is the number of current living children.

### III. Pregnancy Signs ▲

#### A. Presumptive signs

1. Amenorrhea
2. Nausea and vomiting
3. Increased size and increased feeling of fullness in breasts
4. Pronounced nipples
5. Urinary frequency
6. **Quickening**: The first perception of fetal movement by the mother may occur the sixteenth to twentieth week of gestation.
7. Fatigue
8. Discoloration of the vaginal mucosa

#### B. Probable signs

1. Uterine enlargement

2. **Hegar's sign:** Compressibility and softening of the lower uterine segment that occurs at about week 6
3. **Goodell's sign:** Softening of the cervix that occurs at the beginning of the second month
4. **Chadwick's sign:** Violet coloration of the mucous membranes of the cervix, **vagina**, and vulva that occurs at about week 4
5. **Ballottement:** Rebounding of the fetus against the examiner's fingers on palpation
6. Braxton Hicks contractions (irregular painless contractions that may occur intermittently throughout pregnancy)
7. Positive pregnancy test for determination of the presence of human chorionic gonadotropin

#### C. Positive signs (diagnostic)

1. Fetal heart rate detected by electronic device (Doppler transducer) at 10 to 12 weeks and by nonelectronic device (fetoscope) at 20 weeks of gestation
2. Active fetal movements palpable by examiner
3. Outline of fetus via radiography or ultrasonography

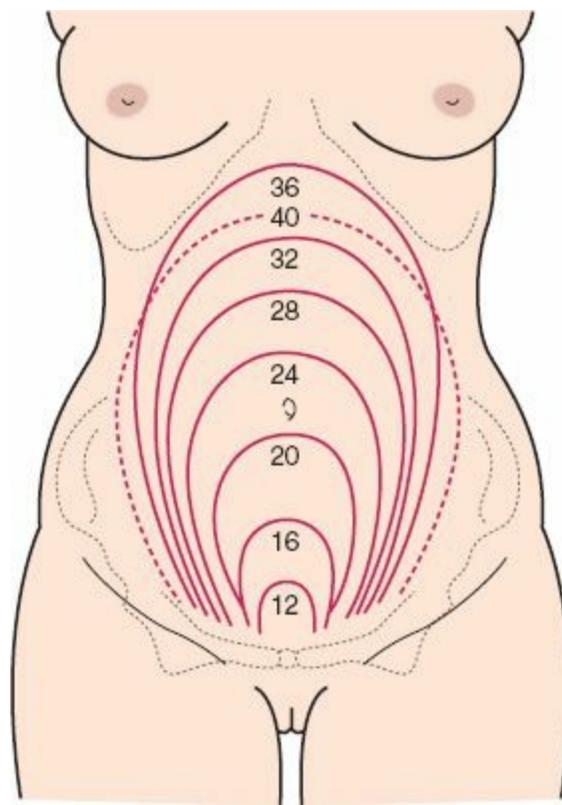
## IV. Fundal Height (Box 27-3)

### **BOX 27-3** Measuring Fundal Height

1. Place the client in the supine position.
2. Place the end of the tape measure at the level of the symphysis pubis.

3. Stretch the tape to the top of the uterine fundus.
4. Note and record the measurement.

- A. Fundal height is measured to evaluate the gestational age of the fetus.
- B. During the second and third trimesters (weeks 18 to 30), fundal height in centimeters approximately equals fetal age in weeks  $\pm 2$  cm (Fig. 27-1). ▲



**FIGURE 27-1** Height of fundus by weeks of normal gestation with a single fetus. *Dashed line*, Height after lightening (descent of the fetus toward the pelvic inlet before labor). (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

- C. At 16 weeks, the fundus can be found approximately halfway between the symphysis

pubis and the umbilicus.

- D. At 20 to 22 weeks, the fundus is approximately at the location of the umbilicus.
- E. At 36 weeks, the fundus is at the xiphoid process.

 When assessing fundal height, monitor the client closely for supine hypotension when placed in the supine position.

## V. Maternal Risk Factors

- A. Maternal age: Women younger than 20 years and older than 35 years are at risk for adverse perinatal outcomes.
- B. Adolescent pregnancy 
  1. Factors that result in adolescent pregnancy include the early onset of menarche, changing sexual behaviors in this age group, problems with family relationships, poverty, and lack of knowledge of reproduction and birth control.
  2. Major concerns related to adolescent pregnancy include poor nutritional status; emotional and behavioral difficulties; lack of support systems; increased risk of stillbirth; low-birth-weight **infants**; fetal mortality; cephalopelvic disproportion; and increased risk of maternal complications, such as hypertension, anemia, prolonged **labor**, and infections.
  3. The role of the nurse in reducing risks and consequences of adolescent pregnancy is twofold—first, to encourage early and continued prenatal care, and second, to refer the adolescent, if necessary, for appropriate assistance, which can help counter the effects of a negative socioeconomic environment.
- C. Nutrition: Adequate nutrition is necessary for normal fetal growth and development.

 Women of childbearing age should take folic acid supplements to prevent neural tube defects and orofacial clefts in the fetus.

- D. Genetic considerations:** Genetic abnormalities such as defective genes or transmissible inherited disorders can result in congenital anomalies; the nurse should perform a genetic risk assessment to determine an inheritable risk.
- E. Health care:** Failure to seek and obtain prenatal care, including dental care, increases the risk for preterm birth and low birth weight.
- F. Abuse and violence:** Physical abuse and violence can increase the risk for abruptio placentae, preterm birth, and infections from unwanted and forced sex.
- G. Medical conditions:** Concurrent medical conditions, such as but not limited to diabetes mellitus, hypertensive disorder, or cardiac disease, increase the risk of pregnancy.
- H. German measles (rubella):** Maternal infection during the first 8 weeks of gestation carries the highest rate of fetal infection. 
- I. Sexually transmitted infections**
  - 1. Syphilis**
    - a.** Organism may cross the **placenta**.
    - b.** Infection usually leads to spontaneous abortions and increases the incidence of mental subnormality and physical deformities.
  - 2. Condyloma acuminatum (human papillomavirus)**
    - a.** Transmission may occur during vaginal birth.

**b.** Infection is associated with the development of epithelial tumors of the mucous membranes of the larynx in children.

### 3. Gonorrhea

**a.** Fetus is contaminated at the time of delivery.

**b.** Maternal infection may result in postpartum infection of the **neonate**.

**c.** Risks to the neonate include ophthalmia neonatorum, pneumonia, and sepsis.

### 4. Chlamydial infection

**a.** Transmission may occur during vaginal birth and can result in neonatal conjunctivitis or pneumonitis.

**b.** Infection can cause premature rupture of the membranes, premature labor, and postpartum endometritis.

**5.** Trichomoniasis: Associated with premature rupture of the membranes and postpartum endometritis

### 6. Genital herpes simplex virus

**a.** Characterized by painful lesions, fever, chills, malaise, and severe dysuria and may last 2 to 3 weeks

**b.** Assessment includes questioning all women about symptoms and inspecting the vulvar, perineal, and vaginal areas for vesicles or areas of ulceration or crusting; this is done during pregnancy and at the onset of labor.

**c.** Vaginal birth may be acceptable; cesarean birth is recommended if visible lesions are present.

**d.** Infants who are born through an infected vagina should be carefully observed,

and samples should be taken for culture.

#### **J. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) ▲**

1. HIV is transmitted through blood; blood products; and other bodily fluids, such as urine, semen, and vaginal secretions; the virus is also transmitted through exposure to infected secretions during birth and through breast milk.
2. Repeated exposure to the virus during pregnancy through unsafe sex practices or intravenous drug use can increase the risk of transmission to the fetus.
3. Perinatal administration of zidovudine may be recommended to decrease the risk of transmission of HIV from mother to fetus.

#### **K. Substance abuse ▲**

1. Substance abuse threatens normal fetal growth and successful term completion of the pregnancy.
2. Substance abuse places the pregnancy at risk for fetal growth restriction, abruptio placentae, and fetal bradycardia.
3. Many substances cross the placenta and can be teratogenic (drugs, tobacco, alcohol); no over-the counter medications should be taken unless prescribed by a health care provider.
4. Smoking (tobacco) can result in low birth weight, a higher incidence of birth defects, and stillbirths.
5. Physical signs of drug abuse may include dilated or contracted pupils, fatigue, track (needle) marks, skin abscesses, inflamed nasal mucosa, and inappropriate behavior by the mother.

6. Consumption of alcohol during pregnancy may lead to fetal alcohol syndrome and can cause jitteriness, physical abnormalities, congenital anomalies, and growth deficits in the **newborn**.

L. Viral hepatitis (see [Chapter 29](#) for information regarding hepatitis B infection)

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Physical signs of drug abuse may include dilated or contracted pupils, fatigue, track (needle) marks, skin abscesses, inflamed nasal mucosa, and inappropriate behavior by the mother. If these are noted, the nurse should report the findings to the health care provider so that appropriate assistance can be planned to protect the mother and fetus.

#### ***Reference***

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 74.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**252.** The nurse is performing an assessment of a pregnant client who is at 28 weeks of gestation. The nurse measures the fundal height in centimeters and expects which finding?

1. 22 cm
2. 30 cm
3. 36 cm
4. 40 cm

**253.** The nurse is assisting in performing an assessment on a client who suspects that she is pregnant and is checking the client for probable signs of pregnancy. Which are probable signs of pregnancy? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Ballottement
2. Chadwick's sign
3. Uterine enlargement
4. Braxton Hicks contractions
5. Fetal heart rate detected by a nonelectronic device
6. Outline of fetus via radiography or ultrasonography

**254.** A pregnant client is seen for a regular prenatal visit and tells the nurse that she is experiencing irregular contractions. The nurse determines that she is experiencing Braxton Hicks contractions. On the basis of this finding, which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Contact the health care provider.
2. Instruct the client to maintain bed rest for the remainder of the pregnancy.
3. Inform the client that these contractions are common and may occur throughout the pregnancy.
4. Call the maternity unit and inform them that the client will be admitted in a prelabor condition.

**255.** The nurse is providing instructions to a pregnant client with genital herpes about the measures that are needed to protect the fetus. Which instruction should the nurse provide to the client?

1. Total abstinence from sexual intercourse is necessary during the entire pregnancy.
2. Sitz baths need to be taken every 4 hours while awake if vaginal lesions are present.
3. Daily administration of acyclovir (Zovirax) is necessary during the entire pregnancy.
4. A cesarean section will be necessary if vaginal lesions are present at the time of labor.

**256.** The nurse is reviewing the record of a client who has just been told that a pregnancy test is positive. The health care provider has documented the presence of Goodell's sign. This finding is most closely associated with which characteristic?

1. A softening of the cervix
2. The presence of fetal movement
3. The presence of human chorionic gonadotropin in the urine
4. A soft blowing sound that corresponds to the maternal pulse during auscultation of the uterus

**257.** A client arrives at the clinic for the first prenatal assessment. She tells the nurse that the first day of her last menstrual period was October 19, 2014. Using Nägele's rule, which expected date of delivery should the nurse document in the client's chart?

1. July 12, 2014
2. July 26, 2015
3. August 12, 2015
4. August 26, 2015

**258.** The health care provider (HCP) is assessing the client for the presence of ballottement. To make this determination, the HCP should take which action?

1. Auscultate for fetal heart sounds.
2. Assess the cervix for compressibility.
3. Palpate the abdomen for fetal movement.
4. Initiate a gentle upward tap on the cervix.

**259.** A pregnant client asks the nurse in the clinic when she will be able to begin to feel the fetus move. The nurse responds by telling the mother that fetal

movements will be noted between which weeks of gestation?

1. 6 and 8
2. 8 and 10
3. 10 and 12
4. 14 and 18

**260.** The nurse is performing an assessment of a primigravida who is being evaluated in a clinic during her second trimester of pregnancy. Which finding concerns the nurse and indicates the **need for follow-up**?

1. Quickening
2. Braxton Hicks contractions
3. Fetal heart rate of 180 beats/minute
4. Consistent increase in fundal height

**261.** The nurse is collecting data during an admission assessment of a client who is pregnant with twins. The client has a healthy 5-year-old child who was delivered at 38 weeks and tells the nurse that she does not have a history of any type of abortion or fetal demise. Using GTPAL, what should the nurse document in the client's chart?

1. G = 3, T = 2, P = 0, A = 0, L = 1
2. G = 2, T = 1, P = 0, A = 0, L = 1
3. G = 1, T = 1, P = 1, A = 0, L = 1
4. G = 2, T = 0, P = 0, A = 0, L = 1

# ANSWERS

252. 2

**Rationale:** During the second and third trimesters (weeks 18 to 30), fundal height in centimeters approximately equals the fetus' age in weeks  $\pm 2$  cm. At 16 weeks, the fundus can be located halfway between the symphysis pubis and the umbilicus. At 20 to 22 weeks, the fundus is at the umbilicus. At 36 weeks, the fundus is at the xiphoid process.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the location of fundal height. Remember that during the second and third trimesters (weeks 18 to 30), fundal height in centimeters approximately equals the fetus' age in weeks  $\pm 2$  cm.

**Review:** Measurement of **fundal height**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 341-342; McKinney et al (2013), p. 223.

❖ 253. 1, 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** The probable signs of pregnancy include uterine enlargement, Hegar's sign (compressibility and softening of the lower uterine segment that occurs at about week 6), Goodell's sign (softening of the cervix that occurs at the beginning of the second month), Chadwick's sign (violet coloration of the mucous membranes of the cervix, vagina, and vulva that occurs at about week 4), ballottement (rebounding of the fetus against the examiner's

fingers on palpation), Braxton Hicks contractions, and a positive pregnancy test for the presence of human chorionic gonadotropin. Positive signs of pregnancy include fetal heart rate detected by electronic device (Doppler transducer) at 10 to 12 weeks and by nonelectronic device (fetoscope) at 20 weeks of gestation, active fetal movements palpable by the examiner, and an outline of the fetus by radiography or ultrasonography.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focusing on the **subject**, probable signs of pregnancy, will assist in answering this question.

Remember that detection of the fetal heart rate and an outline of the fetus via radiography or ultrasonography are positive signs of pregnancy.

**Review:** Probable signs of pregnancy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 292, 330; McKinney et al (2013), p. 244.

254. 3

**Rationale:** Braxton Hicks contractions are irregular, painless contractions that may occur intermittently throughout pregnancy. Because Braxton Hicks contractions may occur and are normal in some pregnant women during pregnancy, options 1, 2, and 4 are unnecessary and inappropriate actions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words**, *most appropriate*. Options 1 and 4 are **comparable or alike** and can be eliminated first. From the remaining options, knowing that Braxton Hicks contractions are common and normal and can occur throughout pregnancy will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Physiology associated with **Braxton Hicks contractions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 245.

255. 4

**Rationale:** For women with active lesions, either recurrent or primary at the time of labor, delivery should be by cesarean section to prevent the fetus from being in contact with the genital herpes. The safety of acyclovir has not been established during pregnancy, and it should be used only when a life-threatening infection is present. Clients should be advised to abstain from sexual contact while the lesions are present. If this is an initial infection, clients should continue to abstain until they become culture-negative because prolonged viral shedding may occur in such cases. Keeping the genital area clean and dry promotes healing.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because of the **closed-ended word** *entire* in these options. From the remaining options, recalling that the lesions should be kept clean and dry to promote healing will assist in eliminating option 2.

**Review:** Maternal risk factors associated with **genital herpes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Sexuality

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 154.

**256. 1**

**Rationale:** At the beginning of the second month of gestation, the cervix becomes softer as a result of increased vascularity and hyperplasia, which cause Goodell's sign. Cervical softening is noted by the examiner during pelvic examination. Goodell's sign does not indicate the presence of fetal movement. Human chorionic gonadotropin noted in maternal urine is a probable sign of pregnancy. A soft blowing sound that corresponds to the maternal pulse may be auscultated over the uterus and is caused by blood circulating through the placenta.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and think about the physiological findings in Goodell's sign to answer this question. Remember that Goodell's sign refers to a softening of the cervix.

**Review: Goodell's sign**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 293-294.

**257. 2**

**Rationale:** Accurate use of Nägele's rule requires that the woman have a regular 28-day menstrual cycle. Subtract 3 months and add 7 days to the first day of the last menstrual period, and then add 1 year to that date: first day of

the last menstrual period, October 19, 2014; subtract 3 months, July 19, 2014; add 7 days, July 26, 2014; add 1 year, July 26, 2015.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and use knowledge regarding Nägele’s rule to answer this question.

This rule requires addition and subtraction, so read all the options carefully, noting the dates and years in the options, before selecting an answer.

**Review: Nägele’s rule**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 330.

**258. 4**

**Rationale:** Ballottement is a technique of palpating a floating structure by bouncing it gently and feeling it rebound.

In the technique used to palpate the fetus, the examiner places a finger in the vagina and taps gently upward, causing the fetus to rise. The fetus then sinks, and the examiner feels a gentle tap on the finger. Options 1, 2, and 3 are not assessment techniques to check for ballottement. Option 2 is related to Hegar’s sign. Options 1 and 3 are a part of fetal assessment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, ballottement. Recalling the definition of ballottement—that it is a technique of palpating a floating structure by bouncing it gently and feeling it rebound—will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Ballottement**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 294-295, 330.

**259. 4**

**Rationale:** Quickening is fetal movement that is felt by the mother. In the multiparous woman this may occur as early as the fourteenth to sixteenth weeks. The nulliparous woman may not notice these sensations until the eighteenth week or later. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect time frames because quickening does not occur this early during pregnancy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and use knowledge regarding the occurrence of quickening. In this situation, selecting the option that indicates the greatest length of gestational time is best.

**Review: Quickening**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 294.

**260. 3**

**Rationale:** The normal range of the fetal heart rate depends on gestational age. The heart rate is usually 160 to 170 beats/minute in the first trimester and slows with fetal growth. Near and at term, the fetal heart rate ranges from 110 to 160 beats/minute. Options 1, 2, and 4 are normal expected findings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for follow-up*, and note that the client is in the second trimester of pregnancy. Recalling the normal fetal heart rate will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal assessment findings in pregnancy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 416.

261. 2

**Rationale:** Pregnancy outcomes can be described with the acronym *GTPAL*. *G* is gravidity, the number of pregnancies; *T* is term births, the number born at term (longer than 37 weeks); *P* is preterm births, the number born before 37 weeks' gestation; *A* is abortions or miscarriages, the number of abortions or miscarriages (included in gravida if before 20 weeks' gestation; included in parity [number of births] if past 20 weeks' gestation); and *L* is the number of current living children. A woman who is pregnant with twins and has a child has a gravida of 2. Because the child was delivered at 38 weeks, the number of term births is 1, and the number of preterm births is 0. The number of abortions is 0, and the number of living children is 1.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question. Recalling the meaning of the acronym *GTPAL* and focusing on the information in the question will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: GTPAL**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Sexuality

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 289-290; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 246-247.



## CHAPTER 28

# Prenatal Period

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

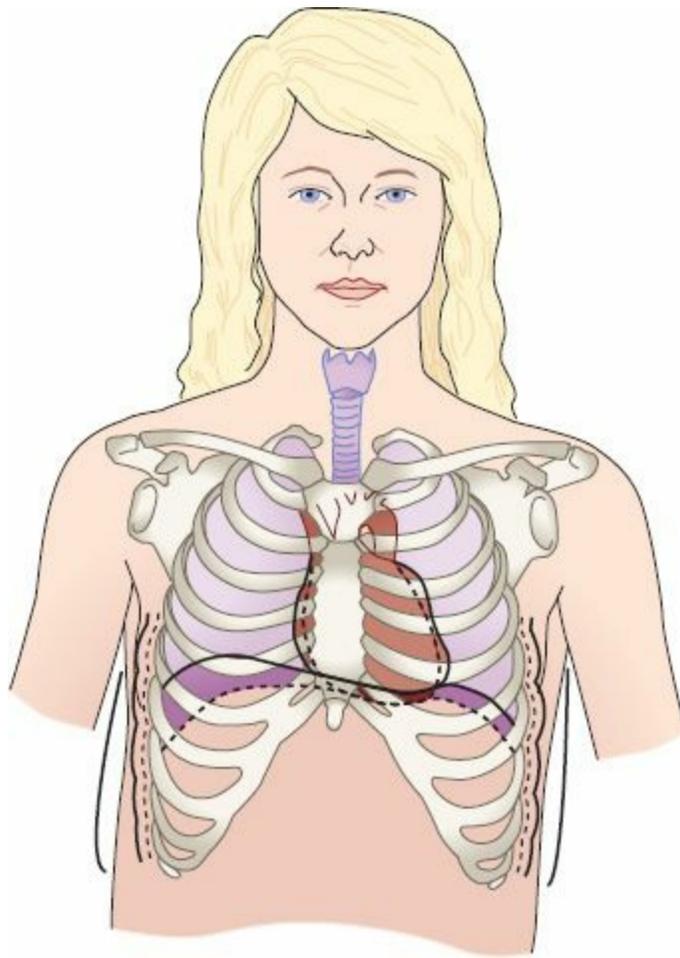
The pregnant client tells the nurse that she is experiencing morning sickness. What should the nurse instruct the client to do to assist in relief of this problem?

*Answer located on p. 322.*

### I. Physiological Maternal Changes ▲

#### A. Cardiovascular system

1. Circulating blood volume increases, plasma increases, and total red blood cell volume increases (total volume increases by approximately 40% to 50%).
2. Physiological anemia occurs as the plasma increase exceeds the increase in production of red blood cells.
3. Iron requirements are increased.
4. Heart size increases, and the heart is elevated slightly upward and to the left because of displacement of the diaphragm as the **uterus** enlarges (Fig. 28-1).



**FIGURE 28-1** Changes in position of heart, lungs, and thoracic cage in pregnancy. *Broken line*, nonpregnant state; *solid line*, change that occurs in pregnancy. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

5. Retention of sodium and water may occur.

## B. Respiratory system

1. Oxygen consumption increases by approximately 15% to 20%.
2. Diaphragm is elevated because of the enlarged uterus (see [Fig. 28-1](#)).
3. Shortness of breath may be experienced.

**⚠** During pregnancy, a woman's pulse rate may increase about 10 to 15

beats/minute, the blood pressure slightly decreases in the second trimester, and the respiratory rate remains unchanged or slightly increases.

### C. Gastrointestinal system

1. Nausea and vomiting may occur as a result of the secretion of human chorionic gonadotropin; it subsides by the third month.
2. Poor appetite may occur because of decreased gastric motility.
3. Alterations in taste and smell may occur.
4. Constipation may occur because of an increase in progesterone production or pressure of the uterus resulting in decreased gastrointestinal motility.
5. Flatulence and heartburn may occur because of decreased gastrointestinal motility and slowed emptying of the stomach caused by an increase in progesterone production.
6. Hemorrhoids may occur because of increased venous pressure.
7. Gum tissue may become swollen and easily bleed because of increasing levels of estrogen.
8. Ptyalism (excessive secretion of saliva) may occur because of increasing levels of estrogen.

### D. Renal system

1. Frequency of urination increases in the first and third trimesters because of increased bladder sensitivity and pressure of the enlarging uterus on the bladder.
2. Decreased bladder tone may occur and is caused by an increase in progesterone and estrogen levels; bladder capacity increases in response to increasing levels

of progesterone.

3. Renal threshold for glucose may be reduced.

#### E. Endocrine system

1. Basal metabolic rate increases and metabolic function increases.

2. The anterior lobe of the pituitary gland enlarges.

3. The thyroid enlarges slightly, and thyroid activity increases.

4. The parathyroid increases in size.

5. Aldosterone levels gradually increase.

6. Body weight increases.

7. Water retention is increased, which can contribute to weight gain.

#### F. Reproductive system

##### 1. Uterus

a. Uterus enlarges, increasing in mass from approximately 60 to 1000 g as a result of hyperplasia (influence of estrogen) and hypertrophy.

b. Size and number of blood vessels and lymphatics increase.

c. Irregular contractions occur.

##### 2. Cervix

a. Cervix becomes shorter, more elastic, and larger in diameter.

b. Endocervical glands secrete a thick mucous plug, which is expelled from the canal when dilation begins.

c. Increased vascularization and an increase in estrogen cause softening and a violet discoloration known as **Chadwick's sign**, which occurs at about 4 weeks

of gestation.

### 3. Ovaries

- a. A major function of the ovaries is to secrete progesterone for the first 6 to 7 weeks of pregnancy.
- b. The maturation of new follicles is blocked.
- c. The ovaries cease ovum production.

### 4. Vagina

- a. Hypertrophy and thickening of the muscle occur.
- b. An increase in vaginal secretions is experienced; secretions are usually thick, white, and acidic.

5. Breasts: Breast changes occur because of the increasing effects of estrogen and progesterone (Fig. 28-2).



**FIGURE 28-2** Enlarged breasts in pregnancy with venous network and darkened areolae and nipples. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

- a. Breast size increases, and breasts may be tender.
- b. Nipples become more pronounced.
- c. The areolae become darker in color.
- d. Superficial veins become prominent.
- e. Hypertrophy of Montgomery's follicles occurs.
- f. Colostrum may leak from the breast.

## G. Skin

1. Some changes occur because the levels of melanocyte-stimulating hormone increase as a result of an increase in estrogen and progesterone levels; these changes include the following:
  - a. Increased pigmentation
  - b. Dark streak down the midline of the abdomen (linea nigra) (Fig. 28-3)



**FIGURE 28-3** Striae gravidarum and linea nigra in a dark-skinned woman. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby. Courtesy Shannon Perry, Phoenix, AZ.)

- c. Chloasma (mask of pregnancy)—a blotchy brownish hyperpigmentation, over the forehead, cheeks, and nose
- d. Reddish purple stretch marks (striae) on the abdomen, breasts, thighs, and upper arms (see Fig. 28-3)

2. Vascular spider nevi may occur on the neck, chest, face, arms, and legs.

3. Rate of hair growth may increase.

#### H. Musculoskeletal system:

1. Changes in the center of gravity begin in the second trimester and are caused by the hormones relaxin and progesterone.

2. The lumbrosacral curve increases.

3. Aching, numbness, and weakness may result; walking becomes more difficult, and the woman develops a waddling gait and is at risk for falls.

4. Relaxation and increased mobility of pelvic joints occurs, which permit enlargement of pelvic dimensions.

5. Abdominal wall stretches with loss of tone throughout pregnancy, regained postpartum.

6. Umbilicus flattens or protrudes.

 During pregnancy, postural changes occur as the increased weight of the uterus causes a forward pull of the bony pelvis. It is important for the nurse to encourage the client to implement measures that maintain safety and correct posture to prevent a backache.

## II. Psychological Maternal Changes

## **A. Ambivalence**

1. Ambivalence occurs early in pregnancy, even when the pregnancy is planned.
2. The mother may experience a dependence-independence conflict and ambivalence related to role changes.
3. The father may experience ambivalence related to the new role that he is assuming, increased financial responsibilities, and sharing the wife's attention with the child.

**B. Acceptance:** Factors that may be related to acceptance of the pregnancy are the woman's readiness for the experience and her identification with the motherhood role.

## **C. Emotional lability**

1. Emotional lability may be manifested by frequent changes of emotional states or extremes in emotional states.
2. These emotional changes are common, but the mother may think that these changes are abnormal.

## **D. Body image changes**

1. The changes in a woman's perception of her image during pregnancy occur gradually and may be positive or negative.
2. The physical changes and symptoms that the woman experiences during pregnancy contribute to her body image.

## **E. Relationship with the fetus** 🟩

1. The woman may daydream to prepare for motherhood and think about the maternal

qualities that she would like to possess.

2. The woman first accepts the biological fact that she is pregnant.
3. The woman next accepts the growing fetus as distinct from herself and a person to nurture.
4. Finally, the woman prepares realistically for the birth and parenting of the child.

### **III. Discomforts of Pregnancy** ▲

#### **A. Nausea and vomiting**

1. Occurs in the first trimester and subsides by the third month
2. Caused by elevated levels of human chorionic gonadotropin and changes in carbohydrate metabolism
3. Interventions
  - a. Eating dry crackers before arising
  - b. Avoiding brushing teeth immediately after arising
  - c. Eating small, frequent, low-fat meals during the day
  - d. Drinking liquids between meals rather than at meals
  - e. Avoiding fried foods and spicy foods
  - f. Asking the health care provider (HCP) about acupuncture (some types may require a prescription)
  - g. Asking the HCP about the use of herbal remedies

#### **B. Syncope**

1. Usually occurs in the first trimester; supine hypotension occurs particularly in the second and third trimesters

2. May be triggered hormonally or caused by the increased blood volume, anemia, fatigue, sudden position changes, or lying supine

3. Interventions

a. Sitting with the feet elevated

b. Risk for falls, teach to change positions slowly

 The nurse needs to instruct the pregnant woman to avoid lying in the supine position, particularly in the second and third trimesters. The supine position places the woman at risk for supine hypotension, which occurs as a result of pressure of the uterus on the inferior vena cava.

C. Urinary urgency and frequency

1. Usually occurs in the first and third trimesters

2. Caused by pressure of the uterus on the bladder

3. Interventions

a. Drinking no less than 2000 mL of fluid during the day

b. Limiting fluid intake in the evening

c. Voiding at regular intervals

d. Sleeping side-lying at night

e. Wearing perineal pads, if necessary

f. Performing Kegel exercises

D. Breast tenderness

1. Can occur in the first through the third trimesters

2. Caused by increased levels of estrogen and progesterone

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Wearing a supportive bra
- b.** Avoiding the use of soap on the nipples and areolar area to prevent drying of skin

### **E. Increased vaginal discharge**

- 1.** Can occur in the first through the third trimesters
- 2.** Caused by hypertrophy and thickening of the vaginal mucosa and increased mucus production

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Using proper cleansing and hygiene techniques
- b.** Wearing cotton underwear
- c.** Avoiding douching
- d.** Consulting the HCP if infection is suspected

### **F. Nasal stuffiness**

- 1.** Occurs in the first through third trimesters
- 2.** Results from increased estrogen, which causes swelling of the nasal tissues and dryness

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Encouraging the use of a humidifier
- b.** Avoiding the use of nasal sprays or antihistamines (the HCP should be consulted about their use)

### **G. Fatigue**

1. Occurs usually in the first and third trimesters
2. Usually results from hormonal changes
3. Interventions
  - a. Arranging frequent rest periods throughout the day
  - b. Using correct posture and body mechanics
  - c. Obtaining regular exercise
  - d. Performing muscle relaxation and strengthening exercises for the legs and hip joints
  - e. Avoiding eating and drinking foods containing stimulants throughout the pregnancy

#### **H. Heartburn**

1. Occurs in the second and the third trimesters
2. Results from increased progesterone levels, decreased gastrointestinal motility, esophageal reflux, and displacement of the stomach by the enlarging uterus
3. Interventions
  - a. Eating small, frequent meals
  - b. Sitting upright for 30 minutes after a meal
  - c. Drinking milk between meals
  - d. Avoiding fatty and spicy foods
  - e. Performing tailor-sitting exercises
  - f. Consulting with the HCP about the use of antacids

#### **I. Ankle edema**

1. Usually occurs in the second and the third trimesters
2. Results from vasodilation, venous stasis, and increased venous pressure below the uterus
3. Interventions
  - a. Elevating the legs at least twice a day and when resting
  - b. Sleeping in a side-lying position
  - c. Wearing supportive stockings or support hose
  - d. Avoiding sitting or standing in one position for long periods

#### **J. Varicose veins**

1. Usually occur in the second and the third trimesters
2. Result from weakening walls of the veins or valves and venous congestion
3. Interventions
  - a. Wearing supportive stockings or support hose
  - b. Elevating the feet when sitting
  - c. Lying with the feet and hips elevated
  - d. Avoiding long periods of standing or sitting
  - e. Moving about while standing to improve circulation
  - f. Avoiding leg crossing
  - g. Avoiding constricting articles of clothing such as knee-high stockings
4. Thrombophlebitis is rare, but it may occur.
  - a. Teaching leg exercises
  - b. Avoiding airline travel

## **K. Headaches**

1. Usually occur in the second and the third trimesters
2. Result from changes in blood volume and vascular tone
3. Interventions
  - a. Changing position slowly
  - b. Applying a cool cloth to the forehead
  - c. Eating a small snack
  - d. Using acetaminophen (Tylenol) only if prescribed by the HCP

## **L. Hemorrhoids**

1. Usually occur in the second and the third trimesters
2. Result from increased venous pressure and constipation
3. Interventions
  - a. Soaking in a warm sitz bath
  - b. Sitting on a soft pillow
  - c. Eating high-fiber foods and drinking sufficient fluids to avoid constipation
  - d. Increasing exercise, such as walking
  - e. Applying ointments, suppositories, or compresses as prescribed by the HCP

## **M. Constipation**

1. Usually occurs in the second and the third trimesters
2. Results from an increase in progesterone production, decreased intestinal motility, displacement of the intestines, pressure of the uterus, and taking iron supplements
3. Interventions

- a. Eating high-fiber foods such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables
- b. Drink no less than 2000 mL per day.
- c. Exercising regularly, such as a daily 20-minute walk
- d. Consulting with the health care provider about interventions such as the use of stool softeners, laxatives, or enemas

#### **N. Backache**

1. Usually occurs in the second and the third trimesters
2. Caused by an exaggerated lumbosacral curve resulting from an enlarged uterus
3. Risk for falls; teach to move about slowly
4. Interventions
  - a. Obtaining rest
  - b. Using correct posture and body mechanics
  - c. Wearing low-heeled, comfortable, and supportive shoes
  - d. Performing pelvic tilt (rock) exercises and conscious relaxation exercises
  - e. Sleeping on a firm mattress

#### **O. Leg cramps**

1. Usually occur in the second and the third trimesters
2. Result from an altered calcium-phosphorus balance and pressure of the uterus on nerves or from fatigue
3. Interventions
  - a. Getting regular exercise, especially walking
  - b. Dorsiflexing the foot of the affected leg

c. Increasing calcium intake

**P. Shortness of breath**

1. Can occur in the second and the third trimesters
2. Results from pressure on the diaphragm from the enlarged uterus
3. Interventions
  - a. Taking frequent rest periods
  - b. Sitting and sleeping with the head elevated or on the side
  - c. Avoiding overexertion

**IV. Antepartum Diagnostic Testing**

 The usual schedule for antepartum health care visits is every 4 weeks for the first 28 to 32 weeks, every 2 weeks from 32 to 36 weeks, and every week from 36 to 40 weeks.

**A. Blood type and Rh factor** 

1. ABO typing is performed to determine the woman's blood type in the ABO antigen system.
2. Rh typing is done to determine the woman's blood type in the rhesus antigen system. (*Rh positive* indicates the presence of the antigen; *Rh negative* indicates the absence of the antigen.)
3. If the client is Rh negative and has a negative antibody screen, she will need repeat antibody screens and should receive Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) at 28 weeks' gestation.

## B. Rubella titer ▲

1. If the client has a negative titer (less than 1:8), indicating susceptibility to the rubella virus, she should receive the appropriate immunization postpartum.
2. The client must be using effective birth control at the time of the immunization and must be counseled not to become pregnant for 1 to 3 months after immunization (as specified by the HCP) and to avoid contact with anyone who is immunocompromised.
3. If the rubella vaccine is administered at the same time as Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin, it may not be effective.
4. Rubella vaccine is administered postpartum (before discharge) via the subcutaneous route if the titer is less than 1:8; inquire about sensitivity to eggs.

⚠ Rubella vaccine is not given during pregnancy because the live attenuated virus may cross the placenta and present a risk to the developing fetus.

## C. Hemoglobin and hematocrit levels

1. Hemoglobin and hematocrit levels decline during gestation as a result of increased plasma volume.
2. A decrease in the hemoglobin level to less than 10 g/dL or in the hematocrit level to less than 30% indicates anemia.

D. Papanicolaou's smear is done during the initial prenatal examination to screen for cervical neoplasia.

E. Sexually transmitted infections ([Table 28-1](#))

**TABLE 28-1 Monitoring for Sexually Transmitted Infections**

Disease	Laboratory Test
Gonorrhea	Vaginal culture is done during initial prenatal examination to screen for gonorrhea. Culture may be repeated during third trimester in high-risk clients.
Syphilis	Culture is done of lesions (if present) during initial prenatal examination to screen for syphilis. Diagnosis depends on microscopic examination of primary and secondary lesion tissue and serology (Venereal Disease Research Laboratory [VDRL] or rapid plasma reagin [RPR] test) during latency and late infection. Culture may be repeated during third trimester in high-risk clients.
Condyloma acuminatum (human papillomavirus)	Culture is indicated for clients with positive history or with active lesions. Test is performed to determine route of delivery. Weekly cultures may be done at week 35 or 36 of pregnancy until delivery.
<i>Chlamydia</i>	Vaginal culture is indicated for all pregnant clients if client is in a high-risk group or if infants from previous pregnancies have developed neonatal conjunctivitis or pneumonia.
Trichomoniasis	Normal saline wet smear of vaginal secretions is checked for presence of protozoa. Associated with premature rupture of membranes and postpartum endometritis.
Genital herpes simplex virus (HSV-2)	Culture is done of lesions (if present) during initial prenatal examination to screen for HSV. Microscopic examination is done to determine presence of virus. Additional screening may be necessary as pregnancy progresses.
HIV	Testing may be done for high-risk client. Common tests to determine the presence of antibodies include ELISA, Western blot, and immunofluorescence assay (IFA).

*ELISA*, Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay; *HIV*, human immunodeficiency virus.

## F. Sickle cell screening

1. Screening is indicated for clients at risk for sickle cell disease.
2. A positive test may indicate a need for further screening.

## G. Tuberculin skin test ▲

1. The HCP may prefer to perform this skin test after **delivery**.
2. A positive skin test indicates the need for a chest radiograph (using an abdominal lead shield) to rule out active disease; in a pregnant client, chest radiography would not be performed until after 20 weeks of gestation (after the fetal organs are formed).

3. Converters to positive may be referred for treatment with medication after delivery.

## **H. Hepatitis B surface antigens**

1. Testing for hepatitis antigens is recommended for all women because of the prevalence of the disease in the general population.
2. Vaccination for hepatitis B antigen may be specifically indicated for the following:
  - a. Health care workers
  - b. Intravenous drug users
  - c. Clients born in Asia, Africa, Haiti, or the Pacific islands
  - d. Clients with previously undiagnosed jaundice or chronic liver disease
  - e. Clients with tattoos
  - f. Clients with histories of blood transfusions
  - g. Clients with histories of multiple episodes of sexually transmitted infections
  - h. Clients who have been rejected previously as blood donors
  - i. Clients with histories of dialysis or renal transplantation
  - j. Clients from households having members infected with hepatitis B or hemodialysis clients
3. Hepatitis B vaccine is not contraindicated during pregnancy and may be recommended by the HCP
4. See [Chapter 56](#) for additional information about hepatitis.

## **I. Urinalysis and urine culture**

1. A urine specimen for glucose and protein determinations should be obtained at every antepartum visit.
2. Glycosuria is a common result of decreased renal threshold that occurs during pregnancy.
3. If glycosuria persists, it may indicate diabetes.
4. White blood cells in the urine may indicate infection.
5. Ketonuria may result from insufficient food intake or vomiting.
6. Levels of 2 + to 4 + protein in the urine may indicate infection or preeclampsia.

#### J. Ultrasonography

1. Outlines and identifies fetal and maternal structures
2. Assists in confirming gestational age and estimated date of delivery and evaluating **amniotic fluid** volume (amniotic fluid index), which is done via special measurements
3. May be done abdominally or transvaginally during pregnancy
4. Interventions
  - a. If an abdominal ultrasound is being performed, the woman may need to drink water to fill the bladder before the procedure to obtain a better image of the fetus.
  - b. If a transvaginal ultrasound is being performed, a lubricated probe is inserted into the **vagina**.
  - c. The client should be informed that the test presents no known risks to the client or the fetus.

## **K. Biophysical profile**

1. Noninvasive assessment of the fetus that includes fetal breathing movements, fetal movements, fetal tone, amniotic fluid index, and fetal heart rate patterns via a nonstress test
2. Normal fetal biophysical activities indicate that the central nervous system is functional and that the fetus is not hypoxemic.

## **L. Doppler blood flow analysis: Noninvasive (ultrasonography) method of studying the blood flow in the fetus and **placenta****

## **M. Percutaneous umbilical blood sampling**

1. Percutaneous umbilical blood sampling is performed if fetal blood sampling is necessary; it involves insertion of a needle directly into the fetal umbilical vessel under ultrasound guidance.
2. Fetal heart rate monitoring is necessary for 1 hour after the procedure, and a follow-up ultrasound to check for bleeding or hematoma formation is done 1 hour after the procedure.

## **N. $\alpha$ -Fetoprotein screening**

1. Assesses the quantity of fetal serum proteins; abnormal protein levels are associated with open neural tube and abdominal wall defects
2. Can detect spina bifida and Down syndrome
3. If abnormal, repeat test; false positive is common
4. Interventions
  - a.  $\alpha$ -Fetoprotein level is determined by a maternal blood sample drawn between

16 and 18 weeks' gestation.

- b. If the level is abnormal and the gestation is less than 18 weeks, a second sample is drawn and screened.
- c. An ultrasound is performed for elevated levels to rule out fetal abnormalities or multiple gestation.

#### **O. Chorionic villus sampling**

1. Performed for the purpose of detecting genetic abnormalities; the HCP aspirates a small sample of chorionic villus tissue at 10 to 13 weeks' gestation.
2. Interventions
  - a. Obtain informed consent.
  - b. The client may need to drink water to fill the bladder before the procedure to aid in the visualization of the uterus for catheter insertion.
  - c. Obtain baseline vital signs and fetal heart rate; monitor frequently after the procedure.
  - d. Rh-negative women may be given Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin because chorionic villus sampling increases the risk of Rh sensitization.

#### **P. Amniocentesis**

1. Aspiration of amniotic fluid; best performed between 15 and 20 weeks of pregnancy because amniotic fluid volume is adequate and many viable fetal cells are present in the fluid by this time
2. Performed to determine genetic disorders, metabolic defects, and fetal lung maturity

### 3. Risks

- a. Maternal hemorrhage
- b. Infection
- c. Rh isoimmunization
- d. Abruptio placentae
- e. Amniotic fluid emboli
- f. Premature rupture of the membranes

### 4. Interventions

- a. Obtain informed consent.
- b. If less than 20 weeks' gestation, the client should have a full bladder to support the uterus; if performed after 20 weeks' gestation, the client should have an empty bladder to minimize chance of puncture.
- c. Prepare the client for ultrasonography, which is performed to locate the placenta and avoid puncture.
- d. Obtain baseline vital signs and fetal heart rate; monitor every 15 minutes.
- e. Position the client supine during the examination and on the left side after the procedure.

**!** After chorionic villus sampling and amniocentesis, instruct the client that if chills, fever, bleeding, leakage of fluid at the needle insertion site, decreased fetal movement, uterine contractions, or cramping occurs, she must notify her HCP.

**Q.** Kick counts (fetal movement counting)

1. The client sits quietly or lies down on her side and counts fetal kicks as instructed.
2. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if there are fewer than 10 kicks in two consecutive 2-hour periods or as instructed by her HCP.

#### **R. Fern test**

1. The fern test is a microscopic slide test to determine the presence of amniotic fluid leakage.
2. Using sterile technique, a specimen is obtained from the external os of the cervix and vaginal pool and is examined on a slide under a microscope.
3. A fernlike pattern produced by the effects of salts of the amniotic fluid indicates the presence of amniotic fluid.
4. Interventions
  - a. Position the client in the dorsal lithotomy position.
  - b. Instruct the client to cough, which causes the amniotic fluid to leak from the uterus if the membranes are ruptured.

#### **S. Nitrazine test**

1. A nitrazine test strip is used to detect the presence of amniotic fluid in vaginal secretions.
2. Vaginal secretions have a pH of 4.5 to 5.5 and do not affect the nitrazine strip or swab.
3. Amniotic fluid has a pH of 7.0 to 7.5 and turns the nitrazine strip or swab blue.
4. Interventions
  - a. Position the client in the dorsal lithotomy position.

- b. Touch the test tape to the fluid.
- c. Assess the test tape for a blue-green, blue-gray, or deep blue color, which indicates that the membranes are ruptured, causing leakage of amniotic fluid.

#### T. Fibronectin test

1. Sampling of cervical and vaginal secretions for fetal fibronectin (a protein present in fetal tissues normally found in cervical and vaginal secretions until 16 to 20 weeks' gestation and again at or near term)
2. Positive results indicate the onset of **labor** in 1 to 3 weeks
3. Test used if at risk for preterm labor, before 37 weeks' gestation
4. Interventions
  - a. Client placed in lithotomy position for sterile speculum exam
  - b. Cervical secretions are obtained with cotton swab
  - c. Laboratory tests for the presence of fibronectin

#### U. Nonstress test ([Box 28-1](#))

### **BOX 28-1** Nonstress Test

#### Description

- Test is performed to assess placental function and oxygenation.
- Test determines fetal well-being.
- Test evaluates the fetal heart rate (FHR) response to fetal movement.

#### Interventions

- An external ultrasound transducer and tocodynamometer are applied to the client,

and a tracing of at least 20 minutes' duration is obtained so that the FHR and uterine activity can be observed.

- Baseline blood pressure is obtained, and blood pressure is monitored frequently.
- The client is placed in the lateral (side-lying) position to avoid vena cava compression.
- The client may be asked to press a button every time she feels fetal movement; the monitor records a mark at each point of fetal movement, which is used as a reference point to assess the FHR response.

## Results

### ***Reactive Nonstress Test (Normal, Negative)***

“Reactive” indicates a healthy fetus.

The result requires two or more FHR accelerations of at least 15 beats/minute, lasting at least 15 seconds from the beginning of the acceleration to the end, in association with fetal movement, during a 20-minute period.

### ***Nonreactive Nonstress Test (Abnormal)***

No accelerations or accelerations of less than 15 beats/minute or lasting less than 15 seconds in duration occur during a 40-minute observation.

### ***Unsatisfactory***

The result cannot be interpreted because of the poor quality of the FHR tracing.

## V. Contraction stress test (Box 28-2)

### Description

- Test assesses placental oxygenation and function.
- Test determines fetal ability to tolerate labor and determines fetal well-being.
- Fetus is exposed to the stress of contractions to assess the adequacy of placental perfusion under simulated labor conditions.
- Test is performed if nonstress test is abnormal.

### Interventions

- External fetal monitor is applied to the client, and a 20- to 30-minute baseline strip is recorded.
- The uterus is stimulated to contract by the administration of a dilute dose of oxytocin (Pitocin) or by having the client use nipple stimulation until three palpable contractions with a duration of 40 seconds or more in a 10-minute period have been achieved.
- Frequent maternal blood pressure readings are done, and the mother is monitored closely while increasing doses of oxytocin are given.

### Results

#### ***Negative Contraction Stress Test (Normal)***

A negative result is represented by no late decelerations of the fetal heart rate (FHR).

#### ***Positive Contraction Stress Test (Abnormal)***

A positive result is represented by late decelerations of the FHR, with 50% or more

of the contractions in the absence of hyperstimulation of the uterus.

### ***Equivocal***

An equivocal result contains decelerations, but with less than 50% of the contractions, or uterine activity shows a hyperstimulated uterus.

### ***Unsatisfactory***

An unsatisfactory result means that adequate uterine contractions cannot be achieved, or the FHR tracing is of insufficient quality for adequate interpretation.

## **V. Nutrition**

### **A. General guidelines**

1. Guidelines for health and nutrition information for breast-feeding and pregnant women are located at the U.S. Department of Agriculture ChooseMyPlate website at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>. The woman should be assisted with accessing this site and preparing a nutritional plan.
2. The average expected weight gain during pregnancy is 25 to 35 lb for women with a normal prepregnancy weight.
3. An increase of about 300 cal/day is needed during pregnancy.
4. Calorie needs are greater in the last two trimesters than in the first.
5. An increase of about 500 cal/day is needed during lactation.
6. A diet high in folic acid and folic acid supplements is recommended.
7. A diet high in folic acid is necessary for all women of childbearing age to prevent

neural tube defects and orofacial clefts in the fetus.

8. At least 8 to 10 (8-oz) glasses of fluid are needed each day, of which 4 to 6 glasses should be water.
9. Sodium is not restricted unless specifically prescribed by the HCP.

#### **B. Vegetarianism (see [Box 12-9](#))**

1. Ensure that the client eats a sufficient amount of varied foods to meet normal nutrient and energy needs.
2. Clients should be educated about consuming complementary proteins over the course of each day to ensure that all essential amino acids are provided.
3. Potential deficiencies in vegetarian diets include energy, protein, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, zinc, iron, calcium, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamin D (if limited exposure to sunlight).
4. Protein consumption can be increased by consumption of a variety of vegetable protein sources based on whole grains, legumes, seeds, nuts, and vegetables combined to provide all essential amino acids.
5. To enhance absorption of iron, vegetarians should include a good source of iron and vitamin C with each meal.
6. Foods commonly eaten include tofu, tempeh, soy milk and soy products, meat analogues, legumes, nuts and seeds, sprouts, and a variety of fruits and vegetables.

#### **C. Lactose intolerance**

1. Lactose consumed by an individual with lactose intolerance can cause abdominal

distention, discomfort, nausea, vomiting, cramps, and loose stools.

2. Clients with lactose intolerance need to incorporate sources of calcium other than dairy products into their dietary patterns regularly.
3. Milk may be tolerated in cooked form, such as in custards or fermented dairy products.
4. Cheese and yogurt sometimes are tolerated.
5. Lactase, an enzyme, may be prescribed and is taken before ingesting milk or milk products.
6. Lactase-treated milk or lactose-free products are also available commercially.

#### D. Pica

1. Pica refers to eating nonfood substances, such as dirt, clay, starch, and freezer frost.
2. The cause is unknown; cultural values, such as beliefs regarding the effect of a material on the mother or fetus, may make pica a common practice.
3. Iron deficiency anemia may occur as a result of pica.

E. Cultural considerations: See [Chapter 6](#) for information on cultural considerations in nutrition.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Interventions for nausea and vomiting in the pregnant client include eating dry crackers before arising; avoiding brushing teeth immediately after arising; eating small, frequent, low-fat meals during the day; drinking liquids between meals rather

than at meals; avoiding fried foods and spicy foods; asking the health care provider (HCP) about acupressure (some types may require a prescription); and asking the HCP about the use of herbal remedies.

***Reference:***

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 326.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 262.** The nurse is providing instructions to a pregnant client who is scheduled for an amniocentesis. What instruction should the nurse provide?
1. Strict bed rest is required after the procedure.
  2. Hospitalization is necessary for 24 hours after the procedure.
  3. An informed consent needs to be signed before the procedure.
  4. A fever is expected after the procedure because of the trauma to the abdomen.
- 263.** A pregnant client in the first trimester calls the nurse at a health care clinic and reports that she has noticed a thin, colorless vaginal drainage. The nurse should make which statement to the client?
1. “Come to the clinic immediately.”
  2. “The vaginal discharge may be bothersome, but is a normal occurrence.”
  3. “Report to the emergency department at the maternity center immediately.”
  4. “Use tampons if the discharge is bothersome, but to be sure to change the tampons every 2 hours.”
- 264.** The nurse has performed a nonstress test on a pregnant client and is reviewing the fetal monitor strip. The nurse interprets the test as reactive. How should the nurse document this finding?
1. Normal
  2. Abnormal
  3. The need for further evaluation

4. That findings were difficult to interpret

**265.** A nonstress test is performed on a client who is pregnant, and the results of the test indicate nonreactive findings. The health care provider prescribes a contraction stress test, and the results are documented as negative. How should the nurse document this finding?

1. A normal test result
2. An abnormal test result
3. A high risk for fetal demise
4. The need for a cesarean delivery

**266.** A pregnant client tells the nurse that she has been craving “unusual foods.” The nurse gathers additional assessment data and discovers that the client has been ingesting daily amounts of white clay dirt from her backyard. Laboratory studies are performed and the nurse determines that which finding indicates a physiological consequence of the client’s practice?

1. Hematocrit 38%
2. Glucose 86 mg/dL
3. Hemoglobin 9.1 g/dL
4. White blood cell count 12,400 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

**267.** A pregnant client asks the nurse about the types of exercises that are allowable during pregnancy. The nurse should tell that client that which exercise is safest?

1. Swimming

2. Scuba diving
3. Low-impact gymnastics
4. Bicycling with the legs in the air

**268.** A health care provider has prescribed transvaginal ultrasonography for a client in the first trimester of pregnancy and the client asks the nurse about the procedure. How should the nurse respond to the client?

1. “The procedure takes about 2 hours.”
2. “It will be necessary to drink 1 to 2 quarts of water before the examination.”
3. “The probe that will be inserted into the vagina will be covered with a disposable cover and coated with a gel.”
4. “Gel is spread over the abdomen, and a round disk transducer will be moved over the abdomen to obtain the picture.”

**269.** The nurse has instructed a pregnant client in measures to prevent varicose veins during pregnancy. Which statement by the client indicates a **need for further instructions?**

1. “I should wear panty hose.”
2. “I should wear support hose.”
3. “I should wear flat nonslip shoes that have good support.”
4. “I should wear knee-high hose, but I should not leave them on longer than 8 hours.”

**270.** A pregnant client calls a clinic and tells the nurse that she is experiencing leg

cramps that awaken her at night. What should the nurse tell the client to provide relief from the leg cramps?

1. "Bend your foot toward your body while flexing the knee when the cramps occur."
2. "Bend your foot toward your body while extending the knee when the cramps occur."
3. "Point your foot away from your body while flexing the knee when the cramps occur."
4. "Point your foot away from your body while extending the knee when the cramps occur."

**271.** A rubella titer result of a 1-day postpartum client is less than 1:8, and a rubella virus vaccine is prescribed to be administered before discharge. The nurse provides which information to the client about the vaccine? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Breast-feeding needs to be stopped for 3 months.
2. Pregnancy needs to be avoided for 1 to 3 months.
3. The vaccine is administered by the subcutaneous route.
4. Exposure to immunosuppressed individuals needs to be avoided.
5. A hypersensitivity reaction can occur if the client has an allergy to eggs.
6. The area of the injection needs to be covered with a sterile gauze for 1 week.

**272.** The nurse in a health care clinic is instructing a pregnant client how to perform

“kick counts.” Which statement by the client indicates a **need for further instructions**?

1. “I will record the number of movements or kicks.”
2. “I need to lie flat on my back to perform the procedure.”
3. “If I count fewer than 10 kicks in a 2-hour period I should count the kicks again over the next 2 hours.”
4. “I should place my hands on the largest part of my abdomen and concentrate on the fetal movements to count the kicks.”

**273.** The nurse is providing instructions regarding treatment of hemorrhoids to a client who is in the second trimester of pregnancy. Which statement by the client indicates a **need for further instruction**?

1. “I should avoid straining during bowel movements.”
2. “I can gently replace the hemorrhoids into the rectum.”
3. “I can apply ice packs to the hemorrhoids to reduce the swelling.”
4. “I should apply heat packs to the hemorrhoids to help the hemorrhoids shrink.”

**274.** The nurse is providing instructions to a client in the first trimester of pregnancy regarding measures to assist in reducing breast tenderness. Which instruction should the nurse provide?

1. Avoid wearing a bra.
2. Wash the breasts with warm water and keep them dry.
3. Wear tight-fitting blouses or dresses to provide support.

4. Wash the nipples and areolar area daily with soap, and massage the breasts with lotion.

275. The nurse is describing cardiovascular system changes that occur during pregnancy to a client and understands that which finding would be normal for a client in the second trimester?

1. Increase in pulse rate
2. Increase in blood pressure
3. Frequent bowel elimination
4. Decrease in red blood cell production

276. The clinic nurse is providing instructions to a pregnant client regarding measures that assist in alleviating heartburn. Which statement by the client indicates an understanding of the instructions?

1. "I should avoid between-meal snacks."
2. "I should lie down for an hour after eating."
3. "I should use spices for cooking rather than using salt."
4. "I should avoid eating foods that produce gas and fatty foods."

## ANSWERS

262. 3

**Rationale:** Because amniocentesis is an invasive procedure, informed consent needs to be obtained before the procedure. After the procedure, the client is instructed to rest, but may resume light activity after the cramping

subsides. The client is instructed to keep the puncture site clean and to report any complications, such as chills, fever, bleeding, leakage of fluid at the needle insertion site, decreased fetal movement, uterine contractions, or cramping. Amniocentesis is an outpatient procedure and may be done in a health care provider's private office or in a special prenatal testing unit. Hospitalization is not necessary after the procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, nursing implications related to amniocentesis. Recalling that this procedure is invasive will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Amniocentesis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 645.

**263. 2**

**Rationale:** Leukorrhea begins during the first trimester. Many clients notice a thin, colorless or yellow vaginal discharge throughout pregnancy. Some clients become distressed about this condition, but it does not require that the client report to the health care clinic or emergency department immediately. If vaginal discharge is profuse, the client may use panty liners, but she should not wear tampons because of the risk of infection. If the client uses panty liners, she should change them frequently.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike**, indicating that the client requires medical attention. From the remaining options, recalling that this manifestation is a normal

physiological occurrence or that tampons should be avoided will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal assessment findings in pregnancy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 295, 355; Perry et al (2010), p. 216.

264. 1

**Rationale:** A reactive nonstress test is a normal result. To be considered reactive, the baseline fetal heart rate must be within normal range (120 to 160 beats/minute) with good long-term variability. In addition, two or more fetal heart rate accelerations of at least 15 beats/minute must occur, each with a duration of at least 15 seconds, in a 20-minute interval.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike**, indicating that an alteration from normal is present.

**Review:** Interpretation of a **nonstress test**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Perfusion

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 309.

**265. 1**

**Rationale:** Contraction stress test results may be interpreted as negative (normal), positive (abnormal), or equivocal. A negative test result indicates that no late decelerations occurred in the fetal heart rate, although the fetus was stressed by three contractions of at least 40 seconds' duration in a 10-minute period. Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that options 2, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** in that they indicate an abnormal test result finding.

**Review:** The interpretation of the results of a **contraction stress test**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 651-652.

**266. 3**

**Rationale:** Pica practices often lead to iron deficiency anemia, resulting in a decreased hemoglobin level. The laboratory values in options 1, 2, and 4 are normal for the pregnant client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, recalling that pica results in anemia. This will assist in eliminating options 2 and 4. From the remaining options, recall the normal laboratory values in a pregnant client to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Physiological effects of **pica** and related laboratory values

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Nutrition

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 318-319.

### 267. 1

**Rationale:** Non–weight-bearing exercises are preferable to weight-bearing exercises during pregnancy. Exercises to avoid are shoulder standing and bicycling with the legs in the air because the knee-chest position should be avoided. Competitive or high-risk sports such as scuba diving, water skiing, downhill skiing, horseback riding, basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics should be avoided. Non–weight-bearing exercises such as swimming are allowable.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, safe exercise to engage in during pregnancy. Identify the activities or exercises that could cause an injury to the fetus. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Appropriate **exercise activities for the pregnant client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 139, 347.

200. 3

**Rationale:** Transvaginal ultrasonography allows clear visibility of the uterus, gestational sac, embryo, and deep pelvic structures, such as the ovaries and fallopian tubes. The client is placed in a lithotomy position and a transvaginal probe, encased in a disposable cover and coated with a gel that provides lubrication and promotes conductivity, is inserted into the vagina. The client may feel more comfortable if she is allowed to insert the probe. The procedure takes about 10 to 15 minutes. Options 2 and 4 identify components of abdominal ultrasound.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for a transvaginal ultrasonography. Also, note the relationship of the name of the test and the description in the correct option.

**Review:** **Transvaginal ultrasonography**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 200, 640-641.

269. 4

**Rationale:** Varicose veins often develop in the lower extremities during pregnancy. Any constrictive clothing, such as knee-high hose, impedes venous return from the lower legs and places the client at risk for developing varicosities. The client should be encouraged to wear support hose or panty hose. Flat nonslip shoes with proper support are important to assist the pregnant woman to maintain proper posture and balance and to minimize falls.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Focus on the **subject** of the

question as it relates to preventing varicose veins. Recall that anything that constricts the lower vessels and impedes venous return from the lower legs would place the client at risk for varicosities.

**Review:** Measures to prevent **varicose veins**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 355.

## 270. 2

**Rationale:** Leg cramps occur when the pregnant client stretches her leg and plantar flexes her foot. Dorsiflexion of the foot while extending the knee stretches the affected muscle, prevents the muscle from contracting, and stops the cramping. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not measures that provide relief from leg cramps.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, to provide relief from the leg cramps. Visualize each of the descriptions in the options to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Measures in alleviating **muscle cramps**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 253-254.

❖ 271. 2, 3, 4, 5

**Rationale:** Rubella vaccine is administered to women who have not had rubella or women who are not serologically immune. The vaccine may be administered in the immediate postpartum period to prevent the possibility of contracting rubella in future pregnancies. The live attenuated rubella virus is not communicable in breast milk; breast-feeding does not need to be stopped. The client is counseled not to become pregnant for 1 to 3 months after immunization as specified by the health care provider because of a possible risk to a fetus from the live virus vaccine; the client must be using effective birth control at the time of the immunization. The client should avoid contact with immunosuppressed individuals because of their low immunity toward live viruses and because the virus is shed in the urine and other body fluids. The vaccine is administered by the subcutaneous route. A hypersensitivity reaction can occur if the client has an allergy to eggs because the vaccine is made from duck eggs. There is no useful or necessary reason for covering the area of the injection with a sterile gauze.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client instructions regarding the rubella vaccine. Recalling that the rubella vaccine is a live virus vaccine will assist in selecting options 2 and 5. Next, recalling the route of administration and the contraindications associated with its use will assist in selecting options 3 and 4.

**Review:** Client instructions regarding the **rubella vaccine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 499-500.

272. 2

**Rationale:** The client should sit or lie quietly on her side to perform kick counts. Lying flat on the back is not necessary to perform this procedure, can cause discomfort, and presents a risk of vena cava (supine hypotensive) syndrome. The client is instructed to place her hands on the largest part of the abdomen and concentrate on the fetal movements. The client records the number of movements felt during a specified time period. The client needs to notify her health care provider if she feels fewer than 10 kicks over two, 2-hour intervals or as instructed by her HCP.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. If you are unfamiliar with this procedure, recalling that the risk of vena cava (supine hypotensive) syndrome exists when the client lies on her back will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Procedure for **kick counts**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Perfusion

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 313.

273. 4

**Rationale:** Measures that provide relief from hemorrhoids include avoiding constipation and straining during bowel

movements; applying ice packs to reduce the hemorrhoidal swelling; gently replacing the hemorrhoids into the rectum; using stool softeners, ointments, or sprays as prescribed; and assuming certain positions to relieve pressure on the hemorrhoids. Heat packs increase the blood flow to the area and worsen the discomfort from hemorrhoids.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Recalling the principles regarding heat and cold will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Treatment measures for **hemorrhoids**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Elimination

**References:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 253-254; Potter et al (2013), pp. 1092, 1111.

274. 2

**Rationale:** The pregnant client should be instructed to wash the breasts with warm water and keep them dry. The client should be instructed to avoid using soap on the nipples and areolar area to prevent the drying of tissues. Wearing a supportive bra with wide adjustable straps can decrease breast tenderness. Tight-fitting blouses or dresses cause discomfort. The client is instructed to wear soft-textured clothing to decrease nipple tenderness and to use breast pads inside the bra to prevent leakage through the clothing if colostrum is a problem.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focusing on the **subject** of the question—reducing breast tenderness—and visualizing each of the measures identified in the options will direct you to the correct option. Also, noting the word *warm* and the word *dry* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Treatment measures for **breast tenderness**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 354.

275. 1

**Rationale:** Between 14 and 20 weeks' gestation, the pulse rate increases about 10 to 15 beats/minute, which then persists to term. Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect. During pregnancy, the blood pressure usually is the same as the prepregnancy level, but then gradually decreases up to about 20 weeks of gestation. During the second trimester, systolic and diastolic pressures decrease by about 5 to 10 mm Hg. Constipation may occur as a result of decreased gastrointestinal motility or pressure of the uterus. During pregnancy, there is an accelerated production of red blood cells.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, the findings that would be considered normal for a client in her second trimester. Think about the physiological occurrences during pregnancy and remember that between 14 and 20 weeks' gestation, the pulse increases about 10 to 15 beats/minute.

**Review:** **Normal physiological changes** in the second trimester of pregnancy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 296-297.

276. 4

**Rationale:** Lying down is likely to lead to reflux of stomach contents, especially immediately after a meal. The client should be instructed to avoid spices, along with salt, because spices trigger heartburn. Salt produces edema. The client should be encouraged to eat between-meal snacks and should be instructed that to control heartburn, eating smaller, more frequent portions is preferred over eating three large meals. The client also should limit or avoid gas-producing and fatty foods.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and note the words *indicates an understanding of the instructions*. Recalling that the client needs to limit or avoid gas-producing and fatty foods will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Measures to alleviate **heartburn** in the pregnant client

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 354; Peckenpaugh (2010), pp. 427-428.



## CHAPTER 29

# Risk Conditions Related to Pregnancy

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A pregnant client with diabetes mellitus asks the nurse about insulin needs during pregnancy. What information should the nurse provide to the client?

*Answer located on p. 340.*

### I. Abortion

- A. Description: A pregnancy that ends before 20 weeks' gestation, spontaneously or electively
- B. Types ([Box 29-1](#))

#### BOX 29-1 Types of Abortions

**Spontaneous:** Pregnancy ends because of natural causes.

**Induced:** Therapeutic or elective reasons exist for terminating pregnancy.

**Threatened:** Spotting and cramping without cervical change occur.

***Inevitable:*** Spotting and cramping occur and cervix begins to dilate and efface.

***Incomplete:*** Loss of some of the products of conception occurs, with part of the products retained (most often placenta is retained).

***Complete:*** Loss of all products of conception occurs.

***Missed:*** Products of conception are retained in utero after fetal death.

***Habitual:*** Spontaneous abortions occur in three or more successive pregnancies.

### C. Assessment

1. Spontaneous vaginal bleeding
2. Low uterine cramping or contractions
3. Blood clots or tissue through the vagina
4. Hemorrhage and shock can result if bleeding is excessive.

### D. Interventions

1. Maintain bed rest as prescribed.
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Monitor for cramping and bleeding.
4. Count perineal pads to evaluate blood loss, and save expelled tissues and clots.
5. Maintain intravenous fluids as prescribed; monitor for signs of hemorrhage or shock.
6. Prepare the client for dilation and curettage as prescribed for incomplete abortion.
7. Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) is prescribed for an Rh-negative woman.
8. Provide psychological support.

## II. Anemia

### A. Description

1. Iron deficiency anemia is a condition that develops as a result of an inadequate amount of serum iron.
2. Anemia predisposes the client to postpartum infection. ▲

### B. Assessment

1. Fatigue
2. Headache
3. Pallor
4. Tachycardia
5. Hemoglobin value is usually less than 10 g/dL; hematocrit value is usually less than 30%.

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor hemoglobin and hematocrit levels every 2 weeks.
2. Administer and instruct the client about iron and folic acid supplements.
3. Instruct the client to take iron with a source of vitamin C to increase its absorption and to avoid taking iron with tea or milk products; absorbed best if taken between meals.
4. Instruct the client to eat foods high in iron, folic acid, and protein.
5. Teach the client to monitor for signs and symptoms of infection.
6. Prepare to administer parenteral iron or blood transfusions; this may be

prescribed for severe anemia.

7. Prepare for the administration of oxytocic medications in the postpartum period if excessive bleeding is a concern.

### III. Cardiac Disease

- A. Description: A pregnant client with cardiac disease may be unable physiologically to cope with the added plasma volume and increased cardiac output that occur during pregnancy; blood volume is at a maximum during the last weeks of the second trimester.
- B. Maternal cardiac disease risk groups ([Box 29-2](#))

#### **BOX 29-2** Maternal Cardiac Disease Risk Groups

##### **Group I (Mortality Rate, 1%)**

- Corrected tetralogy of Fallot
- Pulmonic or tricuspid disease
- Mitral stenosis (classes I and II)
- Patent ductus arteriosus
- Ventricular septal defect
- Atrial septal defect
- Porcine valve

##### **Group II (Mortality Rate, 5% to 15%)**

- Mitral stenosis with atrial fibrillation

- Artificial heart valves
- Mitral stenosis (classes III and IV)
- Uncorrected tetralogy
- Aortic coarctation (uncomplicated)
- Aortic stenosis

### Group III (Mortality Rate, 25% to 50%)

- Aortic coarctation (complicated)
- Myocardial infarction
- Marfan syndrome
- True cardiomyopathy
- Pulmonary hypertension

From Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, p. 710.

### C. Functional classification of heart disease (Box 29-3)

#### **BOX 29-3** New York Heart Association Functional Classification of Heart Disease\*

**Class I:** Uncompromised; no limitation of physical activity; asymptomatic with ordinary activity

**Class II:** Slightly compromised, requiring slight limitation of physical activity; client is comfortable at rest, but ordinary physical activity causes symptoms such as

fatigue, dyspnea, palpitations, or anginal pain

**Class III:** Markedly compromised; marked limitation of physical activity; client is comfortable at rest, but less than ordinary activity causes excessive fatigue, palpitations, dyspnea, or anginal pain

**Class IV:** Inability to perform any physical activity without discomfort; symptoms of cardiac insufficiency are present even at rest

\*In general, maternal and fetal risks for classes I and II disease are small, but risks are greatly increased with classes III and IV.

From Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, pp. 715, 717.

#### D. Assessment

1. Signs and symptoms of cardiac decompensation
  - a. Cough and respiratory congestion
  - b. Dyspnea and fatigue
  - c. Palpitations and tachycardia
  - d. Peripheral edema
  - e. Chest pain
2. Signs of respiratory infection
3. Signs of heart failure and pulmonary edema

#### E. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs, fetal heart rate, and condition of the fetus.

2. Limit physical activities, and stress the need for sufficient rest.
3. Monitor for signs of cardiac stress and decompensation, such as cough, fatigue, dyspnea, chest pain, and tachycardia; also monitor for signs of heart failure and pulmonary edema.
4. Encourage adequate nutrition to prevent anemia, which would worsen the cardiac status; in addition, a low-sodium diet may be prescribed to prevent fluid retention and heart failure.
5. Avoid excessive weight gain.
6. During **labor**, prepare to do the following:
  - a. Monitor vital signs frequently.
  - b. Place the client on a cardiac monitor and on an external fetal monitor.
  - c. Maintain bed rest, with the client lying on her side with her head and shoulders elevated.
  - d. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
  - e. Manage pain early in labor.
  - f. Use controlled pushing efforts to decrease cardiac stress.

 Excessive weight gain places stress on the heart. In addition, obesity places the client at increased risk for complications during pregnancy.

#### **IV. Chorioamnionitis**

##### **A. Description**

1. Bacterial infection of the amniotic cavity; can result from premature or prolonged

rupture of the membranes, vaginitis, amniocentesis, or intrauterine procedures

2. May result in the development of postpartum endometritis and neonatal sepsis

## B. Assessment

1. Uterine tenderness and contractions

2. Elevated temperature

3. Maternal or fetal tachycardia

4. Foul odor to **amniotic fluid**

5. Leukocytosis

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor maternal vital signs and fetal heart rate.

2. Monitor for uterine tenderness, contractions, and fetal activity.

3. Monitor results of blood cultures.

4. Prepare for amniocentesis to obtain amniotic fluid for Gram stain and leukocyte count.

5. Administer antibiotics as prescribed after cultures are obtained.

6. Administer oxytocic medications as prescribed to increase uterine tone.

7. Prepare to obtain neonatal cultures after **delivery**.

## V. Diabetes Mellitus

### A. Description

1. Pregnancy places demands on carbohydrate metabolism and causes insulin requirements to change.

2. Maternal glucose crosses the **placenta**, but insulin does not.

3. The fetus produces its own insulin and pulls glucose from the mother, which predisposes the mother to hypoglycemic reactions.
4. The **newborn** of a diabetic mother may be large in size, but has functions related to gestational age rather than size.
5. The newborn of a diabetic mother is at risk for hypoglycemia, hyperbilirubinemia, respiratory distress syndrome, hypocalcemia, and congenital anomalies.

 During the first trimester, maternal insulin needs decrease. During the second and third trimesters, increases in placental hormones cause an insulin-resistant state, requiring an increase in the client's insulin dose. After placental delivery, placental hormone levels abruptly decrease and insulin requirements decrease.

## **B. Gestational diabetes mellitus**

1. Gestational diabetes occurs in pregnancy (during the second or third trimester) in clients not previously diagnosed as diabetic and occurs when the pancreas cannot respond to the demand for more insulin.
2. Pregnant women should be screened for gestational diabetes between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy.
3. A 3-hour oral glucose tolerance test is performed to confirm gestational diabetes mellitus.
4. Gestational diabetes frequently can be treated by diet alone; however, some clients may need insulin.
5. Most women with gestational diabetes return to a euglycemic state after delivery;

however, these individuals have an increased risk of developing diabetes mellitus in their lifetimes.

### C. Predisposing conditions to gestational diabetes

1. Older than 35 years
2. Obesity
3. Multiple gestation
4. Family history of diabetes mellitus
5. Large for gestational age fetus

### D. Assessment

1. Excessive thirst
2. Hunger
3. Weight loss
4. Frequent urination
5. Blurred vision
6. Recurrent urinary tract infections and vaginal yeast infections
7. Glycosuria and ketonuria
8. Signs of gestational hypertension
9. Polyhydramnios
10. Large for gestational age fetus

### E. Interventions

1. Employ diet, insulin (if diet cannot control blood glucose levels), exercise, and blood glucose determinations to maintain blood glucose levels between 65 mg/dL

and 130 mg/dL as prescribed.

2. Observe for signs of hyperglycemia, glycosuria and ketonuria, and hypoglycemia.
3. Monitor weight.
4. Increase calorie intake as prescribed, with adequate insulin therapy so that glucose moves into the cells.
5. Assess for signs of maternal complications such as preeclampsia (hypertension, proteinuria, and edema).
6. Monitor for signs of infection.
7. Instruct the client to report burning and pain on urination, vaginal discharge or itching, or any other signs of infection to the health care provider (HCP).
8. Assess fetal status and monitor for signs of fetal compromise.

**F. Interventions during labor** ▲

1. Monitor fetal status continuously for signs of distress and, if noted, prepare the client for immediate cesarean section.
2. Carefully regulate insulin and provide glucose intravenously as prescribed because labor depletes glycogen.

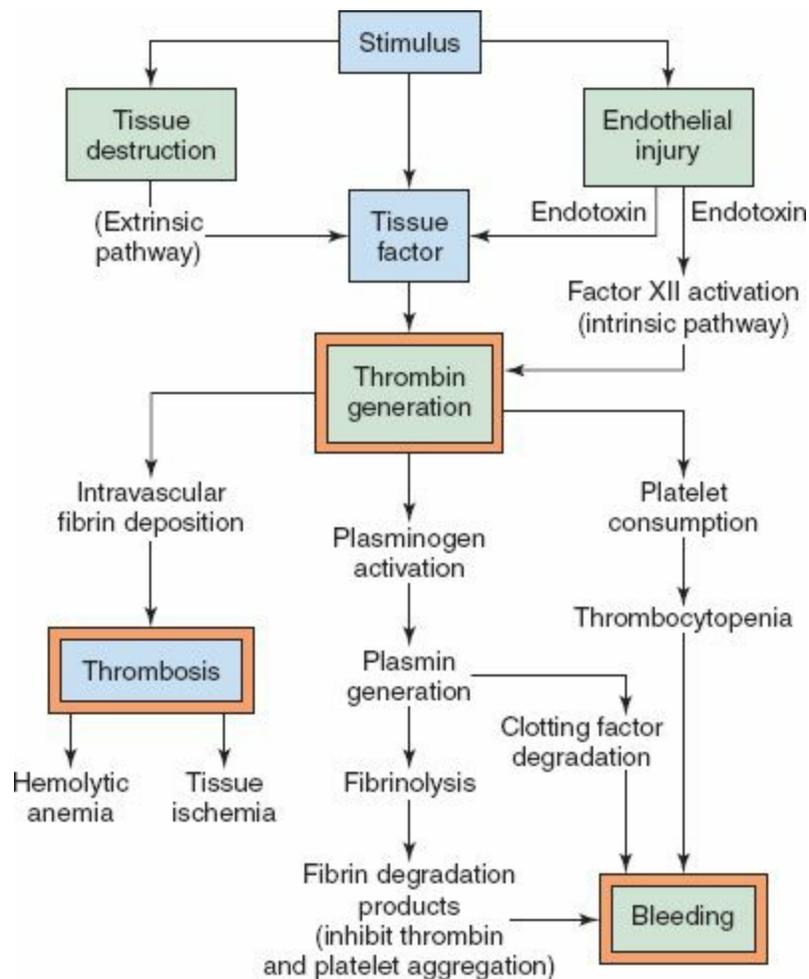
**G. Interventions during the postpartum period** ▲

1. Observe the mother closely for a hypoglycemic reaction because a precipitous decline in insulin requirements normally occurs (the mother may not require insulin for the first 24 hours).
2. Reregulate insulin needs as prescribed after the first day, according to blood glucose testing.

3. Assess dietary needs, based on blood glucose testing and insulin requirements.
4. Monitor for signs of infection or postpartum hemorrhage.

## VI. Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation (DIC)

A. Description: DIC is a maternal condition in which the clotting cascade is activated, resulting in the formation of clots in the microcirculation (Fig. 29-1).



**FIGURE 29-1** Pathophysiology of disseminated intravascular coagulation. (From Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.)

**⚠** The rapid and extensive formation of clots that occurs in DIC causes the

platelets and clotting factors to be depleted; this results in bleeding and the potential vascular occlusion of organs from thromboembolus formation.

## B. Predisposing conditions (Box 29-4)

### **BOX 29-4** Predisposing Conditions for Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation

- Abruptio placentae
- Amniotic fluid embolism
- Gestational hypertension
- Intrauterine fetal death
- Liver disease
- Sepsis

## C. Assessment

1. Uncontrolled bleeding
2. Bruising, purpura, petechiae, and ecchymosis
3. Presence of occult blood in excretions such as stool
4. Hematuria, hematemesis, or vaginal bleeding
5. Signs of shock
6. Decreased fibrinogen level, platelet count, and hematocrit level
7. Increased prothrombin time and partial thromboplastin time, clotting time, and fibrin degradation products

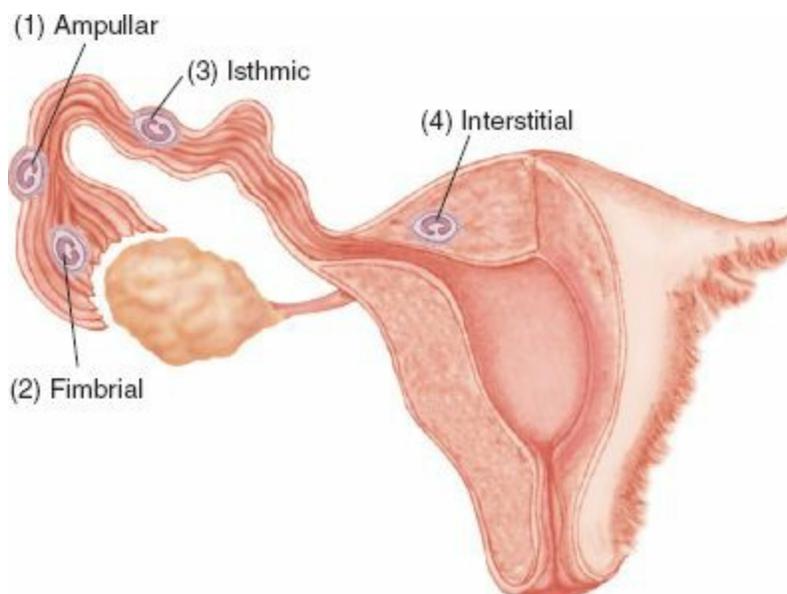
## D. Interventions

1. Remove underlying cause.
2. Monitor vital signs; assess for bleeding and signs of shock. ▲
3. Prepare for oxygen therapy, volume replacement, blood component therapy, and possibly heparin therapy.
4. Monitor for complications associated with fluid and blood replacement and heparin therapy.
5. Monitor urine output and maintain at 30 mL/hour (renal failure is a complication of DIC).

## VII. Ectopic Pregnancy

### A. Description

1. **Implantation** of the fertilized ovum outside of the uterine cavity
2. Most common location is the ampulla of the fallopian tube (Fig. 29-2)



**FIGURE 29-2** Sites of tubal ectopic pregnancy. Numbers indicate order of prevalence. (From Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.)

## B. Assessment

1. Missed menstrual period
2. Abdominal pain
3. Vaginal spotting to bleeding that is dark red or brown
4. Rupture: Increased pain, referred shoulder pain, signs of shock ▲

## C. Interventions ▲

1. Obtain assessment data and vital signs.
2. Monitor bleeding and initiate measures to prevent rupture and shock.
3. Methotrexate (Trexall), a folic acid antagonist, may be prescribed to inhibit cell division in the developing **embryo**.
4. Prepare the client for laparotomy and removal of the pregnancy and tube, if necessary, or repair of the tube.
5. Administer antibiotics; Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin is prescribed for Rh-negative women.

## VIII. Endometritis

### A. Description

1. Endometritis is an infection of the lining of the **uterus** occurring in the postpartum period and caused by bacteria that invade the uterus at the placental site.

2. The infection may spread and involve the entire endometrium and cause peritonitis or pelvic thrombophlebitis.

## B. Assessment

1. Chills and fever
2. Increased pulse
3. Decreased appetite
4. Headache
5. Backache
6. Prolonged, severe afterpains
7. Tender, large uterus
8. Foul odor to **lochia** or reddish brown lochia
9. Ileus
10. Elevated white blood cell count, with left shift of immature cells

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Position the client in Fowler's position to facilitate drainage of lochia. 
3. Provide a private room for the mother; inform the mother that isolation of the newborn from the mother is unnecessary.
4. Instruct the mother in proper hand-washing techniques.
5. Initiate contact precautions as necessary.
6. Monitor intake and output and encourage fluid intake.
7. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

8. Administer comfort measures such as back rubs and position changes and pain medications as prescribed.
9. Administer oxytocic medications as prescribed to improve uterine tone.
10. Provide psychological support.

## IX. Fetal Death in Utero

### A. Description

1. *Fetal death in utero* refers to the death of a fetus after the twentieth week of gestation and before birth.
2. The client can develop DIC if the dead fetus is retained in the uterus for 3 to 4 weeks or longer.

### B. Assessment

1. Absence of fetal movement
2. Absence of fetal heart tones
3. Maternal weight loss
4. Lack of fetal growth or decrease in fundal height
5. No evidence of fetal cardiac activity
6. Other characteristics suggestive of fetal death noted on ultrasound

### C. Interventions

1. Prepare for the delivery of the fetus.
2. Support the client's decision about **labor**, birth, and the postpartum period.
3. Facilitate the grieving process as appropriate, considering cultural practices and beliefs. 

4. Accept behaviors such as anger and hostility from the parents.
5. Refer the parents to an appropriate support group.

 Cultural and religious practices and beliefs are important to consider when caring for the parents of a fetus who has died. Be aware of the cultural and religious practices and beliefs of the client.

## **X. Hepatitis B**

### **A. Description**

1. The risks of prematurity, low birth weight, and neonatal death increase if the mother has hepatitis B infection.
2. Hepatitis is transmitted through blood, saliva, vaginal secretions, semen, and breast milk and across the placental barrier. 

### **B. Interventions**

1. Minimize the risk for intrapartum ascending infections (limit the number of vaginal examinations).
2. Remove maternal blood from the neonate immediately after birth.
3. Suction the fluids from the neonate immediately after birth.
4. Bathe the neonate before any invasive procedures.
5. Clean and dry the face and eyes of the neonate before instilling eye prophylaxis.
6. Infection of the neonate can be prevented by the administration of hepatitis B immune globulin and hepatitis B vaccine soon after birth.
7. Discourage the mother from kissing the neonate until the neonate has received the

vaccine.

8. Inform the mother that the hepatitis B vaccine will be administered to the neonate and that a second dose should be administered at 1 month after birth and a third dose at 6 months after birth.

**!** Support breast-feeding after neonatal treatment for hepatitis B; breast-feeding is not contraindicated if the neonate has been vaccinated.

## XI. Hematoma

### A. Description

1. Hematoma occurs following the escape of blood into the maternal tissue after delivery.
2. Predisposing conditions include operative delivery with forceps or injury to a blood vessel.

### B. Assessment (Box 29-5)

#### **BOX 29-5** Hematoma: Assessment Findings

- Abnormal, severe pain
- Pressure in perineal area (client states that she feels like she has to have a bowel movement)
- Palpable, sensitive swelling in the perineal area, with discolored skin
- Inability to void
- Decreased hemoglobin and hematocrit levels
- Signs of shock, such as pallor, tachycardia, and hypotension, if significant blood

loss has occurred

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor client for abnormal pain, especially when forceps delivery has been performed.
3. Apply ice to the hematoma site.
4. Administer analgesics as prescribed.
5. Monitor intake and output.
6. Encourage fluids and voiding; prepare for urinary catheterization if the client is unable to void.
7. Administer blood replacements as prescribed.
8. Monitor for signs of infection, such as increased temperature, pulse rate, and white blood cell count.
9. Administer antibiotics as prescribed because infection is common after hematoma formation.
10. Prepare for incision and evacuation of the hematoma if necessary.

## **XII. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) ▲**

### A. Description

1. HIV is the causative agent of AIDS.

2. Women infected with HIV may first show symptoms at the time of pregnancy or possibly develop life-threatening infections because normal pregnancy involves some suppression of the maternal immune system.
3. Repeated exposure to the virus during pregnancy through unsafe sex practices or intravenous drug use can increase the risk of transmission to the fetus.
4. Zidovudine (Retrovir) is recommended for the prevention of maternal-to-fetal HIV transmission and is administered orally beginning after 14 weeks' gestation, intravenously during labor, and in the form of syrup to the newborn for 6 weeks after birth.

#### **B. Transmission** ▲

1. Sexual exposure to genital secretions of an infected person
2. Parenteral exposure to infected blood and tissue
3. Perinatal exposure of an **infant** to infected maternal secretions through birth or breast-feeding

**C. Risks to the mother:** A mother with HIV is managed as high risk because she is vulnerable to infections. ▲

#### **D. Diagnosis**

1. Tests used to determine the presence of antibodies to HIV include enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), Western blot, and immunofluorescence assay (IFA).
2. A single reactive ELISA test by itself cannot be used to diagnose HIV, and the test should be repeated with the same blood sample; if the result is again reactive,

follow-up tests using Western blot or IFA should be done.

3. A positive Western blot or IFA is considered confirmatory for HIV.
4. A positive ELISA that fails to be confirmed by Western blot or IFA should not be considered negative, and repeat testing should be done in 3 to 6 months.
5. See [Chapter 11](#) for additional laboratory tests.

#### E. Assessment ([Box 29-6](#)) ▲

### **BOX 29-6** Stages of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

#### Stage 1

- Fever
- Headache
- Lymphadenopathy
- Myalgia

#### Stage 2

- Infection is active but asymptomatic and may remain so for years
- Client may experience outbreak of herpes zoster (shingles)
- Client may experience transient thrombocytopenia

#### Stage 3

- Client is symptomatic
- Immune dysfunction is evident
- All body systems can show signs of immune dysfunction

- Integumentary and gynecological problems are common

#### Stage 4

- Advanced infection
- Client vulnerable to common bacterial infections
- Development of opportunistic infections
- Serious immune compromise

#### F. Interventions

##### 1. Prenatal period

- a. Prevent opportunistic infections.
- b. Avoid procedures that increase the risk of perinatal transmission, such as amniocentesis and fetal scalp sampling.

##### 2. Intrapartum period

- a. If the fetus has not been exposed to HIV in utero, the highest risk exists during delivery through the birth canal.
- b. Avoid the use of internal scalp electrodes for monitoring of the fetus.
- c. Avoid episiotomy to decrease the amount of maternal blood in and around the birth canal.
- d. Avoid the administration of oxytocin (Pitocin) because contractions induced by oxytocin can be strong, causing vaginal tears or necessitating an episiotomy.
- e. Place heavy absorbent pads under the mother's hips to absorb amniotic fluid and maternal blood.

- f. Minimize the neonate's exposure to maternal blood and body fluids; promptly remove the neonate from the mother's blood after delivery.
- g. Suction fluids from the neonate promptly.
- h. Prepare to administer zidovudine as prescribed to the mother during labor and delivery.

### 3. Postpartum period

- a. Monitor for signs of infection.
- b. Place the mother in protective isolation if she is immunosuppressed.
- c. Restrict breast-feeding.
- d. Instruct the mother to monitor for signs of infection and report any signs if they occur.

## G. The **newborn** and HIV

### 1. Description

- a. Neonates born to HIV-positive clients may test positive because antibodies received from the mother may persist for 18 months after birth; all neonates acquire maternal antibody to HIV infection, but not all acquire infection.
- b. The use of antiviral medication, reduced exposure of the neonate to maternal blood and body fluids, and early identification of HIV in pregnancy reduce the risk of transmission to the neonate.

### 2. Interventions ▲

- a. Bathe the **neonate** carefully before any invasive procedure, such as the administration of vitamin K, heel sticks, or venipunctures; clean the umbilical

cord stump meticulously every day until healed.

- b. The newborn can room with the mother.
- c. Administer zidovudine to the newborn as prescribed for the first 6 weeks of life.
- d. All HIV-exposed newborns should be treated with medication to prevent infection by *Pneumocystis jiroveci*.
- e. HIV culture is recommended at 1 and 4 months after birth; infants at risk for HIV infection should be seen by the HCP at birth and 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, and 4 months of age.
- f. The child may be asymptomatic for the first several years of life and should be monitored for early signs of immunodeficiency

 **Infants at risk for HIV infection need to receive all recommended immunizations at the regular schedule; however, no live vaccines should be administered.**

### **XIII. Hydatidiform Mole**

#### **A. Description**

1. Hydatidiform mole is a form of gestational trophoblastic disease that occurs when the trophoblasts, which are the peripheral cells that attach the fertilized ovum to the uterine wall, develop abnormally.
2. The mole manifests as an edematous grape-like cluster that may be nonmalignant or may develop into choriocarcinoma.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Fetal heart rate not detectable
2. Vaginal bleeding, which may occur by the fourth week or not until the second trimester; may be bright red or dark brown in color and may be slight, profuse, or intermittent
3. Symptoms of gestational hypertension, such as elevated blood pressure, edema, and proteinuria, before the twentieth week of gestation
4. Fundal height greater than expected for gestational date
5. Elevated human chorionic gonadotropin levels
6. Characteristic snowstorm pattern shown on ultrasound

#### C. Interventions

1. Prepare the client for uterine evacuation (before evacuation, diagnostic tests are done to detect metastatic disease).
2. Evacuation of the mole is done by vacuum aspiration; oxytocin is administered after evacuation to contract the uterus.
3. Monitor for postprocedure hemorrhage and infection.
4. Tissue is sent to the laboratory for evaluation, and follow-up is important to detect changes suggestive of malignancy. ▲
5. Human chorionic gonadotropin levels are monitored every 1 to 2 weeks until normal prepregnancy levels are attained; levels are checked every 1 to 2 months for 1 year.
6. Instruct the client and her partner about birth control measures so that pregnancy can be prevented during the 1-year follow-up.

## XIV. Hyperemesis Gravidarum

**A. Description:** Intractable nausea and vomiting during the first trimester that causes disturbances in nutrition and fluid and electrolyte balance

### **B. Assessment**

1. Nausea most pronounced on arising; may occur at other times during the day ▲
2. Persistent vomiting
3. Weight loss
4. Signs of dehydration
5. Fluid and electrolyte imbalances ▲

### **C. Interventions**

1. Initiate measures to alleviate nausea, including medication therapy; if unsuccessful, and weight loss and fluid and electrolyte imbalances occur, intravenously administered fluid and electrolyte replacement or parenteral nutrition may be necessary.
2. Monitor vital signs, intake and output, weight, and calorie count.
3. Monitor laboratory data and for signs of dehydration and electrolyte imbalances.
4. Monitor urine for ketones.
5. Monitor fetal heart rate, activity, and growth.
6. Encourage intake of small portions of food (low-fat, easily digestible carbohydrates, such as cereals, rice, and pasta).
7. Liquids should be taken between meals to avoid distending the stomach and triggering vomiting.

8. Encourage the client to sit upright after meals.

## XV. Gestational Hypertension

A. Description and types: Hypertension can be mild or severe, leading to preeclampsia and then eclampsia (seizures) (Table 29-1).

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**TABLE 29-1 Classification of Hypertensive Stages of Pregnancy**

Type	Description
<b>Gestational Hypertensive Disorders</b>	
Gestational hypertension	Blood pressure elevation detected first time after mid-pregnancy without proteinuria
Transient hypertension	Gestational hypertension with no signs of preeclampsia present at time of birth and hypertension resolves by 12 wk after birth
Preeclampsia	Pregnancy-specific syndrome that usually occurs after 20 wk of gestation and is determined by gestational hypertension plus proteinuria
Eclampsia	Occurrence of seizures in a preeclamptic woman
<b>Chronic Hypertensive Disorders</b>	
Chronic hypertension	Hypertension that is present and observable before pregnancy or that is diagnosed before week 20 of gestation
Preeclampsia superimposed on chronic hypertension	Chronic hypertension with new proteinuria or exacerbation of hypertension (previously well controlled) or proteinuria, thrombocytopenia, or increases in hepatocellular enzymes

From Lowdermilk D, Perry S, Cashion K, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.

 Signs of preeclampsia are hypertension, generalized edema, and proteinuria.

B. Assessment (Table 29-2) 

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**TABLE 29-2 Mild Versus Severe Preeclampsia**

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Parameter Evaluated	Mild	Severe
Systolic blood pressure	≥ 140 but < 160 mm Hg	≥ 160 mm Hg (two readings, 6 hr apart, while on bed rest)
Diastolic blood pressure	≥ 90 but < 110 mm Hg	≥ 110 mm Hg
Proteinuria (24-hr specimen is preferred to eliminate hour-to-hour variations)	≥ 0.3 but < 2 g in 24-hr specimen (1 + on random dipstick)	≥ 5 g in 24-hr specimen (≥ 3 + on random dipstick sample)
Creatinine, serum (renal function)	Normal	Elevated (> 1.2 mg/dL)
Platelets	Normal	Decreased (< 100,000 cells/mm <sup>3</sup> )
Liver enzymes (alanine aminotransferase or aspartate aminotransferase)	Normal or minimal increase in levels	Elevated levels
Urine output	Normal	Oliguria common, often < 500 mL/day
Severe, unrelenting headache not attributable to other cause; mental confusion (cerebral edema)	Absent	Often present
Persistent right upper quadrant or epigastric pain or pain penetrating to back (distention of liver capsule); nausea and vomiting	Absent	May be present and often precedes seizure
Visual disturbances (spots or “sparkles”; temporary blindness; photophobia)	Absent to minimal	Common
Pulmonary edema; heart failure; cyanosis	Absent	May be present
Fetal growth restriction	Normal growth	Growth restriction; reduced amniotic fluid volume

From Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.

### C. Predisposing conditions

1. Primigravida
2. Women younger than 19 years or older than 40 years
3. Chronic renal disease
4. Chronic hypertension
5. Diabetes mellitus
6. Rh incompatibility

7. History of or family history of gestational hypertension

**D. Complications of gestational hypertension**

1. Abruptio placentae

2. Disseminated intravascular coagulation

3. Thrombocytopenia

4. Placental insufficiency

5. Intrauterine growth restriction

6. Intrauterine fetal death

7. HELLP syndrome (a laboratory diagnosis for severe preeclampsia characterized by *hemolysis, elevated liver enzyme levels, and low platelet count*)

**E. Interventions for mild hypertension** ▲

1. Monitor blood pressure.

2. Monitor fetal activity and fetal growth.

3. Encourage frequent rest periods, instructing the client to lie in the lateral position.

4. Administer antihypertensive medications as prescribed; teach client about the importance of the medications.

5. Monitor intake and output.

6. Evaluate renal function through prescribed studies such as blood urea nitrogen, serum creatinine, and 24-hour urine levels for creatinine clearance and protein.

**F. Interventions for mild preeclampsia** ▲

1. Provide bed rest and place the client in the lateral position.

2. Monitor blood pressure and weight.

3. Monitor neurological status because changes can indicate cerebral hypoxia or impending seizure.
4. Monitor deep tendon reflexes and for the presence of hyperreflexia or clonus, because hyperreflexia indicates increased central nervous system irritability (Box 29-7).

## **BOX 29-7**      Assessment of Reflexes

### **Biceps**

Position thumb over client's biceps tendon, supporting client's elbow with the palm of the hand.

Strike a downward blow over the thumb with percussion hammer.

*Normal response:* Flexion of the arm at the elbow

### **Patellar**

Position client with her legs dangling over the edge of the examining table or lying on her back with her legs slightly flexed.

Strike patellar tendon just below kneecap with percussion hammer.

*Normal response:* Extension or kicking out of the leg

### **Clonus**

Position client with her legs dangling over the edge of examining table.

Support the leg with one hand and sharply dorsiflex client's foot with the other hand.

Maintain the dorsiflexed position for a few seconds and then release foot.

*Normal response (negative clonus response):*

Foot remains steady in dorsiflexed position.

No rhythmic oscillations or jerking of foot is felt.

When released, foot drops to plantar-flexed position with no oscillations.

*Abnormal response (positive clonus response):*

Rhythmic oscillations occur when foot is dorsiflexed.

Similar oscillations are noted when foot drops to plantar-flexed position.

### **Grading Response**

0 Reflex absent

1 + Reflex present but hypoactive

2 + Normal reflex

3 + Hyperactive reflex

4 + Hyperactive reflex with clonus present

5. Provide adequate fluids.

6. Monitor intake and output; a urinary output of 30 mL/hour indicates adequate renal perfusion.

7. Increase dietary protein and carbohydrates with no added salt.

8. Administer medications as prescribed to reduce blood pressure; blood pressure should not be reduced drastically because placental perfusion can be compromised.

9. Monitor for HELLP syndrome.

## G. Interventions for severe preeclampsia ▲

1. Maintain bed rest.
2. Administer magnesium sulfate (use a controlled infusion device) as prescribed to prevent seizures; magnesium sulfate may be continued for 24 to 48 hours postpartum.
3. Monitor for signs of magnesium toxicity, including flushing, sweating, hypotension, depressed deep tendon reflexes, and central nervous system depression including respiratory depression; keep antidote (calcium gluconate) available for immediate use, if necessary
4. Administer antihypertensives as prescribed.
5. Prepare for the induction of labor.

## H. Eclampsia ▲

1. Assessment: Characterized by generalized seizures ([Box 29-8](#))

### BOX 29-8 Eclampsia

1. Seizure typically begins with twitching around the mouth.
2. Body then becomes rigid in a state of tonic muscular contractions that last 15 to 20 seconds.
3. Facial muscles and then all body muscles alternately contract and relax in rapid succession (clonic phase may last about 1 minute).
4. Respiration ceases during seizure because diaphragm tends to remain fixed (breathing resumes shortly after the seizure).

5. Postictal sleep occurs.

2. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take in the Event of Eclampsia

1. Remain with the client and call for help.
2. Ensure an open airway, turn the client on her side, and administer oxygen by face mask at 8 to 10 L/minute.
3. Monitor fetal heart rate patterns.
4. Administer medications to control the seizures as prescribed.
5. After the seizure had ended, insert an oral airway and suction the client's mouth as needed.
6. Prepare for delivery of the fetus after stabilization of the client, if warranted.
7. Document occurrence, client's response, and outcome.

*Eclampsia* refers to the occurrence of a seizure. It is a potentially preventable extension of severe preeclampsia; early identification of preeclampsia in a pregnant client allows intervention before the condition reaches the seizure state. If eclampsia occurs, the nurse remains with the client and calls for help. The nurse ensures an open airway. If the client is not on her side already, the nurse attempts to turn the client on her side. The side-lying position permits greater circulation through the

placenta and may help prevent aspiration. The nurse administers oxygen by face mask at 8 to 10 L/minute to ensure adequate placental oxygenation. The nurse also notes the time the seizure began and the duration of the seizure and protects the client from injury during the event. The nurse monitors fetal heart rate patterns closely and administers medications as prescribed (magnesium sulfate may be prescribed). After the seizure has ended, the nurse inserts an oral airway to maintain airway patency and suctions the client's mouth as needed. If warranted, the nurse prepares for the delivery of the fetus after stabilization of the client. The nurse documents the occurrence, the client's response, and the outcome.

### ***Reference***

Lowdermilk D, Perry S, Cashion K, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, pp. 667-668.

## **XVI. Incompetent Cervix**

### **A. Description**

1. *Incompetent cervix* refers to premature dilation of the cervix, which occurs most often in the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy and is associated with structural or functional defects of the cervix.
2. Treatment involves surgical placement of a cervical cerclage.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Vaginal bleeding

2. Fetal membranes visible through the cervix

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Provide bed rest, hydration, and tocolysis, as prescribed, to inhibit uterine contractions.
2. Prepare for cervical cerclage (at 10 to 14 weeks' gestation), in which a band of fascia or nonabsorbable ribbon is placed around the cervix beneath the mucosa to constrict the internal os.
3. After cervical cerclage, the client is told to refrain from intercourse and to avoid prolonged standing and heavy lifting.
4. The cervical cerclage is removed at 37 weeks' gestation or left in place and a cesarean birth is performed; if removed, cerclage must be repeated with each successive pregnancy.
5. After placement of the cervical cerclage, monitor for contractions, rupture of the membranes, and signs of infection.
6. Instruct the client to report to the HCP immediately any postprocedure vaginal bleeding or increased uterine contractions.

## XVII. Infections ▲

### A. Toxoplasmosis

1. Caused by infection with the intracellular protozoan parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*
2. Produces a rash and symptoms of acute, flulike infection in the mother
3. Transmitted to the mother through raw meat or handling of cat litter of infected

cats

4. Organism is transmitted to the fetus across the placenta
5. Can cause spontaneous abortion in the first trimester

#### **B. Rubella (German measles)**

1. Teratogenic in the first trimester
2. Organism is transmitted to the fetus across the placenta
3. Causes congenital defects of the eyes, heart, ears, and brain
4. If not immune (titer less than 1:8), the client should be vaccinated in the postpartum period; the client must wait 1 to 3 months (as specified by HCP) before becoming pregnant.

#### **C. Cytomegalovirus**

1. Organism is transmitted through close personal contact; it is transmitted across the placenta to the fetus, or the fetus may be infected through the birth canal.
2. The mother may be asymptomatic; most infants are asymptomatic at birth.
3. Cytomegalovirus causes low birth weight, intrauterine growth restriction, enlarged liver and spleen, jaundice, blindness, hearing loss, and seizures.
4. Antiviral medications may be prescribed for severe infections in the mother, but these medications are toxic and may only temporarily suppress shedding of the virus.

#### **D. Herpes simplex virus**

1. Herpes simplex virus affects the external genitalia, **vagina**, and cervix and causes draining, painful vesicles.

2. Acyclovir (Zovirax) can be used to treat recurrent outbreaks during pregnancy or used as suppressive therapy late in pregnancy to prevent an outbreak during labor and birth.
3. Virus usually is transmitted to the fetus during birth through the infected vagina or via an ascending infection after rupture of the membranes.
4. No vaginal examinations are done in the presence of active vaginal herpetic lesions.
5. Herpes can cause death or severe neurological impairment in the newborn.
6. Delivery of the fetus is usually by cesarean section if active lesions are present in the vagina; delivery may be performed vaginally if the lesions are in the anal, perineal, or inner thigh area (strict precautions are necessary to protect the fetus during delivery).
7. Maintain contact precautions.

E. Group B *Streptococcus* (GBS)

1. GBS is a leading cause of life-threatening perinatal infections.
2. The gram-positive bacterium colonizes the rectum, vagina, cervix, and urethra of pregnant and nonpregnant women.
3. Meningitis, fasciitis, and intraabdominal abscess can occur in the pregnant client if she is infected at the time of birth.
4. Transmission occurs during vaginal delivery.
5. Early-onset newborn GBS occurs within the first week after birth, usually within 48 hours, and can include infections such as sepsis, pneumonia, or meningitis;

permanent neurological disability can result.

6. Diagnosis of the mother is done via vaginal and rectal cultures at 35 to 37 weeks' gestation.
7. Antibiotics such as penicillin may be prescribed for the mother during labor and birth; intravenous antibiotics may be prescribed for infected infants.

## XVIII. Multiple Gestation

### A. Description

1. Multiple gestation results from **fertilization** of two ova (fraternal or dizygotic) or a splitting of one fertilized ovum (identical or monozygotic).
2. Complications include spontaneous abortion, anemia, congenital anomalies, hyperemesis gravidarum, intrauterine growth restriction, gestational hypertension, polyhydramnios, postpartum hemorrhage, premature rupture of membranes, and preterm labor and delivery.

### B. Assessment

1. Excessive fetal activity
2. Uterus large for gestational age
3. Palpation of three or four large parts in the **uterus**
4. Auscultation of more than one fetal heart rate
5. Excessive weight gain

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor fetal heart rates, activity, and growth.

3. Monitor for cervical changes.
4. Prepare the client for ultrasound as prescribed.
5. Monitor for anemia; administer supplemental vitamins as prescribed.
6. Monitor for preterm labor, and treat preterm labor promptly.
7. Prepare for cesarean delivery for abnormal presentations.
8. Prepare to administer oxytocic medications after delivery to prevent postpartum hemorrhage from uterine overdistention.

## **XIX. Pyelonephritis**

### **A. Description**

1. Results from bacterial infections that extend upward from the bladder through the blood vessels and lymphatics
2. Frequently follows untreated urinary tract infections and is associated with increased incidence of anemia, low birth weight, gestational hypertension, premature labor and delivery, and premature rupture of the membranes

### **B. Assessment and Interventions (Refer to [Chapter 62](#))**

## **XX. Sexually Transmitted Infections** ▲

### **A. *Chlamydia***

#### **1. Description**

- a. Sexually transmitted pathogen associated with an increased risk for premature birth, stillbirth, neonatal conjunctivitis, and newborn chlamydial pneumonia
- b. Can cause salpingitis, pelvic abscesses, ectopic pregnancy, chronic pelvic pain,

and infertility

c. Diagnostic test is culture for *Chlamydia trachomatis*

## 2. Assessment

a. Usually asymptomatic

b. Bleeding between periods or after coitus

c. Mucoid or purulent cervical discharge

d. Dysuria and pelvic pain

## 3. Interventions

a. Screen the client to determine whether she is high risk; a vaginal culture is indicated for all pregnant clients if the client is in a high-risk group or if infants from previous pregnancies have developed neonatal conjunctivitis or pneumonia.

b. Instruct the client in the importance of rescreening because reinfection can occur as the client nears term.

c. Ensure that the sexual partner is treated.

## B. Syphilis

### 1. Description

a. Syphilis is a chronic infectious disease caused by the organism *Treponema pallidum*.

b. Transmission is by physical contact with syphilitic lesions, which usually are found on the skin, mucous membranes of the mouth, or genitals.

c. The infection may cause abortion or premature labor and is passed to the fetus

after the fourth month of pregnancy as congenital syphilis.

## 2. Assessment (Box 29-9)

### **BOX 29-9** Stages of Syphilis

#### **Primary Stage**

- Most infectious stage
- Appearance of ulcerative, painless lesions produced by spirochetes at point of entry into the body

#### **Secondary Stage**

- Highly infectious stage
- Appearance of lesions about 6 weeks to 6 months after primary stage; located anywhere on the skin and mucous membranes
- Generalized lymphadenopathy

#### **Tertiary Stage**

- Entrance of spirochetes into internal organs, causing permanent damage; symptoms occur 10 to 30 years after untreated primary lesion
- Invasion of central nervous system, causing meningitis, ataxia, general paresis, and progressive mental deterioration
- Deleterious effects on aortic valve and aorta

## 3. Interventions

- a. Obtain a serum test (Venereal Disease Research Laboratory or rapid plasma reagin) for syphilis on the first prenatal visit; prepare to repeat the test at 36 weeks' gestation because the disease may be acquired after the initial visit.
- b. If the test result is positive, treatment with an antibiotic such as penicillin may be necessary.
- c. Instruct the client that treatment of her partner is necessary if infection is present.

## C. Gonorrhea

### 1. Description

- a. Gonorrhea is an infection caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, which causes inflammation of the mucous membranes of the genital and urinary tracts.
- b. Transmission of the organism is by sexual intercourse.
- c. Infection may be transmitted to the newborn's eyes during delivery, causing blindness (ophthalmia neonatorum).

2. Assessment: Usually asymptomatic; vaginal discharge, urinary frequency, and lower abdominal pain possible

### 3. Interventions

- a. Obtain a vaginal culture during the initial prenatal examination to screen for gonorrhea; the culture may be repeated during the third trimester in high-risk clients.
- b. Instruct the client that treatment of her partner is necessary if infection is present.

## **D. Condyloma acuminatum (human papillomavirus)**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Condyloma acuminatum is caused by human papillomavirus.
- b.** Infection affects the cervix, urethra, anus, penis, and scrotum.
- c.** A culture is indicated for clients with a positive history or with active lesions, and weekly cultures may be done at week 35 or 36 of pregnancy until delivery; the test is performed to determine the route of delivery.
- d.** Human papillomavirus is transmitted through sexual contact.

### **2. Assessment**

- a.** Infection produces small to large wartlike growths on the genitals.
- b.** Cervical cell changes may be noted because human papillomavirus is associated with cervical malignancies.

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Lesions are removed by the use of cytotoxic agents, cryotherapy, electrocautery, and laser.
- b.** Encourage annual Papanicolaou smear.
- c.** Sexual contact should be avoided until lesions are healed (condoms reduce transmission).

## **E. Trichomoniasis**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Trichomoniasis is caused by *Trichomonas vaginalis* and is transmitted via sexual contact.

- b.** A normal saline wet smear of vaginal secretions indicates the presence of protozoa.
- c.** Infection is associated with premature rupture of the membranes and postpartum endometritis.

## **2. Assessment**

- a.** Yellowish to greenish, frothy, mucopurulent, copious, malodorous vaginal discharge
- b.** Inflammation of vulva, vagina, or both may occur

## **3. Interventions**

- a.** Metronidazole (Flagyl) may be prescribed.
- b.** Sexual partner may need to be treated.

## **F. Bacterial vaginosis**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Caused by *Haemophilus vaginalis* (*Gardnerella vaginalis*) and transmitted via sexual contact
- b.** Associated with premature labor and birth

### **2. Assessment**

- a.** Client complains of “fishy odor” to vaginal secretions and increased odor after intercourse.
- b.** Microscopic examination of vaginal secretions identifies the infection.

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Oral metronidazole (Flagyl) may be prescribed.

- b. Sexual partner may need to be treated.

## G. Vaginal candidiasis

### 1. Description

- a. *Candida albicans* is the most common causative organism.
- b. Predisposing factors include use of antibiotics, diabetes mellitus, and obesity.
- c. Vaginal candidiasis is diagnosed by identifying spores of *Candida albicans*.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Vulvar and vaginal pruritus
- b. White, lumpy, cottage cheese–like discharge from vagina

### 3. Interventions

- a. An antifungal vaginal preparation such as miconazole (Monistat) may be prescribed.
- b. For extensive irritation and swelling, sitz baths may be prescribed.
- c. Sexual partner may need to be treated.

## XXI. Tuberculosis ▲

### A. Description

1. Highly communicable disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*
2. Transmitted by the airborne route
3. Multidrug-resistant strains of tuberculosis can result from improper compliance, noncompliance with treatment programs, or development of mutations in tubercle bacillus. ▲

### B. Transmission

1. Transplacental transmission is rare.
  2. Transmission can occur during birth through aspiration of infected amniotic fluid.
  3. The newborn can become infected from contact with infected individuals.
- C. Risk to mother: Active disease during pregnancy has been associated with an increase in hypertensive disorders of pregnancy.
- D. Diagnosis: If a chest radiograph is required for the mother, it is done only after 20 weeks of gestation, and a lead shield for the abdomen is required. ▲

⚠ Tuberculin skin testing is safe during pregnancy; however, the HCP may want to delay testing until after delivery.

#### E. Assessment ▲

##### 1. Mother

- a. Possibly asymptomatic
- b. Fever and chills
- c. Night sweats
- d. Weight loss
- e. Fatigue
- f. Cough with hemoptysis or green or yellow sputum
- g. Dyspnea
- h. Pleural pain

##### 2. Neonate

- a. Fever

- b.** Lethargy
- c.** Poor feeding
- d.** Failure to thrive
- e.** Respiratory distress
- f.** Hepatosplenomegaly
- g.** Meningitis
- h.** Disease may spread to all major organs

## **F.** Interventions

### **1.** Pregnant client

- a.** Administration of isoniazid, pyrazinamide, and rifampin (Rifadin) daily for 9 months (as prescribed); ethambutol (Myambutol) is added if medication resistance is likely.
- b.** Pyridoxine (vitamin B<sub>6</sub>) should be administered with isoniazid to the pregnant client to prevent fetal neurotoxicity caused by isoniazid.
- c.** Promote breast-feeding only if the client is noninfectious.

### **2.** Newborn

- a.** Management focuses on preventing disease and treating early infection.
- b.** Skin testing is performed on the newborn at birth, and the newborn may be placed on isoniazid therapy; the skin test is repeated in 3 to 4 months, and isoniazid may be stopped if the skin test results remain negative.
- c.** If the skin test result is positive, the newborn should receive isoniazid for at least 6 months (as prescribed).

- d. If the mother's sputum is free of organisms, the newborn does not need to be isolated from the mother while in the hospital.

## XXII. Urinary Tract Infection

A. Description: A urinary tract infection can occur during pregnancy (pregnancy is a predisposing factor); if untreated, the client can develop pyelonephritis.

B. Predisposing conditions

1. History of urinary tract infections
2. Sickle cell trait
3. Poor hygiene
4. Anemia
5. Diabetes mellitus

C. Assessment and Interventions (Refer to [Chapter 62](#))

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

*Answer:* The nurse should begin by explaining to the client that pregnancy places demands on carbohydrate metabolism and causes insulin requirements to change. The nurse should inform the client that maternal glucose crosses the placenta, but insulin does not. During the first trimester, maternal insulin needs decrease. During the second and third trimesters, increases in placental hormones cause an insulin-resistant state, requiring an increase in the client's insulin dose. After placental delivery, placental hormone levels abruptly decrease and insulin requirements

decrease. In addition, the fetus produces its own insulin and pulls glucose from the mother, which predisposes the mother to hypoglycemic reactions.

### ***Reference***

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 690.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 277.** The nurse is providing instructions to a pregnant client with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection regarding care to the newborn after delivery. The client asks the nurse about the feeding options that are available. Which response should the nurse make to the client?
1. “You will need to bottle-feed your newborn.”
  2. “You will need to feed your newborn by nasogastric tube feeding.”
  3. “You will be able to breast-feed for 6 months and then will need to switch to bottle-feeding.”
  4. “You will be able to breast-feed for 9 months and then will need to switch to bottle-feeding.”
- 278.** The home care nurse visits a pregnant client who has a diagnosis of mild preeclampsia. Which assessment finding indicates a worsening of the preeclampsia and the need to notify the health care provider?
1. Urinary output has increased.
  2. Dependent edema has resolved.
  3. Blood pressure reading is at the prenatal baseline.
  4. The client complains of a headache and blurred vision.
- 279.** A stillborn baby was delivered in the birthing suite a few hours ago. After the delivery, the family remained together, holding and touching the baby. Which statement by the nurse would further assist the family in their initial period of

grief?

1. "What can I do for you?"
2. "Now you have an angel in heaven."
3. "Don't worry, there is nothing you could have done to prevent this from happening."
4. "We will see to it that you have an early discharge so that you don't have to be reminded of this experience."

**280.** The nurse implements a teaching plan for a pregnant client who is newly diagnosed with gestational diabetes mellitus. Which statement made by the client indicates a **need for further teaching**?

1. "I should stay on the diabetic diet."
2. "I should perform glucose monitoring at home."
3. "I should avoid exercise because of the negative effects on insulin production."
4. "I should be aware of any infections and report signs of infection immediately to my health care provider."

**281.** The nurse is performing an assessment on a pregnant client with a diagnosis of severe preeclampsia. The nurse reviews the assessment findings and determines that which finding is **most** closely associated with a complication of this diagnosis?

1. Enlargement of the breasts
2. Complaints of feeling hot when the room is cool

3. Periods of fetal movement followed by quiet periods
4. Evidence of bleeding, such as in the gums, petechiae, and purpura

**282.** The nurse in a maternity unit is reviewing the clients' records. Which client would the nurse identify as being at the **most** risk for developing disseminated intravascular coagulation?

1. A primigravida with mild preeclampsia
2. A primigravida who delivered a 10-lb infant 3 hours ago
3. A gravida II who has just been diagnosed with dead fetus syndrome
4. A gravida IV who delivered 8 hours ago and has lost 500 mL of blood

**283.** The home care nurse is monitoring a pregnant client with gestational hypertension who is at risk for preeclampsia. At each home care visit, the nurse assesses the client for which classic signs of preeclampsia? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Proteinuria
2. Hypertension
3. Low-grade fever
4. Generalized edema
5. Increased pulse rate
6. Increased respiratory rate

**284.** The nurse is assessing a pregnant client with type 1 diabetes mellitus about her understanding regarding changing insulin needs during pregnancy. The nurse determines that **further teaching is needed** if the client makes which statement?

1. "I will need to increase my insulin dosage during the first 3 months of pregnancy."
2. "My insulin dose will likely need to be increased during the second and third trimesters."
3. "Episodes of hypoglycemia are more likely to occur during the first 3 months of pregnancy."
4. "My insulin needs should return to normal within 7 to 10 days after birth if I am bottle-feeding."

**285.** A pregnant client reports to a health care clinic, complaining of loss of appetite, weight loss, and fatigue. After assessment of the client, tuberculosis is suspected. A sputum culture is obtained and identifies *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Which instruction should the nurse include in the client's teaching plan?

1. Therapeutic abortion is required.
2. She will have to stay at home until treatment is completed.
3. Medication will not be started until after delivery of the fetus.
4. Isoniazid plus rifampin (Rifadin) will be required for 9 months.

**286.** The nurse is providing instructions to a maternity client with a history of cardiac disease regarding appropriate dietary measures. Which statement, if made by the client, indicates an understanding of the information provided by the nurse?

1. "I should increase my sodium intake during pregnancy."
2. "I should lower my blood volume by limiting my fluids."

3. "I should maintain a low-calorie diet to prevent any weight gain."
4. "I should drink adequate fluids and increase my intake of high-fiber foods."

**287.** The clinic nurse is performing a psychosocial assessment of a client who has been told that she is pregnant. Which assessment finding indicates to the nurse that the client is at risk for contracting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)?

1. A client who has a history of intravenous drug use
2. A client who has a significant other who is heterosexual
3. A client who has a history of sexually transmitted infections
4. A client who has had one sexual partner for the past 10 years

**288.** The nurse in a maternity unit is providing emotional support to a client and her husband who are preparing to be discharged from the hospital after the birth of a dead fetus. Which statement made by the client indicates a component of the normal grieving process?

1. "We want to attend a support group."
2. "We never want to try to have a baby again."
3. "We are going to try to adopt a child immediately."
4. "We are okay, and we are going to try to have another baby immediately."

**289.** The nurse evaluates the ability of a hepatitis B–positive mother to provide safe bottle-feeding to her newborn during postpartum hospitalization. Which maternal action **best** exemplifies the mother's knowledge of potential disease transmission to the newborn?

1. The mother requests that the window be closed before feeding.
2. The mother holds the newborn properly during feeding and burping.
3. The mother tests the temperature of the formula before initiating feeding.
4. The mother washes and dries her hands before and after self-care of the perineum and asks for a pair of gloves before feeding.

**290.** A client in the first trimester of pregnancy arrives at a health care clinic and reports that she has been experiencing vaginal bleeding. A threatened abortion is suspected, and the nurse instructs the client regarding management of care. Which statement made by the client indicates a **need for further instruction**?

1. "I will watch for the evidence of the passage of tissue."
2. "I will maintain strict bed rest throughout the remainder of the pregnancy."
3. "I will count the number of perineal pads used on a daily basis and note the amount and color of blood on the pad."
4. "I will avoid sexual intercourse until the bleeding has stopped, and for 2 weeks following the last evidence of bleeding."

## ANSWERS

277. 1

**Rationale:** Perinatal transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can occur during the antepartum period, during labor and birth, or in the postpartum period if the mother is breast-feeding. Clients who have HIV are advised not to breast-feed. There is no physiological reason why the newborn needs to be fed by nasogastric tube.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge regarding the transmission of HIV. Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because these options are **comparable or alike** in that they both address breast-feeding. From the remaining options, select the correct option, knowing that it is unnecessary to feed the newborn by nasogastric tube.

**Review:** Feeding options for a newborn with a mother who has **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 159.

**278. 4**

**Rationale:** If the client complains of a headache and blurred vision, the HCP should be notified because these are signs of worsening preeclampsia. Options 1, 2, and 3 are normal signs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the word *worsening* in the question. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because these options are **comparable or alike** and indicate normal findings.

**Review:** Signs of worsening **preeclampsia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 647.

**279. 1**

**Rationale:** When a loss or death occurs, the nurse should ensure that parents have been honestly told about the situation by their health care provider or others on the health care team. It is important for the nurse to be with the parents at this time and to use therapeutic communication techniques. The nurse must also consider cultural and religious practices and beliefs. The correct option provides a supportive, giving, and caring response. Options 2, 3, and 4 are blocks to communication and devalue the parents' feelings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of **therapeutic communication techniques** to answer the question. The correct option is the only option that reflects use of **therapeutic communication techniques**.

**Review:** **Grief** associated with **perinatal death**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Coping

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 931-932, 936; Potter et al (2013), pp. 320-322.

**280. 3**

**Rationale:** Exercise is safe for a client with gestational diabetes mellitus and is helpful in lowering the blood glucose level. Dietary modifications are the mainstay of treatment, and the client is placed on a standard diabetic diet. Many clients are taught to perform blood glucose monitoring. If the client is not performing the blood glucose monitoring at home, it is performed at the clinic or HCP's office. Signs of infection need to be reported to the HCP.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select an incorrect client statement. Noting these strategic words and the **closed-ended word** *avoid* in the correct option will assist in answering the question.

**Review:** Teaching points for **gestational diabetes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 694.

#### 281. 4

**Rationale:** Severe preeclampsia can trigger disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) because of the widespread damage to vascular integrity. Bleeding is an early sign of DIC and should be reported to the health care provider if noted on assessment. Options 1, 2, and 3 are normal occurrences in the last trimester of pregnancy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Focus on the **subject**, a complication of severe preeclampsia. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are **comparable or alike** and are normal occurrences in the last trimester of pregnancy.

**Review:** Assessment findings in **disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 685-686.

**282. 3**

**Rationale:** In a pregnant client, disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) is a condition in which the clotting cascade is activated, resulting in the formation of clots in the microcirculation. Dead fetus syndrome is considered a risk factor for DIC. Severe preeclampsia is considered a risk factor for DIC; a mild case is not. Delivering a large newborn is not considered a risk factor for DIC. Hemorrhage is a risk factor for DIC; however, a loss of 500 mL is not considered hemorrhage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Focus on the **subject**, the client at most risk for DIC. Think about the pathophysiology associated with DIC and recall that dead fetus syndrome is a risk factor. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Risk factors for **disseminated vascular coagulation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 159, 686.

❖ **283. 1, 2, 4**

**Rationale:** The three classic signs of preeclampsia are hypertension, generalized edema, and proteinuria. A low-

grade fever, increased pulse rate, or increased respiratory rate is not associated with preeclampsia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the classic signs of preeclampsia. Thinking about the pathophysiology associated with preeclampsia will direct you to the correct options. Remember that the three classic signs of preeclampsia are hypertension, generalized edema, and proteinuria.

**Review:** Signs of **preeclampsia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 660, 662; Swearingen (2012), p. 647.

## 284. 1

**Rationale:** Insulin needs decrease in the first trimester of pregnancy because of increased insulin production by the pancreas and increased peripheral sensitivity to insulin. The statements in options 2, 3, and 4 are accurate and signify that the client understands control of her diabetes during pregnancy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *further teaching is needed*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select an incorrect client statement. Eliminate options 2, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and are accurate statements. Remember that insulin needs decrease in the first trimester of pregnancy.

**Review:** Insulin needs of the **pregnant client with diabetes mellitus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 690.

**285. 4**

**Rationale:** More than one medication may be used to prevent the growth of resistant organisms in a pregnant client with tuberculosis. Treatment must continue for a prolonged period. The preferred treatment for the pregnant client is isoniazid plus rifampin daily for 9 months. Ethambutol is added initially if medication resistance is suspected. Pyridoxine (vitamin B<sub>6</sub>) often is administered with isoniazid to prevent fetal neurotoxicity. The client does not need to stay at home during treatment, and therapeutic abortion is not required.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, therapeutic management for a client with tuberculosis. Recalling the pathophysiology associated with tuberculosis and its treatment will assist in eliminating options 1, 2, and 3.

**Review:** Treatment measures for the **pregnant client with tuberculosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 631.

**286. 4**

**Rationale:** The Valsalva maneuver should be avoided in clients with cardiac disease because it can cause blood to

rush to the heart and overload the cardiac system. Constipation can cause the client to use the Valsalva maneuver. High-fiber foods are important. A low-calorie diet is not recommended during pregnancy and could be harmful to the fetus. Diets low in fluid can cause a decrease in blood volume, which could deprive the fetus of nutrients, so adequate fluid intake and high-fiber foods are important. Sodium should be restricted as prescribed by the health care provider because excess sodium would cause an overload to the circulating blood volume and contribute to cardiac complications.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the pregnant client with heart disease. Think about the physiology of the cardiac system, maternal and fetal needs, and the factors that increase the workload on the heart. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing measures for the **pregnant client with heart disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 715.

**287. 1**

**Rationale:** Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is transmitted by intimate sexual contact and the exchange of body fluids, exposure to infected blood, and passage from an infected woman to her fetus. Clients who fall into the high-risk category for HIV infection include individuals with persistent and recurrent sexually transmitted infections, individuals who have a history of multiple sexual partners, and individuals who have used intravenous drugs. A client with a heterosexual partner, particularly a client who has had only one sexual partner in 10 years, does not have a

high risk for contracting HIV.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, risk factors for HIV. Recalling that exchange of blood and body fluids places the client at high risk for HIV infection will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Risk factors associated with **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Sexuality

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 156-157.

**288. 1**

**Rationale:** A support group can help the parents work through their pain by nonjudgmental sharing of feelings. The correct option identifies a statement that would indicate positive, normal grieving. Although the other options may indicate reactions of the client and significant other, they are not specifically a part of the normal grieving process.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Read all the options carefully before selecting an answer and focus on the **subject** of the question, the normal grieving process. Note that options 2, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** in that they relate to childbearing.

**Review:** Normal grieving process

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Coping; Family Dynamics

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 936.

**289. 4**

**Rationale:** Hepatitis B virus is highly contagious and is transmitted by direct contact with blood and body fluids of infected persons. The rationale for identifying childbearing clients with this disease is to provide adequate protection of the fetus and the newborn, to minimize transmission to other individuals, and to reduce maternal complications.

The correct option provides the best evaluation of maternal understanding of disease transmission. Option 1 will not affect disease transmission. Options 2 and 3 are appropriate feeding techniques for bottle-feeding, but do not minimize disease transmission for hepatitis B.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Focus on the **subject** of the question, disease transmission to the newborn. This focus will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Measures to prevent transmission of **hepatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction; Infection

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 582, 850.

**290. 2**

**Rationale:** Strict bed rest throughout the remainder of the pregnancy is not required for a threatened abortion. The

client is advised to curtail sexual activities until bleeding has ceased and for 2 weeks after the last evidence of bleeding or as recommended by the health care provider. The client is instructed to count the number of perineal pads used daily and to note the quantity and color of blood on the pad. The client also should watch for the evidence of the passage of tissue.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction* in the question. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select an incorrect client statement. Noting the word *strict* in the correct option will assist in directing you to this option.

**Review:** Therapeutic management for **threatened abortion**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 577.



## CHAPTER 30

# Labor and Delivery

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A client is in active labor. The nurse is monitoring the fetal heart rate and notes that the heart rate is 180 beats/minute, lasting for longer than 10 minutes. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 354.*

### I. Process of Labor—Four P's

#### A. Description

1. **Labor**: Coordinated sequence of involuntary, intermittent uterine contractions
2. **Delivery**: Actual event of birth

B. Four major factors (four P's) interact during normal childbirth; the four P's are interrelated and depend on each other for a safe delivery and include Powers, Passageway, Passenger, Psyche ▲

C. Powers: Uterine contractions

1. Forces acting to expel the fetus

2. Effacement: Shortening and thinning of the cervix during the first stage of labor

3. Dilation: Enlargement of cervical os and cervical canal during the first stage of labor

4. Pushing efforts of mother during the second stage

**D. Passageway:** The mother's rigid bony pelvis and the soft tissues of the cervix, pelvic floor, **vagina**, and introitus (external opening to the vagina)

**E. Passenger:** The fetus, membranes, and **placenta**

**F. Psyche:** A woman's emotional structure that can determine her entire response to labor and influence physiological and psychological functioning; the mother may experience anxiety or fear.

**G. Attitude** ▲

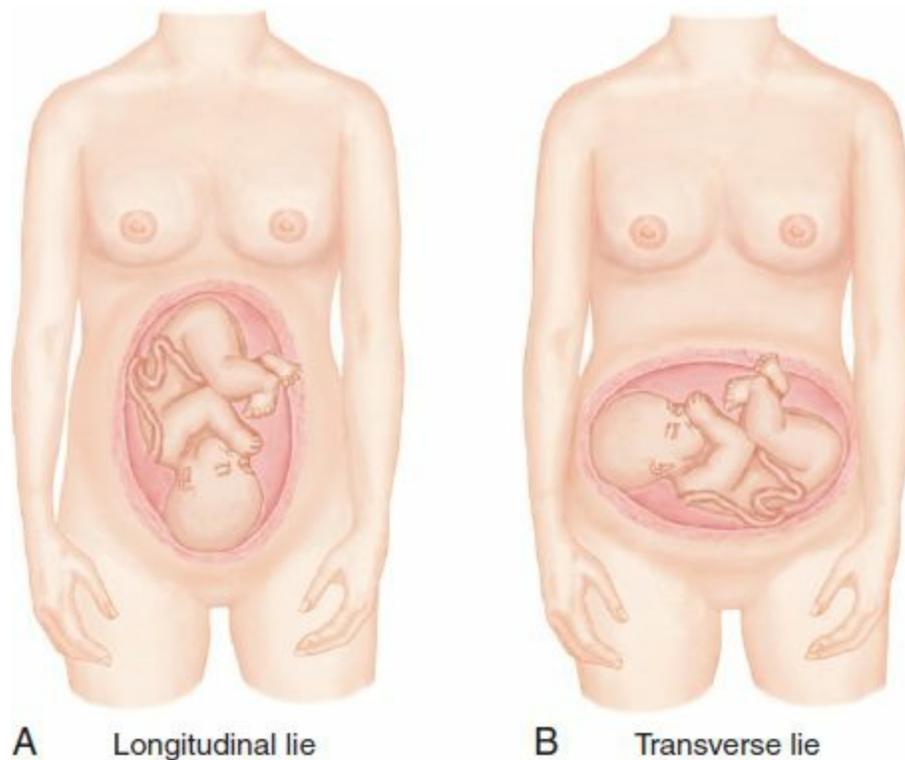
1. Attitude is the relationship of the fetal body parts to one another.

2. Normal intrauterine attitude is flexion, in which the fetal back is rounded, the head is forward on the chest, and the arms and legs are folded in against the body. The other attitude, extension, tends to present larger fetal diameters.

**H. Lie** ▲

1. Relationship of the spine of the fetus to the spine of the mother

2. Longitudinal or vertical ([Fig. 30-1](#))



**FIGURE 30-1** Fetal lie. **A**, In a longitudinal lie, the long axis of the fetus is parallel to the long axis of the mother. **B**, In a transverse lie, the long axis of the fetus is at a right angle to the long axis of the mother. The mother's abdomen has a wide, short appearance. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Fetal spine is parallel to the mother's spine.
  - b. Fetus is in cephalic or breech presentation.
3. Transverse or horizontal (see [Fig. 30-1](#))
- a. Fetal spine is at a right angle, or perpendicular, to the mother's spine.
  - b. Presenting part is the shoulder.
  - c. Delivery by cesarean section is necessary.
- I. Presentation** ▲
1. Portion of the fetus that enters the pelvic inlet first

**2. Cephalic: Head first**

- a. Cephalic is the most common presentation.
- b. Cephalic presentation has four variations—vertex, military, brow, and face.

**3. Breech: Buttocks present first.**

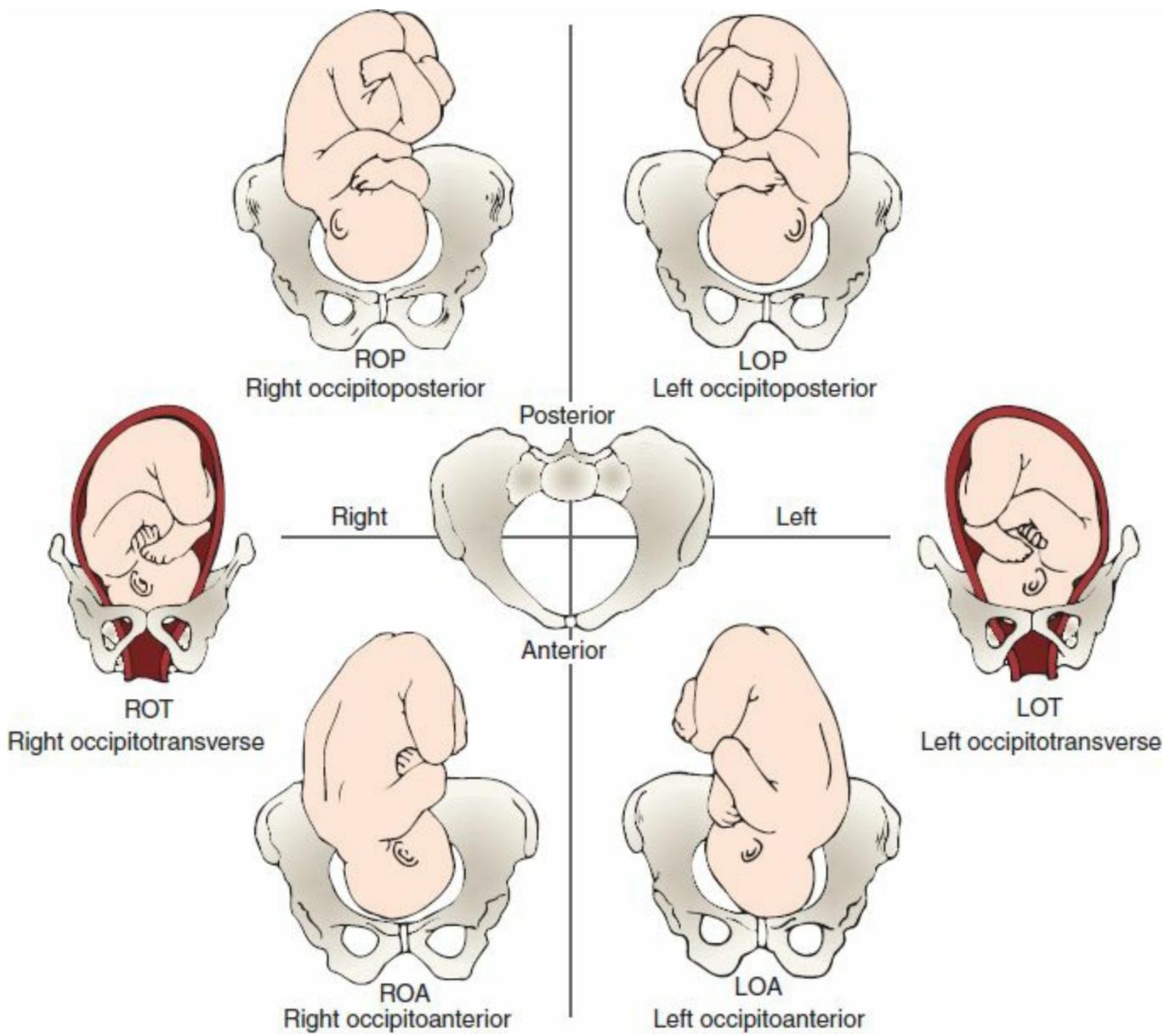
- a. Delivery by cesarean section may be required, although vaginal birth is often possible.
- b. Breech presentation has three variations—frank, full (complete), and footling

**4. Shoulder**

- a. Fetus is in a transverse lie, or the arm, back, abdomen, or side could present.
- b. If the fetus does not spontaneously rotate, or if it is impossible to turn the fetus manually, a cesarean section may need to be performed.

**J. Presenting part:** The specific fetal structure lying nearest to the cervix ▲

**K. Position:** Relationship of assigned area of the presenting part or landmark to the maternal pelvis (Fig. 30-2 and Box 30-1)



*Lie:* Longitudinal or vertical  
*Presentation:* Vertex  
*Reference point:* Occiput  
*Attitude:* Complete flexion

**FIGURE 30-2** Fetal vertex (occiput) presentations in relation to the front, back, or side of the maternal pelvis. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

## Vertex Presentations

**ROA:** Right occipitoanterior

**LOA:** Left occipitoanterior

**ROP:** Right occipitoposterior

**LOP:** Left occipitoposterior

**ROT:** Right occipitotransverse

**LOT:** Left occipitotransverse

## Face Presentations

**RMA:** Right mentoanterior

**LMA:** Left mentoanterior

**RMP:** Right mentoposterior

## Breech Presentations

**LSA:** Left sacroanterior

**LSP:** Left sacroposterior

## Other Presentations

Brow presentation

Shoulder presentation

## L. Station

1. The measurement of the progress of descent in centimeters above or below the midplane from the presenting part to the ischial spine
2. Station 0: At ischial spine

3. Minus station: Above ischial spine
4. Plus station: Below ischial spine
5. Engagement: When the widest diameter of the presenting part has passed the inlet; corresponds to a 0 station

## II. Mechanisms of Labor (Box 30-2)

### BOX 30-2 Mechanisms of Labor

#### Engagement

- Engagement is the mechanism whereby the fetus nestles into the pelvis.
- Engagement also is termed *lightening* or *dropping*.

#### Descent

- Descent is the process that the fetal head undergoes as it begins its journey through the pelvis.
- Descent is a continuous process from the time of engagement until birth and is assessed by the measurement called *station*.

#### Flexion

- Flexion is a process of nodding of the fetal head forward toward the fetal chest.

#### Internal Rotation

- Internal rotation of the fetus occurs most commonly from the occipitotransverse position, assumed at engagement into the pelvis, to the occipitoanterior position

while continuously descending.

### Extension

- Extension enables the head to emerge when the fetus is in a cephalic position.
- Extension begins after the head crowns.
- Extension is complete when the head passes under the symphysis pubis and occiput, and the anterior fontanel, brow, face, and chin pass over the sacrum and coccyx and are over the perineum.

### Restitution

- Restitution is realignment of the fetal head with the body after the head emerges.

### External Rotation

- The shoulders externally rotate after the head emerges and restitution occurs, so that the shoulders are in the anteroposterior diameter of the pelvis.

### Expulsion

- Expulsion is the birth of the entire body.

## A. Assessment ▲

1. Lightening or dropping: Is also known as *engagement* and occurs when the fetus descends into the pelvis about 2 weeks before delivery; lightening or dropping is most noticeable in first pregnancies
2. Braxton Hicks contractions increase.
3. The vaginal mucosa is congested, and vaginal discharge increases.

4. Brownish or blood-tinged cervical mucus is passed.
  5. Cervix ripens, becomes soft and partly effaced, and may begin to dilate.
  6. The mother has a sudden burst of energy, also known as “nesting,” often 24 to 48 hours before onset of labor.
  7. Weight loss of 1 to 3 lb results from fluid shifts produced by the changes in progesterone and estrogen levels 24 to 48 hours before the onset of labor.
  8. Spontaneous rupture of membranes occurs.
- B. True labor:** Contractions may manifest as back pain in some women; contractions often resemble menstrual cramps during early labor ([Box 30-3](#)).

### **BOX 30-3** True Labor Versus False Labor

#### **True Labor**

- Contractions occur regularly, become stronger, last longer, and occur closer together.
- Cervical dilation and effacement are progressive.
- The fetus usually becomes engaged in the pelvis and begins to descend.

#### **False Labor**

- False labor does not produce dilation, effacement, or descent.
- Contractions are irregular, without progression.
- Activity, such as walking, often relieves false labor.

**Example:** If a woman has been sleeping and wakes up with contractions, gets up, and moves around, and her contractions become stronger and closer together, this is

true labor. If the contractions go away, this is false labor.

C. False labor: Also known as *prodromal labor*, contractions are felt in the abdomen and groin and may be more annoying than painful (see [Box 30-3](#)).

**!** In true labor, contractions increase in duration and intensity and cervical dilation and effacement are progressive, with engagement and descent of the fetus. In false labor, contractions are irregular and do not produce dilation, effacement, or descent.

### III. Leopold's Maneuvers

- A. Description: Methods of palpation to determine presentation and position of the fetus and aid in location of fetal heart sounds
- B. If the head is in the fundus, a hard, round, movable object is felt. The buttocks feel soft and have an irregular shape and are more difficult to move.
- C. The fetus's back, which is a smooth, hard surface, should be felt on one side of the abdomen.
- D. Irregular knobs and lumps, which may be the hands, feet, elbows, and knees, are felt on the opposite side of the abdomen.

### IV. Breathing Techniques ([Box 30-4](#))

#### **BOX 30-4** Breathing Techniques

**First-Stage Breathing**

***Cleansing Breath***

Each contraction begins and ends with a deep inspiration and expiration.

### ***Slow-Paced Breathing***

Slow-paced breathing promotes relaxation.

Slow-paced breathing is used as long as possible during labor.

### ***Modified-Paced Breathing***

Modified-paced breathing is used when slow-paced breathing is no longer effective.

Breathing is shallow and fast.

### ***Pattern-Paced Breathing***

Pattern-paced breathing sometimes is referred to as *pant-blow*.

After a certain number of breaths (modified-paced breathing), the woman exhales with a slight blow, and then begins modified-paced breathing again.

### ***Breathing to Prevent Pushing***

The woman blows repeatedly, using short puffs, when the urge to push is strong.

### **Second-Stage Breathing**

Several variations of breathing can be used in the pushing stage of labor, and the woman may grunt, groan, sigh, or moan as she pushes. Prolonged breath holding while pushing with a closed glottis may result in a decrease in cardiac output. If breath holding while pushing is used, the open glottis method or limiting breath holding to less than 6 to 8 seconds should be done.

- A. Provide a focus during contractions, interfering with pain sensory transmission
- B. Promote relaxation and oxygenation

C. Begin with simple breathing patterns and progress to more complex ones as needed.

## V. Fetal Monitoring ▲

### A. Description

1. The fetal monitor displays the fetal heart rate (FHR).
2. The device monitors uterine activity.
3. The monitor assesses frequency, duration, and intensity of contractions.
4. The monitor assesses FHR in relation to maternal contractions.
5. Baseline FHR is measured between contractions; the normal FHR at term is 110 to 160 beats/minute.

### B. External fetal monitoring

1. External fetal monitoring is noninvasive and is performed with a tocotransducer or Doppler ultrasonic transducer.
2. Leopold's maneuvers are performed to determine on which side the fetal back is located, and the ultrasound transducer is placed over this area (fasten with a belt or stocking tubing).
3. The tocotransducer is placed over the fundus of the uterus, where contractions feel the strongest (fasten with a belt or stocking tubing).
4. The client is allowed to assume a comfortable position, avoiding vena cava compression (maternal supine hypotensive syndrome).
5. The preferred position is to have the client lie on her side to increase perfusion.

### C. Internal fetal monitoring

1. Internal fetal monitoring is invasive and requires rupturing of the membranes and attaching an electrode to the presenting part of the fetus.
2. The client must be dilated 2 to 3 cm to perform internal monitoring.

#### D. Periodic patterns in FHR ▲

##### 1. Fetal bradycardia and tachycardia

- a. Bradycardia: FHR is less than 110 beats/minute for 10 minutes or longer.
- b. Tachycardia: FHR is more than 160 beats/minute for 10 minutes or longer.

⚠ If fetal bradycardia or tachycardia occurs, change the position of the mother, administer oxygen, and assess the mother's vital signs. Notify the health care provider as soon as possible.

##### 2. Variability (Box 30-5)

#### BOX 30-5 Variability in Fetal Heart Rate

**Absent Variability:** Undetected variability

**Minimal Variability:** Greater than undetected but not more than 5 beats/minute

**Moderate Variability:** Fetal heart rate fluctuations are 6 to 25 beats/minute

**Marked Variability:** Fetal heart rate fluctuations are greater than 25 beats/minute

- a. Fluctuations in baseline FHR
- b. Absent or undetected variability is considered nonreassuring.
- c. Decreased variability can result from fetal hypoxemia, acidosis, or certain medications.

**d.** A temporary decrease in variability can occur when the fetus is in a sleep state (sleep states do not usually last longer than 30 minutes).

### **3. Accelerations**

**a.** Brief, temporary increases in FHR of at least 15 beats/minute more than baseline and lasting at least 15 seconds

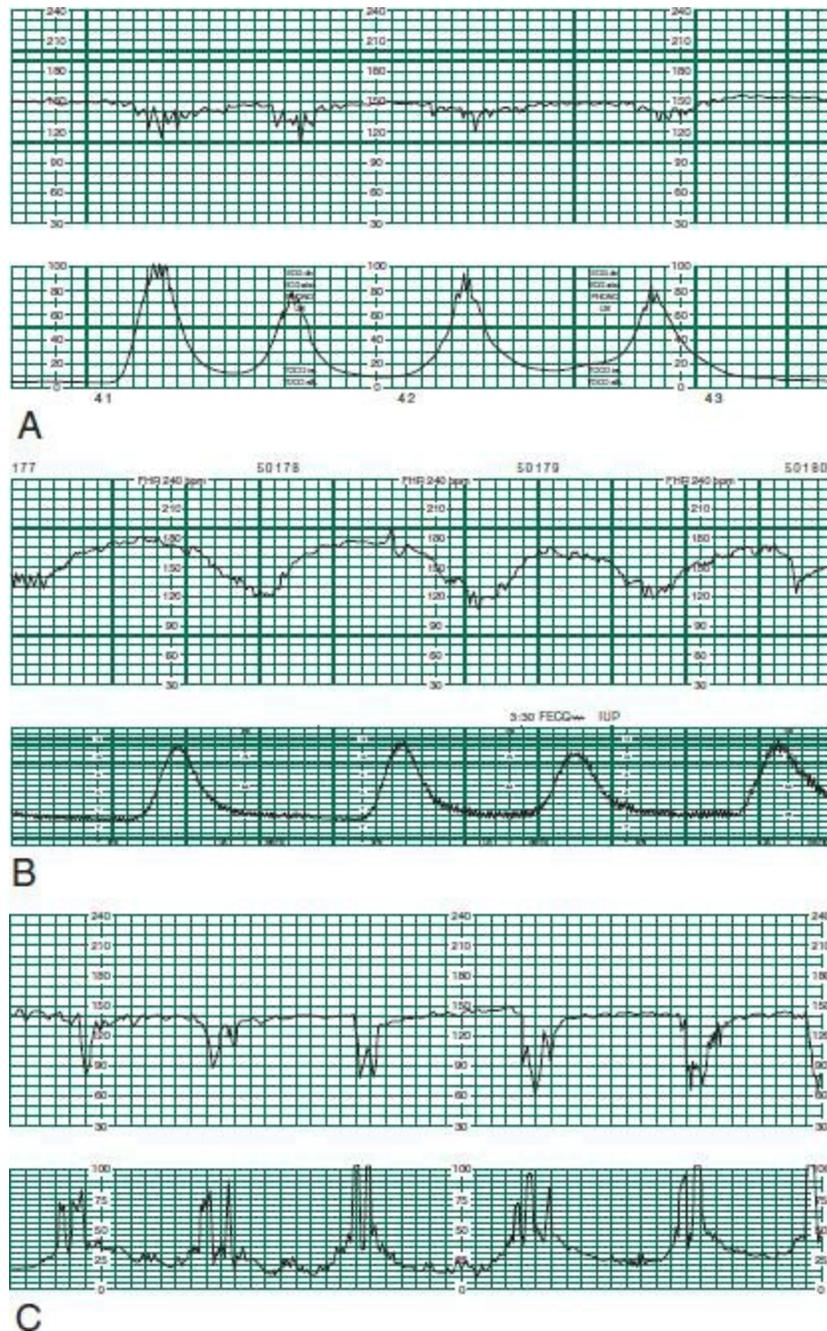
**b.** Usually are a reassuring sign, reflecting a responsive, nonacidotic fetus

**c.** Usually occur with fetal movement

**d.** May be nonperiodic (having no relation to contractions) or periodic (with contractions)

**e.** May occur with uterine contractions, vaginal examinations, or mild cord compression, or when the fetus is in a breech presentation.

### **4. Early decelerations (Fig. 30-3)**



**FIGURE 30-3** Deceleration patterns. *Top graphs:* Fetal heart rate. *Bottom graphs:* Uterine contractions. **A**, Early decelerations caused by head compression. **B**, Late decelerations caused by uteroplacental insufficiency. **C**, Variable decelerations caused by cord compression. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

a. Early decelerations are decreases in FHR below baseline; the rate at the lowest

point of the deceleration usually remains greater than 100 beats/minute.

- b.** Early decelerations occur during contractions as the fetal head is pressed against the mother's pelvis or soft tissues, such as the cervix, and return to baseline FHR by the end of the contraction.
- c.** Tracing shows a uniform shape and mirror image of uterine contractions.
- d.** Early decelerations are not associated with fetal compromise and require no intervention. ▲

#### 5. Late decelerations (see Fig. 30-3)

- a.** Late decelerations are nonreassuring patterns that reflect impaired placental exchange or uteroplacental insufficiency.
- b.** The patterns look similar to early decelerations, but begin well after the contraction begins and return to baseline after the contraction ends.
- c.** The degree of decline in FHR from baseline is not related to the amount of uteroplacental insufficiency.

**⚠ Interventions for late decelerations include immediately improving placental blood flow and fetal oxygenation.**

#### 6. Variable decelerations (see Fig. 30-3)

- a.** Variable decelerations are caused by conditions that restrict flow through the umbilical cord.
- b.** Variable decelerations do not have the uniform appearance of early and late decelerations.

- c. The shape, duration, and degree of decline below baseline FHR are variable; these fall and rise abruptly with the onset and relief of cord compression.
- d. Variable decelerations also may be nonperiodic, occurring at times unrelated to contractions.
- e. Baseline rate and variability are considered when evaluating variable decelerations.
- f. Variable decelerations are significant when FHR repeatedly declines to less than 70 beats/minute and persists at that level for at least 60 seconds before returning to baseline. ▲

▲ If variable decelerations occur, change the position of the mother, administer oxygen, discontinue oxytocin (Pitocin) if infusing, and assess the mother's vital signs. Notify the health care provider. Assist with amnioinfusion (intrauterine instillation of warmed saline to decrease compression on the umbilical cord) if prescribed.

## 7. Hypertonic uterine activity

- a. Assessment of uterine activity includes frequency, duration, intensity of contractions, and uterine resting tone; assessment is performed either by palpating by hand or with an internal uterine pressure catheter (IUPC).
- b. The **uterus** should relax between contractions for 60 seconds or longer.
- c. Uterine contraction intensity is about 50 to 75 mm Hg (with an IUPC) during labor and may reach 110 mm Hg with pushing during the second stage.
- d. The average resting tone is 5 to 15 mm Hg.

- e. In hypertonic uterine activity, the uterine resting tone between contractions is high, reducing uterine blood flow and decreasing fetal oxygen supply.

## 8. Nonreassuring FHR patterns ([Box 30-6](#))

### **BOX 30-6** Nonreassuring Fetal Heart Rate Patterns

- Bradycardia
- Tachycardia
- Late decelerations
- Prolonged decelerations
- Hypertonic uterine activity
- Decreased or absent variability
- Variable decelerations falling to less than 70 beats/minute for longer than 60 seconds

## 9. Interventions for nonreassuring patterns (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## **PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS**

### **Actions to Take for a Nonreassuring Fetal Heart Rate Pattern**

1. Identify the cause.
2. Discontinue oxytocin (Pitocin) infusion.
3. Change the mother's position.

4. Administer oxygen by face mask at 8 to 10 L/minute and infuse intravenous fluids as prescribed.
5. Prepare to initiate continuous electronic fetal monitoring with internal devices if not contraindicated.
6. Prepare for cesarean delivery if necessary.
7. Document the event, actions taken, and the mother's response.

Nonreassuring fetal heart rate patterns include bradycardia, tachycardia, late decelerations, prolonged decelerations, hypertonic uterine activity, decreased or absent variability, or variable decelerations falling to less than 70 beats/minute for longer than 60 seconds. If a nonreassuring fetal heart rate pattern is noted, the health care provider (HCP) or nurse-midwife is notified as soon as possible (the nurse stays with the client and asks another nurse to contact the HCP). The nurse needs to identify the cause of the pattern immediately. This includes checking for a prolapsed umbilical cord and checking maternal vital signs to identify hypotension, hypertension, or fever that can contribute to the fetal response associated with the nonreassuring pattern. If the mother is receiving an oxytocin (Pitocin) infusion, it is stopped because oxytocin causes uterine stimulation, which can worsen the nonreassuring pattern. A tocolytic may be prescribed. The mother is repositioned because this may improve placental perfusion (avoid the supine position). Oxygen is administered by face mask at 8 to 10 L/minute to increase maternal blood oxygen saturation, making more oxygen available to the fetus, and intravenous fluids are infused to expand the mother's blood volume and improve placental perfusion. If not

contraindicated, the nurse prepares to initiate continuous electronic fetal monitoring with internal devices. Cesarean delivery may be necessary, and the nurse should prepare for this procedure. Birth preparation should also include neonatal resuscitation. The nurse documents the event, actions taken, the mother's response, and any other pertinent data.

### References

Lowdermilk D, Perry S, Cashion K, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, p. 428; Murray SS, McKinney ES: *Foundations of maternal-newborn and women's health nursing*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby, p. 320.

## VI. Four Stages of Labor (Table 30-1) ▲

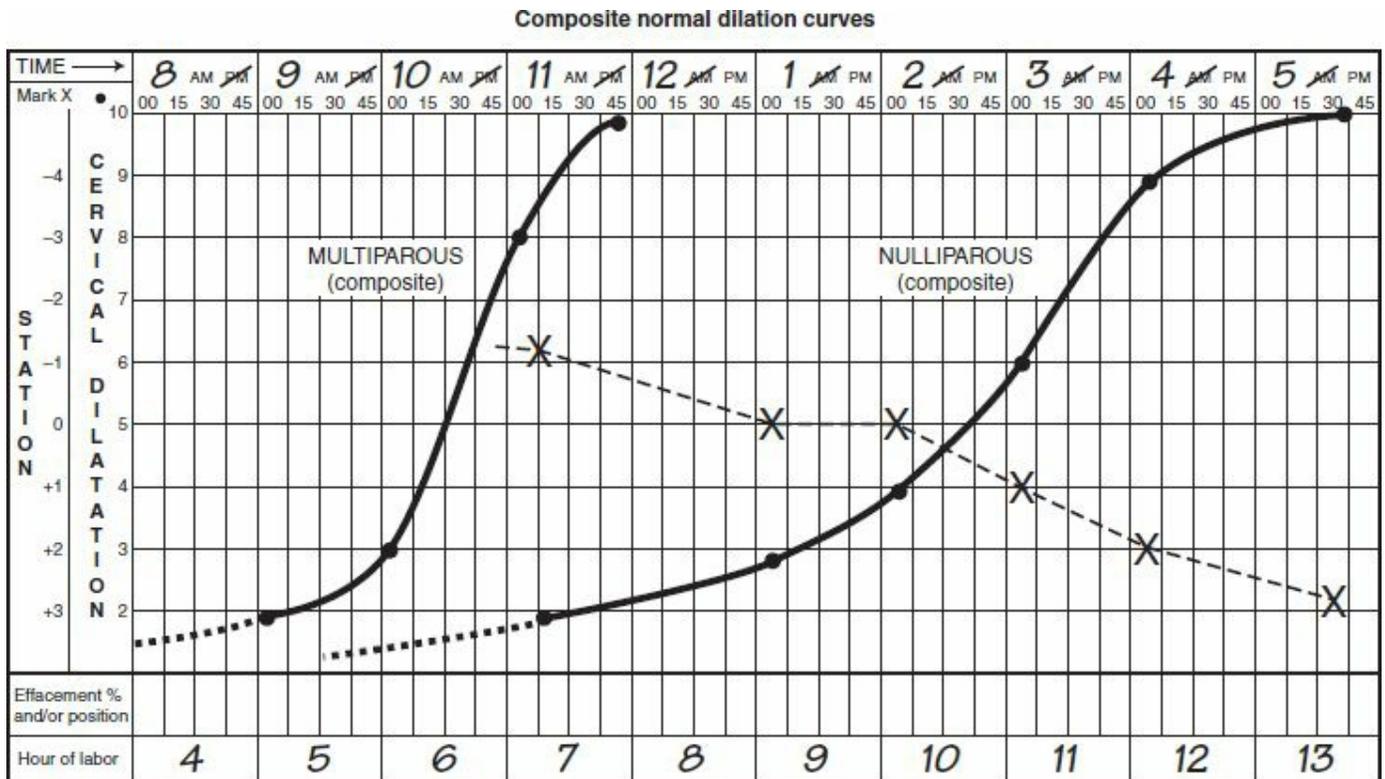
**TABLE 30-1 Four Stages of Labor**

First Stage	Second Stage	Third Stage	Fourth Stage
Effacement and dilation of cervix	Expulsion of fetus	Separation of placenta	Physical recovery
Three stages—latent, active, and transition	Pushing stage	Expulsion of placenta	1–4 hr after expulsion of placenta
Mother is talkative and eager in latent phase, becoming tired, restless, and anxious as labor intensifies and contractions become stronger	Mother has intense concentration on pushing with contractions; may fall asleep between contractions	Mother is relieved after birth of newborn; mother is usually very tired	Mother is tired, but is eager to become acquainted with her newborn

### A. Stage 1: Latent phase

1. Description: Stage 1 is the longest. A labor curve, often called a *Friedman curve*,

may be used to identify whether a woman's cervical dilation is progressing at the expected rate (Fig. 30-4).



**FIGURE 30-4** A labor curve, often called a *Friedman curve*, may be used to identify whether a woman's cervical dilation is progressing at the expected rate. The symbol for station (X) may be added to the labor curve. Typical labor curves for a multiparous woman and a nulliparous woman are illustrated for comparison of patterns. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

## 2. Assessment

- a. Cervical dilation is 1 to 4 cm.
- b. Uterine contractions occur every 15 to 30 minutes, are 15 to 30 seconds in duration, and are of mild intensity.

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Encourage mother and partner to participate in care.
- b.** Assist with comfort measures, changes of position, and ambulation.
- c.** Keep mother and partner informed of progress.
- d.** Offer fluids and ice chips.
- e.** Encourage voiding every 1 to 2 hours.

### **B. Stage 1: Active phase**

#### **1. Assessment**

- a.** Cervical dilation is 4 to 7 cm.
- b.** Uterine contractions occur every 3 to 5 minutes, are 30 to 60 seconds in duration, and are of moderate intensity.

#### **2. Interventions**

- a.** Encourage maintenance of effective breathing patterns.
- b.** Provide a quiet environment.
- c.** Keep mother and partner informed of progress.
- d.** Promote comfort with back rubs, sacral pressure, pillow support, and position changes.
- e.** Instruct partner in effleurage (light stroking of abdomen).
- f.** Offer fluids and ice chips and ointment for dry lips.
- g.** Encourage voiding every 1 to 2 hours.

### **C. Stage 1: Transition phase**

#### **1. Assessment**

- a. Cervical dilation is 8 to 10 cm.
- b. Uterine contractions occur every 2 to 3 minutes, are 45 to 90 seconds in duration, and are of strong intensity.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Encourage rest between contractions.
- b. Wake mother at beginning of contraction so she can begin breathing pattern.
- c. Keep mother and partner informed of progress.
- d. Provide privacy.
- e. Offer fluids and ice chips and ointment for dry lips.
- f. Encourage voiding every 1 to 2 hours.

## D. Interventions throughout stage 1

1. Monitor maternal vital signs.
2. Monitor FHR via ultrasound Doppler, fetoscope, or electronic fetal monitor.
3. Assess FHR before, during, and after a contraction, noting that the normal FHR is 110 to 160 beats/minute.
4. Monitor uterine contractions by palpation or tocodynamometer, determining frequency, duration, and intensity.
5. Assess status of cervical dilation and effacement.
6. Assess fetal station presentation and position by Leopold's maneuvers.
7. Assist with pelvic examination and prepare for a fern test.

 If the membranes have ruptured, assess the fetal heart rate because of the risk of collapsed umbilical cord, and assess the color of the amniotic fluid

because meconium-stained fluid can indicate fetal distress.

## E. Stage 2

### 1. Assessment

- a. Cervical dilation is complete.
- b. Progress of labor is measured by descent of fetal head through the birth canal (change in fetal station).
- c. Uterine contractions occur every 2 to 3 minutes, lasting 60 to 75 seconds, and are of strong intensity.
- d. Increase in bloody show occurs.
- e. Mother feels urge to bear down; assist mother in pushing efforts.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Perform assessments every 5 minutes.
- b. Monitor maternal vital signs.
- c. Monitor FHR via ultrasound Doppler, fetoscope, or electronic fetal monitor.
- d. Assess FHR before, during, and after a contraction, noting that the normal FHR is 110 to 160 beats/minute.
- e. Monitor uterine contractions by palpation or tocodynamometer, determining frequency, duration, and intensity.
- f. Provide mother with encouragement and praise and provide for rest between contractions.
- g. Keep mother and partner informed of progress.
- h. Maintain privacy.

- i.** Provide ice chips and ointment for dry lips.
- j.** Assist mother into a position that promotes comfort and facilitates pushing efforts, such as lithotomy, semisitting, kneeling, side-lying, or squatting.
- k.** Monitor for signs of approaching birth, such as perineal bulging or visualization of the fetal head.
- l.** Prepare for birth (expulsion of the fetus).

## **F. Stage 3**

### **1. Assessment**

- a.** Contractions occur until the placenta is expelled.
- b.** Placental separation and expulsion occur.
- c.** Expulsion of the placenta occurs 5 to 30 minutes after the birth of the infant.
- d.** Schultze mechanism: Center portion of the placenta separates first, and its shiny fetal surface emerges from the vagina.
- e.** Duncan mechanism: Margin of the placenta separates, and the dull, red, rough maternal surface emerges from the vagina first.

### **2. Interventions**

- a.** Assess maternal vital signs.
- b.** Assess uterine status.
- c.** Provide parents with an explanation regarding expulsion of the placenta.
- d.** After expulsion of the placenta, uterine fundus remains firm and is located 2 fingerbreadths below the umbilicus.
- e.** Examine placenta for cotyledons and membranes to verify that it is intact.

- f. Assess mother for shivering and provide warmth.
- g. Promote parental-neonatal attachment.

## G. Stage 4

1. Description: Period 1 to 4 hours after delivery

2. Assessment

- a. Blood pressure returns to prelabor level.
- b. Pulse is slightly lower than during labor.
- c. Fundus remains contracted, in the midline, 1 or 2 fingerbreadths below the umbilicus.

 **Monitor lochia discharge. Lochia may be moderate in amount and red in color in stage 4.**

3. Interventions

- a. Perform maternal assessments every 15 minutes for 1 hour, every 30 minutes for 1 hour, and hourly for 2 hours (or as per agency policy).
- b. Provide warm blankets.
- c. Apply ice packs to the perineum.
- d. Massage the uterus if needed, and teach the mother to massage the uterus.
- e. Provide breast-feeding support as needed.
- f. See [Chapter 34](#) for information on caring for the **newborn**.

## VII. Anesthesia

A. Local anesthesia

1. Local anesthesia is used for blocking pain during episiotomy.
2. Local anesthesia is administered just before the birth of the infant.
3. The anesthetic has no effect on the fetus.

## **B. Lumbar epidural block**

1. Injection site is in epidural space at L3 to L4.
2. The block is administered after labor is established or just before a scheduled cesarean birth.
3. The anesthetic relieves pain from contractions and numbs the vagina and perineum.
4. The block may cause hypotension, bladder distention, and a prolonged second stage.
5. The anesthetic does not cause a headache because the dura mater is not penetrated.
6. Assess maternal blood pressure and assess bladder frequently.
7. Maintain the mother in a side-lying position or place a rolled blanket beneath the right hip to displace the uterus from the vena cava.
8. Administer intravenous fluids as prescribed.
9. Increase fluids as prescribed if hypotension occurs.
10. Observe for any adverse effects from opioid epidurals, such as nausea and vomiting, pruritus, or respiratory depression.

## **C. Intrathecal opioid analgesics**

1. The medication is injected into the subarachnoid space and has a rapid onset of action.

2. It may be used in combination with a lumbar epidural block.

#### D. Subarachnoid (spinal) block

1. Injection site is in the spinal subarachnoid space at L3 to L5.
2. The block is administered just before birth.
3. The anesthetic relieves uterine and perineal pain and numbs the vagina, perineum, and lower extremities.
4. The anesthetic may cause maternal hypotension.
5. The anesthetic may cause postpartum headache.
6. The mother must lie flat for 8 to 12 hours after spinal injection.
7. Administer intravenous fluids as prescribed.

#### E. General anesthesia

1. General anesthesia may be used for some surgical interventions.
2. The mother is not awake.

 General anesthesia presents a maternal danger of respiratory depression, vomiting, and aspiration.

### VIII. Obstetrical Procedures

#### A. Bishop score (Table 30-2)

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#### TABLE 30-2 Factors of the Bishop Score

	SCORE			
	0	1	2	3
Dilation of cervix (cm)	0	1-2	3-4	>5
Effacement of cervix (%)	0-30	40-50	60-70	>80
Consistency of cervix	Firm	Medium	Soft	—
Position of cervix	Posterior	Midposition	Anterior	—
Station of presenting part	-3	-2	-1	+1, +2

1. The Bishop score is used to determine maternal readiness for labor and evaluates cervical status and fetal position.
2. The Bishop score is indicated before the induction of labor.
3. The five factors are assigned a score of 0 to 3, and the total score is calculated.
4. A score of 6 or more indicates a readiness for labor induction.

## B. Induction

1. Induction is a deliberate initiation of uterine contractions that stimulates labor.
2. Elective induction may be accomplished by oxytocin (Pitocin) infusion.
3. Obtain a baseline tracing of uterine contractions and FHR.
4. Increase the intravenous dosage of oxytocin as prescribed only after assessing contractions, FHR, and maternal blood pressure and pulse.
5. Do not increase the rate of oxytocin when the desired contraction pattern is obtained (contraction frequency of 2 to 3 minutes and lasting 60 seconds).

 An oxytocin (Pitocin) infusion is discontinued if uterine contraction frequency is less than 2 minutes or duration is longer than 90 seconds, or if fetal distress is noted.

### C. Amniotomy

1. Artificial rupture of the membranes is performed by the health care provider (HCP) or nurse-midwife to stimulate labor.
2. Amniotomy is performed if the fetus is at 0 or a plus station.
3. Amniotomy increases the risk of prolapsed cord and infection.
4. Monitor FHR before and after amniotomy.
5. Record time of amniotomy, FHR, and characteristics of the fluid.
6. Meconium-stained **amniotic fluid** may be associated with fetal distress.
7. Bloody amniotic fluid may indicate abruptio placentae or fetal trauma.
8. An unpleasant odor to amniotic fluid is associated with infection.
9. Polyhydramnios is associated with maternal diabetes and certain congenital disorders.
10. Oligohydramnios is associated with intrauterine growth restriction and congenital disorders.
11. Expect more variable decelerations after rupture of the membranes as a result of possible cord compression during contractions.
12. Limit client activity if prescribed.

### D. External version

1. External version is the manipulation of the fetus from an abnormal position into a

normal presentation.

2. External version is indicated for an abnormal presentation that exists after the thirty-fourth week.
3. Monitor vital signs.
4. If the mother is Rh-negative, ensure that Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) was given at 28 weeks' gestation.
5. Prepare for a nonstress test to evaluate fetal well-being.
6. Intravenous fluids and tocolytic therapy may be administered to relax the uterus and permit easier manipulation of the fetus.
7. Ultrasound is used during the procedure to evaluate fetal position and placental placement and guide direction of the fetus.
8. The abdominal wall is manipulated to direct the fetus into a cephalic presentation if possible.
9. Monitor blood pressure to identify vena cava compression.
10. Monitor for unusual pain.
11. After the procedure, do the following:
  - a. Perform a nonstress test to evaluate fetal well-being.
  - b. Monitor for uterine activity, bleeding, ruptured membranes, and decreased fetal activity.
  - c. With Rh-negative clients, perform Kleihauer-Betke test as prescribed to detect the presence and amount of fetal blood in the maternal circulation and to identify clients who need additional Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin.

## E. Episiotomy ▲

1. An episiotomy is an incision made into the perineum to enlarge the vaginal outlet and facilitate delivery.
2. Check the episiotomy site.
3. Institute measures to relieve pain.
4. Provide ice packs during the first 24 hours.
5. Instruct the client in the use of an ice pack for the first 24 hours, and then sitz baths thereafter.
6. Apply analgesic spray or ointment as prescribed.
7. Provide perineal care, using clean technique.
8. Instruct the client in the proper care of the incision.
9. Instruct the client to dry the perineal area from front to back and to blot the area rather than wipe it.
10. Instruct the client to shower rather than bathe in a tub.
11. Apply a perineal pad without touching the inside surface of the pad.
12. Report any bleeding or discharge from the episiotomy site to the HCP.

## F. Forceps delivery ▲

1. Two double-crossed, spoon-like articulated blades are used to assist in the delivery of the fetal head.
2. Reassure the mother and explain the need for forceps.
3. Monitor the mother and fetus during delivery.
4. Check neonate and mother after delivery for any possible injury.

5. Assist with repair of any lacerations.

#### G. Vacuum extraction ▲

1. A caplike suction device is applied to the fetal head to facilitate extraction.

2. Suction is used to assist in delivery of the fetal head.

3. Traction is applied during uterine contractions until descent of the fetal head is achieved.

4. The suction device should not be kept in place any longer than 25 minutes.

5. Monitor FHR every 5 minutes if external fetal monitoring is not used.

6. Assess **infant** at birth and throughout the postpartum period for signs of cerebral trauma.

7. Monitor for developing cephalhematoma.

8. Caput succedaneum is normal and resolves in 24 hours.

#### H. Cesarean delivery ▲

1. Cesarean section is delivery of the fetus usually through a transabdominal, low-segment incision of the uterus.

2. Preoperative

a. If planned, prepare the mother and partner.

b. If an emergency, quickly explain the need and procedure to the mother and partner.

c. Obtain informed consent.

d. Ensure that the preoperative diagnostic tests are done, including Rh factor determination.

- e. Prepare to insert an intravenous line and a Foley catheter.
- f. Prepare the abdomen as prescribed.
- g. Monitor the mother and fetus continuously.
- h. Provide emotional support.
- i. Administer preoperative medications as prescribed.

### 3. Postoperative

- a. Monitor vital signs
- b. Perform a fundal assessment; evaluate incision
- c. Provide pain relief.
- d. Encourage turning, coughing, and deep-breathing.
- e. Encourage ambulation.
- f. Encourage bonding/attachment with newborn.
- g. Provide psychological support
- h. Monitor for signs of infection and bleeding.
- i. Burning and pain on urination may indicate a bladder infection.
- j. A tender uterus and foul-smelling **lochia** may indicate endometritis.
- k. A productive cough or chills may indicate pneumonia.
- l. Pain, redness, or edema of an extremity may indicate thrombophlebitis.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Near or at term, the normal fetal heart rate is 110 to 160 beats/minute. If

fetal tachycardia or bradycardia occurs, the nurse should change the position of the mother, administer oxygen, and assess the mother's vital signs. In addition, the nurse should notify the health care provider as soon as possible.

***Reference***

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 422.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 291.** The nurse is caring for a client in labor. Which assessment finding indicates to the nurse that the client is beginning the second stage of labor?
1. The contractions are regular.
  2. The membranes have ruptured.
  3. The cervix is dilated completely.
  4. The client begins to expel clear vaginal fluid.
- 292.** The nurse in the labor room is caring for a client in the active stage of the first phase of labor. The nurse is assessing the fetal patterns and notes a late deceleration on the monitor strip. What is the **most appropriate** nursing action?
1. Administer oxygen via face mask.
  2. Place the mother in a supine position.
  3. Increase the rate of the oxytocin (Pitocin) intravenous infusion.
  4. Document the findings and continue to monitor the fetal patterns.
- 293.** The nurse is performing an assessment of a client who is scheduled for a cesarean delivery. Which assessment finding would indicate the need to contact the health care provider?
1. Hemoglobin of 11 g/dL
  2. Fetal heart rate of 180 beats/minute
  3. Maternal pulse rate of 85 beats/minute
  4. White blood cell count of 12,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

**294.** The nurse is reviewing the record of a client in the labor room and notes that the health care provider has documented that the fetal presenting part is at the –1 station. This documented finding indicates that the fetal presenting part is located at which area?

1. 1 inch below the coccyx
2. 1 inch below the iliac crest
3. 1 cm above the ischial spine
4. 1 fingerbreadth below the symphysis pubis

**295.** A client arrives at a birthing center in active labor. Her membranes are still intact, and the health care provider prepares to perform an amniotomy. What will the nurse relay to the client as the **most likely** outcome of the amniotomy?

1. Less pressure on her cervix
2. Decreased number of contractions
3. Increased efficiency of contractions
4. The need for increased maternal blood pressure monitoring

**296.** The nurse is monitoring a client in labor. The nurse suspects umbilical cord compression if which is noted on the external monitor tracing during a contraction?

1. Variability
2. Accelerations
3. Early decelerations

#### 4. Variable decelerations

297. A client in labor is transported to the delivery room and prepared for a cesarean delivery. After the client is transferred to the delivery room table, the nurse should place the client in which position?

1. Supine position with a wedge under the right hip
2. Trendelenburg's position with the legs in stirrups
3. Prone position with the legs separated and elevated
4. Semi-Fowler's position with a pillow under the knees

298. The nurse has provided discharge instructions to a client who delivered a healthy newborn by cesarean delivery. Which statement made by the client indicates a **need for further instruction**?

1. "I will begin abdominal exercises immediately."
2. "I will notify the health care provider if I develop a fever."
3. "I will turn on my side and push up with my arms to get out of bed."
4. "I will lift nothing heavier than my newborn baby for at least 2 weeks."

299. The nurse is monitoring a client in active labor and notes that the client is having contractions every 3 minutes that last 45 seconds. The nurse notes that the fetal heart rate between contractions is 100 beats/minute. Which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
2. Continue monitoring the fetal heart rate.

3. Encourage the client to continue pushing with each contraction.
4. Instruct the client's coach to continue to encourage breathing techniques.

**300.** The nurse is caring for a client in labor and is monitoring the fetal heart rate patterns. The nurse notes the presence of episodic accelerations on the electronic fetal monitor tracing. Which action is **most appropriate**?

1. Notify the health care provider of the findings.
2. Reposition the mother and check the monitor for changes in the fetal tracing.
3. Take the mother's vital signs and tell the mother that bed rest is required to conserve oxygen.
4. Document the findings and tell the mother that the pattern on the monitor indicates fetal well-being.

**301.** The nurse is admitting a pregnant client to the labor room and attaches an external electronic fetal monitor to the client's abdomen. After attachment of the electronic fetal monitor, what is the **next** nursing action?

1. Identify the types of accelerations.
2. Assess the baseline fetal heart rate.
3. Determine the intensity of the contractions.
4. Determine the frequency of the contractions.

**302.** The nurse is reviewing true and false labor signs with a multiparous client. The nurse determines that the client understands the signs of true labor if she makes which statement?

1. "I won't be in labor until my baby drops."
2. "My contractions will be felt in my abdominal area."
3. "My contractions will not be as painful if I walk around."
4. "My contractions will increase in duration and intensity."

**303.** Which assessment finding following an amniotomy should be conducted **first**?

1. Cervical dilation
2. Bladder distention
3. Fetal heart rate pattern
4. Maternal blood pressure

**304.** The nurse has been working with a laboring client and notes that she has been pushing effectively for 1 hour. What is the client's **primary** physiological need at this time?

1. Ambulation
2. Rest between contractions
3. Change positions frequently
4. Consume oral food and fluids

**305.** The nurse is assisting a client undergoing induction of labor at 41 weeks' gestation. The client's contractions are moderate and occurring every 2 to 3 minutes, with a duration of 60 seconds. An internal fetal heart rate monitor is in place. The baseline fetal heart rate has been 120 to 122 beats/minute for the past hour. What is the **priority** nursing action?

1. Notify the health care provider.
2. Discontinue the infusion of oxytocin (Pitocin).
3. Place oxygen on at 8 to 10 L/minute via face mask.
4. Contact the client's primary support person(s) if not currently present.

## ANSWERS

291. 3

**Rationale:** The second stage of labor begins when the cervix is dilated completely and ends with birth of the neonate. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not specific assessment findings of the second stage of labor and occur in stage 1.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, recalling that regular contractions occur before the second stage of labor will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Stages of labor**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 457, 461.

292. 1

**Rationale:** Late decelerations are due to uteroplacental insufficiency and occur because of decreased blood flow

and oxygen to the fetus during the uterine contractions. Hypoxemia results; oxygen at 8 to 10 L/minute via face mask is necessary. The supine position is avoided because it decreases uterine blood flow to the fetus. The client should be turned onto her side to displace pressure of the gravid uterus on the inferior vena cava. An intravenous oxytocin infusion is discontinued when a late deceleration is noted. The oxytocin would cause further hypoxemia because of increased uteroplacental insufficiency resulting from stimulation of contractions by this medication.

Although the nurse would document the occurrence, option 4 would delay necessary treatment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—and knowledge related to the significance of a late deceleration to answer this question.

**Review:** Nursing actions related to **late decelerations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 425.

**293. 2**

**Rationale:** A normal fetal heart rate is 110 to 160 beats/minute. A fetal heart rate of 180 beats/minute could indicate fetal distress and would warrant immediate notification of the HCP. By full term, a normal maternal hemoglobin range is 11 to 13 g/dL because of the hemodilution caused by an increase in plasma volume during pregnancy. The maternal pulse rate during pregnancy increases 10 to 15 beats/minute over prepregnancy readings to facilitate increased cardiac output, oxygen transport, and kidney filtration. White blood cell counts in a normal

pregnancy begin to increase in the second trimester and peak in the third trimester, with a normal range of 11,000 to 15,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> (up to 18,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>). During the immediate postpartum period, the white blood cell count may be 25,000 to 30,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> because of increased leukocytosis that occurs during delivery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, normal assessment and laboratory findings and those that indicate the need to contact the health care provider (HCP). Knowledge regarding the normal and abnormal findings in a pregnant client and fetus will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal and abnormal **laboratory findings** and **normal fetal heart rate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 459.

### 294. 3

**Rationale:** Station is the measurement of the progress of descent in centimeters above or below the midplane from the presenting part to the ischial spine. It is measured in centimeters, and noted as a negative number above the line and as a positive number below the line. At the negative 1 (–1) station, the fetal presenting part is 1 cm above the ischial spine.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Recalling that station is measured in centimeters and uses the ischial spine as a reference point will assist in answering this question. Options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** in the use of the word *below*, which would be represented by a positive measurement in determining station.

**Review:** **Stations** of the **presenting part**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 371.

### 295. 3

**Rationale:** Amniotomy (artificial rupture of the membranes) can be used to induce labor when the condition of the cervix is favorable (ripe) or to augment labor if the progress begins to slow. Rupturing of the membranes allows the fetal head to contact the cervix more directly and may increase the efficiency of contractions. Increased monitoring of maternal blood pressure is unnecessary following this procedure. The fetal heart rate needs to be monitored frequently, however.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Focus on the **subject**, an amniotomy. Recalling that amniotomy is performed to augment labor if the progress begins to slow will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Purpose of **amniotomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 802-803.

## 296. 4

**Rationale:** Variable decelerations occur if the umbilical cord becomes compressed, reducing blood flow between the placenta and the fetus. Variability refers to fluctuations in the baseline fetal heart rate. Accelerations are a reassuring sign and usually occur with fetal movement. Early decelerations result from pressure on the fetal head during a contraction.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, umbilical cord compression. Recalling that variable decelerations occur if the umbilical cord becomes compressed will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Findings that occur in **umbilical cord compression**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 424.

## 297. 1

**Rationale:** Vena cava and descending aorta compression by the pregnant uterus impedes blood return from the lower trunk and extremities. This leads to decreasing cardiac return, cardiac output, and blood flow to the uterus and subsequently the fetus. The best position to prevent this would be side-lying, with the uterus displaced off the abdominal vessels. Positioning for abdominal surgery necessitates a supine position, however; a wedge placed under the right hip provides displacement of the uterus. Trendelenburg's position places pressure from the pregnant uterus on the diaphragm and lungs, decreasing respiratory capacity and oxygenation. A semi-Fowler's position or prone position is not practical for this type of abdominal surgery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning the pregnant woman. Visualizing each of the positions identified in the options and considering the effect that the position may have on the mother and the fetus will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care for the mother requiring **cesarean delivery**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 812.

**298. 1**

**Rationale:** A cesarean delivery requires an incision made through the abdominal wall and into the uterus.

Abdominal exercises should not start immediately after abdominal surgery; the client should wait at least 3 to 4 weeks postoperatively to allow for healing of the incision. Options 2, 3, and 4 are appropriate instructions for the client after a cesarean delivery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Keeping in mind that the client had a cesarean delivery and noting the word *immediately* in the correct option will assist in directing you to this option.

**Review:** Home care instructions for a client after **cesarean delivery**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 814.

**299. 1**

**Rationale:** A normal fetal heart rate is 110 to 160 beats/minute, and the fetal heart rate should be within this range between contractions. Fetal bradycardia between contractions may indicate the need for immediate medical management, and the HCP or nurse-midwife needs to be notified. Options 2, 3, and 4 are inappropriate nursing actions in this situation and delay necessary intervention.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the data in the question.

Knowledge that the normal fetal heart rate is 110 to 160 beats/minute will assist you to recognize that fetal bradycardia is present.

**Review:** Expected and unexpected findings during the **labor process**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 416, 421.

**300. 4**

**Rationale:** Accelerations are transient increases in the fetal heart rate that often accompany contractions or are

caused by fetal movement. Episodic accelerations are thought to be a sign of fetal well-being and adequate oxygen reserve. Options 1, 2, and 3 are inaccurate nursing actions and are unnecessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Options 1, 2, and 3 are **comparable or alike** in that they indicate the need for further intervention. Also, knowing that accelerations indicate fetal well-being will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The significance of **episodic accelerations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 416, 423; Perry et al (2010), pp. 429-430.

### 301. 2

**Rationale:** Assessing the baseline fetal heart rate is important so that abnormal variations of the baseline rate can be identified if they occur. The intensity of contractions is assessed by an internal fetal monitor, not an external fetal monitor. Options 1 and 4 are important to assess, but not as the first priority. Fetal heart rate is evaluated by assessing baseline and periodic changes. Periodic changes occur in response to the intermittent stress of uterine contractions and the baseline beat-to-beat variability of the fetal heart rate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *next* in the question. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. Fetal heart rate reflects the ABCs.

**Review:** Concepts related to **external fetal monitoring**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 418-419.

### 302. 4

**Rationale:** True labor is present when contractions increase in duration and intensity. Lightening or dropping is also known as *engagement* and occurs when the fetus descends into the pelvis about 2 weeks before delivery.

Contractions felt in the abdominal area and contractions that ease with walking are signs of false labor.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the signs of true labor. Noting the word *true* in the question and its relationship to the words *increase in duration and intensity* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Signs of **true and false labor**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 434.

### 303. 3

**Rationale:** Fetal heart rate is assessed immediately after amniotomy to detect any changes that may indicate cord compression or prolapse. Bladder distention or maternal blood pressure would not be the first things to check after

an amniotomy. When the membranes are ruptured, minimal vaginal examinations would be done because of the risk of infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Because of the risk of a prolapsed cord after an amniotomy, the first action is to check the fetal heart rate for signs of nonreassuring fetal heart rate patterns.

**Review:** Nursing care following **amniotomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 803; Perry et al (2010), pp. 506-507.

### 304. 2

**Rationale:** The birth process expends a great deal of energy, particularly during the transition stage. Encouraging rest between contractions conserves maternal energy, facilitating voluntary pushing efforts with contractions.

Uteroplacental perfusion also is enhanced, which promotes fetal tolerance of the stress of labor. Changing positions frequently is not the primary physiological need. Ambulation is encouraged during early labor. Ice chips should be provided. Food and fluids are likely to be withheld at this time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *primary*. Also, noting the words *pushing effectively* will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care for the client in the **transition stage of labor**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 380.

### 305. 2

**Rationale:** The priority nursing action is to stop the infusion of oxytocin. Oxytocin can cause forceful uterine contractions and decrease oxygenation to the placenta, resulting in decreased variability. After stopping the oxytocin, the nurse should reposition the laboring mother. Applying oxygen, increasing the rate of the intravenous (IV) fluid (the solution without the oxytocin), and notifying the health care provider are also actions that are indicated in this situation. Contacting the client's primary support person(s) is not the priority action at this time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic word** *priority*. Focus on the data in the question and note the relationship of the words *undergoing induction* and the correct option. Also recall that physiological needs are prioritized over psychosocial needs.

**Review:** Care to the client receiving **oxytocin (Pitocin)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 804-805.



## CHAPTER 31

# Problems with Labor and Delivery

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is caring for a pregnant client who suddenly experiences a hypotensive episode. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 364.*

### I. Premature Rupture of the Membranes

#### A. Description

1. Premature rupture of the membranes refers to spontaneous rupture of the amniotic membranes before the onset of **labor**.
2. Gestational age usually determines the plan and intervention.
3. When the rupture of membranes is before term and **delivery** will be delayed, infection becomes a risk.

#### B. Assessment

1. Presence of fluid pooling in vaginal vault; nitrazine test is positive.

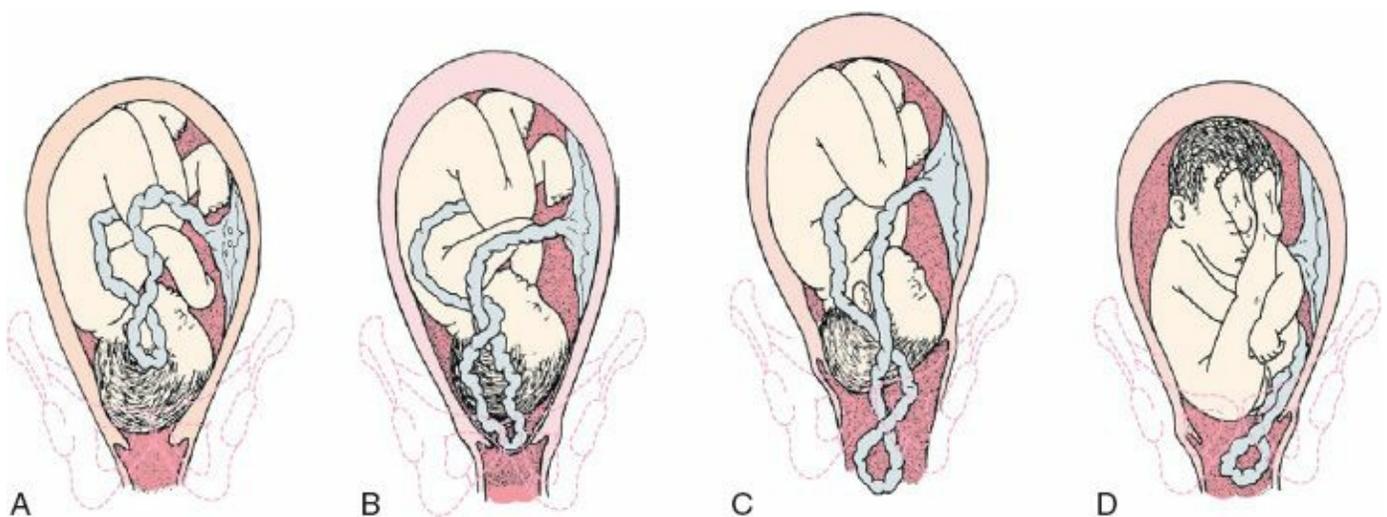
2. Amount, color, consistency, and odor of fluid need to be assessed.
3. Vital signs are monitored; an elevated temperature may indicate infection.
4. Fetal monitoring is necessary; tachycardia may indicate infection.

### C. Interventions

1. Assist with tests to assess gestational age.
2. Avoid vaginal examinations because of the risk of infection.
3. Monitor maternal and fetal status for signs of compromise or infection.
4. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

## II. Prolapsed Umbilical Cord

**A.** Description: The umbilical cord is displaced between the presenting part and the amnion or protruding through the cervix, causing compression of the cord and compromising fetal circulation (**Fig. 31-1**).



**FIGURE 31-1** Prolapse of umbilical cord. Note the pressure of the presenting part on the umbilical cord, which endangers fetal circulation. **A**, Occult (hidden) prolapse of cord. **B**, Complete prolapse of cord. Membranes are intact. **C**, Cord presenting in

front of the fetal head may be seen in the vagina. **D**, Frank breech presentation with prolapsed cord. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

## B. Assessment

1. The client has a feeling that something is coming through the **vagina**.
2. Umbilical cord is visible or palpable.
3. Fetal heart rate is irregular and slow.
4. Fetal heart monitor shows variable decelerations or bradycardia after rupture of the membranes.
5. If fetal hypoxia is severe, violent fetal activity may occur and then cease.

## C. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Steps to Take if Umbilical Cord Prolapse Is Suspected

1. Elevate the fetal presenting part that is lying on the cord by applying finger pressure with a gloved hand.
2. Place the client into extreme Trendelenburg's or modified Sims' position or a knee-chest position.
3. Administer oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, by face mask to the client.
4. Monitor fetal heart rate and assess the fetus for hypoxia.
5. Prepare to start intravenous fluids or increase the rate of administration of an

existing solution.

6. Prepare for immediate birth.

7. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

If umbilical cord prolapse occurs, the cord is lying alongside or below the presenting part of the fetus and can be seen or felt in or protruding from the vagina.

The nurse stays with the client and asks another nurse to call the health care provider immediately. The nurse must relieve cord pressure immediately so that the fetus receives adequate oxygenation. The nurse can relieve cord pressure by elevating the fetal presenting part that is lying on the cord; the nurse does this by quickly gloving the hand and inserting two fingers into the vagina to the cervix and exerting upward pressure on the presenting part. The nurse also relieves cord pressure by placing the client into an extreme Trendelenburg's or modified Sims' position or a knee-chest position (a rolled towel is placed under the client's hip). The nurse administers oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, by face mask to the client, monitors the fetal heart rate and fetal heart rate patterns, and assesses the fetus for hypoxia. The client is prepared for immediate birth (vaginal or cesarean). The nurse documents the event, actions taken, the client's response, and any additional pertinent information. The nurse never attempts to push the cord into the uterus. If the umbilical cord is protruding from the vagina, the cord is wrapped loosely in a sterile towel saturated with warm sterile normal saline.

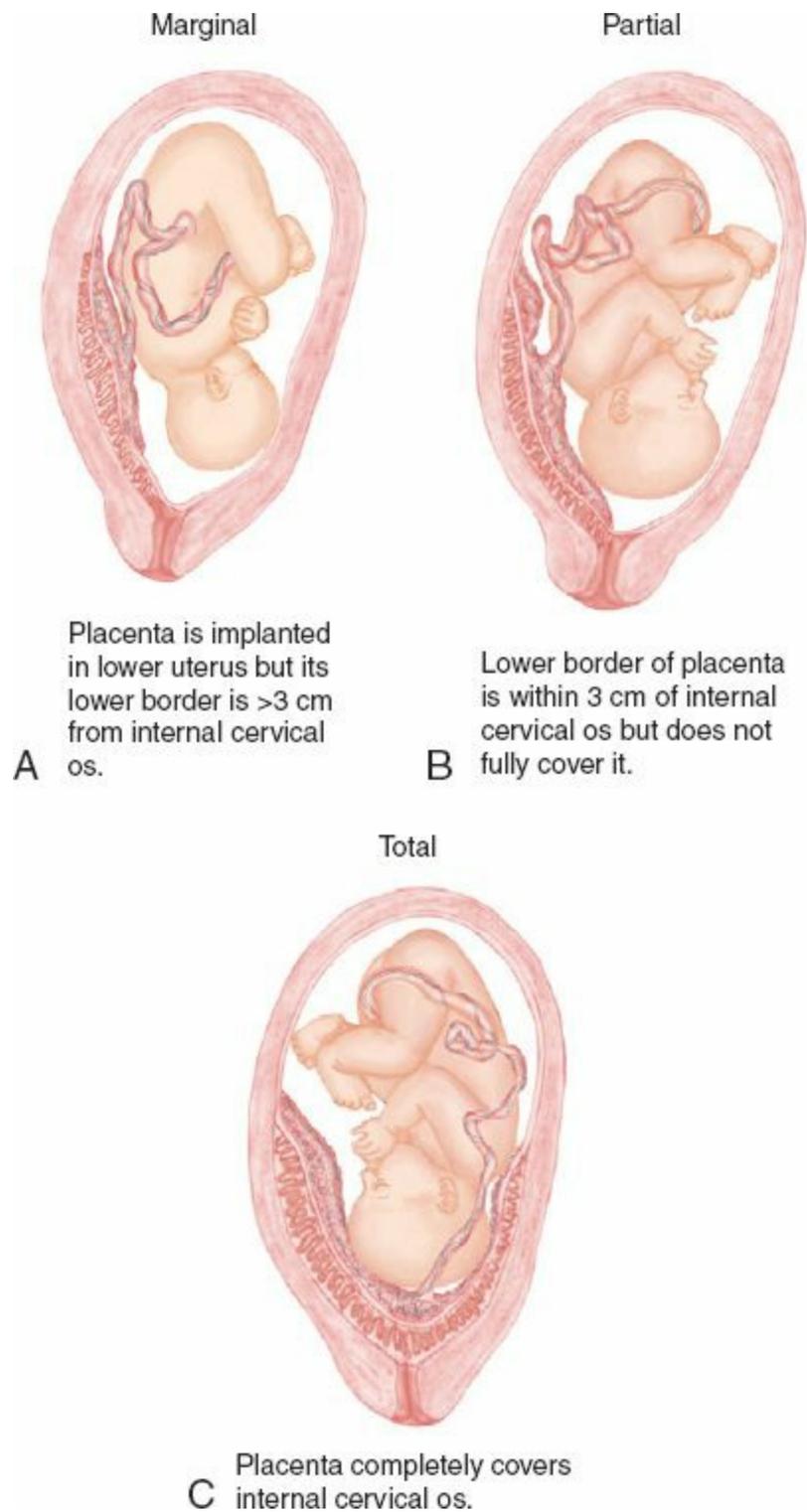
### ***Reference***

Lowdermilk D, Perry S, Cashion K, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, p. 619.

### III. Placenta Previa

#### A. Description

1. Placenta previa is an improperly implanted **placenta** in the lower uterine segment near or over the internal cervical os ([Fig. 31-2](#)).



**FIGURE 31-2 A-C**, Three classifications of placenta previa. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

2. Total: The internal cervical os is covered entirely by the placenta when the cervix is dilated fully.
3. Partial: The lower border of the placenta is within 3 cm of the internal cervical os, but does not fully cover it.
4. Marginal: The placenta is implanted in the lower **uterus**, but its lower border is more than 3 cm from the internal cervical os.
5. Management depends on the classification of the placenta previa and gestational age of the fetus.

#### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Sudden onset of painless, bright red vaginal bleeding occurs in the last half of pregnancy.
2. Uterus is soft, relaxed, and nontender.
3. Fundal height may be more than expected for gestational age.

#### **C. Interventions** ▲

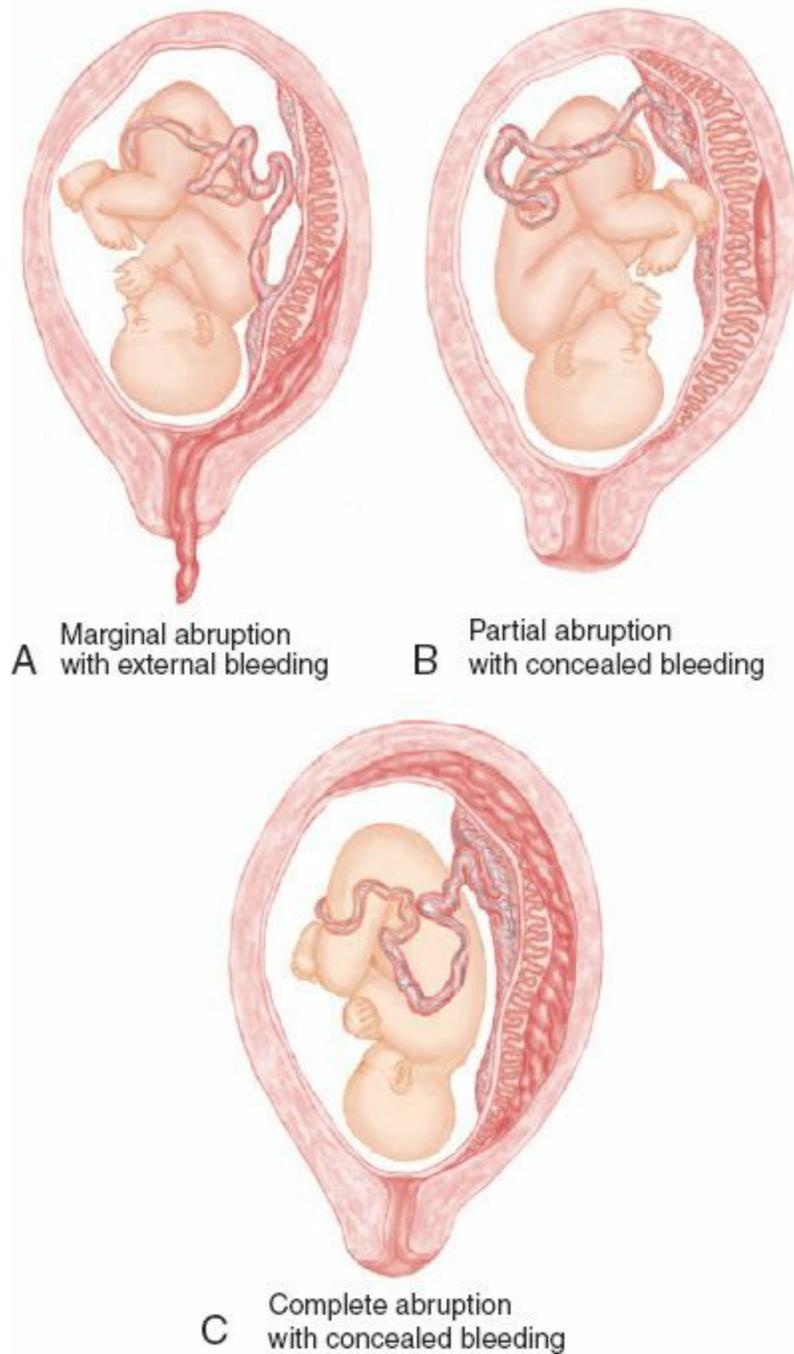
1. Monitor maternal vital signs, fetal heart rate, and fetal activity.
2. Prepare for ultrasound to confirm the diagnosis.
3. Vaginal examinations or any other actions that would stimulate uterine activity are avoided. ▲
4. Maintain bed rest in a side-lying position as prescribed.
5. Monitor amount of bleeding (treat signs of shock).
6. Administer intravenous fluids, blood products, or tocolytic medications as prescribed; Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) may be prescribed.

7. If bleeding is heavy, a cesarean delivery may be performed.

 Vaginal exams are contraindicated if the client is suspected of having or has a known placenta previa.

#### **IV. Abruption Placentae**

**A.** Description: Premature separation of the placenta from the uterine wall after the twentieth week of gestation and before the fetus is delivered (Fig. 31-3)



**FIGURE 31-3 A-C**, Types of abruptio placentae. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

**B. Assessment** ▲

1. Dark red vaginal bleeding. If the bleeding is high in the **uterus** or is minimal, there can be an absence of visible blood.

2. Uterine pain or tenderness or both
3. Uterine rigidity
4. Severe abdominal pain
5. Signs of fetal distress
6. Signs of maternal shock if bleeding is excessive

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor maternal vital signs and fetal heart rate.
2. Assess for excessive vaginal bleeding, abdominal pain, and an increase in fundal height.
3. Maintain bed rest; administer oxygen, intravenous fluids, and blood products as prescribed.
4. Place the client in Trendelenburg's position if indicated to decrease the pressure of the fetus on the placenta, or place in the lateral position with the head of the bed flat if hypovolemic shock occurs.
5. Monitor and report any uterine activity.
6. Prepare for delivery of the fetus as quickly as possible, with vaginal delivery preferable if the fetus is healthy and stable and the presenting part is in the pelvis; emergency cesarean delivery is performed if the fetus is alive but shows signs of distress.
7. Monitor for signs of disseminated intravascular coagulation in the postpartum period.

 **Know the differences between placenta previa and abruptio placentae. In**

placenta previa, there is painless, bright red vaginal bleeding, and the uterus is soft, relaxed, and nontender. In abruptio placentae, there is dark red vaginal bleeding, uterine pain or tenderness or both, and uterine rigidity.

## V. Supine Hypotension (Vena Cava Syndrome) ▲

### A. Description

1. Supine hypotension (also known as vena cava syndrome) occurs when the venous return to the heart is impaired by the weight of the **uterus** on the vena cava.
2. The syndrome results in partial occlusion of the vena cava and aorta and in reduced cardiac return, cardiac output, and blood pressure.

### B. Assessment

1. Pallor
2. Faintness, dizziness, breathlessness
3. Tachycardia, hypotension
4. Sweating, cool and damp skin
5. Fetal distress

### C. Interventions

1. Position the client on her side to shift the weight of the fetus off the vena cava until her signs and symptoms subside and vital signs stabilize.
2. Monitor vital signs and fetal heart rate.

**⚠** To prevent supine hypotension, avoid the supine position; position the client by placing a pillow or wedge under the client's hip to displace the gravid uterus off the vena cava.

## VI. Placental Abnormalities

- A. Description:** **Placenta** accreta is an abnormally adherent placenta; placenta increta occurs when the placenta penetrates the uterine muscle itself; placenta percreta occurs when the placenta goes all the way through the **uterus**.
- B. Assessment:** May cause hemorrhage immediately after birth because the placenta does not separate cleanly
- C. Intervention**
1. Monitor for hemorrhage and shock. ▲
  2. Prepare the client for a hysterectomy if a large portion of the placenta is abnormally adherent.

## VII. Preterm Labor

### A. Description

1. Preterm labor occurs after the twentieth week but before the thirty-seventh week of gestation.
2. Risk factors include a history of medical conditions; present and past obstetric problems; infection; and social and environmental factors, including substance abuse.
3. Additional risk factors include a multifetal pregnancy, which contributes to overdistention of the uterus; anemia, which decreases oxygen supply to the uterus; and age younger than 18 years or first pregnancy and age older than 40 years.

### B. Assessment

1. Uterine contractions (painful or painless)
2. Abdominal cramping (may be accompanied by diarrhea)
3. Low back pain
4. Pelvic pressure or heaviness
5. Change in character and amount of usual discharge—may be thicker or thinner, bloody, brown or colorless, odorous ▲
6. Rupture of amniotic membranes

#### C. Interventions ▲

1. Focus on stopping the labor: Identify and treat infection, restrict activity, and ensure hydration.
2. Maintain bed rest and a lateral position.
3. Monitor fetal status.
4. Administer fluids.
5. Administer medications as prescribed and monitor for side effects of tocolytics (see [Table 35-1](#) for a description of medications used to treat preterm labor).

## VIII. Precipitous Labor and Delivery

A. Description: Labor lasting less than 3 hours

#### B. Interventions ▲

1. Have a precipitous delivery tray available (hemostats, scissors, and cord clamp).
2. Stay with the client at all times.
3. Provide emotional support and keep the client calm.

4. Encourage the client to pant between contractions.
5. Prepare for rupturing membranes when the head crowns, if they are not already ruptured.
6. Do not try to keep the fetus from being delivered.
7. If delivery is necessary before the arrival of the health care provider, do the following:
  - a. Apply gentle pressure to the fetal head upward toward the vagina to prevent damage to the fetal head and vaginal lacerations.
  - b. Support the infant's body during delivery.
  - c. Deliver the **infant** between contractions, checking for the cord around the neck.
  - d. Use restitution to deliver the posterior shoulder.
  - e. Use gentle downward pressure to move the anterior shoulder under the pubic symphysis.
  - f. Bulb suction infant's mouth first and then suction each naris.
  - g. Dry and cover the infant to keep the body warm.
  - h. Allow the placenta to separate naturally.
  - i. Place the infant on the mother's abdomen or breast to induce uterine contractions.

## **IX. Dystocia**

### **A. Description**

1. Dystocia is difficult labor that is prolonged or more painful.

2. Occurs because of problems caused by uterine contractions, the fetus, or the bones and tissues of the maternal pelvis.
3. The fetus may be excessively large, malpositioned, or in an abnormal presentation.
4. Contractions may be hypotonic or hypertonic.
5. Hypotonic contractions are short, irregular, and weak; amniotomy and oxytocin (Pitocin) infusion may be treatment measures.
6. Hypertonic contractions are painful, occur frequently, and are uncoordinated; treatment depends on the cause and includes pain relief measures and rest.
7. Can result in maternal dehydration, infection, fetal injury, or death.

#### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Excessive abdominal pain
2. Abnormal contraction pattern
3. Fetal distress
4. Maternal or fetal tachycardia
5. Lack of progress in labor

#### **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Assess fetal heart rate; monitor for fetal distress.
2. Monitor uterine contractions.
3. Monitor maternal temperature and heart rate.
4. Assist with pelvic examination, measurements, ultrasound, and other procedures.
5. Administer prophylactic antibiotics as prescribed to prevent infection.

6. Administer intravenous fluids as prescribed.
7. Monitor intake and output.
8. Maintain hydration.
9. Instruct the client in breathing techniques and relaxation exercises.
10. Perform fetal monitoring if oxytocin is prescribed for hypotonic uterine contractions (oxytocin is not prescribed for hypertonic uterine contractions).
11. Monitor color of **amniotic fluid**.
12. Provide rest and comfort as with a normal delivery, such as back rubs and position changes.
13. Assess client's fatigue and pain, and administer sedatives and pain medications as prescribed.
14. Assess for prolapse of the cord after membranes rupture.

## **X. Amniotic Fluid Embolism**

### **A. Description**

1. Amniotic fluid embolism is the escape of amniotic fluid into the maternal circulation.
2. The debris-containing amniotic fluid deposits in the pulmonary arterioles and is usually fatal to the mother.

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Abrupt onset of respiratory distress and chest pain
2. Cyanosis
3. Fetal bradycardia and distress if delivery has not occurred at the time of the

embolism

### C. Intervention

1. Institute emergency measures to maintain life.
2. Administer oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, by face mask or resuscitation bag delivering 100% oxygen.
3. Prepare for intubation and mechanical ventilation.
4. Position the client on her side.
5. Administer intravenous fluids, blood products, and medications to correct coagulation failure.
6. Monitor fetal status.
7. Prepare for emergency delivery when the client is stabilized.
8. Provide emotional support to the client, partner, and family.

## XI. Fetal Distress

### A. Assessment

1. Fetal heart rate less than 110 beats/minute or greater than 160 beats/minute
2. Meconium-stained amniotic fluid
3. Fetal hyperactivity
4. Progressive decrease in baseline variability
5. Severe variable decelerations
6. Late decelerations

### B. Interventions

1. Place the client in a lateral position.
2. Administer oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, via face mask.
3. Discontinue oxytocin if infusing.
4. Monitor maternal and fetal status.

 In the event of fetal distress, prepare the client for emergency cesarean delivery.

## **XII. Intrauterine Fetal Demise**

### **A. Assessment**

1. Loss of fetal movement
2. Absence of fetal heart tones
3. Disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) screen (monitor for coagulation abnormalities because DIC is a complication related to intrauterine fetal demise)
4. Low hemoglobin and hematocrit; low platelet count; prolonged bleeding and clotting time
5. Bleeding from puncture sites (could indicate DIC)

### **B. Interventions**

1. Encourage the client and her family to verbalize feelings; provide emotional support.
2. Incorporate religious and cultural health care beliefs and practices in the plan of care.
3. Allow the client choices relating to labor and delivery.

4. Administer intravenous fluids, medications, and blood and blood products as prescribed if DIC occurs.

### **XIII. Rupture of the Uterus**

#### **A. Description**

1. Complete or incomplete separation of the uterine tissue as a result of a tear in the wall of the uterus from the stress of **labor**
2. Complete: Direct communication between the uterine and peritoneal cavities
3. Incomplete: Rupture into the peritoneum covering the uterus, but not into the peritoneal cavity
4. Manifestations vary with the degree of rupture.
5. Risk factors: Labor after previous cesarean section, overdistended uterus (e.g., multiple fetuses or hydramnios) after cesarean section, abdominal trauma

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Abdominal pain or tenderness
2. Chest pain
3. Contractions may stop or fail to progress
4. Rigid abdomen
5. Absent fetal heart rate
6. Signs of maternal shock
7. Fetus palpated outside the uterus (complete rupture) ▲

#### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor for and treat signs of shock (administer oxygen, intravenous fluids, and blood products).
2. Prepare client for cesarean delivery (possible hysterectomy may be necessary).
3. Provide emotional support for the client and partner.

## **XIV. Uterine Inversion**

### **A. Description**

1. **Uterus** completely or partly turns inside out.
2. This can occur during delivery or after delivery of the **placenta**.
3. Risk factors: Fundal implantation of the placenta, manual extraction of the placenta, short umbilical cord, uterine atony, leiomyomas, and abnormally adherent placental tissue

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. A depression in the fundal area of the uterus is noted.
2. The interior of the uterus may be seen through the cervix or protruding through the **vagina**.
3. The client has severe pain.
4. Hemorrhage is evident.
5. The client shows signs of shock.

### **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor for hemorrhage and signs of shock, and treat shock.
2. Prepare the client for a return of the uterus to the correct position via the vagina; if

unsuccessful, laparotomy with replacement to the correct position is done.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* If a pregnant client experiences a hypotensive episode, the nurse should position the client on her side to shift the weight of the fetus off the vena cava until her signs and symptoms subside, and monitor vital signs until stable. The nurse should also monitor the fetal heart rate. To reposition the client, a pillow or wedge should be placed under the client's hip to displace the gravid uterus off the vena cava and the supine position should be avoided.

### *Reference*

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 354.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**306.** The nurse is assessing a pregnant client in the second trimester of pregnancy who was admitted to the maternity unit with a suspected diagnosis of abruptio placentae. Which assessment finding should the nurse expect to note if this condition is present?

1. Soft abdomen
2. Uterine tenderness
3. Absence of abdominal pain
4. Painless, bright red vaginal bleeding

**307.** The maternity nurse is preparing for the admission of a client in the third trimester of pregnancy who is experiencing vaginal bleeding and has a suspected diagnosis of placenta previa. The nurse reviews the health care provider's prescriptions and should question which prescription?

1. Prepare the client for an ultrasound.
2. Obtain equipment for a manual pelvic examination.
3. Prepare to draw a hemoglobin and hematocrit blood sample.
4. Obtain equipment for external electronic fetal heart rate monitoring.

**308.** An ultrasound is performed on a client at term gestation who is experiencing moderate vaginal bleeding. The results of the ultrasound indicate that abruptio placentae is present. On the basis of these findings, the nurse should prepare the client for which anticipated prescription?

1. Delivery of the fetus
2. Strict monitoring of intake and output
3. Complete bed rest for the remainder of the pregnancy
4. The need for weekly monitoring of coagulation studies until the time of delivery

**309.** The nurse is performing an initial assessment on a client who has just been told that a pregnancy test is positive. Which assessment finding indicates that the client is at risk for preterm labor?

1. The client is a 35-year-old primigravida
2. The client has a history of cardiac disease
3. The client's hemoglobin level is 13.5 g/dL
4. The client is a 20-year-old primigravida of average weight and height

**310.** The nurse is monitoring a client who is in the active stage of labor. The client has been experiencing contractions that are short, irregular, and weak. The nurse documents that the client is experiencing which type of labor dystocia?

1. Hypotonic
2. Precipitous
3. Hypertonic
4. Preterm labor

**311.** After a precipitous delivery, the nurse notes that the new mother is passive and only touches her newborn infant briefly with her fingertips. What should the nurse

do to help the woman process the delivery?

1. Encourage the mother to breast-feed soon after birth.
2. Support the mother in her reaction to the newborn infant.
3. Tell the mother that it is important to hold the newborn infant.
4. Document a complete account of the mother's reaction on the birth record.

**312.** The nurse in a labor room is monitoring a client with dysfunctional labor for signs of fetal or maternal compromise. Which assessment finding would alert the nurse to a compromise?

1. Maternal fatigue
2. Coordinated uterine contractions
3. Progressive changes in the cervix
4. Persistent nonreassuring fetal heart rate

**313.** The nurse in a labor room is preparing to care for a client with hypertonic uterine contractions. The nurse is told that the client is experiencing uncoordinated contractions that are erratic in their frequency, duration, and intensity. What is the **priority** nursing action?

1. Provide pain relief measures.
2. Prepare the client for an amniotomy.
3. Promote ambulation every 30 minutes.
4. Monitor the oxytocin (Pitocin) infusion closely.

**314.** The nurse is reviewing the health care provider's (HCP's) prescriptions for a

client admitted for premature rupture of the membranes. Gestational age of the fetus is determined to be 37 weeks. Which prescription should the nurse question?

1. Monitor fetal heart rate continuously.
2. Monitor maternal vital signs frequently.
3. Perform a vaginal examination every shift.
4. Administer ampicillin 1 g as an intravenous piggyback every 6 hours.

**315.** The nurse has developed a plan of care for a client experiencing dystocia and includes several nursing actions in the plan of care. What is the **priority** nursing action?

1. Providing comfort measures
2. Monitoring the fetal heart rate
3. Changing the client's position frequently
4. Keeping the significant other informed of the progress of the labor

**316.** Fetal distress is occurring with a laboring client. As the nurse prepares the client for a cesarean birth, what is the **most important** nursing action?

1. Slow the intravenous flow rate.
2. Place the client in a high Fowler's position.
3. Continue the oxytocin (Pitocin) drip if infusing.
4. Administer oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, via face mask.

**317.** The nurse in the postpartum unit is caring for a client who has just delivered a

newborn infant following a pregnancy with a placenta previa. The nurse reviews the plan of care and prepares to monitor the client for which risk associated with placenta previa?

1. Infection
2. Hemorrhage
3. Chronic hypertension
4. Disseminated intravascular coagulation

**318.** The nurse is performing an assessment on a client diagnosed with placenta previa. Which of these assessment findings would the nurse expect to note?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Uterine rigidity
2. Uterine tenderness
3. Severe abdominal pain
4. Bright red vaginal bleeding
5. Soft, relaxed, nontender uterus
6. Fundal height may be greater than expected for gestational age.

**319.** The nurse in a labor room is performing a vaginal assessment on a pregnant client in labor. The nurse notes the presence of the umbilical cord protruding from the vagina. What is the **first** nursing action with this finding?

1. Gently push the cord into the vagina.
2. Place the client in Trendelenburg's position.

3. Find the closest telephone and page the health care provider stat.
4. Call the delivery room to notify the staff that the client will be transported immediately.

## ANSWERS

### 306. 2

**Rationale:** Abruptio placentae is the premature separation of the placenta from the uterine wall after the twentieth week of gestation and before the fetus is delivered. In abruptio placentae, acute abdominal pain is present. Uterine tenderness accompanies placental abruption, especially with a central abruption and trapped blood behind the placenta. The abdomen feels hard and boardlike on palpation as the blood penetrates the myometrium and causes uterine irritability. A soft abdomen and painless, bright red vaginal bleeding in the second or third trimester of pregnancy is a sign of placenta previa.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, abruptio placentae. Remember that the difference between placenta previa and abruptio placentae involves the presence of uterine pain and tenderness with abruptio placentae, as opposed to painless bleeding with placenta previa.

**Review:** Signs of **abruptio placentae**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 751.

**307. 2**

**Rationale:** Placenta previa is an improperly implanted placenta in the lower uterine segment near or over the internal cervical os. Manual pelvic examinations are contraindicated when vaginal bleeding is apparent until a diagnosis is made and placenta previa is ruled out. Digital examination of the cervix can lead to hemorrhage. A diagnosis of placenta previa is made by ultrasound. The hemoglobin and hematocrit levels are monitored, and external electronic fetal heart rate monitoring is initiated. Electronic fetal monitoring (external) is crucial in evaluating the status of the fetus, who is at risk for severe hypoxia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, nursing care of the client with placenta previa. Use knowledge of the pathophysiology associated with placenta previa. Note the words *question which prescription* in the event query. Also, note that the correct option is the only procedure that is invasive to the pregnancy and endangers the physiological safety of the client and the fetus.

**Review:** Care of the client with **placenta previa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration; Safety

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 613.

**308. 1**

**Rationale:** Abruptio placentae is the premature separation of the placenta from the uterine wall after the twentieth

week of gestation and before the fetus is delivered. The goal of management in abruptio placentae is to control the hemorrhage and deliver the fetus as soon as possible. Delivery is the treatment of choice if the fetus is at term gestation or if the bleeding is moderate to severe and the client or fetus is in jeopardy. Because delivery of the fetus is necessary, options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect regarding management of a client with abruptio placentae.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, management of abruptio placentae. Use knowledge regarding the management of abruptio placentae to answer the question. Note the words *term gestation* and *moderate vaginal bleeding*. Knowing that the goal is to deliver the fetus will direct you easily to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing management of **abruptio placentae**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 683-684; Swearingen (2012), p. 614.

### 309. 2

**Rationale:** Preterm labor occurs after the twentieth week but before the thirty-seventh week of gestation. Several factors are associated with preterm labor, including a history of medical conditions, present and past obstetric problems, social and environmental factors, and substance abuse. Other risk factors include a multifetal pregnancy, which contributes to overdistention of the uterus; anemia, which decreases oxygen supply to the uterus; and age younger than 18 years or first pregnancy at age older than 40 years.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 1, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and are average and normal findings. Also note that the correct option is the only option that identifies an abnormal condition.

**Review:** Risk factors for **preterm labor**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 715, 780; Swearingen (2012), p. 656.

### 310. 1

**Rationale:** Hypotonic labor contractions are short, irregular, and weak and usually occur during the active phase of labor. Hypertonic dystocia usually occurs during the latent phase of labor, and contractions are painful, frequent, and usually uncoordinated. Precipitous labor is labor that lasts in its entirety for 3 hours or less. Preterm labor is the onset of labor after 20 weeks of gestation and before the thirty-seventh week of gestation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessment findings indicative of dystocia. Note the relationship between the words *short, irregular, and weak* in the question and *hypotonic* in the correct option.

**Review:** **Dystocia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Perfusion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 792-793; McKinney et al (2013), p. 637.

### 311. 2

**Rationale:** Precipitous labor is labor that lasts 3 hours or less. Women who have experienced precipitous labor often describe feelings of disbelief that their labor progressed so rapidly. To assist the client to process what has happened, the best option is to support the client in her reaction to the newborn infant. Options 1, 3, and 4 do not acknowledge the client's feelings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use **therapeutic communication techniques**. The correct option is the only option that acknowledges the client's feelings.

**Review:** Use of **therapeutic communication techniques** following delivery

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Professionalism

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 794.

### 312. 4

**Rationale:** Signs of fetal or maternal compromise include a persistent, nonreassuring fetal heart rate, fetal acidosis, and the passage of meconium. Maternal fatigue and infection can occur if the labor is prolonged, but do not indicate fetal or maternal compromise. Progressive changes in the cervix and coordinated uterine contractions are a reassuring pattern in labor.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of fetal or maternal compromise. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are **comparable or alike** and are normal expectations during labor.

**Review:** Assessment findings that indicate **fetal** or **maternal compromise**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 346.

### 313. 1

**Rationale:** Hypertonic uterine contractions are painful, occur frequently, and are uncoordinated. Management of hypertonic labor depends on the cause. Relief of pain is the primary intervention to promote a normal labor pattern. An amniotomy and oxytocin infusion are not treatment measures for hypertonic contractions; however, these treatments may be used in clients with hypotonic dysfunction. A client with hypertonic uterine contractions would not be encouraged to ambulate every 30 minutes, but would be encouraged to rest.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic word** *priority*. Also note that options 2, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and are therapeutic measures for hypotonic dysfunction.

**Review:** Management of **hypertonic uterine contractions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Pain

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 792-793.

### 314. 3

**Rationale:** Vaginal examinations should not be done routinely on a client with premature rupture of the membranes because of the risk of infection. The nurse would expect to monitor fetal heart rate, monitor maternal vital signs, and administer an antibiotic.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the word *question*. This word indicates the activity that the nurse should not implement without clarification. Options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and are expected activities for the nurse to perform for a client with premature rupture of the membranes. Performing a vaginal examination every shift should not be done on a client with premature rupture of the membranes because of the risk of infection, so the nurse would question this prescription.

**Review:** Care of the client with **premature rupture of the membranes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration; Safety

**References:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 644-646; Swearingen (2012), p. 613.

### 315. 2

**Rationale:** Dystocia is difficult labor that is prolonged or more painful than expected. The priority is to monitor the fetal heart rate. Although providing comfort measures, changing the client's position frequently, and keeping the significant other informed of the progress of the labor are components of the plan of care, the fetal status would be the priority.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** and the

**ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to assist in answering the question.

**Review:** Priority nursing interventions for the client with **dystocia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 798.

### 316. 4

**Rationale:** Oxygen is administered, 8 to 10 L/minute, via face mask to optimize oxygenation of the circulating blood. Option 1 is incorrect because the intravenous infusion should be increased (per health care provider prescription) to increase the maternal blood volume. Option 2 is incorrect because the client is placed in the lateral position with her legs raised to increase maternal blood volume and improve fetal perfusion. Option 3 is incorrect because oxytocin stimulation of the uterus is discontinued if fetal heart rate patterns change for any reason.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most important*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. Oxygen is the only option that would improve cardiac output and improve perfusion to the fetus. The other options would not improve perfusion to the fetus.

**Review:** Care of the laboring client experiencing **fetal distress**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 416.

### 317. 2

**Rationale:** In placenta previa, the placenta is implanted in the lower uterine segment. The lower uterine segment does not contain the same intertwining musculature as the fundus of the uterus, and this site is more prone to bleeding. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not risks that are related specifically to placenta previa.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the risks associated with placenta previa. Think about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder and recalling that bleeding is a primary concern in this client will direct you easily to the correct option.

**Review:** **Placenta previa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 680-681.

### ❖ 318. 4, 5, 6

**Rationale:** Placenta previa is an improperly implanted placenta in the lower uterine segment near or over the internal cervical os. Painless, bright red vaginal bleeding in the second or third trimester of pregnancy is a sign of placenta previa. The client has a soft, relaxed, nontender uterus, and fundal height may be more than expected for

gestational age. In abruption placentae, severe abdominal pain is present. Uterine tenderness accompanies placental abruption. In addition, in abruption placentae, the abdomen feels hard and boardlike on palpation as the blood penetrates the myometrium and causes uterine irritability.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** First eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are **comparable or alike**. Next, remember that the difference between placenta previa and abruption placentae involves the presence of uterine pain and tenderness with abruption placentae, as opposed to painless bright red bleeding with placenta previa.

**Review:** Signs of **placenta previa** and **abruption placentae**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 681-682.

### 319. 2

**Rationale:** When cord prolapse occurs, prompt actions are taken to relieve cord compression and increase fetal oxygenation. The client should be positioned with the hips higher than the head to shift the fetal presenting part toward the diaphragm. The nurse should push the call light to summon help, and other staff members should call the health care provider and notify the delivery room. If the cord is protruding from the vagina, no attempt should be made to replace it because to do so could traumatize it and reduce blood flow further. The examiner may place a gloved hand into the vagina, however, and hold the presenting part off the umbilical cord. Oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, by face mask is administered to the client to increase fetal oxygenation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first* and that the umbilical cord is protruding from the vagina.

Options 3 and 4 can be eliminated first because these actions delay necessary and immediate treatment. Recalling that the goal is to relieve cord compression and to increase fetal oxygenation will direct you to the correct option.

Also remember that the cord should not be pushed back into the vagina.

**Review:** Priority nursing measures for **prolapsed cord**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Intrapartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 818-819; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 659-660.



## CHAPTER 32

# Postpartum Period

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is caring for a postpartum client and is preparing to measure the amount of lochial flow. What should the nurse do to obtain an accurate assessment?

*Answer located on p. 372.*

### I. Postpartum

- A. Description: Period when the reproductive tract returns to the normal, nonpregnant state
- B. The postpartum period starts immediately after **delivery** and is usually completed by week 6 following delivery.

### II. Physiological Maternal Changes ▲

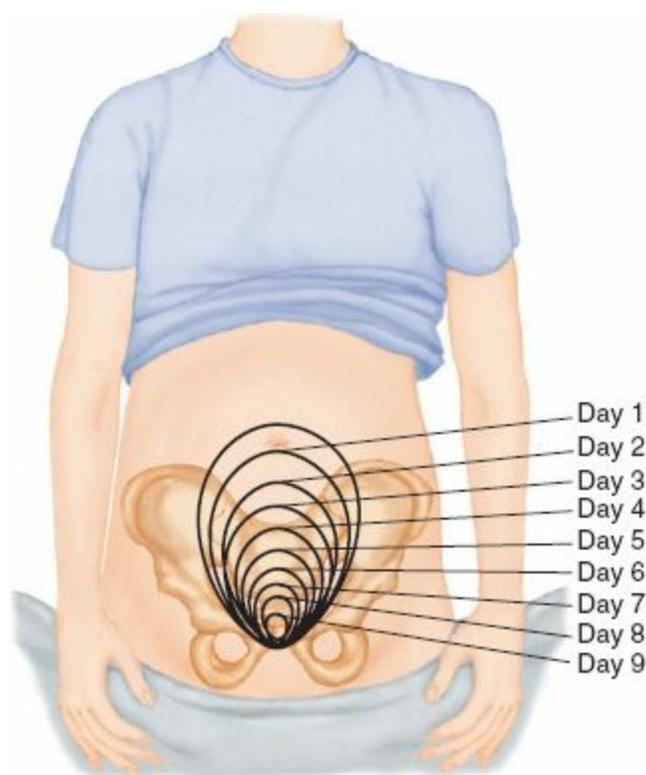
#### A. Involution

1. Description

- a. Involution is the rapid decrease in the size of the **uterus** as it returns to the nonpregnant state.
- b. Clients who breast-feed may experience a more rapid involution because of the release of oxytocin during breast-feeding.

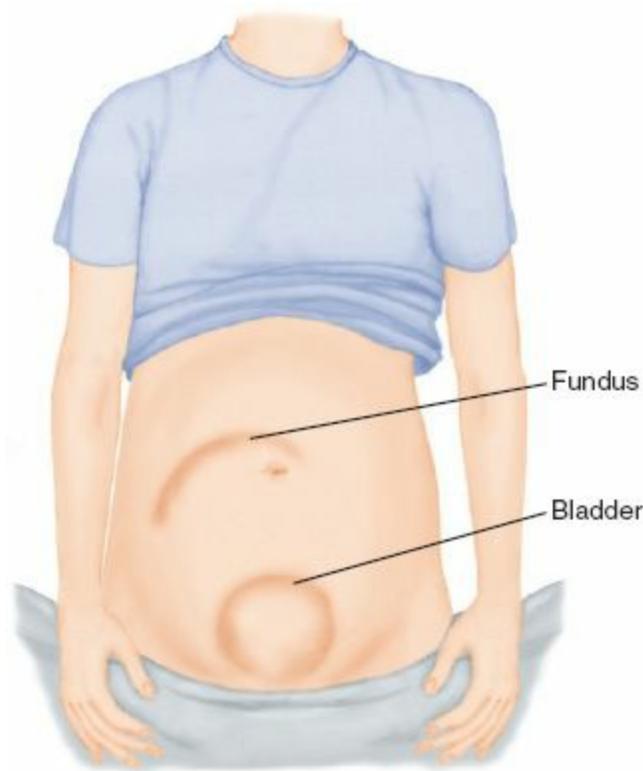
## 2. Assessment

- a. The weight of the uterus decreases from approximately 2 lb to 2 oz in 6 weeks.
- b. The endometrium regenerates.
- c. The fundus steadily descends into the pelvis.
- d. Fundal height decreases about 1 cm/day (**Fig. 32-1**).



**FIGURE 32-1** Involution of the uterus. The height of the uterine fundus decreases by approximately 1 cm/day. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

- e. By 10 days postpartum, the uterus cannot be palpated abdominally.
- f. A flaccid fundus indicates uterine atony, and it should be massaged until firm; a tender fundus indicates an infection (Fig. 32-2).



**FIGURE 32-2** A full bladder displaces and prevents contraction of the uterus. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

- g. Afterpains decrease in frequency after the first few days.

## **B. Lochia**

1. Description: Discharge from the uterus that consists of blood from the vessels of the placental site and debris from the decidua
2. Assessment (Box 32-1)

**BOX 32-1****Amount of Lochia**

**Scant:** Less than 2.5 cm (< 1 inch) on menstrual pad in 1 hour

**Light:** Less than 10 cm (< 4 inches) on menstrual pad in 1 hour

**Moderate:** Less than 15 cm (< 6 inches) on menstrual pad in 1 hour

**Heavy:** Saturated menstrual pad in 1 hour

**Excessive:** Menstrual pad saturated in 15 minutes

From Murray S, McKinney E: *Foundations of maternal-newborn and women's health nursing*, ed 5, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.

- a. Rubra is bright red discharge that occurs from delivery day to day 3.
- b. Serosa is brownish pink discharge that occurs from days 4 to 10.
- c. Alba is white discharge that occurs from days 11 to 14.
- d. The discharge should smell like normal menstrual flow.
- e. Discharge decreases daily in amount.
- f. Discharge may increase with ambulation.

 To determine most accurately the amount of lochial flow, weigh the perineal pad before and after use and identify the amount of time between pad changes.

- C. Cervix: Cervical involution occurs, and the muscle begins to regenerate after 1 week.
- D. **Vagina:** Vaginal distention decreases, although muscle tone is never restored

completely to the pregravid state.

#### E. Ovarian function and menstruation

1. Ovarian function depends on the rapidity with which pituitary function is restored.
2. Menstrual flow resumes within 1 to 2 months in non–breast-feeding mothers.
3. Menstrual flow usually resumes within 3 to 6 months in breast-feeding mothers.
4. Breast-feeding mothers may experience amenorrhea during the entire period of lactation.

 **Women may ovulate without menstruating, so breast-feeding should not be considered a form of birth control.**

#### F. Breasts

1. Breasts continue to secrete colostrum for the first 48 to 72 hours after delivery.
2. A decrease in estrogen and progesterone levels after delivery stimulates increased prolactin levels, which promote breast milk production.
3. Breasts become distended with milk on the third day.
4. Engorgement occurs on approximately day 4 in both breast-feeding and non–breast-feeding mothers. [Box 32-2](#) summarizes care of breasts for non–breast-feeding mothers.

#### **BOX 32-2** Breast Care for Non–Breast-Feeding Mothers

Avoid nipple stimulation.

Apply a breast binder, wear a snug-fitting bra, apply ice packs, or take a mild analgesic for engorgement.

Engorgement usually resolves within 24 to 36 hours after it begins.

5. Breast-feeding relieves engorgement.

## G. Urinary tract

1. The client may have urinary retention as a result of loss of elasticity and tone and loss of sensation in the bladder from trauma, medications, anesthesia, and lack of privacy.
2. Diuresis usually begins within the first 12 hours after delivery.

## H. Gastrointestinal tract

1. Clients are usually hungry after delivery.
2. Constipation can occur, with bowel movement (soft, formed stool) by the second or third postpartum day.
3. Hemorrhoids are common.

## I. Vital signs (Table 32-1) ▲

**TABLE 32-1 Normal Postpartum Vital Signs**

Vital Sign	Description
Temperature	May increase to 100.4 ° F during the first 24 hr postpartum because of dehydrating effects of labor. Any higher elevation may be caused by infection and must be reported
Pulse	May decrease to 50 beats/min (normal puerperal bradycardia). Pulse > 100 beats/min may indicate excessive blood loss or infection
Blood pressure	Should be normal; suspect hypovolemia if it decreases
Respirations	Rarely change; if respirations increase significantly, suspect pulmonary embolism, uterine atony, or hemorrhage

### III. Postpartum Interventions

#### A. Assessment

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess pain level.
3. Assess height, consistency, and location of the fundus (have client empty the bladder before fundal assessment) (see Fig. 32-2). ▲
4. Monitor color, amount, and odor of lochia. ▲
5. Assess breasts for engorgement.
6. Monitor perineum for swelling or discoloration.
7. Monitor for perineal lacerations or episiotomy for healing.
8. Assess incisions or dressings of client who had a cesarean birth.
9. Monitor bowel status.
10. Monitor intake and output.
11. Encourage frequent voiding.
12. Encourage ambulation.
13. Assess extremities for thrombophlebitis (redness, tenderness, or warmth of the leg).
14. Administer Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) as prescribed within 72 hours postpartum to Rh-negative client who has given birth to Rh-positive **newborn**. ▲
15. Assess bonding with the **newborn**. ▲
16. Assess emotional status.

#### B. Client teaching ▲

1. Demonstrate newborn care skills as necessary.
2. Provide the opportunity for the client to bathe the newborn.
3. Instruct in feeding technique.
4. Instruct the client to avoid heavy lifting for at least 3 weeks.
5. Instruct the client to plan at least one rest period per day.
6. Instruct the client that contraception should begin after delivery or with the initiation of intercourse (intercourse should be postponed at least until lochia ceases).
7. Instruct the client in the importance of follow-up, which should be scheduled at 4 to 6 weeks.
8. Instruct the client to report any signs of chills, fever, increased lochia, or depressed feelings to the health care provider immediately.

#### IV. Postpartum Discomforts ▲

##### A. Afterbirth pains

1. Occur as a result of contractions of the **uterus**.
2. Are more common in multiparas, breast-feeding mothers, clients treated with oxytocin (Pitocin), and clients who had an overdistended uterus during pregnancy, such as with carrying twins.

##### B. Perineal discomfort

1. Apply ice packs to the perineum during the first 24 hours to reduce swelling.
2. After the first 24 hours, apply warmth by sitz baths.

##### C. Episiotomy

1. Instruct the client to administer perineal care after each voiding.
2. Encourage the use of an analgesic spray as prescribed.
3. Administer analgesics as prescribed if comfort measures are unsuccessful.

#### **D. Perineal lacerations**

1. Care as for an episiotomy; administer perineal care and use analgesic spray and analgesics for comfort.
2. Rectal suppositories and enemas may be contraindicated (to avoid injury to sutures).

#### **E. Breast discomfort from engorgement**

1. Encourage the client to wear a support bra at all times, even while she is sleeping.
2. Encourage the use of ice packs between feedings if the client is breast-feeding.
3. Encourage the use of warm soaks or a warm shower before feeding for the breast-feeding mother.
4. Administer analgesics as prescribed if comfort measures are unsuccessful.

#### **F. Constipation**

1. Encourage adequate intake of fluids (2000 mL/day).
2. Encourage diet high in fiber.
3. Encourage ambulation.
4. Administer stool softener, laxative, enema, or suppository if needed and prescribed.

#### **G. Postpartum emotional changes (Box 32-3).**



**Postpartum Blues**

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Cries easily for no apparent reason
- Emotionally labile
- Expresses a let-down feeling
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Insomnia
- Restlessness
- Sadness

**Postpartum Depression**

- Anxiety
- Appetite changes
- Crying, sadness
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Fatigue, unable to sleep
- Feelings of guilt
- Irritability and agitation
- Lack of energy

- Less responsive to the infant
- Loss of pleasure in normal activities
- Suicidal thoughts

### Postpartum Psychosis

- Break with reality
- Confusion
- Delirium
- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Panic

Data from: Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby; Lowdermilk D, Perry S, Cashion MC, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby; Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013.

1. Acknowledge the client's feelings and demonstrate a caring attitude.
2. Determine availability of family support and other support systems and resources as needed.
3. Encourage and assist the client to verbalize her feelings.
4. Monitor newborn for appropriate growth and development expectations.
5. Assist the significant other and other appropriate family members to discuss

feelings and identify ways to assist the client.

 All clients should be assessed for depression during pregnancy and in the postpartum period.

## V. Nutritional Counseling

- A. Discuss caloric intake with breast-feeding and non–breast-feeding mothers.
- B. Nutritional needs depend on prepregnancy weight, ideal weight for height, and whether the client is breast-feeding.
- C. If the client is breast-feeding, calorie needs increase by 200 to 500 cal/day, and the client may require increased fluids and the continuance of prenatal vitamins and minerals. 

## VI. Breast-Feeding

### A. Interventions

1. Put the newborn to the mother's breast as soon as the mother's and newborn's conditions are stable (on delivery table, if possible).
2. Stay with the client each time she nurses until she feels secure and confident with the newborn and her feelings.
3. Assess *LATCH* (*l*atch achieved by newborn; *a*udible swallowing; *t*ype of nipple; *c*omfort of mother; *h*old or position of baby).
4. Uterine cramping may occur the first day after delivery while the client is nursing, when oxytocin stimulation causes the uterus to contract.
5. Instruct the client to use general hygiene and wash the breasts once daily.

6. If engorgement occurs, breast-feed frequently, apply warm packs before feeding, apply ice packs between feedings, and massage the breasts.
7. The client should not use soap on the breasts because it tends to remove natural oils, which increases the chance of cracked nipples.
8. If cracked nipples develop, the client should expose the nipples to air for 10 to 20 minutes after feeding, rotate the position of the baby for each feeding, and ensure that the baby is latched on to the areola, not just the nipple.
9. The bra should be well-fitted and supporting; avoid an underwire bra.
10. Breasts may leak between feedings or during coitus; place breast pad in bra.
11. Calories should be increased by 200 to 500 cal/day, and the diet should include additional fluids; prenatal vitamins should be taken as prescribed.
12. Newborn's stools are usually light yellow, seedy, watery, and frequent.
13. Medications, including over-the-counter medications, need to be avoided unless prescribed because they may be unsafe when breast-feeding.
14. Gas-producing foods and caffeine should be avoided.
15. Hormonal contraceptives may cause a decrease in the milk supply and are best avoided during the first 6 weeks after birth.
16. Oral contraceptives containing estrogen are not recommended for breast-feeding mothers; progestin-only birth control pills are less likely to interfere with the milk supply.
17. The infant will develop his or her own feeding schedule.

**B. Breast-feeding procedure for mother (Box 32-4)**

1. Wash hands and assume a comfortable position.
2. Start with the breast with which the last feeding ended.
3. Brush the newborn's lower lip with nipple.
4. Tickle the lips to have the newborn open the mouth wide.
5. Guide the nipple and surrounding areola into the newborn's mouth.
6. Encourage the newborn to nurse on each breast for 15 to 20 minutes.
7. After the newborn has nursed, release suction by depressing the newborn's chin or inserting a clean finger into the newborn's mouth.
8. Burp the newborn after the first breast.
9. Repeat the procedure on the second breast until the newborn stops nursing.
10. Burp the newborn again.
11. Listen for audible sucking and swallowing.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** To determine most accurately the amount of lochial flow, the nurse should weigh the perineal pad before and after use and identify the amount of time between pad changes. This information is then documented according to agency procedures. The nurse should also note the color, odor, and the presence and characteristics of clots if any are noted.

#### **Reference**

## Reference

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 492.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**320.** The postpartum nurse is taking the vital signs of a client who delivered a healthy newborn 4 hours ago. The nurse notes that the client's temperature is 100.2° F.

What is the **priority** nursing action?

1. Document the findings.
2. Retake the temperature in 15 minutes.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Increase hydration by encouraging oral fluids.

**321.** The nurse is assessing a client who is 6 hours postpartum after delivering a full-term healthy newborn. The client complains to the nurse of feelings of faintness and dizziness. Which nursing action would be **most appropriate**?

1. Raise the head of the client's bed.
2. Obtain hemoglobin and hematocrit levels.
3. Instruct the client to request help when getting out of bed.
4. Inform the nursery room nurse to avoid bringing the newborn to the client until the mother's symptoms have subsided.

**322.** The postpartum nurse is providing instructions to a client after delivery of a healthy newborn. Which time frame should the nurse relay to the client regarding the return of bowel function?

1. 3 days postpartum
2. 7 days postpartum

3. On the day of delivery
4. Within 2 weeks postpartum

**323.** The nurse is planning care for a postpartum client who had a vaginal delivery 2 hours ago. The client had a midline episiotomy and has several hemorrhoids. What is the **priority** nursing consideration for this client?

1. Client pain level
2. Inadequate urinary output
3. Client perception of body changes
4. Potential for imbalanced body fluid volume

**324.** The nurse is providing postpartum instructions to a client who will be breast-feeding her newborn. The nurse determines that the client has understood the instructions if she makes which statement(s)? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. "I should wear a bra that provides support."
2. "Drinking alcohol can affect my milk supply."
3. "The use of caffeine can decrease my milk supply."
4. "I will start my estrogen birth control pills again as soon as I get home."
5. "I know if my breasts get engorged I will limit my breast-feeding and supplement the baby."
6. "I plan on having bottled water available in the refrigerator so I can get additional fluids easily."

**325.** The nurse is teaching a postpartum client about breast-feeding. Which instruction

should the nurse include?

1. The diet should include additional fluids.
2. Prenatal vitamins should be discontinued.
3. Soap should be used to cleanse the breasts.
4. Birth control measures are unnecessary while breast-feeding.

**326.** A nurse is preparing to assess the uterine fundus of a client in the immediate postpartum period. After locating the fundus, the nurse notes that the uterus feels soft and boggy. Which nursing intervention would be **most appropriate**?

1. Elevate the client's legs.
2. Massage the fundus until it is firm.
3. Ask the client to turn on her left side.
4. Push on the uterus to assist in expressing clots.

**327.** The nurse is caring for four 1-day postpartum clients. Which client would require further nursing action?

1. The client with mild afterpains
2. The client with a pulse rate of 60 beats/minute
3. The client with colostrum discharge from both breasts
4. The client with lochia that is red and has a foul-smelling odor.

**328.** When performing a postpartum assessment on a client, a nurse notes the presence of clots in the lochia. The nurse examines the clots and notes that they are larger than 1 cm. Which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Document the findings.
2. Reassess the client in 2 hours.
3. Notify the health care provider.
4. Encourage increased oral intake of fluids.

**329.** The nurse is monitoring the amount of lochia drainage in a client who is 2 hours postpartum and notes that the client has saturated a perineal pad in 1 hour. How should the nurse document this finding?

1. Scant
2. Light
3. Heavy
4. Excessive

## ANSWERS

**320. 4**

**Rationale:** The client's temperature should be taken every 4 hours while she is awake. Temperatures up to 100.4° F (38° C) in the first 24 hours after birth often are related to the dehydrating effects of labor. The appropriate action is to increase hydration by encouraging oral fluids, which should bring the temperature to a normal reading.

Although the nurse also would document the findings, the appropriate action would be to increase hydration. Taking the temperature in another 15 minutes is an unnecessary action. Contacting the HCP is not necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority* and use knowledge regarding the physiological findings in the immediate postpartum period to answer this question. Recalling that a temperature elevation often is related to

the dehydrating effects of labor will direct you to the correct option. Also, increasing hydration relates to a physiological client need.

**Review:** Normal postpartum assessment findings

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Thermoregulation

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 440.

### 321. 3

**Rationale:** Orthostatic hypotension may be evident during the first 8 hours after birth. Feelings of faintness or dizziness are signs that caution the nurse to focus interventions on the client's safety. The nurse should advise the client to get help the first few times she gets out of bed. Option 1 is not a helpful action in this situation and would not relieve the symptoms. Option 2 requires a health care provider's prescription. Option 4 is unnecessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the **subject** of the question, client safety. Option 4 is inappropriate and should be eliminated first. Elevating the client's head is not a helpful intervention. To select from the remaining options, recall that safety is a primary issue.

**Review:** Postpartum nursing interventions

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 496.

**322. 1**

**Rationale:** After birth, the nurse should auscultate the client's abdomen in all four quadrants to determine the return of bowel sounds. Normal bowel elimination usually returns 2 to 3 days postpartum. Surgery, anesthesia, and the use of opioids and pain control agents also contribute to the longer period of altered bowel functions. Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and use general principles related to postpartum care. Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because of the length of time stated in these options. From the remaining options, eliminate option 3 because it would seem unreasonable that bowel function would return that quickly in the postpartum woman.

**Review:** Normal gastrointestinal function in the **postpartum client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Elimination

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 498; McKinney et al (2013), p. 449.

**323. 1**

**Rationale:** The priority nursing consideration for a client who delivered 2 hours ago and who has a midline

episiotomy and hemorrhoids is client pain level. Most clients have some degree of discomfort during the immediate postpartum period. There are no data in the question that indicate inadequate urinary output, the presence of client perception of body changes, and potential for imbalanced body fluid volume.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to eliminate option 3 because this is a psychosocial, not a physiological, need. To select from the remaining options, focus on the data in the question.

**Review:** Discomforts in the **postpartum client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Pain

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 480-481, 492.

❖ 324. 1, 2, 3, 6

**Rationale:** The postpartum client should wear a bra that is well-fitted and supportive. Breasts may leak between feedings or during coitus, and the client is taught to place a breast pad in the bra. Breast-feeding clients should increase their daily fluid intake; having bottled water available indicates that the postpartum client understands the importance of increasing fluids. If engorgement occurs, the client should not limit breast-feeding, but should breast-feed frequently. Oral contraceptives containing estrogen are not recommended for breast-feeding mothers. Common causes of decreased milk supply include formula use; inadequate rest or diet; smoking by the mother or others in the home; and use of caffeine, alcohol, or other medications.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and note the words *understood the instructions*. Think about the

physiology associated with milk production and the complications of breast-feeding to answer correctly.

**Review:** Postpartum instructions for a **breast-feeding client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 614.

### 325. 1

**Rationale:** The diet for a breast-feeding client should include additional fluids. Prenatal vitamins should be taken as prescribed, and soap should not be used on the breasts because it tends to remove natural oils, which increases the chance of cracked nipples. Breast-feeding is not a method of contraception, so birth control measures should be resumed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject** of the question, teaching for the breast-feeding client. Remember that fluids and calories should be increased when the client is breast-feeding.

**Review:** **Breast-feeding**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 313.

**326. 2**

**Rationale:** If the uterus is not contracted firmly, the initial intervention is to massage the fundus until it is firm and to express clots that may have accumulated in the uterus. Pushing on an uncontracted uterus can invert the uterus and cause massive hemorrhage. Elevating the client's legs and positioning the client on the side would not assist in managing uterine atony.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a soft and boggy uterus, and note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* in the query. Visualize the procedure and recall the therapeutic management for uterine atony. Remember that a full bladder displaces the uterus.

**Review: Fundal assessment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 474, 491.

**327. 4**

**Rationale:** Lochia, the discharge present after birth, is red for the first 1 to 3 days and gradually decreases in amount. Normal lochia has a fleshy odor or an odor similar to menstrual flow. Foul-smelling or purulent lochia usually indicates infection, and these findings are not normal. The other options are normal findings for a 1-day postpartum client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the finding that requires further nursing action. Note the words *foul-smelling* in the correct option.

**Review:** Normal assessment findings in the **postpartum client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 479-480; McKinney et al (2013), p. 441.

### 328. 3

**Rationale:** Normally, a few small clots may be noted in the lochia in the first 1 to 2 days after birth from pooling of blood in the vagina. Clots larger than 1 cm are considered abnormal. The cause of these clots, such as uterine atony or retained placental fragments, needs to be determined and treated to prevent further blood loss. Although the findings would be documented, the appropriate action is to notify the HCP. Reassessing the client in 2 hours would delay necessary treatment. Increasing oral intake of fluids would not be a helpful action in this situation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the words *larger than 1 cm*. Think about the significance of lochial clots in the postpartum period to answer correctly.

**Review:** Normal findings in the **postpartum client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 474; McKinney et al (2013), p. 360.

**329. 3**

**Rationale:** Lochia is the discharge from the uterus in the postpartum period; it consists of blood from the vessels of the placental site and debris from the decidua. The following can be used as a guide to determine the amount of flow: scant = less than 2.5 cm (< 1 inch) on menstrual pad in 1 hour; light = less than 10 cm (< 4 inches) on menstrual pad in 1 hour; moderate = less than 15 cm (< 6 inches) on menstrual pad in 1 hour; heavy = saturated menstrual pad in 1 hour; and excessive = menstrual pad saturated in 15 minutes.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a saturated perineal pad in 1 hour. The data and the use of guidelines to determine the amount of lochial flow will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Assessment of the amount of **lochia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clotting; Health Promotion

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 493-494; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 360, 434-435.



## CHAPTER 33

# Postpartum Complications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse caring for a client who is 28 hours postpartum notes a temperature of 101.2 ° F. What should the nurse do?

Answer located on *p. 379*.

### I. Cystitis

- A. Description: Cystitis, an infection of the bladder, can occur in the postpartum period and the postpartum woman should be encouraged to consume adequate fluids and void frequently to avoid bladder distention.
- B. Assessment and interventions (refer to [Chapter 62](#))

**⚠** If a urine specimen for culture and sensitivity is prescribed, obtain the specimen before initiating antibiotic therapy.

### II. Hematoma

## A. Description

1. A hematoma is a localized collection of blood in the tissues and can occur internally, involving the vaginal sulcus or other organs; vulvar hematomas are the most common (Fig. 33-1).



**FIGURE 33-1** A vulvar hematoma is caused by rapid bleeding into soft tissue. It causes severe pain and feelings of pressure. (From Murray S, McKinney E: *Foundations of maternal-newborn and women's health nursing*, ed 5, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

2. Predisposing conditions include operative **delivery** with forceps and injury to a blood vessel.
3. A hematoma can be a life-threatening condition.

## B. Assessment ▲

1. Abnormal, severe pain
2. Pressure in the perineal area
3. Sensitive, bulging mass in the perineal area with discolored skin

4. Inability to void
5. Decreased hemoglobin and hematocrit levels
6. Signs of shock, such as pallor, tachycardia, and hypotension, if significant blood loss has occurred ▲

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor client for abnormal pain or perineal pressure, especially when forceps delivery has occurred.
3. Place ice at the hematoma site.
4. Administer analgesics as prescribed.
5. Monitor intake and output.
6. Encourage fluids and voiding.
7. Prepare for urinary catheterization if the client is unable to void.
8. Administer blood products as prescribed.
9. Monitor for signs of infection, such as increased temperature, pulse rate, and white blood cell count.
10. Administer antibiotics as prescribed because infection is common after hematoma formation.
11. Prepare for incision and evacuation of hematoma if necessary.

## III. Hemorrhage

### A. Description

1. Bleeding of 500 mL or more after **delivery**
2. Primary cause of maternal mortality that demands prompt recognition and intervention ▲

**B. Assessment (Box 33-1) ▲**

**BOX 33-1 Postpartum Hemorrhage**

**Causes**

- Uterine atony
- Laceration of the cervix or vagina
- Hematoma development in the cervix, perineum, or labia
- Retained placental fragments

**Predisposing Factors**

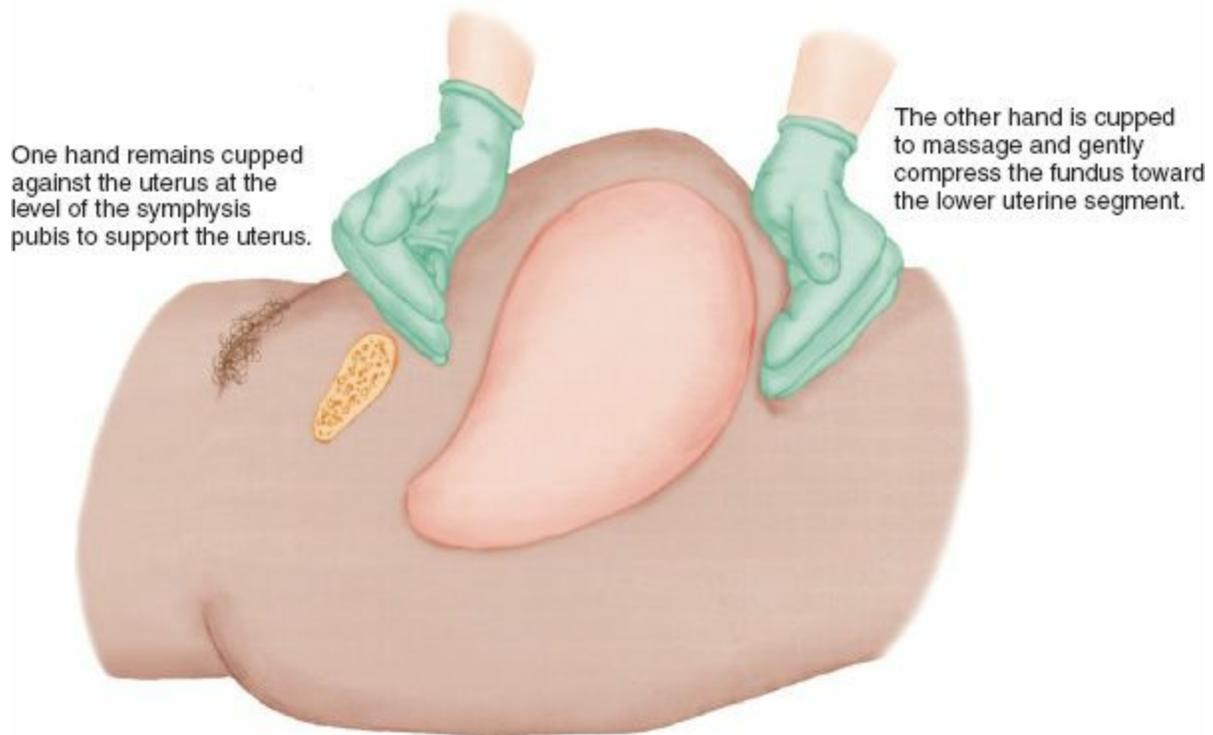
- Previous history of postpartum hemorrhage
- Placenta previa
- Abruptio placentae
- Overdistention of the uterus—polyhydramnios, multiple gestation, large neonate
- Infection
- Multiparity
- Dystocia or labor that is prolonged
- Operative delivery—cesarean or forceps delivery, intrauterine manipulation

1. Early: Hemorrhage occurs during the first 24 hours after delivery.

2. Late: Hemorrhage occurs after the first 24 hours following delivery.

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Massage fundus for uterine atony (Fig. 33-2).



**FIGURE 33-2** Technique for fundal massage. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

2. Monitor vital signs and fundus every 5 to 15 minutes; monitor for early signs of hemorrhaging and shock, including restlessness and increased pulse rate. (A decrease in blood pressure is a later sign of hemorrhage.)
3. Remain with the client if hemorrhage or signs of shock occur.
4. Ask another nurse to notify the health care provider (HCP) if hemorrhage or signs of shock occur.
5. Assess and estimate blood loss by pad count (1 gram = 1 mL of blood).

6. Turn the client to assess for pooled blood underneath her.
7. Assess level of consciousness.
8. Administer fluids and monitor intake and output.
9. Monitor hemoglobin and hematocrit levels.
10. Maintain asepsis because hemorrhage predisposes to infection.
11. Prepare for the administration of oxytocin (Pitocin) if prescribed.
12. Prepare for the administration of intravenous fluids and blood transfusions if prescribed.
13. Prepare for surgical intervention (e.g., dilation and curettage or hysterectomy).

#### IV. Infection

A. Description: Any infection of the reproductive organs that occurs within 28 days of **delivery** or abortion

#### B. Assessment

1. Fever
2. Chills
3. Anorexia
4. Pelvic discomfort or pain
5. Vaginal discharge that is malodorous; normal vaginal discharge has a fleshy odor or an odor similar to a menstrual period. ▲
6. Elevated white blood cell count

⚠ A temperature of 100.4 ° F is normal during the first 24 hours postpartum

because of dehydration; a temperature of 100.4 ° F or greater after 24 hours postpartum indicates infection.

### C. Interventions

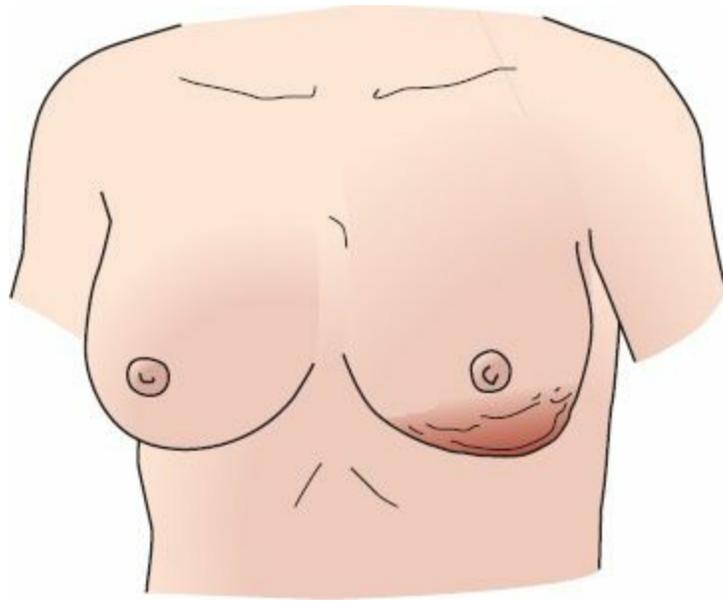
1. Monitor vital signs and temperature every 2 to 4 hours.
2. Make the client as comfortable as possible; position the client to promote vaginal drainage.
3. Keep the client warm if chilled.
4. Isolate the **newborn** from the client only if the client can infect the newborn. ▲
5. Provide a nutritious, high-calorie, high-protein diet.
6. Encourage fluids to 3000 to 4000 mL/day, if not contraindicated.
7. Encourage frequent voiding and monitor intake and output.
8. Monitor culture results if cultures were prescribed.
9. Administer antibiotics according to identified organism, as prescribed.

## V. Mastitis

### A. Description

1. Mastitis is inflammation of the breast as a result of infection.
2. Mastitis occurs primarily in breast-feeding mothers 2 to 3 weeks after **delivery**, but may occur at any time during lactation.

### B. Assessment (Fig. 33-3)



**FIGURE 33-3** Mastitis. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

1. Localized heat and swelling
2. Pain; tender axillary lymph nodes
3. Elevated temperature
4. Complaints of flulike symptoms

C. Interventions ▲

1. Instruct the client in good hand washing and breast hygiene techniques.
2. Promote comfort.
3. Apply heat or cold to the site as prescribed.
4. Maintain lactation in breast-feeding mothers.
5. Encourage manual expression of breast milk or use of a breast pump every 4 hours.
6. Encourage the client to support the breasts by wearing a supportive bra; avoid

wearing an underwire bra.

7. Administer analgesics as prescribed.

8. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

## VI. Pulmonary Embolism ▲

A. Description: Passage of a thrombus, often originating in a uterine or other pelvic vein, into the lungs, where it disrupts the circulation of the blood

### B. Assessment ▲

1. Sudden dyspnea and chest pain

2. Tachypnea and tachycardia

3. Cough and lung crackles

4. Hemoptysis

5. Feeling of impending doom

### C. Interventions

1. Administer oxygen. ▲

2. Position client with the head of the bed elevated. ▲

3. Monitor vital signs frequently, especially respiratory and heart rate and breath sounds.

4. Monitor for signs of respiratory distress and for signs of increasing hypoxemia.

5. Administer intravenous fluids as prescribed.

6. Administer anticoagulants as prescribed.

7. Prepare to assist the HCP to administer medications to dissolve the clot if prescribed.

## VII. Subinvolution

**A. Description:** Incomplete involution or failure of the **uterus** to return to its normal size and condition

**B. Assessment**

1. Uterine pain on palpation
2. Uterus larger than expected
3. More than normal vaginal bleeding

**C. Interventions**

1. Assess vital signs.
2. Assess uterus and fundus.
3. Monitor for uterine pain and vaginal bleeding.
4. Elevate legs to promote venous return.
5. Encourage frequent voiding.
6. Monitor hemoglobin and hematocrit.
7. Prepare to administer methylergonovine maleate (Methergine), which provides sustained contraction of the uterus, as prescribed. ▲

## VIII. Thrombophlebitis

**A. Description**

1. A clot forms in a vessel wall as a result of inflammation of the vessel wall.
2. A partial obstruction of the vessel can occur.
3. Increased blood-clotting factors in the postpartum period place the client at risk.

4. Early ambulation in the postoperative period after cesarean section is a preventive measure.

## B. Types

1. Superficial thrombophlebitis
2. Femoral thrombophlebitis
3. Pelvic thrombophlebitis

## C. Assessment (Box 33-2) ▲

### BOX 33-2 Assessment of Types of Thrombophlebitis

#### Superficial

- Palpable thrombus that feels bumpy and hard
- Tenderness and pain in affected lower extremity
- Warm and pinkish red color over the thrombus area

#### Femoral

- Malaise
- Chills and fever
- Possible positive Homans's sign (not always present)
- Diminished peripheral pulses
- Shiny white skin over affected area
- Pain, stiffness, and swelling of affected leg

#### Pelvic

- Severe chills
- Dramatic body temperature changes
- Pulmonary embolism may be the first sign

#### D. Interventions ▲

1. Specific therapies may depend on the location of thrombophlebitis.
2. Assess the lower extremities for edema, tenderness, varices, and increased skin temperature.
3. Maintain bed rest.
4. Elevate affected leg.
5. Apply a bed cradle and keep bedclothes off affected leg.
6. Never massage the leg.
7. Monitor for manifestations of pulmonary embolism.
8. Apply hot packs or moist heat to the affected site as prescribed to alleviate discomfort.
9. Apply elastic stockings (support hose) if prescribed.
10. Administer analgesics and antibiotics as prescribed.
11. Heparin sodium intravenously may be prescribed for femoral or pelvic thrombophlebitis to prevent further thrombus formation.

#### E. Client education (Box 33-3) ▲

Never massage the leg.

Avoid crossing the legs.

Avoid prolonged sitting.

Avoid constrictive clothing.

Avoid pressure behind the knees.

Know how to apply elastic stockings (support hose) if prescribed.

Understand the importance of anticoagulant therapy if prescribed.

Understand the importance of follow-up with the health care provider.

## IX. Perinatal Loss

### A. Description

1. Perinatal loss is associated with miscarriage, neonatal death, stillbirth, and therapeutic abortion.
2. Loss and grief may also occur with the birth of a preterm baby, a **newborn** with complications of birth, or a newborn with congenital anomalies; it may also occur in a client who is giving up a child for adoption.

### B. Interventions

 Not all interventions are appropriate for every woman and her significant family who experienced perinatal loss. It is crucial to consider religious and cultural health care practices and beliefs when planning care for a woman and family who have experienced perinatal loss.

1. Communicate therapeutically and actively listen, providing parents time to grieve.

2. Notify the hospital chaplain or other religious person.
3. Discuss with the parents options such as seeing, holding, bathing, or dressing the deceased infant; visitation by other family members or friends; religious or cultural rituals; and funeral arrangements.
4. Prepare a special memories box with keepsakes such as footprints, handprints, locks of hair, and pictures, if appropriate.
5. Admit the mother to a private room; if possible, mark the door to the room with a special card (per agency procedure and maintaining confidentiality) that denotes to hospital staff that this family has experienced a loss.
6. See [Chapter 29](#) for additional information on intrauterine fetal demise.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* A temperature of 100.4 ° F is normal during the first 24 hours postpartum because of dehydration; a temperature of 100.4 ° F or greater after 24 hours postpartum indicates infection. Therefore, if the temperature is 101.2 ° F 28 hours postpartum, the nurse should report the finding to the health care provider.

### *Reference*

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 489.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**330.** The nurse is monitoring a client in the immediate postpartum period for signs of hemorrhage. Which sign, if noted, would be an **early** sign of excessive blood loss?

1. A temperature of 100.4 ° F
2. An increase in the pulse rate from 88 to 102 beats/minute
3. A blood pressure change from 130/88 to 124/80 mm Hg
4. An increase in the respiratory rate from 18 to 22 breaths/minute

**331.** The nurse is preparing a list of self-care instructions for a postpartum client who was diagnosed with mastitis. Which instructions should be included on the list?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Wear a supportive bra.
2. Rest during the acute phase.
3. Maintain a fluid intake of at least 3000 mL.
4. Continue to breast-feed if the breasts are not too sore.
5. Take the prescribed antibiotics until the soreness subsides.
6. Avoid decompression of the breasts by breast-feeding or breast pump.

**332.** The nurse is providing instructions about measures to prevent postpartum mastitis to a client who is breast-feeding her newborn. Which client statement would indicate a **need for further instruction**?

1. "I should breast-feed every 2 to 3 hours."

2. "I should change the breast pads frequently."
3. "I should wash my hands well before breast-feeding."
4. "I should wash my nipples daily with soap and water."

333. The postpartum nurse is assessing a client who delivered a healthy infant by cesarean section for signs and symptoms of superficial venous thrombosis. Which sign would the nurse note if superficial venous thrombosis were present?

1. Paleness of the calf area
2. Coolness of the calf area
3. Enlarged, hardened veins
4. Palpable dorsalis pedis pulses

334. A client in a postpartum unit complains of sudden sharp chest pain and dyspnea. The nurse notes that the client is tachycardic and the respiratory rate is elevated. The nurse suspects a pulmonary embolism. Which should be the **initial** nursing action?

1. Initiate an intravenous line.
2. Assess the client's blood pressure.
3. Prepare to administer morphine sulfate.
4. Administer oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, by face mask.

335. The nurse is assessing a client in the fourth stage of labor and notes that the fundus is firm, but that bleeding is excessive. Which should be the **initial** nursing action?

1. Record the findings.
2. Massage the fundus.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Place the client in Trendelenburg's position.

**336.** The nurse is preparing to care for four assigned clients. Which client is at highest risk for hemorrhage?

1. A primiparous client who delivered 4 hours ago
2. A multiparous client who delivered 6 hours ago
3. A primiparous client who delivered 6 hours ago and had epidural anesthesia
4. A multiparous client who delivered a large baby after oxytocin (Pitocin) induction

**337.** A postpartum client is diagnosed with cystitis. The nurse should plan for which **priority** nursing action in the care of the client?

1. Providing sitz baths
2. Encouraging fluid intake
3. Placing ice on the perineum
4. Monitoring hemoglobin and hematocrit levels

**338.** The nurse is monitoring a postpartum client who received epidural anesthesia for delivery for the presence of a vulvar hematoma. Which assessment finding would **best** indicate the presence of a hematoma?

1. Changes in vital signs

2. Signs of heavy bruising
3. Complaints of intense pain
4. Complaints of a tearing sensation

**339.** The nurse is developing a plan of care for a postpartum client with a small vulvar hematoma. The nurse should include which specific action during the first 12 hours after delivery?

1. Assess vital signs every 4 hours.
2. Measure fundal height every 4 hours.
3. Prepare an ice pack for application to the area.
4. Inform the health care provider of assessment findings.

**340.** On assessment of a postpartum client, the nurse notes that the uterus feels soft and boggy. The nurse should take which **initial** action?

1. Elevate the client's legs.
2. Document the findings.
3. Massage the fundus until it is firm.
4. Push on the uterus to assist in expressing clots.

## ANSWERS

**330. 2**

**Rationale:** During the fourth stage of labor, the maternal blood pressure, pulse, and respiration should be checked

every 15 minutes during the first hour. An increasing pulse is an early sign of excessive blood loss because the heart pumps faster to compensate for reduced blood volume. A slight increase in temperature is normal. The blood pressure decreases as the blood volume diminishes, but a decreased blood pressure would not be the earliest sign of hemorrhage. The respiratory rate is slightly increased from normal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early* in the question. Think about the physiological occurrences of shock and the expected findings in the postpartum period. This should assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Early signs of **hemorrhage**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 829; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 671-672.

❖ **331. 1, 2, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** Mastitis is an infection of the lactating breast. Client instructions include resting during the acute phase, maintaining a fluid intake of at least 3000 mL/day (if not contraindicated), and taking analgesics to relieve discomfort. Antibiotics may be prescribed and are taken until the complete prescribed course is finished. They are not stopped when the soreness subsides. Additional supportive measures include the use of moist heat or ice packs and wearing a supportive bra. Continued decompression of the breast by breast-feeding or breast pump is important to empty the breast and prevent the formation of an abscess.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, treatment measures for mastitis. Think about the pathophysiology associated with mastitis. Recalling that supportive measures include rest, moist heat or ice packs, antibiotics,

analgesics, increased fluid intake, breast support, and decompression of the breasts will assist in answering the question.

**Review:** Treatment measures for **mastitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 629, 834-835; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 680-681.

**332. 4**

**Rationale:** Mastitis is inflammation of the breast as a result of infection. It generally is caused by an organism that enters through an injured area of the nipples, such as a crack or blister. Measures to prevent the development of mastitis include changing nursing pads when they are wet and avoiding continuous pressure on the breasts. Soap is drying and could lead to cracking of the nipples, and the client should be instructed to avoid using soap on the nipples. The mother is taught about the importance of hand-washing and that she should breast-feed every 2 to 3 hours.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select the option that identifies the incorrect client statement. Recalling that the use of soap is drying to the skin and could cause cracking and provide an entry point for organisms will direct you easily to the correct option.

**Review:** Prevention measures for **mastitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Reproduction

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 835.

**333. 3**

**Rationale:** Thrombosis of superficial veins usually is accompanied by signs and symptoms of inflammation, including swelling, redness, tenderness, and warmth of the involved extremity. It also may be possible to palpate the enlarged, hard vein. Clients sometimes experience pain when they walk. Palpable dorsalis pedis pulses is a normal finding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate option 4 first because this is a normal and expected finding. Next eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are **comparable or alike**.

**Review:** **Superficial venous thrombosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 832-833; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 674-675.

**334. 4**

**Rationale:** If pulmonary embolism is suspected, oxygen should be administered, 8 to 10 L/minute, by face mask.

Oxygen is used to decrease hypoxia. The client also is kept on bed rest with the head of the bed slightly elevated to reduce dyspnea. Morphine sulfate may be prescribed for the client, but this would not be the initial nursing action.

An intravenous line also will be required, and vital signs need to be monitored, but these actions would follow the administration of oxygen.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* in the query. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Therapeutic management of a client with **pulmonary embolism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 726; McKinney et al (2013), p. 677; Murray, McKinney (2010), pp. 743-744.

### 335. 3

**Rationale:** If bleeding is excessive, the cause may be laceration of the cervix or birth canal. Massaging the fundus if it is firm would not assist in controlling the bleeding. Trendelenburg's position should be avoided because it may interfere with cardiac and respiratory function. Although the nurse would record the findings, the initial nursing action would be to notify the HCP.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial*. Read the question carefully, noting the **subject**, the initial nursing action, and the clinical manifestations identified in the question. Eliminate option 2 first because, if the uterus

is firm, it would not be necessary to perform fundal massage. Knowing that Trendelenburg's position interferes with cardiac and respiratory function will assist in eliminating option 4. From the remaining options, noting the words *bleeding is excessive* will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing interventions for postpartum **hemorrhage**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**References:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 672-673; Swearingen (2012), pp. 612-613.

### 336. 4

**Rationale:** The causes of postpartum hemorrhage include uterine atony; laceration of the vagina; hematoma development in the cervix, perineum, or labia; and retained placental fragments. Predisposing factors for hemorrhage include a previous history of postpartum hemorrhage, placenta previa, abruptio placentae, overdistention of the uterus from polyhydramnios, multiple gestation, a large neonate, infection, multiparity, dystocia or labor that is prolonged, operative delivery such as a cesarean or forceps delivery, and intrauterine manipulation. The multiparous client who delivered a large fetus after oxytocin induction has more risk factors associated with postpartum hemorrhage than the other clients. In addition, there are no specific data in the client descriptions in options 1, 2, and 3 that present the risk for hemorrhage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the client at highest risk for hemorrhage. Read the client description in each option. Noting the words *large* and *oxytocin* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Hemorrhage and postpartum client.

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**References:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 281-282; Swearingen (2012), p. 611.

### 337. 2

**Rationale:** Cystitis is an infection of the bladder. The client should consume 3000 mL of fluids per day if not contraindicated. Sitz baths and ice would be appropriate interventions for perineal discomfort. Hemoglobin and hematocrit levels would be monitored with hemorrhage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, measures to treat cystitis, and note the **strategic word** *priority*.

Remember that increased fluids are a priority intervention.

**Review:** Interventions for a client with **cystitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Infection

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 731-732.

### 338. 1

**Rationale:** Because the client has had epidural anesthesia and is anesthetized, she cannot feel pain, pressure, or a tearing sensation. Changes in vital signs indicate hypovolemia in an anesthetized postpartum client with vulvar hematoma. Option 2 (heavy bruising) may be seen, but vital sign changes indicate hematoma caused by blood collection in the perineal tissues.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Also note that the client received epidural anesthesia. With this in mind, eliminate options 3 and 4. From the remaining options, use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of a **vulvar hematoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 825, 829.

### 339. 3

**Rationale:** A hematoma is a localized collection of blood into the tissues of the reproductive sac after delivery. Vulvar hematoma is the most common. Application of ice reduces swelling caused by hematoma formation in the vulvar area. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not interventions that are specific to the plan of care for a client with a small vulvar hematoma.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a small vulvar hematoma. This focus will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing care of the client with a **hematoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 669-670.

### 340. 3

**Rationale:** If the uterus is not contracted firmly (i.e., it is soft and boggy), the initial intervention is to massage the fundus until it is firm and to express clots that may have accumulated in the uterus. Elevating the client's legs would not assist in managing uterine atony. Documenting the findings is an appropriate action but is not the initial action. Pushing on an uncontracted uterus can invert the uterus and cause massive hemorrhage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* in the question. Focus on the **subject**, that the uterus is soft and boggy. Recalling the therapeutic management for uterine atony will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Therapeutic management of the client with **uterine atony**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Reproduction

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 667-669.





## CHAPTER 34

# Care of the Newborn

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse is performing an initial assessment on a newborn and notes that the newborn is experiencing tremors. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 398.*

### **I. Initial Care of the Newborn** ▲

#### **A. Assessment**

1. Observe or assist with initiation of respirations.
2. Assess Apgar score.
3. Note characteristics of cry.
4. Monitor for nasal flaring, grunting, retractions, and abnormal respirations, such as a seesaw respiratory pattern (rise and fall of the chest and abdomen do not occur together).
5. Assess for central cyanosis and acrocyanosis.

6. Obtain vital signs.
7. Observe the **newborn** for signs of hypothermia or hyperthermia.
8. Assess for gross anomalies.

## **B. Interventions**

1. Suction the mouth first and then the nares with a bulb syringe.
2. Dry the newborn and stimulate crying by rubbing the back.
3. Maintain temperature stability; wrap the newborn in warm blankets and place a stockinette cap on the newborn's head.
4. Keep the newborn with the mother to facilitate bonding.
5. Place the newborn at mother's breast if breast-feeding is planned, or place the newborn on the mother's abdomen.
6. Place the newborn in radiant warmer.
7. Position the newborn on the side with a rolled blanket at the back to facilitate drainage of mucus.
8. Ensure the newborn's proper identification.
9. Footprint the newborn and fingerprint the mother on the identification sheet per agency policies and procedures; initiate other agency identification and safety procedures.
10. Place matching identification bracelets on the mother and the newborn.

## **C. Apgar scoring system**

1. Assess each of five items to be scored and add the points to determine the newborn's total score.

## 2. Five vital indicators (Table 34-1)

**TABLE 34-1 Five Vital Indicators of Apgar Scoring**

Indicator	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
Heart rate	Absent	<100 beats/min	≥100 beats/min
Respiratory rate/effort	Absent	Slow, irregular breathing, weak cry	Good rate and effort, vigorous cry
Muscle tone	Flaccid, limp	Minimal flexion of extremities	Good flexion, active motion
Reflex irritability	No response	Minimal response (grimace) to suction or to gentle slap on soles	Responds promptly with a cry or active movement
Skin color	Pallor or cyanosis	Body skin normal, extremities blue	Body and extremity skin color normal

## 3. Interventions: Apgar score (Table 34-2)

**TABLE 34-2 Apgar Score Interventions**

Score	Intervention
8-10	No intervention required except to support newborn's spontaneous efforts
4-7	Stimulate; rub newborn's back; administer oxygen to newborn; rescore at specific intervals
0-3	Newborn requires full resuscitation; rescore at specific intervals

 The newborn's Apgar score is routinely assessed and recorded at 1 minute and at 5 minutes after birth, and at 10 minutes if needed.

## II. Initial Physical Examination

## A. General guidelines

1. Keep the **newborn** warm during the examination. ▲
2. Begin with general observations, and then perform assessments that are least disturbing to the newborn first. ▲
3. Initiate nursing interventions for abnormal findings and document findings.
4. The Ballard Scale may be used for gestational age assessment; in this scale, scores are assigned to physical and neurological criteria.

⚠ The phases of newborn instability occur during the first 6 to 8 hours after birth and are known as the transition period between intrauterine and extrauterine existence. These phases include the first period of reactivity, period of decreased responsiveness, and second period of reactivity.

## B. Vital signs

1. Heart rate (resting): 120 to 160 beats/minute (apical), 80 to 100 beats/minute (if sleeping), up to 180 beats/minute (if crying); auscultate at the fourth intercostal space for 1 full minute to detect abnormalities. ▲
2. Respirations: 30 to 60 breaths/minute; assess for 1 full minute.
3. Assess heart rate and respiratory rate first before assessing other vital signs while the newborn is resting or sleeping.
4. Axillary temperature: 96.8 ° F to 99 ° F
5. Blood pressure: Usually not done in term newborn, 80-90/40-50 mm Hg

## C. Body measurements (approximate)

1. Length: 45 to 55 cm (18 to 22 inches)

2. Weight: 2500 to 4000 g (5.5 to 8.75 lb)
3. Head circumference: 33 to 35 cm (13.2 to 14 inches)

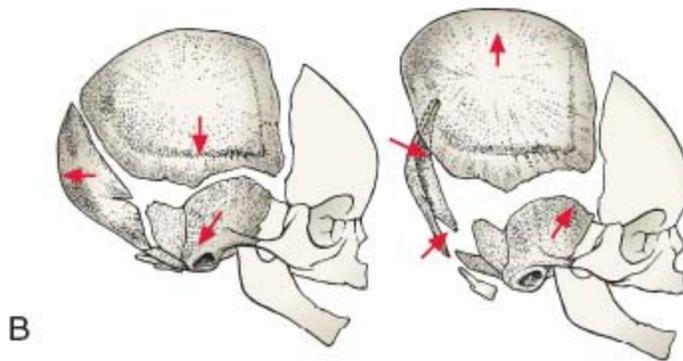
#### D. Head

1. Head should be one-fourth of the body length (cephalocaudal development).
2. Bones of the skull are not fused.
3. Sutures (connective tissue between the skull bones) are palpable and may be overlapping because of head molding, but should not be widened.
4. Fontanelles are unossified membranous tissue at the junction of the sutures (Table 34-3). 

**TABLE 34-3 Fontanelles**

Fontanel	Characteristics	Closure
Anterior	Soft, flat, diamond-shaped; 3-4 cm wide × 2-3 cm long	Between 12 and 18 mo of age
Posterior	Triangular; 0.5-1 cm wide Located between occipital and parietal bones	Between birth and 2-3 mo of age

5. Molding is asymmetry of the head resulting from pressure in the birth canal; molding disappears in about 72 hours (Fig. 34-1).



**FIGURE 34-1** Molding. **A**, Significant molding after vaginal birth. **B**, Schematic of bones of skull when molding is present. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby. Courtesy of Kim Molloy, Knoxville, IA.)

## 6. Masses from birth trauma

- a. Caput succedaneum is edema of the soft tissue over bone (crosses over suture line); it subsides within a few days.
- b. Cephalhematoma is swelling caused by bleeding into an area between the bone and its periosteum (does not cross over suture line); it usually is absorbed

within 6 weeks with no treatment.

## 7. Head lag

- a. Common when pulling the newborn to a sitting position
- b. When prone, the newborn should be able to lift the head slightly and turn the head from side to side.

## E. Eyes

1. Slate gray (light skin), dark blue, or brown-gray (dark skin)
2. Symmetrical and clear
3. Pupils equal, round, react to light and by accommodation
4. Blink reflex present
5. Eyes cross because of weak extraocular muscles
6. Ability to track and fixate momentarily
7. Red reflex present
8. Eyelids often edematous as a result of pressure during the birth process and the effects of eye medication

## F. Ears

1. Symmetrical
2. Firm cartilage with recoil
3. Top of pinna on or above line drawn from outer canthus of eye
4. Low-set ears associated with Down syndrome

## G. Nose

1. Flat, broad, in center of face

2. Obligatory nose breathing
3. Occasional sneezing to remove obstructions
4. Nares are patent and should not flare (flaring is an indication of respiratory distress).

## H. Mouth

1. Pink, moist gums
2. Soft and hard palates intact
3. Epstein's pearls (small, white cysts) may be present on hard palate.
4. Uvula in midline
5. Freely moving tongue, symmetrical, has short frenulum
6. Sucking and crying movements symmetrical
7. Able to swallow
8. Root and gag reflexes present

 When assessing the newborn's mouth, look for the presence of thrush (*Candida albicans*), which are white patchy areas on the tongue or gums that cannot be removed with a washcloth; these may be painful.

## I. Neck

1. Short and thick
2. Head held in midline
3. Trachea on midline
4. Good range of motion and ability to flex and extend
5. Assess for torticollis (head inclined to one side as a result of contraction of

muscles on that side of the neck)

## **J. Chest** ▲

1. Circular appearance because anteroposterior and lateral diameters are about equal (approximately 30 to 33 cm [12 to 13.2 inches] at birth)
2. Diaphragmatic respirations—chest and abdomen should rise and fall in synchrony, not in seesaw pattern
3. Bronchial sounds heard on auscultation
4. Nipples prominent and often edematous; milky secretion (witch's milk) common
5. Breast tissue present
6. Clavicles need to be palpated to assess for fractures.

## **K. Skin** ▲

1. Pinkish red (light-skinned newborn) to pinkish brown or pinkish yellow (dark-skinned newborn)
2. Vernix caseosa, a cheesy white substance, on entire body in preterm newborns, but is more prominent between folds closer to term; may be absent after 42 weeks of gestation
3. Lanugo, fine body hair, might be seen, especially on the back.
4. Milia, small white sebaceous glands, appear on the forehead, nose, and chin.
5. Dry, peeling skin, increased in postmature newborns
6. Dark red color (plethoric) common in premature newborns
7. Cyanosis may be noted with hypothermia, infection, and hypoglycemia and with cardiac, respiratory, or neurological abnormalities.

- 8.** Acrocyanosis (peripheral cyanosis of hands and feet) is normal in the first few hours after birth and may be noted intermittently for the next 7 to 10 days (Fig. 34-2).



**FIGURE 34-2** Acrocyanosis. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders. Courtesy of Todd Shiros, Santa Fe Springs, CA.)

- 9.** Assess for ecchymosis and petechiae resulting from trauma of birth.
- 10.** Assess skin turgor over the abdomen to determine hydration status.
- 11.** Observe for forceps marks.
- 12.** Harlequin sign
- a.** Deep pink or red color develops over one side of newborn's body while the other side remains pale or of normal color.
  - b.** Harlequin sign may indicate shunting of blood that occurs with a cardiac problem or may indicate sepsis.
- 13.** Birthmarks (Table 34-4)

**TABLE 34-4 Birthmarks**

Birthmark	Characteristics
Telangiectatic nevi (stork bites)	Pale pink or red, flat, dilated capillaries On eyelids, nose, lower occipital bone, and nape of neck Blanch easily More noticeable during crying periods Disappear by age 2 yr
Nevus flammeus (port-wine stain)	Capillary angioma directly below epidermis Nonelevated, sharply demarcated, red to purple, dense areas of capillaries Commonly appear on face No fading with time May require future surgery
Nevus vasculosus (strawberry mark)	Capillary hemangioma Raised, clearly delineated, dark red, with rough surface Common in head region Disappears by age 7-9 yr
Mongolian spots	Bluish black pigmentation On lumbar dorsal area and buttocks Gradually fade during first and second years of life Common in Asian and dark-skinned individuals

## L. Abdomen

### 1. Umbilical cord

- a. Umbilical cord should have three vessels—two arteries and one vein; if fewer than three vessels are noted, notify the health care provider (HCP). 
- b. Small, thin cord may be associated with poor fetal growth.
- c. Assess for intact cord, and ensure that the cord clamp is secured.
- d. Cord should be clamped for at least the first 24 hours after birth; clamp can be removed when the cord is dried and occluded and is no longer bleeding.
- e. Note any bleeding or drainage from the cord.
- f. Hospital protocol and HCP's preference determine the technique and skin preparation used for cord care; protocols may include the use of antibiotic ointment, triple dye, soap and water, sterile water, povidone-iodine, alcohol, or another treatment.
- g. If symptoms of infection, such as moistness, oozing, discharge, and a reddened base, occur, antibiotic treatment is prescribed.

## 2. Gastrointestinal

- a. Monitor cord for meconium staining.
- b. Assess for umbilical hernia.
- c. Assess for abdominal depression associated with diaphragmatic hernia.
- d. Assess for abdominal distention associated with obstruction, mass, or sepsis.
- e. Monitor bowel sounds (present within the first hour after birth).

## 3. Anus

- a. Ensure that the anal opening is present.
- b. First stool meconium should pass within first 24 hours.

## M. Genitals

### 1. Female

- a. Labia may be swollen; clitoris may be enlarged.
- b. Smegma may be present (thick, white mucus discharge).
- c. Pseudomenstruation, caused by the withdrawal of the maternal hormone estrogen, is possible (blood-tinged mucus).
- d. Hymen tag may be visible.
- e. First voiding should occur within 24 hours.

### 2. Male

- a. Prepuce (foreskin) covers glans penis.
- b. Scrotum may be edematous.
- c. Verify meatus at tip of penis.
- d. Testes are descended, but may retract with cold.

e. Assess for hernia or hydrocele.

f. First voiding should occur within 24 hours.

## **N. Spine**

1. Straight

2. Posture flexed

3. Supportive of head momentarily when prone

4. Chin flexed on upper chest

5. Well-coordinated, sporadic movements

6. A degree of hypotonicity or hypertonicity may indicate central nervous system damage.

7. Assess for hair tufts and dimples along the spinal column (may be indicative of a possible opening).

## **O. Extremities**

1. Flexed

2. Full range of motion; symmetrical movements

3. Fists clenched

4. Ten fingers and 10 toes, all separate

5. Legs bowed

6. Major gluteal folds even

7. Creases on soles of feet

8. Assess for fractures (especially clavicle) or dislocations (hip).

9. Assist HCP to assess for developmental dysplasia of the hip; when thighs are

rotated outward, no clicks should be heard (Ortolani's sign and Barlow's sign are the two assessment tools for developmental dysplasia of the hip).

10. Pulses palpable (radial, brachial, femoral)

⚠ Slight tremors noted in the newborn may be a common finding, but could also be a sign of hypoglycemia, hypocalcemia, or drug withdrawal.

### III. Body Systems Assessment and Interventions

#### A. Cardiovascular system ▲

1. Keep the **newborn** warm.
2. Measure the apical heart rate for 1 full minute.
3. Listen for murmurs; assess oxygen saturation via pulse oximetry if a murmur is heard.
4. Palpate pulses.
5. Assess for cyanosis; blanch the skin on the trunk and extremities to assess circulation.
6. Observe for cardiac distress when the newborn is feeding.

#### B. Respiratory system ▲

1. Suction the airway as necessary: Use a bulb syringe for upper airway suctioning (compress bulb before insertion) and a French catheter for deeper suctioning.
2. Observe for respiratory distress and hypoxemia.
  - a. Nasal flaring
  - b. Increasingly severe retractions
  - c. Grunting

d. Cyanosis

e. Bradycardia and periods of apnea lasting longer than 15 seconds

3. Administer oxygen if necessary and as prescribed.

### C. Hepatic system

1. Normal or physiological jaundice appears after the first 24 hours in full-term newborns and after the first 48 hours in premature newborns; jaundice occurring before this time (pathological jaundice) may indicate early hemolysis of red blood cells and must be reported to the HCP. ▲

2. Physiological jaundice peaks about the fifth day of life (indirect bilirubin levels 6 to 7 mg/dL).

3. Feed early to stimulate intestinal activity and to keep the bilirubin level low. ▲

4. Prevent chilling because hypothermia can cause acidosis that interferes with bilirubin conjugation and excretion.

5. Liver stores the iron passed from the mother for 5 to 6 months.

6. Glycogen storage occurs in the liver.

7. The newborn is at risk for hemorrhagic disorders; coagulation factors synthesized in the liver depend on vitamin K, which is not synthesized until intestinal bacteria are present. ▲

8. Handle the newborn carefully and monitor for any bruising or bleeding episodes.

9. Watch for meconium stool and subsequent stools.

10. Administer intramuscular dose of vitamin K to the newborn as prescribed to prevent hemorrhagic disorders (usually 0.5 to 1 mg is prescribed); administer in

lateral aspect of the middle third of the vastus lateralis muscle. ▲

11. Assess the newborn's hemoglobin and blood glucose levels.

#### D. Renal system

1. The immature kidneys are unable to concentrate urine.
2. A weight loss of 5% to 10% during the first week of life occurs as a result of water loss and limited intake; birth weight should be regained by 10 to 14 days after birth.
3. Weigh the newborn daily.
4. Monitor intake and output; weigh diapers if necessary (1 g of diaper weight equals 1 mL of urine). ▲
5. If the diaper requires weighing, record the weight before putting it on the newborn; after the newborn voids, reweigh the diaper and subtract the prevoided weight.
6. Assess for signs of dehydration (dry mucous membranes, sunken eyeballs, poor skin turgor, sunken fontanel). ▲

#### E. Immune system

1. Newborn receives passive immunity via the **placenta** (immunoglobulin G).
2. Newborn receives passive immunity from colostrum (immunoglobulin A).
3. Elevations in immunoglobulin M indicate infection in utero.
4. Use aseptic technique and standard precautions when caring for the newborn. ▲
5. Ensure meticulous hand-washing.
6. Ensure that an infection-free staff cares for the newborn.

7. Monitor the newborn's temperature.
8. Observe for any cracks or openings in the skin.
9. Administer eye medication within 1 hour after birth to prevent ophthalmia neonatorum; agent used varies depending on agency protocols, but usually ophthalmic forms of erythromycin (0.5%) or tetracycline (1%) are prescribed because they are bacteriostatic and bactericidal and provide prophylaxis against *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia trachomatis*. ▲
10. Provide cord care. ▲
  - a. Umbilical clamp can be removed after 24 hours if cord is dried and occluded and is not bleeding.
  - b. Teach the mother how to perform cord care.
  - c. Keep the cord clean and dry; soap and water may be prescribed for cleaning the cord.
  - d. Keep the diaper from covering the cord; fold the diaper below the cord.
  - e. Assess cord for odor, swelling, or discharge.
  - f. The newborn is washed via a sponge bath until the cord falls off (within 2 weeks).
11. Provide circumcision care.
  - a. Apply petroleum jelly gauze to the penis except when a PlastiBell is used.
  - b. Remove petroleum jelly gauze, if applied, after the first voiding following circumcision.
  - c. Observe for swelling, infection, or bleeding from the circumcision site.

- d. Teach the mother how to care for the circumcision site.
- e. Clean the penis after each voiding by squeezing warm water over the penis.
- f. A milky covering over the glans penis is normal and should not be disrupted.
- g. Monitor for urinary retention. ▲

## F. Metabolic system and gastrointestinal system

1. Newborns are able to digest simple carbohydrates, but are unable to digest fats because of the lack of lipase.
2. Proteins may be broken down only partially, so they may serve as antigens and provoke an allergic reaction.
3. The newborn has a small stomach capacity (about 90 mL), with rapid intestinal peristalsis (bowel emptying time is 2.5 to 3 hours).
4. Breast-feeding usually can begin immediately after birth; based on HCP preference and agency protocols, bottle-fed newborns may be initially offered no more than 30 mL of formula. ▲
5. Observe feeding reflexes, such as rooting, sucking, and swallowing.
6. Assist the mother with breast-feeding or formula feeding; breast-feeding should be done every 2 to 3 hours, and formula feeding (minimum of 30 mL, or 1 oz) should be done every 3 to 4 hours (or per HCP preference or agency protocols).
7. Burp the newborn during and after feeding.
8. Assess for regurgitation or vomiting.
9. Position the newborn on the right side after feeding; however, the side-lying position is not recommended for sleep because this position makes it easy for the

newborn to roll to the prone position (prone position is contraindicated because the prone position increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome). ▲

**10.** Observe for normal stool and the passage of meconium.

- a. Meconium stool, which is greenish black with a thick, sticky, tarlike consistency, usually is passed within the first 24 hours of life.
- b. Transitional stool, the second type of stool excreted by the newborn, is greenish brown and of looser consistency than meconium.
- c. Seedy, yellow stools are usually noted in breast-fed newborns; pale yellow to light brown stools are usually seen in formula-fed newborns.

**11.** Perform a newborn screening test (including the test for phenylketonuria) as prescribed before discharge after sufficient protein intake occurs; the newborn should be on formula or breast milk for 24 hours before screening. ▲

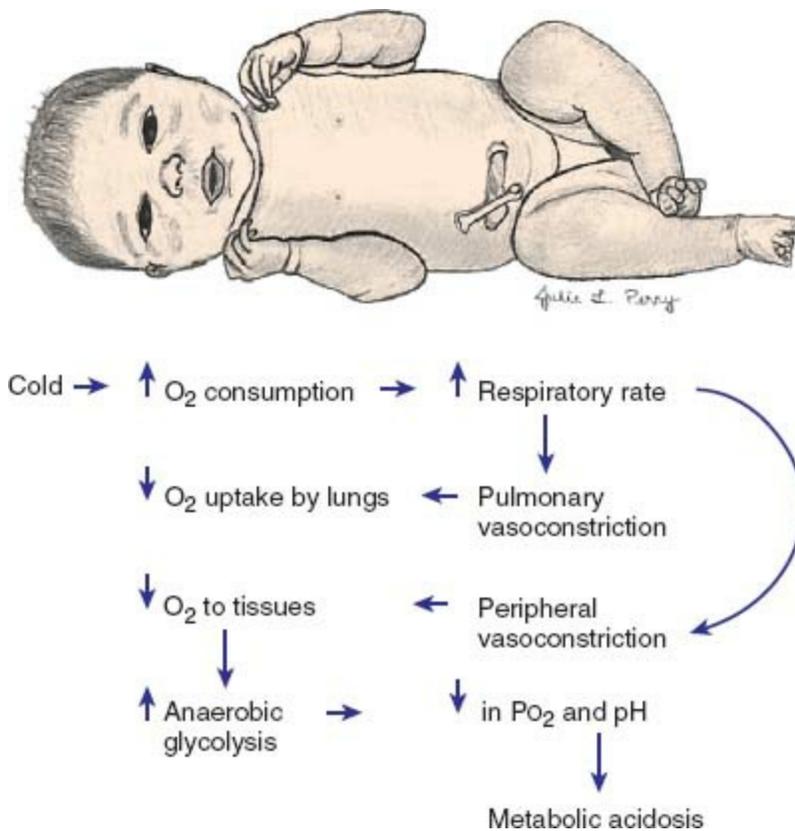
## **G.** Neurological system

1. Newborn head size is proportionally larger than that of an adult because of cephalocaudal development.
2. Myelination of nerve fibers is incomplete, so primitive reflexes are present.
3. Fontanelles are open to allow for brain growth.
4. Assess for abnormal head size and a bulging or depressed anterior fontanel.
5. Measure and graph the head circumference in relation to chest circumference and length.
6. Assess the newborn's movements, noting symmetry, posture, and abnormal movements.

7. Observe for jitteriness, marked tremors, and seizures. ▲
8. Test the newborn's reflexes.
9. Assess for lethargy.
10. Assess pitch of cry.

## H. Thermal regulatory system ▲

1. Prevent cold stress (Fig. 34-3).



**FIGURE 34-3** Effects of cold stress. When a newborn is stressed by cold, oxygen consumption increases, and pulmonary and peripheral vasoconstriction occur, decreasing oxygen uptake by the lungs and oxygen delivery to the tissues; anaerobic glycolysis increases; and there is a decrease in  $PO_2$  and pH, leading to metabolic acidosis. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

2. Newborns do not shiver to produce heat.
3. Newborns have brown fat deposits, which produce heat.
4. Prevent heat loss resulting from evaporation by keeping the newborn dry and well wrapped with a blanket.
5. Prevent heat loss resulting from radiation by keeping the newborn away from cold objects and outside walls.
6. Prevent heat loss resulting from convection by shielding the newborn from drafts.
7. Prevent heat loss resulting from conduction by performing all treatments on a warm, padded surface.
8. Keep the room temperature warm.
9. Take the newborn's axillary temperature every hour for the first 4 hours of life, every 4 hours for the remainder of the first 24 hours, and then every shift (as per agency protocol).

 Cold stress causes oxygen consumption and energy to be diverted from maintaining normal brain cell function and cardiac function, resulting in serious metabolic and physiological conditions.

## I. Reflexes

1. Sucking and rooting
  - a. Touch the newborn's lip, cheek, or corner of the mouth with a nipple.
  - b. The newborn turns the head toward the nipple, opens the mouth, takes hold of the nipple, and sucks.
  - c. Rooting reflex usually disappears after 3 to 4 months, but may persist for 1 year.

## 2. Swallowing reflex

- a. Swallowing reflex occurs spontaneously after sucking and obtaining fluids.
- b. Newborn swallows in coordination with sucking without gagging, coughing, or vomiting.

## 3. Tonic neck or fencing

- a. While the newborn is falling asleep or sleeping, gently and quickly turn the head to one side.
- b. As the newborn faces the left side, the left arm and leg extend outward while the right arm and leg flex.
- c. When the head is turned to the right side, the right arm and leg extend outward while the left arm and leg flex.
- d. Response usually disappears within 3 to 4 months.

## 4. Palmar-plantar grasp

- a. Place a finger in the palm of the newborn's hand and then place a finger at the base of the toes.
- b. The newborn's fingers curl around the examiner's fingers, and the newborn's toes curl downward.
- c. Palmar response lessens within 3 to 4 months.
- d. Plantar response lessens within 8 months.

## 5. Moro reflex

- a. Hold the newborn in a semisitting position and then allow the head and trunk to fall backward to at least a 30-degree angle.

- b.** The newborn assumes sharp extension and abduction of the arms with the thumbs and forefingers in a “C” position; this is followed by flexion and adduction to an “embrace” position (legs follow a similar pattern).
- c.** The Moro reflex is present at birth and is absent by 6 months of age if neurological maturation is not delayed.
- d.** A body jerk motion may be the response between 8 and 18 weeks.
- e.** A persistent response lasting more than 6 months may indicate a neurological abnormality.

#### **6. Startle reflex**

- a.** The response is best elicited if the newborn is at least 24 hours old.
- b.** The examiner makes a loud noise or claps hands to elicit the response.
- c.** The newborn’s arms adduct while the elbows flex.
- d.** The hands stay clenched.
- e.** The reflex should disappear within 4 months.

#### **7. Pull-to-sit response**

- a.** Pull the newborn up by the wrist while the newborn is in the supine position.
- b.** The head lags until the newborn is in an upright position, and then the head is level with the chest and shoulders momentarily before falling forward.
- c.** The head then lifts for a few minutes.
- d.** The response depends on the newborn’s general muscle tone and condition and on maturity level.

#### **8. Babinski sign: Plantar reflex**

- a. Beginning at the heel of the foot, use a finger to stroke gently upward along the lateral aspect of the sole, and then move the finger along the ball of the foot.
- b. The newborn's toes hyperextend while the big toe dorsiflexes.
- c. The reflex disappears after the newborn is 1 year old.
- d. Absence of this reflex indicates the need for a neurological examination.

#### 9. Stepping or walking

- a. Hold the newborn in a vertical position, allowing one foot to touch a table surface.
- b. The newborn simulates walking, alternately flexing and extending the feet.
- c. The reflex is usually present for 3 to 4 months.

#### 10. Crawling

- a. Place the newborn on the abdomen
- b. The newborn begins making crawling movements with the arms and legs.
- c. The reflex usually disappears after about 6 weeks.

### IV. Newborn Safety ▲

#### A. Newborn identification

1. Information bracelets are applied to the mother and newborn immediately after birth and before the mother and newborn are separated; in addition, identification pictures of the newborn and footprints from the newborn may be obtained before the newborn leaves the mother's side in the delivery room.
2. The bracelets include name, sex, date, time of birth, and identification numbers.
3. Some agencies use identification bracelets that have radiofrequency transmitters

that set off alarms if the newborn is removed from a certain area.

4. Agencies also conduct unit and hospital-wide drills to prevent newborn abductions.

## B. Newborn abduction

1. The mother is taught to check the identification of any person who comes to remove the infant from her room and is taught other precautions to prevent newborn abduction (nurses must be wearing photo identification or some other security badge) (Box 34-1).

### **BOX 34-1** Precautions to Prevent Infant Abduction

All personnel must wear identification that is easily visible at all times.

Teach parents to allow only hospital staff with proper identification to take their infants from them.

Question anyone with a newborn near an exit or in an unusual part of the facility.

Never leave a newborn unattended.

Teach the parents that the newborn must be observed at all times.

When the newborn is in the mother's room, position the crib away from the doorway.

Teach the parents home safety precautions; suggest that the parents not place announcements in the paper or signs in their yard that might alert an abductor that a new infant is in the home.

2. Closed-circuit televisions, code-alert bands, computer monitoring systems, or

other monitoring systems may be used in some agencies.

3. The newborn is wheeled in a bassinette, not carried in a staff member's arms.

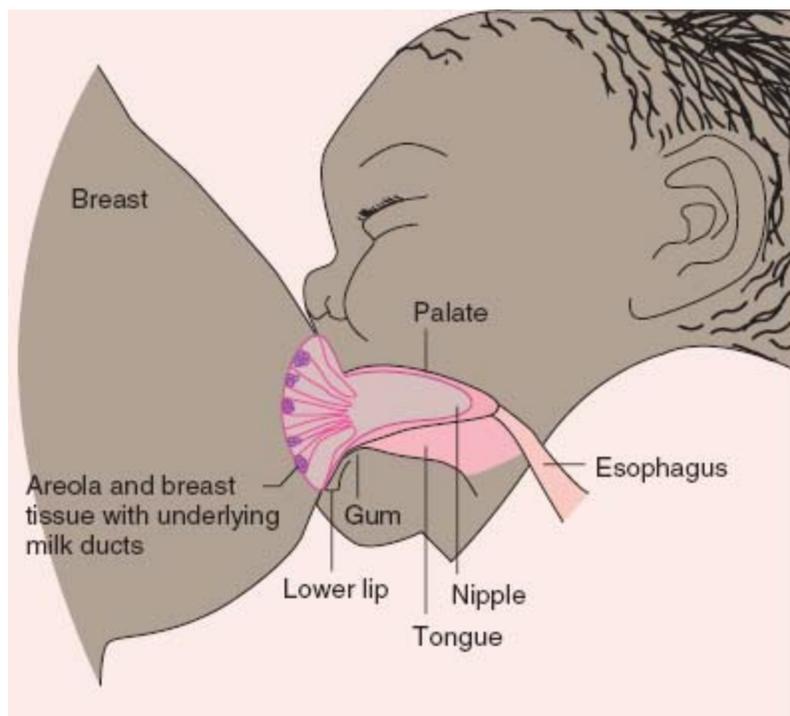
## V. Parent Teaching ▲

### A. Formula feeding

1. Teach sterilization techniques if the water supply is located in areas where the purification process of the water is questionable.
2. Remind the mother not to heat the bottle of formula in a microwave oven.
3. Inform the mother that formula is a sufficient diet for the first 4 to 6 months.
4. Assess the mother's ability to burp the newborn.

### B. Breast-feeding

1. Assess the newborn's ability to attach to the mother's breast and suck (Fig. 34-4).



**FIGURE 34-4** Correct attachment (latch-on) of a newborn at breast. (From Perry S,

Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

2. Teach the mother how to pump her breasts and how to store breast milk properly.
3. Inform the mother that breast milk is a sufficient diet for the first 4 to 6 months.
4. Give the mother the phone numbers of local organizations that offer support to breast-feeding mothers.

### C. Bathing

1. Bathe the newborn in a warm room before feeding.
2. Have all equipment for bathing available.
3. Use a mild soap (not on the face).
4. Proceed from the cleanest area to the dirtiest.
5. Clean eyes from the inner canthus outward.
6. Special care should be taken to clean under the folds of the neck, underarms, groin, and genitals.
7. Make bath time enjoyable for the newborn and the mother.

### D. Clothing

1. Assess diaper and clothing needs for the newborn with the mother.
2. Instruct the mother that the newborn's head should be covered in cold weather to prevent heat loss.
3. Instruct the mother to layer the newborn's clothing in cooler weather.
4. To be comfortable, the newborn should be dressed in one more layer of clothing than what the parents are wearing.

**E. Cord care:** See earlier for cord care, “Body Systems Assessment and Interventions.”

**F. Circumcision:** See earlier for circumcision care, “Body Systems Assessment and Interventions.”

**G. Uncircumcised newborn**

1. Inform the mother that the foreskin and glans are two similar layers of cells that separate from each other and that the separation process normally is complete by 3 years of age, although the layers can remain adhered until puberty.
2. Instruct the mother not to pull back the foreskin, but to allow natural separation to occur.
3. Inform the mother that as the process of separation occurs, sloughed cells build up between the layers of the foreskin and the glans, and that when retraction occurs, daily gentle washing of the glans with soap and water is sufficient to maintain adequate cleanliness.

## **VI. Preterm Newborn**

**A. Description**

1. An infant born before 37 weeks of gestation
2. Primary concern relates to immaturity of all body systems ▲

**B. Assessment**

1. Respirations are irregular with periods of apnea.
2. Body temperature is below normal.
3. The newborn has poor suck and swallow reflexes.

4. Bowel sounds are diminished.
5. Urinary output is increased or decreased.
6. Extremities are thin, with minimal creasing on soles and palms.
7. The newborn extends extremities and does not maintain flexion.
8. Lanugo, on skin and in the hair on the newborn's head, is present in woolly patches.
9. Skin is thin, with visible blood vessels and minimal subcutaneous fat pads.
10. Skin may appear jaundiced.
11. Testes are undescended in boys.
12. Labia are narrow in girls.

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs every 2 to 4 hours.
2. Maintain airway and cardiopulmonary functions.
3. Administer oxygen and humidification as prescribed.
4. Monitor intake and output and electrolyte balance.
5. Monitor daily weight.
6. Maintain the newborn in a warming device.
7. Avoid exposure to infections.
8. Provide the newborn with appropriate stimulation, such as touch and cuddling.

## VII. Postterm Newborn

A. Description: Infant born after 42 weeks of gestation

## B. Assessment

1. Hypoglycemia
2. Parchment-like skin (dry and cracked) without lanugo
3. Long fingernails, extended over ends of fingers
4. Profuse scalp hair
5. Long and thin body
6. Wasting of fat and muscle in extremities
7. Meconium staining possibly present on nails and umbilical cord

## C. Interventions

1. Provide normal newborn care.
2. Monitor for hypoglycemia. ▲
3. Maintain newborn's temperature.
4. Monitor for meconium aspiration.

## VIII. Small for Gestational Age

A. Description: **Newborn** who is plotted at or below the 10th percentile on the intrauterine growth curve

## B. Assessment

1. Fetal distress
2. Decreased or elevated body temperature
3. Physical abnormalities
4. Hypoglycemia

## 5. Signs of polycythemia

- a. Ruddy appearance
- b. Cyanosis
- c. Jaundice

## 6. Signs of infection

## 7. Signs of aspiration of meconium

### C. Interventions

- 1. Maintain airway and cardiopulmonary function. ▲
- 2. Maintain body temperature.
- 3. Observe for signs of respiratory distress.
- 4. Monitor for infection and initiate measures to prevent sepsis.
- 5. Monitor blood glucose levels and for signs of hypoglycemia.
- 6. Initiate early feedings and monitor for signs of aspiration.
- 7. Provide stimulation (e.g., touch and cuddling).

## IX. Large for Gestational Age

A. Description: **Newborn** who is plotted at or above the 90th percentile on the intrauterine growth curve

### B. Assessment

- 1. Birth trauma or injury
- 2. Respiratory distress
- 3. Hypoglycemia

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs and for respiratory distress. ▲
2. Monitor blood glucose levels and for signs of hypoglycemia.
3. Initiate early feedings.
4. Monitor for infection and initiate measures to prevent sepsis.
5. Provide stimulation, such as touch and cuddling.

## X. Respiratory Distress Syndrome ▲

A. Description: Serious lung disorder caused by immaturity and inability to produce **surfactant**, resulting in hypoxia and acidosis

### B. Assessment

1. Respiratory distress; can include tachypnea, nasal flaring, expiratory grunting, retractions, seesaw respirations, decreased breath sounds, apnea
2. Pallor and cyanosis
3. Hypothermia
4. Poor muscle tone

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor color, respiratory rate, and degree of effort in breathing.
2. Maintain airway and cardiopulmonary function and support respirations as prescribed.
3. Monitor arterial blood gases and oxygen saturation levels as prescribed (arterial blood gases from umbilical artery).

4. Monitor arterial blood gases so that oxygen administered to the newborn is at the lowest possible concentration necessary to maintain adequate arterial oxygenation.
5. Any premature **newborn** who required oxygen support should be scheduled for an eye examination before discharge to assess for retinal damage.
6. Suction every 2 hours or more often as necessary.
7. Position the newborn on the side or back, with the neck slightly extended.
8. Administer respiratory therapy (percussion and vibration) as prescribed; use padded small plastic cup or small oxygen mask for percussion; use padded electric toothbrush for vibration.
9. Provide nutrition.
10. Support bonding.
11. Prepare parents for short-term to long-term period of oxygen dependency if necessary.
12. Encourage the mother to pump the breasts for future breast-feeding if she so desires.
13. Encourage as much parental participation in the newborn's care as the condition allows.

 Prepare to administer surfactant replacement therapy (instilled into the endotracheal tube) to a newborn with respiratory distress syndrome.

## **XI. Meconium Aspiration Syndrome**

## A. Description

1. Occurs in term or postterm **newborns**
2. Exact etiology is unknown, but the release of meconium into the **amniotic fluid** is thought to be related to a stressful fetal event initiating a biochemical chain of events.
3. Aspiration can occur in utero or with the first breath.

## B. Assessment ▲

1. Respiratory distress is present at birth; tachypnea, cyanosis, retractions, nasal flaring, grunting, crackles, and rhonchi may be present.
2. The newborn's nails, skin, and umbilical cord may be stained a yellow-green color.

## C. Interventions

1. Suctioning must be done immediately after the head is delivered and before the first breath is taken; vocal cords should be viewed to see if the airway is clear before stimulation and crying. ▲
2. Newborns with severe meconium aspiration syndrome may benefit from extracorporeal membrane oxygenation; this therapy uses a modified heart-lung machine and provides oxygen to the circulation, allowing the lungs to rest and decreasing pulmonary hypertension and hypoxemia in some conditions, such as meconium aspiration.

## **XII. Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia**

## A. Description

1. This chronic pulmonary condition affects **newborns** who have experienced respiratory failure or have been oxygen-dependent for more than 28 days. ▲
2. X-ray findings are abnormal, indicating areas of overinflation and atelectasis.

## B. Assessment

1. Tachypnea
2. Tachycardia
3. Retractions
4. Nasal flaring
5. Labored breathing
6. Crackles and decreased air movement
7. Occasional expiratory wheezing

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor airway and cardiopulmonary function; provide oxygen therapy.
2. Fluid restriction may be prescribed.
3. Medications include **surfactant** at delivery, diuretics, corticosteroids, and bronchodilators.

## XIII. Transient Tachypnea of the Newborn

### A. Description

1. Respiratory condition that results from incomplete reabsorption of fetal lung fluid in full-term **newborns** ▲

2. Usually disappears within 24 to 48 hours

**B. Assessment**

1. Tachypnea
2. Expiratory grunting
3. Retractions
4. Nasal flaring
5. Fluid breath sounds per auscultation
6. Cyanosis

**C. Interventions**

1. Supportive care
2. Oxygen administration

**XIV. Intraventricular Hemorrhage**

**A. Description**

1. Bleeding within the ventricles of the brain
2. Risk factors include prematurity, respiratory distress syndrome, trauma, and asphyxia.

**B. Assessment:** Diminished or absent Moro reflex, lethargy, apnea, poor feeding, high-pitched shrill cry, seizure activity

**C. Interventions:** Supportive treatment

**XV. Retinopathy of Prematurity**

**A. Description**

1. Vascular disorder involving gradual replacement of retina by fibrous tissue and blood vessels
  2. Primarily caused by prematurity and use of supplemental oxygen (> 30 days) ▲
- B. Assessment:** Leukocoria (white tissue on the retrolental space), vitreous hemorrhage, myopia, strabismus, cataracts (check for red reflex)
- C. Interventions:** Laser photocoagulation surgery

## **XVI. Necrotizing Enterocolitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Acute inflammatory disease of the gastrointestinal tract
2. Usually occurs 4 to 10 days after birth, and is most frequently seen in preterm newborns

**B. Assessment:** Increased abdominal girth, decreased or absent bowel sounds, bowel loop distention, vomiting, bile-stained emesis, abdominal tenderness, occult blood in stool ▲

### **C. Interventions**

1. Hold oral feedings.
2. Insert oral gastric tube to decompress the abdomen.
3. Intravenous antibiotics
4. Intravenous fluids to correct fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base imbalances
5. Surgery if indicated

## **XVII. Hyperbilirubinemia** ▲

## A. Description

1. Elevated serum bilirubin level
2. Evaluation is indicated when serum levels are greater than 12 mg/dL in a term **newborn**.
3. Therapy is aimed at preventing kernicterus, which results in permanent neurological damage resulting from the deposition of bilirubin in the brain cells.

## B. Assessment

1. Jaundice
2. Elevated serum bilirubin levels
3. Enlarged liver
4. Poor muscle tone
5. Lethargy
6. Poor sucking reflex

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor for the presence of jaundice; assess skin and sclera for jaundice.
  - a. Examine the newborn's skin color in natural light.
  - b. Press a finger over a bony prominence or tip of the newborn's nose to press out capillary blood from the tissues.
  - c. Note that jaundice starts at the head first and spreads to the chest, abdomen, arms and legs, and hands and feet, which are the last to be jaundiced.
2. Keep the newborn well hydrated to maintain blood volume.
3. Facilitate early, frequent feeding to hasten passage of meconium and encourage

excretion of bilirubin.

4. Report to the HCP any signs of jaundice in the first 24 hours of life and any abnormal signs and symptoms.
5. Prepare for phototherapy, and monitor the newborn closely during the treatment.

**⚠** At any serum bilirubin level, the appearance of jaundice during the first day of life indicates a pathological process.

## D. Phototherapy

### 1. Description

- a. Phototherapy is use of light to reduce serum bilirubin levels in the newborn.
- b. Adverse effects from treatment, such as eye damage, dehydration, or sensory deprivation, can occur.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Expose as much of the newborn's skin as possible.
- b. Cover the genital area, and monitor the genital area for skin irritation or breakdown.
- c. Cover the newborn's eyes with eye shields or patches; ensure that the eyelids are closed when shields or patches are applied.
- d. Remove the shields or patches at least once per shift (during a feeding time) to inspect the eyes for infection or irritation and to allow for eye contact and bonding with the parents.
- e. Measure the lamp energy output to ensure efficacy of the treatment (done with a special device known as a *photometer*).

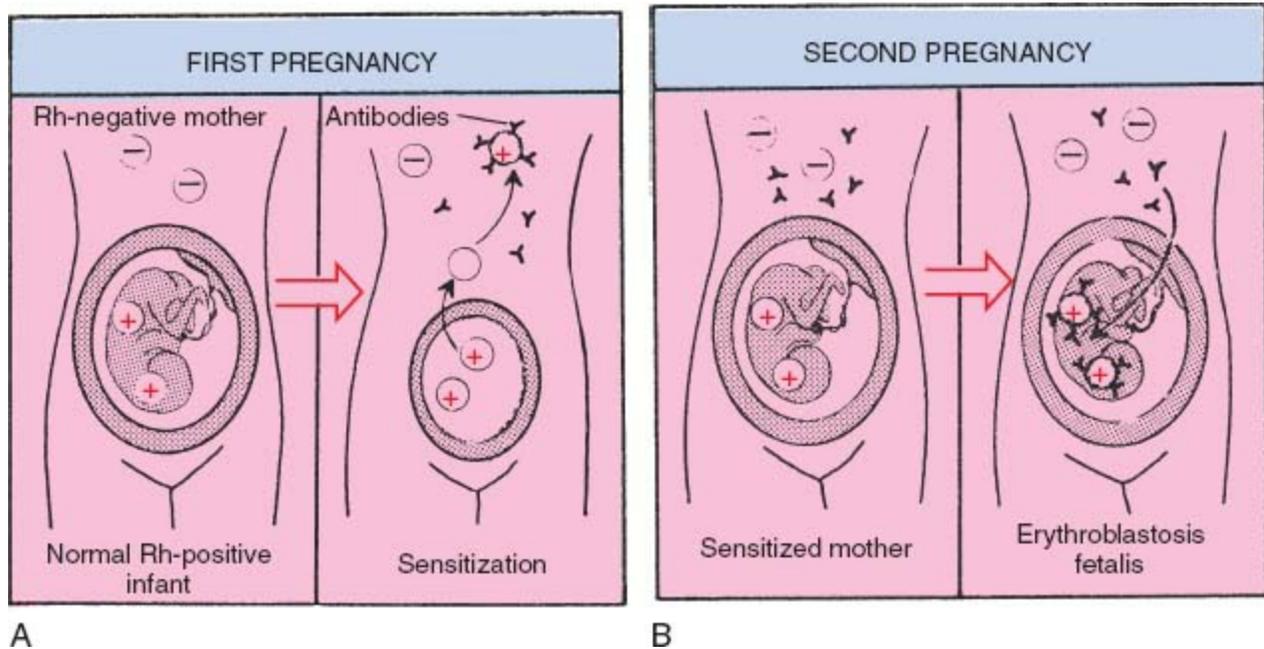
- f. Monitor skin temperature closely.
- g. Increase fluids to compensate for water loss.
- h. Expect loose green stools.
- i. Monitor the newborn's skin color with the fluorescent light turned off, every 4 to 8 hours.
- j. Monitor the skin for bronze baby syndrome, a grayish brown discoloration of the skin; notify the HCP because this may indicate a complication of phototherapy.
- k. Reposition the newborn every 2 hours; monitor the newborn closely.
- l. Provide stimulation.
- m. After treatment, continue monitoring for signs of hyperbilirubinemia because rebound elevations are normal after therapy is discontinued.
- n. Turn off the phototherapy lights before drawing a blood specimen for serum bilirubin levels, and do not leave the blood specimen uncovered under fluorescent lights (to prevent the breakdown of bilirubin in the blood specimen).

## **XVIII. Erythroblastosis Fetalis**

### **A. Description**

1. Erythroblastosis fetalis is the destruction of red blood cells that results from an antigen-antibody reaction.
2. The disorder is characterized by hemolytic anemia or hyperbilirubinemia.
3. Exchange of fetal and maternal blood occurs primarily when the placenta

separates at birth (Fig. 34-5).



**FIGURE 34-5** Development of maternal sensitization to Rh antigens. **A**, Fetal Rh-positive erythrocytes enter the maternal system. Maternal anti-Rh antibodies are formed. **B**, Anti-Rh antibodies cross the placenta and attack fetal erythrocytes. (Modified from Seeley RR, Stephens TD, Tate P: *Anatomy and physiology*, ed 3, St. Louis, 1995, Mosby.)

4. Antibodies are harmless to the mother, but attach to the erythrocytes in the fetus and cause hemolysis.
5. Sensitization is rare with the first pregnancy.
6. ABO incompatibility is usually less severe.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Anemia
2. Jaundice that develops rapidly after birth and before 24 hours

### 3. Edema

## C. Interventions

1. Administer Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) to the mother during the first 72 hours after **delivery** if the Rh-negative mother delivers an Rh-positive fetus but remains unsensitized. ▲
2. Assist with exchange transfusion after birth or intrauterine transfusion as prescribed.
3. The **newborn's** blood is replaced with Rh-negative blood to stop the destruction of the newborn's red blood cells; the Rh-negative blood is replaced with the newborn's own blood gradually.
4. Reassure the mother that the newborn will experience no untoward effects from the condition.

## XIX. Sepsis

**A. Description:** Generalized infection resulting from the presence of bacteria in the blood, such as Group B streptococcal infection

### **B. Assessment**

1. Pallor
2. Tachypnea, tachycardia
3. Poor feeding
4. Abdominal distention
5. Temperature instability

## C. Interventions

1. Assess for periods of apnea or irregular respirations.
2. If apnea is present, stimulate by gently rubbing the chest or foot.
3. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
4. Monitor vital signs; assess for fever.
5. Maintain warmth in a radiant warmer.
6. Provide isolation as necessary.
7. Monitor intake and output, and obtain daily weight.
8. Monitor for diarrhea.
9. Assess feeding and sucking reflex, which may be poor.
10. Assess for jaundice.
11. Assess for irritability and lethargy.
12. Administer antibiotics as prescribed, and observe carefully for toxicity because a newborn's liver and kidneys are immature.

## XX. TORCH Infections

### A. Description

1. TORCH infections are infections that occur in the fetus or **newborn**.
2. Infection is caused by one of the following:
  - a. *Toxoplasmosis*
  - b. *Other infections such as gonorrhea, syphilis, varicella, hepatitis B, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), or human parvovirus B19*

c. Rubella

d. Cytomegalovirus

e. Herpes simplex virus

**B. Infections (Table 34-5)**

**TABLE 34-5 Infections Included in TORCH Syndrome**

Infection	Characteristics and Description
Toxoplasmosis Caused by protozoan infection	Produces no serious effects in mother Organism can be transmitted to fetus Infection can result in severe physical, developmental abnormalities Common carriers include cat feces, raw beef
Other infections	Can include syphilis, gonorrhea, varicella, hepatitis B, HIV, human parvovirus B19
Rubella	Systemic viral infection Rubella causes congenital rubella syndrome—includes congenital heart disease, cataracts, growth retardation, and pneumonia if mother becomes infected within first trimester Deafness and some learning disabilities can occur if mother becomes infected during first trimester
Cytomegalovirus	Viral infection that persists in the body indefinitely; has periods of reactivation without symptoms Can infect fetus or newborn during delivery or after birth through breast milk, blood transfusions, or contact with infected secretions May cause microcephaly, blindness, deafness, mental and motor retardation
Herpes simplex virus	Sexually transmitted infection Has periods of reactivation Newborn commonly infected during delivery by direct contact with lesions in genital tract Can cause neurological impairment or death

*HIV*, Human immunodeficiency virus.

**XXI. Syphilis**

**A. Description**

1. Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection.
2. Congenital syphilis can result in premature delivery, skin lesions, and abnormal skeletal development.

3. The causative organism, *Treponema pallidum*, a spirochete, is able to cross the **placenta** throughout pregnancy and infect the fetus, usually after 18 weeks' gestation.
4. Risks include preterm birth, stillbirth, and low birth weight.
5. Congenital effects are irreversible and may include central nervous system damage and hearing loss.

#### B. Assessment ▲

1. Hepatosplenomegaly
2. Joint swelling
3. Palmar rash and lesions (Fig. 34-6)



**FIGURE 34-6** Neonatal syphilitic lesions on hands and feet. (From Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby. Courtesy of Mahesh Kotwal, MD, Phoenix, AZ.)

4. Anemia

5. Jaundice
6. Snuffles
7. Ascites
8. Pneumonitis
9. Cerebrospinal fluid changes

#### C. Interventions

1. Monitor the newborn for signs of syphilis.
2. Prepare the newborn for serological testing if prescribed.
3. Administer antibiotic therapy as prescribed.
4. Use standard precautions and drainage and secretion (contact) precautions with suspected congenital syphilis. ▲
5. Wear gloves when handling the newborn until antibiotic therapy has been administered for 24 hours. ▲
6. Provide psychological support to the mother, and provide instructions regarding follow-up care to the newborn.

## XXII. Addicted Newborn

#### A. Description

1. A newborn can become passively addicted to drugs that have passed through the **placenta**.
2. Assessment findings and withdrawal times may vary depending on the specific addicting drug.

3. See also fetal alcohol syndrome.

**B. Assessment** ▲

1. Irritability
2. Tremors
3. Hyperactivity and hypertonicity
4. Respiratory distress
5. Vomiting
6. High-pitched cry
7. Sneezing
8. Fever
9. Diarrhea
10. Excessive sweating
11. Poor feeding
12. Extreme sucking of fists
13. Seizures

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor respiratory and cardiac status frequently.
2. Monitor temperature and vital signs.
3. Hold newborn firmly and close to the body during feeding and when giving care.
4. Initiate seizure precautions (pad sides of the crib).
5. Provide small frequent feedings and allow a longer period for feeding.
6. Monitor intake and output.

7. Administer intravenous hydration if prescribed.
8. Protect the newborn's skin from injury that can be caused by the constant rubbing from hyperactive jitters.
9. Swaddle the newborn.
10. Place the newborn in a quiet room and reduce stimulation.
11. Allow the mother to express feelings such as anxiety and guilt.
12. Refer the mother for treatment of the substance abuse problem.

### **XXIII. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome** ▲

#### **A. Description**

1. Fetal alcohol syndrome is caused by maternal alcohol use during pregnancy.
2. The syndrome is a result of teratogenesis.
3. The syndrome causes mental and physical retardation.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Facial changes ([Fig. 34-7](#))



**FIGURE 34-7** Infant with fetal alcohol syndrome. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

- a. Short palpebral fissures
  - b. Hypoplastic philtrum
  - c. Short, upturned nose
  - d. Flat midface
  - e. Thin upper lip
  - f. Low nasal bridge
2. Abnormal palmar creases
  3. Respiratory distress (apnea, cyanosis)
  4. Congenital heart disorders

5. Irritability and hypersensitivity to stimuli

6. Tremors

7. Poor feeding

8. Seizures

#### C. Interventions

1. Monitor for respiratory distress.

2. Position the newborn on the side to facilitate drainage of secretions.

3. Keep resuscitation equipment at the bedside.

4. Monitor for hypoglycemia.

5. Assess suck and swallow reflex.

6. Administer small feedings and burp well.

7. Suction as necessary.

8. Monitor intake and output.

9. Monitor weight and head circumference.

10. Decrease environmental stimuli.

### **XXIV. Newborn of a Mother with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**

#### A. Description

1. The fetus of a mother who is positive for HIV antibody should be monitored closely throughout the pregnancy.

2. Serial ultrasound screenings should be done during pregnancy to identify intrauterine growth restriction.

3. Weekly nonstress testing after 32 weeks of gestation and biophysical profiles may

be necessary during pregnancy.

4. Newborns born to HIV-positive mothers may test positive because the mother's antibodies may persist in the newborn for 18 months after birth.
5. The use of antiviral medication, the reduction of newborn exposure to maternal blood and body fluids, and the early identification of HIV in pregnancy reduce the risk of transmission to the newborn.
6. All newborns born to HIV-positive mothers acquire maternal antibody to HIV infection, but not all acquire the infection.
7. The newborn may be asymptomatic for the first several months to years of life.

#### **B. Transmission** ▲

1. Across placental barrier
2. During **labor** and delivery
3. Breast milk (breast-feeding not done if the mother is HIV-positive)

#### **C. Assessment**

1. Possibly no outward signs at birth
2. Signs of immunodeficiency
3. Hepatomegaly
4. Splenomegaly
5. Lymphadenopathy
6. Impairment in growth and development

#### **D. Interventions** ▲

1. Clean the newborn's skin carefully before any invasive procedure, such as the

administration of vitamin K, heel sticks, or venipunctures.

2. Circumcisions are not done on newborns with HIV-positive mothers until the newborn's status is determined.
3. Newborn can room with mother.
4. All HIV-exposed newborns should be treated with medication to prevent infection by *Pneumocystis jiroveci*.
5. Antiretroviral medications may be administered as prescribed for the first 6 weeks of life or longer if prescribed.
6. Monitor for early signs of immunodeficiency, such as enlarged spleen or liver, lymphadenopathy, and impairment in growth and development.
7. Newborns at risk for HIV infection should be seen by the HCP at birth and at 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, and 2 months of age.
8. Inform the mother that HIV culture is recommended at 1 month and after 4 months of age.

#### E. Immunizations

1. Immunizations with live vaccines, such as measles-mumps-rubella and varicella, should not be done until the newborn's, infant's, or child's status is confirmed.
2. If infected, live vaccine will not be given.

 Newborns at risk for HIV infection need to receive all recommended immunizations at the regular schedule; live vaccines are not administered until HIV status is determined.

#### XXV. Newborn of a Diabetic Mother

## **A. Description**

1. Infant born to mother with insulin-dependent diabetes or gestational diabetes
2. Hypoglycemia, hyperbilirubinemia, respiratory distress syndrome, hypocalcemia, birth trauma, and congenital anomalies may be present.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Excessive size and weight as a result of excess fat and glycogen in the tissues
2. Edema or puffiness in the face and cheeks
3. Signs of hypoglycemia, such as twitching, apnea, difficulty in feeding, lethargy, seizures, and cyanosis
4. Hyperbilirubinemia
5. Signs of respiratory distress, such as tachypnea, cyanosis, retractions, grunting, and nasal flaring

## **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor for signs of respiratory distress, birth trauma, and congenital anomalies.
2. Monitor bilirubin and blood glucose levels.
3. Monitor weight.
4. Feed the newborn soon after birth with glucose in water, breast milk, or formula as prescribed.
5. Administer glucose intravenously to treat hypoglycemia if necessary and as prescribed.
6. Monitor for edema.
7. Monitor for respiratory distress, tremors, or seizures.

## XXVI. Hypoglycemia ▲

### A. Description

1. Hypoglycemia is an abnormally low level of glucose in the blood ( $< 40$  mg/dL in the first 72 hours of life or  $< 45$  mg/dL after the first 3 days of life).
2. Normal blood glucose level is 40 to 60 mg/dL in a 1-day-old newborn and 50 to 90 mg/dL in a newborn older than 1 day (institutional values for normal newborn blood glucose levels vary).

### B. Assessment

1. Increased respiratory rate
2. Twitching, nervousness, or tremors
3. Unstable temperature
4. Lethargy, apnea, seizures, cyanosis

### C. Interventions

1. Prevent low blood glucose level through early feedings.
2. Administer formula orally or glucose intravenously as prescribed.
3. Monitor blood glucose levels as prescribed.
4. Monitor for feeding problems.
5. Monitor for apneic periods.
6. Assess for shrill or intermittent cries.
7. Evaluate lethargy and poor muscle tone.

## XXVII. Hypothyroidism

**A. Description:** Hypothyroidism is a decrease in the production of thyroid hormone.

**B. Assessment**

1. Protruding or thick tongue
2. Dull look
3. Swollen face
4. Decreased muscle tone

**C. Interventions:** Focus on thyroid replacement

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Slight tremors noted in the newborn may be a common finding, but could also be a sign of hypoglycemia, hypocalcemia, or drug withdrawal. The nurse should immediately determine the presence of tremors so that treatment can be initiated immediately. This finding should also be immediately reported to the health care provider.

### **Reference**

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 846.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

341. The nurse assisted with the delivery of a newborn. Which nursing action is **most effective** in preventing heat loss by evaporation?
1. Warming the crib pad
  2. Closing the doors to the room
  3. Drying the infant with a warm blanket
  4. Turning on the overhead radiant warmer
342. The mother of a newborn calls the clinic and reports that when cleaning the umbilical cord, she noticed that the cord was moist and that discharge was present. What is the **most appropriate** nursing instruction for this mother?
1. Bring the infant to the clinic.
  2. This is a normal occurrence.
  3. Increase the number of times that the cord is cleaned per day.
  4. Monitor the cord for another 24 to 48 hours and call the clinic if the discharge continues.
343. The nurse in a neonatal intensive care nursery (NICU) receives a telephone call to prepare for the admission of a 43-week gestation newborn with Apgar scores of 1 and 4. In planning for admission of this newborn, what is the nurse's **highest priority**?
1. Turn on the apnea and cardiorespiratory monitors.
  2. Connect the resuscitation bag to the oxygen outlet.

3. Set up the intravenous line with 5% dextrose in water.
4. Set the radiant warmer control temperature at 36.5° C (97.6° F).

344. The nurse is assessing a newborn after circumcision and notes that the circumcised area is red with a small amount of bloody drainage. Which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Apply gentle pressure.
2. Reinforce the dressing.
3. Document the findings.
4. Contact the health care provider (HCP).

345. The nurse in a newborn nursery is monitoring a preterm newborn for respiratory distress syndrome. Which assessment findings would alert the nurse to the possibility of this syndrome?

1. Tachypnea and retractions
2. Acrocyanosis and grunting
3. Hypotension and bradycardia
4. Presence of a barrel chest and acrocyanosis

346. The postpartum nurse is providing instructions to the mother of a newborn with hyperbilirubinemia who is being breast-fed. The nurse should provide which **most appropriate** instruction to the mother?

1. Feed the newborn less frequently.
2. Continue to breast-feed every 2 to 4 hours.

3. Switch to bottle-feeding the infant for 2 weeks.
4. Stop breast-feeding and switch to bottle-feeding permanently.

347. The nurse is assessing a newborn who was born to a mother who is addicted to drugs. Which assessment finding would the nurse expect to note during the assessment of this newborn?

1. Lethargy
2. Sleepiness
3. Constant crying
4. Cuddles when being held

348. The nurse notes hypotonia, irritability, and a poor sucking reflex in a full-term newborn on admission to the nursery. The nurse suspects fetal alcohol syndrome and is aware that which additional sign would be consistent with this syndrome?

1. Length of 19 inches
2. Abnormal palmar creases
3. Birth weight of 6 lb, 14 oz
4. Head circumference appropriate for gestational age

349. The nurse is preparing a plan of care for a newborn with fetal alcohol syndrome. The nurse should include which **priority** intervention in the plan of care?

1. Allow the newborn to establish own sleep-rest pattern.
2. Maintain the newborn in a brightly lighted area of the nursery.
3. Encourage frequent handling of the newborn by staff and parents.

4. Monitor the newborn's response to feedings and weight gain pattern.

350. The nurse administers erythromycin ointment (0.5%) to the eyes of a newborn and the mother asks the nurse why this is performed. Which explanation is **best** for the nurse to provide about neonatal eye prophylaxis?

1. Protects the newborn's eyes from possible infections acquired while hospitalized.
2. Prevents cataracts in the newborn born to a woman who is susceptible to rubella.
3. Minimizes the spread of microorganisms to the newborn from invasive procedures during labor.
4. Prevents an infection called ophthalmia neonatorum from occurring after delivery in a newborn born to a woman with an untreated gonococcal infection.

351. The nurse is preparing to care for a newborn receiving phototherapy. Which interventions should be included in the plan of care? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Avoid stimulation.
2. Decrease fluid intake.
3. Expose all of the newborn's skin.
4. Monitor skin temperature closely.
5. Reposition the newborn every 2 hours.
6. Cover the newborn's eyes with eye shields or patches.

**352.** The nurse develops a plan of care for a woman with human immunodeficiency virus infection and her newborn. The nurse should include which intervention in the plan of care?

1. Monitoring the newborn's vital signs routinely
2. Maintaining standard precautions at all times while caring for the newborn
3. Initiating referral to evaluate for blindness, deafness, learning problems, or behavioral problems
4. Instructing the breast-feeding mother regarding the treatment of the nipples with nystatin ointment

**353.** The nurse is planning care for a newborn of a mother with diabetes mellitus.

What is the **priority** nursing consideration for this newborn?

1. Developmental delays because of excessive size
2. Maintaining safety because of low blood glucose levels
3. Choking because of impaired suck and swallow reflexes
4. Elevated body temperature because of excess fat and glycogen

**354.** Which statement reflects a new mother's understanding of the teaching about the prevention of newborn abduction?

1. "I will place my baby's crib close to the door."
2. "Some health care personnel won't have name badges."
3. "It's OK to allow the unlicensed assistive personnel to carry my newborn to the nursery."

4. “I will ask the nurse to attend to my infant if I am napping and my husband is not here.”

355. The nurse prepares to administer a vitamin K injection to a newborn, and the mother asks the nurse why her infant needs the injection. What **best** response should the nurse provide?

1. “Your newborn needs vitamin K to develop immunity.”
2. “The vitamin K will protect your newborn from being jaundiced.”
3. “Newborns have sterile bowels, and vitamin K promotes the growth of bacteria in the bowel.”
4. “Newborns are deficient in vitamin K, and this injection prevents your newborn from bleeding.”

## ANSWERS

341. 3

**Rationale:** Evaporation of moisture from a wet body dissipates heat along with the moisture. Keeping the newborn dry by drying the wet newborn at birth prevents hypothermia via evaporation. Hypothermia caused by conduction occurs when the newborn is on a cold surface, such as a cold pad or mattress, and heat from the newborn’s body is transferred to the colder object (direct contact). Warming the crib pad assists in preventing hypothermia by conduction. Convection occurs as air moves across the newborn’s skin from an open door and heat is transferred to the air. Radiation occurs when heat from the newborn radiates to a colder surface (indirect contact).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most effective* in the query. Recalling that evaporation of

moisture from a wet body dissipates heat along with the moisture will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Methods of **heat loss** in a newborn

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Thermoregulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 250.

**342. 1**

**Rationale:** Symptoms of umbilical cord infection are moistness, oozing, discharge, and a reddened base around the cord. If symptoms of infection occur, the client should be instructed to notify a health care provider (HCP). If these symptoms occur, antibiotics may be necessary. Options 2, 3, and 4 are inappropriate nursing interventions for the description given in the question.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the clinical manifestations provided in the question to assist in answering. Noting the word *discharge* in the question will assist in directing you to the option that indicates that the newborn needs to be seen by the HCP.

**Review:** Interventions related to **cord care**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 597.

343. 2

**Rationale:** The highest priority on admission to the nursery for a newborn with a low Apgar score is the airway, which would involve preparing respiratory resuscitation equipment and oxygen. The remaining options are also important, although they are of lower priority. The newborn would be placed on an apnea and cardiorespiratory monitor. Setting up an intravenous line with 5% dextrose in water would provide circulatory support. The radiant warmer would provide an external heat source, which is necessary to prevent further respiratory distress.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *highest priority*. This question asks you to prioritize care on the basis of information about a newborn's condition. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. A method of planning for airway support is to have the resuscitation bag connected to an oxygen source.

**Review:** Care of the newborn with low **Apgar scores**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care: Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 570-572.

344. 3

**Rationale:** The penis is normally red during the healing process after circumcision. A yellow exudate may be noted in 24 hours, and this is part of normal healing. The nurse would expect that the area would be red with a small

amount of bloody drainage. Only if the bleeding were excessive would the nurse apply gentle pressure with a sterile gauze. If bleeding cannot be controlled, the blood vessel may need to be ligated, and the nurse would notify the health care provider. Because the findings identified in the question are normal, the nurse would document the assessment findings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and focus on the assessment findings in the question. This should assist in directing you to the correct option because this is a normal occurrence after circumcision.

**Review:** Expected findings after **circumcision**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Development

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 588.

**345. 1**

**Rationale:** A newborn infant with respiratory distress syndrome may present with clinical signs of cyanosis, tachypnea or apnea, nasal flaring, chest wall retractions, or audible grunts. Acrocyanosis, a bluish discoloration of the hands and feet, is associated with immature peripheral circulation, and is common in the first few hours of life. Options 2, 3, and 4 do not indicate clinical signs of respiratory distress syndrome.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of respiratory distress syndrome. Recalling that acrocyanosis may be a normal sign in a newborn will assist in eliminating options 2 and 4. From the remaining options, you must be familiar with the signs of respiratory distress syndrome. Also, note the relationship between the diagnosis and the

signs noted in the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of **respiratory distress syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 350.

**346. 2**

**Rationale:** Hyperbilirubinemia is an elevated serum bilirubin level. At any serum bilirubin level, the appearance of jaundice during the first day of life indicates a pathological process. Early and frequent feeding hastens the excretion of bilirubin. Breast-feeding should be initiated within 2 hours after birth and every 2 to 4 hours thereafter. The infant should not be fed less frequently. Switching to bottle-feeding for 2 weeks or stopping breast-feeding permanently is unnecessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Options 3 and 4 are **comparable or alike**. These options discourage the continuation of breast-feeding and should be eliminated. From the remaining options, recalling the pathophysiology associated with hyperbilirubinemia will assist you in eliminating option 1.

**Review:** **Hyperbilirubinemia** in the newborn

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Client Education

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 289, 292; Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 538-539.

**347. 3**

**Rationale:** A newborn of a woman using drugs is irritable. The infant is overloaded easily by sensory stimulation. The infant may cry incessantly and be difficult to console. The infant would hyperextend and posture rather than cuddle when being held.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 1 and 2 are **comparable or alike** in that they indicate hypoactivity of the newborn and can be eliminated. From the remaining options, recalling the pathophysiology associated with an infant born to a drug-addicted mother and that the newborn is irritable will assist you in eliminating option 4.

**Review:** Assessment findings for the **newborn of a drug-addicted mother**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 374-375.

**348. 2**

**Rationale:** Fetal alcohol syndrome is caused by maternal alcohol use during pregnancy. Features of newborns diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome include craniofacial abnormalities, intrauterine growth restriction, cardiac abnormalities, abnormal palmar creases, and respiratory distress. Options 1, 3, and 4 are normal assessment findings

in the full-term newborn infant.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge regarding normal assessment findings in the full-term newborn infant to answer this question. Options 1, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and represent normal assessment findings in a full-term newborn.

**Review:** Normal newborn assessment findings and **fetal alcohol syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 378-379.

#### 349. 4

**Rationale:** Fetal alcohol syndrome is caused by maternal alcohol use during pregnancy. A primary nursing goal for the newborn diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome is to establish nutritional balance after delivery. These newborns may exhibit hyperirritability, vomiting, diarrhea, or an uncoordinated sucking and swallowing ability. A quiet environment with minimal stimuli and handling would help establish appropriate sleep-rest cycles in the newborn as well. Options 1, 2, and 3 are inappropriate interventions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Think about the pathophysiology that occurs in a newborn with this condition. Recalling that these newborns may exhibit hyperirritability, vomiting, diarrhea, or an uncoordinated sucking and swallowing ability will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of a newborn with **fetal alcohol syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 383; Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 863.

### 350. 4

**Rationale:** Erythromycin ophthalmic ointment 0.5% is used as a prophylactic treatment for ophthalmia neonatorum, which is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. Preventive treatment of gonorrhea is required by law.

Options 1, 2, and 3 are not the purposes for administering this medication to a newborn infant.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Use knowledge of the purpose of administering erythromycin ophthalmic ointment to a newborn infant. Remember that this is done to prevent ophthalmia neonatorum.

**Review:** Initial **eye prophylaxis** for the newborn infant

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 252.

### ❖ 351. 4, 5, 6

**Rationale:** Phototherapy is the use of intense fluorescent lights to reduce serum bilirubin levels in the newborn.

Adverse effects from treatment, such as eye damage, dehydration, or sensory deprivation, can occur. Interventions include exposing as much of the newborn's skin as possible; however, the genital area is covered. The newborn's eyes are also covered with eye shields or patches, ensuring that the eyelids are closed when shields or patches are applied. The shields or patches are removed at least once per shift to inspect the eyes for infection or irritation and to allow eye contact. The nurse measures the lamp energy output to ensure efficacy of the treatment (done with a special device known as a *photometer*), monitors skin temperature closely, and increases fluids to compensate for water loss. The newborn will have loose green stools and green-colored urine. The newborn's skin color is monitored with the fluorescent light turned off every 4 to 8 hours and is monitored for bronze baby syndrome, a grayish brown discoloration of the skin. The newborn is repositioned every 2 hours, and stimulation is provided. After treatment, the newborn is monitored for signs of hyperbilirubinemia because rebound elevations can occur after therapy is discontinued.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, phototherapy. Recalling that adverse effects from treatment, such as eye damage, dehydration, or sensory deprivation, can occur will assist in determining the correct interventions.

**Review:** Interventions for the newborn receiving **phototherapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 584-585.

352. 2

**Rationale:** An infant born to a mother infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) must be cared for with

strict attention to standard precautions. This prevents the transmission of HIV from the newborn, if infected, to others and prevents transmission of other infectious agents to the possibly immunocompromised newborn. Mothers infected with HIV should not breast-feed. Options 1 and 3 are not associated specifically with the care of a potentially HIV-infected newborn.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike** and are not associated specifically with the care of a potentially HIV-infected newborn. Recalling that HIV-infected mothers should not breast-feed will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of an infant born to a **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)**-infected mother

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 166, 850-851.

**353. 2**

**Rationale:** The newborn of a diabetic mother is at risk for hypoglycemia, so maintaining safety because of low blood glucose levels would be a priority. The newborn would also be at risk for hyperbilirubinemia, respiratory distress, hypocalcemia, and congenital anomalies. Developmental delays, choking, and an elevated body temperature are not expected problems.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Read each option thoroughly and eliminate options 1, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** in that newborns of diabetic mothers are not at risk for these

problems. Also, note the relationship of the word *diabetic* in the question and the word *glucose* in the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing interventions for **newborns of diabetic mothers**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 843-844.

**354. 4**

**Rationale:** Precautions to prevent infant abduction include placing a newborn's crib away from the door, transporting a newborn only in the crib and never carrying the newborn, expecting health care personnel to wear identification that is easily visible at all times, and asking the nurse to attend to the newborn if the mother is napping and no family member is available to watch the newborn (the newborn is never left unattended). If the mother states that she will ask the nurse to watch the newborn while she is sleeping, she has understood the teaching. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect and would indicate that the mother needs further teaching.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, that the client understands precautions to prevent infant abduction. Read each option carefully and select the option that provides protection to the infant. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Precautions to prevent **newborn abduction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 492.

**355. 4**

**Rationale:** Vitamin K is necessary for the body to synthesize coagulation factors. Vitamin K is administered to the newborn to prevent bleeding disorders. Vitamin K promotes liver formation of the clotting factors II, VII, IX, and X. Newborns are vitamin K–deficient because the bowel does not have the bacteria necessary for synthesizing fat-soluble vitamin K. The normal flora in the intestinal tract produces vitamin K. The newborn’s bowel does not support the normal production of vitamin K until bacteria adequately colonize it. The bowel becomes colonized by bacteria as food is ingested. Vitamin K does not promote the development of immunity or prevent the infant from becoming jaundiced.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Because immunity and jaundice are not related to the action of vitamin K, eliminate options 1 and 2. From the remaining options, recall the action of vitamin K to direct you to the correct option. Remember that vitamin K does not promote the growth of bacteria, but is administered to prevent bleeding.

**Review:** The purpose of administering a **vitamin K injection** to a newborn

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

***Priority Concepts:*** Client Education; Clotting

***Reference:*** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 252-253.



## CHAPTER 35

# Maternity and Newborn Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse notes that a pregnant client who has undergone amniocentesis is Rh-negative. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 410.*

### I. Tocolytics

**A.** Description: Tocolytics are medications that produce uterine relaxation and suppress uterine activity in an attempt to halt uterine contractions and prevent preterm birth (Table 35-1).

**TABLE 35-1 Tocolytics**

Medication, Classification, and Actions	Adverse Effects	Nursing Interventions
Indomethacin (Indocin)—prostaglandin inhibitor; relaxes uterine smooth muscle	<i>Maternal</i> —nausea and vomiting, dyspepsia, dizziness  <i>Fetal</i> —premature closure of ductus	Used when other methods fail only if gestational age is < 32 wk  Not used in clients with

	arteriosus  <i>Newborn</i> —bronchopulmonary dysplasia, respiratory distress syndrome, intracranial pressure, necrotizing enterocolitis, hyperbilirubinemia	bleeding potential, peptic ulcer disease, or oligohydramnios Follow agency protocol for administration  Prepare to determine amniotic fluid volume and function of ductus arteriosus before therapy and within 48 hr of discontinuing therapy
Magnesium sulfate—central nervous system depressant; relaxes smooth muscle, including the uterus; used to halt preterm labor contractions; used for preeclamptic clients to prevent seizures	<i>Maternal</i> —depressed respirations, depressed DTRs, hypotension, extreme muscle weakness, flushing, decreased urine output, pulmonary edema, serum magnesium levels > 9 mg/dL <i>Newborn</i> —hypotonia and sleepiness	Always use intravenous controller pump for administration  Follow agency protocol for administration Discontinue infusion and notify health care provider (HCP) if adverse effects occur Monitor for respirations < 12/min, urine output < 100 mL/4 hr (25-30 mL/hr) Monitor DTRs  Monitor magnesium levels and report values outside therapeutic range (4-7.5 mEq/L [5-8 mg/dL]) Keep calcium gluconate available (antidote)
Nifedipine (Procardia, Adalat, Nifedical)—calcium channel blocker; relaxes smooth muscles, including the uterus, by blocking calcium entry	<i>Maternal</i> —tachycardia, hypotension, dizziness, headache, nervousness, facial flushing, fatigue, nausea <i>Newborn</i> —hypotension	Follow agency protocol for administration Avoid use or use cautiously with magnesium sulfate because severe hypotension can occur Monitor for adverse effects
Terbutaline— $\beta$ -adrenergic agonist; relaxes smooth muscles, inhibiting uterine activity and causing bronchodilation	<i>Maternal</i> —tachycardia, palpitations, pulmonary edema, chest pain, myocardial ischemia, hypotension, tremors, hypokalemia, hyperglycemia <i>Newborn</i> —tachycardia, hypotension, ileus, hypocalcemia, hyperbilirubinemia, hyperinsulinemia with hypoglycemia	Monitor for adverse effects and notify HCP if they occur  Teach client and family to monitor for adverse effects and when to notify HCP

*DTRs*, Deep tendon reflexes.

**B. Uses:** To halt uterine contractions and prevent preterm birth

**C. Adverse effects and contraindications**

1. See [Table 35-1](#) for a description of adverse effects.
2. Maternal contraindications include severe preeclampsia and eclampsia, active vaginal bleeding, intrauterine infection, cardiac disease, and medical or obstetric condition that contraindicates continuation of pregnancy.
3. Fetal contraindications include estimated gestational age greater than 37 weeks, cervical dilation greater than 4 cm, fetal demise, lethal fetal anomaly, chorioamnionitis, acute fetal distress, and chronic intrauterine growth restriction.

**D. Interventions for the client receiving tocolytic therapy** ▲

1. Position the client on her side to enhance **placental** perfusion and reduce pressure on the cervix.
2. Monitor maternal vital signs, fetal status, and **labor** status frequently according to agency protocol.
3. Monitor for signs of adverse effects to the medication.
4. Monitor daily weight and input and output status, and provide fluid intake as prescribed.
5. Offer comfort measures and provide psychosocial support to the client and family.
6. See [Table 35-1](#) for interventions specific to each tocolytic medication.

## **II. Magnesium Sulfate** ▲

**A. Description** (see [Table 35-1](#))

1. Magnesium sulfate is a central nervous system depressant and anticonvulsant.
2. The medication causes smooth muscle relaxation.
3. The antidote is calcium gluconate. ▲

#### **B. Uses**

1. Stopping preterm labor to prevent preterm birth
2. Preventing and controlling seizures in preeclamptic and eclamptic clients

#### **C. Adverse effects and contraindications ▲**

1. Magnesium sulfate can cause respiratory depression, depressed reflexes, flushing, hypotension, extreme muscle weakness, decreased urine output, pulmonary edema, and elevated serum magnesium levels.
2. Continuous intravenous infusion increases the risk of magnesium toxicity in the **newborn**.
3. Intravenous administration should not be used for 2 hours preceding **delivery**.
4. Magnesium sulfate may be prescribed for the first 12 to 24 hours postpartum if it is used for preeclampsia.
5. High doses can cause loss of deep tendon reflexes, heart block, respiratory paralysis, and cardiac arrest.
6. The medication is contraindicated in clients with heart block, myocardial damage, or kidney failure.
7. The medication is used with caution in clients with severe kidney impairment.

#### **D. Interventions ▲**

1. Monitor maternal vital signs, especially respirations, every 30 to 60 minutes.

2. Assess renal function and electrocardiogram for cardiac function.
3. Monitor magnesium levels—the target range is 4 to 7.5 mEq/L (5 to 8 mg/dL); if the magnesium level increases, notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Always administer by intravenous infusion via an infusion monitoring device such as a controller pump; carefully monitor the dose being administered, and follow agency protocol for administration.
5. Keep calcium gluconate on hand in case of a magnesium sulfate overdose because calcium gluconate antagonizes the effect of magnesium sulfate.
6. Monitor deep tendon reflexes hourly for signs of developing toxicity.
7. Test the patellar reflex or knee jerk reflex before administering a repeat parenteral dose (used as an indicator of central nervous system depression; suppressed reflex may be a sign of impending respiratory arrest) (Fig. 35-1 and Table 35-2).



**FIGURE 35-1** Patellar reflex, with client's legs hanging freely over end of examining table. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

**TABLE 35-2 Assessing Deep Tendon Reflexes**

Grade	Deep Tendon Reflex Response
0	No response
1	Sluggish or diminished
2	Active or expected response
3	More brisk than expected, slightly hyperactive
4	Brisk, hyperactive, with intermittent or transient clonus

Data from Seidel H, Ball J, Dains J, Flynn J, Solomon B, Stewart R: *Mosby's guide to physical examination*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

8. Patellar reflex must be present and respiratory rate must be greater than 16 breaths/minute (or as designated by agency protocol) before each parenteral dose.
9. Monitor intake and output hourly; output should be maintained at 25 to 30 mL/hour because the medication is eliminated through the kidneys.

 Monitor a client receiving magnesium sulfate intravenously closely for signs of toxicity. Call the HCP if respirations are less than 12 breaths/minute, indicating respiratory depression, or if any other adverse effects occur.

### III. Betamethasone (Celestone) and Dexamethasone

- A. Description: Corticosteroids that increase the production of **surfactant** to accelerate fetal lung maturity and reduce the incidence or severity of respiratory distress syndrome 
- B. Use: For a client in preterm labor between 28 and 32 weeks' gestation whose labor can be inhibited for 48 hours without jeopardizing the mother or fetus 
- C. Adverse effects and contraindications

1. May decrease the mother's resistance to infection
2. Pulmonary edema secondary to sodium and fluid retention can occur.
3. Elevated blood glucose levels can occur in a client with diabetes mellitus.

#### **D. Interventions**

1. Monitor maternal vital signs and lung sounds, and for edema.
2. Monitor mother for signs of infection.
3. Monitor white blood cell count.
4. Monitor blood glucose levels.
5. Administer by deep intramuscular injection.

## **IV. Opioid Analgesics**

### **A. Description**

1. Used to relieve moderate to severe pain associated with **labor**
2. Administered by intramuscular or intravenous route
3. Regular use of opioids during pregnancy may produce withdrawal symptoms in the newborn (irritability, excessive crying, tremors, hyperactive reflexes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, yawning, sneezing, and seizures). ▲
4. Antidotes for opioids ▲
  - a. Naloxone is usually the treatment of choice because it rapidly reverses opioid toxicity; the dose may need to be repeated every few hours until opioid concentrations have decreased to nontoxic levels.
  - b. These medications can cause withdrawal in opioid-dependent clients.

- B. Meperidine hydrochloride (Demerol) and hydromorphone hydrochloride (Dilaudid)**
1. Can cause dizziness, nausea, vomiting, sedation, decreased blood pressure, decreased respirations, diaphoresis, flushed face, urinary retention
  2. May be prescribed to be administered with an antiemetic such as promethazine (Phenergan) to prevent nausea
  3. High dosages may result in respiratory depression, skeletal muscle flaccidity, cold clammy skin, cyanosis, and extreme somnolence progressing to seizures, stupor, and coma.
  4. Used cautiously in clients delivering preterm newborns
  5. Not administered in early labor because it may slow the labor process
  6. Not administered in advanced labor (within 1 hour of expected delivery); if the medication is not adequately removed from the fetal circulation, respiratory depression can occur.
- C. Fentanyl and sufentanil (Sufenta):** Can cause respiratory depression, dizziness, drowsiness, hypotension, urinary retention, and fetal narcosis and distress
- D. Butorphanol tartrate (Stadol) and nalbuphine (Nubain)**
1. Can cause confusion, sedation, sweating, nausea, vomiting, hypotension, sinusoidal-like fetal heart rhythm
  2. Use with caution in a client with preexisting opioid dependency because these medications can precipitate withdrawal symptoms in the client and the newborn.
- E. Interventions** ▲
1. Monitor vital signs, particularly respiratory status; if respirations are 12

breaths/minute or less, withhold the medication and contact the HCP.

2. Monitor the fetal heart rate and characteristics of uterine contractions.
3. Monitor for blood pressure changes (hypotension); maintain the client in a recumbent position (elevate the hip with a wedge pillow or other device).
4. Record the client's response and level of pain relief.
5. Monitor the bladder for distention and retention.
6. Have the antidote naloxone available, especially if delivery is expected to occur during peak drug absorption time.

 Obtain a medication history before the administration of an opioid analgesic. Some medications may be contraindicated if the client has a history of opioid dependency because these medications can precipitate withdrawal symptoms in the client and newborn.

## V. Prostaglandins (Box 35-1)

### BOX 35-1 Prostaglandins

**Prostaglandin  $E_1$ :** Misoprostol (Cytotec) intravaginal tablet

**Prostaglandin  $E_2$ :** Dinoprostone (Cervidil vaginal insert, Prostin E2 vaginal suppository, Prepidil gel)

#### A. Description

1. Ripen the cervix, making it softer and causing it to begin to dilate and efface
2. Stimulate uterine contractions

### 3. Administered vaginally

## B. Uses

1. Preinduction cervical ripening (ripening of the cervix before the induction of labor when the Bishop score is  $\leq 4$ )
2. Induction of labor
3. Induction of abortion (abortifacient agent)

## C. Adverse effects and contraindications ▲

1. Gastrointestinal effects, including diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps
2. Fever, chills, flushing, headache, hypotension
3. Tachysystole ( $\geq 12$  uterine contractions in 20 minutes without an alteration in the fetal heart rate pattern)
4. Hyperstimulation of the **uterus**
5. Fetal passage of meconium
6. Contraindications ([Box 35-2](#))

### **BOX 35-2** Contraindications to the Use of Prostaglandins

- Active cardiac, hepatic, pulmonary, or kidney disease
- Acute pelvic inflammatory disease
- Clients in whom vaginal delivery is not indicated
- Fetal malpresentation
- History of cesarean section or major uterine surgery
- History of difficult labor or traumatic labor

- Hypersensitivity to prostaglandins
- Maternal fever or infection
- Nonreassuring fetal heart rate pattern
- Placenta previa or unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Regular progressive uterine contractions
- Significant cephalopelvic disproportion

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor maternal vital signs, fetal heart rate pattern, and status of pregnancy including indications for cervical ripening or the induction of labor, signs of labor or impending labor, and the Bishop score (see [Chapter 30, Table 30-2](#) for information about the Bishop score).
2. Monitor for adverse effects to the medication.
3. Have the client void before administration of medication and then have her maintain a supine with lateral tilt or side-lying position for 30 to 60 minutes (gel) up to 2 hours (insert) after administration, depending on the medication administered.
4. Treatment is discontinued when the Bishop score is 8 or more (cervix ripens) or an effective contraction pattern is established (three or more contractions in a 10-minute period); in addition, signs of adverse effects indicate that the treatment needs to be discontinued.
5. Follow agency protocol for the induction of labor if cervical ripening has

occurred and labor has not begun; oxytocin (Pitocin) can be initiated if needed 6 to 12 hours after discontinuation of prostaglandin therapy.

## VI. Uterine Stimulants (Oxytocics): Oxytocin (Pitocin) ▲

### A. Description

1. Oxytocin stimulates the smooth muscle of the **uterus** and increases the force, frequency, and duration of uterine contractions.
2. Oxytocin also promotes milk letdown.
3. For induction of labor, oxytocin is administered by the intravenous route (other routes of administration include intranasal and intramuscular).
4. Minimal cervical change usually is noted until the active phase of labor is achieved.

### B. Uses

1. Induces or augments labor
2. Controls postpartum bleeding
3. Promotes milk letdown and facilitates breast-feeding (intranasal route)
4. Manages an incomplete abortion

### C. Adverse effects and contraindications ▲

1. Adverse effects include allergies, dysrhythmias, changes in blood pressure, uterine rupture, and water intoxication; intranasal administration may cause nasal vasoconstriction.
2. Oxytocin may produce uterine hypertonicity, resulting in fetal or maternal adverse effects.

3. High doses may cause hypotension, with rebound hypertension.
4. Postpartum hemorrhage can occur and should be monitored for because the uterus may become atonic when the medication wears off.
5. Oxytocin should not be used in a client who cannot deliver vaginally or in a client with hypertonic uterine contractions; it is also contraindicated in a client with active genital herpes.

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor maternal vital signs (every 15 minutes), especially the blood pressure and heart rate; weight; intake and output; level of consciousness; and lung sounds.
2. Monitor frequency, duration, and force of contractions and resting uterine tone every 15 minutes.
3. Monitor fetal heart rate every 15 minutes, and notify the HCP if significant changes occur; use of an internal fetal scalp electrode may be prescribed.
4. Administered by intravenous infusion via an infusion monitoring device; prescribed additive solution is piggybacked at the port nearest the point of venous insertion (prescribed additive solution may be normal saline, lactated Ringer's, or 5% dextrose in water).
5. Carefully monitor the dose being administered; do not leave the client unattended while the oxytocin is infusing.
6. Administer oxygen if prescribed.
7. Monitor for hypertonic contractions or a nonreassuring fetal heart rate and notify the HCP if these occur (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Steps to Take if Hypertonic Contractions or a Nonreassuring Fetal Heart Rate Occurs during Oxytocin (Pitocin) Infusion

1. Stop the oxytocin (Pitocin) infusion.
2. Turn the client on her side, stay with the client, and ask another nurse to contact the health care provider (HCP).
3. Increase the flow rate of the intravenous solution that does not contain the oxytocin.
4. Administer oxygen, 8 to 10 L/minute, by snug face mask.
5. Assess maternal vital signs; fetal heart rate and patterns; and frequency, duration, and force of contractions.
6. Document the event, actions taken, and the response.

Oxytocin (Pitocin) is a uterine stimulant and stimulates the smooth muscle of the uterus and increases the force, frequency, and duration of uterine contractions. It is administered to induce or augment labor. The presence of hypertonic contractions or a nonreassuring fetal heart rate indicates the need to institute emergency measures to reduce uterine stimulation and increase fetal oxygenation. The nurse would always follow the agency's protocol regarding the procedure to follow in this event.

Keeping the emergency goals of care in mind (to reduce uterine stimulation and increase fetal oxygenation) guides the nurse's actions. The oxytocin infusion needs to be stopped to reduce uterine contractions. The nurse turns the client on her side to increase placental oxygenation. The nurse never leaves a client if an emergency

situation is present; the nurse asks another nurse to contact the HCP. The flow rate of the intravenous solution that does not contain the oxytocin is increased, and oxygen is administered. These actions also facilitate the goals of care. When these emergency actions are taken, the nurse assesses and continuously monitors maternal vital signs; fetal heart rate and patterns; and frequency, duration, and force of contractions. The nurse also implements any additional prescriptions and documents the event, actions taken, and the response.

### ***Reference***

Lowdermilk D, Cashion MC, Perry S, Alden K: *Maternity & women's health care*, ed 10, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, p. 805.

8. Stop the medication if uterine hyperstimulation or a nonreassuring fetal heart rate occurs; turn the client on her side, increase the intravenous rate of the normal saline, and administer oxygen via face mask.
9. Monitor for signs of water intoxication.
10. Have emergency equipment available.
11. Document the dose of the medication and the time the medication was started, increased, maintained, and discontinued; document the client's response.
12. Keep the client and family informed of the client's progress.

## **VII. Medications Used to Manage Postpartum Hemorrhage (Box 35-3)**

**BOX 35-3****Medications Used to Manage Postpartum Hemorrhage**

- Ergonovine maleate
- Methylergonovine (Methergine)
- Oxytocin (Pitocin)
- Prostaglandin F<sub>2α</sub>: Carboprost tromethamine (Hemabate)

**A. Ergot alkaloids****1. Description**

- a. Ergonovine maleate and methylergonovine maleate (Methergine) are ergot alkaloids.
- b. Directly stimulate uterine muscle, increase the force and frequency of contractions, and produce a firm tetanic contraction of the uterus
- c. Can produce arterial vasoconstriction and vasospasm of the coronary arteries
- d. Ergot alkaloids are administered postpartum and are not administered before the delivery of the placenta.

**2. Uses**

- a. Postpartum hemorrhage
- b. Postabortal hemorrhage resulting from atony or involution

**3. Adverse effects and contraindications**

- a. Can cause nausea, uterine cramping, bradycardia, dysrhythmias, myocardial

infarction, and severe hypertension ▲

- b.** High doses are associated with peripheral vasospasm or vasoconstriction, angina, miosis, confusion, respiratory depression, seizures, or unconsciousness; uterine tetany can occur.
- c.** Contraindicated during pregnancy and in clients with significant cardiovascular disease, peripheral vascular disease, or hypertension

#### 4. Interventions ▲

- a.** Monitor maternal vital signs, weight, intake and output, level of consciousness, and lung sounds.
- b.** Monitor the blood pressure closely; the medication produces vasoconstriction, and if an increase in blood pressure is noted, withhold the medication and notify the HCP.
- c.** Monitor uterine contractions (frequency, strength, and duration).
- d.** Assess for chest pain, headache, shortness of breath, itching, pale or cold hands or feet, nausea, diarrhea, or dizziness.
- e.** Assess the extremities for color, warmth, movement, and pain.
- f.** Assess vaginal bleeding.
- g.** Notify the HCP if chest pain or other adverse effects occur.
- h.** Administer analgesics as prescribed; they may be required because the medication produces painful uterine contractions.

**⚠** Check the client's blood pressure before administering an ergot alkaloid. These medications can cause severe hypertension and are contraindicated in a

client with hypertension.

**B. Prostaglandin F<sub>2α</sub> (carboprost tromethamine; Hemabate)**

1. Description: Contracts the uterus
2. Uses: Postpartum hemorrhage
3. Adverse effects and contraindications
  - a. Can cause headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, tachycardia, hypertension
  - b. Contraindicated if the client has asthma
4. Interventions
  - a. Monitor vital signs.
  - b. Monitor vaginal bleeding and uterine tone.

**C. Oxytocin (Pitocin): See Section VI on uterine stimulants**

**VIII. Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) Immune Globulin (RhoGAM, WinRho)**

**A. Description**

1. Prevention of anti-Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) antibody formation is most successful if the medication is administered twice, at 28 weeks of gestation and again within 72 hours after delivery.
2. Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin also should be administered within 72 hours after potential or actual exposure to Rh-positive blood and must be given with each subsequent exposure or potential exposure to Rh-positive blood. ▲

**B. Use: To prevent isoimmunization in Rh-negative clients who are negative for Rh**

antibodies and exposed or potentially exposed to Rh-positive red blood cells by amniocentesis, chorionic villus sampling, transfusion, termination of pregnancy, abdominal trauma, or bleeding during pregnancy or the birth process

**C. Adverse effects and contraindications**

1. Elevated temperature
2. Tenderness at the injection site
3. Contraindicated for Rh-positive clients
4. Contraindicated in clients with a history of systemic allergic reactions to preparations containing human immunoglobulins
5. Not administered to a newborn

**D. Interventions** ▲

1. Administer to the client by intramuscular injection at 28 weeks' gestation and within 72 hours after delivery.
2. Never administer by the intravenous route.
3. Monitor for temperature elevation.
4. Monitor injection site for tenderness.

⚠ Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM, WinRho) is of no benefit when the client has developed a positive antibody titer to the Rh antigen.

**IX. Rubella Vaccine** ▲

- A. Given subcutaneously before hospital discharge to a nonimmune postpartum client
- B. Administered if the rubella titer is less than 1:8
- C. Adverse effects: Transient rash, hypersensitivity

**D.** Contraindicated in a client with a hypersensitivity to eggs

**E.** Interventions

1. Assess for allergy to duck eggs and notify the HCP before administration if an allergy exists.
2. Do not administer if the client or other family members are immunocompromised.

 The client should avoid pregnancy for 1 to 3 months (or as prescribed) after immunization with rubella vaccine. Inform the client about the need for using a contraception method during this time.

## **X. Lung Surfactants**

**A.** Description

1. Lung surfactants replenish surfactant and restore surface activity to the lungs to prevent and treat respiratory distress syndrome.
2. Lung surfactants are administered by the intratracheal route.

**B.** Use: To prevent or treat respiratory distress syndrome in premature newborns

**C.** Adverse effects and contraindications

1. Adverse effects include transient bradycardia and oxygen desaturation; pulmonary hemorrhage, mucus plugging, and endotracheal tube reflux can also occur.
2. Surfactants are administered with caution in newborns at risk for circulatory overload.

**D.** Interventions 

1. Instill surfactant through the catheter inserted into the newborn's endotracheal tube; avoid suctioning for at least 2 hours after administration.

2. Monitor for bradycardia and decreased oxygen saturation during administration.
3. Monitor respiratory status and lung sounds and for signs of adverse effects.

## XI. Eye Prophylaxis for the Newborn

### A. Description ▲

1. Preventive eye treatment against ophthalmia neonatorum in the newborn is required by law in the United States.
2. Agent used varies depending on agency protocols, but usually ophthalmic forms of erythromycin (Ilotycin, Romycin) (0.5%) or tetracycline (1%) are prescribed because they are bacteriostatic and bactericidal and provide prophylaxis against *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia trachomatis*.
3. Silver nitrate (1%) solution may be prescribed, but its use is minimal because it does not protect against chlamydial infection and can cause chemical conjunctivitis.

**B. Use:** As a prophylactic measure to protect against *N. gonorrhoeae* and *C. trachomatis*

**C. Adverse effect:** Silver nitrate (1%) solution can cause chemical conjunctivitis.

### D. Interventions ▲

1. Clean the newborn's eyes before instilling the medication.
2. Do not flush the eyes after instillation.

**⚠** Instillation of eye medication can be delayed for 1 hour after birth to facilitate eye contact and parent-newborn attachment and bonding.

## **XII. Phytonadione (Vitamin K)**

### **A. Description**

1. The **newborn** is at risk for hemorrhagic disorders; coagulation factors synthesized in the liver depend on vitamin K, which is not synthesized until intestinal bacteria are present.
2. Newborns are deficient in vitamin K for the first 5 to 8 days of life because of the lack of intestinal bacteria.

### **B. Use: Prophylaxis and treatment of hemorrhagic disease of the newborn**

### **C. Adverse effect: Vitamin K can cause hyperbilirubinemia in the newborn (occurrence is rare).**

### **D. Interventions ▲**

1. Protect the medication from light.
2. Administer during the early newborn period.
3. Administer by the intramuscular route in the lateral aspect of the middle third of the vastus lateralis muscle of the thigh.
4. Monitor for bruising at the injection site and for bleeding from the cord.
5. Monitor for jaundice and monitor the bilirubin level because although rare, the medication can cause hyperbilirubinemia in the newborn.

## **XIII. Recombivax HB Pediatric (Hepatitis B Virus [HBV]) Vaccine**

### **A. Description: Given intramuscularly to the newborn before discharge home ▲**

### **B. Use: Recommended for all newborns to prevent hepatitis B**

C. Adverse effects: Rash, fever, erythema, and pain at injection site

D. Interventions ▲

1. Parental consent must be obtained.
2. Administer intramuscularly in the lateral aspect of the middle third of the vastus lateralis muscle.
3. If the infant was born to a mother positive for hepatitis B surface antigen, hepatitis B immune globulin should be given within 12 hours of birth in addition to HBV vaccine. Then follow the regularly scheduled HBV vaccination schedule.
4. Document immunization administration on a vaccination card for the parents to have a record that it was administered.

## CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The nurse should seek a prescription from the health care provider for the administration of Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM). Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin is administered to prevent isoimmunization in Rh-negative clients who are negative for Rh antibodies and exposed or potentially exposed to Rh-positive red blood cells from the fetus by amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling, transfusion, termination of pregnancy, abdominal trauma, or bleeding during pregnancy or the birth process. It is administered to the Rh-negative client by intramuscular injection at 28 weeks' gestation and within 72 hours after delivery.

### Reference

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 870.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**356.** The nurse is monitoring a client who is receiving oxytocin (Pitocin) to induce labor. Which assessment finding would cause the nurse to **immediately** discontinue the oxytocin infusion?

1. Fatigue
2. Drowsiness
3. Uterine hyperstimulation
4. Early decelerations of the fetal heart rate

**357.** A pregnant client is receiving magnesium sulfate for the management of preeclampsia. The nurse determines that the client is experiencing toxicity from the medication if which finding is noted on assessment?

1. Proteinuria of 3 +
2. Respirations of 10 breaths/minute
3. Presence of deep tendon reflexes
4. Serum magnesium level of 6 mEq/L

**358.** The nurse is monitoring a client in preterm labor who is receiving intravenous magnesium sulfate. The nurse should monitor for which adverse effects of this medication? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Flushing
2. Hypertension
3. Increased urine output

4. Depressed respirations
5. Extreme muscle weakness
6. Hyperactive deep tendon reflexes

359. The nursing instructor asks a nursing student to describe the procedure for administering erythromycin ointment to the eyes of a newborn. Which student statement indicates that **further teaching is needed**?

1. "I will flush the eyes after instilling the ointment."
2. "I will clean the newborn's eyes before instilling ointment."
3. "I need to administer the eye ointment within 1 hour after delivery."
4. "I will instill the eye ointment into each of the newborn's conjunctival sacs."

360. A client in preterm labor (31 weeks) who is dilated to 4 cm has been started on magnesium sulfate and contractions have stopped. If the client's labor can be inhibited for the next 48 hours, the nurse anticipates a prescription for which medication?

1. Nalbuphine (Nubain)
2. Betamethasone (Celestone)
3. Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM)
4. Dinoprostone (Cervidil vaginal insert)

361. Methylergonovine (Methergine) is prescribed for a woman to treat postpartum hemorrhage. Before administration of methylergonovine, what is the **priority** nursing assessment?

1. Uterine tone
2. Blood pressure
3. Amount of lochia
4. Deep tendon reflexes

**362.** The nurse is preparing to administer beractant (Survanta) to a premature infant who has respiratory distress syndrome. The nurse plans to administer the medication by which route?

1. Intradermal
2. Intratracheal
3. Subcutaneous
4. Intramuscular

**363.** An opioid analgesic is administered to a client in labor. The nurse assigned to care for the client ensures that which medication is readily available if respiratory depression occurs?

1. Naloxone
2. Morphine sulfate
3. Betamethasone (Celestone)
4. Meperidine hydrochloride (Demerol)

**364.** Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) is prescribed for a client after delivery and the nurse provides information to the client about the purpose of the medication. The nurse determines that the woman understands the purpose if the woman states

that it will protect her next baby from which condition?

1. Having Rh-positive blood
2. Developing a rubella infection
3. Developing physiological jaundice
4. Being affected by Rh incompatibility

**365.** Methylergonovine (Methergine) is prescribed for a client with postpartum hemorrhage. Before administering the medication, the nurse contacts the health care provider who prescribed the medication if which condition is documented in the client's medical history?

1. Hypotension
2. Hypothyroidism
3. Diabetes mellitus
4. Peripheral vascular disease

## ANSWERS

**356. 3**

**Rationale:** Oxytocin stimulates uterine contractions and is a common pharmacological method to induce labor.

High-dose protocols have been associated with more uterine hyperstimulation and more cesarean births related to fetal stress. Some health care providers prescribe the administration of oxytocin in 10-minute pulsed infusions rather than as a continuous infusion. This pulsed method, which is more like endogenous secretion of oxytocin, is reported to be effective for labor induction and requires significantly less oxytocin use. Adverse effects associated with

administration of the medication are hyperstimulation of uterine contractions and nonreassuring fetal heart rate patterns. Oxytocin infusion must be stopped when any signs of uterine hyperstimulation are present. Drowsiness and fatigue may be caused by the labor experience. Early decelerations of the fetal heart rate are a reassuring sign and do not indicate fetal distress.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediately*. Focus on the **subject**, an adverse effect of oxytocin. Options 1 and 2 are **comparable or alike** and can be eliminated first. From the remaining options, recalling that early decelerations of the fetal heart rate are a reassuring sign will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing responsibilities associated with the administration of **oxytocin (Pitocin)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 883-884; Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 804.

### 357. 2

**Rationale:** Magnesium toxicity can occur from magnesium sulfate therapy. Signs of magnesium sulfate toxicity relate to the central nervous system depressant effects of the medication and include respiratory depression, loss of deep tendon reflexes, and a sudden decline in fetal heart rate and maternal heart rate and blood pressure.

Therapeutic serum levels of magnesium are 4 to 7.5 mEq/L. Proteinuria of 3+ is an expected finding in a client with preeclampsia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, magnesium toxicity. Eliminate option 3 first because it is a normal

finding. Next, eliminate option 4, knowing that the therapeutic serum level of magnesium is 4 to 7.5 mEq/L. From the remaining options, recalling that proteinuria of 3 + would be noted in a client with preeclampsia will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **magnesium sulfate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 719; Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 665.

❖ 358. 1, 4, 5

**Rationale:** Magnesium sulfate is a central nervous system depressant and relaxes smooth muscle, including the uterus. It is used to halt preterm labor contractions and is used for preeclamptic clients to prevent seizures. Adverse effects include flushing, depressed respirations, depressed deep tendon reflexes, hypotension, extreme muscle weakness, decreased urine output, pulmonary edema, and elevated serum magnesium levels.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, adverse effects of magnesium sulfate. Recalling that this medication is a central nervous system depressant and relaxes smooth muscle will assist you in choosing the correct answer.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **magnesium sulfate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), pp. 869-870.

**359. 1**

**Rationale:** Eye prophylaxis protects the newborn against *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

The eyes are not flushed after instillation of the medication because the flush would wash away the administered medication. Options 2, 3, and 4 are correct statements regarding the procedure for administering eye medication to the newborn.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *further teaching is needed*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and relate to instilling the eye medication. From the remaining options, visualize the effect of each. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Procedure for administering **eye prophylaxis** to the newborn

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Infection

**References:** Lehne (2013), p. 1222; Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 572.

**360. 2**

**Rationale:** Betamethasone, a glucocorticoid, is given to increase the production of surfactant to stimulate fetal lung maturation. It is administered to clients in preterm labor at 28 to 32 weeks of gestation if the labor can be inhibited

for 48 hours. Nalbuphine (Nubain) is an opioid analgesic. Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) is given to Rh-negative clients to prevent sensitization. Dinoprostone (Cervidil vaginal insert) is a prostaglandin given to ripen and soften the cervix and to stimulate uterine contractions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a client at 31 weeks' gestation. Recall that the preterm infant is at risk for respiratory distress syndrome because of immaturity and the inability to produce surfactant. Next, recalling the actions of the medications in the options and that betamethasone is used to increase the production of surfactant will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Betamethasone**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 790.

### 361. 2

**Rationale:** Methylergonovine, an ergot alkaloid, is used to prevent or control postpartum hemorrhage by contracting the uterus. Methylergonovine causes continuous uterine contractions and may elevate the blood pressure. A priority assessment before the administration of the medication is to check the blood pressure. The health care provider should be notified if hypertension is present. Although options 1, 3, and 4 may be components of the postpartum assessment, the correct option, blood pressure, is related specifically to the administration of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike** and related to one another. To choose from the remaining options, use the **ABCs—airway,**

**breathing, and circulation.** Blood pressure is a method of assessing circulation.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **methyle rgonovine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 823.

## 362. 2

**Rationale:** Respiratory distress syndrome is a serious lung disorder caused by immaturity and the inability to produce surfactant, resulting in hypoxia and acidosis. It is common in premature infants and may be due to lung immaturity as a result of surfactant deficiency. The mainstay of treatment is the administration of exogenous surfactant, which is administered by the intratracheal route. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not routes of administration for this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, route of administration for beractant (Survanta). Note the relationship between the diagnosis *respiratory distress syndrome* and the correct option, *intratracheal*.

**Review: Beractant (Survanta)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Gas Exchange

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 351-352; Hodgson, Kizior (2012), pp. 120-121.

**363. 1**

**Rationale:** Opioid analgesics may be prescribed to relieve moderate to severe pain associated with labor. Opioid toxicity can occur and cause respiratory depression. Naloxone is an opioid antagonist, which reverses the effects of opioids and is given for respiratory depression. Morphine sulfate and meperidine hydrochloride are opioid analgesics. Betamethasone is a corticosteroid administered to enhance fetal lung maturity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, the antidote for respiratory depression. Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and are opioid analgesics. Next, eliminate option 3, knowing that this medication is a corticosteroid.

**Review:** **Antidote** for **opioid toxicity**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 399-400.

**364. 4**

**Rationale:** Rh incompatibility can occur when an Rh-negative mother becomes sensitized to the Rh antigen. Sensitization may develop when an Rh-negative woman becomes pregnant with a fetus who is Rh positive. During pregnancy and at delivery, some of the fetus's Rh-positive blood can enter the maternal circulation, causing the

mother's immune system to form antibodies against Rh-positive blood. Administration of Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM) prevents the mother from developing antibodies against Rh-positive blood by providing passive antibody protection against the Rh antigen.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject** of the question, the purpose of Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin. Noting the relationship between the name of the medication, Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin, and the word *incompatibility* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** The purpose of **Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Reproduction

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 298; Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 499.

### 365. 4

**Rationale:** Methylergonovine is an ergot alkaloid used to treat postpartum hemorrhage. Ergot alkaloids are contraindicated in clients with significant cardiovascular disease, peripheral vascular disease, hypertension, preeclampsia, or eclampsia. These conditions are worsened by the vasoconstrictive effects of the ergot alkaloids.

Options 1, 2, and 3 are not contraindications related to the use of ergot alkaloids.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the purpose, action, and contraindications of methylergonovine.

Recalling that ergot alkaloids produce vasoconstriction will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The purpose and action of **methylergonovine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Implementation

***Content Area:*** Reproductive/Maternity/Newborn Medications

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Safety

***Reference:*** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 826-827.

# UNIT VII



## Pediatric Nursing

### PYRAMID TERMS

**abuse** Nonaccidental physical injury or the nonaccidental act of omission of care by a parent or person responsible for a child; includes neglect and physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment.

**active immunity** A form of long-term acquired antibody protection that develops naturally after an initial infection or exposure to antigens, or artificially after a vaccination.

**atresia** Congenital absence or closure of a body orifice.

**attenuated vaccines** Vaccines derived from microorganisms or viruses; their virulence has been weakened as a result of passage through another host.

**chronological age** Age in years.

**crackles** Audible high-pitched crackling or popping sounds heard during lung

auscultation; result from fluid in the airways, and are not cleared by coughing.

**cyanosis** The bluish color that results in tissues, nail beds, and mucous membranes when tissues are deprived of adequate amounts of oxygen.

**developmental age** Age based on a child's maturational progress. It is determined by standardized resources such as body size, physical and psychological functioning, motor skills, and aptitude tests.

**functional age** The age equivalent at which a child actually is able to perform specific self-care or related tasks.

**growth** Measurable physical and physiological body changes that occur over time.

**grunting** The sound made by forced expiration, which is the body's attempt to improve oxygenation when hypoxemia is present.

**hereditary** Refers to the transmission of genetic characteristics from parent to offspring.

**inactivated vaccines** Vaccines that contain killed microorganisms.

**nasal flaring** A widening of the nares to enable an infant or child to take in more oxygen; a serious indicator of air hunger.

**passive immunity** A form of acquired immunity that occurs artificially through injection or is acquired naturally as the result of antibody transfer through the placenta to a fetus or through colostrum to an infant; is not permanent and does not last as long as active immunity.

**prodromal** Pertaining to early symptoms that mark the onset of a disease.

**puberty** The period of time during which the adolescent experiences a growth spurt,

develops secondary sex characteristics, and achieves reproductive maturity.

**regurgitation** An abnormal backward flow of body fluid.

**retraction** An abnormal movement of the chest wall during inspiration in which the skin appears to be drawn in between the ribs, and above and/or below the clavicle, and scapula; indicates respiratory difficulty.

**shunt** Movement of blood or body fluid through an abnormal anatomical or surgically created opening.

**stenosis** The narrowing or constriction of an opening.

**stridor** A shrill harsh sound heard during inspiration, expiration, or both, produced by the flow of air through a narrowed segment of the respiratory tract.

**vaccine** A suspension of attenuated or killed microorganisms administered to induce active immunity to infectious disease.

**wheezing** High-pitched musical whistle sounds heard with or without a stethoscope as air is compressed through narrowed or obstructed airways because of swelling, secretions, or tumors.

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points focus on growth and development, safety, and age-appropriate measures to ensure a safe and hazard-free environment for the child, on protection of the child and the prevention of accidents, and on acute disorders that can occur in children. The focus is on nutrition, specific feeding techniques, positioning techniques, and interventions that will provide and maintain adequate airway, breathing, and circulation patterns in the child. In addition, neglect and abuse of the child is a focus. On the NCLEX-RN examination, be alert to the age of the child if the age is presented in a question. If an age is presented in the question, think about the specific growth and development characteristics of the age group to answer the question correctly.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Considering issues related to informed consent regarding minors

Delegation of care

Ensuring environmental safety, including home safety and personal safety, related to the developmental age of the child

Error prevention

Establishing priorities

Instituting measures related to the spread and control of infectious agents, particularly regarding communicable diseases

Maintaining confidentiality

Preventing accidents

Protecting the child and other contacts to prevent illness

Providing continuity of care

Providing protective measures

Upholding parent and child rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Ensuring that immunization schedules are up to date

Focusing on developmental stages when planning care

Performing physical assessment techniques specific to the pediatric client

Preventing disease in the pediatric population

Providing health promotion programs for the pediatric client

Providing instructions to the child and parents regarding care at home

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessment for child neglect and abuse

Communicating with the pediatric client

Considering concepts of family dynamics when planning care

Considering cultural, religious, and spiritual beliefs when planning care

Considering end-of-life issues and grief and loss in the pediatric population

Identifying family and support systems for the child

Providing play therapies

## **Physiological Integrity**

Following medication administration procedures

Following nutritional guidelines for the pediatric population

Identifying comfort measures appropriate for the child

Maintaining sensitivity for intrusive procedures needed for the pediatric client

Managing childhood illnesses

Monitoring elimination patterns

Monitoring for age-appropriate normal body structure and function

Monitoring for infectious diseases of the pediatric client

Monitoring for responses to treatments

Providing for consistent rest and sleep patterns

## Responding to medical emergencies



## CHAPTER 36

# Integumentary Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A child being admitted to the pediatric unit is suspected of having impetigo. In order to prevent the spread of this infectious disease, what should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 419.*

### I. Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis)

#### A. Description

1. Superficial inflammatory process involving primarily the epidermis
2. Associated with family history of the disorder, allergies, asthma, or allergic rhinitis
3. The major goals of management are to relieve pruritus, lubricate the skin, reduce inflammation, and prevent or control secondary infections. ▲

#### B. Forms of eczema (Box 36-1)

**Infantile:** Usually begins at 2 to 6 months of age and decreases in incidence with aging; spontaneous remission may occur by 3 years

**Childhood:** May follow the infantile form; occurs at 2 to 3 years of age

**Preadolescent and Adolescent:** Begins at about 12 years of age and may continue into the early adult years or indefinitely

### C. Assessment

1. Redness
2. Scaliness
3. Itching
4. Minute papules (firm, elevated, circumscribed lesions < 1 cm in diameter) and vesicles (similar to papules, but fluid-filled)
5. Weeping, oozing, and crusting of lesions ▲
6. Adolescent and early adult forms: Commonly occur in antecubital and popliteal areas

### D. Interventions ▲

1. Avoid exposure to skin irritants such as soaps, detergents, fabric softeners, diaper wipes, and powder.
2. Avoid excessive bathing and washing of affected areas; bathing water should be tepid, and the skin should be lubricated immediately after the bath.
3. Intermittently apply cool, wet compresses for short periods to soothe the skin and

alleviate itching; pat skin dry between cooling treatments.

4. Administer antihistamines and topical corticosteroids as prescribed; corticosteroids are applied in a thin layer and are rubbed into the area thoroughly.
5. Administer immunomodulator medications as prescribed.
6. Administer prescribed antibiotics if secondary infections occur.
7. Prevent or minimize scratching; keep nails short and clean, and place gloves or cotton socks over the hands.
8. Eliminate conditions that increase itching, such as wet diapers, excessive bathing, ambient heat, woolen clothes or blankets, and rough fabrics or furry stuffed animals; exposure to latex should also be avoided.
9. Instruct parents to wash clothing in a mild detergent and rinse thoroughly; putting the clothes through a second complete wash cycle without detergent minimizes the residue remaining on the fabric.
10. Instruct parents about measures to prevent skin infections.
11. Instruct parents to monitor lesions for signs of infection (honey-colored crusts with surrounding erythema) and to seek immediate medical intervention if such signs are noted.

 A child with an integumentary disorder needs to be monitored for signs of either a skin infection or a systemic infection.

## II. Impetigo

### A. Description

1. Impetigo is a contagious bacterial infection of the skin caused by  $\beta$ -hemolytic

streptococci or staphylococci, or both; it occurs most commonly during hot, humid months. ▲

2. Impetigo can occur because of poor hygiene; it can be a primary infection or occur secondarily at a site that has been injured or sustained an insect bite, or at a site that was originally a rash, such as atopic dermatitis or poison ivy or poison oak.
3. The most common sites of infection are on the face and around the mouth, and then on the hands, neck, and extremities.
4. The lesions begin as vesicles or pustules surrounded by edema and redness (a pustule is similar to a vesicle except that its fluid content is purulent).
5. The lesions progress to an exudative and crusting stage; after the crusting of the lesions, the initially serous vesicular fluid becomes cloudy, and the vesicles rupture, leaving honey-colored crusts covering ulcerated bases. ▲

**B. Assessment (Fig. 36-1)**



**FIGURE 36-1** Impetigo contagiosa. (From Weston WL, Lane AT: *Color textbook of*

*pediatric dermatology*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

1. Lesions
2. Erythema
3. Pruritus
4. Burning
5. Secondary lymph node involvement

#### C. Interventions

1. Institute contact isolation; use standard precautions and implement agency-specific isolation procedures for the hospitalized child; strict hygiene practices are important because impetigo is a highly contagious condition. ▲
2. Allow lesions to dry by air exposure.
3. Assist the child with daily bathing with antibacterial soap, as prescribed.
4. Apply warm saline or other prescribed compresses to the lesions two or three times daily, followed by a mild soap and water to remove crusts and allow for healing; Burow's solution may also be prescribed to soften the crusts.
5. Apply topical antibiotic ointments with a clean/sterile cotton swab without touching the tube opening with fingers or skin and instruct parents in their use; the infection is still communicable for 48 hours beyond initiation of antibiotic treatment.
6. Administer oral antibiotics, which may be prescribed if there is no response to topical antibiotic treatment; it is extremely important to comply with the

prescribed antibiotic regimen because secondary infections such as glomerulonephritis may result if the infectious agent is of a streptococcal type that can affect the nephrons.

7. To prevent skin cracking, apply emollients and instruct parents in the use of emollients.
8. Instruct parents in the methods to prevent the spread of the infection, especially careful hand-washing. ▲
9. Inform parents that the child needs to use separate towels, linens, and dishes. ▲
10. Inform parents that all linens and clothing used by the child should be washed with detergent in hot water separately from linens and clothing of other household members. ▲

### III. Pediculosis Capitis (Lice)

#### A. Description

1. *Pediculosis capitis* refers to an infestation of the hair and scalp with lice.
2. The most common sites of involvement are the occipital area, behind the ears at the nape of the neck, and occasionally the eyebrows and eyelashes.
3. The female louse lays her eggs (nits) on the hair shaft, close to the scalp; the incubation period is 7 to 10 days.
4. Lice can survive for 48 hours away from the host; nits shed in the environment can hatch in 7 to 10 days.
5. Head lice live and reproduce only on humans and are transmitted by direct and indirect contact, such as sharing of brushes, hats, towels, and bedding.

6. All contacts of the infested child, especially siblings, should be examined for lice infestation and referred for treatment as appropriate. ▲

**B. Assessment** (Box 36-2 and Fig. 36-2)

**BOX 36-2** Assessment Findings: Pediculosis Capitis

Child scratches scalp excessively.

Pruritus is caused by the crawling insect and insect saliva on the skin.

Nits (white eggs) are observable on the hair shaft (it is important to differentiate nits from lint or dandruff, which flakes away easily).

Adult lice are difficult to see and appear as small tan or grayish specks, which may crawl fast.



**FIGURE 36-2** Viable nits. (From Morse S, Ballard R, Holmes K, Moreland A: *Atlas of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS*, ed 4, London, 2010, Saunders.)

## C. Interventions

1. Use a pediculicide product as prescribed; follow package instructions for timing the application and for contraindications for use in children.
2. Daily removal of nits with an extra-fine-tooth metal nit comb should be done as a control measure after use of the pediculicide product (gloves should be worn for removal of nits); hairbrushes or combs should be discarded or soaked in boiling water for 10 minutes or in a commercially available lice-killing product for 1 hour.
3. Instruct parents that siblings may also need treatment; grooming items should not be shared, and a single comb or brush should be used for each individual child.
4. Instruct parents that bedding and clothing used by the child should be changed daily, laundered in hot water with detergent, and dried in a hot dryer for 20 minutes; this process should continue for 1 week.
5. Instruct parents that nonessential bedding and clothing can be stored in a tightly sealed bag for 2 weeks and then washed.
6. Instruct parents to seal toys that cannot be washed or dry-cleaned in a plastic bag for 2 weeks.
7. Instruct parents that furniture and carpets need to be vacuumed frequently and that the dust bag from the vacuum should be discarded after vacuuming.
8. Teach the child not to share clothing, headwear, brushes, and combs.
9. Lice on the eyelashes or eyebrows may need to be removed manually.

## IV. Scabies

### A. Description

1. Scabies is a parasitic skin disorder caused by an infestation of *Sarcoptes scabiei* (itch mite) (see [Chapter 50](#)).
2. Scabies is endemic among schoolchildren and institutionalized populations as a result of close personal contact.
3. Incubation period
  - a. The female mite burrows into the epidermis, lays eggs, and dies in the burrow after 4 to 5 weeks.
  - b. The eggs hatch in 3 to 5 days, and larvae mature and complete their life cycle.
4. Infectious period: During the entire course of the infestation ▲

### B. Assessment ([Box 36-3](#) and [Fig. 36-3](#))

#### **BOX 36-3** Assessment Findings: Scabies

- Pruritic papular rash
- Burrows into the skin (fine grayish red lines that may be difficult to see)





**FIGURE 36-3** Scabies rash on an infant. (From Calen JP, Greer KE, Hood AF, Paller AS, Swinyer LJ: *Color atlas of dermatology*, Philadelphia, 1993, Saunders. Courtesy of Dr. Steve Estes.)

**⚠ Scabies is transmitted by close personal contact with an infected person. Household members and contacts of an infected child need to be treated simultaneously.**

### C. Interventions

1. Topical application of a scabicide such as permethrin (Elimite) kills the mites.
2. Lindane, an alternative product that may be prescribed, should not be used in children younger than 2 years because of the risk of neurotoxicity and seizures. ▲
3. Instruct parents in the application of the scabicide.
4. When permethrin is used, it is applied to cool dry skin at least 30 minutes after bathing; the cream is massaged thoroughly and gently into all skin surfaces (not just the areas that have the rash) from the head to the soles of the feet (avoid contact with the eyes), left on the skin for 8 to 14 hours, and then removed by bathing; a repeat treatment may be necessary. ▲
5. Instruct the parents about the importance of frequent hand-washing.
6. Instruct the parents that all clothing, bedding, and pillowcases used by the child need to be changed daily, washed in hot water with detergent, dried in a hot dryer, and ironed before reuse; this process should continue for 1 week. ▲
7. Instruct parents that nonwashable toys and other items should be sealed in plastic bags for at least 4 days.

8. Anti-itch topical treatment may be necessary, and antibiotics may be prescribed if a secondary infection develops.

## V. Burn Injuries (see Priority Nursing Actions)

### PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

#### Actions to Take in the Event of a Major Burn Injury

1. Stop the burning process.
2. Assess the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation.
3. Begin resuscitation if the child is not breathing.
4. Remove burned clothing and jewelry.
5. Cover the wound with a clean cloth.
6. Keep the child warm.
7. Transport the child to the emergency department.

The initial management of the burn injury begins at the scene of the injury. The first priority is to stop the burning process; this must be done before other interventions. To stop the burning process, flames should be smothered. The child should be placed in a horizontal position because a vertical position may cause the hair to ignite or the inhalation of flames, heat, or smoke. The child should be rolled in a blanket or other article, taking care not to cover the face and head because of the danger of inhaling smoke and fumes. As soon as the flames are extinguished, the child is assessed for

adequate airway, breathing, and circulation. Measures are taken immediately if resuscitation is necessary. Burned clothing and jewelry are removed to prevent further burning of the skin and disruption of skin integrity, and then the burn is covered with a clean cloth, which prevents contamination of the wound, reduces pain by eliminating air contact, and prevents hypothermia. The child is also kept warm to prevent hypothermia and is immediately transported to the nearest emergency facility.

### ***Reference***

Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Won'tg nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby, p. 1446.

#### **A. Pediatric considerations** ▲

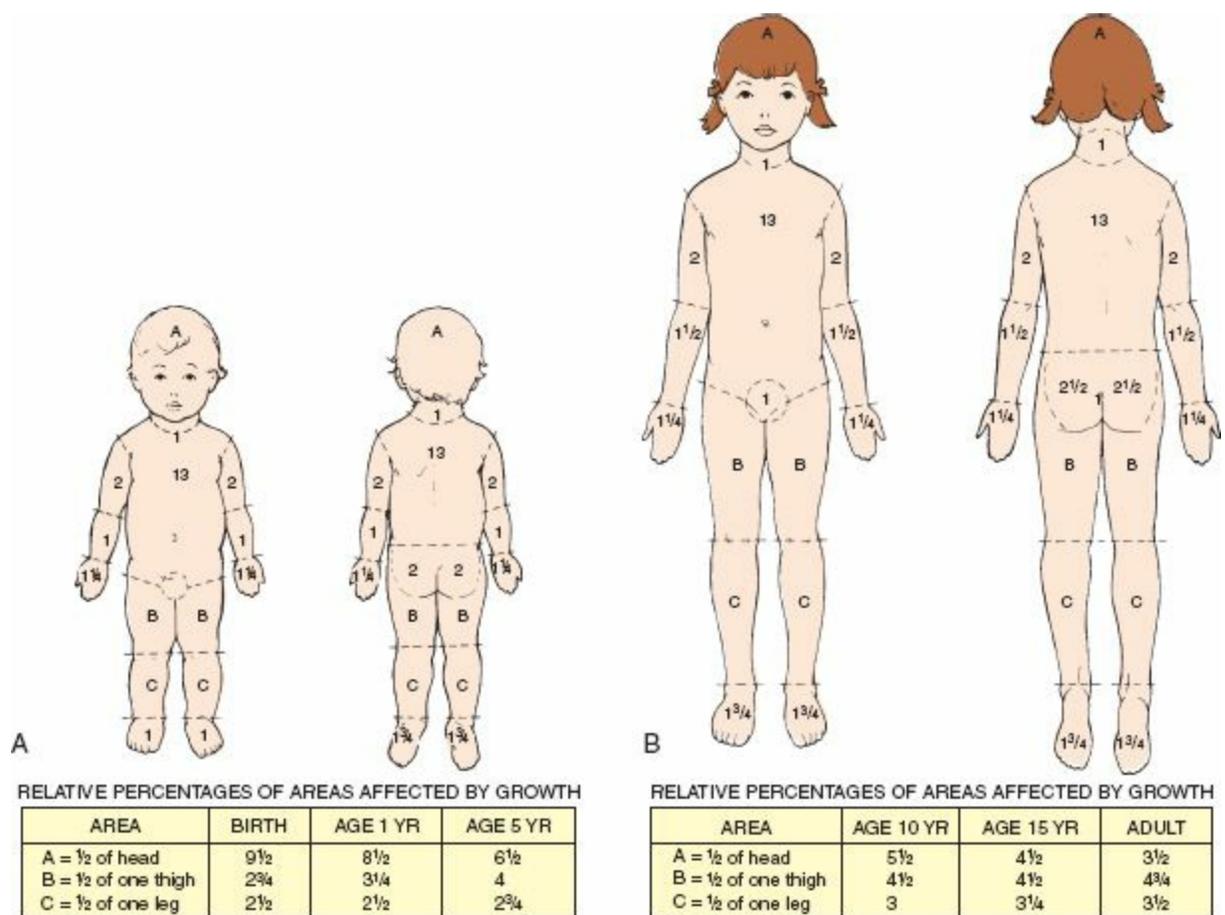
1. Very young children who have been burned severely have a higher mortality rate than older children and adults with comparable burns.
2. Lower burn temperatures and shorter exposure to heat can cause a more severe burn in a child than in an adult because a child's skin is thinner.
3. The degree of pain experienced by the child and the ability to communicate it are different than in an adult with the same exposure.
4. Severely burned children are at increased risk for fluid and heat loss, dehydration, and metabolic acidosis compared with adults.
5. The higher proportion of body fluid to mass in children increases the risk of

cardiovascular problems.

6. Burns involving more than 10% of the total body surface area require some form of fluid resuscitation.
7. Infants and children are at increased risk for protein and calorie deficiency because they have smaller muscle mass and less body fat than adults.
8. Scarring is more severe in a child; disturbed body image is a distinct issue for a child or adolescent, especially as **growth** continues.
9. An immature immune system presents an increased risk of infection for infants and young children.
10. A delay in growth may occur after a burn.

**B. Extent of burn injury**

1. The rule of nines, used for adults with burn injuries, gives an inaccurate estimate in children because of the difference in body proportions between children and adults.
2. In a pediatric client, the extent of the burn is expressed as a percentage of the total body surface area, using age-related charts (Fig. 36-4). ▲



**FIGURE 36-4** Estimation of distribution of burns in children. **A**, Children from birth to age 5 years. **B**, Older children. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

### C. Fluid replacement therapy ▲

⚠ To determine adequacy of fluid resuscitation, vital signs (especially heart rate), urine output, adequacy of capillary filling, and sensorium status are assessed.

1. Fluid replacement is necessary during the initial 24-hour period after burn injury because of the fluid shifts that occur as a result of the injury.
2. Several formulas are available to calculate the child's fluid needs, and the

formula used depends on the health care provider's preference.

3. Crystalloid solutions are used during the initial phase of therapy; colloid solutions such as albumin, Plasma-Lyte (combined electrolyte solution), or fresh-frozen plasma are useful in maintaining plasma volume.
4. See also [Chapter 50](#).

## CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

*Answer:* For a child suspected of having impetigo, the nurse should institute strict contact precautions and use standard precautions. The nurse should also implement agency-specific isolation procedures for the hospitalized child. Strict hygiene practices are important because impetigo is a highly contagious condition. The nurse should ensure that all health care workers and visitors are aware of the necessary precautions in order to prevent the spread of infection.

### *Reference*

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 696-698.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**366.** The nurse is monitoring a child with burns during treatment for burn shock. The nurse understands that which assessment provides the **most** accurate guide to determine the adequacy of fluid resuscitation?

1. Skin turgor

2. Neurological assessment
3. Level of edema at burn site
4. Quality of peripheral pulses

367. The mother of a 3-year-old child arrives at a clinic and tells the nurse that the child has been scratching the skin continuously and has developed a rash. The nurse assesses the child and suspects the presence of scabies. The nurse bases this suspicion on which finding noted on assessment of the child's skin?

1. Fine grayish red lines
2. Purple-colored lesions
3. Thick, honey-colored crusts
4. Clusters of fluid-filled vesicles

368. Permethrin (Elimite) is prescribed for a child with a diagnosis of scabies. The nurse should give which instruction to the parents regarding the use of this treatment?

1. Apply the lotion to areas of the rash only.
2. Apply the lotion and leave it on for 6 hours.
3. Avoid putting clothes on the child over the lotion.
4. Apply the lotion to cool, dry skin at least 30 minutes after bathing.

369. The school nurse has provided an instructional session about impetigo to parents of the children attending the school. Which statement, if made by a parent, indicates a **need for further instruction**?

1. “It is extremely contagious.”
2. “It is most common in humid weather.”
3. “Lesions most often are located on the arms and chest.”
4. “It might show up in an area of broken skin, such as an insect bite.”

**370.** The clinic nurse is reviewing the health care provider’s prescription for a child who has been diagnosed with scabies. Lindane has been prescribed for the child. The nurse questions the prescription if which is noted in the child’s record?

1. The child is 18 months old.
2. The child is being bottle-fed.
3. A sibling is using lindane for the treatment of scabies.
4. The child has a history of frequent respiratory infections.

**371.** A topical corticosteroid is prescribed by a health care provider for a child with atopic dermatitis (eczema). Which instruction should the nurse give the parent about applying the cream?

1. Apply the cream over the entire body.
2. Apply a thick layer of cream to affected areas only.
3. Avoid cleansing the area before application of the cream.
4. Apply a thin layer of cream and rub it into the area thoroughly.

**372.** The school nurse is conducting pediculosis capitis (head lice) assessments. Which finding indicates a child has a “positive” head check?

1. Maculopapular lesions behind the ears

2. Lesions in the scalp that extend to the hairline or neck
3. White flaky particles throughout the entire scalp region
4. White sacs attached to the hair shafts in the occipital area

**373.** The nurse caring for a child who sustained a burn injury plans care based on which pediatric considerations associated with this injury? **Select all that apply.**



1. Scarring is less severe in a child than in an adult.
2. A delay in growth may occur after a burn injury.
3. An immature immune system presents an increased risk of infection for infants and young children.
4. The lower proportion of body fluid to mass in a child increases the risk of cardiovascular problems.
5. Fluid resuscitation is unnecessary unless the burned area is more than 25% of the total body surface area.
6. Infants and young children are at increased risk for protein and calorie deficiency because they have smaller muscle mass and less body fat than adults.

## ANSWERS

**366. 2**

**Rationale:** Sensorium is an accurate guide to determine the adequacy of fluid resuscitation. The burn injury itself

does not affect the sensorium, so the child should be alert and oriented. Any alteration in sensorium should be evaluated further. A neurological assessment would determine the level of sensorium in the child. Options 1, 3, and 4 would not provide an accurate assessment of the adequacy of fluid resuscitation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most* in the query. Although options 1, 3, and 4 may provide some information related to fluid volume, in a burn injury, neurological assessment is most accurate from the options provided.

**Review:** **Fluid resuscitation** and **burn shock**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1119; McKinney et al (2013), p. 1331.

### 367. 1

**Rationale:** Scabies is a parasitic skin disorder caused by an infestation of *Sarcoptes scabiei* (itch mite). Scabies appears as burrows or fine, grayish red, threadlike lines. They may be difficult to see if they are obscured by excoriation and inflammation. Purple-colored lesions may indicate various disorders, including systemic conditions. Thick, honey-colored crusts are characteristic of impetigo or secondary infection in eczema. Clusters of fluid-filled vesicles are seen in herpesvirus infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, clinical manifestations of scabies. Think about the characteristic of this parasitic skin disorder. Recalling that scabies infestation produces burrows will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review: Scabies**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 696-698.

**368. 4**

**Rationale:** Permethrin is massaged thoroughly and gently into all skin surfaces (not just the areas that have the rash) from the head to the soles of the feet. Care should be taken to avoid contact with the eyes. The lotion should not be applied until at least 30 minutes after bathing and should be applied only to cool, dry skin. The lotion should be kept on for 8 to 14 hours, and then the child should be given a bath. The child should be clothed during the 8 to 14 hours of treatment contact time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Option 3 can be eliminated because the child should be clothed. Eliminate option 1 next because of the **closed-ended word** *only* in this option. From the remaining options, recalling the procedure for the application of this lotion will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Permethrin (Elimite)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 696.

**369. 3**

**Rationale:** Impetigo is a contagious bacterial infection of the skin caused by  $\beta$ -hemolytic streptococci or staphylococci, or both. Impetigo is most common during hot, humid summer months. Impetigo may begin in an area of broken skin, such as an insect bite or atopic dermatitis. Impetigo is extremely contagious. Lesions usually are located around the mouth and nose, but may be present on the hands and extremities.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Knowledge regarding the cause and manifestations of impetigo will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Impetigo**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 693-694.

**370. 1**

**Rationale:** Lindane is a pediculicide product that may be prescribed to treat scabies. It is contraindicated for children younger than 2 years because they have more permeable skin, and high systemic absorption may occur, placing the children at risk for central nervous system toxicity and seizures. Lindane also is used with caution in

children between the ages of 2 and 10 years. Siblings and other household members should be treated simultaneously. Options 2 and 4 are unrelated to the use of lindane. Lindane is not recommended for use by a breast-feeding woman because the medication is secreted into breast milk.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, contraindications of lindane. Recall the concepts related to the body surface area of children and an 18 month old, and medication administration. These concepts will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Lindane**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 696-698; Lehne (2013), p. 1255.

**371. 4**

**Rationale:** Atopic dermatitis is a superficial inflammatory process involving primarily the epidermis. A topical corticosteroid may be prescribed and should be applied sparingly (thin layer) and rubbed into the area thoroughly. The affected area should be cleaned gently before application. A topical corticosteroid should not be applied over extensive areas. Systemic absorption is more likely to occur with extensive application.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, application of a topical corticosteroid. Eliminate option 3 first because it does not make sense not to clean an affected area. Eliminate option 1 because medicated cream should be applied only to areas that are affected. Eliminate option 2 because of the word *thick*.

**Review: Topical corticosteroids**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Tissue Integrity

**References:** Bryant, Nix (2012), p. 96; Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 541-542.

372. 4

**Rationale:** Pediculosis capitis is an infestation of the hair and scalp with lice. The nits are visible and attached firmly to the hair shaft near the scalp. The occiput is an area in which nits can be seen. Maculopapular lesions behind the ears or lesions that extend to the hairline or neck are indicative of an infectious process, not pediculosis. White flaky particles are indicative of dandruff.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of pediculosis capitis. Option 3 can be eliminated first because white flaky particles are indicative of dandruff. Recalling that in this infestation, nit sacs attach to the hair shaft, will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Pediculosis capitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 698-700.

❖ 373. 2, 3, 6

**Rationale:** Pediatric considerations in the care of a burn victim include the following: Scarring is more severe in a child than in an adult. A delay in growth may occur after a burn injury. An immature immune system presents an increased risk of infection for infants and young children. The higher proportion of body fluid to mass in a child increases the risk of cardiovascular problems. Burns involving more than 10% of total body surface area require some form of fluid resuscitation. Infants and young children are at increased risk for protein and calorie deficiencies because they have smaller muscle mass and less body fat than adults.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, pediatric considerations in the care of a child who sustained a burn injury. To answer correctly, read each option carefully and think about the physiology of a child related to body size.

**Review:** **Burn injuries in the child**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**References:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 1332; Swearingen (2012), pp. 554-555.



## CHAPTER 37

# Hematological Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A child with hemophilia who has been in a motor vehicle crash is admitted to the pediatric unit. What should the nurse do in the care of this child?

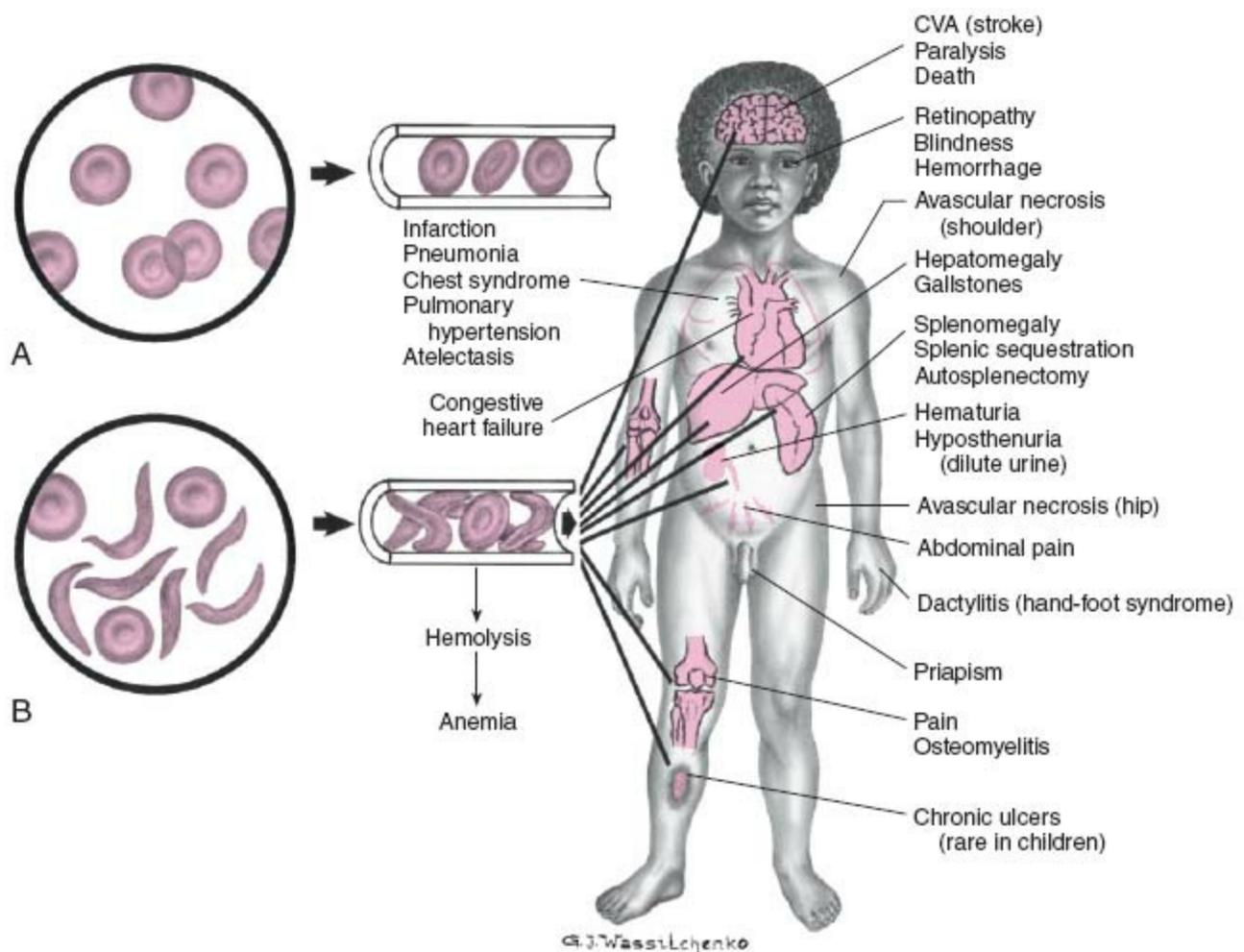
Answer located on *p. 426*.

### I. Sickle Cell Anemia

#### A. Description

1. Sickle cell anemia constitutes a group of diseases termed *hemoglobinopathies*, in which hemoglobin A is partly or completely replaced by abnormal sickle hemoglobin S.
2. It is caused by the inheritance of a gene for a structurally abnormal portion of the hemoglobin chain.
3. Risk factors include having parents heterozygous for hemoglobin S or being of African-American descent.

4. For screening purposes the sickle-turbidity test (Sickledex) is frequently used because it can be performed on blood from a fingerstick and yields accurate results in 3 minutes. However, if the test result is positive, hemoglobin (Hgb) electrophoresis is necessary to distinguish between children with the trait and those with the disease.
5. Hemoglobin S is sensitive to changes in the oxygen content of the red blood cell.
6. Insufficient oxygen causes the cells to assume a sickle shape, and the cells become rigid and clumped together, obstructing capillary blood flow (Fig. 37-1)



**FIGURE 37-1** Differences between effects of (A) normal red blood cells and (B)

sickled red blood cells on circulation, with related complications. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

7. The clinical manifestations occur primarily as a result of obstruction caused by sickled red blood cells and increased red blood cell destruction.
8. Situations that precipitate sickling include fever, dehydration, and emotional or physical stress; any condition that increases the need for oxygen or alters the transport of oxygen can result in sickle cell crisis (acute exacerbation). ▲
9. Sickle cell crises are acute exacerbations of the disease, which vary considerably in severity and frequency; these include vaso-occlusive crisis, splenic sequestration, hyperhemolytic crisis, and aplastic crisis.
10. The sickling response is reversible under conditions of adequate oxygenation and hydration; after repeated sickling, the cell becomes permanently sickled.
11. A multidisciplinary approach to care is needed, and care focuses on the prevention (preventing exposure to infection and maintaining normal hydration) and treatment (hydration, oxygen, pain management, and bed rest) of the crisis. ▲

**B. Assessment of the crisis (Box 37-1)**

**BOX 37-1 Sickle Cell Crisis**

**Vaso-Occlusive Crisis**

Caused by stasis of blood with clumping of cells in the microcirculation, ischemia, and infarction

*Manifestations:* Fever; painful swelling of hands, feet, and joints; and abdominal pain

### **Splenic Sequestration**

Caused by pooling and clumping of blood in the spleen (hypersplenism)

*Manifestations:* Profound anemia, hypovolemia, and shock

### **Hyperhemolytic Crisis**

An accelerated rate of red blood cell destruction

*Manifestations:* Anemia, jaundice, and reticulocytosis

### **Aplastic Crisis**

Caused by diminished production and increased destruction of red blood cells, triggered by viral infection or depletion of folic acid

*Manifestations:* Profound anemia and pallor

## **C. Interventions**

1. Maintain adequate hydration and blood flow through oral and intravenously administered fluids. Electrolyte replacement is also provided as needed; without adequate hydration, pain will not be controlled. ▲
2. Administer oxygen and blood transfusions as prescribed to increase tissue perfusion; exchange transfusions, which reduce the number of circulating sickle cells and the risk of complications, may also be prescribed. ▲
3. Administer analgesics as prescribed (around the clock). ▲

4. Assist the child to assume a comfortable position so that the child keeps the extremities extended to promote venous return; elevate the head of the bed no more than 30 degrees, avoid putting strain on painful joints, and do not raise the knee gatch of the bed.
5. Encourage consumption of a high-calorie, high-protein diet, with folic acid supplementation.
6. Administer antibiotics as prescribed to prevent infection.
7. Monitor for signs of complications, including increasing anemia, decreased perfusion, and shock (mental status changes, pallor, vital sign changes).
8. Instruct the child and parents about the early signs and symptoms of crisis and the measures to prevent crisis.
9. Ensure that the child receives pneumococcal and meningococcal **vaccines** and an annual influenza vaccine because of susceptibility to infection secondary to functional asplenia.
10. A splenectomy may be necessary for clients who experience recurrent splenic sequestration.
11. Inform parents of the **hereditary** aspects of the disorder.

 Administration of meperidine (Demerol) for pain is avoided because of the risk of normeperidine-induced seizures.

## II. Iron Deficiency Anemia

### A. Description

1. Iron stores are depleted, resulting in a decreased supply of iron for the manufacture of hemoglobin in red blood cells.
2. Iron deficiency anemia commonly results from blood loss, increased metabolic demands, syndromes of gastrointestinal malabsorption, and dietary inadequacy.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Pallor
2. Weakness and fatigue
3. Low hemoglobin and hematocrit levels
4. Red blood cells that are microcytic and hypochromic

## **C. Interventions**

1. Increase oral intake of iron; iron-fortified formula is needed for an infant. ▲
2. Instruct the child and parents in food choices that are high in iron ([Box 37-2](#)).

### **BOX 37-2** Iron-Rich Foods

- Breads and cereals
- Dark green, leafy vegetables
- Dried fruits
- Egg yolks
- Iron-enriched infant formula and cereal
- Kidney beans
- Legumes
- Liver

- Meats
- Molasses
- Nuts
- Potatoes
- Prune juice
- Raisins
- Seeds
- Shellfish
- Tofu
- Whole grains

3. Administer iron supplements as prescribed.
4. Intramuscular injections of iron (using Z-track method) or intravenous administration of iron may be prescribed in severe cases of anemia.
5. Teach parents how to administer the iron supplements. ▲
  - a. Give between meals for maximum absorption.
  - b. Give with a multivitamin or fruit juice because vitamin C increases absorption.
  - c. Do not give with milk or antacids because these items decrease absorption.
6. Instruct the child and parents about the side effects of iron supplements (black stools, constipation, and foul aftertaste).

**▲** Liquid iron preparation stains the teeth. Teach the parents and child that liquid iron should be taken through a straw and that the teeth should be brushed

after administration.

### III. Aplastic Anemia

#### A. Description

1. Aplastic anemia is a deficiency of circulating erythrocytes and all other formed elements of blood, resulting from the arrested development of cells within the bone marrow.
2. It can be primary (present at birth) or secondary (acquired).
3. Several possible causes exist, including chronic exposure to myelotoxic agents, viruses, infection, autoimmune disorders, and allergic states.
4. The definitive diagnosis is determined by bone marrow aspiration (shows conversion of red bone marrow to fatty bone marrow). ▲
5. Therapeutic management focuses on restoring function to the bone marrow and involves immunosuppressive therapy and bone marrow transplantation (treatment of choice if a suitable donor exists).
6. If the cause is a myelotoxic medication that is being administered for another purpose, the medication may be discontinued to improve bone marrow function.

#### B. Assessment ▲

1. Pancytopenia (deficiency of erythrocytes, leukocytes, and thrombocytes)
2. Petechiae, purpura, bleeding, pallor, weakness, tachycardia, and fatigue

#### C. Interventions

1. Prepare the child for bone marrow transplantation if planned.
2. Administer immunosuppressive medications as prescribed; anti-lymphocyte

globulin or anti-thymocyte globulin may be prescribed to suppress the autoimmune response.

3. Colony-stimulating factors may be prescribed to enhance bone marrow production.
4. Corticosteroids and cyclosporine (Sandimmune) may be prescribed.
5. Administer blood transfusions if prescribed and monitor for transfusion reactions.

## IV. Hemophilia

### A. Description

1. *Hemophilia* refers to a group of bleeding disorders resulting from a deficiency of specific coagulation proteins.
2. Identifying the specific coagulation deficiency is important so that definitive treatment with the specific replacement agent can be implemented; aggressive replacement therapy is initiated to prevent the chronic crippling effects from joint bleeding.
3. The most common types are factor VIII deficiency (hemophilia A or classic hemophilia) and factor IX deficiency (hemophilia B or Christmas disease) (Box 37-3).

#### BOX 37-3 Types of Hemophilia

***Hemophilia A (Classic Hemophilia):*** Results from deficiency of factor VIII

***Hemophilia B (Christmas Disease):*** Results from deficiency of factor IX

4. Hemophilia is transmitted as an X-linked recessive disorder (it may also occur as a result of a gene mutation).
5. Carrier females pass on the defect to affected males; female offspring are rarely born with the disorder, but may be if they inherit an affected gene from their mother and are offspring of a father with hemophilia.
6. The primary treatment is replacement of the missing clotting factor; additional medications, such as agents to relieve pain or corticosteroids, may be prescribed depending on the source of bleeding from the disorder. ▲

#### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Abnormal bleeding in response to trauma or surgery (sometimes is detected after circumcision)
2. Epistaxis (nosebleeds)
3. Joint bleeding causing pain, tenderness, swelling, and limited range of motion
4. Tendency to bruise easily
5. Results of tests that measure platelet function are normal; results of tests that measure clotting factor function may be abnormal.

#### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor for bleeding and maintain bleeding precautions. ▲
2. Prepare to administer factor VIII concentrates, either produced through genetic engineering (recombinant) or derived from pooled plasma, as prescribed.
3. DDAVP (1-deamino-8-D-arginine vasopressin), a synthetic form of vasopressin, increases plasma factor VIII and may be prescribed to treat mild hemophilia.

4. Monitor for joint pain; immobilize the affected extremity if joint pain occurs.
5. Assess neurological status (child is at risk for intracranial hemorrhage).
6. Monitor urine for hematuria.
7. Control joint bleeding by immobilization, elevation, and application of ice; apply pressure (15 minutes) for superficial bleeding.
8. Instruct the child and parents about the signs of internal bleeding.
9. Instruct parents in how to control the bleeding.
10. Instruct parents regarding activities for the child, emphasizing the avoidance of contact sports and the need for protective devices while learning to walk; assist in developing an appropriate exercise plan. ▲
11. Instruct the child to wear protective devices such as helmets and knee and elbow pads when participating in sports such as bicycling and skating. ▲

## V. von Willebrand's Disease

### A. Description

1. von Willebrand's disease is a **hereditary** bleeding disorder that occurs in males and females and is characterized by a deficiency of or a defect in a protein termed *von Willebrand factor*.
2. The disorder causes platelets to adhere to damaged endothelium; the von Willebrand factor protein also serves as a carrier protein for factor VIII.
3. It is characterized by an increased tendency to bleed from mucous membranes. ▲

### B. Assessment ▲

1. Epistaxis
2. Gum bleeding
3. Easy bruising
4. Excessive menstrual bleeding

### C. Interventions

1. Treatment and care are similar to measures implemented for hemophilia, including administration of clotting factors.
2. Provide emotional support to the child and parents, especially if the child is experiencing an episode of bleeding.

 A child with a bleeding disorder needs to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## VI. $\beta$ -Thalassemia Major

### A. Description (Box 37-4)

#### **BOX 37-4** Types of $\beta$ -Thalassemia

***Thalassemia Minor:*** Asymptomatic silent carrier case

***Thalassemia Trait:*** Produces mild microcytic anemia

***Thalassemia Intermedia:*** Manifested as splenomegaly and moderate to severe anemia

***Thalassemia Major:*** Results in severe anemia requiring transfusion support to sustain life (also known as Cooley's anemia)

1.  $\beta$ -Thalassemia major is an autosomal recessive disorder characterized by the reduced production of one of the globin chains in the synthesis of hemoglobin (both parents must be carriers to produce a child with  $\beta$ -thalassemia major).
2. The incidence is highest in individuals of Mediterranean descent, such as Italians, Greeks, Syrians, and their offspring. ▲
3. Treatment is supportive; the goal of therapy is to maintain normal hemoglobin levels by the administration of blood transfusions.
4. Bone marrow transplantation may be offered as an alternative therapy.
5. A splenectomy may be performed in a child with severe splenomegaly who requires repeated transfusions (assists in relieving abdominal pressure and may increase the life span of supplemental red blood cells).

## **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Frontal bossing
2. Maxillary prominence
3. Wide-set eyes with a flattened nose
4. Greenish yellow skin tone
5. Hepatosplenomegaly
6. Severe anemia
7. Microcytic, hypochromic red blood cells

## **C. Interventions**

1. Administer blood transfusions as prescribed; monitor for transfusion reactions.
2. Monitor for iron overload; chelation therapy with Exjade or deferoxamine

(Desferal) may be prescribed to treat iron overload and to prevent organ damage from the elevated levels of iron caused by the multiple transfusion therapy.

3. If the child has had a splenectomy, instruct parents to report any signs of infection because of the risk of sepsis.
4. Ensure that parents understand the importance of the child receiving pneumococcal and meningococcal vaccines in addition to an annual influenza vaccine and the regularly scheduled vaccines.
5. Provide genetic counseling to parents.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The child with hemophilia is at risk for bleeding. If the child experienced recent trauma, the nurse should place the child on bleeding precautions and monitor for bleeding. This is the priority intervention. The nurse should monitor vital signs and monitor for joint pain. Joint bleeding should be controlled by immobilization, elevation, and application of ice. Pressure should be applied for 15 minutes for any superficial bleeding. The neurological status should be checked because the child is at risk for intracranial hemorrhage, and the nurse should monitor the urine for hematuria. Blood replacement factors may be prescribed.

### **Reference**

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1443-1444.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

374. The nurse analyzes the laboratory results of a child with hemophilia. The nurse understands that which result will **most likely** be abnormal in this child?
1. Platelet count
  2. Hematocrit level
  3. Hemoglobin level
  4. Partial thromboplastin time
375. The nurse is providing home care instructions to the parents of a 10-year-old child with hemophilia. Which sport activity should the nurse suggest for this child?
1. Soccer
  2. Basketball
  3. Swimming
  4. Field hockey
376. The nursing student is presenting a clinical conference and discusses the cause of  $\beta$ -thalassemia. The nursing student informs the group that a child at greatest risk of developing this disorder is which one?
1. A child of Mexican descent
  2. A child of Mediterranean descent
  3. A child whose intake of iron is extremely poor
  4. A breast-fed child of a mother with chronic anemia

**377.** A child with  $\beta$ -thalassemia is receiving long-term blood transfusion therapy for the treatment of the disorder. Chelation therapy is prescribed as a result of too much iron from the transfusions. Which medication should the nurse anticipate to be prescribed?

1. Fragmin
2. Meropenem (Merrem)
3. Metoprolol (Toprol-XL)
4. Deferoxamine (Desferal)

**378.** The clinic nurse instructs parents of a child with sickle cell anemia about the precipitating factors related to sickle cell crisis. Which, if identified by the parents as a precipitating factor, indicates the **need for further instructions**?

1. Stress
2. Trauma
3. Infection
4. Fluid overload

**379.** A 10-year-old child with hemophilia A has slipped on the ice and bumped his knee. The nurse should prepare to administer which prescription?

1. Injection of factor X
2. Intravenous infusion of iron
3. Intravenous infusion of factor VIII
4. Intramuscular injection of iron using the Z-track method

**380.** The nurse is instructing the parents of a child with iron deficiency anemia regarding the administration of a liquid oral iron supplement. Which instruction should the nurse tell the parents?

1. Administer the iron at mealtimes.
2. Administer the iron through a straw.
3. Mix the iron with cereal to administer.
4. Add the iron to formula for easy administration.

**381.** Laboratory studies are performed for a child suspected to have iron deficiency anemia. The nurse reviews the laboratory results, knowing that which result indicates this type of anemia?

1. Elevated hemoglobin level
2. Decreased reticulocyte count
3. Elevated red blood cell count
4. Red blood cells that are microcytic and hypochromic

**382.** The nurse is reviewing a health care provider's prescriptions for a child with sickle cell anemia who was admitted to the hospital for the treatment of vaso-occlusive crisis. Which prescriptions documented in the child's record should the nurse question? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Restrict fluid intake.
2. Position for comfort.
3. Avoid strain on painful joints.

4. Apply nasal oxygen at 2 L/minute.
5. Provide a high-calorie, high-protein diet.
6. Give meperidine (Demerol), 25 mg intravenously, every 4 hours for pain.

**383.** The nurse is conducting staff in-service training on von Willebrand's disease.

Which should the nurse include as characteristics of von Willebrand's disease?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Easy bruising occurs.
2. Gum bleeding occurs.
3. It is a hereditary bleeding disorder.
4. Treatment and care are similar to that for hemophilia.
5. It is characterized by extremely high creatinine levels.
6. The disorder causes platelets to adhere to damaged endothelium.

## ANSWERS

**374. 4**

**Rationale:** Hemophilia refers to a group of bleeding disorders resulting from a deficiency of specific coagulation proteins. Results of tests that measure platelet function are normal; results of tests that measure clotting factor function may be abnormal. Abnormal laboratory results in hemophilia indicate a prolonged partial thromboplastin time. The platelet count, hemoglobin level, and hematocrit level are normal in hemophilia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, laboratory tests used to monitor hemophilia, and note the **strategic words**, *most likely*. Recalling the pathophysiology associated with this disorder and recalling that it results from a

deficiency of specific coagulation proteins will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Laboratory tests used to monitor **hemophilia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1442.

**375. 3**

**Rationale:** Hemophilia refers to a group of bleeding disorders resulting from a deficiency of specific coagulation proteins. Children with hemophilia need to avoid contact sports and to take precautions such as wearing elbow and knee pads and helmets with other sports. The safe activity for them is swimming.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a safe activity. Recalling that bleeding is a major concern in this condition, eliminate options 1, 2, and 4 because these activities are **comparable or alike** in that they present the potential for injury.

**Review:** Home care and safety instructions for **hemophilia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Clotting; Safety

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1253-1254.

**376. 2**

**Rationale:**  $\beta$ -Thalassemia is an autosomal recessive disorder characterized by the reduced production of one of the globin chains in the synthesis of hemoglobin (both parents must be carriers to produce a child with  $\beta$ -thalassemia major). This disorder is found primarily in individuals of Mediterranean descent. Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the child at greatest risk for  $\beta$ -thalassemia major. Think about the pathophysiology of the disorder. Remember that this disorder occurs primarily in individuals of Mediterranean descent.

**Review:  $\beta$ -Thalassemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1434, 1436-1437.

**377. 4**

**Rationale:**  $\beta$ -Thalassemia is an autosomal recessive disorder characterized by the reduced production of one of the globin chains in the synthesis of hemoglobin (both parents must be carriers to produce a child with  $\beta$ -thalassemia major). The major complication of long-term transfusion therapy is hemosiderosis. To prevent organ damage from too much iron, chelation therapy with either Exjade or deferoxamine (Desferal) may be prescribed. Deferoxamine is classified as an antidote for acute iron toxicity. Fragmin is an anticoagulant used as prophylaxis for postoperative

deep vein thrombosis. Meropenem is an antibiotic. Metoprolol is a  $\beta$ -blocker used to treat hypertension.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, chelation therapy. Specific knowledge regarding the antidote for iron toxicity is needed to answer this question. One way to remember this is to look at the prefix in the generic name of the medication used to treat iron overdose. Remember to associate *defer-* and removal of iron.

**Review:** **Chelation therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1438.

### 378. 4

**Rationale:** Sickle cell crises are acute exacerbations of the disease, which vary considerably in severity and frequency; these include vaso-occlusive crisis, splenic sequestration, hyperhemolytic crisis, and aplastic crisis. Sickle cell crisis may be precipitated by infection, dehydration, hypoxia, trauma, or physical or emotional stress. The mother of a child with sickle cell disease should encourage fluid intake of 1 1/2 to 2 times the daily requirement to prevent dehydration.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Recalling that fluids are a main component of treatment in sickle cell anemia to prevent crisis will direct you to the correct option. Remember that fluids are required to prevent dehydration.

**Review:** Precipitating factors of **sickle cell crisis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**References:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 1248; Swearingen (2012), pp. 606-607.

### 379. 3

**Rationale:** *Hemophilia* refers to a group of bleeding disorders resulting from a deficiency of specific coagulation proteins. The primary treatment is replacement of the missing clotting factor; additional medications, such as agents to relieve pain, may be prescribed depending on the source of bleeding from the disorder. A child with hemophilia A is at risk for joint bleeding after a fall. Factor VIII would be prescribed intravenously to replace the missing clotting factor and minimize the bleeding. Factor X and iron are not used to treat children with hemophilia A.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the child's diagnosis. Eliminate options 2 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike**. Recalling that a child with hemophilia A is missing clotting factor VIII will direct you to the correct option from those remaining.

**Review:** **Hemophilia A**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 1254.

**380. 2**

**Rationale:** In iron deficiency anemia, iron stores are depleted, resulting in a decreased supply of iron for the manufacture of hemoglobin in red blood cells. An oral iron supplement should be administered through a straw or medicine dropper placed at the back of the mouth because the iron stains the teeth. The parents should be instructed to brush or wipe the child's teeth or have the child brush the teeth after administration. Iron is administered between meals because absorption is decreased if there is food in the stomach. Iron requires an acid environment to facilitate its absorption in the duodenum. Iron is not added to formula or mixed with cereal or other food items.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and because medication should not be added to formula and food. Next, note the word *liquid* in the question. This should assist you in recalling that iron in liquid form stains teeth.

**Review:** Administration of oral liquid **iron**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1424.

**381. 4**

**Rationale:** In iron deficiency anemia, iron stores are depleted, resulting in a decreased supply of iron for the

manufacture of hemoglobin in red blood cells. The results of a complete blood cell count in children with iron deficiency anemia show decreased hemoglobin levels and microcytic and hypochromic red blood cells. The red blood cell count is decreased. The reticulocyte count is usually normal or slightly elevated.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, laboratory findings. Eliminate options 1 and 3 first, knowing that the hemoglobin and red blood cell counts would be decreased. From the remaining options, select the correct option over option 2 because of the relationship between anemia and red blood cells.

**Review:** Laboratory findings associated with **iron deficiency anemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1422.

❖ **382. 1, 6**

**Rationale:** Sickle cell anemia is one of a group of diseases termed *hemoglobinopathies*, in which hemoglobin A is partly or completely replaced by abnormal sickle hemoglobin S. It is caused by the inheritance of a gene for a structurally abnormal portion of the hemoglobin chain. Hemoglobin S is sensitive to changes in the oxygen content of the red blood cell; insufficient oxygen causes the cells to assume a sickle shape, and the cells become rigid and clumped together, obstructing capillary blood flow. Oral and intravenous fluids are an important part of treatment. Meperidine (Demerol) is not recommended for a child with sickle cell disease because of the risk for normeperidine-induced seizures. Normeperidine, a metabolite of meperidine, is a central nervous system stimulant that produces anxiety, tremors, myoclonus, and generalized seizures when it accumulates with repetitive dosing. The

nurse would question the prescription for restricted fluids and meperidine for pain control. Positioning for comfort, avoiding strain on painful joints, oxygen, and a high-calorie and high-protein diet are also important parts of the treatment plan.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, identifying the prescriptions that need to be questioned and on the pathophysiology that occurs in sickle cell disease. Recalling that fluids are an important component of the treatment plan will assist in identifying that a fluid restriction prescription would need to be questioned. Also, recalling the effects of meperidine will assist in identifying that this prescription needs to be questioned.

**Review:** Sickle cell crisis

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1432-1433.

❖ 383. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

**Rationale:** von Willebrand's disease is a hereditary bleeding disorder characterized by a deficiency of or a defect in a protein termed *von Willebrand factor*. The disorder causes platelets to adhere to damaged endothelium. It is characterized by an increased tendency to bleed from mucous membranes. Assessment findings include epistaxis, gum bleeding, easy bruising, and excessive menstrual bleeding. An elevated creatinine level is not associated with this disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessment findings, and on the child's diagnosis. Recalling that this

disorder is characterized by an increased tendency to bleed from mucous membranes will direct you to the correct options.

**Review:** von Willebrand's disease

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Hematological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1446-1448.



## CHAPTER 38

# Oncological Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A child with a diagnosis of leukemia receives a report from the laboratory indicating that the white blood cell count is 2000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> and the neutrophil count is 800 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 436.*

### I. Leukemia

#### A. Description

1. Leukemia is a malignant increase in the number of leukocytes, usually at an immature stage, in the bone marrow.
2. In leukemia, proliferating immature white blood cells (WBCs) depress the bone marrow, causing anemia from decreased erythrocytes, infection from neutropenia, and bleeding from decreased platelet production (thrombocytopenia). ▲
3. The cause is unknown; it seems to involve genetic damage of cells, leading to the

transformation of cells from a normal state to a malignant state.

4. Risk factors include genetic, viral, immunological, and environmental factors and exposure to radiation, chemicals, and medications.
5. Acute lymphocytic leukemia is the most frequent type of cancer in children.
6. Leukemia is more common in boys than girls after 1 year of age.
7. Prognosis depends on various factors such as age at diagnosis, initial white blood cell count, type of cell involved, and sex of the child.
8. Treatment involves chemotherapy and possibly radiation and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation.
9. The phases of chemotherapy include induction, which achieves a complete remission or disappearance of leukemic cells; intensification or consolidation therapy, which decreases the tumor burden further; central nervous system prophylactic therapy, which prevents leukemic cells from invading the central nervous system; and maintenance, which serves to maintain the remission phase.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Infiltration of the bone marrow by malignant cells causes fever, pallor, fatigue, anorexia, hemorrhage (usually petechiae), and bone and joint pain; pathological fractures can occur as a result of bone marrow invasion with leukemic cells. ▲
2. Signs of infection occur as a result of neutropenia.
3. The child experiences hepatosplenomegaly and lymphadenopathy.
4. The child has a normal, elevated, or low white blood cell count, depending on the presence of infection or of immature versus mature white blood cells. ▲

5. The child has decreased hemoglobin and hematocrit levels.
6. The child has a decreased platelet count.
7. A positive bone marrow biopsy specimen identifies leukemic blast (immature)–phase cells. ▲
8. Signs of increased intracranial pressure occur as a result of central nervous system involvement (Box 38-1).

### **BOX 38-1**

### **Manifestations of Increased Intracranial Pressure in Infants and Children**

#### **Infants**

- Tense, bulging fontanel
- Separated cranial sutures
- Macewen's sign (cracked-pot sound on percussion)
- Irritability
- High-pitched cry
- Increased head circumference
- Distended scalp veins
- Poor feeding
- Crying when disturbed
- Setting sun sign (eyes appear to look only downward, with the sclera prominent over the iris)

#### **Children**

- Headache
- Nausea
- Forceful vomiting
- Diplopia; blurred vision
- Seizures

### **Personality and Behavior Signs**

- Irritability, restlessness
- Indifference, drowsiness
- Decline in school performance
- Diminished physical activity and motor performance
- Increased sleeping
- Inability to follow simple commands
- Lethargy

### **Late Signs**

- Bradycardia
- Decreased motor response to command
- Decreased sensory response to painful stimuli
- Alterations in pupil size and reaction
- Decerebrate (extension) or decorticate (flexion) posturing
- Cheyne-Stokes respirations
- Papilledema

- Decreased consciousness
- Coma

From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

9. The child shows signs of cranial nerve (cranial nerve VII, or the facial nerve, is most commonly affected) or spinal nerve involvement; clinical manifestations relate to the area involved.
10. Clinical manifestations indicate the invasion of leukemic cells to the kidneys, testes, prostate, ovaries, gastrointestinal tract, and lungs.

### C. Infection (Box 38-2) ▲

#### **BOX 38-2** Protecting the Child from Infection

Initiate protective isolation procedures.

Maintain frequent and thorough hand-washing.

Maintain the child in a private room with high-efficiency particulate air filtration or laminar air flow system if possible.

Ensure that the child's room is cleaned daily.

Use strict aseptic technique for all nursing procedures.

Limit the number of caregivers entering the child's room, and ensure that anyone entering the child's room wears a mask.

Keep supplies for the child separate from supplies for other children.

Reduce exposure to environmental organisms by eliminating raw fruits and vegetables from the diet and not allowing fresh flowers in the child's room and by not leaving standing water in the child's room.

Assist the child with daily bathing, using antimicrobial soap.

Assist the child to perform oral hygiene frequently.

Assess for signs and symptoms of infection.

Monitor temperature, pulse, and blood pressure.

Change wound dressings daily, and inspect wounds for redness, swelling, or drainage.

Assess urine for color and cloudiness.

Assess the skin and oral mucous membranes for signs of infection.

Auscultate lung sounds.

Encourage the child to cough and deep-breathe.

Monitor white blood cell and neutrophil counts.

Notify the health care provider if signs of infection are present, and prepare to obtain specimens for culture of open lesions, urine, and sputum.

Initiate a bowel program to prevent constipation and rectal trauma.

Avoid invasive procedures such as injections, rectal temperatures, and urinary catheterization.

Administer antibiotic, antifungal, and antiviral medications as prescribed.

Administer granulocyte colony-stimulating factor as prescribed.

Instruct parents to keep the child away from crowds and individuals with infections.

Instruct parents that the child should not receive immunization with a live virus (measles, mumps, rubella, polio) because if the immune system is depressed, the attenuated virus can result in a life-threatening infection; also, the child should not receive the varicella vaccine.

The Salk (inactivated) vaccine for poliomyelitis may be administered.

Instruct parents to inform the teacher that they should be notified immediately if a case of a communicable disease occurs in another child at school.

1. Infection can occur through self-contamination or cross-contamination.
2. The most common sites for infection are the skin (any break in the skin is a potential site of infection), respiratory tract, and gastrointestinal tract.

#### D. Bleeding (Box 38-3) ▲

### **BOX 38-3** Protecting the Child from Bleeding

Examine the child for signs and symptoms of bleeding.

Handle the child gently.

Measure abdominal girth; an increase can indicate internal hemorrhage.

Instruct the child to use a soft toothbrush and avoid dental floss.

Provide soft foods that are cool to warm in temperature.

Avoid injections, if possible, to prevent trauma to the skin and bleeding.

Apply firm and gentle pressure to a needle stick site for at least 10 minutes.

Pad side rails and sharp corners of the bed and furniture.

Discourage the child from engaging in activities involving the use of objects that can be harmful.

Instruct the child to avoid constrictive or tight clothing.

Use caution when taking the blood pressure to prevent skin injury.

Instruct the child to avoid blowing his or her nose.

Avoid the use of rectal suppositories, enemas, and rectal thermometers.

Examine all body fluids and excrement for the presence of blood.

Count the number of pads or tampons used if the adolescent girl is menstruating.

Instruct the child about the signs and symptoms of bleeding.

Instruct parents to avoid administering nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs and products that contain aspirin to the child.

1. Platelet transfusions are generally reserved for active bleeding episodes that do not respond to local treatment and that may occur during induction or relapse therapy.

2. Packed red blood cells may be prescribed for a child with severe blood loss.

#### E. Fatigue and nutrition

1. Assist the parents and child in selecting a well-balanced diet.

2. Provide small meals that require little chewing and are not irritating to the oral mucosa.

3. If the child cannot take oral feedings, parenteral nutrition or enteral feedings may be prescribed.

4. Assist the child in self-care and mobility activities.
5. Allow adequate rest periods during care.
6. Do not perform nursing care activities unless they are essential.

## F. Chemotherapy

1. Monitor for severe bone marrow suppression; during the period of greatest bone marrow suppression (the nadir), blood cell counts are extremely low. ▲
2. Monitor for infection and bleeding.
3. Protect the child from life-threatening infections. ▲
4. Monitor for nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
5. Administer stool softeners as prescribed.
6. Provide rectal hygiene gently as needed.
7. Administer antiemetics before beginning chemotherapy as prescribed.
8. Monitor for signs of dehydration.
9. Monitor for signs of hemorrhagic cystitis.
10. Monitor for signs of peripheral neuropathy.
11. Assess oral mucous membranes for mucositis; administer frequent mouth rinses per agency procedure and as prescribed to promote healing or prevent infection (local oral anesthetics may also be prescribed).
12. Instruct the parents and child in the signs and symptoms to watch for after chemotherapy and when to notify the health care provider (HCP).
13. Inform the parents and child that hair loss may occur from chemotherapy (hair regrows in about 3 to 6 months and may be a slightly different color or texture).

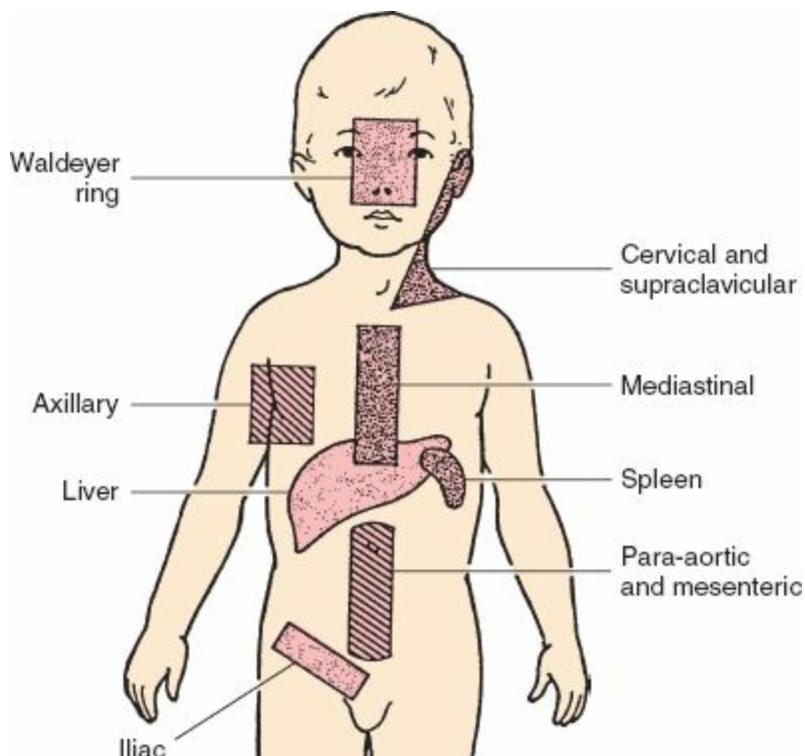
14. Instruct the parents and child about the care of a central venous access device, as necessary (see [Chapter 14](#)).
15. Listen to the child and family, and encourage them to verbalize their feelings and express their concerns.
16. Introduce the family to other families of children with cancer.
17. Consult social services and chaplains as necessary.

**⚠** Monitor a child receiving chemotherapy closely for signs of infection. Infection is a major cause of death in the immunosuppressed child.

## II. Hodgkin's Disease

### A. Description

1. Hodgkin's disease (a type of lymphoma) is a malignancy of the lymph nodes that originates in a single lymph node or a single chain of nodes ([Fig. 38-1](#)).





**FIGURE 38-1** Main areas of lymphadenopathy and organ involvement in Hodgkin's disease. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

2. The disease predictably metastasizes to nonnodal or extralymphatic sites, especially the spleen, liver, bone marrow, lungs, and mediastinum.
3. Hodgkin's disease is characterized by the presence of Reed-Sternberg cells noted in a lymph node biopsy specimen. ▲
4. Peak incidence is in mid-adolescence.
5. Possible causes include viral infections and previous exposure to alkylating chemical agents.
6. The prognosis is excellent, with long-term survival rates depending on the stage of the disease.
7. The primary treatment modalities are radiation and chemotherapy; each may be used alone or in combination, depending on the clinical stage of the disease.

**B. Assessment** ▲

1. Painless enlargement of lymph nodes
2. Enlarged, firm, nontender, movable nodes in the supraclavicular area; in children, the "sentinel" node located near the left clavicle may be the first enlarged node
3. Nonproductive cough as a result of mediastinal lymphadenopathy
4. Abdominal pain as a result of enlarged retroperitoneal nodes
5. Advanced lymph node and extralymphatic involvement that may cause systemic

symptoms, such as a low-grade or intermittent fever, anorexia, nausea, weight loss, night sweats, and pruritus

6. Positive biopsy specimen of a lymph node (presence of Reed-Sternberg cells) and positive bone marrow biopsy specimen ▲
7. Computed tomography scan of the liver, spleen, and bone marrow may be done to detect metastasis.

### C. Interventions ▲

1. For early stages without mediastinal node involvement, the treatment of choice is extensive external radiation of the involved lymph node regions.
2. With more extensive disease, radiation and multidrug chemotherapy are used.
3. Monitor for drug-induced pancytopenia and an abnormal depression of all the cellular components of the blood, which increases the risk for infection, bleeding, and anemia.
4. Monitor for signs of infection and bleeding.
5. Protect the child from infection.
6. Monitor for side/adverse effects related to chemotherapy or radiation; the most common side effect of extensive irradiation is malaise, which can be difficult for older children and adolescents to tolerate physically and psychologically ([Table 38-1](#)).

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## **TABLE 38-1 Side/Adverse Effects of Radiation Therapy and Nursing Interventions**

Body Area and Side/Adverse Effects	Interventions
<b>Gastrointestinal Tract</b>	
Anorexia	Encourage fluids and foods as best tolerated Provide small, frequent meals Monitor for weight loss
Nausea, vomiting	Administer antiemetics around the clock Monitor for dehydration
Mucosal ulceration	Provide soothing oral hygiene and prescribed mouth rinses Topical anesthetic may be prescribed
Diarrhea	Administer antispasmodics and antidiarrheal preparations as prescribed Monitor for dehydration
<b>Skin</b>	
Alopecia (hair loss)	Introduce idea of a wig Provide scalp hygiene Stress the need for head covering in cold weather
Dry or moist desquamation	Keep skin clean Wash skin daily, using a mild soap sparingly Do not remove skin markings for radiation Avoid exposure to the sun and other extreme temperature changes For dryness, apply lubricant as prescribed
<b>Urinary Bladder</b>	
Cystitis	Encourage fluid intake and frequent voiding Monitor for hematuria
<b>Bone Marrow</b>	
Myelosuppression	Monitor for fever Administer antibiotics as prescribed Avoid use of suppositories, enemas, and rectal temperatures Institute neutropenic or bleeding precautions as needed Monitor for signs of anemia

Adapted from Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby; and McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.

7. Monitor for nausea and vomiting, and administer antiemetics as prescribed.

### III. Nephroblastoma (Wilms' Tumor)

#### A. Description

1. Wilms' tumor is the most common intraabdominal and kidney tumor of childhood; it may manifest unilaterally and localized or bilaterally, sometimes with metastasis to other organs (Fig. 38-2). ▲



**FIGURE 38-2** Wilms' tumor. (From Kumar V, Cotran RS, Robbins SL: *Basic pathology*, ed 6, Philadelphia, 1997, Saunders.)

2. The peak incidence is 3 years of age.
3. Occurrence is associated with a genetic inheritance and with several congenital anomalies.
4. Therapeutic management includes a combined treatment of surgery (partial to total nephrectomy) and chemotherapy with or without radiation, depending on the clinical stage and the histological pattern of the tumor.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Swelling or mass within the abdomen (mass is characteristically firm, nontender,

confined to one side, and deep within the flank) ▲

2. Urinary retention or hematuria or both
3. Anemia (caused by hemorrhage within the tumor)
4. Pallor, anorexia, and lethargy (resulting from anemia)
5. Hypertension (caused by secretion of excess amounts of renin by the tumor)
6. Weight loss and fever
7. Symptoms of lung involvement, such as dyspnea, shortness of breath, and pain in the chest, if metastasis has occurred

#### C. Preoperative interventions

1. Monitor vital signs, particularly blood pressure.
2. Avoid palpation of the abdomen; place a sign at bedside that reads, Do Not Palpate Abdomen. ▲
3. Measure abdominal girth at least once daily.

#### D. Postoperative interventions

1. Monitor temperature and blood pressure closely.
2. Monitor for signs of hemorrhage and infection.
3. Monitor strict intake and urine output closely.
4. Monitor for abdominal distention; monitor bowel sounds and other signs of gastrointestinal activity because of the risk for intestinal obstruction.

**⚠** Avoid palpation of the abdomen in a child with Wilms' tumor and be cautious when bathing, moving, or handling the child. It is important to keep the encapsulated tumor intact. Rupture of the tumor can cause the cancer cells to spread throughout the abdomen, lymph system, and bloodstream.

## IV. Neuroblastoma

### A. Description

1. Neuroblastoma is a tumor that originates from the embryonic neural crest cells that normally give rise to the adrenal medulla and the sympathetic ganglia.
2. Most tumors develop in the adrenal gland or the retroperitoneal sympathetic chain; other sites may be within the head, neck, chest, or pelvis.
3. Most children present with neuroblastoma before 10 years of age.
4. Most presenting signs are caused by the tumor compressing adjacent normal tissue and organs. 🟩
5. Diagnostic evaluation is aimed at locating the primary site of the tumor; analyzing the breakdown products excreted in the urine, namely vanillylmandelic acid, homovanillic acid, dopamine, and norepinephrine, permits detection of suspected tumor before and after medical-surgical intervention.
6. The prognosis is poor because of the frequency of invasiveness of the tumor and because, in most cases, a diagnosis is not made until after metastasis has occurred; the younger the child at diagnosis, the better the survival rate.
7. Therapeutic management
  - a. Surgery is performed to remove as much of the tumor as possible and to obtain biopsy specimens; in the early stages, complete surgical removal of the tumor is the treatment of choice.
  - b. Surgery usually is limited to biopsy in the later stages because of extensive

metastasis.

c. Radiation is used commonly with later stage disease and provides palliation for metastatic lesions in bones, lungs, liver, and brain.

d. Chemotherapy is used for extensive local or disseminated disease.

## **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Firm, nontender, irregular mass in the abdomen that crosses the midline
2. Urinary frequency or retention from compression of the kidney, ureter, or bladder
3. Lymphadenopathy, especially in the cervical and supraclavicular areas
4. Bone pain if skeletal involvement
5. Supraorbital ecchymosis, periorbital edema, and exophthalmos as a result of invasion of retrobulbar soft tissue
6. Pallor, weakness, irritability, anorexia, weight loss
7. Signs of respiratory impairment (thoracic lesion)
8. Signs of neurological impairment (intracranial lesion)
9. Paralysis from compression of the spinal cord

## **C. Preoperative interventions**

1. Monitor for signs and symptoms related to the location of the tumor.
2. Provide emotional support to the child and parents.

## **D. Postoperative interventions**

1. Monitor for postoperative complications related to the location (organ) of the surgery.
2. Monitor for complications related to chemotherapy or radiation if prescribed.

3. Provide support to the parents and encourage them to express their feelings; many parents feel guilt for not having recognized signs in the child earlier.
4. Refer parents to appropriate community services.

## V. Osteosarcoma (Osteogenic Sarcoma)

### A. Description

1. Osteosarcoma is the most common bone cancer in children; it is also known as *osteogenic sarcoma* (Fig. 38-3). ▲



**FIGURE 38-3** Osteosarcoma. (From Cotran RS, Kumar V, Collins T: *Robbins' pathologic basis of disease*, ed 6, Philadelphia, 1999, Saunders.)

2. Cancer usually is found in the metaphysis of long bones, especially in the lower

extremities, with most tumors occurring in the femur.

3. The peak age of incidence is between 10 and 25 years.
4. Symptoms in the earliest stage are almost always attributed to extremity injury or normal growing pains.
5. Treatment may include surgical resection (limb salvage procedure) to save a limb or remove affected tissue, or amputation.
6. Chemotherapy is used to treat the cancer and may be used before and after surgery.

## **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Localized pain at the affected site (may be severe or dull) that may be attributed to trauma or the vague complaint of “growing pains”; pain often is relieved by a flexed position.
2. Palpable mass
3. Limping if weight-bearing limb is affected
4. Progressive limited range of motion and the child’s curtailing of physical activity
5. Child may be unable to hold heavy objects because of their weight and resultant pain in the affected extremity.
6. Pathological fractures occur at the tumor site.

## **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Prepare the child and family for prescribed treatment modalities, which may include surgical resection by limb salvage to remove affected tissue, amputation, and chemotherapy.

2. Communicate honestly with the child and family and provide support.
3. Prepare for prosthetic fitting as necessary.
4. Assist the child in dealing with problems of self-image.
5. Instruct the child and parents about the potential development of phantom limb pain that may occur after amputation, characterized by tingling, itching, and a painful sensation in the area where the limb was amputated.

## VI. Brain Tumors

### A. Description

1. An infratentorial (below the tentorium cerebelli) tumor, the most common brain tumor, is located in the posterior third of the brain (primarily in the cerebellum or brainstem) and accounts for the frequency of symptoms resulting from increased intracranial pressure (ICP).
2. A supratentorial tumor is located within the anterior two thirds of the brain—mainly the cerebrum.
3. The signs and symptoms of a brain tumor depend on its anatomical location and size and, to some extent, the age of the child; a number of tests may be used in the neurological evaluation, but the most common diagnostic procedure is magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), which determines the location and extent of the tumor.
4. Therapeutic management includes surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy; the treatment of choice is total removal of the tumor without residual neurological damage.

## B. Assessment

1. Headache that is worse on awakening and improves during the day
2. Vomiting that is unrelated to feeding or eating
3. Ataxia
4. Seizures
5. Behavioral changes
6. Clumsiness; awkward gait or difficulty walking
7. Diplopia
8. Facial weakness

 Monitor for signs of increased ICP in a child with a brain tumor and after a craniotomy. If signs of increased ICP occur, notify the HCP immediately.

## C. Preoperative interventions

1. Perform a neurological assessment at least every 4 hours.
2. Institute seizure precautions and safety measures.
3. Assess weight loss and nutritional status.
4. Shave the child's head as prescribed (provide a favorite cap or hat for the child); shaving the head may also be done in the surgical suite.
5. Prepare the child as much as possible; tell the child that he or she will wake up with a large head dressing.

## D. Postoperative interventions

1. Assess neurological and motor function and level of consciousness.

2. Monitor temperature closely, which may be elevated because of hypothalamus or brainstem involvement during surgery; maintain a cooling blanket by the bedside.
3. Monitor for signs of respiratory infection.
4. Monitor for signs of meningitis (opisthotonos, Kernig's and Brudzinski's signs).
5. Monitor for signs of increased ICP (see [Box 38-1](#); see also [Chapter 45](#)).
6. Monitor for hemorrhage, checking the back of the head dressing for posterior pooling of blood; mark drainage edges with marker, reinforce dressing if needed, do not change dressing without a specific health care provider prescription.
7. Assess pupillary response; sluggish, dilated, or unequal pupils are reported immediately because they may indicate increased ICP and potential brainstem herniation.
8. Monitor for colorless drainage on the dressing or from the ears or nose, which indicates cerebrospinal fluid and should be reported immediately; assess for the presence of glucose in the drainage (dipstick).
9. Assess the HCP's prescription for positioning, including the degree of neck flexion ([Box 38-4](#)).

#### **BOX 38-4** Positioning after Craniotomy

Assess the health care provider's prescription for positioning, including the degree of neck flexion.

If a large tumor has been removed, the child is not placed on the operative side because the brain may shift suddenly to that cavity.

In an infratentorial procedure, the child usually is positioned flat and on either side.

In a supratentorial procedure, the head usually is elevated above the heart level to facilitate cerebrospinal fluid drainage and to decrease excessive blood flow to the brain to prevent hemorrhage.

Never place the child in Trendelenburg's position because it increases intracranial pressure and the risk of hemorrhage.

10. Monitor intravenous fluids closely.

11. Promote measures that prevent vomiting (vomiting increases intracranial pressure and the risk for incisional rupture).

12. Provide a quiet environment.

13. Administer analgesics as prescribed.

14. Provide emotional support to the child and parents, and promote optimal **growth** and development.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** A white blood cell count of 2000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> and a neutrophil count of 800 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> are indicative of a neutropenic state, and the child should be placed on neutropenic precautions. Interventions include a private room; good hand-washing technique or use of alcohol-based hand rub before entering the child's room and before touching the client or any belongings; ensuring the child's room and bathroom are cleaned a minimum of once per day; limiting the number of people entering the

child's room (no sick persons should enter the room); using strict aseptic technique for all invasive procedures; keeping fresh flowers and potted plants out of the room; and implementing a low-bacteria diet (no fresh fruits or vegetables or undercooked meats).

### ***Reference***

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1471.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**384.** The nurse is monitoring a child for bleeding after surgery for removal of a brain tumor. The nurse checks the head dressing for the presence of blood and notes a colorless drainage on the back of the dressing. Which intervention should the nurse perform **immediately**?

1. Reinforce the dressing.
2. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
3. Document the findings and continue to monitor.
4. Circle the area of drainage and continue to monitor.

**385.** A child undergoes surgical removal of a brain tumor. During the postoperative period, the nurse is monitoring the child and notes that the child is restless, the pulse rate is elevated, and the blood pressure has decreased significantly from the baseline value. The nurse suspects that the child is in shock. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

1. Notify the HCP.
2. Place the child in a supine position.
3. Place the child in Trendelenburg's position.
4. Increase the flow rate of the intravenous fluids.

**386.** The mother of a 4-year-old child tells the pediatric nurse that the child's abdomen seems to be swollen. During further assessment of subjective data, the mother tells the nurse that the child is eating well and that the activity level of the child is unchanged. The nurse, suspecting the possibility of Wilms' tumor, should avoid which during the physical assessment?

1. Palpating the abdomen for a mass
2. Assessing the urine for the presence of hematuria
3. Monitoring the temperature for the presence of fever
4. Monitoring the blood pressure for the presence of hypertension

**387.** The pediatric nurse specialist provides a teaching session to the nursing staff regarding osteosarcoma. Which statement by a member of the nursing staff indicates a **need for information**?

1. "The femur is the most common site of this sarcoma."
2. "The child does not experience pain at the primary tumor site."
3. "Limping, if a weight-bearing limb is affected, is a clinical manifestation."
4. "The symptoms of the disease in the early stage are almost always attributed to normal growing pains."

**388.** The nurse analyzes the laboratory values of a child with leukemia who is receiving chemotherapy. The nurse notes that the platelet count is 19,500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. On the basis of this laboratory result, which intervention should the nurse include in the plan of care?

1. Initiate bleeding precautions.
2. Monitor closely for signs of infection.
3. Monitor the temperature every 4 hours.
4. Initiate protective isolation precautions.

**389.** The nurse is monitoring a 3-year-old child for signs and symptoms of increased intracranial pressure (ICP) after a craniotomy. The nurse plans to monitor for which **early** sign or symptom of increased ICP?

1. Vomiting
2. Bulging anterior fontanel
3. Increasing head circumference
4. Complaints of a frontal headache

**390.** A 4-year-old child is admitted to the hospital for abdominal pain. The mother reports that the child has been pale and excessively tired and is bruising easily. On physical examination, lymphadenopathy and hepatosplenomegaly are noted. Diagnostic studies are being performed on the child because acute lymphocytic leukemia is suspected. The nurse understands that which diagnostic study should confirm this diagnosis?

1. Platelet count
2. Lumbar puncture
3. Bone marrow biopsy
4. White blood cell count

**391.** A 6-year-old child with leukemia is hospitalized and is receiving combination chemotherapy. Laboratory results indicate that the child is neutropenic, and protective isolation procedures are initiated. The grandmother of the child visits and brings a fresh bouquet of flowers picked from her garden and asks the nurse for a vase for the flowers. Which response should the nurse provide to the grandmother?

1. "I have a vase in the utility room, and I will get it for you."
2. "I will get the vase and wash it well before you put the flowers in it."
3. "The flowers from your garden are beautiful, but should not be placed in the child's room at this time."
4. "When you bring the flowers into the room, place them on the bedside stand as far away from the child as possible."

**392.** A diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease is suspected in a 12-year-old child seen in a clinic. Several diagnostic studies are performed to determine the presence of this disease. Which diagnostic test result will confirm the diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease?

1. Elevated vanillylmandelic acid urinary levels

2. The presence of blast cells in the bone marrow
3. The presence of Epstein-Barr virus in the blood
4. The presence of Reed-Sternberg cells in the lymph nodes

**393.** Which specific nursing interventions are implemented in the care of a child with leukemia who is at risk for infection? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Maintain the child in a semiprivate room.
2. Reduce exposure to environmental organisms.
3. Use strict aseptic technique for all procedures.
4. Ensure that anyone entering the child's room wears a mask.
5. Apply firm pressure to a needle stick area for at least 10 minutes.

**394.** The nurse is performing an assessment on a 10-year-old child suspected to have Hodgkin's disease. The nurse understands that which assessment findings are specifically characteristic of this disease? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Abdominal pain
2. Fever and malaise
3. Anorexia and weight loss
4. Painful, enlarged inguinal lymph nodes
5. Painless, firm, and movable adenopathy in the cervical area

## ANSWERS

**Rationale:** Colorless drainage on the dressing in a child after craniotomy indicates the presence of cerebrospinal fluid and should be reported to the HCP immediately. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not the immediate nursing intervention because they do not address the need for immediate intervention to prevent complications.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, *immediately*. Eliminate options 3 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and delay necessary intervention. Also, note the words *colorless drainage*. This should alert you quickly to the possibility of the presence of cerebrospinal fluid and direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Assessment of **cerebrospinal fluid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1491.

**385. 1**

**Rationale:** In the event of shock, the HCP is notified immediately before the nurse changes the child's position or increases intravenous fluids. After craniotomy, a child is never placed in the supine or Trendelenburg's position because it increases intracranial pressure (ICP) and the risk of bleeding. The head of the bed should be elevated. Increasing intravenous fluids can cause an increase in ICP.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care for the child following craniotomy, and note the **strategic words**, *most appropriate*. Eliminate options 2 and 3 because these positions could increase ICP. Eliminate option 4 because increasing the flow rate could also increase ICP. In addition, the nurse should not increase intravenous

fluids without a HCP's prescription.

**Review:** Care following surgical removal of a **brain tumor** or **craniotomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1492.

### 386. 1

**Rationale:** Wilms' tumor is the most common intraabdominal and kidney tumor of childhood. If Wilms' tumor is suspected, the tumor mass should not be palpated by the nurse. Excessive manipulation can cause seeding of the tumor and spread of the cancerous cells. Hematuria, fever, and hypertension are clinical manifestations associated with Wilms' tumor.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the action to avoid. Knowledge that this tumor is an intraabdominal and kidney tumor will assist in eliminating options 2 and 4 because of the relationship of these options to renal function. Next, thinking about the effect of palpating the tumor will direct you to the correct option from the remaining options.

**Review:** **Wilms' tumor**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1497-1498.

**387. 2**

**Rationale:** Osteosarcoma is the most common bone cancer in children. Cancer usually is found in the metaphysis of long bones, especially in the lower extremities, with most tumors occurring in the femur. Osteosarcoma is manifested clinically by progressive, insidious, and intermittent pain at the tumor site. By the time these children receive medical attention, they may be in considerable pain from the tumor. Options 1, 3, and 4 are accurate regarding osteosarcoma.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for information*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Knowledge that osteosarcoma is a malignant tumor of the bone will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Osteogenic sarcoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1496-1497.

**388. 1**

**Rationale:** Leukemia is a malignant increase in the number of leukocytes, usually at an immature stage, in the bone marrow. It affects the bone marrow, causing anemia from decreased erythrocytes, infection from neutropenia, and

bleeding from decreased platelet production (thrombocytopenia). If a child is severely thrombocytopenic and has a platelet count less than 20,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, bleeding precautions need to be initiated because of the increased risk of bleeding or hemorrhage. Precautions include limiting activity that could result in head injury, using soft toothbrushes, checking urine and stools for blood, and administering stool softeners to prevent straining with constipation. In addition, suppositories, enemas, and rectal temperatures are avoided. Options 2, 3, and 4 are related to the prevention of infection rather than bleeding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Noting that the platelet count is low and recall that a low platelet count places the child at risk for bleeding. In addition, note that options 2, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** because they relate to prevention of and monitoring for infection.

**Review:** Interventions for child at **risk for bleeding** and **leukemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1276-1277.

**389. 1**

**Rationale:** The brain, although well protected by the solid bony cranium, is highly susceptible to pressure that may accumulate within the enclosure. Volume and pressure must remain constant within the brain. A change in the size of the brain, such as occurs with edema or increased volume of intracranial blood or cerebrospinal fluid without a compensatory change, leads to an increase in intracranial pressure (ICP), which may be life-threatening. Vomiting, an early sign of increased ICP, can become excessive as pressure builds up and stimulates the medulla in the

brainstem, which houses the vomiting center. Children with open fontanels (posterior fontanel closes at 2 to 3 months; anterior fontanel closes at 12 to 18 months) compensate for ICP changes by skull expansion and subsequent bulging fontanels. When the fontanels have closed, nausea, excessive vomiting, diplopia, and headaches become pronounced, with headaches becoming more prevalent in older children.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*; focus on the age of the child, and use age as the key to principles of growth and development. Knowing when the fontanels close and focusing on the child's age as 3 years eliminates options 2 and 3. The subjective symptom of headache in option 4 is unreliable in a 3-year-old, so eliminate this option.

**Review:** **Increased intracranial pressure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1510-1511.

**390. 3**

**Rationale:** Leukemia is a malignant increase in the number of leukocytes, usually at an immature stage, in the bone marrow. The confirmatory test for leukemia is microscopic examination of bone marrow obtained by bone marrow aspirate and biopsy. A lumbar puncture may be done to look for blast cells in the spinal fluid that indicate central nervous system disease. The white blood cell count may be normal, high, or low in leukemia. An altered platelet count occurs as a result of the disease, but also may occur as a result of chemotherapy and does not confirm the

diagnosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, bone marrow biopsy and leukemia, and note the word *confirm* in the question. This word and knowledge that the bone marrow is affected in leukemia will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Confirmatory diagnostic tests for **leukemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1483.

### 391. 3

**Rationale:** Leukemia is a malignant increase in the number of leukocytes, usually at an immature stage, in the bone marrow. It affects the bone marrow, causing anemia from decreased erythrocytes, infection from neutropenia, and bleeding from decreased platelet production (thrombocytopenia). For a hospitalized neutropenic child, flowers or plants should not be kept in the room because standing water and damp soil harbor *Aspergillus* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, to which the child is susceptible. In addition, fresh fruits and vegetables harbor molds and should be avoided until the white blood cell count increases.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that options 1 and 2 are **comparable or alike** and should be eliminated first; these options indicate that it is acceptable to place the flowers in the child's room. From the remaining options, select the correct option over option 4 because this response maintains the protective isolation procedures required.

**Review:** **Protective isolation procedures** and **neutropenia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1470-1472; McKinney et al (2013), p. 1276.

**392. 4**

**Rationale:** Hodgkin's disease (a type of lymphoma) is a malignancy of the lymph nodes. The presence of giant, multinucleated cells (Reed-Sternberg cells) is the classic characteristic of this disease. Elevated levels of vanillylmandelic acid in the urine may be found in children with neuroblastoma. The presence of blast cells in the bone marrow indicates leukemia. Epstein-Barr virus is associated with infectious mononucleosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, confirmatory diagnostic tests for Hodgkin's disease. Think about the pathophysiology associated with Hodgkin's disease. Remember that the Reed-Sternberg cell is characteristic of Hodgkin's disease.

**Review: Hodgkin's disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1285-1286.

❖ 393. 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** Leukemia is a malignant increase in the number of leukocytes, usually at an immature stage, in the bone marrow. It affects the bone marrow, causing anemia from decreased erythrocytes, infection from neutropenia, and bleeding from decreased platelet production (thrombocytopenia). A common complication of treatment for leukemia is overwhelming infection secondary to neutropenia. Measures to prevent infection include the use of a private room, strict aseptic technique, restriction of visitors and health care personnel with active infection, strict hand-washing, ensuring that anyone entering the child's room wears a mask, and reducing exposure to environmental organisms by eliminating raw fruits and vegetables from the diet and fresh flowers from the child's room and by not leaving standing water in the child's room. Applying firm pressure to a needle stick area for at least 10 minutes is a measure to prevent bleeding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, preventing infection. Reading each intervention carefully and keeping this subject in mind will assist in answering the question. A semiprivate room places the child at risk for infection. Applying firm pressure to a needle stick area is related to preventing bleeding.

**Review:** **Leukemia** and **risk for infection**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1471.

❖ 394. 1, 5

**Rationale:** Hodgkin's disease (a type of lymphoma) is a malignancy of the lymph nodes. Specific clinical

manifestations associated with Hodgkin's disease include painless, firm, and movable adenopathy in the cervical and supraclavicular areas and abdominal pain as a result of enlarged retroperitoneal nodes. Hepatosplenomegaly also is noted. Although fever, malaise, anorexia, and weight loss are associated with Hodgkin's disease, these manifestations are seen in many disorders.

***Test-Taking Strategy:*** Note the words, *specifically characteristic* in the question. Eliminate options 2 and 3 first because these symptoms are **comparable or alike** in that they are general and vague. Recalling that painless adenopathy is associated with Hodgkin's disease and abdominal pain will direct you to the correct options.

***Review:*** Hodgkin's disease

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Analyzing

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Child Health—Oncological

***Priority Concepts:*** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

***Reference:*** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1285-1286.



## CHAPTER 39

# Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A child is diagnosed with phenylketonuria. What interventions should the nurse include in the plan of care?

*Answer located on p. 446.*

### **I. Fever**

#### **A. Description**

1. Fever is an abnormal body temperature elevation.
2. A child's temperature can vary depending on activity, emotional stress, disease processes, medications, type of clothing the child is wearing, and temperature of the environment.
3. Assessment findings associated with the fever provide important indications of the seriousness of the fever.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Temperature elevation: Normal temperature range for a child is 36.4° C to 37° C (97.5° F to 98.6° F); 38° C (100.4° F) is considered to be fever.
2. Flushed skin, warm to touch
3. Diaphoresis
4. Chills
5. Restlessness or lethargy

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs; take the temperature via the electronic route or per agency procedures.
2. Remove excess clothing and blankets, reduce the room temperature, and increase the air circulation; use other cooling measures such as the application of a cool compress to the forehead if appropriate.
3. Administer a sponge bath with tepid water for 20 to 30 minutes and gently squeeze water from a facecloth over the back and chest, and recheck the temperature 30 minutes after the bath; do not use alcohol because it can cause peripheral vasoconstriction.
4. Administer antipyretics such as ibuprofen (Motrin) as prescribed.
5. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) should not be administered, unless specifically prescribed, because of the risk of Reye's syndrome. ▲
6. Retake the temperature 30 to 60 minutes after the antipyretic is administered. ▲
7. Provide adequate fluid intake as tolerated and as prescribed.
8. Monitor for signs and symptoms that indicate dehydration and electrolyte

imbalances; monitor laboratory values.

9. Instruct the parents in how to take the temperature, how to medicate the child safely, and when it is necessary to call the health care provider (HCP).

## II. Dehydration

### A. Description

1. Dehydration is a common fluid and electrolyte imbalance in infants and children.
2. In infants and children, the organs that conserve water are immature, placing them at risk for fluid volume deficit.
3. Causes can include decreased fluid intake, diaphoresis, vomiting, diarrhea, diabetic ketoacidosis, and extensive burns or other serious injuries.

 **Infants and children are more vulnerable to fluid volume deficit because more of their body water is in the extracellular fluid compartment.**

### B. Assessment (Table 39-1)

**TABLE 39-1 Evaluating the Extent of Dehydration**

Clinical Signs	LEVEL OF DEHYDRATION		
	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Weight loss—infants	3%-5%	6%-9%	≥ 10%
Weight loss—children	3%-4%	6%-8%	10%
Pulse	Normal	Slightly increased	Very increased
Respiratory rate	Normal	Slight tachypnea (rapid)	Hyperpnea (deep and rapid)
Blood	Normal	Normal to orthostatic	Orthostatic to shock

pressure Behavior	Normal	(>.10 mm Hg change) Irritable, more thirsty	Hyperirritable to lethargic
Thirst	Slight	Moderate	Intense
Mucous membranes*	Normal	Dry	Parched
Tears	Present	Decreased	Absent; sunken eyes
Anterior fontanel	Normal	Normal to sunken	Sunken
External jugular vein	Visible when supine	Not visible except with supraclavicular pressure	Not visible even with supraclavicular pressure
Skin*	Capillary refill > 2 sec	Slowed capillary refill (2-4 sec [decreased turgor])	Very delayed capillary refill (> 4 sec) and tenting; skin cool, acrocyanotic or mottled
Urine specific gravity	> 1.020	> 1.020; oliguria	Oliguria or anuria

\*These signs are less prominent in the child who has hypernatremia.

Data from Jospe N, Forbes G: Fluids and electrolytes—clinical aspects, *Pediatr Rev* 17:395-403, 1996; and Steiner MJ, DeWalt DA, Byerley JS: Is this child dehydrated? *JAMA* 291:2746-2754, 2004. Table from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

### C. Interventions

1. Treat and eliminate the cause of the dehydration. ▲
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Monitor weight and monitor for changes, including fluid gains and losses. ▲
4. Monitor intake and output and urine for specific gravity.
5. Monitor level of consciousness.
6. Monitor skin turgor and mucous membranes for dryness.
7. For mild to moderate dehydration, provide oral rehydration therapy with Pedialyte or a similar rehydration solution as prescribed; avoid carbonated beverages because they are gas-producing and fluids that contain high amounts of

sugar, such as apple juice.

8. For severe dehydration, maintain NPO (nothing by mouth) status to place the bowel at rest and provide fluid and electrolyte replacement by the intravenous (IV) route as prescribed; if potassium is prescribed for IV administration, ensure that the child has voided before administering and has adequate renal function.
9. Reintroduce a normal diet when rehydration is achieved.
10. Provide instructions to the parents about the types and amounts of fluid to encourage, signs of dehydration, and indications of the need to notify the HCP.

### III. Phenylketonuria

#### A. Description

1. Phenylketonuria is a genetic disorder (autosomal recessive disorder) that results in central nervous system damage from toxic levels of phenylalanine (an essential amino acid) in the blood.
2. It is characterized by blood phenylalanine levels greater than 20 mg/dL (normal level is 1.2 to 3.4 mg/dL in newborns and 0.8 to 1.8 mg/dL thereafter).
3. All 50 states require routine screening of all newborns for phenylketonuria. ▲

#### B. Assessment

1. In all children
  - a. Digestive problems and vomiting
  - b. Seizures
  - c. Musty odor of the urine

**d. Mental retardation**

**2. In older children**

**a. Eczema**

**b. Hypertonia**

**c. Hypopigmentation of the hair, skin, and irises**

**d. Hyperactive behavior**

**C. Interventions** ▲

**1. Screening of newborn infants for phenylketonuria:** The infant should have begun formula or breast milk feeding before specimen collection.

**2. If initial screening is positive, a repeat test is performed, and further diagnostic evaluation is required to verify the diagnosis.**

**3. Rescreen newborns by 14 days of age if the initial screening was done before 48 hours of age.**

**4. If phenylketonuria is diagnosed, prepare to implement the following:**

**a. Restrict phenylalanine intake; high-protein foods (meats and dairy products) and aspartame are avoided because they contain large amounts of phenylalanine.**

**b. Monitor physical, neurological, and intellectual development.**

**c. Stress the importance of follow-up treatment.**

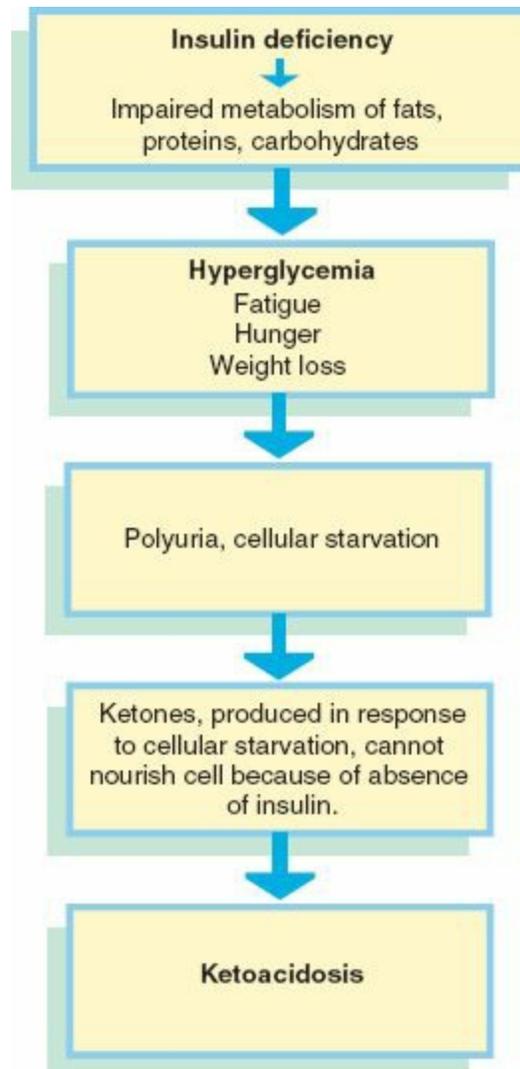
**d. Encourage the parents to express their feelings about the diagnosis and discuss the risk of phenylketonuria in future children.**

**e. Educate the parents about the use of special preparation formulas and about the foods that contain phenylalanine.**

- f. Consult with social care services to assist the parents with the financial burdens of purchasing special prepared formulas.

#### IV. Diabetes Mellitus ▲

##### A. Description (Fig. 39-1)



**FIGURE 39-1** Insulin deficiency leading to ketoacidosis. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Type 1 diabetes mellitus is characterized by the destruction of the pancreatic beta

cells, which produce insulin; this results in absolute insulin deficiency.

2. Type 2 diabetes mellitus usually arises because of insulin resistance, in which the body fails to use insulin properly, combined with relative (rather than absolute) insulin deficiency.
3. Insulin deficiency requires the use of exogenous insulin to promote appropriate glucose use and to prevent complications related to elevated blood glucose levels, such as hyperglycemia, diabetic ketoacidosis, and death.
4. Diagnosis is based on the presence of classic symptoms and an elevated blood glucose level (normal blood glucose level is 70 to 110 mg/dL; based on health care provider preference, normal level may be a lower range).
5. Children may need to be admitted directly to the pediatric intensive care unit because of the manifestations of diabetic ketoacidosis, which may be the initial occurrence leading to diagnosis of diabetes mellitus.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Polyuria, polydipsia, polyphagia
2. Hyperglycemia
3. Weight loss
4. Unexplained fatigue or lethargy
5. Headaches
6. Occasional enuresis in a previously toilet-trained child
7. Vaginitis in adolescent girls (caused by *Candida*, which thrives in hyperglycemic tissues)

8. Fruity odor to breath
9. Dehydration
10. Blurred vision
11. Slow wound healing
12. Changes in level of consciousness

**C. Long-term effects**

1. Failure to grow at a normal rate
2. Delayed maturation
3. Recurrent infections
4. Neuropathy
5. Cardiovascular disease
6. Retinal microvascular disease
7. Renal microvascular disease

**D. Complications**

1. Hypoglycemia
2. Hyperglycemia
3. Diabetic ketoacidosis
4. Coma
5. Hypokalemia
6. Hyperkalemia
7. Microvascular changes
8. Cardiovascular changes

 For a child with diabetes mellitus, plan to initiate a consultation with the diabetic specialist to plan the child's care.

#### E. Diet

1. Normal healthy nutrition is encouraged, and the total number of calories is individualized based on the child's age and **growth** expectations.
2. As prescribed by the HCP, children with diabetes need no special foods or supplements. They need sufficient calories to balance daily expenditure for energy and to satisfy the requirement for growth and development.
3. Dietary intake should include three well-balanced meals per day, eaten at regular intervals, plus a mid-afternoon snack and a bedtime snack; a consistent intake of the prescribed protein, fats, and carbohydrates at each meal and snack is needed (concentrated sweets are discouraged; fat is reduced to 30% or less of the total caloric requirement).
4. Instruct children and parents to carry a source of glucose, such as glucose tablets, with them at all times to treat hypoglycemia if it occurs.
5. Incorporate the diet into the individual child's needs, likes and dislikes, lifestyle, and cultural and socioeconomic patterns.
6. Allow the child to participate in making food choices to provide a sense of control.

#### F. Exercise

1. Instruct the child in dietary adjustments when exercising.
2. Extra food needs to be consumed for increased activity, usually 10 to 15 g of

carbohydrates for every 30 to 45 minutes of activity.

3. Instruct the child to monitor the blood glucose level before exercising.
4. Plan an appropriate exercise regimen with the child, taking the developmental stage into account.

## G. Insulin ▲

1. Diluted insulin may be required for some infants to provide small enough doses to avoid hypoglycemia; diluted insulin should be labeled clearly to avoid dosage errors.
2. Laboratory evaluation of glycosylated hemoglobin (hemoglobin A1c) should be performed every 3 months. Hemoglobin A1c levels of less than 7% are a well-established goal at most care centers.
3. Illness, infection, and stress increase the need for insulin, and insulin should not be withheld during illness, infection, or stress because hyperglycemia and ketoacidosis can result.
4. When the child is not receiving anything by mouth for a special procedure, verify with the HCP the need to withhold the morning insulin, and when food, fluids, and insulin are to be resumed.
5. Instruct the child and parents in the administration of insulin.
6. Instruct the child and parents to recognize symptoms of hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia.
7. Instruct the parents in the administration of glucagon intramuscularly or subcutaneously if the child has a hypoglycemic reaction and is unable to consume

anything orally (if semiconscious or unconscious).

8. Instruct the child and parents always to have a spare bottle of insulin available.
9. Advise the parents to obtain a Medic-Alert bracelet indicating the type and daily insulin dosage prescribed for the child.
10. See [Chapter 55](#) for information on insulin types, administration sites, and administration procedure.

#### H. Blood glucose monitoring ▲

1. Results provide information needed to maintain good glycemic control.
2. Blood glucose monitoring is more accurate than urine testing.
3. Monitoring requires that the child prick himself or herself several times a day as prescribed ([Box 39-1](#)).

#### **BOX 39-1**      Lessening the Pain of Blood Glucose Monitoring

Hold the finger under warm water for a few seconds before puncture (enhances blood flow to the finger).

Use the ring finger or thumb to obtain a blood sample because blood flows more easily to these areas; puncture the finger just to the side of the finger pad because there are more blood vessels in this area and fewer nerve endings.

Press the lancet device lightly against the skin to prevent a deep puncture.

Use glucose monitors that require very small blood samples for measurement.

Adapted from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

4. Instruct the child and parents about the proper procedure for obtaining the blood glucose level.
5. Inform the child and parents that the procedure must be done precisely to obtain accurate results.
6. Stress the importance of hand-washing before and after performing the procedure to prevent infection.
7. Stress the importance of following the manufacturer's instructions for the blood glucose monitoring device.
8. Instruct the child and parents to calibrate the monitor as instructed by the manufacturer.
9. Instruct the child and parents to check the expiration date on the test strips used for blood glucose monitoring.
10. Instruct the child and parents that if the blood glucose results do not seem reasonable, reread the instructions, reassess technique, check the expiration date of the test strips, and perform the procedure again to verify results.

#### **I. Urine testing**

1. Instruct the parents and child in the procedure for testing urine for ketones and glucose.
2. Teach the child that the second voided urine specimen is most accurate. ▲
3. The presence of ketones may indicate impending ketoacidosis.

 Urine glucose testing is an unreliable method of monitoring the glucose

level; however, the urine should be tested for ketones when the child is ill or when the blood glucose level is consistently greater than 200 mg/dL or as specified by the HCP.

## J. Hypoglycemia ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Hypoglycemia is a blood glucose level less than 70 mg/dL (or as specified by the HCP).
- b. Hypoglycemia results from too much insulin, not enough food, or excessive activity.

2. Signs include headache, nausea, sweating, tremors, lethargy, hunger, confusion, slurred speech, tingling around the mouth, and anxiety.

3. Interventions ([Boxes 39-2](#) and [39-3](#); see also [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ▲

### **BOX 39-2** Interventions for Hypoglycemia

If possible, confirm hypoglycemia with a blood glucose reading.

Administer glucose immediately; rapid-releasing glucose is followed by a complex carbohydrate and protein, such as a slice of bread or a peanut butter cracker.

Give an extra snack if the next meal is not planned for more than 30 minutes or if activity is planned.

If the child becomes unconscious, squeeze cake frosting or glucose paste onto the gums and retest the blood glucose level in 15 minutes (monitor the child closely); if the reading remains low, administer additional glucose.

If the child remains unconscious, the administration of glucagon may be necessary.

In the hospital, prepare to administer dextrose intravenously if the child is unable to consume an oral glucose product.

### **BOX 39-3** Food Items to Treat Hypoglycemia

- ½ cup orange juice or sugar-sweetened carbonated beverage
- 8 oz of milk
- 1 small box of raisins
- 3 or 4 hard candies
- 4 sugar cubes (1 tbsp of sugar)
- 3 or 4 LifeSavers candies
- 1 candy bar
- 1 tsp honey
- 2 or 3 glucose tablets

## **PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS**

### **Actions to Take When a Hospitalized Child with Diabetes Mellitus Experiences Hypoglycemia**

- 1.** Check the child's blood glucose level.
- 2.** Give the child ½ cup of fruit juice or other acceptable item.

3. Take the child's vital signs.
4. Retest the blood glucose level.
5. Give the child a small snack of carbohydrate and protein.
6. Document the child's complaints, actions taken, and outcome.

If a child with diabetes mellitus experiences hypoglycemia, the nurse first would check the child's blood glucose level to verify that the child is experiencing hypoglycemia. When this is verified, the nurse gives the child 10 to 15 g of carbohydrates. The nurse retests the blood glucose level in 15 minutes. In the meantime, the nurse checks the child's vital signs. If the child's symptoms of hypoglycemia do not resolve, the nurse gives the child another 10- to 15-g carbohydrate food item. Otherwise, the nurse provides a small snack of carbohydrates and protein if the child's next scheduled meal is more than 1 hour away from the time of the occurrence. After treatment and resolution of the hypoglycemic event, the nurse documents the occurrence, actions taken, and outcome.

### ***Reference***

Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby, pp. 1621, 1624.

## **K. Hyperglycemia** ▲

1. Description: Elevated blood glucose level ( $> 200$  mg/dL, or as specified by the

HCP)

2. Signs include polydipsia, polyuria, polyphagia, blurred vision, weakness, weight loss, and syncope.

3. Interventions ([Box 39-4](#))

#### **BOX 39-4** Interventions for Hyperglycemia

Instruct the parents to notify the health care provider when the following occur:

- Blood glucose results remain elevated (usually > 200 mg/dL)
- Moderate or high ketonuria is present
- Child is unable to take food or fluids
- Child vomits more than once
- Illness persists

4. Sick day rules ([Box 39-5](#)) 

#### **BOX 39-5** Sick Day Rules for a Diabetic Child

Always give insulin, even if the child does not have an appetite, or contact the health care provider (HCP) for specific instructions.

Test blood glucose levels at least every 4 hours.

Test for urinary ketones with each voiding.

Notify the HCP if moderate or large amounts of urinary ketones are present.

Follow the child's usual meal plan.

Encourage liquids to aid in clearing ketones.

Encourage rest, especially if urinary ketones are present.

Notify the HCP if vomiting, fruity odor to the breath, deep rapid respirations, decreasing level of consciousness, or persistent hyperglycemia occurs.

Adapted from Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

## L. Diabetic ketoacidosis ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Diabetic ketoacidosis is a complication of diabetes mellitus that develops when a severe insulin deficiency occurs.
- b. Diabetic ketoacidosis is a life-threatening condition.
- c. Hyperglycemia that progresses to metabolic acidosis occurs.
- d. Diabetic ketoacidosis develops over several hours to days.
- e. The blood glucose level is greater than 300 mg/dL, and urine and serum ketone tests are positive.

**▲** Manifestations of diabetic ketoacidosis include signs of hyperglycemia, Kussmaul's respirations, acetone (fruity) breath odor, increasing lethargy, and decreasing level of consciousness.

### 2. Interventions ▲

- a. Restore circulating blood volume, and protect against cerebral, coronary, or renal hypoperfusion.

- b. Correct dehydration with IV infusions of 0.9% or 0.45% saline as prescribed.
- c. Correct hyperglycemia with IV regular insulin administration as prescribed.
- d. Monitor vital signs, urine output, and mental status closely.
- e. Correct acidosis and electrolyte imbalances as prescribed.
- f. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
- g. Monitor blood glucose level frequently.
- h. Monitor potassium level closely because when the child receives insulin to reduce the blood glucose level, the serum potassium level changes; if the potassium level decreases, potassium replacement may be required.
- i. The child should be voiding adequately before administering potassium; if the child does not have an adequate output, hyperkalemia may result.
- j. Monitor the child closely for signs of fluid overload.
- k. IV dextrose is added as prescribed when the blood glucose reaches an appropriate level.
- l. Treat the cause of hyperglycemia.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Interventions for phenylketonuria include restricting phenylalanine intake. High-protein foods (meats and dairy products) and products that contain aspartame are avoided because they contain large amounts of phenylalanine. Monitoring physical, neurological, and intellectual development is important to detect any

abnormalities. The nurse should stress the importance of follow-up treatment with the parents; encourage the parents to express their feelings about the diagnosis and discuss the risk of phenylketonuria in future children; educate the parents about the use of special preparation formulas and about the foods that contain phenylalanine; and consult with social care services to assist the parents with any financial burdens.

### ***Reference***

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 306.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**395.** A school-age child with type 1 diabetes mellitus has soccer practice three afternoons a week. The school nurse provides instructions regarding how to prevent hypoglycemia during practice. Which should the school nurse tell the child to do?

- 1.** Eat twice the amount normally eaten at lunchtime.
- 2.** Take half the amount of prescribed insulin on practice days.
- 3.** Take the prescribed insulin at noontime rather than in the morning.
- 4.** Eat a small box of raisins or drink a cup of orange juice before soccer practice.

**396.** The mother of a 6-year-old child who has type 1 diabetes mellitus calls a clinic nurse and tells the nurse that the child has been sick. The mother reports that she checked the child's urine and it was positive for ketones. The nurse should

instruct the mother to take which action?

1. Hold the next dose of insulin.
2. Come to the clinic immediately.
3. Encourage the child to drink liquids.
4. Administer an additional dose of regular insulin.

**397.** A health care provider prescribes an intravenous (IV) solution of 5% dextrose and half-normal saline (0.45%) with 40 mEq of potassium chloride for a child with hypotonic dehydration. The nurse performs which **priority** assessment before administering this IV prescription?

1. Obtains a weight
2. Takes the temperature
3. Takes the blood pressure
4. Checks the amount of urine output

**398.** An adolescent client with type 1 diabetes mellitus is admitted to the emergency department for treatment of diabetic ketoacidosis. Which assessment findings should the nurse expect to note?

1. Sweating and tremors
2. Hunger and hypertension
3. Cold, clammy skin and irritability
4. Fruity breath odor and decreasing level of consciousness

**399.** A mother brings her 3-week-old infant to a clinic for a phenylketonuria

rescreening blood test. The test indicates a serum phenylalanine level of 1 mg/dL. The nurse reviews this result and makes which interpretation?

1. It is positive.
2. It is negative.
3. It is inconclusive.
4. It requires rescreening at age 6 weeks.

**400.** A child with type 1 diabetes mellitus is brought to the emergency department by the mother, who states that the child has been complaining of abdominal pain and has been lethargic. Diabetic ketoacidosis is diagnosed. Anticipating the plan of care, the nurse prepares to administer which type of intravenous (IV) infusion?

1. Potassium infusion
2. NPH insulin infusion
3. 5% dextrose infusion
4. Normal saline infusion

**401.** The nurse has just administered ibuprofen (Motrin IB) to a child with a temperature of 38.8° C (102° F). The nurse should also take which action?

1. Withhold oral fluids for 8 hours.
2. Sponge the child with cold water.
3. Plan to administer salicylate (aspirin) in 4 hours.
4. Remove excess clothing and blankets from the child.

**402.** A child has fluid volume deficit. The nurse performs an assessment and

determines that the child is improving and the deficit is resolving if which finding is noted?

1. The child has no tears.
2. Urine specific gravity is 1.030.
3. Urine output is less than 1 mL/kg/hour.
4. Capillary refill is less than 2 seconds.

**403.** The nurse should implement which interventions for a child older than 2 years with type 1 diabetes mellitus who has a blood glucose level of 60 mg/dL? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Administer regular insulin.
2. Encourage the child to ambulate.
3. Give the child a teaspoon of honey.
4. Provide electrolyte replacement therapy intravenously.
5. Wait 30 minutes and confirm the blood glucose reading.
6. Prepare to administer glucagon subcutaneously if unconsciousness occurs.

## ANSWERS

**395. 4**

**Rationale:** Hypoglycemia is a blood glucose level less than 70 mg/dL and results from too much insulin, not enough food, or excessive activity. An extra snack of 15 to 30 g of carbohydrates eaten before activities such as soccer practice would prevent hypoglycemia. A small box of raisins or a cup of orange juice provides 15 to 30 g of

carbohydrates. The child or parents should not be instructed to adjust the amount or time of insulin administration.

Meal amounts should not be doubled.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use general medication guidelines to eliminate options 2 and 3 first, noting that they are **comparable or alike** and indicate changing the amount of insulin or time of administration. From the remaining options, recalling the definition of hypoglycemia and its manifestations and associated treatment will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Prevention of **hypoglycemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolical/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Glucose Regulation; Health Promotion

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1603; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1399-1400.

### 396. 3

**Rationale:** When the child is sick, the mother should test for urinary ketones with each voiding. If ketones are present, liquids are essential to aid in clearing the ketones. The child should be encouraged to drink liquids. Bringing the child to the clinic immediately is unnecessary. Insulin doses should not be adjusted or changed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use general medication guidelines. Eliminate options 1 and 4, noting that they are **comparable or alike**. Recall that insulin doses should not be adjusted or changed. From the remaining options, note the words *positive for ketones*. Recalling that liquids are essential to aid in clearing the ketones will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Sick day rules** for the **diabetic child**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1603-1604; McKinney et al (2013), p. 1405.

### 397. 4

**Rationale:** In hypotonic dehydration, electrolyte loss exceeds water loss. The priority assessment before administering potassium chloride intravenously would be to assess the status of the urine output. Potassium chloride should never be administered in the presence of oliguria or anuria. If the urine output is less than 1 to 2 mL/kg/hour, potassium chloride should not be administered. Although options 1, 2, and 3 are appropriate assessments for a child with dehydration, these assessments are not related specifically to the IV administration of potassium chloride.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Focus on the IV prescription. Recalling that the kidneys play a key role in the excretion and reabsorption of potassium will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing considerations for the administration of **potassium chloride**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 998.

**398. 4**

**Rationale:** Diabetic ketoacidosis is a complication of diabetes mellitus that develops when a severe insulin deficiency occurs. Hyperglycemia occurs with diabetic ketoacidosis. Signs of hyperglycemia include fruity breath odor and a decreasing level of consciousness. Hunger can be a sign of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia, but hypertension is not a sign of diabetic ketoacidosis. Hypotension occurs because of a decrease in blood volume related to the dehydrated state that occurs during diabetic ketoacidosis. Cold clammy skin, irritability, sweating, and tremors all are signs of hypoglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the signs of diabetic ketoacidosis, and recall that in this condition the blood glucose level is elevated. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because these signs do not occur with hyperglycemia. Recall that fruity breath odor and a change in the level of consciousness can occur during diabetic ketoacidosis.

**Review:** Signs and symptoms of **hyperglycemia, hypoglycemia, and diabetic ketoacidosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**References:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1403, 1405; Swearingen (2012), p. 582.

**399. 2**

**Rationale:** Phenylketonuria is a genetic (autosomal recessive) disorder that results in central nervous system damage from toxic levels of phenylalanine (an essential amino acid) in the blood. It is characterized by blood phenylalanine levels greater than 20 mg/dL (normal level is 1.2 to 3.4 mg/dL in newborns and 0.8 to 1.8 mg/dL thereafter). A result of 1 mg/dL is a negative test result.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike**, indicating no definitive finding. Note that the level identified in the question is a low level; this should assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Phenylketonuria**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 304-306.

#### **400. 4**

**Rationale:** Diabetic ketoacidosis is a complication of diabetes mellitus that develops when a severe insulin deficiency occurs. Hyperglycemia occurs with diabetic ketoacidosis. Rehydration is the initial step in resolving diabetic ketoacidosis. Normal saline is the initial IV rehydration fluid. NPH insulin is never administered by the IV route. Dextrose solutions are added to the treatment when the blood glucose level decreases to an acceptable level. Intravenously administered potassium may be required, depending on the potassium level, but would not be part of the initial treatment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, treatment for diabetic ketoacidosis. Eliminate option 3, knowing that dextrose would not be administered in a hyperglycemic state. Eliminate option 2 next, knowing that NPH insulin is not administered by the IV route. Recalling that hydration is the initial treatment in diabetic ketoacidosis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Diabetic ketoacidosis

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1604-1605.

#### 401. 4

**Rationale:** After administering ibuprofen, excess clothing and blankets should be removed. The child can be sponged with tepid water, but not cold water because the cold water can cause shivering, which increases metabolic requirements above those already caused by the fever. Aspirin is not administered to a child with fever because of the risk of Reye's syndrome. Fluids should be encouraged to prevent dehydration, so oral fluids should not be withheld.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interventions for an elevated temperature. Remember that cooling measures such as removing excess clothing and blankets should be done when a child has a fever. Options 1, 2, and 3 are not interventions for a child with a fever.

**Review:** Interventions for fever

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Thermoregulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1016-1017.

**402. 4**

**Rationale:** Indicators that fluid volume deficit is resolving would be capillary refill less than 2 seconds, specific gravity of 1.002 to 1.025, urine output of at least 1 mL/kg/hour, and adequate tear production. A capillary refill time less than 2 seconds is the only indicator that the child is improving. Urine output of less than 1 mL/kg/hour, a specific gravity of 1.030, and no tears would indicate that the deficit is not resolving.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessment findings indicating that fluid volume deficit is resolving. Recall the parameters that indicate adequate hydration status. The only option that indicates an improving fluid balance is option 4. The other options indicate fluid imbalance.

**Review:** **Fluid volume deficit** and **fluid volume excess**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1059.

❖ **403. 3, 6**

**Rationale:** Hypoglycemia is defined as a blood glucose level less than 70 mg/dL. Hypoglycemia occurs as a result of too much insulin, not enough food, or excessive activity. If possible, the nurse should confirm hypoglycemia with a blood glucose reading. Glucose is administered orally immediately; rapid-releasing glucose is followed by a

complex carbohydrate and protein, such as a slice of bread or a peanut butter cracker. An extra snack is given if the next meal is not planned for more than 30 minutes or if activity is planned. If the child becomes unconscious, cake frosting or glucose paste is squeezed onto the gums, and the blood glucose level is retested in 15 minutes; if the reading remains low, additional glucose is administered. If the child remains unconscious, administration of glucagon may be necessary, and the nurse should be prepared for this intervention. Encouraging the child to ambulate and administering regular insulin would result in a lowered blood glucose level. Providing electrolyte replacement therapy intravenously is an intervention to treat diabetic ketoacidosis. Waiting 30 minutes to confirm the blood glucose level delays necessary intervention.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a low blood glucose level, and on the information in the question.

Think about the pathophysiology associated with hypoglycemia and how it is treated. Recalling that a blood glucose level of 60 mg/dL indicates hypoglycemia will assist in determining the correct interventions.

**Review:** Interventions for **hypoglycemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Metabolic/Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1602-1603.



## CHAPTER 40

# Gastrointestinal Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A child suddenly vomits. What should the nurse do to prevent aspiration?

*Answer located on p. 464.*

### I. Vomiting

#### A. Description

1. The major concerns when a child is vomiting are the risk of dehydration, the loss of fluid and electrolytes, and the development of metabolic alkalosis. ▲
2. Additional concerns include aspiration and the development of atelectasis or pneumonia.
3. Causes of vomiting include acute infectious diseases, increased intracranial pressure, toxic ingestions, food intolerance, mechanical obstruction of the gastrointestinal tract, metabolic disorders, and psychogenic disorders.

#### B. Assessment

1. Character of vomitus
2. Signs of aspiration ▲
3. Presence of pain and abdominal cramping
4. Signs of dehydration and fluid and electrolyte imbalances
5. Signs of metabolic alkalosis

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Maintain a patent airway.
2. Position the child on the side to prevent aspiration.
3. Monitor the character, amount, and frequency of vomiting.
4. Assess the force of the vomiting; projectile vomiting may indicate pyloric **stenosis** or increased intracranial pressure.
5. Monitor strict intake and output.
6. Monitor for signs and symptoms of dehydration, such as a sunken fontanel (age-appropriate), nonelastic skin turgor, dry mucous membranes, decreased tear production, and oliguria.
7. Monitor electrolyte levels.
8. Provide oral rehydration therapy as tolerated and as prescribed; begin feeding slowly, with small amounts of fluid at frequent intervals.
9. Administer antiemetics as prescribed.
10. Assess for abdominal pain or diarrhea.
11. Advise the parents to inform the health care provider (HCP) if signs of dehydration, blood in the vomitus, forceful vomiting, or abdominal pain are

present.

## II. Diarrhea

### A. Description

1. Acute diarrhea is a cause of dehydration, particularly in children younger than 5 years. ▲
2. Causes of acute diarrhea include acute infectious disorders of the gastrointestinal tract, antibiotic therapy, rotavirus, and parasitic infestation.
3. Causes of chronic diarrhea include malabsorption syndromes, inflammatory bowel disease, immunodeficiencies, food intolerances, and nonspecific factors.
4. Rotavirus is a cause of serious gastroenteritis and is a nosocomial (hospital-acquired) pathogen that is most severe in children 3 to 24 months old; children younger than 3 months have some protection because of maternally acquired antibodies.

### B. Assessment

1. Character of stools
2. Presence of pain and abdominal cramping
3. Signs of dehydration and fluid and electrolyte imbalances
4. Signs of metabolic acidosis

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor character, amount, and frequency of diarrhea.
2. Provide enteric isolation as required; instruct the parents in effective hand-washing technique (children should be taught this technique also). ▲

3. Monitor skin integrity.
4. Monitor strict intake and output.
5. Monitor electrolyte levels. ▲
6. Monitor for signs and symptoms of dehydration.
7. For mild to moderate dehydration, provide oral rehydration therapy with Pedialyte or a similar rehydration solution as prescribed; avoid carbonated beverages because they are gas-producing and fluids that contain high amounts of sugar, such as apple juice.
8. For severe dehydration, maintain NPO (nothing by mouth) status to place the bowel at rest and provide fluid and electrolyte replacement by the intravenous (IV) route as prescribed; if potassium is prescribed for IV administration, ensure that the child has voided before administering and has adequate renal function. ▲
9. Reintroduce a normal diet when rehydration is achieved.

**⚠** The major concerns when a child is having diarrhea are the risk of dehydration, the loss of fluid and electrolytes, and the development of metabolic acidosis.

### III. Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate

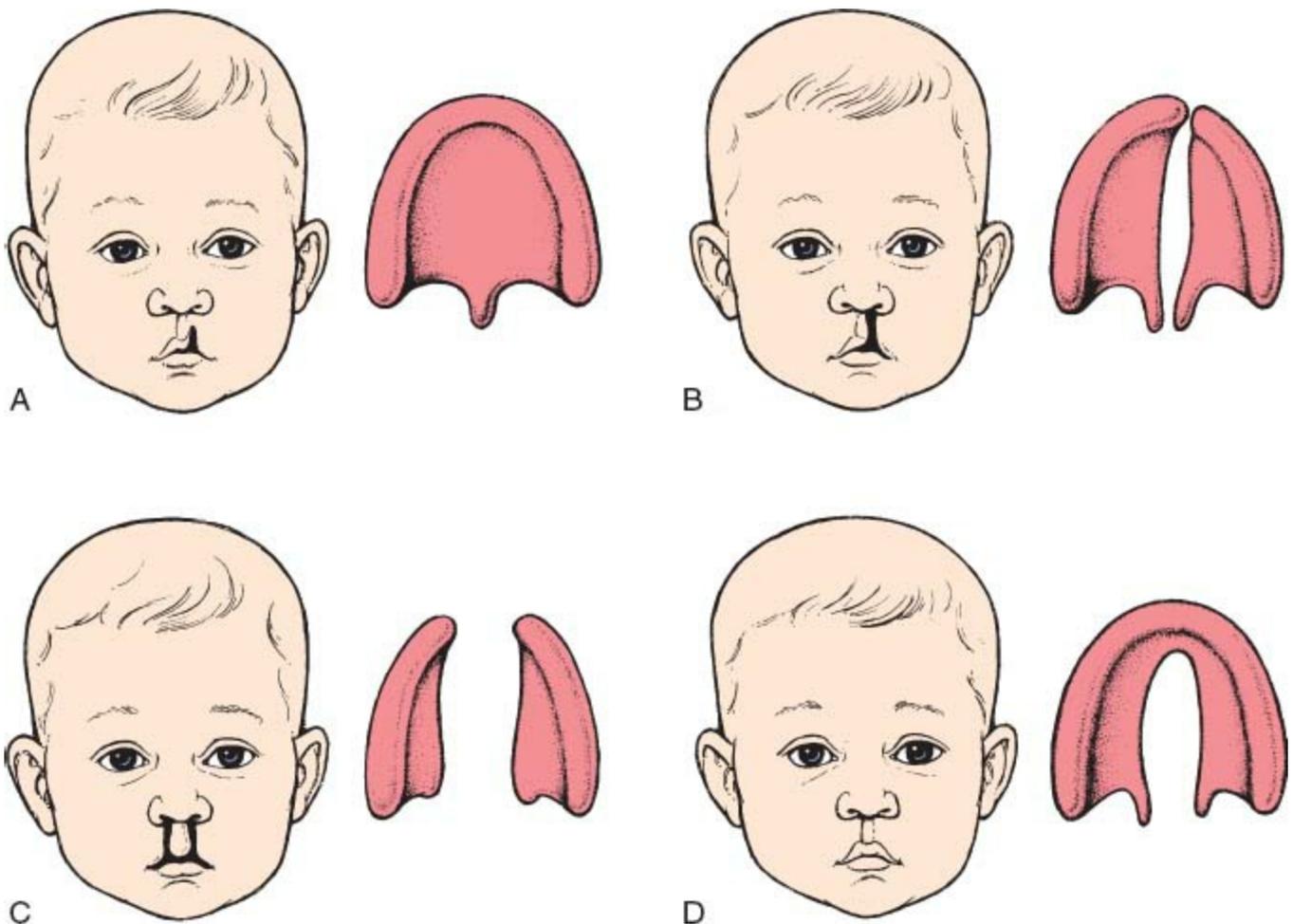
#### A. Description

1. Cleft lip and cleft palate are congenital anomalies that occur as a result of failure of soft tissue or bony structure to fuse during embryonic development.
2. The defects involve abnormal openings in the lip and palate that may occur

unilaterally or bilaterally and are readily apparent at birth.

3. Causes include **hereditary** and environmental factors—exposure to radiation or rubella virus, chromosome abnormalities, and teratogenic factors.
4. Closure of a cleft lip defect precedes closure of the cleft palate and is usually performed by age 3 to 6 months.
5. Cleft palate repair is usually performed between 6 and 24 months of age to allow for the palatal changes that occur with normal **growth**; a cleft palate is closed as early as possible to facilitate speech development.
6. A child with cleft palate is at risk for developing frequent otitis media; this can result in hearing loss.
7. A multidisciplinary team approach, including audiologists, orthodontists, plastic surgeons, and occupational and speech therapists, is taken to address the many needs of the child.

**B. Assessment (Fig. 40-1)**



**FIGURE 40-1** Variations in clefts of lip and palate at birth. **A**, Notch in vermillion border. **B**, Unilateral cleft lip and palate. **C**, Bilateral cleft lip and palate. **D**, Cleft palate. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

1. Cleft lip can range from a slight notch to a complete separation from the floor of the nose.
2. Cleft palate can include nasal distortion, midline or bilateral cleft, and variable extension from the uvula and soft and hard palate.

### C. Interventions

1. Assess the ability to suck, swallow, handle normal secretions, and breathe without

distress. ▲

2. Assess fluid and calorie intake daily.
3. Monitor daily weight.
4. Modify feeding techniques; plan to use specialized feeding techniques, obturators, and special nipples and feeders.
5. Hold the infant in an upright position and direct the formula to the side and back of the mouth to prevent aspiration. ▲
6. Feed small amounts gradually and burp frequently.
7. Keep suction equipment and a bulb syringe at the bedside. ▲
8. Teach the parents special feeding or suctioning techniques.
9. Teach the parents the *ESSR* method of feeding— *enlarge the nipple, stimulate the sucking reflex, swallow, rest* to allow the infant to finish swallowing what has been placed in the mouth.
10. Encourage parents to express their feelings about the disorder.
11. Encourage parental bonding with the infant, including holding the infant and calling the infant by name.

#### **D. Postoperative interventions**

##### **1. Cleft lip repair**

- a. Provide lip protection; a metal appliance or adhesive strips may be taped securely to the cheeks to prevent trauma to the suture line.
- b. Avoid positioning the infant on the side of the repair or in the prone position because these positions can cause rubbing of the surgical site on the mattress

(position on the back upright and position to prevent airway obstruction by secretions, blood, or the tongue). ▲

- c.** Keep the surgical site clean and dry; after feeding, gently cleanse the suture line of formula or serosanguineous drainage with a solution such as normal saline or as designated by agency procedure.
- d.** Apply antibiotic ointment to the site as prescribed.
- e.** Elbow restraints should be used to prevent the infant from injuring or traumatizing the surgical site.
- f.** Monitor for signs and symptoms of infection at the surgical site.

## **2.** Cleft palate repair

- a.** Feedings are resumed by bottle, breast, or cup per surgeon preference; some surgeons prescribe the use of an Asepto syringe for feeding or a soft cup such as a Sippy cup.
- b.** Oral packing may be secured to the palate (usually removed in 2 to 3 days).
- c.** Do not allow the child to brush his or her teeth.
- d.** Instruct the parents to avoid offering hard food items to the child, such as toast or cookies.

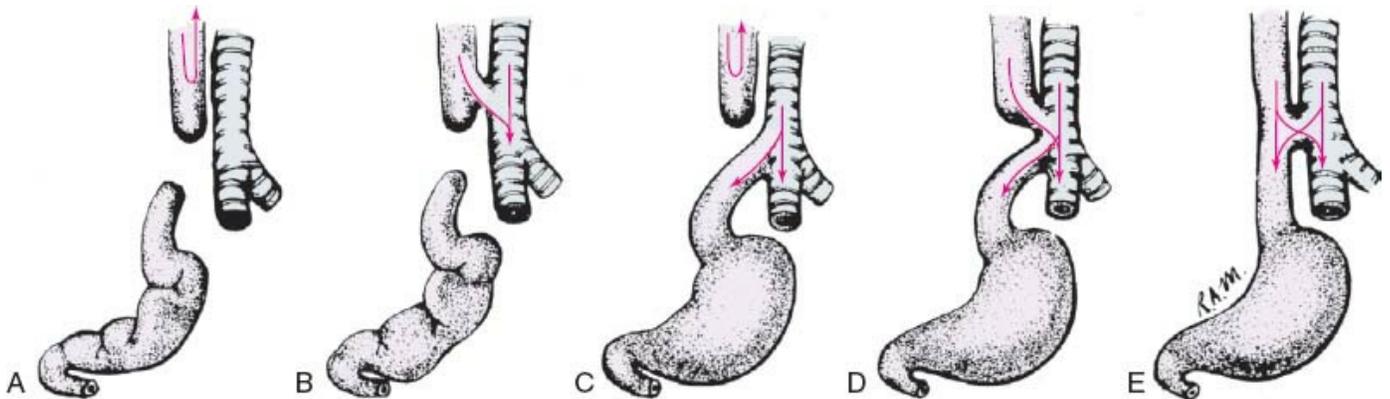
**3.** Soft elbow or jacket restraints may be used (check agency policies and procedures) to keep the child from touching the repair site; remove restraints at least every 2 hours (or per agency procedure) to assess skin integrity and circulation and to allow for exercising the arms. ▲

**4.** Avoid the use of oral suction or placing objects in the mouth such as a tongue

depressor, thermometer, straws, spoons, forks, or pacifiers. ▲

5. Provide analgesics for pain as prescribed.
6. Instruct the parents in feeding techniques and in the care of the surgical site.
7. Instruct the parents to monitor for signs of infection at the surgical site, such as redness, swelling, or drainage.
8. Encourage the parents to hold the child.
9. Initiate appropriate referrals such as a dental referral and speech therapy referral.

#### IV. Esophageal Atresia and Tracheoesophageal Fistula (Fig. 40-2)



**FIGURE 40-2** Congenital atresia of esophagus and tracheoesophageal fistula. **A**, Upper and lower segments of esophagus end in blind sac (occurring in 5% to 8% of such infants). **B**, Upper segment of esophagus ends in atresia and connects to trachea by fistulous tract (occurring rarely). **C**, Upper segment of esophagus ends in blind pouch; lower segment connects with trachea by small fistulous tract (occurring in 80% to 95% of such infants). **D**, Both segments of esophagus connect by fistulous tracts to trachea (occurring in less than 1% of such infants). Infant may aspirate with first feeding. **E**, Esophagus is continuous, but connects by fistulous tract to trachea (known as *H-type*). (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of*

*infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

## A. Description

1. The esophagus terminates before it reaches the stomach ending in a blind pouch, or a fistula is present that forms an unnatural connection with the trachea.
2. The condition causes oral intake to enter the lungs or a large amount of air to enter the stomach, presenting a risk of coughing and choking; severe abdominal distention can occur.
3. Aspiration pneumonia and severe respiratory distress may develop, and death is likely to occur without surgical intervention.
4. Treatment includes maintenance of a patent airway, prevention of aspiration pneumonia, gastric or blind pouch decompression, supportive therapy, and surgical repair.

## B. Assessment

1. Frothy saliva in the mouth and nose and excessive drooling
2. The “3 C’s”—coughing and choking during feedings and unexplained **cyanosis** ▲
3. **Regurgitation** and vomiting
4. Abdominal distention
5. Increased respiratory distress during and after feeding

## C. Preoperative interventions

1. The infant may be placed in a radiant warmer in which humidified oxygen is administered (intubation and mechanical ventilation may be necessary if

respiratory distress occurs).

2. Maintain NPO status.
3. Maintain IV fluids as prescribed.
4. Monitor respiratory status closely.
5. Suction accumulated secretions from the mouth and pharynx.
6. Maintain in a supine upright position (at least 30 degrees upright) to facilitate drainage and prevent aspiration of gastric secretions. ▲
7. Keep the blind pouch empty of secretions by intermittent or continuous suction as prescribed; monitor its patency closely because clogging from mucus can easily occur.
8. If a gastrostomy tube is inserted, it may be left open so that air entering the stomach through the fistula can escape, minimizing the risk of **regurgitation** of gastric contents into the trachea.
9. Broad-spectrum antibiotics may be prescribed because of the high risk for aspiration pneumonia.

#### **D. Postoperative interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs and respiratory status.
2. Maintain IV fluids, antibiotics, and parenteral nutrition as prescribed.
3. Monitor strict intake and output.
4. Monitor daily weight; assess for dehydration and possible fluid overload.
5. Assess for signs of pain.
6. Maintain chest tube if present.

7. Inspect the surgical site for signs and symptoms of infection.
8. Monitor for anastomotic leaks as evidenced by purulent drainage from the chest tube, increased temperature, and increased white blood cell count.
9. If a gastrostomy tube is present, it is usually attached to gravity drainage until the infant can tolerate feedings and the anastomosis is healed (usually postoperative day 5 to 7); then feedings are prescribed.
10. Before oral feedings and removal of the chest tube, prepare for an esophagogram as prescribed to check the integrity of the esophageal anastomosis.
11. Before feeding, elevate the gastrostomy tube and secure it above the level of the stomach to allow gastric secretions to pass to the duodenum and swallowed air to escape through the open gastrostomy tube.
12. Administer oral feedings with sterile water, followed by frequent small feedings of formula as prescribed.
13. Assess the cervical esophagostomy site, if present, for redness, breakdown, or exudate; remove accumulated drainage frequently, and apply protective ointment, barrier dressing, or a collection device as prescribed.
14. Provide nonnutritive sucking, using a pacifier for infants who remain NPO for extended periods (a pacifier should not be used if the infant is unable to handle secretions).
15. Instruct the parents in the techniques of suctioning, gastrostomy tube care and feedings, and skin site care as appropriate.
16. Instruct the parents to identify behaviors that indicate the need for suctioning, signs

of respiratory distress, and signs of a constricted esophagus (e.g., poor feeding, dysphagia, drooling, coughing during feedings, regurgitated undigested food). ▲

## V. Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease

### A. Description

1. Gastroesophageal reflux is backflow of gastric contents into the esophagus as a result of relaxation or incompetence of the lower esophageal or cardiac sphincter. ▲
2. Most infants with gastroesophageal reflux have a mild problem that improves in about 1 year and requires medical therapy only.
3. Gastroesophageal reflux disease occurs when gastric contents reflux into the esophagus or oropharynx and produce symptoms.

### B. Assessment ▲

1. Passive **regurgitation** or emesis
2. Poor weight gain
3. Irritability
4. Hematemesis
5. Heartburn (in older children)
6. Anemia from blood loss

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Assess amount and characteristics of emesis.
2. Assess the relationship of vomiting to the times of feedings and infant activity.
3. Monitor breath sounds before and after feedings.

4. Assess for signs of aspiration, such as drooling, coughing, or dyspnea, after feeding.
5. Place suction equipment at the bedside.
6. Monitor intake and output.
7. Monitor for signs and symptoms of dehydration.
8. Maintain IV fluids as prescribed.

 **Complications of gastroesophageal reflux disease include esophagitis, esophageal strictures, aspiration of gastric contents, and aspiration pneumonia.**

#### **D. Positioning**

1. The infant is placed in the supine position during sleep (to reduce the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome) unless the risk of death from aspiration or other serious complications of gastroesophageal reflux disease greatly outweighs the risks associated with the prone position (check HCP's prescription); otherwise, the prone position is acceptable only while the infant is awake and can be monitored.
2. In children older than 1 year, position with the head of the bed elevated.

#### **E. Diet**

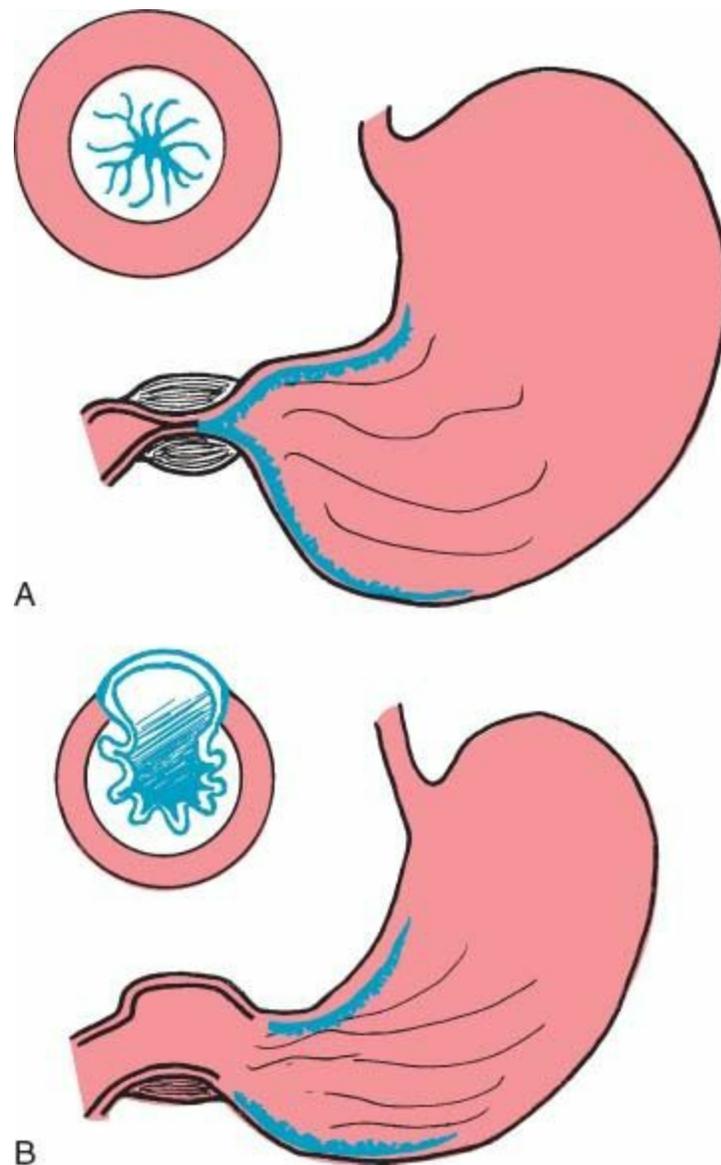
1. Provide small, frequent feedings with predigested formula to decrease the amount of regurgitation.
2. Nutrition via nasogastric tube feedings may be prescribed if severe regurgitation and poor **growth** are present.

3. For infants, formula may be thickened by adding rice cereal to the formula (follow agency procedure); cross-cut the nipple.
4. Breast-feeding may continue, and the mother may provide more frequent feeding times or express milk for thickening with rice **cereal**.
5. Burp the infant frequently when feeding and handle the infant minimally after feedings; monitor for coughing during feeding and other signs of aspiration. ▲
6. For toddlers, feed solids first, followed by liquids.
7. Instruct the parents to avoid feeding the child fatty foods, chocolate, tomato products, carbonated liquids, fruit juices, citrus products, and spicy foods.
8. Instruct the parents that the child should avoid vigorous play after feeding and avoid feeding just before bedtime.

#### F. Medications

1. Antacids for symptom relief
2. Proton pump inhibitors and histamine H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists to decrease gastric acid secretion

## VI. Hypertrophic Pyloric Stenosis (Fig. 40-3)



**FIGURE 40-3** Hypertrophic pyloric stenosis. **A**, Enlarged muscular area nearly obliterates pyloric channel. **B**, Longitudinal surgical division of muscle down to submucosa establishes adequate passageway. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

#### A. Description

1. Hypertrophy of the circular muscles of the pylorus causes narrowing of the pyloric canal between the stomach and the duodenum.
2. The **stenosis** usually develops in the first few weeks of life, causing projectile

vomiting, dehydration, metabolic alkalosis, and failure to thrive.

## B. Assessment

1. Vomiting that progresses from mild **regurgitation** to forceful and projectile vomiting; it usually occurs after a feeding. ▲
2. Vomitus contains gastric contents such as milk or formula, may contain mucus, may be blood-tinged, and does not usually contain bile.
3. The child exhibits hunger and irritability.
4. Peristaltic waves are visible from left to right across the epigastrium during or immediately after a feeding. ▲
5. An olive-shaped mass is in the epigastrium just right of the umbilicus. ▲
6. Signs of dehydration and malnutrition
7. Signs of electrolyte imbalances
8. Metabolic alkalosis

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor strict intake and output.
2. Monitor vomiting episodes and stools.
3. Obtain daily weights.
4. Monitor for signs of dehydration and electrolyte imbalances.
5. Prepare the child and parents for pyloromyotomy if prescribed.

## D. Pyloromyotomy ▲

1. Description: An incision through the muscle fibers of the pylorus; may be performed by laparoscopy

## 2. Preoperative interventions

- a. Monitor hydration status by daily weights, intake and output, and urine for specific gravity.
- b. Correct fluid and electrolyte imbalances; administer fluids intravenously as prescribed for rehydration.
- c. Maintain NPO status as prescribed.
- d. Monitor the number and character of stools.
- e. Maintain patency of the nasogastric tube placed for stomach decompression.

## 3. Postoperative interventions

- a. Monitor intake and output.
- b. Begin small, frequent feedings postoperatively as prescribed.
- c. Gradually increase amount and interval between feedings until a full feeding schedule has been reinstated.
- d. Feed the infant slowly, burping frequently and handle the infant minimally after feedings. 🟢
- e. Monitor for abdominal distention.
- f. Monitor the surgical wound and for signs of infection.
- g. Instruct the parents about wound care and feeding.

## VII. Lactose Intolerance

- A. Description: Inability to tolerate lactose as a result of an absence or deficiency of lactase, an enzyme found in the secretions of the small intestine that is required for

the digestion of lactose

## B. Assessment

1. Symptoms occur after the ingestion of milk or other dairy products.
2. Abdominal distention
3. Crampy, abdominal pain; colic
4. Diarrhea and excessive flatus

## C. Interventions

1. Eliminate the offending dairy product, or administer an enzyme tablet replacement.
2. Provide information to the parents about enzyme tablets that predigest the lactose in dairy products or supplement the body's own lactase.
3. Substitute soy-based formulas for cow's milk formula or human milk.
4. Limit milk consumption to one glass at a time.
5. Instruct the child and family that the child should drink milk with other foods rather than by itself.
6. Encourage consumption of hard cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt, which contain the inactive lactase enzyme.
7. Encourage consumption of small amounts of dairy foods daily to help colonic bacteria adapt to ingested lactose.
8. Instruct the parents about the foods that contain lactose, including hidden sources.

 **A child with lactose intolerance can develop calcium and vitamin D deficiency. Instruct the parents about the importance of providing these supplements.**

## VIII. Celiac Disease

### A. Description

1. Celiac disease is also known as gluten enteropathy or celiac sprue.
2. Intolerance to gluten, the protein component of wheat, barley, rye, and oats, is characteristic. ▲
3. Celiac disease results in the accumulation of the amino acid glutamine, which is toxic to intestinal mucosal cells.
4. Intestinal villous atrophy occurs, which affects absorption of ingested nutrients.
5. Symptoms of the disorder occur most often between the ages of 1 and 5 years.
6. There is usually an interval of 3 to 6 months between the introduction of gluten in the diet and the onset of symptoms.
7. Strict dietary avoidance of gluten minimizes the risk of developing malignant lymphoma of the small intestine and other gastrointestinal malignancies.

### B. Assessment

1. Acute or insidious diarrhea
2. Steatorrhea
3. Anorexia
4. Abdominal pain and distention
5. Muscle wasting, particularly in the buttocks and extremities
6. Vomiting
7. Anemia
8. Irritability

### C. Celiac crisis ▲

1. Precipitated by fasting, infection, or ingestion of gluten
2. Causes profuse watery diarrhea and vomiting
3. Can lead to rapid dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, and severe acidosis

### D. Interventions

1. Maintain a gluten-free diet, substituting corn, rice, and millet as grain sources. ▲
2. Instruct the parents and child about lifelong elimination of gluten sources such as wheat, rye, oats, and barley. ▲
3. Administer mineral and vitamin supplements, including iron, folic acid, and fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K.
4. Teach the child and parents about a gluten-free diet and about reading food labels carefully for hidden sources of gluten (Box 40-1).

#### **BOX 40-1** Basics of a Gluten-Free Diet

##### **Foods Allowed**

Meat such as beef, pork, poultry, and fish; eggs; milk and some dairy products; vegetables, fruits, rice, corn, gluten-free flour, puffed rice, cornflakes, cornmeal, and precooked gluten-free cereals are allowed.

##### **Foods Prohibited**

Commercially prepared ice cream; malted milk; prepared puddings; and grains, including anything made from wheat, rye, oats, or barley, such as breads, rolls, cookies, cakes, crackers, cereal, spaghetti, macaroni noodles, beer, and ale, are

prohibited.

5. Instruct the parents in measures to prevent celiac crisis.
6. Inform the parents about the Celiac Sprue Association.

## **IX. Appendicitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Inflammation of the appendix
2. When the appendix becomes inflamed or infected, perforation may occur within a matter of hours, leading to peritonitis, sepsis, septic shock, and potentially death.
3. Treatment is surgical removal of the appendix before perforation occurs.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Pain in periumbilical area that descends to the right lower quadrant
2. Abdominal pain that is most intense at McBurney's point ▲
3. Referred pain indicating the presence of peritoneal irritation
4. Rebound tenderness and abdominal rigidity
5. Elevated white blood cell count
6. Side-lying position with abdominal guarding (legs flexed) to relieve pain
7. Difficulty walking and pain in the right hip
8. Low-grade fever
9. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting after pain develops
10. Diarrhea

### **C. Peritonitis ▲**

1. Description: Results from a perforated appendix

2. Assessment

- a. Increased fever
- b. Progressive abdominal distention
- c. Tachycardia and tachypnea
- d. Pallor
- e. Chills
- f. Restlessness and irritability

 An indication of a perforated appendix is the sudden relief of pain and then a subsequent increase in pain accompanied by right guarding of the abdomen.

**D. Appendectomy**

1. Description: Surgical removal of the appendix

2. Interventions preoperatively

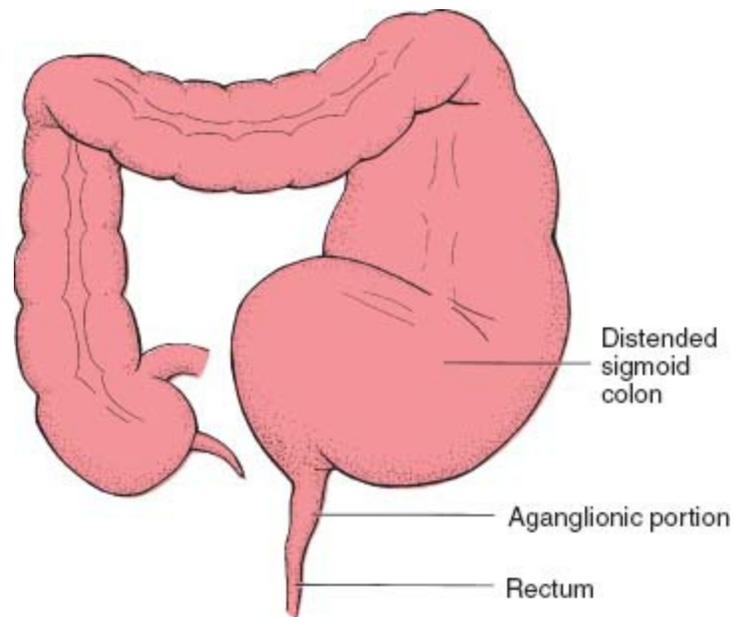
- a. Maintain NPO status.
- b. Administer IV fluids and electrolytes as prescribed to prevent dehydration and correct electrolyte imbalances.
- c. Monitor for changes in the level of pain.
- d. Monitor for signs of a ruptured appendix and peritonitis.
- e. Avoid the use of pain medications so as not to mask pain changes associated with perforation.
- f. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

- g.** Monitor bowel sounds.
- h.** Position in a right side–lying or low to semi-Fowler’s position to promote comfort. ▲
- i.** Apply ice packs to the abdomen for 20 to 30 minutes every hour if prescribed.
- j.** Avoid the application of heat to the abdomen. ▲
- k.** Avoid laxatives or enemas. ▲

### **3. Postoperative interventions**

- a.** Monitor vital signs, particularly temperature.
- b.** Maintain NPO status until bowel function has returned, advancing the diet gradually as tolerated and as prescribed when bowel sounds return.
- c.** Assess the incision for signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, drainage, and pain.
- d.** Monitor drainage in Penrose drain, which may be inserted if perforation occurred.
- e.** Position the child in a right side–lying or low to semi-Fowler’s position with the legs slightly flexed to facilitate drainage. ▲
- f.** Change the dressing as prescribed, and record the type and amount of drainage.
- g.** Perform wound irrigations if prescribed.
- h.** Maintain nasogastric tube suction and patency of the tube if present.
- i.** Administer antibiotics and analgesics as prescribed.

## **X. Hirschsprung’s Disease (Fig. 40-4)**



**FIGURE 40-4** Hirschsprung's disease. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

#### A. Description

1. Hirschsprung's disease is a congenital anomaly also known as congenital aganglionosis or aganglionic megacolon.
2. The disease occurs as the result of an absence of ganglion cells in the rectum and other areas of the affected intestine.
3. Mechanical obstruction results because of inadequate motility in an intestinal segment.
4. The disease may be a familial congenital defect or may be associated with other anomalies, such as Down syndrome and genitourinary abnormalities.
5. A rectal biopsy specimen shows histological evidence of the absence of ganglionic cells.
6. The most serious complication is enterocolitis; signs include fever, severe

prostration, gastrointestinal bleeding, and explosive watery diarrhea. ▲

7. Treatment for mild or moderate disease is based on relieving the chronic constipation with stool softeners and rectal irrigations; however, many children require surgery.
8. Treatment for moderate to severe disease involves a two-step surgical procedure.
  - a. Initially, in the neonatal period, a temporary colostomy is created to relieve obstruction and allow the normally innervated, dilated bowel to return to its normal size.
  - b. When the bowel returns to its normal size, a complete surgical repair is performed via a pull-through procedure to excise portions of the bowel; at this time, the colostomy is closed.

## B. Assessment ▲

### 1. Newborns

- a. Failure to pass meconium stool
- b. Refusal to suck
- c. Abdominal distention
- d. Bile-stained vomitus

### 2. Children

- a. Failure to gain weight and delayed **growth**
- b. Abdominal distention
- c. Vomiting
- d. Constipation alternating with diarrhea

e. Ribbon-like and foul-smelling stools

**C. Interventions: Medical management**

1. Maintain a low-fiber, high-calorie, high-protein diet; parenteral nutrition may be necessary in extreme situations. ▲
2. Administer stool softeners as prescribed.
3. Administer daily rectal irrigations with normal saline to promote adequate elimination and prevent obstruction as prescribed.

**D. Surgical management: Preoperative interventions**

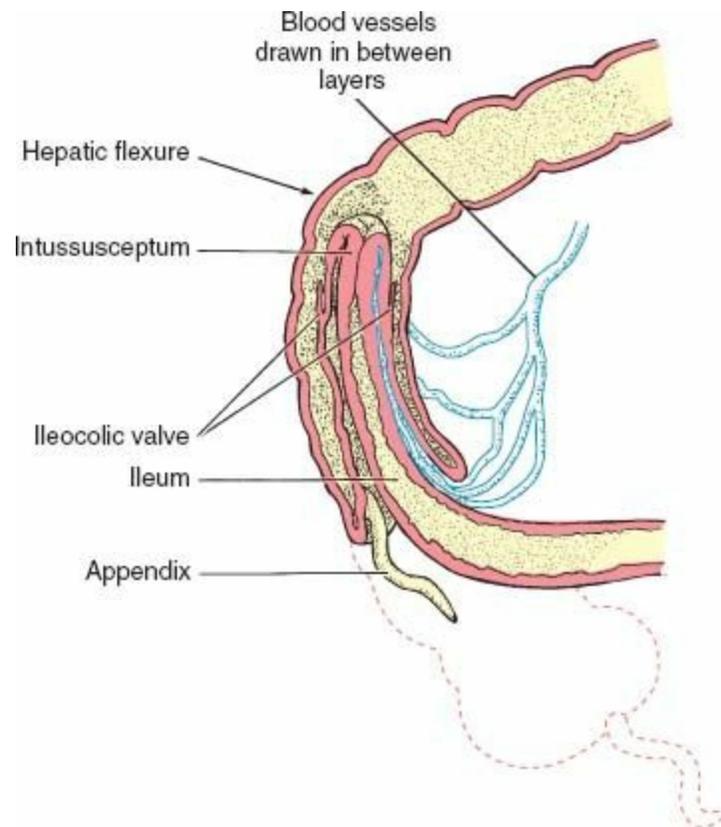
1. Assess bowel function.
2. Administer bowel preparation as prescribed.
3. Maintain NPO status.
4. Monitor hydration and fluid and electrolyte status; provide fluids intravenously as prescribed for hydration.
5. Administer antibiotics or colonic irrigations with an antibiotic solution as prescribed to clear the bowel of bacteria.
6. Monitor strict intake and output.
7. Obtain daily weight.
8. Measure abdominal girth daily
9. Avoid taking the temperature rectally.
10. Monitor for respiratory distress associated with abdominal distention.

**E. Surgical management: Postoperative interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs, avoiding taking the temperature rectally.

2. Measure abdominal girth daily and PRN (as needed).
3. Assess the surgical site for redness, swelling, and drainage.
4. Assess the stoma if present for bleeding or skin breakdown (stoma should be red and moist).
5. Assess the anal area for the presence of stool, redness, or discharge.
6. Maintain NPO status as prescribed and until bowel sounds return or flatus is passed, usually within 48 to 72 hours.
7. Maintain nasogastric tube to allow intermittent suction until peristalsis returns.
8. Maintain IV fluids until the child tolerates appropriate oral intake, advancing the diet from clear liquids to regular as tolerated and as prescribed.
9. Assess for dehydration and fluid overload.
10. Monitor strict intake and output.
11. Obtain daily weight.
12. Assess for pain and provide comfort measures as required.
13. Provide the parents with instructions regarding colostomy care and skin care.
14. Teach the parents about the appropriate diet and the need for adequate fluid intake.

## **XI. Intussusception (Fig. 40-5)**



**FIGURE 40-5** Ileocolic intussusception. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

**A. Description**

1. Telescoping of one portion of the bowel into another portion
2. The condition results in obstruction to the passage of intestinal contents.

**B. Assessment**

1. Colicky abdominal pain that causes the child to scream and draw the knees to the abdomen, similar to the fetal position
2. Vomiting of gastric contents
3. Bile-stained fecal emesis
4. Currant jelly–like stools containing blood and mucus ▲

5. Hypoactive or hyperactive bowel sounds
6. Tender distended abdomen, possibly with a palpable sausage-shaped mass in the upper right quadrant

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor for signs of perforation and shock as evidenced by fever, increased heart rate, changes in level of consciousness or blood pressure, and respiratory distress, and report immediately. ▲
2. Antibiotics, IV fluids, and decompression via nasogastric tube may be prescribed.
3. Monitor for the passage of normal, brown stool, which indicates that the intussusception has reduced itself. ▲
4. Prepare for hydrostatic reduction as prescribed, if no signs of perforation or shock occur (in hydrostatic reduction, air or fluid is used to exert pressure on area involved to lessen, diminish, or rid the intestine of prolapse).
5. Posthydrostatic reduction
  - a. Monitor for the return of normal bowel sounds, for the passage of barium, and the characteristics of stool.
  - b. Administer clear fluids, and advance the diet gradually as prescribed.
6. If surgery is required, postoperative care is similar to care after any abdominal surgery; procedure may be done via laparoscope.

## XII. Abdominal Wall Defects

### A. Omphalocele

1. *Omphalocele* refers to herniation of the abdominal contents through the umbilical ring, usually with an intact peritoneal sac. ▲
2. The protrusion is covered by a translucent sac that may contain bowel or other abdominal organs.
3. Rupture of the sac results in evisceration of the abdominal contents.
4. Immediately after birth, the sac is covered with sterile gauze soaked in normal saline to prevent drying of abdominal contents; a layer of plastic wrap is placed over the gauze to provide additional protection against moisture loss. ▲
5. Monitor vital signs frequently (every 2 to 4 hours), particularly temperature, because the infant can lose heat through the sac.
6. Preoperatively: Maintain NPO status, administer IV fluids as prescribed to maintain hydration and electrolyte balance, monitor for signs of infection, and handle the infant carefully to prevent rupture of the sac. ▲
7. Postoperatively: Control pain, prevent infection, maintain fluid and electrolyte balance, and ensure adequate nutrition.

## **B. Gastroschisis**

1. Gastroschisis occurs when the herniation of the intestine is lateral to the umbilical ring.
2. No membrane covers the exposed bowel. ▲
3. The exposed bowel is covered loosely in saline-soaked pads, and the abdomen is loosely wrapped in a plastic drape; wrapping directly around the exposed bowel is contraindicated because if the exposed bowel expands, wrapping could cause

pressure and necrosis. ▲

4. Preoperatively: Care is similar to that for omphalocele; surgery is performed within several hours after birth because no membrane is covering the sac.
5. Postoperatively: Most infants develop prolonged ileus, require mechanical ventilation, and need parenteral nutrition; otherwise, care is similar to that for omphalocele.

### **XIII. Umbilical Hernia**

#### **A. Description**

1. A hernia is a protrusion of the bowel through an abnormal opening in the abdominal wall.
2. In children, hernias most commonly occur at the umbilicus and through the inguinal canal.
3. A hydrocele is the presence of abdominal fluid in the scrotal sac.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Umbilical hernia: Soft swelling or protrusion around the umbilicus that is usually reducible with the finger
2. Inguinal hernia
  - a. Inguinal hernia refers to a painless inguinal swelling that is reducible.
  - b. Swelling may disappear during periods of rest and is most noticeable when the infant cries or coughs.
3. Incarcerated hernia ▲
  - a. Incarcerated hernia occurs when the descended portion of the bowel becomes

tightly caught in the hernial sac, compromising blood supply.

**b.** This represents a medical emergency requiring surgical repair.

**c.** Assessment findings include irritability, tenderness at site, anorexia, abdominal distention, and difficulty defecating.

**d.** Complete intestinal obstruction and gangrene may occur.

#### **4.** Noncommunicating hydrocele

**a.** Noncommunicating hydrocele occurs when residual peritoneal fluid is trapped with no communication to the peritoneal cavity.

**b.** Hydrocele usually disappears by age 1 year.

#### **5.** Communicating hydrocele

**a.** Communicating hydrocele is associated with a hernia that remains open from the scrotum to the abdominal cavity.

**b.** Assessment includes a bulge in the inguinal area or the scrotum that increases with crying or straining and decreases when the infant is at rest.

### **C.** Postoperative interventions (hernia)

**1.** Monitor vital signs.

**2.** Assess for wound infection.

**3.** Monitor for redness or drainage.

**4.** Monitor input and output and hydration status.

**5.** Advance the diet as tolerated.

**6.** Administer analgesics as prescribed.

### **D.** Postoperative interventions (hydrocele)

1. Provide ice bags and a scrotal support to relieve pain and swelling.
2. Instruct the child and parents to avoid tub bathing until the incision heals.
3. Instruct the child and parents to avoid strenuous physical activities.

## **XIV. Constipation and Encopresis**

### **A. Description**

1. Constipation is the infrequent and difficult passage of dry, hard stools.
2. Encopresis is constipation with fecal incontinence; children often complain that soiling is involuntary and occurs without warning.
3. If the child does not have a neurological or anatomical disorder, encopresis is usually the result of fecal impaction and an enlarged rectum caused by chronic constipation.

### **B. Assessment**

#### **1. Constipation**

- a. Abdominal pain and cramping without distention
- b. Palpable movable fecal masses
- c. Normal or decreased bowel sounds
- d. Malaise and headache
- e. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting

#### **2. Encopresis**

- a. Evidence of soiling of clothing
- b. Scratching or rubbing of the anal area

c. Fecal odor

d. Social withdrawal

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Maintain a diet high in fiber and fluids to promote bowel elimination (Box 40-2).

#### **BOX 40-2** High-Fiber Foods

##### **Bread and Grains**

- Whole-grain bread or rolls
- Whole-grain cereals
- Bran
- Pancakes, waffles, and muffins with fruit or bran
- Unrefined (brown) rice

##### **Vegetables**

- Raw vegetables, especially broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, lettuce, and spinach
- Cooked vegetables including those listed above and asparagus, beans, Brussels sprouts, corn, potatoes, rhubarb, squash, string beans, and turnips

##### **Fruits**

- Prunes, raisins, or other dried fruits
- Raw fruits, especially those with skins or seeds, other than ripe banana or avocado

##### **Miscellaneous**

- Legumes (beans), popcorn, nuts, and seeds

## ■ High-fiber snack bars

Data from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

2. Monitor treatment regimen for severe encopresis for 3 to 6 months.
3. Decrease sugar and milk intake.
4. Administer enemas as prescribed until impaction is cleared.
5. Monitor for hypernatremia or hyperphosphatemia when administering repeated enemas.
  - a. Signs of hypernatremia include increased thirst; dry, sticky mucous membranes; flushed skin; increased temperature; nausea and vomiting; oliguria; and lethargy.
  - b. Signs of hyperphosphatemia include tetany, muscle weakness, dysrhythmias, and hypotension.
6. Administer stool softeners or laxatives as prescribed.
7. Encourage the child to sit on the toilet for 5 to 10 minutes approximately 20 to 30 minutes after breakfast and dinner to assist with defecation.

## **XV. Irritable Bowel Syndrome**

### **A. Description**

1. Irritable bowel syndrome results from increased motility, which can lead to spasm and pain.
2. The diagnosis is based on the elimination of pathological conditions.

3. The syndrome is a self-limiting, intermittent problem with no definitive treatment.
4. Stress and emotional factors may contribute to its occurrence.

## **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Diffuse abdominal pain unrelated to meals or activity
2. Alternating constipation and diarrhea with the presence of undigested food and mucus in the stool

## **C. Interventions**

1. Reassure the parents and child that the problem is self-limiting and intermittent and will resolve.
2. Anticholinergics may be prescribed (antidepressants may be needed in severe cases).
3. Encourage the maintenance of a healthy, well-balanced, moderate-fiber, and low-fat diet.
4. Encourage health promotion activities such as exercise and school activities.
5. Inform the parents of psychosocial resources if required.

## **XVI. Imperforate Anus**

**A. Description:** Incomplete development or absence of the anus in its normal position in the perineum

### **B. Types**

1. A membrane is noted over the anal opening, with a normal anus just above the membrane.

2. There is complete absence of the anus (anal agenesis) with a rectal pouch ending some distance above.
3. Rectum ends blindly or has a fistula connection to the perineum, urethra, bladder, or vagina.

#### C. Assessment (Box 40-3)

##### **BOX 40-3** Assessment Findings: Imperforate Anus

- Failure to pass meconium stool
- Absence or stenosis of the anal rectal canal
- Presence of an anal membrane
- External fistula to the perineum

#### D. Preoperative interventions

1. Determine presence of an anal opening. ▲
2. Monitor for the presence of stool in the urine and vagina (indicates a fistula) and report immediately. ▲
3. Administer IV fluids as prescribed.
4. Prepare the child and parents for the surgical procedures, including the potential for colostomy.

#### E. Postoperative interventions

1. Monitor the skin for signs of infection.
2. The preferred position is a side-lying prone position with the hips elevated or a

supine position with the legs suspended at a 90-degree angle to the trunk to reduce edema and pressure on the surgical site. ▲

3. Keep the anal surgical incision clean and dry, and monitor for redness, swelling, or drainage.
4. Maintain NPO status and nasogastric tube if in place.
5. Maintain IV fluids until gastrointestinal motility returns.
6. Provide care for colostomy, if present, as prescribed.
7. A new colostomy stoma may be red and edematous, but this should decrease with time. ▲
8. Instruct the parents to perform anal dilation if prescribed to achieve and maintain bowel patency.
9. Instruct the parents to use only dilators supplied by the HCP and a water-soluble lubricant and to insert the dilator no more than 1 to 2 cm into the anus to prevent damage to the mucosa.

## **XVII. Hepatitis** ▲

- A. This section contains specific information regarding hepatitis as it relates to infants and children; see also [Chapters 29](#) and [56](#).
- B. Description: An acute or chronic inflammation of the liver that may be caused by a virus, a medication reaction, or another disease process
- C. Hepatitis A (HAV)
  1. Highest incidence of HAV infection occurs among preschool or school-age children younger than 15 years.

2. Many infected children are asymptomatic, but mild nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may occur.
3. Infected children who are asymptomatic still can spread HAV to others.

#### **D. Hepatitis B (HBV)**

1. Most HBV infection in children is acquired perinatally.
2. Newborns are at risk if the mother is infected with HBV or was a carrier of HBV during pregnancy.
3. Possible routes of maternal-fetal (newborn) transmission include leakage of the virus across the placenta late in pregnancy or during labor, ingestion of amniotic fluid or maternal blood, and breast-feeding, especially if the mother has cracked nipples.
4. The severity in the infant varies from no liver disease to fulminant (severe acute course) or chronic active disease.
5. In children and adolescents, HBV occurs in specific high-risk groups, including children with hemophilia or other disorders requiring multiple blood transfusions, children or adolescents involved in IV drug abuse, institutionalized children, preschool children in endemic areas, and children who have had heterosexual activity or sexual activity with homosexual men.
6. Infection with HBV can cause a carrier state and lead to eventual cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma in adulthood.

#### **E. Hepatitis C (HCV)**

1. Transmission of HCV is primarily by the parenteral route.

2. Some children may be asymptomatic, but HCV often becomes a chronic condition and can cause cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma.

#### F. Hepatitis D

1. Infection occurs in children already infected with HBV.
2. Acute and chronic forms tend to be more severe than HBV and can lead to cirrhosis.
3. Children with hemophilia are more likely to be infected, as are children who are IV drug users.

#### G. Hepatitis E

1. Infection is uncommon in children.
2. Infection is not a chronic condition, does not cause chronic liver disease, and has no carrier state.

#### H. Assessment (Box 40-4) ▲

### **BOX 40-4** Assessment Findings: Hepatitis

#### **Prodromal or Anicteric Phase**

- Lasts 5 to 7 days
- Absence of jaundice
- Anorexia, malaise, lethargy, easy fatigability
- Fever (especially in adolescents)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Epigastric or right upper quadrant abdominal pain

- Arthralgia and rashes (more likely with hepatitis B virus)
- Hepatomegaly

### Icteric Phase

- Jaundice, which is best assessed in the sclera, nail beds, and mucous membranes
- Dark urine and pale stools
- Pruritus

I. Diagnostic evaluation: See [Chapter 11](#).

### J. Prevention

1. Immunoglobulin provides **passive immunity** and may be effective for preexposure prophylaxis to prevent HAV infection.
2. Hepatitis B immunoglobulin provides passive immunity and may be effective in preventing infection after a one-time exposure (should be given immediately after exposure), such as an accidental needle puncture or other contact of contaminated material with mucous membranes; immunoglobulin should also be given to newborns whose mothers are positive for hepatitis B surface antigen.
3. Hepatitis A **vaccine** and hepatitis B vaccine: See [Chapter 48](#).

 Proper hand-washing and standard precautions, as well as enteric precautions, can prevent the spread of viral hepatitis.

### K. Interventions

1. Strict hand-washing is required.

2. Hospitalization is required in the event of coagulopathy or fulminant hepatitis.
3. Standard precautions and enteric precautions are followed during hospitalization.
4. Provide enteric precautions for at least 1 week after the onset of jaundice with HAV.
5. The hospitalized child usually is not isolated in a separate room unless he or she is fecally incontinent and items are likely to become contaminated with feces.
6. Children are discouraged from sharing toys.
7. Instruct the child and parents in effective hand-washing techniques.
8. Instruct the parents to disinfect diaper-changing surfaces thoroughly with a solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup bleach in 1 gallon of water.
9. Maintain comfort, and provide adequate rest and sleep.
10. Provide a low-fat, well-balanced diet.
11. Inform the parents that because HAV is not infectious 1 week after the onset of jaundice, the child may return to school at that time if he or she feels well enough.
12. Inform the parents that jaundice may appear worse before it resolves.
13. Caution the parents about administering any medications to the child; explain the role of the liver in detoxification and excretion of medications in understandable terms.
14. Instruct the parents about the signs of the child's condition worsening, such as changes in neurological status, bleeding, and fluid retention.

## **XVIII. Ingestion of Poisons (see Priority Nursing Actions)**

# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take in the Emergency Department in the Event of a Poisoning

1. Assess the child.
2. Terminate exposure to the poison.
3. Identify the poison.
4. Take measures to prevent absorption of the poison.
5. Document the occurrence, assessment findings, poison ingested, treatment measures, and the child's response.

In the event of a poisoning, the nurse treats the child first, not the poison. The ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation—and vital signs are assessed. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is initiated immediately if necessary. Exposure to the poison is terminated next, such as emptying the mouth of pills or other materials or flushing the skin or other body area. Then, the poison is identified by questioning the parents or witnesses of the event to determine the appropriate treatment. The nurse administers the antidote or takes other measures as prescribed by the health care provider, such as administering activated charcoal. The nurse documents the occurrence, assessment findings, poison ingested, treatment measures, and the child's response.

### *Reference*

Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St.

## A. Lead poisoning

1. Description: Excessive accumulation of lead in the blood

2. Causes ▲

- a. The pathway for exposure may be food, air, or water.
- b. Dust and soil contaminated with lead may be a source of exposure.
- c. Lead enters the child's body through ingestion or inhalation or through placental transmission to an unborn child when the mother is exposed; the most common route is hand to mouth from contaminated objects, such as loose paint chips, pottery, or ceramic ware coupled with the inhalation of lead dust in the environment.
- d. When lead enters the body, it affects the erythrocytes, bones and teeth, and organs and tissues, including the brain and nervous system; the most serious consequences are the effects on the central nervous system.

3. Universal screening ▲

- a. Screening is recommended for children 1 to 2 years old; children at high risk should be screened earlier.
- b. Any child between the ages of 3 and 6 years who has not been screened should be tested.

4. Targeted screening

- a. Targeted screening is acceptable in low-risk areas.
- b. A child at the age of 1 to 2 years (or a child between the ages of 3 and 6 years who has not been screened) may be targeted for screening if determined to be at risk.

5. Blood lead level test: Used for screening and diagnosis (Table 40-1)

**TABLE 40-1 Blood Lead Level Test Results and Interventions**

Level (mcg/dL)	Intervention
< 10	Reassess or rescreen in 1 yr or sooner if exposure status changes
10-14	Provide family lead education, follow-up testing, and social service referral for home assessment if necessary
15-19	Provide family education about lead, follow-up testing, and social service referral if necessary; on follow-up testing, initiate actions for blood lead level of 20-44 mcg/dL
20-44	Provide coordination of care and clinical management, including treatment, environmental investigation, and lead-hazard control
45-69	Provide coordination of care and clinical management within 48 hr, including treatment, environmental investigation, and lead-hazard control (the child must not remain in a lead-hazardous environment if resolution is necessary)
≥ 70	Medical treatment is provided immediately, including coordination of care, clinical management, environmental investigation, and lead-hazard control

Modified from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

6. Erythrocyte protoporphyrin test

- a. Indicator of anemia
- b. Normal value for a child: 35 mcg/100 mL of whole blood or lower

7. Chelation therapy 

- a. Chelation therapy removes lead from the circulating blood and from some

organs and tissues.

- b.** Therapy does not counteract any effects of the lead.
- c.** Medications include calcium disodium edetate ( $\text{CaNa}_2\text{EDTA}$ ), and succimer (Chemet), an oral preparation; British anti-Lewisite (BAL, dimercaprol) is used in conjunction with EDTA.
- d.** British anti-Lewisite is administered by the IV route or via the deep intramuscular route and is contraindicated in children with an allergy to peanuts because the medication is prepared in a peanut oil solution; it is also contraindicated in children with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency and should not be given with iron.
- e.** The function of the renal, hepatic, and hematological systems must be monitored closely.
- f.** Ensure adequate urinary output before administering the medication, and monitor the output and pH of the urine closely during and after therapy.
- g.** Provide adequate hydration and monitor kidney function for nephrotoxicity when the medication is given because the medication is excreted via the kidneys.
- h.** Follow-up of lead levels needs to be done to monitor progress.
- i.** Provide instructions to parents about safety from lead hazards, medication administration, and the need for follow-up.
- j.** Confirm that the child will be discharged to a home without lead hazards.

**B.** Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 

## 1. Description

- a. Seriousness of ingestion is determined by the amount ingested and the length of time before intervention.
- b. Toxic dose is 150 mg/kg or higher in children.

## 2. Assessment

- a. First 2 to 4 hours: Malaise, nausea, vomiting, sweating, pallor, weakness
- b. Latent period: 24 to 36 hours; child improves
- c. Hepatic involvement: May last 7 days and may be permanent; right upper quadrant pain, jaundice, confusion, stupor, elevated liver enzyme and bilirubin levels, prolonged prothrombin time

## 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Administer antidote: *N*-Acetylcysteine (Mucomyst)
- b. Dilute antidote in juice or soda because of its offensive odor.
- c. Loading dose is followed by maintenance doses.
- d. In an unconscious child, prepare to administer gastric lavage with activated charcoal to decrease the absorption of acetaminophen.
- e. If using activated charcoal with lavage, do not also use *N*-acetylcysteine because activated charcoal inactivates the antidote.

## C. Acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Overdose may be caused by acute ingestion or chronic ingestion.
- b. Acute: Severe toxicity with 300 to 500 mg/kg

- c. Chronic: Ingestion of more than 100 mg/kg per day for 2 days or more, which can be more serious than acute ingestion

## 2. Assessment

- a. Gastrointestinal effects: Nausea, vomiting, and thirst from dehydration
- b. Central nervous system effects: Hyperpnea, confusion, tinnitus, seizures, coma, respiratory failure, circulatory collapse
- c. Renal effects: Oliguria
- d. Hematopoietic effects: Bleeding tendencies
- e. Metabolic effects: Diaphoresis, fever, hyponatremia, hypokalemia, dehydration, hypoglycemia, metabolic acidosis

## 3. Interventions

- a. Prepare to administer activated charcoal to decrease absorption of salicylate.
- b. Emesis or cathartic measures may be prescribed.
- c. Administer IV fluids; sodium bicarbonate may be prescribed to correct metabolic acidosis.
- d. Other interventions include external cooling, anticonvulsants, vitamin K (if bleeding), and oxygen.
- e. Prepare the child for dialysis as prescribed if the child is unresponsive to the therapy.

## D. Corrosives

### 1. Description

- a. Items that can cause poisoning include household cleaners, detergents, bleach,

paint or paint thinners, or batteries.

- b. Liquid corrosives can cause more damage to the victim than other types of corrosives, such as granular.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Severe burning in the mouth, throat, or stomach
- b. Edema of the mucous membranes, lips, tongue, and pharynx
- c. Vomiting
- d. Drooling and inability to clear secretions

## 3. Interventions

- a. Dilute corrosive with water or milk as prescribed (usually no more than 4 oz)
- b. Inducing vomiting is contraindicated because vomiting redamages the mucous membranes.
- c. Neutralization of the ingested corrosive is not done because it can cause a reaction producing heat and burns.

 Educate parents to call the poison control center immediately in the event of poisoning. The parents need post the poison control center telephone number near each phone in the house and in their mobile phones.

## **XIX. Intestinal Parasites**

**A.** Description: Common infections in children are giardiasis and pinworm infestation.

- 1. Giardiasis is caused by protozoa and is prevalent among children in crowded environments, such as classrooms or day care centers.
- 2. Pinworms (enterobiasis) are universally present in temperate climate zones and

are easily transmitted in crowded environments.

## **B. Assessment**

### **1. Giardiasis**

- a.** Diarrhea and vomiting
- b.** Anorexia
- c.** Failure to thrive
- d.** Abdominal cramps with intermittent loose stools and constipation
- e.** Steatorrhea
- f.** Resolves in 4 to 6 weeks spontaneously
- g.** Stool specimens from three or more collections are used for diagnosis.

### **2. Pinworms**

- a.** Intense perianal itching
- b.** Irritability, restlessness
- c.** Poor sleeping
- d.** Bed wetting

## **C. Interventions**

### **1. Giardiasis**

- a.** Medications that may be prescribed include metronidazole (Flagyl), tinidazole (Tindamax), nitazoxanide (Alinia), or albendazole (Albenza).
- b.** Caregivers should wash hands meticulously.
- c.** Provide education to family and caregivers regarding sanitary practices.

### **2. Pinworms**

- a. Perform a visual inspection of the anus with a flashlight 2 to 3 hours after sleep.
- b. The tape test is the most common diagnostic test.
- c. Educate the family and caregivers regarding the tape test. A loop of transparent tape is placed firmly against the child's perianal area; it is removed in the morning and placed in a glass jar or plastic bag and transported to the laboratory for analysis.
- d. Medications that may be prescribed include mebendazole (Vermox), pyrantel pamoate (Pin-Rid, Antiminth), and albendazole (Albenza); these medications are not used in children younger than 2 years.
- e. The medication regimen may be repeated in 2 weeks to prevent reinfection.
- f. All members of the family are treated for the infection.
- g. Teach the family and caregivers about the importance of meticulous hand-washing and about washing all clothes and bed linens in hot water.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** If a child suddenly vomits, the nurse must maintain a patent airway. The child should be positioned upright or on the side to prevent aspiration. Suctioning equipment should be obtained and kept at the bedside. The nurse should check the character and amount of the vomitus. The force of the vomiting should be assessed because projectile vomiting may indicate pyloric stenosis or increased intracranial pressure. The nurse should also monitor intake and output and for signs of dehydration.

## *Reference*

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1099-1100.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**404.** The clinic nurse reviews the record of an infant and notes that the health care provider has documented a diagnosis of suspected Hirschsprung's disease. The nurse reviews the assessment findings documented in the record, knowing that which symptom **most likely** led the mother to seek health care for the infant?

1. Diarrhea
2. Projectile vomiting
3. Regurgitation of feedings
4. Foul-smelling ribbon-like stools

**405.** An infant has just returned to the nursing unit after surgical repair of a cleft lip on the right side. The nurse should place the infant in which **best** position at this time?

1. Prone position
2. On the stomach
3. Left lateral position
4. Right lateral position

**406.** The nurse reviews the record of a newborn infant and notes that a diagnosis of esophageal atresia with tracheoesophageal fistula is suspected. The nurse expects to note which **most likely** sign of this condition documented in the record?

1. Incessant crying

2. Coughing at nighttime
3. Choking with feedings
4. Severe projectile vomiting

**407.** The nurse provides feeding instructions to a parent of an infant diagnosed with gastroesophageal reflux disease. Which instruction should the nurse give to the parent to assist in reducing the episodes of emesis?

1. Provide less frequent, larger feedings.
2. Burp the infant less frequently during feedings.
3. Thin the feedings by adding water to the formula.
4. Thicken the feedings by adding rice cereal to the formula.

**408.** A child is hospitalized because of persistent vomiting. The nurse should monitor the child closely for which problem?

1. Diarrhea
2. Metabolic acidosis
3. Metabolic alkalosis
4. Hyperactive bowel sounds

**409.** The nurse is caring for a newborn with a suspected diagnosis of imperforate anus. The nurse monitors the infant, knowing that which is a clinical manifestation associated with this disorder?

1. Bile-stained fecal emesis
2. The passage of currant jelly–like stools

3. Failure to pass meconium stool in the first 24 hours after birth
4. Sausage-shaped mass palpated in the upper right abdominal quadrant

**410.** The nurse admits a child to the hospital with a diagnosis of pyloric stenosis. On assessment, which data would the nurse expect to obtain when asking the mother about the child's symptoms?

1. Watery diarrhea
2. Projectile vomiting
3. Increased urine output
4. Vomiting large amounts of bile

**411.** The nurse provides home care instructions to the parents of a child with celiac disease. The nurse should teach the parents to include which food item in the child's diet?

1. Rice
2. Oatmeal
3. Rye toast
4. Wheat bread

**412.** The nurse is preparing to care for a child with a diagnosis of intussusception. The nurse reviews the child's record and expects to note which symptom of this disorder documented?

1. Watery diarrhea
2. Ribbon-like stools

3. Profuse projectile vomiting
4. Bright red blood and mucus in the stools

**413.** Which interventions should the nurse include when preparing a care plan for a child with hepatitis? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Providing a low-fat, well-balanced diet.
2. Teaching the child effective hand-washing techniques.
3. Scheduling playtime in the playroom with other children.
4. Notifying the health care provider (HCP) if jaundice is present.
5. Instructing the parents to avoid administering medications unless prescribed.
6. Arranging for indefinite home schooling because the child will not be able to return to school.

## ANSWERS

**404. 4**

**Rationale:** Hirschsprung's disease is a congenital anomaly also known as congenital aganglionosis or aganglionic megacolon. It occurs as the result of an absence of ganglion cells in the rectum and other areas of the affected intestine. Chronic constipation beginning in the first month of life and resulting in pellet-like or ribbon-like stools that are foul-smelling is a clinical manifestation of this disorder. Delayed passage or absence of meconium stool in the neonatal period is also a sign. Bowel obstruction especially in the neonatal period, abdominal pain and distention, and failure to thrive are also clinical manifestations. Options 1, 2, and 3 are not associated specifically with this disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Use knowledge regarding the pathophysiology

associated with Hirschsprung's disease to direct you to the correct option. Remember that chronic constipation beginning in the first month of life and resulting in pellet-like or ribbon-like, foul-smelling stools is a clinical manifestation of this disorder.

**Review:** Hirschsprung's disease

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 1099.

**405. 3**

**Rationale:** A cleft lip is a congenital anomaly that occurs as a result of failure of soft tissue or bony structure to fuse during embryonic development. After cleft lip repair, the nurse avoids positioning an infant on the side of the repair or in the prone position because these positions can cause rubbing of the surgical site on the mattress. The nurse positions the infant on the side lateral to the repair or on the back upright and positions the infant to prevent airway obstruction by secretions, blood, or the tongue. From the options provided, placing the infant on the left side immediately after surgery is best to prevent the risk of aspiration if the infant vomits.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are **comparable or alike** positions. Consider the anatomical location of the surgical site and note the words *right side* in the question to direct you to the correct option from those remaining.

**Review:** Positioning guidelines following **cleft lip repair**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 434.

### 406. 3

**Rationale:** In esophageal atresia and tracheoesophageal fistula, the esophagus terminates before it reaches the stomach, ending in a blind pouch, and a fistula is present that forms an unnatural connection with the trachea. Any child who exhibits the “3 C’s”—coughing and choking with feedings and unexplained cyanosis—should be suspected to have tracheoesophageal fistula. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not specifically associated with tracheoesophageal fistula.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most likely*. Focus on the diagnosis and think about the pathophysiology of the disorder. Recalling the “3 C’s” associated with this disorder will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Tracheoesophageal fistula**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 435.

407. 4

**Rationale:** Gastroesophageal reflux is backflow of gastric contents into the esophagus as a result of relaxation or incompetence of the lower esophageal or cardiac sphincter. Small, more frequent feedings with frequent burping often are prescribed in the treatment of gastroesophageal reflux. Feedings thickened with rice cereal may reduce episodes of emesis. If thickened formula is used, cross-cutting of the nipple may be required.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, gastroesophageal reflux disease. Use basic principles related to feeding an infant to assist in eliminating options 1 and 2. Noting the words *reducing the episodes of emesis* will assist in directing you to select the correct option over option 3.

**Review: Gastroesophageal reflux disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1308.

408. 3

**Rationale:** Vomiting causes the loss of hydrochloric acid and subsequent metabolic alkalosis. Metabolic acidosis would occur in a child experiencing diarrhea because of the loss of bicarbonate. Diarrhea might or might not accompany vomiting. Hyperactive bowel sounds are not associated with vomiting.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, complications related to vomiting. Recalling that gastric fluids are

acidic and that the loss of these fluids leads to alkalosis will assist you in answering the question. No data in the question support options 1 and 4.

**Review:** Fluid and electrolyte balance and vomiting

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1067, 1098-1099.

### 409. 3

**Rationale:** Imperforate anus is the incomplete development or absence of the anus in its normal position in the perineum. During the newborn assessment, this defect should be identified easily on sight. A rectal thermometer or tube may be necessary, however, to determine patency if meconium is not passed in the first 24 hours after birth. Other assessment findings include absence or stenosis of the anal rectal canal, presence of an anal membrane, and an external fistula to the perineum. Options 1, 2, and 4 are findings noted in intussusception.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, manifestations of imperforate anus. Use the definition of the word *imperforate* to assist in answering this question. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Imperforate anus

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 440; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1078-1079.

#### 410. 2

**Rationale:** In pyloric stenosis, hypertrophy of the circular muscles of the pylorus causes narrowing of the pyloric canal between the stomach and the duodenum. Clinical manifestations of pyloric stenosis include projectile vomiting, irritability, hunger and crying, constipation, and signs of dehydration including a decrease in urine output.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the manifestations of pyloric stenosis. Considering the anatomical location of this disorder and its potential effects will assist in eliminating options 1 and 3. Thinking about the pathophysiology of the disorder and recalling that a major clinical manifestation is projectile vomiting will assist in directing you to the correct option from those remaining.

**Review:** Pyloric stenosis

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Nutrition

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1322.

#### 411. 1

**Rationale:** Celiac disease also is known as gluten enteropathy or celiac sprue and refers to an intolerance to gluten, the protein component of wheat, barley, rye, and oats. The important factor to remember is that all wheat, rye, barley, and oats should be eliminated from the diet and replaced with corn, rice, or millet. Vitamin supplements—

especially the fat-soluble vitamins, iron, and folic acid—may be needed to correct deficiencies. Dietary restrictions are likely to be lifelong.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, home care instructions for the child with celiac disease. Recalling that corn, rice, and millet are substitute food replacements in this disease will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Celiac disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1325-1327.

#### 412. 4

**Rationale:** Intussusception is a telescoping of one portion of the bowel into another. The condition results in an obstruction to the passage of intestinal contents. A child with intussusception typically has severe abdominal pain that is crampy and intermittent, causing the child to draw in the knees to the chest. Vomiting may be present, but is not projectile. Bright red blood and mucus are passed through the rectum and commonly are described as currant jelly–like stools. Watery diarrhea and ribbon-like stools are not manifestations of this disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the manifestations of intussusception. Think about the pathophysiology associated with this condition. Recalling that a classic manifestation is currant jelly–like stools will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review: Intussusception**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1323-1325.

❖ 413. 1, 2, 5

**Rationale:** Hepatitis is an acute or chronic inflammation of the liver that may be caused by a virus, a medication reaction, or another disease process. Because hepatitis can be viral, standard precautions should be instituted in the hospital. The child should be discouraged from sharing toys, so playtime in the playroom with other children is not part of the plan of care. The child will be allowed to return to school 1 week after the onset of jaundice, so indefinite home schooling would not need to be arranged. Jaundice is an expected finding with hepatitis and would not warrant notification of the HCP. Provision of a low-fat, well-balanced diet is recommended. Parents are cautioned about administering any medication to the child because normal doses of many medications may become dangerous owing to the liver's inability to detoxify and excrete them. Hand-washing is the most effective measure for control of hepatitis in any setting, and effective hand-washing can prevent the immunocompromised child from contracting an opportunistic type of infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care for a child with hepatitis. Thinking about the pathophysiology associated with hepatitis and the method of transmission will assist you in answering the question. Because the infection can be transmitted to others, playing with other children in the playroom is not an appropriate intervention. Since jaundice is an expected finding, notifying the HCP is unnecessary. Planning for an indefinite period of home schooling is not necessary.

**Review: Hepatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1334.



## CHAPTER 41

# Eye, Ear, and Throat Disorders

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

An adolescent has just been diagnosed with bacterial conjunctivitis. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 471.*

### **I. Strabismus**

#### **A. Description**

1. Called “squint” or “cross-eye”
2. Condition in which the eyes are not aligned because of lack of coordination of the extraocular muscles
3. Most often results from muscle imbalance or paralysis of extraocular muscles, but also may result from a congenital defect
4. Amblyopia (reduced visual acuity) may occur if not treated early because the brain receives two messages as a result of the nonparallel visual axes.

5. Permanent loss of vision can occur if not treated early.
6. This condition, considered a normal finding in a young infant, should not be present after about age 4 months. ▲
7. Treatment of the condition depends on the cause.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Crossed eyes
2. Squinting; tilts the head or closes one eye to see
3. Loss of binocular vision
4. Impairment of depth perception
5. Frequent headaches
6. Diplopia; photophobia

## **C. Interventions**

1. Corrective lenses may be indicated.
2. Instruct the parents regarding patching (occlusion therapy) of the “good” eye to strengthen the weak eye. ▲
3. Prepare for surgery to realign the weak muscles as prescribed if nonsurgical interventions are unsuccessful; this is usually performed before age 2 years.
4. Instruct the parents about the need for follow-up visits.

## **II. Conjunctivitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Also known as “pinkeye”; an inflammation of the conjunctiva
2. Conjunctivitis usually is caused by allergy, infection, or trauma.

3. Bacterial or viral conjunctivitis is extremely contagious. ▲

## B. Assessment

1. Itching, burning, or scratchy eyelids
2. Redness
3. Edema
4. Discharge

⚠ Chlamydial conjunctivitis is rare in older children; if diagnosed in a child who is not sexually active, the child should be assessed for possible sexual abuse.

## C. Interventions ▲

1. Instruct in infection control measures such as good hand-washing and not sharing towels and washcloths.
2. Administer antibiotic or antiviral eye drops or ointment as prescribed if infection is present (severe infection may require therapy with systemic antibiotics).
3. Instruct the child and parents about the administration of the prescribed medications.
4. Instruct the parents that the child should be kept home from school or day care until antibiotics have been administered for 24 hours.
5. Instruct about the use of cool compresses to lessen irritation and wearing dark glasses if photophobia occurs.
6. Instruct the child to avoid rubbing the eye to prevent injury.
7. Instruct a child who is wearing contact lenses to discontinue wearing them and to

obtain new lenses to eliminate the chance of reinfection that can occur from use of the old lenses.

8. Instruct an adolescent that eye makeup should be discarded and replaced.

### III. Otitis Media

#### A. Description

1. An inflammatory disorder usually caused by an infection of the middle ear occurring as a result of a blocked eustachian tube, which prevents normal drainage; can be acute or chronic.
2. Otitis media is a common complication of an acute respiratory infection (most commonly from respiratory syncytial virus or influenza).
3. Infants and children have eustachian tubes that are shorter, wider, and straighter, which makes them more prone to otitis media.

#### B. Prevention

1. Feed infants in upright position, to prevent reflux.
2. Maintain routine immunizations.
3. Encourage breast-feeding for at least the first 6 months of life.
4. Avoid exposure to tobacco smoke and allergens.

#### C. Assessment

1. Fever
2. Acute onset of ear pain
3. Crying, irritability, lethargy

4. Loss of appetite
5. Rolling of head from side to side
6. Pulling on or rubbing the ear
7. Purulent ear drainage may be present
8. Red, opaque, bulging, immobile tympanic membrane on otoscopic examination
9. Signs of hearing loss (indicative of chronic otitis media)

#### **D. Interventions**

1. Encourage fluid intake (may be difficult if the child is in pain).
2. Instruct the child to avoid chewing as much as possible during the acute period because chewing increases pain.
3. Provide local heat or cold as prescribed to relieve discomfort, and have the child lie with the affected ear down.
4. Instruct the parents in the appropriate procedure to clean drainage from the external ear canal with sterile swabs or gauze; frequent cleansing and the application of moisture barriers may be prescribed to prevent ear excoriation from the drainage.
5. Instruct the parents in the administration of analgesics or antipyretics such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin IB) as prescribed to decrease fever and pain.
6. Instruct the parents in the administration of antibiotics if prescribed, emphasizing that the prescribed period of administration is necessary to eliminate infective organisms.

7. In healthy infants over 6 months and children, careful use of antibiotics is recommended because of concerns about drug-resistant *Streptococcus pneumoniae*; usually, waiting up to 72 hours for spontaneous resolution is a safe and appropriate management of acute otitis media. ▲
8. Instruct the parents that screening for hearing loss may be necessary.
9. Instruct the parents about the procedure for administering ear medications such as topical pain relief drops if prescribed. ▲

⚠ To administer ear medications in a child younger than age 3 years, pull the ear lobe down and back. In a child older than 3 years, pull the pinna up and back.

## E. Myringotomy

### 1. Description

- a. A surgical incision into the tympanic membrane to provide drainage of the purulent middle ear fluid; may be done by a laser-assisted procedure
- b. Tympanoplasty tubes may be inserted into the middle ear to allow continued drainage and to equalize pressure and allow ventilation of the middle ear.

### 2. Postoperative interventions

- a. Instruct the parents and child to keep the ears dry.
- b. The client should wear earplugs while bathing, shampooing, and swimming (diving and submerging under water are not allowed).
- c. Parents can administer an analgesic such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin IB) to relieve discomfort after insertion of tympanoplasty

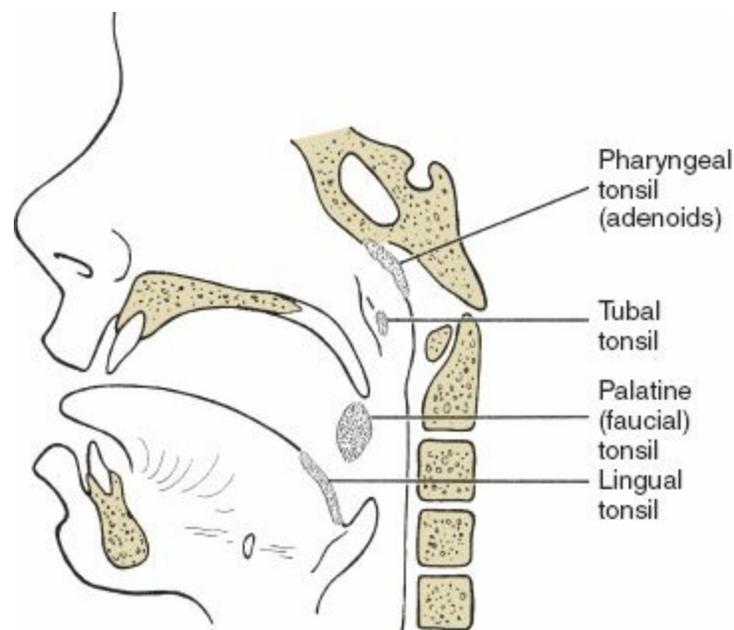
tubes.

- d. Parents should be taught that the child should not blow his or her nose for 7 to 10 days after surgery.
- e. Instruct the parents that if the tubes fall out, it is not an emergency, but the health care provider (HCP) should be notified; inform the parents of the appearance of the tubes (tiny, white, spool-shaped tubes). 🟢

#### IV. Tonsillitis and Adenoiditis

##### A. Description

1. Tonsillitis refers to inflammation and infection of the tonsils, which is lymphoid tissue located in the pharynx (Fig. 41-1).



**FIGURE 41-1** Location of various tonsillar masses. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

2. *Adenoiditis* refers to inflammation and infection of the adenoids (pharyngeal tonsils), located on the posterior wall of the nasopharynx.
3. Tonsillectomy (surgical removal of the tonsils) and adenoidectomy (surgical removal of the adenoids) may be necessary.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Persistent or recurrent sore throat
2. Enlarged, bright red tonsils that may be covered with white exudate
3. Difficulty in swallowing
4. Mouth breathing and an unpleasant mouth odor
5. Fever
6. Cough
7. Enlarged adenoids may cause nasal quality of speech, mouth breathing, hearing difficulty, snoring, or obstructive sleep apnea.

## **C. Preoperative interventions**

1. Assess for signs of active infection.
2. Assess bleeding and clotting studies because the throat is vascular.
3. Prepare the child for a sore throat postoperatively, and inform the child that he or she will need to drink liquids.
4. Assess for any loose teeth to decrease the risk of aspiration during surgery.

## **D. Interventions postoperatively**

1. Position the child prone or side-lying to facilitate drainage. ▲
2. Have suction equipment available, but do not suction unless there is an airway

obstruction. ▲

3. Monitor for signs of bleeding (frequent swallowing may indicate bleeding); if bleeding occurs, turn the child to the side and notify the HCP.
4. Discourage coughing, clearing the throat, or nose blowing to prevent bleeding.
5. Provide an ice collar or analgesics (rectally or intravenously) for discomfort.
6. Administer antiemetics to prevent vomiting if prescribed.
7. Provide clear, cool, noncitrus and noncarbonated fluids (crushed ice, ice pops).
8. Avoid red, purple, or brown liquids, which simulate the appearance of blood if the child vomits. ▲
9. Avoid milk products such as milk, ice cream, and pudding initially because they coat the throat, causing the child to cough to clear the throat. ▲
10. Soft foods may be prescribed 1 to 2 days postoperatively.
11. Do not give the child any straws, forks, or sharp objects that can be put into the mouth. ▲
12. Mouth odor, slight ear pain, and a low-grade fever may occur for a few days postoperatively, but the parents should be instructed to notify the HCP if bleeding, persistent earache, or fever occurs.
13. Instruct the parents to keep the child away from crowds until healing has occurred; usually the child is able to resume normal activities 1 to 2 weeks postoperatively.

## V. Epistaxis (Nosebleed)

### A. Description

1. The nose, especially the septum, is a highly vascular structure, and bleeding

usually results from direct trauma, foreign bodies, and nose picking or from mucosal inflammation.

2. Recurrent epistaxis and severe bleeding may indicate an underlying disease.

## B. Interventions

1. See [Priority Nursing Actions](#).

# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take if a Child Has a Nosebleed

1. Remain calm and keep the child calm and quiet.
2. Have the child sit up and lean forward (not lying down).
3. Apply continuous pressure to the nose with the thumb and forefinger for at least 10 minutes.
4. Insert cotton or wadded tissue into each nostril, and apply ice or a cold cloth to the bridge of the nose if bleeding persists.

If a nosebleed occurs in a child, it is important for the nurse to remain calm; otherwise, the child becomes agitated and it is difficult to get the child to cooperate with the necessary interventions. The child should be assisted to a sitting up and leaning forward position to prevent aspiration of blood. The child should not be placed in a lying down position because of the risk of aspiration. Nosebleeds usually originate in the anterior part of the nasal septum and can be controlled by applying pressure to the soft lower portion of the nose with the thumb and forefinger for at

least 10 minutes. If bleeding persists, cotton or wadded tissue should be placed into each nostril, and ice or a cold cloth should be applied to the bridge of the nose. In addition, if bleeding persists, the health care provider (HCP) needs to be notified, and the nose may require packing by the HCP. After the nosebleed has been stopped, petroleum or a water-soluble jelly may be inserted into each nostril to prevent crusting of old blood and to lessen the likelihood of the child picking at the crusted lesions and restarting the bleeding. Repeated bleeding episodes that last longer than 30 minutes may be an indication of the need for evaluation of a bleeding disorder.

### ***Reference***

Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby, p. 1446.

2. If bleeding cannot be controlled, packing or cauterization of the bleeding vessel may be prescribed.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Bacterial conjunctivitis is contagious, so the nurse should immediately institute measures to prevent the spread of the infection to others. The nurse should also teach the adolescent about measures to prevent the spread of infection. These and other measures include good infection control measures such as hand-washing

and not sharing towels and washcloths; procedure for administering antibiotic eye drops or ointment as prescribed; staying home from school until antibiotics have been administered for 24 hours; applying cool compresses to lessen irritation and wearing dark glasses if photophobia occurs; avoiding rubbing the eye to prevent injury; discontinuing wearing eye contacts and obtaining new lenses to eliminate the chance of reinfection; and discarding and replacing eye makeup.

### *Reference*

Hockenberry, Wilson (2013), p. 617.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 414.** After a tonsillectomy, a child begins to vomit bright red blood. The nurse should take which **initial** action?
1. Maintain NPO status.
  2. Turn the child to the side.
  3. Administer the prescribed antiemetic.
  4. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
- 415.** The mother of a 6-year-old child arrives at a clinic because the child has been experiencing scratchy, red, and swollen eyes. The nurse notes a discharge from the eyes and sends a culture to the laboratory for analysis. Chlamydial conjunctivitis is diagnosed. On the basis of this diagnosis, the nurse determines that which requires further investigation?

1. Possible trauma
2. Possible sexual abuse
3. Presence of an allergy
4. Presence of a respiratory infection

**416.** The nurse prepares a teaching plan for the mother of a child diagnosed with bacterial conjunctivitis. Which, if stated by the mother, indicates a **need for further teaching?**

1. "I need to wash my hands frequently."
2. "I need to clean the eye as prescribed."
3. "It is okay to share towels and washcloths."
4. "I need to give the eye drops as prescribed."

**417.** The nurse is reviewing the laboratory results for a child scheduled for tonsillectomy. The nurse determines that which laboratory value is **most** significant to review?

1. Creatinine level
2. Prothrombin time
3. Sedimentation rate
4. Blood urea nitrogen level

**418.** The nurse is preparing to care for a child after a tonsillectomy. The nurse documents on the plan of care to place the child in which position?

1. Supine

2. Side-lying
3. High Fowler's
4. Trendelenburg's

**419.** After a tonsillectomy, the nurse reviews the health care provider's (HCP's) postoperative prescriptions. Which prescription should the nurse question?

1. Monitor for bleeding.
2. Suction every 2 hours.
3. Give no milk or milk products.
4. Give clear, cool liquids when awake and alert.

**420.** The nurse is caring for a child after a tonsillectomy. The nurse monitors the child, knowing that which finding indicates the child is bleeding?

1. Frequent swallowing
2. A decreased pulse rate
3. Complaints of discomfort
4. An elevation in blood pressure

**421.** Antibiotics are prescribed for a child with otitis media who underwent a myringotomy with insertion of tympanostomy tubes. The nurse provides discharge instructions to the parents regarding the administration of the antibiotics. Which statement, if made by the parents, indicates understanding of the instructions provided?

1. "Administer the antibiotics until they are gone."

2. “Administer the antibiotics if the child has a fever.”
3. “Administer the antibiotics until the child feels better.”
4. “Begin to taper the antibiotics after 3 days of a full course.”

422. The day care nurse is observing a 2-year-old child and suspects that the child may have strabismus. Which observation made by the nurse indicates the presence of this condition?

1. The child has difficulty hearing.
2. The child consistently tilts the head to see.
3. The child does not respond when spoken to.
4. The child consistently turns the head to hear.

423. A child has been diagnosed with acute otitis media of the right ear. Which interventions should the nurse include in the plan of care? **Select all that apply.**



1. Provide a soft diet.
2. Position the child on the left side.
3. Administer an antihistamine twice daily.
4. Irrigate the right ear with normal saline every 8 hours.
5. Administer ibuprofen (Motrin IB) for fever every 4 hours as prescribed and as needed.
6. Instruct the parents about the need to administer the prescribed antibiotics for the full course of therapy.

# ANSWERS

414. 2

**Rationale:** After tonsillectomy, if bleeding occurs, the nurse immediately turns the child to the side to prevent aspiration and then notifies the health care provider. NPO status would be maintained, and an antiemetic may be prescribed; however, the initial nursing action would be to turn the child to the side.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* in the event query. Although all the options may be appropriate to maintain physiological integrity, the initial action is to turn the child to the side to prevent aspiration.

**Review:** **Tonsillectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1229.

415. 2

**Rationale:** Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the conjunctiva. A diagnosis of chlamydial conjunctivitis in a child who is not sexually active should signal the health care provider to assess the child for possible sexual abuse.

Trauma, allergy, and infection can cause conjunctivitis, but the causative organism is not likely to be *Chlamydia*.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the age of the child and the organism that is identified in the question. Also note that options 1, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** in that they can be recognized as the common causes of conjunctivitis and they relate to a physiological problem.

**Review:** Causes of **chlamydial conjunctivitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 636, 638.

**416. 3**

**Rationale:** Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the conjunctiva. Bacterial conjunctivitis is highly contagious, and the nurse should teach infection control measures. These include good hand-washing and not sharing towels and washcloths. Options 1, 2, and 4 are correct treatment measures.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Options 1, 2, and 4 can be eliminated by recalling that bacterial conjunctivitis is highly contagious.

**Review:** Infection control measures for **bacterial conjunctivitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Eye/Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 617; Swearingen (2012), pp. 566-567.

417. 2

**Rationale:** A tonsillectomy is the surgical removal of the tonsils. Because the tonsillar area is so vascular, postoperative bleeding is a concern. Prothrombin time, partial thromboplastin time, platelet count, hemoglobin and hematocrit, white blood cell count, and urinalysis are performed preoperatively. The prothrombin time results would identify a potential for bleeding. Creatinine level, sedimentation rate, and blood urea nitrogen would not determine the potential for bleeding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Focus on the surgical procedure and the **subject** of the question. The **subject** of the question relates to the potential for bleeding. Options 1 and 4 can be eliminated because they relate to kidney function. Option 3 can be eliminated because it is unrelated to the **subject** of the question.

**Review:** Tonsillectomy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1442.

418. 2

**Rationale:** A tonsillectomy is the surgical removal of the tonsils. The child should be placed in a prone or side-lying position after the surgical procedure to facilitate drainage. Options 1, 3, and 4 would not achieve this goal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, positioning after tonsillectomy. Focus on the surgical procedure and

visualize each of the positions described in the options. Keeping in mind that the goal is to facilitate drainage will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Positioning guidelines following tonsillectomy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1229.

419. 2

**Rationale:** A tonsillectomy is the surgical removal of the tonsils. After tonsillectomy, suction equipment should be available, but suctioning is not performed unless there is an airway obstruction because of the risk of trauma to the surgical site. Monitoring for bleeding is an important nursing intervention after any type of surgery. Milk and milk products are avoided initially because they coat the throat, cause the child to clear the throat, and increase the risk of bleeding. Clear, cool liquids are encouraged.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the prescription that the nurse questions. Option 1 can be eliminated first because this is a nursing action, not a medical prescription. From the remaining options, consider the anatomical location of the surgery. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Postoperative care following tonsillectomy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration; Safety

**Reference:** Perry et al (2010), p. 1312.

**420. 1**

**Rationale:** A tonsillectomy is the surgical removal of the tonsils. Frequent swallowing, restlessness, a fast and thready pulse, and vomiting bright red blood are signs of bleeding. An elevated blood pressure and complaints of discomfort are not indications of bleeding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a sign of bleeding, and use the concepts related to the signs of shock. These concepts should assist in eliminating options 2 and 4. From the remaining options, recalling that discomfort is expected and does not indicate bleeding will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of **bleeding** following **tonsillectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1229.

**421. 1**

**Rationale:** A myringotomy is the insertion of tympanoplasty tubes into the middle ear to promote drainage of purulent middle ear fluid, equalize pressure, and keep the ear aerated. The nurse must instruct parents regarding the administration of antibiotics. Antibiotics need to be taken as prescribed, and the full course needs to be completed.

Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect. Antibiotics are not tapered, but are administered for the full course of therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, understanding of the instructions about antibiotics. Recall that antibiotics must be taken for the full course, regardless of whether the child is feeling better. This will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Administration of **antibiotics**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Eye/Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1234-1235.

422. 2

**Rationale:** Strabismus is a condition in which the eyes are not aligned because of lack of coordination of the extraocular muscles. The nurse may suspect strabismus in a child when the child complains of frequent headaches, squints, or tilts the head to see. Other manifestations include crossed eyes, closing one eye to see, diplopia, photophobia, loss of binocular vision, or impairment of depth perception. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not indicative of this condition.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and relate to hearing. To select from the remaining options, recall that this is a condition in which the eyes are not aligned because of lack of coordination of the extraocular muscles.

**Review:** **Strabismus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Eye/Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 930.

❖ 423. 1, 5, 6

**Rationale:** Acute otitis media is an inflammatory disorder caused by an infection of the middle ear. The child often has fever, pain, loss of appetite, and possible ear drainage. The child also is irritable and lethargic and may roll the head or pull on or rub the affected ear. Ooscopic examination may reveal a red, opaque, bulging, and immobile tympanic membrane. Hearing loss may be noted particularly in chronic otitis media. The child's fever should be treated with ibuprofen (Motrin IB). The child is positioned on his or her affected side to facilitate drainage. A soft diet is recommended during the acute stage to avoid pain that can occur with chewing. Antibiotics are prescribed to treat the bacterial infection and should be administered for the full prescribed course. The ear should not be irrigated with normal saline because it can exacerbate the inflammation further. Antihistamines are not usually recommended as a part of therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care for the child with acute otitis media, and on the child's diagnosis and note the words, *acute* and *right ear*. Think about the pathophysiology associated with the disorder and the associated manifestations to select the correct options.

**Review:** Acute otitis media

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Planning

***Content Area:*** Child Health—Eye/Ear

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Infection

***Reference:*** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1232-1235.



## CHAPTER 42

# Respiratory Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A child with pneumonia complains of pain in the pleural area on the affected side.

What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 485.*

### I. Epiglottitis

#### A. Description

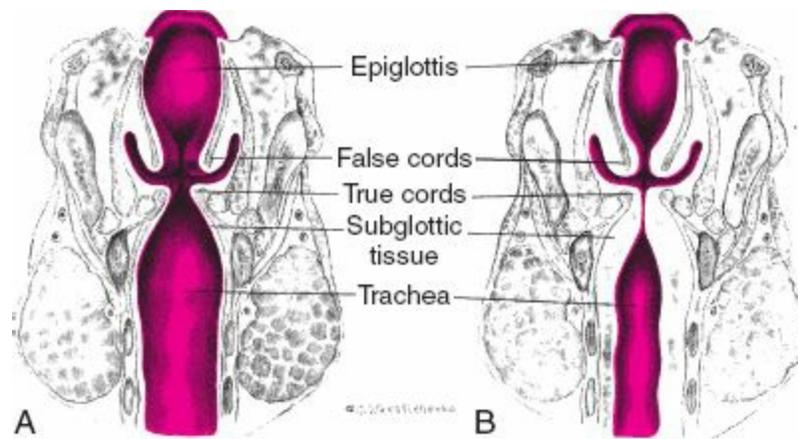
1. Bacterial form of croup
2. Inflammation of the epiglottis occurs, which may be caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b or *Streptococcus pneumoniae*; children immunized with *H. influenzae* type b (Hib **vaccine**) are at less risk for epiglottitis.
3. Occurs most frequently in children 2 to 8 years old, but can occur from infancy to adulthood
4. Onset is abrupt, and the condition occurs most often in winter.

5. Considered an emergency situation because it can progress rapidly to severe respiratory distress ▲

## B. Assessment

1. High fever

2. Sore, red, and inflamed throat (large, cherry red, edematous epiglottis) and pain on swallowing (Fig. 42-1) ▲



**FIGURE 42-1** A, Normal larynx. B, Obstruction and narrowing resulting from edema of croup. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

3. Absence of spontaneous cough

4. Dysphonia (muffled voice), dysphagia, dyspnea, and drooling ▲

5. Agitation

6. **Retractions** as the child struggles to breathe

7. Inspiratory **stridor** aggravated by the supine position

8. Tachycardia

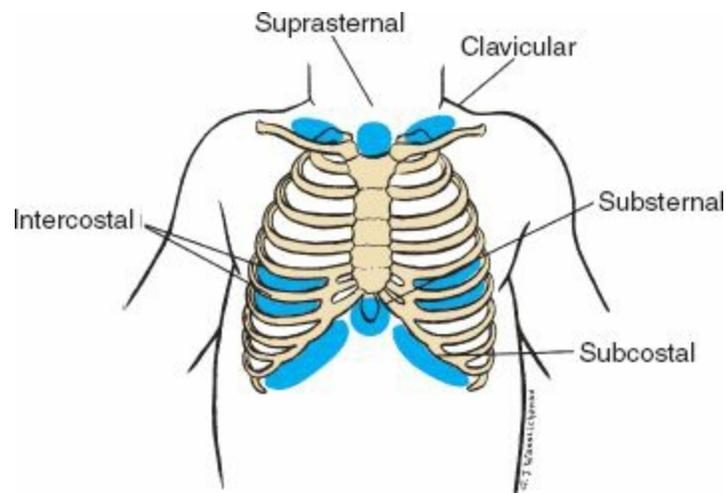
9. Tachypnea progressing to more severe respiratory distress (hypoxia, hypercapnia,

respiratory acidosis, decreased level of consciousness)

10. Tripod positioning: While supporting the body with the hands, the child leans forward, thrusts the chin forward and opens the mouth in an attempt to widen the airway ▲

### C. Interventions

1. Maintain a patent airway. ▲
2. Assess respiratory status and breath sounds, noting **nasal flaring**, the use of accessory muscles, retractions, and the presence of stridor (Fig. 42-2).



**FIGURE 42-2** Location of retractions. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

3. Do not measure the temperature by the oral route. ▲
4. Monitor pulse oximetry.
5. Prepare the child for lateral neck films to confirm the diagnosis (accompany the child to the radiology department).
6. Maintain NPO (nothing by mouth) status.

7. Do not leave the child unattended. ▲
8. Avoid placing the child in a supine position because this position would affect the respiratory status further. ▲
9. Do not restrain the child or take any other measure that may agitate the child.
10. Administer intravenous fluids as prescribed; insertion of an intravenous line may need to be delayed until an adequate airway is established because this procedure may agitate the child.
11. Administer intravenous antibiotics as prescribed; these are usually followed by oral antibiotics.
12. Administer analgesics and antipyretics (acetaminophen [Tylenol] or ibuprofen [Motrin IB]) to reduce fever and throat pain as prescribed.
13. Administer corticosteroids to decrease inflammation and reduce throat edema as prescribed.
14. Nebulized epinephrine (racemic epinephrine) may be prescribed for severe cases (causes mucosal vasoconstriction and reduces edema); heliox (mixture of helium and oxygen) may also be prescribed to reduce mucosal edema.
15. Provide cool mist oxygen therapy as prescribed; high humidification cools the airway and decreases swelling.
16. Have resuscitation equipment available, and prepare for endotracheal intubation or tracheotomy for severe respiratory distress.
17. Ensure that the child is up to date with immunizations, including Hib conjugate vaccine (see [Chapter 48](#)). ▲

 If epiglottitis is suspected, no attempts should be made to visualize the posterior pharynx, obtain a throat culture, or take an oral temperature. Otherwise, spasm of the epiglottis can occur, leading to complete airway occlusion.

## II. Laryngotracheobronchitis

### A. Description

1. Inflammation of the larynx, trachea, and bronchi
2. Most common type of croup; may be viral or bacterial and most frequently occurs in children younger than 5 years
3. Common causative organisms include parainfluenza virus types 2 and 3, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, and influenza A and B.
4. Characterized by gradual onset that may be preceded by an upper respiratory infection

### B. Assessment (Box 42-1)

#### **BOX 42-1** Progression of Symptoms in Laryngotracheobronchitis

##### Stage I

- Low-grade fever
- Hoarseness
- Seal bark and brassy cough (croup cough)
- Inspiratory stridor
- Fear

- Irritability and restlessness

### Stage II

- Continuous respiratory stridor
- Retractions
- Use of accessory muscles
- Crackles and wheezing
- Labored respirations

### Stage III

- Continued restlessness
- Anxiety
- Pallor
- Diaphoresis
- Tachypnea
- Signs of anoxia and hypercapnia

### Stage IV

- Intermittent cyanosis progressing to permanent cyanosis
- Apneic episodes progressing to cessation of breathing

Modified from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

## C. Interventions

1. Maintain a patent airway.
2. Assess respiratory status and monitor pulse oximetry; monitor for **nasal flaring**, sternal retraction, and inspiratory **stridor** (see Fig. 42-2).
3. Monitor for adequate respiratory exchange; monitor for pallor or **cyanosis**.
4. Elevate the head of the bed and provide rest.
5. Provide humidified oxygen via a cool air or mist tent as prescribed for a hospitalized child (Table 42-1).

**TABLE 42-1 Oxygen Delivery Systems: Advantages and Disadvantages**

System	Advantages	Disadvantages
Oxygen mask	Various sizes available; delivers higher O <sub>2</sub> concentration than cannula Able to provide a predictable concentration of oxygen if Venturi mask is used, whether child breathes through nose or mouth	Skin irritation Fear of suffocation Accumulation of moisture on face Possibility of aspiration of vomitus Difficulty in controlling O <sub>2</sub> concentrations (except with Venturi mask)
Nasal cannula	Provides low-moderate O <sub>2</sub> concentration (22%-40%) Child is able to eat and talk while getting O <sub>2</sub> Possibility of more complete observation of child because nose and mouth remain unobstructed	Must have patent nasal passages May cause abdominal distention and discomfort or vomiting Difficulty controlling O <sub>2</sub> concentrations if child breathes through mouth Inability to provide mist if desired
Oxygen tent	Provides lower O <sub>2</sub> concentrations (F <sub>I</sub> O <sub>2</sub> up to 0.3-0.5) Child is able to receive desired inspired O <sub>2</sub> concentrations, even while eating	Necessity for tight fit around bed to prevent leakage of oxygen Cool and wet tent environment Poor access to child; inspired O <sub>2</sub> levels fall when tent is entered
Oxygen hood, face tent	Provides high O <sub>2</sub> concentrations (F <sub>I</sub> O <sub>2</sub> up to 1.00) Free access to child's chest for assessment	High-humidity environment Need to remove child for feeding and care

F<sub>I</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, Fraction of inspired oxygen.

Data from Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

6. Instruct the parents to use a cool air vaporizer at home; other measures include having the child breathe in the cool night air or the air from an open freezer or taking the child to a cool basement or garage.
7. Provide and encourage fluid intake; intravenous fluids may be prescribed to maintain hydration status if the child is unable to take fluids orally.
8. Administer analgesics as prescribed to reduce fever.
9. Teach the parents to avoid administering cough syrups or cold medicines, which may dry and thicken secretions. 🟢
10. Administer corticosteroids if prescribed to reduce inflammation and edema.
11. Administer nebulized epinephrine (racemic epinephrine) as prescribed; this may be prescribed for children with severe disease experiencing stridor at rest, retractions, or difficulty breathing.
12. Administer antibiotics as prescribed, noting that they are not indicated unless a bacterial infection is present.
13. Heliox (mixture of helium and oxygen) may be prescribed; this medication reduces the work of breathing, reduces airway turbulence, and helps to relieve airway obstruction.
14. Have resuscitation equipment available.
15. Provide appropriate reassurance and education to the parents or caregivers.

 Isolation precautions should be implemented for a hospitalized child with an upper respiratory infection until the cause of the infection is known.

### III. Bronchitis

#### A. Description

1. Inflammation of the trachea and bronchi; may be referred to as tracheobronchitis
2. Usually occurs in association with an upper respiratory infection
3. Is usually a mild disorder; causative agent is most often viral

#### B. Assessment

1. Fever
2. Dry, hacking, and nonproductive cough that is worse at night and becomes productive in 2 to 3 days

#### C. Interventions

1. Treat symptoms as necessary.
2. Monitor for respiratory distress.
3. Provide cool, humidified air to the child.
4. Encourage increased fluid intake; child may drink beverages that he or she likes as long as the respiratory status is stable. 
5. Administer antipyretics for fever as prescribed.
6. A cough suppressant may be prescribed to promote rest.

### IV. Bronchiolitis and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

#### A. Description

1. Bronchiolitis is an inflammation of the bronchioles that causes production of thick mucus that occludes bronchiole tubes and small bronchi.
2. RSV causes an acute viral infection and is a common cause of bronchiolitis (other organisms that cause bronchiolitis include adenoviruses, parainfluenza viruses, and human metapneumovirus).
3. RSV, although not airborne, is highly communicable and is usually transferred by direct contact with respiratory secretions. ▲
4. RSV occurs primarily in the winter and spring.
5. RSV is rarer in children older than 2 years, with a peak incidence at approximately 6 months of age.
6. At-risk children include children older than 1 year of age who have a chronic or disabling condition.
7. Identification of the virus is done via testing of nasal or nasopharyngeal secretions. ▲
8. Prevention measures include encouraging breast-feeding; avoiding tobacco smoke exposure; using good hand-washing techniques; and administering palivizumab (Synagis), a monoclonal antibody, to high-risk infants. Palivizumab is administered via intramuscular injection monthly for a 5-month period (usually from November to March).

**B. Assessment (Box 42-2) ▲**

## **Initial Manifestations**

- Rhinorrhea
- Eye or ear drainage
- Pharyngitis
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Wheezing
- Intermittent fever

## **Manifestations as Disease Progresses**

- Increased coughing and wheezing
- Signs of air hunger
- Tachypnea and retractions
- Periods of cyanosis

## **Manifestations in Severe Illness**

- Tachypnea more than 70 breaths/minute
- Decreased breath sounds and poor air exchange
- Listlessness
- Apneic episodes

Modified from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

## C. Interventions

1. For a child with bronchiolitis, interventions are aimed at treating symptoms and include airway maintenance, cool humidified air and oxygen, adequate fluid intake, and medications.
2. For a hospitalized child with RSV, isolate the child in a single room or place in a room with another child with RSV. ▲
3. Ensure that nurses caring for a child with RSV do not care for other, high-risk children. ▲
4. Use contact and standard precautions during care; using good hand-washing techniques and wearing gloves and gowns are necessary. ▲
5. Monitor airway status and maintain a patent airway.
6. For most effective airway maintenance, position the child at a 30- to 40-degree angle with the neck slightly extended to maintain an open airway and decrease pressure on the diaphragm. ▲
7. Provide cool, humidified oxygen as prescribed.
8. Monitor pulse oximetry levels.
9. Encourage fluids; fluids administered intravenously may be necessary until the acute stage has passed.
10. Periodic suctioning may be necessary if nasal secretions are copious; use of a bulb syringe for suctioning may be effective. Suctioning should be done before feeding to promote comfort and adequate intake.
11. Administer ribavirin (Virazole), an antiviral medication, if prescribed

(administered via the inhalation route).

 Cough suppressants are administered with caution because they can interfere with the clearance of respiratory secretions.

## V. Pneumonia

### A. Description

1. Inflammation of the pulmonary parenchyma or alveoli or both, caused by a virus, mycoplasmal agents, bacteria, or aspiration of foreign substances.
2. The causative agent usually is introduced into the lungs through inhalation or from the bloodstream.
3. Viral pneumonia occurs more frequently than bacterial pneumonia, is seen in children of all ages, and often is associated with a viral upper respiratory infection.
4. Primary atypical pneumonia, usually caused by *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* or *Chlamydia pneumoniae*, occurs most often in the fall and winter months and is more common in crowded living conditions; it is most often seen in children 5 to 12 years old.
5. Bacterial pneumonia is often a serious infection requiring hospitalization when pleural effusion or empyema accompanies the disease; hospitalization is also necessary for children with staphylococcal pneumonia (*Streptococcus pneumoniae* is a common cause). 
6. Aspiration pneumonia occurs when food, secretions, liquids, or other materials enter the lung and cause inflammation and a chemical pneumonitis. Classic

symptoms include an increasing cough or fever with foul-smelling sputum, deteriorating results on chest x-rays, and other signs of airway involvement.

7. Prevention of viral and bacterial pneumonia includes immunization of infants and children with heptavalent pneumococcal conjugate **vaccine** (PCV; Prevnar) (see [Chapter 48](#)). ▲

## B. Viral pneumonia ▲

### 1. Assessment

- a. Acute or insidious onset
- b. Symptoms range from mild fever, slight cough, and malaise to high fever, severe cough, and diaphoresis.
- c. Nonproductive or productive cough of small amounts of whitish sputum
- d. Wheezes or fine **crackles**

### 2. Interventions

- a. Treatment is symptomatic.
- b. Administer oxygen with cool humidified air as prescribed.
- c. Increase fluid intake.
- d. Administer antipyretics for fever as prescribed.
- e. Administer chest physiotherapy and postural drainage as prescribed.

## C. Primary atypical pneumonia

### 1. Assessment

- a. Acute or insidious onset
- b. Fever (lasting several days to 2 weeks), chills, anorexia, headache, malaise,

and myalgia (muscle pain)

c. Rhinitis; sore throat; and dry, hacking cough

d. Nonproductive cough initially, progressing to production of seromucoid sputum that becomes mucopurulent or blood-streaked

## 2. Interventions

a. Treatment is symptomatic.

b. Recovery generally occurs in 7 to 10 days.

## D. Bacterial pneumonia ▲

### 1. Assessment

a. Acute onset

b. Infant: Irritability, lethargy, poor feeding; abrupt fever (may be accompanied by seizures); respiratory distress (air hunger, tachypnea, and circumoral cyanosis)

c. Older child: Headache, chills, abdominal pain, chest pain, meningeal symptoms (meningism)

d. Hacking, nonproductive cough

e. Diminished breath sounds or scattered crackles

f. With consolidation, decreased breath sounds are more pronounced.

g. As the infection resolves, the cough becomes productive, and the child expectorates purulent sputum; coarse crackles and **wheezing** are noted.

### 2. Interventions

a. Antibiotic therapy is initiated as soon as the diagnosis is suspected; in a hospitalized infant or child, intravenous antibiotics are usually prescribed. ▲

- b.** Administer oxygen for respiratory distress as prescribed, and monitor oxygen saturation via pulse oximetry.
- c.** Place the child in a cool mist tent as prescribed; cool humidification moistens the airways and assists in temperature reduction.
- d.** Suction mucus from the infant, using a bulb syringe, to maintain a patent airway if the infant is unable to handle secretions.
- e.** Administer chest physiotherapy and postural drainage every 4 hours as prescribed.
- f.** Promote bed rest to conserve energy.
- g.** Encourage the child to lie on the affected side (if pneumonia is unilateral) to splint the chest and reduce the discomfort caused by pleural rubbing.
- h.** Encourage fluid intake (administer cautiously to prevent aspiration); intravenously administered fluids may be necessary.
- i.** Administer antipyretics for fever and bronchodilators as prescribed.
- j.** Monitor temperature frequently because of the risk for febrile seizures.
- k.** Institute isolation precautions with pneumococcal or staphylococcal pneumonia (according to agency policy).
- l.** Administer cough suppressant as prescribed before rest times and meals if the cough is disturbing.
- m.** Continuous closed chest drainage may be instituted if purulent fluid is present (usually noted in *Staphylococcus* infections).
- n.** Fluid accumulation in the pleural cavity may be removed by thoracentesis;

thoracentesis also provides a means for obtaining fluid for culture and for instilling antibiotics directly into the pleural cavity.

**!** Children with a respiratory disorder should be monitored for weight loss and for signs of dehydration. Signs of dehydration include a sunken fontanel (infants), nonelastic skin turgor, decreased and concentrated urinary output, dry mucous membranes, and decreased tear production.

## VI. Asthma

### A. Description

1. Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways (see [Chapter 58](#)).
2. Asthma is classified on the basis of disease severity; management includes medications, environmental control of allergens, and child and family education.
3. The allergic reaction in the airways caused by the precipitant can result in an immediate reaction with obstruction occurring, and it can result in a late bronchial obstructive reaction several hours after the initial exposure to the precipitant.
4. Mast cell release of histamine leads to a bronchoconstrictive process, bronchospasm, and obstruction.
5. Diagnosis is made on the basis of the child's symptoms, history and physical examination, chest radiograph, and laboratory tests ([Box 42-3](#)).

### **BOX 42-3** Laboratory Tests to Assist in Diagnosing Asthma

***Pulmonary Function Tests:*** Spirometry testing assesses the presence and degree of

disease and can determine the response to treatment.

**Peak Expiratory Flow Rate Measurement:** Measures maximum flow of air that can be forcefully exhaled in 1 second; child uses a peak expiratory flowmeter to determine a “personal best” value that can be used for comparison at other times, such as during and after an asthma attack.

**Bronchoprovocation Testing:** Testing that is done to identify inhaled allergens; mucous membranes are directly exposed to suspected allergen in increasing amounts.

**Skin Testing:** Done to identify specific allergens.

**Exercise Challenges:** Exercise is used to identify the occurrence of exercise-induced bronchospasm.

**Radioallergosorbent Test:** Blood test used to identify a specific allergen.

**Chest Radiograph:** May show hyperexpansion of the airways

*Note:* Some tests place the child at risk for an asthma attack; testing should be done under close supervision.

6. Precipitants may trigger an asthma attack ([Box 42-4](#)).

## **BOX 42-4** Precipitants Triggering an Asthma Attack

### **Allergens**

*Outdoor:* Trees, shrubs, weeds, grasses, molds, pollen, air pollution, spores

*Indoor:* Dust, dust mites, mold, cockroach antigen

**Irritants:** Tobacco smoke, wood smoke, odors, sprays

## ***Exposure to Occupational Irritants***

***Exercise***

***Cold Air***

***Changes in Weather or Temperature***

***Environmental Change:***

Moving to a new home, starting a new school

***Colds and Infections***

***Animals:*** Cats, dogs, rodents, horses

***Medications:*** Aspirin, nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs, antibiotics,  $\beta$ -blockers

***Strong Emotions:*** Fear, anger, laughing, crying

***Conditions:*** Gastroesophageal reflux disease, tracheoesophageal fistula

***Food Additives:*** Sulfite preservatives

***Foods:*** Nuts, milk, and other dairy products

***Endocrine Factors:*** Menses, pregnancy, thyroid disease

Data from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

7. Status asthmaticus is an acute asthma attack, and the child displays respiratory distress despite vigorous treatment measures; this is a medical emergency that can result in respiratory failure and death if not treated. ▲

## **B. Assessment**

1. Child has episodes of dyspnea, **wheezing**, breathlessness, chest tightness, and

cough, particularly at night or in the early morning or both. ▲

## 2. Acute asthma attacks

- a. Episodes include progressively worsening shortness of breath, cough, wheezing, chest tightness, decreases in expiratory airflow secondary to bronchospasm, mucosal edema, and mucus plugging; air is trapped behind occluded or narrow airways, and hypoxemia can occur.
- b. The attack begins with irritability, restlessness, headache, feeling tired, or chest tightness; just before the attack, the child may present with itching localized at the front of the neck or over the upper part of the back. ▲
- c. Respiratory symptoms include a hacking, irritable, nonproductive cough caused by bronchial edema.
- d. Accumulated secretions stimulate the cough; the cough becomes rattling, and there is production of frothy, clear, gelatinous sputum.
- e. The child experiences retractions.
- f. Hyperresonance on percussion of the chest is noted.
- g. Breath sounds are coarse and loud, with crackles, coarse rhonchi, and inspiratory and expiratory wheezing; expiration is prolonged.
- h. Child may be pale or flushed, and the lips may have a deep, dark red color that may progress to **cyanosis** (also observed in the nail beds and skin, especially around the mouth).
- i. Restlessness, apprehension, and **diaphoresis** occur.
- j. Child speaks in short, broken phrases.

- k. Younger children assume the tripod sitting position; older children sit upright, with the shoulders in a hunched-over position, the hands on the bed or a chair, and the arms braced to facilitate the use of the accessory muscles of breathing (child avoids a lying down position).
- l. Exercise-induced attack: Cough, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, wheezing, and endurance problems occur during exercise.
- m. Severe spasm or obstruction: Breath sounds and wheezing cannot be heard (silent chest), and cough is ineffective (represents a lack of air movement).
- n. Ventilatory failure and asphyxia: Shortness of breath, with air movement in the chest restricted to the point of absent breath sounds, is noted; this is accompanied by a sudden increase in the respiratory rate.

C. Interventions: Acute episode (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ▲

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take in the Event of an Acute Asthma Attack

1. Assess airway patency and respiratory status.
2. Administer humidified oxygen by nasal cannula or face mask.
3. Administer quick-relief (rescue) medications.
4. Initiate an intravenous (IV) line.
5. Prepare the child for a chest radiograph if prescribed.
6. Prepare to obtain a blood sample for determining arterial blood gas levels if

prescribed.

In the event of an acute asthma attack, several interventions are necessary. First, the nurse assesses airway status to ensure airway patency. If the airway is not patent, emergency interventions such as endotracheal intubation may be necessary. The nurse also quickly assesses the child's respiratory status. If the airway is patent, the nurse administers oxygen by nasal cannula or mask as prescribed. Quick-relief (rescue) medications are administered as prescribed to treat the symptoms. An IV line is initiated so that IV medications can be administered if prescribed. The nurse prepares the child for a chest x-ray to assess airway status and to assist in ruling out a respiratory infection. Blood samples are obtained, and an arterial blood gas may be obtained. When the laboratory results are obtained, the nurse administers medications as prescribed to correct dehydration, acidosis, or electrolyte imbalances. During the episode and during treatment, the nurse continuously monitors respiratory status, pulse oximetry, and color. The nurse also needs to be alert to decreased wheezing or a silent chest, which may signal the inability to move air.

### ***References***

Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby, p. 1274; Swearingen P: *All-in-one care planning resource*, ed 3, Philadelphia, 2012, Mosby, p. 531.

## **D. Medications**

1. Quick-relief medications (rescue medications): Used to treat symptoms and exacerbations (Box 42-5)

#### **BOX 42-5 Quick-Relief Medications (Rescue Medications)**

- Short-acting  $\beta_2$  agonists (for bronchodilation)
- Anticholinergics (for relief of acute bronchospasm)
- Systemic corticosteroids (for antiinflammatory action to treat reversible airflow obstruction)

2. Long-term control medications (preventer medications): Used to achieve and maintain control of inflammation (Box 42-6)

#### **BOX 42-6 Long-Term Control (Medications to Prevent Attacks)**

- Corticosteroids (for antiinflammatory action)
- Antiallergy medications (to prevent an adverse response on exposure to an allergen)
- Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (for antiinflammatory action)
- Long-acting  $\beta_2$  agonists (for long-acting bronchodilation)
- Leukotriene modifiers (to prevent bronchospasm and inflammatory cell infiltration)
- Monoclonal antibody (blocks binding of IgE to mast cells to inhibit inflammation)

3. Nebulizer, metered-dose inhaler (MDI): May be used to administer medications;

if the child has difficulty using the MDI, medication can be administered by nebulization (medication is mixed with saline and then nebulized with compressed air by a machine).

4. If an MDI is used to administer a corticosteroid, a spacer should be used to prevent yeast infections in the child's mouth.
5. The child's **growth** patterns need to be monitored when corticosteroids are prescribed.

#### E. Chest physiotherapy

1. Includes breathing exercises and physical training.
2. Chest physiotherapy strengthens the respiratory musculature and produces more efficient breathing patterns.
3. Chest physiotherapy is not recommended during an acute exacerbation.

#### F. Allergen control ▲

1. Testing may be done to identify allergens.
2. Teach the child and parents about measures to prevent and reduce exposure to allergens (see [Box 42-4](#))

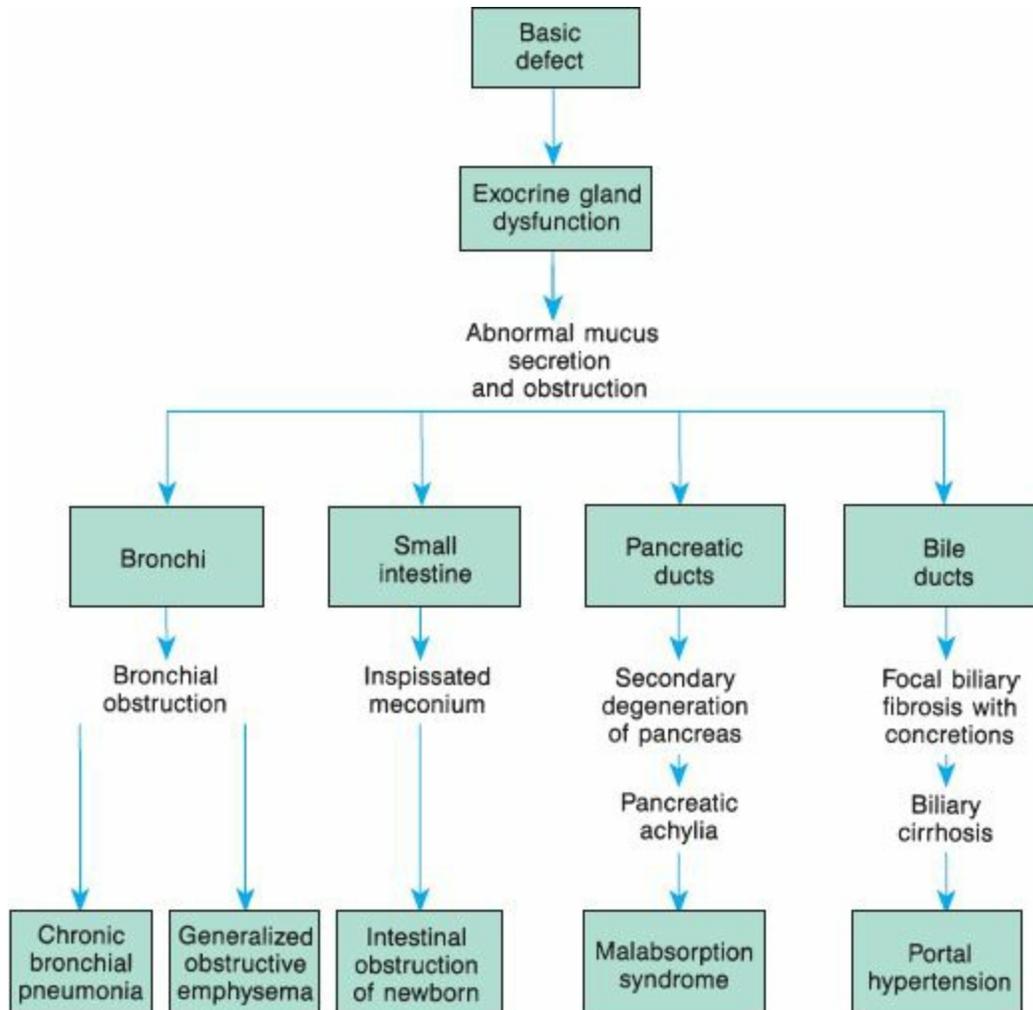
#### G. Home care measures ▲

1. Instruct the family in measures to eliminate environmental allergens.
2. Avoid extremes of environmental temperature; in cold temperatures, instruct the child to breathe through the nose, not the mouth, and to cover the nose and mouth with a scarf.
3. Avoid exposure to individuals with a respiratory infection.

4. Instruct the child and family in how to recognize early symptoms of an asthma attack.
5. Teach the child and family how to administer medications as prescribed.
6. Teach the child and family how to use a nebulizer, MDI, or peak expiratory flowmeter.
7. Instruct the child and family about the importance of home monitoring of the peak expiratory flow rate; a decrease in the expiratory flow rate may indicate impending infection or exacerbation.
8. Instruct the child in the cleaning of devices used for inhaled medications (yeast infections can occur with the use of aerosolized corticosteroids).
9. Encourage adequate rest, sleep, and a well-balanced diet.
10. Instruct the child in the importance of adequate fluid intake to liquefy secretions.
11. Assist in developing an exercise program.
12. Instruct the child in the procedure for respiratory treatments and exercises as prescribed.
13. Encourage the child to cough effectively.
14. Encourage the parents to keep immunizations up to date; annual influenza vaccinations are recommended for children 6 months of age and older.
15. Inform other health care providers and school personnel of the asthma condition.
16. Allow the child to take control of self-care measures, based on age appropriateness.

## VII. Cystic Fibrosis

### A. Description (Fig. 42-3)



**FIGURE 42-3** Various effects of exocrine gland dysfunction in cystic fibrosis. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

1. A chronic multisystem disorder (autosomal recessive trait disorder) characterized by exocrine gland dysfunction
2. The mucus produced by the exocrine glands is abnormally thick, tenacious, and copious, causing obstruction of the small passageways of the affected organs,

particularly in the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and reproductive systems.

3. Common symptoms are associated with pancreatic enzyme deficiency and pancreatic fibrosis caused by duct blockage, progressive chronic lung disease as a result of infection, and sweat gland dysfunction resulting in increased sodium and chloride sweat concentrations. ▲
4. An increase in sodium and chloride in sweat and saliva forms the basis for one diagnostic test, the sweat chloride test (Box 42-7).

#### **BOX 42-7** Quantitative Sweat Chloride Test

Production of sweat is stimulated (pilocarpine iontophoresis), sweat is collected, and sweat electrolytes are measured (more than 75 mg of sweat is needed).

Normally, the sweat chloride concentration is less than 40 mEq/L.

Chloride concentration greater than 60 mEq/L is a positive test result (higher than 40 mEq/L is diagnostic in infants younger than 3 months of age).

Chloride concentrations of 40 to 60 mEq/L are highly suggestive of cystic fibrosis and require a repeat test.

5. Cystic fibrosis is a progressive and incurable disorder, and respiratory failure is a common cause of death; organ transplantations may be an option to increase survival rates.

#### **B. Respiratory system** ▲

1. Symptoms are produced by the stagnation of mucus in the airway, leading to

bacterial colonization and destruction of lung tissue.

2. Emphysema and atelectasis occur as the airways become increasingly obstructed.
3. Chronic hypoxemia causes contraction and hypertrophy of the muscle fibers in pulmonary arteries and arterioles, leading to pulmonary hypertension and eventual cor pulmonale.
4. Pneumothorax from ruptured bullae and hemoptysis from erosion of the bronchial wall occur as the disease progresses.
5. Other respiratory symptoms
  - a. **Wheezing** and cough
  - b. Dyspnea
  - c. **Cyanosis**
  - d. Clubbing of the fingers and toes
  - e. Barrel chest
  - f. Repeated episodes of bronchitis and pneumonia

#### C. Gastrointestinal system ▲

1. Meconium ileus in the newborn is the earliest manifestation.
2. Intestinal obstruction (distal intestinal obstructive syndrome) caused by thick intestinal secretions can occur; signs include pain, abdominal distention, nausea, and vomiting.
3. Stools are frothy and foul-smelling.
4. Deficiency of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K, which can result in easy bruising, bleeding, and anemia, occurs.

5. Malnutrition and failure to thrive is a concern.
6. Demonstration of hypoalbuminemia can occur from diminished absorption of protein, resulting in generalized edema.
7. Rectal prolapse can result from the large, bulky stools and increased intraabdominal pressure.
8. Pancreatic fibrosis can occur and places the child at risk for diabetes mellitus.

#### D. Integumentary system ▲

1. Abnormally high concentrations of sodium and chloride in sweat are noted.
2. Parents report that the infant tastes “salty” when kissed.
3. Dehydration and electrolyte imbalances can occur, especially during hyperthermic conditions.

#### E. Reproductive system

1. Cystic fibrosis can delay **puberty** in girls.
2. Fertility can be inhibited by the highly viscous cervical secretions, which act as a plug and block sperm entry.
3. Males are usually sterile (but not impotent), caused by the blockage of the vas deferens by abnormal secretions or by failure of normal development of duct structures.

#### F. Diagnostic tests

1. Quantitative sweat chloride test is positive (see [Box 42-7](#)). ▲
2. Newborn screening may be done in some states and may consist of immunoreactive trypsinogen analysis and direct DNA analysis for mutant genes.



3. Chest x-ray reveals atelectasis and obstructive emphysema.
4. Pulmonary function tests provide evidence of abnormal small airway function.
5. Stool, fat, enzyme analysis: A 72-hour stool sample is collected to check the fat or enzyme (trypsin) content, or both (food intake is recorded during the collection).

#### G. Interventions: Respiratory system

1. Goals of treatment include preventing and treating pulmonary infection by improving aeration, removing secretions, and administering antibiotic medications.
2. Monitor respiratory status including lung sounds and the presence and characteristics of a cough.
3. Chest physiotherapy (percussion and postural drainage) on awakening and in the evening (more frequently during pulmonary infection) needs to be done every day to maintain pulmonary hygiene; chest physiotherapy should not be performed before or immediately after a meal.
4. A Flutter mucus clearance device (a small, hand-held plastic pipe with a stainless steel ball on the inside) facilitates the removal of mucus and may be prescribed; store away from small children because if the device separates, the steel ball poses a choking hazard.
5. Hand-held percussors or a special vest device that provides high-frequency chest wall oscillation may be prescribed to help loosen secretions.
6. A positive expiratory pressure mask may be prescribed; use of this mask forces secretion to the upper airway for expectoration.

7. The child should be taught the forced expiratory technique (huffing) to mobilize secretions for expectoration.
8. Bronchodilator medication by aerosol may be prescribed; the medication opens the bronchi for easier expectoration (administered before chest physiotherapy when the child has reactive airway disease or is wheezing). Medications that decrease the viscosity of mucus may also be prescribed.
9. A physical exercise program with the aim of stimulating mucus expectoration and establishing an effective breathing pattern should be instituted.
10. Aerosolized or intravenous antibiotics may be prescribed and administered at home through a central venous access device.
11. Oxygen may be prescribed during acute episodes; monitor closely for oxygen narcosis (signs include nausea and vomiting, malaise, fatigue, numbness and tingling of extremities, substernal distress) because a child with cystic fibrosis may have chronic carbon dioxide retention.
12. Lung transplantation is occasionally performed.

#### H. Interventions: Gastrointestinal system ▲

1. A child with cystic fibrosis requires a high-calorie, high-protein, and well-balanced diet to meet energy and **growth** needs; multivitamins and vitamins A, D, E, and K are also administered; for those with severe lung disease, energy requirements may be as high as 20% to 50% or more of the recommended daily allowance.
2. Monitor weight and for failure to thrive.

3. Monitor stool patterns and for signs of intestinal obstruction.
4. The goal of treatment for pancreatic insufficiency is to replace pancreatic enzymes; pancreatic enzymes are administered within 30 minutes of eating and administered with all meals and all snacks (enzymes should not be given if the child is NPO).
5. The amount of pancreatic enzymes administered depends on the health care provider's preference and usually is adjusted to achieve normal growth and a decrease in the number of stools to two or three daily (additional enzymes are needed if the child is consuming high-fat foods).
6. Enteric-coated pancreatic enzymes should not be crushed or chewed; capsules can be taken apart and the contents can be sprinkled on a small amount of food for administration.
7. Monitor for constipation, intestinal obstruction, and rectal prolapse.
8. Monitor for signs of gastroesophageal reflux; place the infant in an upright position after eating, and teach the child to sit upright after eating.

#### **I. Additional interventions**

1. Monitor blood glucose levels and for signs of diabetes mellitus.
2. Ensure adequate salt intake and fluids that provide an adequate supply of electrolytes during extremely hot weather and when the child has a fever.
3. Monitor bone growth in the child.
4. Monitor for signs of retinopathy or nephropathy.
5. Provide emotional support to the parents, particularly when the child is

diagnosed; parents will be fearful and uncertain about the disorder and the care involved.

6. Provide support to the child as he or she transitions through the stages of growth.
7. Teach the child and parents about the care involved and encourage independence in the child for self-care as age-appropriate.

#### J. Home care

1. Home care involves educating the parents and the child about all of the aspects of care for the disorder.
2. Informing the parents and child about the signs of complications and actions to take and that the importance of follow-up care is crucial.
3. Instruct the parents to ensure that the child receives the recommended immunizations on schedule; in addition, annual influenza vaccinations are recommended for children 6 months of age and older.
4. Inform the child and parents about the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

 An alteration in respiratory status can be a frightening experience for the child and parents. A calm and reassuring nursing approach assists in reducing fear.

### VIII. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

#### A. Description

1. *SIDS* refers to unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant younger than 1 year for whom an investigation of the death and a thorough autopsy fail to show an adequate cause of death.

2. Several theories are proposed regarding the cause of SIDS, but the exact cause is unknown.
3. SIDS most frequently occurs during winter months.
4. Death usually occurs during sleep periods, but not necessarily at night.
5. SIDS most frequently affects infants 2 to 3 months of age.
6. Incidence is higher in boys.
7. Incidence is higher in Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics and in lower socioeconomic groups.
8. Incidence has been found to be lower in breastfed infants and infants sleeping with a pacifier.
9. High-risk conditions for SIDS:
  - a. Prone position
  - b. Use of soft bedding, sleeping in a noninfant bed such as a sofa
  - c. Overheating (thermal stress)
  - d. Cosleeping
  - e. Mother who smoked cigarettes or abused substances during pregnancy
  - f. Exposure to tobacco smoke after birth

## **B. Assessment**

1. Infant is apneic, blue, and lifeless.
2. Frothy blood-tinged fluid is in the nose and mouth.
3. Infant may be found in any position, but typically is found in a disheveled bed, with blankets over the head, and huddled in a corner.

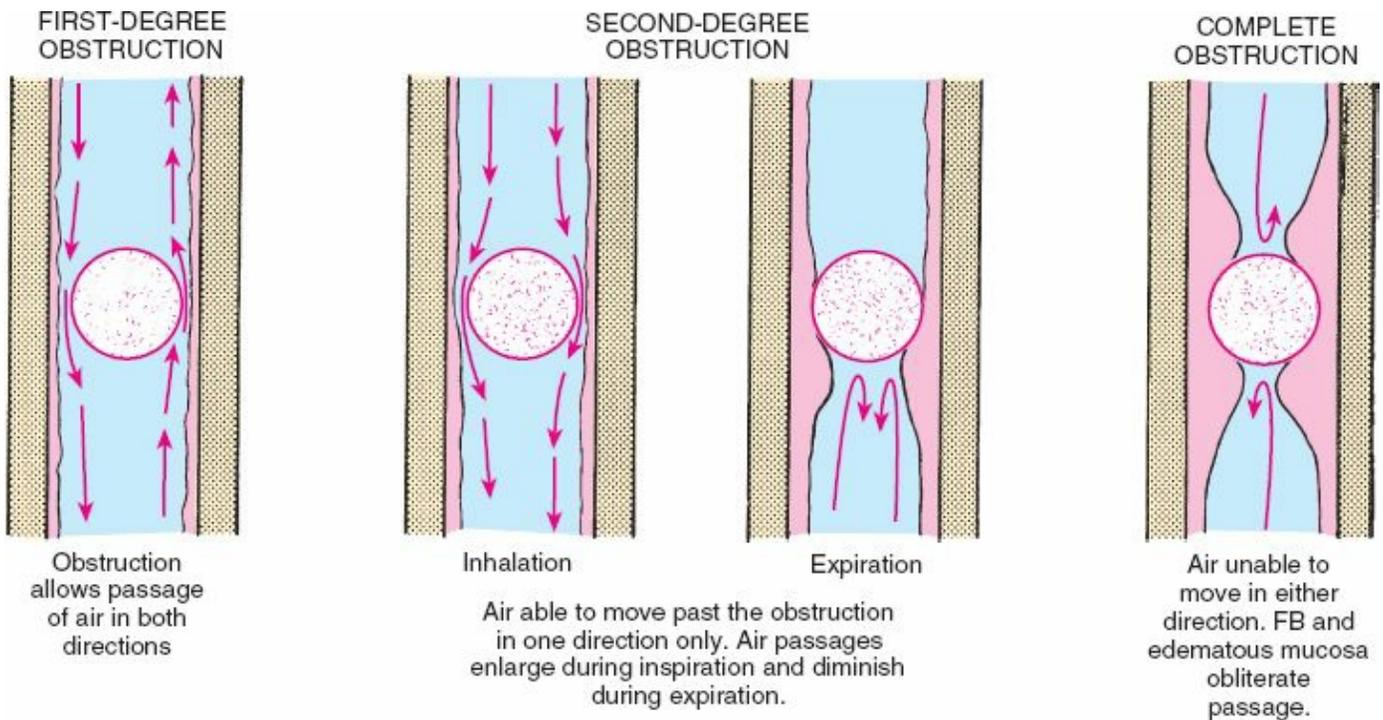
4. Infants may appear to have been clutching bedding.
5. Diaper may be wet and full of stool.

### C. Prevention and interventions ▲

1. Infants should be placed in the supine position for sleep.
2. Mother needs to be taught about the risk factors: cigarette smoking and substance **abuse** during pregnancy; use of soft bedding, sleeping in a noninfant bed such as a sofa, overheating (thermal stress), cosleeping, exposure to tobacco smoke after birth; stuffed animals or other toys should be removed from the crib while the infant is sleeping.
3. Teach the parents to monitor for positional plagiocephaly caused by the supine sleeping position; signs include flattened posterior occiput and development of a bald spot in the posterior occiput area.
4. To assist in preventing positional plagiocephaly, teach the parents to alter head position during sleep, avoid excessive time in infant seats and bouncers, and place the infant in a prone position while awake (monitor the infant when in the prone position).
5. If SIDS occurs, the parents need a great deal of support as they grieve and mourn, especially because the event was sudden, unexpected, and unexplained.

## **IX. Foreign Body Aspiration**

### A. Description (Fig. 42-4)



**FIGURE 42-4** Mechanisms of airway obstruction by a foreign body (FB). (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

1. Swallowing and aspiration of a foreign body into the air passages
2. Most inhaled foreign bodies lodge in the main stem or lobar bronchus.
3. Most common offending foods are round in shape and include items such as hot dogs, candy, peanuts, popcorn, or grapes. ▲

#### B. Assessment ▲

1. Initially, choking, gagging, coughing, and retractions are general findings.
2. If the condition worsens, **cyanosis** may occur.
3. Laryngotracheal obstruction leads to dyspnea, **stridor**, cough, and hoarseness.
4. Bronchial obstruction produces paroxysmal cough, **wheezing**, asymmetrical breath sounds, and dyspnea.

5. If any obstruction progresses, unconsciousness and asphyxiation may occur.
6. Partial obstructions may occur without **symptoms**.
7. Distressed child cannot speak, becomes cyanotic, and collapses.

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Emergency care (see [Chapter 18](#))
2. After instituting emergency care measures, removal by endoscopy may be necessary.
  - a. After endoscopy, the child receives high-humidity air.
  - b. Observe for signs and symptoms of airway edema.
3. Prevention
  - a. Keep small objects including rubber balloons out of reach of small children.
  - b. Avoid giving small children small, round food items.
4. Parent, day care provider, babysitter education
  - a. Teach about the hazards of aspiration.
  - b. Discuss potential situations in which small items may be aspirated.
  - c. Teach about the symptoms of aspiration.
  - d. Teach how to perform emergency care measures.

## X. Tuberculosis ▲

### A. Description

1. Tuberculosis is a contagious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, an acid-fast bacillus (see [Chapter 58](#)).
2. Multidrug-resistant strains of *M. tuberculosis* occur because of child or family

noncompliance with therapeutic regimens.

3. The route of transmission of *M. tuberculosis* is through inhalation of droplets from an individual with active tuberculosis. ▲
4. There is an increased incidence in urban low-income areas, nonwhite racial or ethnic groups, and first-generation immigrants from endemic countries.
5. Most children are infected by a family member or by another individual with whom they have frequent contact, such as a babysitter.

## B. Assessment

1. Child may be asymptomatic or develop symptoms such as malaise, fever, cough, weight loss, anorexia, and lymphadenopathy.
2. Specific symptoms related to the site of infection, such as the lungs, brain, or bone, may be present.
3. With increased time, asymmetrical expansion of the lungs, decreased breath sounds, **crackles**, and dullness to percussion develop.

## C. Tuberculin skin test (TST) (Box 42-8)

### BOX 42-8 Tuberculin Skin Test Interpretation

Induration measuring 15 mm or more is considered to be a positive reaction in children 4 years or older who do not have any risk factors.

Induration measuring 10 mm or more is considered to be a positive reaction in children younger than 4 years and in children with chronic illness or at high risk for exposure to tuberculosis.

Induration measuring 5 mm or more is considered to be positive for the highest risk groups, such as children with immunosuppressive conditions or human immunodeficiency virus infection.

1. The test produces a positive reaction 2 to 10 weeks after the initial infection.
2. The test determines whether a child has been infected and has developed a sensitivity to the protein of the tubercle **bacillus**; a positive reaction does not confirm the presence of active disease (exposure versus presence).
3. After a child reacts positively, the child will always react positively; a positive reaction in a previously negative child indicates that the child has been infected since the last test.
4. Tuberculosis testing should not be done at the same time as measles immunization (viral interference from the measles **vaccine** may cause a false-negative result).



#### D. Sputum culture

1. A definitive diagnosis is made by showing the presence of mycobacteria in a culture.
2. Chest x-rays are supplemental to sputum cultures and are not definitive alone.
3. Because an infant or young child often swallows sputum rather than expectorates it, gastric washings (aspiration of lavaged contents from the fasting stomach) may be done to obtain a specimen; the specimen is obtained in the early morning before breakfast. 

#### E. Interventions

## 1. Medications

- a. A 9-month course of isoniazid may be prescribed to prevent a latent infection from progressing to clinically active tuberculosis and to prevent initial infection in children in high-risk situations; a 12-month course may be prescribed for a child infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
  - b. Recommendation for a child with clinically active tuberculosis may include combination administration of isoniazid, rifampin (Rifadin), and pyrazinamide (PZA) daily for 2 months, and then isoniazid and rifampin twice weekly for 4 months.
  - c. Inform the parents and child that bodily fluids including urine may turn an orange-red color with some tuberculosis medications.
  - d. Directly observed therapy may be necessary for some children.
2. Place children with active disease who are contagious on respiratory isolation until medications have been initiated, sputum cultures show a diminished number of organisms, and cough is improving; this includes use of a personally fitted air-purifying N95 or N100 respirator (mask) by the nurse caring for the child. 🟢
  3. Stress the importance of adequate rest and adequate diet.
  4. Instruct the child and family about measures to prevent the transmission of tuberculosis.
  5. Case finding and follow-up with known contacts is crucial to decrease the number of cases of individuals with active tuberculosis.
-

## CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

**Answer:** For a child with pneumonia, in order to reduce the discomfort in the pleural area, the nurse should encourage the child to lie on the affected side (if pneumonia is unilateral) to splint the chest. This position reduces the discomfort associated with pleural rubbing. A mild analgesic may be administered if prescribed.

### *Reference*

Hockenberry, Wilson (2013), p. 728.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 424.** A 10-year-old child with asthma is treated for acute exacerbation in the emergency department. The nurse caring for the child should monitor for which sign, knowing that it indicates a worsening of the condition?
1. Warm, dry skin
  2. Decreased wheezing
  3. Pulse rate of 90 beats/minute
  4. Respirations of 18 breaths/minute
- 425.** The mother of an 8-year-old child being treated for right lower lobe pneumonia at home calls the clinic nurse. The mother tells the nurse that the child complains of discomfort on the right side and that ibuprofen (Motrin IB) is not effective. Which instruction should the nurse provide to the mother?
1. Increase the dose of ibuprofen.

2. Increase the frequency of ibuprofen.
3. Encourage the child to lie on the left side.
4. Encourage the child to lie on the right side.

**426.** A new parent expresses concern to the nurse regarding sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). She asks the nurse how to position her new infant for sleep. In which position should the nurse tell the parent to place the infant?

1. Side or prone
2. Back or prone
3. Stomach with the face turned
4. Back rather than on the stomach

**427.** The clinic nurse is providing instructions to a parent of a child with cystic fibrosis regarding the immunization schedule for the child. Which statement should the nurse make to the parent?

1. "The immunization schedule will need to be altered."
2. "The child should not receive any hepatitis vaccines."
3. "The child will receive all the immunizations except for the polio series."
4. "The child will receive the recommended basic series of immunizations along with a yearly influenza vaccination."

**428.** The emergency department nurse is caring for a child diagnosed with epiglottitis. In assessing the child, the nurse should monitor for which indication that the child may be experiencing airway obstruction?

1. The child exhibits nasal flaring and bradycardia.
2. The child is leaning forward, with the chin thrust out.
3. The child has a low-grade fever and complains of a sore throat.
4. The child is leaning backward, supporting himself or herself with the hands and arms.

429. A child with laryngotracheobronchitis (croup) is placed in a cool mist tent. The mother becomes concerned because the child is frightened, consistently crying and trying to climb out of the tent. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

1. Tell the mother that the child must stay in the tent.
2. Place a toy in the tent to make the child feel more comfortable.
3. Call the health care provider and obtain a prescription for a mild sedative.
4. Let the mother hold the child and direct the cool mist over the child's face.

430. The clinic nurse reads the results of a tuberculin skin test (TST) on a 3-year-old child. The results indicate an area of induration measuring 10 mm. The nurse should interpret these results as which finding?

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Inconclusive
4. Definitive and requiring a repeat test

431. The mother of a hospitalized 2-year-old child with viral laryngotracheobronchitis (croup) asks the nurse why the health care provider did

not prescribe antibiotics. Which response should the nurse make?

1. "The child may be allergic to antibiotics."
2. "The child is too young to receive antibiotics."
3. "Antibiotics are not indicated unless a bacterial infection is present."
4. "The child still has the maternal antibodies from birth and does not need antibiotics."

**432.** The nurse is caring for an infant with bronchiolitis, and diagnostic tests have confirmed respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). On the basis of this finding, which is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

1. Initiate strict enteric precautions.
2. Move the infant to a room with another child with RSV.
3. Leave the infant in the present room because RSV is not contagious.
4. Inform the staff that they must wear a mask, gloves, and a gown when caring for the child.

**433.** The nurse is preparing for the admission of an infant with a diagnosis of bronchiolitis caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Which interventions should the nurse include in the plan of care? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Place the infant in a private room.
2. Ensure that the infant's head is in a flexed position.
3. Wear a mask at all times when in contact with the infant.
4. Place the infant in a tent that delivers warm humidified air.

5. Position the infant on the side, with the head lower than the chest.
6. Ensure that nurses caring for the infant with RSV do not care for other high-risk children.

## ANSWERS

424. 2

**Rationale:** Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways. Decreased wheezing in a child with asthma may be interpreted incorrectly as a positive sign when it may actually signal an inability to move air. A “silent chest” is an ominous sign during an asthma episode. With treatment, increased wheezing actually may signal that the child’s condition is improving. Warm, dry skin indicates an improvement in the child’s condition because the child is normally diaphoretic during exacerbation. The normal pulse rate in a 10-year-old is 70 to 110 beats/minute. The normal respiratory rate in a 10-year-old is 16 to 20 breaths/minute.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the word *worsening* in the question. Options 3 and 4 can be eliminated because they are **comparable or alike** in that they are normal vital signs. From the remaining options, recall that a “silent chest” is an ominous sign during an asthma episode and indicates severe bronchial spasm or obstruction.

**Review:** **Bronchial spasm** and care of the child with **asthma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 531.

425. 4

**Rationale:** Pneumonia is an inflammation of the pulmonary parenchyma or alveoli or both caused by a virus, mycoplasmal agents, bacteria, or aspiration of foreign substances. Splinting of the affected side by lying on that side may decrease discomfort. It would be inappropriate to advise the mother to increase the dose or frequency of the ibuprofen. Lying on the left side would not be helpful in alleviating discomfort.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated because they are **comparable or alike**. Recall that the nurse does not adjust the dose or frequency of medications. Recalling the principles related to splinting an incision in the postoperative client will assist in directing you to the correct option because these principles can be applied in this situation.

**Review:** Care of a child with **pneumonia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Pain

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2012), pp. 1245-1247; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 292-293.

426. 4

**Rationale:** Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant younger than 1 year for whom an investigation of the death and a thorough autopsy fail to show an adequate cause of death. Several theories are proposed regarding the cause, but the exact cause is unknown. Nurses should encourage

parents to place the infant on the back (supine) for sleep. Infants in the prone position (on the stomach) may be unable to move their heads to the side, increasing the risk of suffocation. The infant may have the ability to turn to a prone position from the side-lying position.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are **comparable or alike**. Remember that the infant needs to be placed on his or her back.

**Review:** **Positioning guidelines** to prevent **sudden infant death syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 544; McKinney et al (2013), p. 1173.

427. 4

**Rationale:** Cystic fibrosis is a chronic multisystem disorder (autosomal recessive trait disorder) characterized by exocrine gland dysfunction. The mucus produced by the exocrine glands is abnormally thick, tenacious, and copious, causing obstruction of the small passageways of the affected organs, particularly in the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and reproductive systems. Adequately protecting children with cystic fibrosis from communicable diseases by immunization is essential. In addition to the basic series of immunizations, a yearly influenza immunization is recommended for children with cystic fibrosis. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are **comparable or alike**, indicating that the immunization schedule will be adjusted in some way. Recalling the importance of protection from communicable diseases, particularly in children with a disorder such as cystic fibrosis, will assist in directing you to the correct

option.

**Review:** Immunization schedule for the child with **cystic fibrosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Health Promotion

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1288; McKinney et al (2013), p. 1190.

**428. 2**

**Rationale:** Epiglottitis is a bacterial form of croup. A primary concern is that it can progress to acute respiratory distress. Clinical manifestations suggestive of airway obstruction include tripod positioning (leaning forward while supported by arms, chin thrust out, mouth open), nasal flaring, the use of accessory muscles for breathing, and the presence of stridor. Option 4 is an incorrect position. Options 1 and 3 are incorrect because epiglottitis causes tachycardia and a high fever.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestations of airway obstruction in a child with epiglottitis.

Eliminate option 1 first because tachycardia rather than bradycardia would occur in a child experiencing respiratory distress. Eliminate option 3 next, knowing that a high fever occurs with epiglottitis. From the remaining options, visualize the descriptions in each and determine which position would best assist a child experiencing respiratory distress.

**Review:** Manifestations of **epiglottitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1238.

**429. 4**

**Rationale:** Laryngotracheobronchitis (croup) is the inflammation of the larynx, trachea, and bronchi and is the most common type of croup. Cool mist therapy may be prescribed to liquefy secretions and to assist in breathing. If the use of a tent or hood is causing distress, treatment may be more effective if the child is held by the parent and a cool mist is directed toward the child's face (blow-by). A mild sedative would not be administered to the child. Crying would increase hypoxia and aggravate laryngospasm, which may cause airway obstruction. Options 1 and 2 would not alleviate the child's fear.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the **subject** of the question, the child's fear. Options 1, 2, and 3 are **comparable or alike** in that they do not address the fear. The correct option is the one that addresses the **subject** of the question.

**Review:** Nursing care for the client in a **mist tent**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1240; Perry et al (2010), pp. 1320-1321.

**430. 1**

**Rationale:** Induration measuring 10 mm or more is considered to be a positive result in children younger than 4 years of age and in children with chronic illness or at high risk for exposure to tuberculosis. A reaction of 5 mm or more is considered to be a positive result for the highest risk groups, such as a child with an immunosuppressive condition or a child with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. A reaction of 15 mm or more is positive in children 4 years or older without any risk factors.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 3 and 4 are **comparable or alike** and can be eliminated first. From the remaining options, focus on the data in the question and note the child's age to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Analysis of the **tuberculin skin test** in children

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1250-1251.

**431. 3**

**Rationale:** Laryngotracheobronchitis (croup) is the inflammation of the larynx, trachea, and bronchi and is the most common type of croup. It can be viral or bacterial. Antibiotics are not indicated in the treatment of croup unless a bacterial infection is present. Options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect. In addition, no supporting data in the question indicate that the child may be allergic to antibiotics.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, indications for the use of antibiotics. Eliminate option 1 because there are no supporting data in the question regarding the potential for allergies. Noting the word *viral* in the question and noting the age of the child will assist in eliminating options 2 and 4.

**Review:** Treatment for **croup**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Inflammation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1240.

432. 2

**Rationale:** Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a highly communicable disorder and is not transmitted via the airborne route. The virus usually is transferred by the hands. Use of contact and standard precautions during care is necessary. Using good hand-washing techniques and wearing gloves and gowns are also necessary. Masks are not required. An infant with RSV is isolated in a single room or placed in a room with another child with RSV. Enteric precautions are unnecessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words**, *most appropriate*. Focus on the **subject**, the method of transmission of RSV. Remember that the virus is not transmitted via the airborne route and is usually transferred by the hands. An infant with RSV is isolated in a single room or placed in a room with another child with RSV.

**Review:** The nursing care for an infant with **respiratory syncytial virus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1242; Perry et al (2010), p. 1323.

❖ **433. 1, 6**

**Rationale:** Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a highly communicable disorder and is not transmitted via the airborne route. The virus usually is transferred by the hands. Use of contact and standard precautions during care (wearing gloves and a gown) reduces nosocomial transmission of RSV. A mask is unnecessary. In addition, it is important to ensure that nurses caring for a child with RSV do not care for other high-risk children to prevent the transmission of the infection. An infant with RSV should be isolated in a private room or in a room with another infant with RSV infection. The infant should be positioned with the head and chest at a 30- to 40-degree angle and the neck slightly extended to maintain an open airway and decrease pressure on the diaphragm. Cool humidified oxygen is delivered to relieve dyspnea, hypoxemia, and insensible water loss from tachypnea.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care to the child with bronchiolitis and RSV. Recalling the mode of transmission of RSV will assist in answering correctly. Remember that RSV is highly communicable and is transmitted via contact such as by the hands.

**Review:** **Bronchiolitis** and **respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

***Content Area:*** Child Health—Throat/Respiratory

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Safety

***References:*** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1242-1244; Swearingen (2012), pp. 546-547.



## CHAPTER 43

# Cardiovascular Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A child diagnosed with a congenital heart defect suddenly develops difficulty breathing. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 497.*

### I. Heart Failure (HF)

#### A. Description

1. HF (**Box 43-1**) is the inability of the heart to pump a sufficient amount of blood to meet the metabolic and oxygen needs of the body.

#### BOX 43-1 Signs and Symptoms of Heart Failure

##### Left-Sided Failure

- Crackles and wheezes
- Cough

- Dyspnea
- Grunting (infants)
- Head bobbing (infants)
- Nasal flaring
- Orthopnea
- Periods of cyanosis
- Retractions
- Tachypnea

### Right-Sided Failure

- Ascites
- Hepatosplenomegaly
- Jugular vein distention
- Oliguria
- Peripheral edema, especially dependent edema, and periorbital edema
- Weight gain

2. In infants and children, inadequate cardiac output most commonly is caused by congenital heart defects (**shunt**, obstruction, or a combination of both) that produce an excessive volume or pressure load on the myocardium. ▲
3. In infants and children, a combination of left-sided and right-sided heart failure is usually present.
4. The goals of treatment are to improve cardiac function, remove accumulated fluid

and sodium, decrease cardiac demands, improve tissue oxygenation, and decrease oxygen consumption.

**B. Assessment of early signs** ▲

1. Tachycardia, especially during rest and slight exertion
2. Tachypnea
3. Profuse scalp diaphoresis, especially in infants
4. Fatigue and irritability
5. Sudden weight gain
6. Respiratory distress

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor for early signs of HF.
2. Monitor for respiratory distress (count respirations for 1 minute).
3. Monitor apical pulse (count apical pulse for 1 minute), and monitor for dysrhythmias.
4. Monitor temperature for hyperthermia and for other signs of infection, particularly respiratory infection.
5. Monitor strict intake and output; weigh diapers as appropriate for most accurate output.
6. Monitor daily weight to assess for fluid retention; a weight gain of 0.5 kg (1 lb) in 1 day is caused by the accumulation of fluid.
7. Monitor for facial or peripheral dependent edema, auscultate lung sounds, and report abnormal findings indicating excessive fluid in the body.

- 8.** Elevate the head of the bed in a semi-Fowler's position.
- 9.** Maintain a neutral thermal environment to prevent cold stress in infants.
- 10.** Provide rest and decrease environmental stimuli.
- 11.** Administer cool humidified oxygen as prescribed, using an oxygen hood for young infants and a nasal cannula or face mask for older infants and children.
- 12.** Organize nursing activities to allow for uninterrupted sleep.
- 13.** Maintain adequate nutritional status.
- 14.** Feed when hungry and soon after awakening, conserving energy and oxygen supply.
- 15.** Provide small, frequent feedings, conserving energy and oxygen supply.
- 16.** Administer sedation as prescribed during the acute stage to promote rest.
- 17.** Administer digoxin (Lanoxin) as prescribed. 🟢
  - a.** Assess apical heart rate for 1 minute before administration.
  - b.** Withhold digoxin if the apical pulse is less than 90 to 110 beats/minute in infants and young children and less than 70 beats/minute in older children, as prescribed.
  - c.** Be aware that infants rarely receive more than 1 mL (50 mcg or 0.05 mg) of digoxin in one dose.
- 18.** Monitor digoxin levels and for signs of digoxin toxicity, including anorexia, poor feeding, nausea, vomiting, bradycardia, and dysrhythmias.
  - a.** Normal digoxin level is 0.5 to 2 ng/mL.
  - b.** Digoxin toxicity is present when level is greater than 2 ng/mL.

- 19.** Administer angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors as prescribed.
  - a.** Monitor for hypotension, renal dysfunction, and cough when angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors are administered.
  - b.** Assess blood pressure; serum protein, albumin, blood urea nitrogen, and creatinine levels; white blood cell count; urine output; urinary specific gravity; and urinary protein level.
  
- 20.** Administer diuretics such as furosemide (Lasix) as prescribed.
  - a.** Monitor for signs and symptoms of hypokalemia (serum potassium level  $< 3.5$  mEq/L), including muscle weakness and cramping, confusion, irritability, restlessness, and inverted T waves or prominent U waves on the electrocardiogram.
  - b.** If signs and symptoms of hypokalemia are present and the child is also being administered digoxin, monitor closely for digoxin toxicity because hypokalemia potentiates digoxin toxicity. ▲
  
- 21.** Administer potassium supplements and provide dietary sources of potassium as prescribed.
  - a.** Supplemental potassium should be given only if indicated by serum potassium levels and if adequate renal function is evident and is usually necessary when administering a potassium-losing diuretic such as furosemide (Lasix). ▲
  - b.** Encourage foods that the child will eat that are high in potassium, as appropriate, such as bananas, baked potato skins, and peanut butter.
  
- 22.** Monitor serum electrolyte levels, particularly the potassium level (normal level is

3.5 to 5.0 mEq/L).

23. Limit fluid intake as prescribed in the acute stage.
24. Monitor for signs and symptoms of dehydration, including sunken fontanel (infant), nonelastic skin turgor, dry mucous membranes, decreased tear production, decreased urine output, and concentrated urine.
25. Monitor sodium levels as prescribed.
  - a. Normal level is 135 to 145 mEq/L.
  - b. Many infant formulas have slightly more sodium than breast milk.
26. Instruct the parents regarding administration of digoxin (Box 43-2). ▲

#### **BOX 43-2** Home Care Instructions for Administering Digoxin (Lanoxin)

Administer as prescribed.

Use an accurate measuring device as provided by the pharmacist.

Administer 1 hour before or 2 hours after feedings.

Use a calendar to mark off the dose administered.

Do not mix medication with foods or fluid.

If a dose is missed and more than 4 hours has elapsed, withhold the dose and give the next dose at the scheduled time; if less than 4 hours has elapsed, administer the missed dose.

If the child vomits, do not administer a second dose. (Follow the health care provider's [HCP's] prescription.)

If more than two consecutive doses have been missed, notify the HCP; do not increase or double the dose for missed doses.

If the child has teeth, give water after the medication; if possible, brush the teeth to prevent tooth decay from the sweetened liquid.

Monitor for signs of toxicity, such as poor feeding or vomiting.

If the child becomes ill, notify the HCP.

Keep the medication in a locked cabinet.

Call the poison control center immediately if accidental overdose occurs.

**27.** Instruct the parents in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) (see [Chapter 18](#)).

 The parents should be provided with a medication guide for any medication prescribed for the infant or child. In addition, the nurse needs to review the instructions in the guide and provide an opportunity for the parents to demonstrate medication administration procedures.

## **II. Defects with Increased Pulmonary Blood Flow**

### **A. Description**

1. Intracardiac communication along the septum or an abnormal connection between the great arteries allows blood to flow from the high-pressure left side of the heart to the low-pressure right side of the heart.
2. The infant typically shows signs and symptoms of HF.

### **B. Atrial septal defect (ASD)**

1. ASD is an abnormal opening between the atria that causes an increased flow of oxygenated blood into the right side of the heart.
2. Right atrial and ventricular enlargement occurs.

3. Infant may be asymptomatic or may develop HF.
4. Signs and symptoms of decreased cardiac output may be present (Box 43-3). ▲

### **BOX 43-3**      Signs and Symptoms of Decreased Cardiac Output

- Decreased peripheral pulses
- Exercise intolerance
- Feeding difficulties
- Hypotension
- Irritability, restlessness, lethargy
- Oliguria
- Pale, cool extremities
- Tachycardia

### 5. Types

- a. ASD 1 (ostium primum): Opening is at the lower end of the septum.
- b. ASD 2 (ostium secundum): Opening is near the center of the septum.
- c. ASD 3 (sinus venosus defect): Opening is near the junction of the superior vena cava and the right atrium.

### 6. Management

- a. Defect may be closed during a cardiac catheterization.
- b. Open repair with cardiopulmonary bypass may be performed and usually is performed before school age.

### C. Atrioventricular canal defect

1. The defect results from incomplete fusion of the endocardial cushions.
2. The defect is the most common cardiac defect in Down syndrome.
3. A characteristic murmur is present.
4. The infant usually has mild to moderate HF, with **cyanosis** increasing with crying. ▲
5. Signs and symptoms of decreased cardiac output may be present.
6. Management can include pulmonary artery banding for infants with severe symptoms (palliative) or complete repair via cardiopulmonary bypass.

### D. Patent ductus arteriosus

1. Patent ductus arteriosus is failure of the fetal ductus arteriosus (**shunt** connecting the aorta and the pulmonary artery) to close within the first weeks of life.
2. A characteristic machinery-like murmur is present.
3. An infant may be asymptomatic or may show signs of HF.
4. A widened pulse pressure and bounding pulses are present. ▲
5. Signs and symptoms of decreased cardiac output may be present.
6. Management
  - a. Indomethacin (Indocin), a prostaglandin inhibitor, may be administered to close a patent ductus in premature infants and some newborns.
  - b. The defect may be closed during cardiac catheterization, or the defect may require surgical management.

### E. Ventricular septal defect (VSD)

1. VSD is an abnormal opening between the right and left ventricles.

2. Many VSDs close spontaneously during the first year of life in children having small or moderate defects.
3. A characteristic murmur is present.
4. Signs and symptoms of HF are commonly present. ▲
5. Signs and symptoms of decreased cardiac output may be present.
6. Management
  - a. Closure during cardiac catheterization may be possible.
  - b. Open repair may be done with cardiopulmonary bypass.

### III. Obstructive Defects

#### A. Description

1. Blood exiting a portion of the heart meets an area of anatomical narrowing (**stenosis**), causing obstruction to blood flow.
2. The location of narrowing is usually near the valve of the obstructive defect.
3. Infants and children exhibit signs of HF. ▲
4. Children with mild obstruction may be asymptomatic.

#### B. Aortic stenosis

1. Aortic stenosis is a narrowing or stricture of the aortic valve, causing resistance to blood flow from the left ventricle into the aorta, resulting in decreased cardiac output, left ventricular hypertrophy, and pulmonary vascular congestion.
2. Valvular stenosis is the most common type and usually is caused by malformed cusps, resulting in a bicuspid rather than a tricuspid valve, or fusion of the cusps.

3. A characteristic murmur is present.
4. Infants with severe defects show signs of decreased cardiac output.
5. Children show signs of exercise intolerance, chest pain, and dizziness when standing for long periods. ▲

#### 6. Management

- a. Dilation of the narrowed valve may be done during cardiac catheterization.
- b. Surgical aortic valvotomy (palliative) may be done; a valve replacement may be required at a second procedure.

### C. Coarctation of the aorta

1. Coarctation of the aorta is localized narrowing near the insertion of the ductus arteriosus.
2. Blood pressure is higher in the upper extremities than the lower extremities; bounding pulses in the arms, weak or absent femoral pulses, and cool lower extremities may be present. ▲
3. Signs of HF may occur in infants. ▲
4. Signs and symptoms of decreased cardiac output may be present.
5. Children may experience headaches, dizziness, fainting, and epistaxis resulting from hypertension. ▲
6. Management of the defect may be done via balloon angioplasty in children; restenosis can occur.
7. Surgical management
  - a. Mechanical ventilation and medications to improve cardiac output are often

necessary before surgery.

- b. Resection of the coarcted portion with end-to-end anastomosis of the aorta or enlargement of the constricted section, using a graft, may be required.
- c. Because the defect is outside the heart, cardiopulmonary bypass is not required, and a thoracotomy incision is used.

 With coarctation of the aorta, the blood pressure is higher in the upper extremities than in the lower extremities. In addition, bounding pulses in the arms, weak or absent femoral pulses, and cool lower extremities may be present.

#### D. Pulmonary stenosis

1. Pulmonary stenosis is narrowing at the entrance to the pulmonary artery.
2. Resistance to blood flow causes right ventricular hypertrophy and decreased pulmonary blood flow; the right ventricle may be hypoplastic.
3. Pulmonary **atresia** is the extreme form of pulmonary stenosis in that there is total fusion of the commissures and no blood flows to the lungs.
4. A characteristic murmur is present. 
5. Infants or children may be asymptomatic.
6. Newborns with severe narrowing are cyanotic. 
7. If pulmonary stenosis is severe, HF occurs.
8. Signs and symptoms of decreased cardiac output may occur.
9. Management: Dilation of the narrowed valve may be done during cardiac catheterization.

## 10. Surgical management:

- a. In infants: Transventricular (closed) valvotomy procedure
- b. In children: Pulmonary valvotomy with cardiopulmonary bypass

## IV. Defects with Decreased Pulmonary Blood Flow

### A. Description

1. Obstructed pulmonary blood flow and an anatomical defect (ASD or VSD) between the right and left sides of the heart are present.
2. Pressure on the right side of the heart increases, exceeding pressure on the left side, which allows desaturated blood to **shunt** right to left, causing desaturation in the left side of the heart and in the systemic circulation.
3. Typically hypoxemia and **cyanosis** appear.

### B. Tetralogy of Fallot

1. Tetralogy of Fallot includes four defects—VSD, pulmonary **stenosis**, overriding aorta, and right ventricular hypertrophy. ▲
2. If pulmonary vascular resistance is higher than systemic resistance, the shunt is from right to left; if systemic resistance is higher than pulmonary resistance, the shunt is from left to right.
3. Infants
  - a. An infant may be acutely cyanotic at birth or may have mild cyanosis that progresses over the first year of life as the pulmonic stenosis worsens.
  - b. A characteristic murmur is present.

c. Acute episodes of cyanosis and hypoxia (hypercyanotic spells), called *blue spells* or *tet spells*, occur when the infant's oxygen requirements exceed the blood supply, such as during periods of crying, feeding, or defecating. ▲

4. Children: With increasing cyanosis, squatting, clubbing of the fingers, and poor **growth** may occur. ▲

a. Squatting is a compensatory mechanism to facilitate increased return of blood flow to the heart for oxygenation.

b. Clubbing is an abnormal enlargement in the distal phalanges; seen in the fingers.

5. Surgical management: Palliative shunt

a. The shunt increases pulmonary blood flow and increases oxygen saturation in infants who cannot undergo primary repair.

b. The shunt provides blood flow to the pulmonary arteries from the left or right subclavian artery.

6. Surgical management: Complete repair

a. Complete repair usually is performed in the first year of life.

b. The repair requires a median sternotomy and cardiopulmonary bypass.

C. Tricuspid atresia

1. Tricuspid **atresia** is failure of the tricuspid valve to develop.

2. No communication exists from the right atrium to the right ventricle.

3. Blood flows through an ASD or a patent foramen ovale to the left side of the heart and through a VSD to the right ventricle and out to the lungs.

4. The defect often is associated with pulmonic stenosis and transposition of the

great arteries.

5. The defect results in complete mixing of unoxygenated and oxygenated blood in the left side of the heart, resulting in systemic desaturation, pulmonary obstruction, and decreased pulmonary blood flow.
6. Cyanosis, tachycardia, and dyspnea are seen in the newborn. ▲
7. Older children exhibit signs of chronic hypoxemia and clubbing. ▲
8. Management: If the ASD is small, the defect may be closed during cardiac catheterization; otherwise, surgery is needed.

⚠ Clubbing is symptomatic of chronic hypoxia. Peripheral circulation is diminished and oxygenation of vital organs and tissues is compromised.

## V. Mixed Defects

### A. Description

1. Fully saturated systemic blood flow mixes with the desaturated blood flow, causing desaturation of the systemic blood flow.
2. Pulmonary congestion occurs and cardiac output decreases.
3. Signs of HF are present; symptoms vary with the degree of desaturation. ▲

### B. Hypoplastic left heart syndrome

1. Underdevelopment of the left side of the heart occurs, resulting in a hypoplastic left ventricle and aortic **atresia**.
2. Mild **cyanosis** and signs of HF occur until the ductus arteriosus closes; then progressive deterioration with cyanosis and decreased cardiac output are seen, leading to cardiovascular collapse. ▲

3. The defect is fatal in the first few months of life without intervention.

4. Surgical treatment

a. Surgical treatment is necessary; transplantation in the newborn period may be considered.

b. In the preoperative period, the newborn requires mechanical ventilation and a continuous infusion of prostaglandin  $E_1$  to maintain ductal patency, ensuring adequate systemic blood flow.

C. Transposition of the great arteries or transposition of the great vessels

1. The pulmonary artery leaves the left ventricle, and the aorta exits from the right ventricle.

2. No communication exists between the systemic and pulmonary circulation.

3. Infants with minimal communication are severely cyanotic and depressed at birth.



4. Infants with large septal defects or a patent ductus arteriosus may be less severely cyanotic, but may have symptoms of HF. 

5. Cardiomegaly is evident a few weeks after birth.

6. Nonsurgical management

a. Prostaglandin  $E_1$  may be initiated to keep the ductus arteriosus open and to improve blood mixing temporarily.

b. Balloon atrial septostomy during cardiac catheterization may be performed to increase mixing and to maintain cardiac output over a longer period.

7. Surgical management: The arterial switch procedure reestablishes normal

circulation with the left ventricle acting as the systemic pump and creation of a new aorta.

#### **D. Total anomalous pulmonary venous connection**

1. The defect is a failure of the pulmonary veins to join the left atrium.
2. The defect results in mixed blood being returned to the right atrium and shunted from the right to the left through an ASD.
3. The right side of the heart hypertrophies, whereas the left side of the heart may remain small.
4. Signs and symptoms of HF develop. ▲
5. Cyanosis worsens with pulmonary vein obstruction; when obstruction occurs, the infant's condition deteriorates rapidly. ▲
6. Surgical management
  - a. Corrective repair is performed in early infancy.
  - b. The pulmonary vein is anastomosed to the left atrium, the ASD is closed, and the anomalous pulmonary venous connection is ligated.

#### **E. Truncus arteriosus**

1. Truncus arteriosus is failure of normal septation and division of the embryonic bulbar trunk into the pulmonary artery and the aorta, resulting in a single vessel that overrides both ventricles.
2. Blood from both ventricles mixes in the common great artery, causing desaturation and hypoxemia.
3. A characteristic murmur is present. ▲

4. The infant exhibits moderate to severe HF and variable cyanosis, poor **growth**, and activity intolerance. ▲
5. Surgical management: Corrective surgical repair is performed in the first few months of life.

## VI. Interventions: Cardiovascular Defects ▲

- A. Monitor for signs of a defect in the infant or child (see previous descriptions of defects).
- B. Monitor vital signs closely.
- C. Monitor respiratory status for the presence of **nasal flaring**, use of accessory muscles, and other signs of impending respiratory distress, and notify the health care provider (HCP) if any changes occur.
- D. Auscultate breath sounds for **crackles**, rhonchi, or **wheezes**.
- E. If respiratory effort is increased, place the child in a reverse Trendelenburg position, elevating the head and upper body, to decrease the work of breathing.
- F. Administer humidified oxygen as prescribed.
- G. Provide endotracheal tube and ventilator care as prescribed.
- H. Monitor for hypercyanotic spells and intervene immediately if they occur (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

Actions to Take if a Hypercyanotic Spell Occurs in an Infant

1. Place the infant in a knee-chest position.
2. Administer 100% oxygen.
3. Administer morphine sulfate.
4. Administer fluids intravenously.
5. Document occurrence, actions taken, and the infant's response.

Hypercyanotic spells are also known as *tet spells* or *blue spells* and occur in infants or children with certain types of heart defects. The infant or child becomes acutely cyanotic and hyperpneic because of the sudden infundibular spasm. These spells may occur as a result of stressful procedures or from feeding, crying, or defecation. If a spell occurs, the nurse needs to provide a calm and comforting approach while immediately placing the infant in the knee-chest position; this assists breathing and increases oxygenation to body tissues. Oxygen is administered by face mask or blow-by. Morphine sulfate is administered as prescribed subcutaneously or through an existing intravenous line (morphine sulfate helps reduce the infundibular spasm). Intravenous fluids are administered to replace fluids and to keep the infant well hydrated and to keep the hematocrit and blood viscosity within acceptable limits. Depending on the infant's response, a repeated dose of morphine sulfate may be prescribed. Finally, the nurse documents the occurrence, actions taken, and the infant's response.

### ***References***

Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St.

Louis, 2011, Mosby, pp. 1362-1363; Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk DL, Wilson D: Maternal child nursing care, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby, pp. 1465-1466.

- I. Assess for signs of HF, such as periorbital edema or dependent edema in the hands and feet.
- J. Assess peripheral pulses.
- K. Maintain fluid restriction if prescribed.
- L. Monitor intake and output, and notify the HCP if a decrease in urine output occurs.
- M. Obtain daily weight.
- N. Provide adequate nutrition (high calorie requirements) as prescribed.
- O. Administer medications as prescribed.
- P. Plan interventions to allow maximal rest for the child; keep the child as stress-free as possible.
- Q. Prepare the child and parents for cardiac catheterization, if appropriate.

## **VII. Cardiac Catheterization**

### **A. Description**

1. Invasive diagnostic procedure to determine cardiac defects.
2. Provides information about oxygen saturation of blood in great vessels and heart chambers.
3. May be done for diagnostic, interventional, or electrophysiological reasons.

4. May be carried out on an outpatient basis.
5. Risks include hemorrhage from the entry site, clot formation and subsequent blockage distally, and transient dysrhythmias.
6. General anesthesia is usually unnecessary.
7. See [Chapter 60](#).

#### **B. Preprocedure nursing interventions**

1. Assess accurate height and weight because this helps with the selection of the correct catheter size. ▲
2. Obtain a history of the presence of allergic reactions to iodine.
3. Assess for symptoms of infection, including a diaper rash.
4. Assess and mark bilateral pulses, such as the dorsalis pedis and posterior tibial.
5. Assess baseline oxygen saturation.
6. Familiarize the parents and child with hospital procedures and equipment.
7. Educate the child, if age appropriate, and the parents about the procedure.
8. Allow the parents and child to verbalize feelings and concerns regarding the procedure and the disorder.

#### **C. Postprocedure nursing interventions** ▲

1. Monitor findings on the cardiac monitor and oxygen saturation for 4 hours after procedure.
2. Assess pulses below the catheter site for equality and symmetry.
3. Assess the temperature and color of the affected extremity and report coolness, which may indicate arterial obstruction.

4. Monitor vital signs frequently, usually every 15 minutes four times, every half-hour four times, and then every hour four times.
  5. Assess the pressure dressing for intactness and signs of hemorrhage.
  6. Check the bed sheets under the extremity for blood, which may indicate bleeding from the entry site.
  7. If bleeding is present, apply continuous, direct pressure at the cardiac catheter entry site and report it immediately.
  8. Immobilize the affected extremity in a flat position for at least 4 to 6 hours for venous entry site and 6 to 8 hours for arterial entry site as prescribed.
  9. Hydrate the child via the oral or intravenous route or both routes as prescribed.
  10. Administer acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin IB) for pain or discomfort as prescribed.
  11. Prepare the parents and child, if appropriate, for surgery.
- D. Discharge teaching for the child and parents** ▲
1. Remove the dressing on the day after the procedure and cover it with a bandage for 2 or 3 days as prescribed.
  2. Keep the site clean and dry.
  3. Avoid tub baths for 2 to 3 days.
  4. Observe for redness, edema, drainage, bleeding, and fever, and report any of these signs immediately.
  5. Avoid strenuous activity, if applicable.
  6. The child may return to school, if appropriate.

7. Provide a diet as tolerated.
8. Administer acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain, discomfort, or fever.
9. Keep follow-up appointment with primary care provider.

## VIII. Cardiac Surgery

### A. Postoperative interventions

1. Monitor vital signs frequently, especially temperature, and notify the HCP if fever occurs.
2. Monitor for signs of sepsis, such as fever, chills, diaphoresis, lethargy, and altered levels of consciousness.
3. Maintain strict aseptic technique.
4. Monitor lines, tubes, or catheters that are in place, and monitor for signs and symptoms of infection.
5. Assess for signs of discomfort, such as irritability, restlessness, changes in heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure.
6. Administer pain medications as prescribed.
7. Administer antibiotics and antipyretics as prescribed.
8. Promote rest and sleep periods.
9. Facilitate parent-child contact as soon as possible.

### B. Postoperative home care (Box 43-4) ▲

#### **BOX 43-4** Home Care after Cardiac Surgery

Omit play outside for several weeks as prescribed.

Avoid activities in which the child could fall and be injured, such as bike riding, for 2 to 4 weeks.

Avoid crowds for 2 weeks after discharge.

Follow a no-added-salt diet if prescribed.

Do not add any new foods to the infant's diet (if an allergy exists to the new food, the manifestations may be interpreted as a postoperative complication).

Do not place creams, lotions, or powders on the incision until completely healed.

The child may return to school usually the third week after discharge, starting with half-days.

The child should not participate in physical education for 2 months.

Instruct the parents to discipline the child normally.

Instruct the parents about the importance of the 2-week follow-up.

Avoid immunizations, invasive procedures, and dental visits for 2 months; following this time period, the immunization schedule and dental visits need to be resumed.

Advise the parents regarding the importance of a dental visit every 6 months after age 3 years and to inform the dentist of the cardiac problem so that antibiotics can be prescribed if necessary.

Instruct the parents to call the health care provider if coughing, tachypnea, cyanosis, vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, pain, or fever occur, or any swelling, redness, or drainage occurs at the site of the incision.

## **IX. Rheumatic Fever**

## A. Description

1. Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory autoimmune disease that affects the connective tissues of the heart, joints, skin (subcutaneous tissues), blood vessels, and central nervous system.
2. The most serious complication is rheumatic heart disease, which affects the cardiac valves, particularly the mitral valve.
3. Rheumatic fever manifests 2 to 6 weeks after an untreated or partially treated group A  $\beta$ -hemolytic streptococcal infection of the upper respiratory tract. ▲
4. Jones criteria are used to help determine the diagnosis (Box 43-5).

### BOX 43-5 Jones Criteria for Diagnosis of Rheumatic Fever

#### Major Criteria

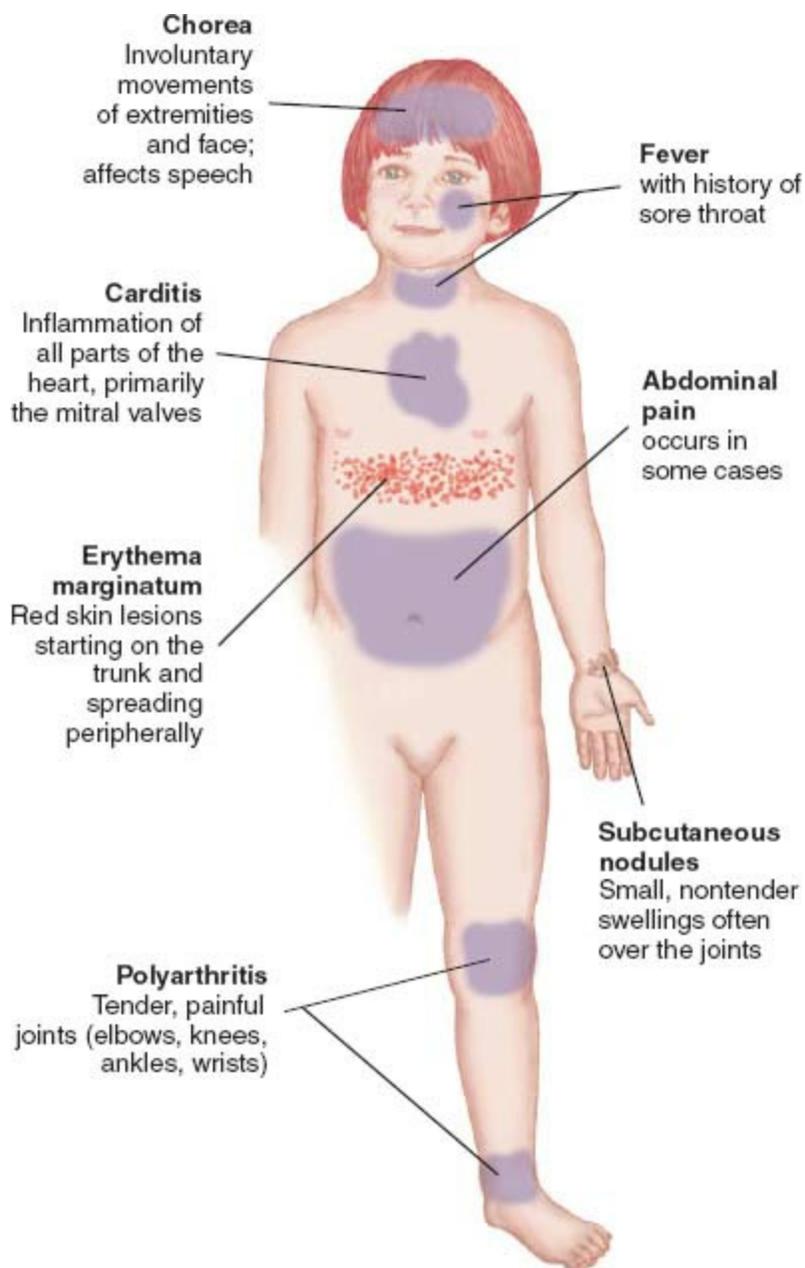
- Carditis
- Arthralgia
- Chorea
- Erythema marginatum
- Subcutaneous nodules

#### Minor Criteria

- Fever
- Arthralgia
- Elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate or positive C-reactive protein level
- Prolonged P-R interval on electrocardiogram

*Note:* For making a diagnosis, two major or one major and two minor manifestations must be accompanied by supporting evidence of a preceding streptococcal infection (positive throat culture for group A *Streptococcus* and an elevated or increasing anti-streptolysin O titer).

**B. Assessment (Fig. 43-1)** ▲



**FIGURE 43-1** Clinical manifestations of rheumatic fever. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Fever: Low-grade fever that spikes in the late afternoon
2. Elevated anti-streptolysin O titer
3. Elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate
4. Elevated C-reactive protein level
5. Aschoff bodies (lesions): Found in the heart, blood vessels, brain, and serous surfaces of the joints and pleura

 Assessment of a child with suspected rheumatic fever includes inquiring about a recent sore throat because rheumatic fever manifests 2 to 6 weeks after an untreated or partially treated group A  $\beta$ -hemolytic streptococcal infection of the upper respiratory tract.

### C. Interventions

1. Assess vital signs.
2. Control joint pain and inflammation with massage and alternating hot and cold applications as prescribed.
3. Provide bed rest during the acute febrile phase.
4. Limit physical exercise in a child with carditis.
5. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.
6. Administer salicylates and antiinflammatory agents as prescribed; these medications should not be administered before the diagnosis is confirmed because the medications mask the polyarthritis.

7. Initiate seizure precautions if the child is experiencing chorea.
8. Instruct the parents about the importance of follow-up and the need for antibiotic prophylaxis for dental work, infection, and invasive procedures.
9. Advise the child to inform the parents if anyone in school develops a streptococcal throat infection.

## X. Kawasaki Disease

### A. Description

1. Kawasaki disease, also known as *mucocutaneous lymph node syndrome*, is an acute systemic inflammatory illness.
2. The cause is unknown, but may be associated with an infection from an organism or toxin.
3. Cardiac involvement is the most serious complication; aneurysms can develop. ▲

### B. Assessment ▲

1. Acute stage
  - a. Fever
  - b. Conjunctival hyperemia
  - c. Red throat
  - d. Swollen hands, rash, and enlargement of cervical lymph nodes
2. Subacute stage
  - a. Cracking lips and fissures
  - b. Desquamation of the skin on the tips of the fingers and toes

c. Joint pain

d. Cardiac manifestations

e. Thrombocytosis

3. Convalescent stage: Child appears normal, but signs of inflammation may be present.

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor temperature frequently.

2. Assess heart sounds and heart rate and rhythm.

3. Assess extremities for edema, redness, and desquamation.

4. Examine eyes for conjunctivitis.

5. Monitor mucous membranes for inflammation.

6. Monitor strict intake and output.

7. Administer soft foods and liquids that are neither too hot nor too cold.

8. Weigh child daily.

9. Provide passive range-of-motion exercises to facilitate joint movement.

10. Administer acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) as prescribed for its antipyretic and antiplatelet effects (additional anticoagulation may be necessary if aneurysms are present). ▲

11. Administer immunoglobulin intravenously as prescribed to reduce the duration of the fever and the incidence of coronary artery lesions and aneurysms; intravenous immunoglobulin is a blood product, so blood precautions when administering it are warranted. ▲

## 12. Parent education (Box 43-6) ▲

### **BOX 43-6** Parent Education for Kawasaki Disease

Follow-up care is essential to recovery.

Signs and symptoms of Kawasaki disease include the following: Irritability that may last for 2 months after the onset of symptoms.

Peeling of the hands and feet may occur.

Pain in the joints may persist for several weeks.

Stiffness in the morning, after naps, and in cold temperatures may occur.

Record the temperature (because fever is expected) until the child has been afebrile for several days.

Notify the health care provider if the temperature is 101 ° F or higher.

Salicylates such as acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) may be prescribed.

Signs of aspirin toxicity include tinnitus, headache, vertigo, and bruising; do not administer aspirin or aspirin-containing products if the child has been exposed to chickenpox or the flu.

Signs and symptoms of bleeding include epistaxis (nosebleeds), hemoptysis (coughing up blood), hematemesis (vomiting up blood), hematuria (blood in urine), melena (blood in stool), and bruises on the body.

Signs and symptoms of cardiac complications include chest pain or tightness (older children), cool and pale extremities, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, irritability, restlessness, and uncontrollable crying.

The child should avoid contact sports, if age appropriate, if taking aspirin or anticoagulants.

Avoid administration of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) or varicella vaccine to the child for 11 months after intravenous immunoglobulin therapy, if appropriate.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* The nurse should monitor respiratory status closely in a child who has a congenital heart defect. If respiratory effort is increased, the nurse should place the child in a reverse Trendelenburg position, elevating the head and upper body, to decrease the work of breathing. In addition, the child should sleep with the head elevated on several pillows and should remain in a semi- or high-Fowler position during waking hours.

### *Reference*

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1355, 1358.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 434.** The nurse is monitoring an infant with congenital heart disease closely for signs of heart failure (HF). The nurse should assess the infant for which **early** sign of HF?
1. Pallor
  2. Cough
  3. Tachycardia
  4. Slow and shallow breathing
- 435.** The nurse reviews the laboratory results for a child with a suspected diagnosis of rheumatic fever, knowing that which laboratory study would assist in confirming the diagnosis?
1. Immunoglobulin
  2. Red blood cell count
  3. White blood cell count
  4. Anti-streptolysin O titer
- 436.** On assessment of a child admitted with a diagnosis of acute-stage Kawasaki disease, the nurse expects to note which clinical manifestation of the acute stage of the disease?
1. Cracked lips
  2. Normal appearance
  3. Conjunctival hyperemia

4. Desquamation of the skin

437. The nurse provides home care instructions to the parents of a child with heart failure regarding the procedure for administration of digoxin (Lanoxin). Which statement made by the parent indicates the **need for further instruction**?

1. "I will not mix the medication with food."
2. "I will take my child's pulse before administering the medication."
3. "If more than one dose is missed, I will call the health care provider."
4. "If my child vomits after medication administration, I will repeat the dose."

438. The nurse is closely monitoring the intake and output of an infant with heart failure who is receiving diuretic therapy. The nurse should use which **most appropriate** method to assess the urine output?

1. Weighing the diapers
2. Inserting a Foley catheter
3. Comparing intake with output
4. Measuring the amount of water added to formula

439. The clinic nurse reviews the record of a child just seen by a health care provider and diagnosed with suspected aortic stenosis. The nurse expects to note documentation of which clinical manifestation specifically found in this disorder?

1. Pallor
2. Hyperactivity

3. Exercise intolerance
4. Gastrointestinal disturbances

440. The nurse has provided home care instructions to the parents of a child who is being discharged after cardiac surgery. Which statement made by the parents indicates a **need for further instructions**?

1. "A balance of rest and exercise is important."
2. "I can apply lotion or powder to the incision if it is itchy."
3. "Activities in which my child could fall need to be avoided for 2 to 4 weeks."
4. "Large crowds of people need to be avoided for at least 2 weeks after surgery."

441. A child with rheumatic fever will be arriving in the nursing unit for admission. On admission assessment, the nurse should ask the parents which question to elicit assessment information specific to the development of rheumatic fever?

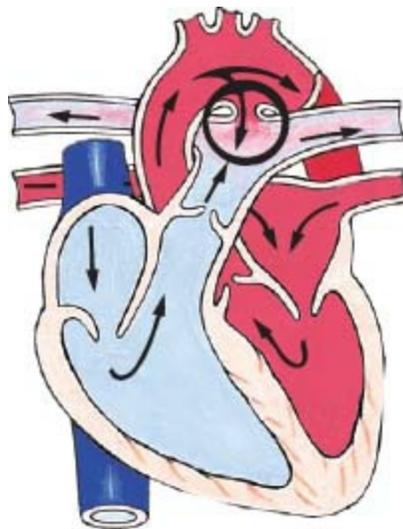
1. "Has the child complained of back pain?"
2. "Has the child complained of headaches?"
3. "Has the child had any nausea or vomiting?"
4. "Did the child have a sore throat or fever within the last 2 months?"

442. A health care provider has prescribed oxygen as needed for an infant with heart failure. In which situation should the nurse administer the oxygen to the infant?

1. During sleep
2. When changing the infant's diapers

3. When the mother is holding the infant
4. When drawing blood for electrolyte level testing

443. Assessment findings of an infant admitted to the hospital reveal a machinery-like murmur on auscultation of the heart and signs of heart failure. The nurse reviews congenital cardiac anomalies and identifies the infant's condition as which disorder? **Refer to figure** (the circled area) to determine the condition. ❖



(From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Saunders.)

1. Aortic stenosis
2. Atrial septal defect
3. Patent ductus arteriosus
4. Ventricular septal defect

# ANSWERS

434. 3

**Rationale:** Heart failure (HF) is the inability of the heart to pump a sufficient amount of blood to meet the oxygen and metabolic needs of the body. The early signs of HF include tachycardia, tachypnea, profuse scalp sweating, fatigue and irritability, sudden weight gain, and respiratory distress. A cough may occur in HF as a result of mucosal swelling and irritation, but is not an early sign. Pallor may be noted in an infant with HF, but is not an early sign.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. Think about the physiology and the effects on the heart when fluid overload occurs. These concepts will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Early signs of **heart failure** in the infant

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1353.

435. 4

**Rationale:** Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory autoimmune disease that affects the connective tissues of the heart, joints, skin (subcutaneous tissues), blood vessels, and central nervous system. A diagnosis of rheumatic fever is confirmed by the presence of two major manifestations or one major and two minor manifestations from the Jones criteria. In addition, evidence of a recent streptococcal infection is confirmed by a positive anti-streptolysin O titer, Streptozyme assay, or anti-DNase B assay. Options 1, 2, and 3 would not help to confirm the diagnosis of rheumatic

fever.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, definitive diagnosis of rheumatic fever. Recalling that rheumatic fever characteristically is associated with streptococcal infection will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Rheumatic fever

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1385.

436. 3

**Rationale:** Kawasaki disease, also known as *mucocutaneous lymph node syndrome*, is an acute systemic inflammatory illness. In the acute stage, the child has a fever, conjunctival hyperemia, red throat, swollen hands, rash, and enlargement of the cervical lymph nodes. In the subacute stage, cracking lips and fissures, desquamation of the skin on the tips of the fingers and toes, joint pain, cardiac manifestations, and thrombocytosis occur. In the convalescent stage, the child appears normal, but signs of inflammation may be present.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the acute stage of Kawasaki disease. Option 2 can be eliminated first because a normal appearance is not likely in the acute stage. From the remaining options, focusing on the words *acute stage* in the question will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Acute stage of Kawasaki disease

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1386-1388.

437. 4

**Rationale:** Digoxin is a cardiac glycoside. The parents need to be instructed that if the child vomits after digoxin is administered, they are not to repeat the dose. Options 1, 2, and 3 are accurate instructions regarding the administration of this medication. In addition, the parents should be instructed that if a dose is missed and is not identified until 4 hours later, the dose should not be administered.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. General knowledge regarding digoxin administration will assist in eliminating option 3. Principles related to administering medications to children will assist in eliminating option 1. From the remaining options, select the correct option because if the child vomits, it would be difficult to determine whether the medication also was vomited or was absorbed by the body.

**Review:** Guidelines for administration of **digoxin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1358.

**438. 1**

**Rationale:** Heart failure is the inability of the heart to pump a sufficient amount of blood to meet the oxygen and metabolic needs of the body. The most appropriate method for assessing urine output in an infant receiving diuretic therapy is to weigh the diapers. Comparing intake with output would not provide an accurate measure of urine output. Measuring the amount of water added to formula is unrelated to the amount of output. Although Foley catheter drainage is most accurate in determining output, it is not the most appropriate method in an infant and places the infant at risk for infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and will not provide an indication of urine output. Noting the **strategic words** will direct you to the correct option from the remaining options.

**Review:** Care of an infant receiving **diuretic therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1157, 1359.

**439. 3**

**Rationale:** Aortic stenosis is a narrowing or stricture of the aortic valve, causing resistance to blood flow in the left ventricle, decreased cardiac output, left ventricular hypertrophy, and pulmonary vascular congestion. A child with aortic stenosis shows signs of exercise intolerance, chest pain, and dizziness when standing for long periods. Pallor may be noted, but is not specific to this type of disorder alone. Options 2 and 4 are not related to this disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of aortic stenosis. Options 2 and 4 can be eliminated first because they are not associated with a cardiac disorder. From the remaining options, noting the word *specifically* in the question will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Aortic stenosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1369.

**440. 2**

**Rationale:** The mother should be instructed that lotions and powders should not be applied to the incision site after cardiac surgery. Lotions and powders can irritate the surrounding skin, which could lead to skin breakdown and subsequent infection of the incision site. Options 1, 3, and 4 are accurate instructions regarding home care after cardiac surgery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Using general principles related to postoperative incisional site care will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Home care instructions following **cardiac surgery**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1381.

441. 4

**Rationale:** Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory autoimmune disease that affects the connective tissues of the heart, joints, skin (subcutaneous tissues), blood vessels, and central nervous system. Rheumatic fever characteristically manifests 2 to 6 weeks after an untreated or partially treated group A  $\beta$ -hemolytic streptococcal infection of the upper respiratory tract. Initially, the nurse determines whether the child had a sore throat or an unexplained fever within the past 2 months. Options 1, 2, and 3 are unrelated to rheumatic fever.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the pathophysiology and etiology associated with rheumatic fever. Also, note the similarity between the words *rheumatic fever* in the question and the word *fever* in the correct option.

**Review:** Etiology related to **rheumatic fever**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1384.

442. 4

**Rationale:** Heart failure (HF) is the inability of the heart to pump a sufficient amount of blood to meet the oxygen and metabolic needs of the body. Crying exhausts the limited energy supply, increases the workload of the heart, and increases the oxygen demands. Oxygen administration may be prescribed for stressful periods, especially during bouts of crying or invasive procedures. Options 1, 2, and 3 are not likely to produce crying in the infant.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the need to administer oxygen to the infant with heart failure, and recall the situations that would place stress and an increased workload on the heart; this should direct you to the correct option. Drawing blood is an invasive procedure, which would likely cause the infant to cry.

**Review:** Care of the child with **heart failure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1357; Hockenberry, Wilson (2013), p. 846.

### ❖ 443. 3

**Rationale:** A patent ductus arteriosus is failure of the fetal ductus arteriosus (artery connecting the aorta and the pulmonary artery) to close. A characteristic machinery-like murmur is present, and the infant may show signs of heart failure. Aortic stenosis is a narrowing or stricture of the aortic valve. Atrial septal defect is an abnormal opening between the atria. Ventricular septal defect is an abnormal opening between the right and left ventricles.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the congenital cardiac anomaly and the location of the defect.

Recalling the anatomical locations in the heart will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Congenital heart defects

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1368.



## CHAPTER 44

# Renal and Urinary Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse notes that there has been no urinary output for 1 hour in an infant who underwent surgical repair of hypospadias. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 505.*

### I. Glomerulonephritis

#### A. Description

1. *Glomerulonephritis* refers to a group of kidney disorders characterized by inflammatory injury in the glomerulus, most of which are caused by an immunological reaction.
2. The disorder results in proliferative and inflammatory changes within the glomerular structure.
3. Destruction, inflammation, and sclerosis of the glomeruli of the kidneys occur.
4. Inflammation of the glomeruli results from an antigen-antibody reaction produced

by an infection elsewhere in the body.

5. Loss of kidney function develops.

## **B. Causes**

1. Immunological diseases

2. Autoimmune diseases

3. Antecedent group A  $\beta$ -hemolytic streptococcal infection of the pharynx or skin ▲

4. History of pharyngitis or tonsillitis 2 to 3 weeks before symptoms ▲

## **C. Types**

1. Acute: Occurs 2 to 3 weeks after a streptococcal infection

2. Chronic: May occur after the acute phase or slowly over time

## **D. Complications**

1. Kidney failure

2. Hypertensive encephalopathy

3. Pulmonary edema

4. Heart failure

## **E. Assessment** ▲

1. Periorbital and facial edema that is more prominent in the morning

2. Anorexia

3. Decreased urinary output

4. Cloudy, smoky, brown-colored urine (hematuria)

5. Pallor, irritability, lethargy

6. In an older child: Headaches, abdominal or flank pain, dysuria

7. Hypertension
8. Proteinuria that produces a persistent and excessive foam in the urine
9. Azotemia
10. Increased blood urea nitrogen and creatinine levels
11. Increased anti-streptolysin O titer (used to diagnose disorders caused by streptococcal infections)

## F. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs, intake and output, and characteristics of urine. ▲
2. Daily weights at the same time of day, using the same scale, and wearing the same clothing ▲
3. Limit activity; provide safety measures.
4. Diet restrictions of sodium depend on the stage and severity of the disease, especially the extent of the edema; in addition, potassium may be restricted during periods of oliguria.
5. Monitor for complications (e.g., kidney failure, hypertensive encephalopathy, seizures, pulmonary edema, heart failure).
6. Administer diuretics (if significant edema and fluid overload are present), antihypertensives (for hypertension), and antibiotics (to a child with evidence of persistent streptococcal infections) as prescribed.
7. Initiate seizure precautions and administer anticonvulsants as prescribed for seizures associated with hypertensive encephalopathy.
8. Instruct parents to report signs of bloody urine, headache, or edema. ▲

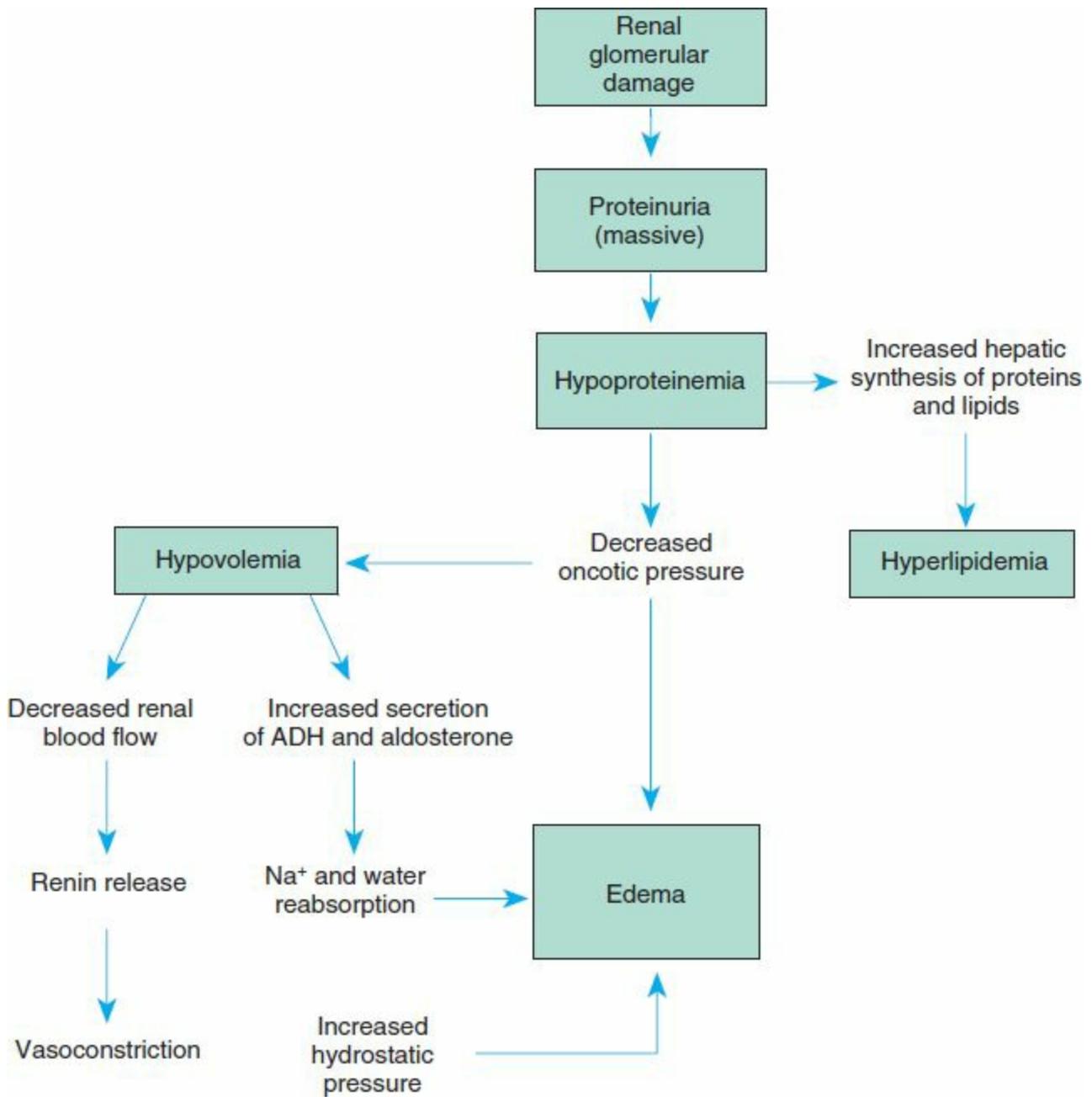
9. Instruct parents that the child needs to obtain appropriate treatment for infections, specifically for sore throats, upper respiratory infections, and skin infections. ▲

⚠ Measuring the daily weight and assessing for changes is the most useful and effective measure for determining fluid balance.

## II. Nephrotic Syndrome

### A. Description

1. Nephrotic syndrome is a kidney disorder characterized by massive proteinuria, hypoalbuminemia (hypoproteinemia), and edema (Fig. 44-1).



**FIGURE 44-1** Sequence of events in nephrotic syndrome. *ADH*, Antidiuretic hormone. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

2. The primary objectives of therapeutic management are to reduce the excretion of urinary protein, maintain protein-free urine, reduce edema, prevent infection, and minimize complications.

## B. Assessment (Box 44-1) ▲

### BOX 44-1 Assessment Findings in Nephrotic Syndrome

- Child gains weight
- Periorbital and facial edema most prominent in the morning
- Leg, ankle, labial, or scrotal edema
- Urine output decreases; urine dark and frothy
- Ascites (fluid in abdominal cavity)
- Blood pressure normal or slightly decreased
- Lethargy, anorexia, and pallor
- Massive proteinuria
- Decreased serum protein (hypoproteinemia) and elevated serum lipid levels

**!** The classic manifestations of nephrotic syndrome are massive proteinuria, hypoalbuminemia, and edema.

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs, intake and output, and daily weights. ▲
2. Monitor urine for specific gravity and protein.
3. Monitor for edema.
4. Nutrition: A regular diet without added salt may be prescribed if the child is in remission; sodium is restricted during periods of massive edema (fluids may also be restricted).

5. Corticosteroid therapy is prescribed as soon as the diagnosis has been determined; monitor the child closely for signs of infection and other adverse effects of corticosteroids (see [Chapter 55](#)).
6. Immunosuppressant therapy may be prescribed to reduce the relapse rate and induce long-term remission, or, if the child is nonresponsive to corticosteroid therapy, therapy may be administered along with the corticosteroid.
7. Diuretics may be prescribed to reduce edema.
8. Plasma expanders such as salt-poor human albumin may be prescribed for a severely edematous child.
9. Instruct parents about testing the urine for protein, medication administration, side effects of medications, and general care of the child. ▲
10. Instruct parents regarding the signs of infection and the need to avoid contact with other children who may be infectious. ▲

### III. Hemolytic-Uremic Syndrome

#### A. Description

1. Hemolytic-uremic syndrome is thought to be associated with bacterial toxins, chemicals, and viruses that cause acute kidney injury in children.
2. It occurs primarily in infants and small children 6 months to 5 years old.
3. Clinical features include acquired hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia, kidney injury, and central nervous system symptoms.

#### B. Assessment ▲

1. Triad of anemia, thrombocytopenia, and kidney failure ([Box 44-2](#))

**BOX 44-2****Manifestations of Hemolytic-Uremic Syndrome**

- Vomiting
- Irritability
- Lethargy
- Marked pallor
- Hemorrhagic manifestations: Bruising, petechiae, jaundice, bloody diarrhea
- Oliguria or anuria
- Central nervous system involvement: Seizures, stupor, coma

2. Proteinuria, hematuria, and presence of urinary casts

3. Blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine levels elevated; hemoglobin and hematocrit levels decreased.

**C. Interventions**

1. Hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis may be prescribed if a child is anuric (dialysate solution is prescribed to meet the child's electrolyte needs). ▲

2. Strict monitoring of fluid balance is necessary; fluid restrictions may be prescribed if the child is anuric.

3. Institute measures to prevent infection.

4. Provide adequate nutrition.

5. Other treatments include medications to treat manifestations and the administration of blood products to treat severe anemia (administered with caution to prevent

fluid overload).

## IV. Enuresis

### A. Description

1. *Enuresis* refers to a condition in which a child is unable to control bladder function, even though the child has reached an age at which control of voiding is expected or the child has successfully completed a bladder control program.
2. By age 5, most children are aware of bladder fullness and are able to control voiding.

### B. Primary nocturnal enuresis

1. Primary nocturnal enuresis is bed-wetting in a child who has never been dry for extended periods.
2. The condition is common in children, and most children eventually outgrow bed-wetting without therapeutic intervention.
3. The child is unable to sense a full bladder and does not awaken to void.
4. The child may have delayed maturation of the central nervous system.
5. The child should be evaluated for any pathological causes before the diagnosis of primary nocturnal enuresis is made.

### C. Secondary or acquired enuresis

1. The onset of wetting occurs after a period of established urinary continence.
2. Secondary enuresis may occur during nighttime sleep (nocturnal), only during the waking hours (diurnal), or during daytime and nighttime.
3. The child may complain of dysuria, urgency, or frequency.

4. The child should be assessed for urinary tract infections.

**D. Assessment:** History of bed-wetting with no extended period of dryness in a child older than age 5 years

**E. Interventions**

1. Perform urinalysis and urine culture as prescribed to rule out infection or an existing disorder.

2. Assist the family with identifying a treatment plan that best fits the needs of the child.

3. Limit fluid intake at night, and encourage the child to void just before going to bed.

4. Involve the child in caring for the wet sheets and changing the bed to assist the child to take ownership of the problem.

5. Provide reward systems as appropriate for the child.

6. Incorporate behavioral conditioning techniques.

7. Medications may be prescribed (such as tricyclic antidepressants, antidiuretics, and antispasmodics) to treat enuresis.

8. Encourage follow-up to determine the effectiveness of the treatment.

## **V. Cryptorchidism**

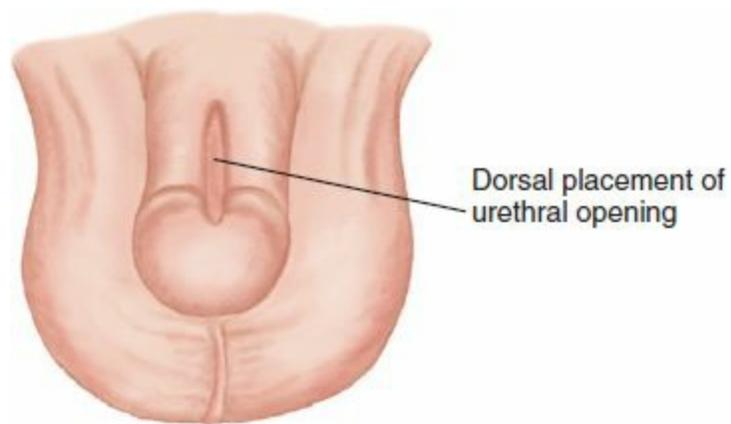
**A. Description:** Cryptorchidism is a condition in which one or both testes fail to descend through the inguinal canal into the scrotal sac.

**B. Assessment:** Testes are not palpable or easily guided into the scrotum. 🟩

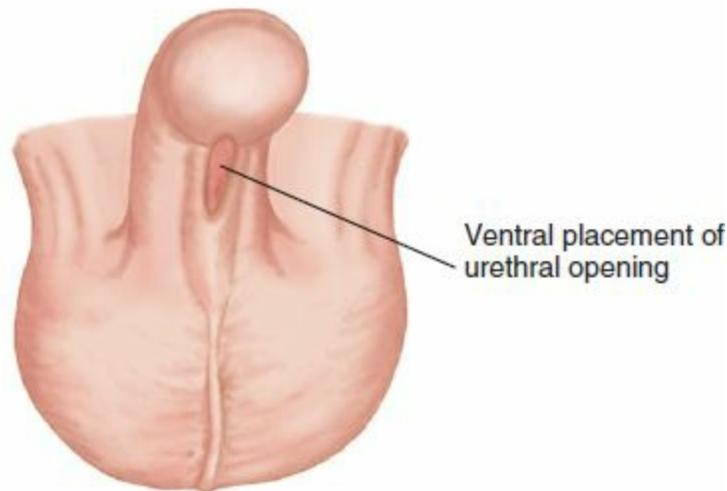
### C. Interventions

1. Monitor during the first 12 months of life to determine whether spontaneous descent occurs.
2. After age 1 year, medical or surgical treatment may be instituted.
3. Human chorionic gonadotropin, a pituitary hormone that stimulates the production of testosterone, may be prescribed for an older child.
4. Surgical correction, if needed, is done by orchiopexy before the child's second birthday (preferably between 1 and 2 years of age) if the testes do not descend spontaneously.
5. Monitor for bleeding and infection postoperatively.
6. Instruct parents in postoperative home care measures, including preventing infection, pain control, and activity restrictions. ▲
7. Provide an opportunity for parental counseling if the parents are concerned about the future fertility of the child. ▲

### VI. Epispadias and Hypospadias (Fig. 44-2)



**Epispadias**



**Hypospadias**

**FIGURE 44-2** Epispadias and hypospadias are genital anomalies in which the urethral opening is above or below its normal location on the glans of the penis. (From James S, Ashwill J: *Nursing care of children: Principles and practice*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2012, Saunders.)

#### A. Description

1. Epispadias and hypospadias are congenital defects involving abnormal placement of the urethral orifice of the penis.
2. These anatomical defects can lead to the easy entry of bacteria into the urine.

## B. Assessment

1. Epispadias: Urethral orifice is located on the dorsal surface of the penis; the condition often occurs with exstrophy of the bladder.
2. Hypospadias: Urethral orifice is located below the glans penis along the ventral surface.

C. Surgical interventions: Surgery is done before the age of toilet training, preferably between 16 and 18 months of age.

 Circumcision is not performed on a newborn with epispadias or hypospadias because the foreskin may be used in surgical reconstruction of the defect.

## D. Postoperative interventions

1. The child has a pressure dressing and may have some type of urinary diversion or a urinary stent (used to maintain patency of the urethral opening) while the meatus is healing. 
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Encourage fluid intake to maintain adequate urine output and maintain patency of the stent.
4. Monitor intake and output and the urine for cloudiness or a foul odor.
5. Notify the health care provider (HCP) if there is no urinary output for 1 hour because this may indicate kinks in the urinary diversion or stent or obstruction by sediment.
6. Provide pain medication or medication to relieve bladder spasms

(anticholinergic) as prescribed.

7. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.
8. Instruct parents in the care of the child who has a urinary diversion or stent.
9. Instruct parents to avoid giving the child a tub bath until the stent, if present, is removed.
10. Instruct parents about fluid intake, medication administration, signs and symptoms of infection, and need for HCP follow-up for dressing removal after surgery as prescribed.

## **VII. Bladder Exstrophy**

### **A. Description**

1. Bladder exstrophy is a congenital anomaly characterized by extrusion of the urinary bladder to the outside of the body through a defect in the lower abdominal wall.
2. The cause is unknown.
3. Treatment requires surgical management and occurs in a series of staged reconstructions.
4. Initial surgery for closure of the abdominal defect should occur within the first few days of life.
5. The goal of subsequent surgeries is to reconstruct the bladder and genitalia and enable the child to achieve urinary continence.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Exposed bladder mucosa
2. Widened symphysis pubis
3. Defects of the external genitalia

#### C. Interventions

1. Monitor urinary output.
2. Monitor for signs of urinary tract or wound infection.
3. Maintain the integrity of the exposed bladder mucosa.
4. Prevent the bladder tissue from drying, while allowing the drainage of urine, until surgical closure is performed; immediately after birth, as prescribed, the exposed bladder is covered with a sterile, nonadherent dressing to protect it until closure can be performed. ▲
5. Monitor laboratory values and urinalysis to assess renal function.
6. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.
7. Provide emotional support to the parents, and encourage verbalization of their fears and concerns.

⚠ Applying petroleum jelly to the bladder mucosa is avoided because it tends to dry out, adhere to the bladder mucosa, and damage the delicate tissues when the dressing is removed.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Following surgical repair for hypospadias, the urinary output is monitored

closely. The nurse should notify the health care provider (HCP) if there is no urinary output for 1 hour because this may indicate kinks in the urinary diversion or stent placed during the surgical procedure or an obstruction caused by sediment.

### ***Reference***

Hockenberry, Wilson (2013), p. 453.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

444. The nurse reviews the record of a child who is suspected to have glomerulonephritis and expects to note which finding that is associated with this diagnosis?
1. Hypotension
  2. Brown-colored urine
  3. Low urinary specific gravity
  4. Low blood urea nitrogen level
445. The nurse performing an admission assessment on a 2-year-old child who has been diagnosed with nephrotic syndrome notes that which **most** common characteristic is associated with this syndrome?
1. Hypertension
  2. Generalized edema
  3. Increased urinary output
  4. Frank, bright red blood in the urine
446. The nurse is planning care for a child with hemolytic-uremic syndrome who has been anuric and will be receiving peritoneal dialysis treatment. The nurse should plan to implement which measure?
1. Restrict fluids as prescribed.
  2. Care for the arteriovenous fistula.
  3. Encourage foods high in potassium.

4. Administer analgesics as prescribed.

447. A 7-year-old child is seen in a clinic, and the primary health care provider documents a diagnosis of primary nocturnal enuresis. The nurse should provide which information to the parents?

1. Primary nocturnal enuresis does not respond to treatment.
2. Primary nocturnal enuresis is caused by a psychiatric problem.
3. Primary nocturnal enuresis requires surgical intervention to improve the problem.
4. Most children outgrow the bed-wetting problem without therapeutic intervention.

448. The nurse provided discharge instructions to the parents of a 2-year-old child who had an orchiopexy to correct cryptorchidism. Which statement by the parents indicate that **further teaching is necessary**?

1. "I'll check his temperature."
2. "I'll give him medication so he'll be comfortable."
3. "I'll check his voiding to be sure there's no problem."
4. "I'll let him decide when to return to his play activities."

449. The nurse is reviewing a treatment plan with the parents of a newborn with hypospadias. Which statement by the parents indicates their understanding of the plan?

1. "Caution should be used when straddling the infant on a hip."

2. “Vital signs should be taken daily to check for bladder infection.”
3. “Catheterization will be necessary when the infant does not void.”
4. “Circumcision has been delayed to save tissue for surgical repair.”

450. The nurse is caring for an infant with a diagnosis of bladder exstrophy. To protect the exposed bladder tissue, the nurse should plan which intervention?

1. Cover the bladder with petroleum jelly gauze.
2. Cover the bladder with a nonadhering plastic wrap.
3. Apply sterile distilled water dressings over the bladder mucosa.
4. Keep the bladder tissue dry by covering it with dry sterile gauze.

451. The nurse understands that which information collected during the assessment of a child recently diagnosed with glomerulonephritis is **most** often associated with the diagnosis?

1. Child fell off a bike onto the handlebars
2. Nausea and vomiting for the last 24 hours
3. Urticaria and itching for 1 week before diagnosis
4. Streptococcal throat infection 2 weeks before diagnosis

452. The nurse collects a urine specimen preoperatively from a child with epispadias who is scheduled for surgical repair. When analyzing the results of the urinalysis, which should the nurse **most likely** expect to note?

1. Hematuria
2. Proteinuria

3. Bacteriuria

4. Glucosuria

**453.** The nurse is performing an assessment on a child admitted to the hospital with a probable diagnosis of nephrotic syndrome. Which assessment findings should the nurse expect to observe? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Pallor

2. Edema

3. Anorexia

4. Proteinuria

5. Weight loss

6. Decreased serum lipids

## ANSWERS

444. 2

**Rationale:** *Glomerulonephritis* refers to a group of kidney disorders characterized by inflammatory injury in the glomerulus. Gross hematuria, resulting in dark, smoky, cola-colored or brown-colored urine, is a classic symptom of glomerulonephritis. Hypertension is also common. Blood urea nitrogen levels may be elevated. A moderately elevated to high urinary specific gravity is associated with glomerulonephritis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the manifestations of glomerulonephritis. Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because hypertension and a high specific gravity are most likely to occur in this kidney disorder. Recalling that this is a renal disorder and that blood urea nitrogen levels increase in these type of disorders will assist in directing

you to the correct option.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations of **glomerulonephritis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1151.

445. 2

**Rationale:** Nephrotic syndrome is defined as massive proteinuria, hypoalbuminemia, hyperlipemia, and edema.

Other manifestations include weight gain; periorbital and facial edema that is most prominent in the morning; leg, ankle, labial, or scrotal edema; decreased urine output and urine that is dark and frothy; abdominal swelling; and blood pressure that is normal or slightly decreased.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Recall the pathophysiology associated with nephrotic syndrome. Associate edema with nephrotic syndrome. This will help you answer questions similar to this one.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations of **nephrotic syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1155-1156; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1131-1132.

446. 1

**Rationale:** Hemolytic-uremic syndrome is thought to be associated with bacterial toxins, chemicals, and viruses that result in acute kidney injury in children. Clinical manifestations of the disease include acquired hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia, renal injury, and central nervous system symptoms. A child with hemolytic-uremic syndrome undergoing peritoneal dialysis because of anuria would be on fluid restriction. Pain is not associated with hemolytic-uremic syndrome, and potassium would be restricted, not encouraged, if the child is anuric. Peritoneal dialysis does not require an arteriovenous fistula (only hemodialysis).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, anuria. Focus on the child's diagnosis and recall knowledge about the care of a client with acute kidney injury. Also focus on the data in the question. Noting the word *peritoneal* will assist in eliminating option 2. From the remaining options, remember that because the child is anuric, fluids will be restricted.

**Review:** Hemolytic-uremic syndrome

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1160-1161.

447. 4

**Rationale:** Primary nocturnal enuresis occurs in a child who has never been dry at night for extended periods. The

condition is common in children, and most children eventually outgrow bed-wetting without therapeutic intervention. The child is unable to sense a full bladder and does not awaken to void. The child may have delayed maturation of the central nervous system. The condition is not caused by a psychiatric problem.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of primary nocturnal enuresis. Note the relationship between the words *enuresis* in the question and *bed-wetting* in the correct option.

**Review:** **Enuresis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Elimination

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 719-722.

448. 4

**Rationale:** Cryptorchidism is a condition in which one or both testes fail to descend through the inguinal canal into the scrotal sac. Surgical correction may be necessary. All vigorous activities should be restricted for 2 weeks after surgery to promote healing and prevent injury. This prevents dislodging of the suture, which is internal. Normally, 2-year-olds want to be active; allowing the child to decide when to return to his play activities may prevent healing and cause injury. The parents should be taught to monitor the temperature, provide analgesics as needed, and monitor the urine output.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *further teaching is necessary*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Option 1 is an important action to recognize signs of infection. Option 2 is appropriate to keep pain to a minimum. Option 3 monitors voiding

pattern, which is also important after this type of surgery.

**Review:** Procedures for the correction of **cryptorchidism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 452.

**449. 4**

**Rationale:** Hypospadias is a congenital defect involving abnormal placement of the urethral orifice of the penis. In hypospadias, the urethral orifice is located below the glans penis along the ventral surface. The infant should not be circumcised because the dorsal foreskin tissue will be used for surgical repair of the hypospadias. Options 1, 2, and 3 are unrelated to this disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, treatment for hypospadias. Note the words *indicates their understanding*. Recalling that hypospadias is a congenital defect involving abnormal placement of the urethral orifice of the penis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Treatment plan related to repair of **hypospadias**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Elimination

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 452-453.

**450. 2**

**Rationale:** In bladder exstrophy, the bladder is exposed and external to the body. In this disorder, one must take care to protect the exposed bladder tissue from drying, while allowing the drainage of urine. This is accomplished best by covering the bladder with a nonadhering plastic wrap. The use of petroleum jelly gauze should be avoided because this type of dressing can dry out, adhere to the mucosa, and damage the delicate tissue when removed.

Dry sterile dressings and dressings soaked in solutions (that can dry out) also damage the mucosa when removed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, treatment for bladder exstrophy, and visualize this disorder. Noting the word *nonadhering* in the correct option will direct you to select this one.

**Review:** Care for the infant with **bladder exstrophy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 454.

**451. 4**

**Rationale:** Glomerulonephritis refers to a group of kidney disorders characterized by inflammatory injury in the glomerulus. Group A  $\beta$ -hemolytic streptococcal infection is a cause of glomerulonephritis. Often, a child becomes ill with streptococcal infection of the upper respiratory tract and then develops symptoms of acute poststreptococcal

glomerulonephritis after an interval of 1 to 2 weeks. The assessment data in options 1, 2, and 3 are unrelated to a diagnosis of glomerulonephritis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Option 1 relates to a kidney injury, not an infectious process. From the remaining options, recalling that a streptococcal infection 1 to 2 weeks before the development of glomerulonephritis is the classic assessment finding will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Causes of **glomerulonephritis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1150-1151; McKinney et al (2013), p. 1128.

452. 3

**Rationale:** Epispadias is a congenital defect involving abnormal placement of the urethral orifice of the penis. The urethral opening is located anywhere on the dorsum of the penis. This anatomical characteristic facilitates entry of bacteria into the urine. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not characteristically noted in this condition.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Visualize the anatomical characteristics of epispadias to answer the question. Options 1, 2, and 4 do not relate to the potential for infection, which can be associated with epispadias.

**Review:** **Epispadias**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

***Reference:*** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 452-455.

❖ 453. 1, 2, 3, 4

***Rationale:*** Nephrotic syndrome is a kidney disorder characterized by massive proteinuria, hypoalbuminemia, edema, elevated serum lipids, anorexia, and pallor. The child gains weight.

***Test-Taking Strategy:*** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of nephrotic syndrome. Thinking about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder and recalling the assessment findings for nephrotic syndrome will direct you to the correct options.

***Review:*** Clinical manifestations associated with **nephrotic syndrome**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Analyzing

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Child Health—Renal and Urinary

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

***Reference:*** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1155-1156.



## CHAPTER 45

# Neurological and Cognitive Disorders

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse notes signs of increased intracranial pressure (ICP) in a child who has undergone insertion of a ventriculoperitoneal shunt for the treatment of hydrocephalus. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 516.*

### **I. Cerebral Palsy**

#### **A. Description**

1. Disorder characterized by impaired movement and posture resulting from an abnormality in the extrapyramidal or pyramidal motor system
2. The most common clinical type is spastic cerebral palsy, which represents an upper motor neuron type of muscle weakness.
3. Less common types of cerebral palsy are athetoid, ataxic, and mixed.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Extreme irritability and crying
2. Feeding difficulties
3. Abnormal motor performance
4. Alterations of muscle tone; stiff and rigid arms or legs
5. Delayed developmental milestones
6. Persistence of primitive infantile reflexes (Moro, tonic neck) after 6 months (most primitive reflexes disappear by 3 to 4 months of age)
7. Abnormal posturing, such as opisthotonos (exaggerated arching of the back) (Fig. 45-1) ▲



**FIGURE 45-1** Abnormal posturing: Opisthotonos. (From Rarrar WE: *Atlas of infections of the nervous system*, London, 1993, Mosby-Wolfe.)

8. Seizures may occur.

### C. Interventions

1. The goal of management is early recognition and interventions to maximize the

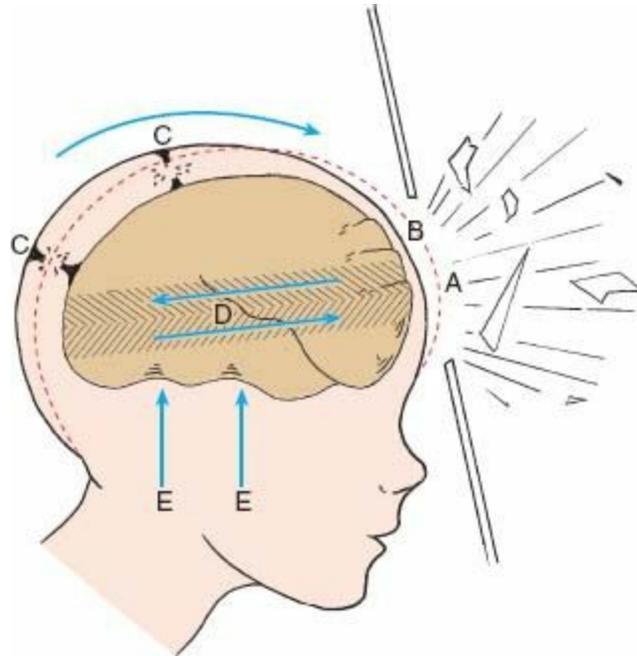
child's abilities. ▲

2. A multidisciplinary team approach is implemented to meet the many needs of the child.
3. Therapeutic management includes physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, education, and recreation.
4. Assess the child's developmental level and intelligence.
5. Encourage early intervention and participation in school programs.
6. Prepare for using mobilizing devices to help prevent or reduce deformities.
7. Encourage communication and interaction with the child on his or her developmental level, rather than **chronological age** level.
8. Provide a safe environment by removing sharp objects, using a protective helmet if the child falls frequently, and implementing seizure precautions if necessary.
9. Provide safe, appropriate toys for the child's age and developmental level.
10. Position the child upright after meals.
11. Medications may be prescribed to relieve muscle spasms, which cause intense pain; antiseizure medications may also be prescribed.
12. Provide the parents with information about the disorder and treatment plan; encourage support groups for parents.

## II. Head Injury

### A. Description

1. Head injury is the pathological result of any mechanical force to the skull, scalp, meninges, or brain (Fig. 45-2).



**FIGURE 45-2** Mechanical distortion of cranium during closed head injury. *A*, Preinjury contour of skull. *B*, Immediate postinjury contour of skull. *C*, Torn subdural vessels. *D*, Shearing forces. *E*, Trauma from contact with floor of cranium. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

- a. Open head injury occurs when there is a fracture of the skull or penetration of the skull by an object.
- b. Closed head injury is the result of blunt trauma (this is more serious than an open head injury because of the chance of increased ICP in a “closed” vault); this type of injury can also be caused by shaken baby syndrome. ▲

2. Manifestations depend on the type of injury and the subsequent amount of increased ICP.

**B. Assessment: Increased ICP** ▲

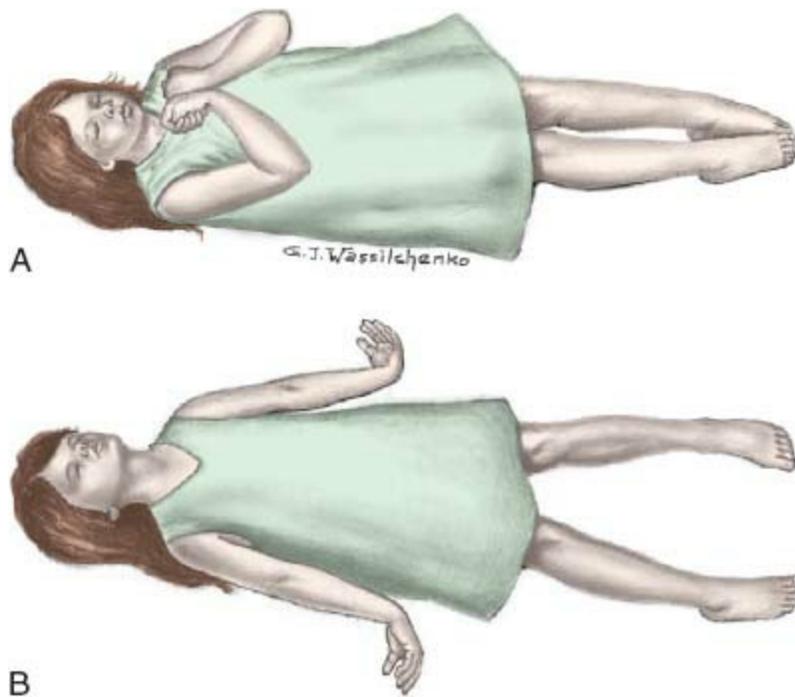
**⚠** The child's level of consciousness provides the earliest indication of an improvement or deterioration of the neurological condition.

## 1. Early signs

- a. Slight change in vital signs
- b. Slight change in level of consciousness
- c. Infant: Irritability, high-pitched cry, bulging fontanel, increased head circumference, dilated scalp veins, Macewen's sign (cracked-pot sound on percussion of the head), setting sun sign (sclera visible above the iris)
- d. Child: Headache, nausea, vomiting, visual disturbances (diplopia), seizures

## 2. Late signs

- a. Significant decrease in level of consciousness
- b. Bradycardia
- c. Decreased motor and sensory responses
- d. Alteration in pupil size and reactivity
- e. Decorticate (flexion) posturing: Adduction of the arms at the shoulders; arms are flexed on the chest with the wrists flexed and the hands fisted, and the lower extremities are extended and adducted; seen with severe dysfunction of cerebral cortex (Fig. 45-3)



**FIGURE 45-3** **A**, Decorticate (flexion) posturing. **B**, Decerebrate (extension) posturing. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

- f. Decerebrate (extension) posturing: Rigid extension and pronation of the arms and the legs; sign of dysfunction at the level of the midbrain (see Fig. 45-3)
- g. Cheyne-Stokes respirations
- h. Coma

**⚠** Immobilize the neck and spine after a head injury if a cervical or other spinal injury is suspected. When a spinal cord injury is ruled out, elevate the head of the bed 15 to 30 degrees, if not contraindicated and as prescribed, to facilitate venous drainage.

### C. Interventions **▲**

1. Monitor the airway; administer oxygen as prescribed.

2. Assess injuries. (See [Chapter 66](#) for information on spinal cord injuries.)
3. Position the client so that the head is maintained midline to avoid jugular vein compression, which can increase ICP.
4. Monitor vital signs and neurological function (assess level of consciousness closely).
5. Notify the health care provider if signs of increased ICP occur.
6. Keep stimuli to a minimum; attempt to minimize crying in an infant.
7. Withhold sedating medications during the acute phase of the injury so that changes in levels of consciousness can be assessed.
8. Initiate seizure precautions ([Box 45-1](#)).

#### **BOX 45-1**      Seizure Precautions

Raise side rails when child is sleeping or resting.

Pad side rails and other hard objects.

Place waterproof mattress or pad on bed or crib.

Instruct child to wear or carry medical identification.

Instruct child in precautions to take during potentially hazardous activities.

Instruct child to swim with a companion.

Instruct child to use a protective helmet and padding when engaged in bicycle riding, skateboarding, and in-line skating.

Alert caregivers to need for any special precautions.

9. Monitor for decreased responsiveness to pain (a significant sign of altered level of consciousness).
10. Maintain NPO (nothing by mouth) status or provide clear liquids, if prescribed, until it is determined that vomiting will not occur.
11. Monitor prescribed intravenous fluids carefully to avoid increasing any cerebral edema and to minimize the possibility of overhydration.
12. Monitor for a fluid or electrolyte alteration (could indicate injury to the hypothalamus or posterior pituitary).
13. Assess wounds and dressings for the presence of drainage, and monitor for nose or ear drainage, which could indicate leakage of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).
14. Administer tepid sponge baths or place the child on a hypothermia blanket as prescribed if hyperthermia occurs.
15. Avoid suctioning through the nares because of the possibility of the catheter entering the brain through a fracture, which places the child at high risk for a secondary infection.
16. As prescribed, administer acetaminophen (Tylenol) for headache, anticonvulsants for seizures, and antibiotics if a laceration is present; prepare to administer prophylactic tetanus toxoid.
17. A corticosteroid or osmotic diuretic may be prescribed to reduce cerebral edema.
18. Monitor for signs of brainstem involvement ([Box 45-2](#)).

- Deep, rapid, or intermittent and gasping respirations
- Wide fluctuations or noticeable slowing of pulse
- Widening pulse pressure or extreme fluctuations in blood pressure
- Sluggish, dilated, or unequal pupils

*Notify the health care provider immediately if these signs develop!*

**19.** Monitor for signs of epidural hematoma: Asymmetrical pupils (one dilated, nonreactive pupil) may indicate a neurosurgical emergency that requires evacuation of the hematoma.

**⚠** Drainage from the nose or ear needs to be tested for the presence of glucose. Drainage that is positive for glucose (as tested with reagent strips) indicates leakage of CSF. The health care provider must be notified immediately if the drainage tests positive for glucose.

### III. Hydrocephalus

#### A. Description

1. An imbalance of CSF absorption or production caused by malformations, tumors, hemorrhage, infections, or trauma
2. Results in head enlargement and increased ICP

#### B. Types (Box 45-3)

#### **BOX 45-3** Types of Hydrocephalus

#### Communicating

Hydrocephalus occurs as a result of impaired absorption within the subarachnoid space.

Interference of the cerebrospinal fluid in the ventricular system does not occur.

### **Noncommunicating**

Obstruction of cerebrospinal fluid flow in the ventricular system does occur.

## **C. Assessment** ▲

### **1. Infant**

- a.** Increased head circumference
- b.** Thin, widely separated bones of the head that produce a cracked-pot sound (Macewen's sign) on percussion
- c.** Anterior fontanel tense, bulging, and nonpulsating; sutures will separate prior to fontanel bulging
- d.** Dilated scalp veins
- e.** Frontal bossing
- f.** "Setting sun" eyes

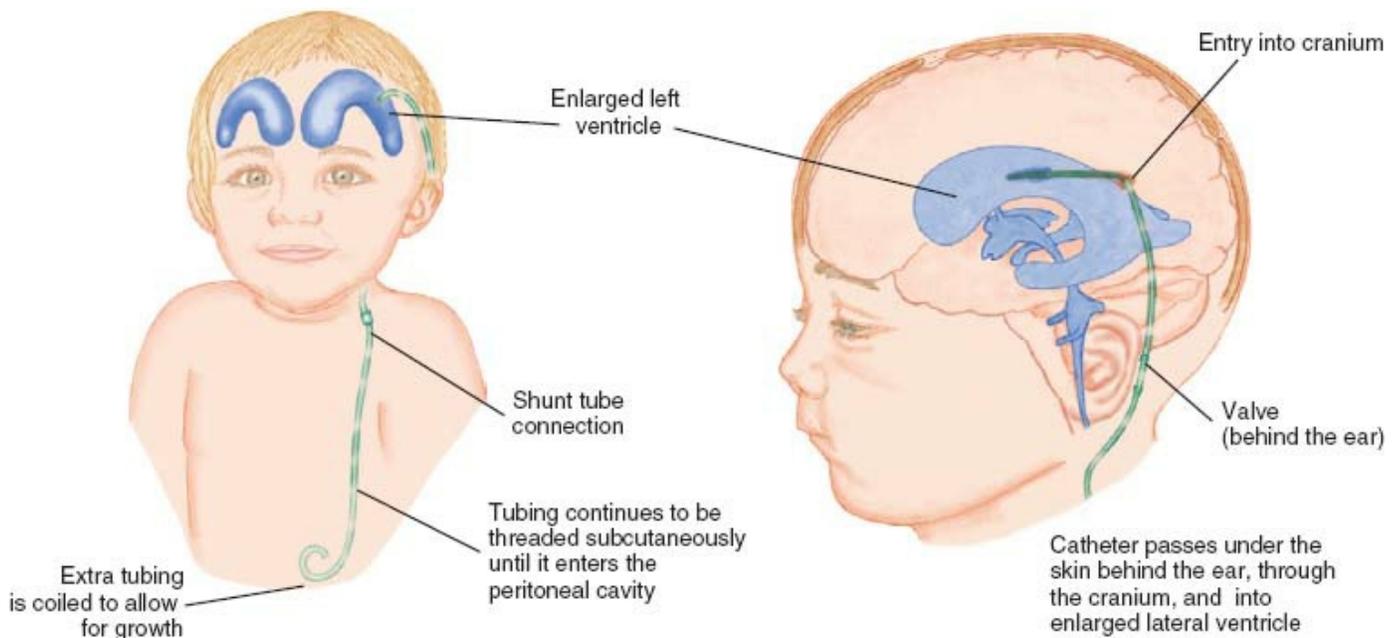
### **2. Child**

- a.** Behavior changes, such as irritability and lethargy
- b.** Headache on awakening
- c.** Nausea and vomiting
- d.** Ataxia
- e.** Nystagmus

3. Late signs: High, shrill cry and seizures

#### D. Surgical interventions

1. The goal of surgical treatment is to prevent further CSF accumulation by bypassing the blockage and draining the fluid from the ventricles to a location where it may be reabsorbed. ▲
2. In a ventriculoperitoneal **shunt**, the CSF drains into the peritoneal cavity from the lateral ventricle (Fig. 45-4).



**FIGURE 45-4** Ventriculoperitoneal shunt. (From McKinney E, James S, Murray S, Ashwill J: *Maternal-child nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

3. In a ventriculoatrial shunt, CSF drains into the right atrium of the heart from the lateral ventricle, bypassing the obstruction (used in older children and in children with pathological conditions of the abdomen).
4. Shunt revision may be necessary as the child grows.

5. An alternative to shunt placement is endoscopic third ventriculostomy, in which a small opening in the floor of the third ventricle is made that allows CSF to bypass the fourth ventricle and return to the circulation to be absorbed; this treatment may not be appropriate for some types of hydrocephalus.

#### E. Preoperative interventions

1. Monitor intake and output; give small, frequent feedings as tolerated until preoperative NPO status is prescribed.
2. Reposition the head frequently and use special devices such as an egg crate mattress under the head to prevent pressure sores. ▲
3. Prepare the child and family for diagnostic procedures and surgery.

#### F. Postoperative interventions ▲

1. Monitor vital signs and neurological signs.
2. Position the child on the unoperated side to prevent pressure on the shunt valve.
3. Keep the child flat as prescribed to avoid rapid reduction of intracranial fluid.
4. Observe for increased ICP; if increased ICP occurs, elevate the head of the bed to 15 to 30 degrees to enhance gravity flow through the shunt.
5. Measure head circumference.
6. Monitor for signs of infection and assess dressings for drainage.
7. Monitor intake and output.
8. Provide comfort measures and administer medications as prescribed.
9. Instruct parents on how to recognize shunt infection or malfunction.
10. In an infant, irritability, a high shrill cry, lethargy, and feeding poorly may indicate

shunt malfunction or infection.

11. In a toddler, headache and a lack of appetite are the earliest common signs of shunt malfunction.
12. In older children, an indicator of shunt malfunction is an alteration in the child's level of consciousness.

 A high shrill cry in an infant can be a sign of increased ICP.

## IV. Meningitis

### A. Description

1. Meningitis is an infectious process of the central nervous system caused by bacteria or viruses that may be acquired as a primary disease or as a result of complications of neurosurgery, trauma, infection of the sinuses or ears, or systemic infections.
2. Diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is made by testing CSF obtained by lumbar puncture; the fluid is cloudy with increased pressure, increased white blood cell count, elevated protein, and decreased glucose levels. 
3. Bacterial meningitis can be caused by various organisms, most commonly *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, or *Neisseria meningitidis*; meningococcal meningitis occurs in epidemic form and can be transmitted by droplets from nasopharyngeal secretions.
4. Viral meningitis is associated with viruses such as mumps, paramyxovirus, herpesvirus, and enterovirus.

## B. Assessment

1. Signs and symptoms vary, depending on the type, the age of the child, and the duration of the preceding illness.
2. Fever, chills, headache
3. Vomiting, diarrhea
4. Poor feeding or anorexia
5. Nuchal rigidity
6. Poor or high shrill cry
7. Altered level of consciousness, such as lethargy or irritability
8. Bulging anterior fontanel in an infant
9. Positive Kernig's sign (inability to extend the leg when the thigh is flexed anteriorly at the hip) and Brudzinski's sign (neck flexion causes adduction and flexion movements of the lower extremities) in children and adolescents
10. Muscle or joint pain (meningococcal infection and *H. influenzae* infection)
11. Petechial or purpuric rashes (meningococcal infection)
12. Ear that chronically drains (pneumococcal meningitis)

## C. Interventions

1. Provide respiratory isolation precautions and maintain it for at least 24 hours after antibiotics are initiated.
2. Administer antibiotics and antipyretics as prescribed (administer antibiotics as soon as they are prescribed after lumbar puncture); antiseizure medications may also be prescribed.

3. Perform neurological assessment and monitor for seizures; assess for the complication of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion, causing fluid retention (cerebral edema) and dilutional hyponatremia.
4. Assess for changes in level of consciousness and irritability.
5. Monitor for a purpuric or petechial rash and for signs of thromboemboli.
6. Assess nutritional status; monitor intake and output.
7. Monitor for hearing loss.
8. Determine close contacts of the child with meningitis because the contacts need prophylactic treatment.
9. Pneumococcal conjugate **vaccine** is recommended for all children beginning at age 2 months to protect against meningitis; streptococcal pneumococci can cause many bacterial infections including meningitis (see [Chapter 48](#) for information on vaccines).

## V. Near-Drowning

### A. Description

1. Survival of at least 24 hours after submersion in a fluid medium
2. Hypoxia/asphyxiation is the primary problem because it results in extensive cell damage; cerebral cells sustain irreversible damage after 4 to 6 minutes of submersion. ▲
3. Additional problems include aspiration and hypothermia.
4. Outcome is predicted on the basis of the length of submersion in nonicy water; outcome may be good if submersion was for less than 5 minutes and the child

exhibits neurological responsiveness, reactive pupils, and a normal cardiac rhythm.

5. A child who was submerged for more than 10 minutes and does not respond to cardiopulmonary life support measures within 25 minutes has an extremely poor prognosis (severe neurological impairment or death).

## **B. Interventions** ▲

1. Provide ventilatory and circulatory support; if the child has had a severe cerebral insult, endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation may be required.
2. Monitor respiratory status because respiratory compromise and cerebral edema may occur 24 hours after the incident.
3. Monitor for aspiration pneumonia.
4. Monitor neurological status closely; if spontaneous purposeful movement and normal brainstem function are not apparent 24 hours after the event, the child most likely has sustained severe neurological deficits.
5. Teach parents to provide adequate supervision of infants and small children around water to prevent accidents.

## **VI. Reye's Syndrome**

### **A. Description**

1. Reye's syndrome is an acute encephalopathy that follows a viral illness and is characterized pathologically by cerebral edema and fatty changes in the liver; a definitive diagnosis is made by liver biopsy.

2. The exact cause is unclear; it most commonly follows a viral illness such as influenza or varicella.
3. Administration of aspirin and aspirin-containing products is not recommended for children with a febrile illness or children with varicella or influenza because of its association with Reye's syndrome. ▲
4. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is considered the medication of choice.
5. Early diagnosis and aggressive treatment are important; the goal of treatment is to maintain effective cerebral perfusion and control increasing ICP.

## **B. Assessment**

1. History of systemic viral illness 4 to 7 days before the onset of symptoms
2. Fever
3. Nausea and vomiting
4. Signs of altered hepatic function such as lethargy ▲
5. Progressive neurological deterioration ▲
6. Increased blood ammonia levels

## **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Provide rest and decrease stimulation in the environment.
2. Assess neurological status.
3. Monitor for altered level of consciousness and signs of increased ICP.
4. Monitor for signs of altered hepatic function and results of liver function studies.
5. Monitor intake and output.
6. Monitor for signs of bleeding and signs of impaired coagulation, such as a

prolonged bleeding time.

## VII. Seizure Disorders

### A. Description (see [Chapter 66](#) for additional information on seizures)

1. Excessive and unorganized neuronal discharges in the brain that activate associated motor and sensory organs
2. Classified as generalized, partial, or unclassified, depending on the area of the brain involved
3. Types of generalized seizures include tonic-clonic, absence, myoclonic, and atonic.
4. Partial seizures arise from a specific area in the brain and cause limited symptoms; types include simple partial and complex partial.

### B. Assessment

1. Obtain information from the parents about the time of onset, precipitating events, and behavior before and after the seizure.
2. Determine the child's history related to seizures.
3. Ask the child about the presence of an aura (a warning sign of impending seizure).
4. Monitor for apnea and **cyanosis**.
5. Postseizure: The child is disoriented and sleepy.

### C. Seizure precautions (see [Box 45-1](#))

### D. Interventions ([Box 45-4](#))

Ensure airway patency.

Have suction equipment and oxygen available.

Time the seizure episode.

If the child is standing or sitting, ease the child down to the floor and place the child in a side-lying position.

Place a pillow or folded blanket under the child's head; if no bedding is available, place your own hands under the child's head or place the child's head in your own lap.

Loosen restrictive clothing.

Remove eyeglasses from the child if present.

Clear the area of any hazards or hard objects.

Allow the seizure to proceed and end without interference.

If vomiting occurs, turn the child to one side as a unit.

Do not restrain the child, place anything in the child's mouth, or give any food or liquids to the child.

Prepare to administer medications as prescribed.

Remain with the child until the child fully recovers.

Observe for incontinence, which may have occurred during the seizure.

Document the occurrence.

**E.** Anticonvulsant medications (see [Chapter 67](#) for information on medications) 

**⚠** Never place anything, including an airway device or a padded tongue blade, into the mouth of a child experiencing a seizure.

## VIII. Neural Tube Defects

### A. Description

1. This central nervous system defect results from failure of the neural tube to close during embryonic development. **▲**
2. Associated deficits include sensorimotor disturbance, dislocated hips, talipes equinovarus (clubfoot), and hydrocephalus.
3. Defect closure is performed soon after birth.

### B. Types

1. Spina bifida occulta
  - a. Posterior vertebral arches fail to close in the lumbosacral area.
  - b. Spinal cord remains intact and usually is not visible.
  - c. Meninges are not exposed on the skin surface.
  - d. Neurological deficits are not usually present.
2. Spina bifida cystica
  - a. Protrusion of the spinal cord or its meninges or both occurs.
  - b. Defect results in incomplete closure of the vertebral and neural tubes, resulting in a saclike protrusion in the lumbar or sacral area, with varying degrees of nervous tissue involvement.
  - c. Defect can include meningocele, myelomeningocele, lipomeningocele, and lipomeningomyelocele.

### 3. Meningocele ▲

- a. Protrusion involves meninges and a saclike cyst that contains CSF in the midline of the back, usually in the lumbosacral area.
- b. Spinal cord is not involved.
- c. Neurological deficits are usually not present.

### 4. Myelomeningocele ▲

- a. Protrusion of the meninges, CSF, nerve roots, and a portion of the spinal cord occurs.
- b. The sac (defect) is covered by a thin membrane prone to leakage or rupture.
- c. Neurological deficits are evident.

### C. Assessment ▲

1. Depends on the spinal cord involvement
2. Visible spinal defect
3. Flaccid paralysis of the legs
4. Altered bladder and bowel function
5. Hip and joint deformities
6. Hydrocephalus

### D. Interventions

1. Evaluate the sac and measure the lesion.
2. Perform neurological assessment.
3. Monitor for increased ICP, which might indicate developing hydrocephalus.
4. Measure head circumference; assess anterior fontanel for bulging.

5. Protect the sac; as prescribed, cover with a sterile, moist (normal saline), nonadherent dressing to maintain the moisture of the sac and contents. ▲
6. Change the dressing covering the sac on a regular schedule or whenever it becomes soiled because of the risk of infection; diapering may be contraindicated until the defect has been repaired. ▲
7. Use aseptic technique to prevent infection.
8. Assess the sac for redness, clear or purulent drainage, abrasions, irritation, and signs of infection.
9. Early signs of infection include elevated temperature (axillary), irritability, lethargy, and nuchal rigidity.
10. Place in a prone position to minimize tension on the sac and the risk of trauma; the head is turned to one side for feeding. ▲
11. Assess for physical impairments such as hip and joint deformities.
12. Prepare the child and family for surgery.
13. Administer antibiotics preoperatively and postoperatively, as prescribed, to prevent infection.
14. Teach the parents and eventually the child about long-term home care.
  - a. Positioning, feeding, skin care, and range-of-motion exercises
  - b. Instituting a bladder elimination program and performing clean intermittent catheterization technique if necessary
  - c. Administering antispasmodics (that act on the smooth muscle of the bladder) as prescribed to increase bladder capacity and improve continence

- d. Implement a bowel program including a high-fiber diet, increased fluids, and suppositories as needed.
- e. The child is at high risk for allergy to latex and rubber products because of the frequent exposure to latex during implementation of care measures.

## **IX. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder**

### **A. Description**

1. Behavior disorder characterized by developmentally inappropriate degrees of inattention, overactivity, and impulsivity ▲
2. Childhood problems include lowered intellectual development, some minor physical abnormalities, sleeping disturbances, behavioral or emotional disorders, and difficulty in social relationships.
3. Early diagnosis is important to prevent impaired emotional and psychological development.
4. Diagnosis is established on the basis of self-reports, parent and teacher reports, and use of assessment tools.

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in the seat
2. Easily distracted with external or internal stimuli
3. Difficulty with following through on instructions
4. Poor attention span
5. Shifts from one uncompleted activity to another
6. Talks excessively

7. Interrupts or intrudes on others
8. Engages in physically dangerous activities without considering the possible consequences

### C. Interventions

1. Provide parents with information about the disorder and treatment plan; encourage support groups for parents.
2. Treatment includes behavioral therapy, medication, maintaining a consistent environment, and appropriate classroom placement. 🟢
3. Behavioral therapy focuses on preventing undesirable behavior.
4. Maintain a consistent home and classroom environment, and provide environmental and physical safety measures.
5. Promote self-esteem.
6. Stimulant medications may be prescribed; possible side effects include appetite suppression and weight loss, nervousness, tics, insomnia, and increased blood pressure.
7. Instruct the child and parents about medication administration and the need for regular follow-up.

## X. Autism Spectrum Disorders

### A. Description

1. Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are complex neurodevelopmental disorders of unknown etiology composed of qualitative alterations in social interaction and

verbal impairment with repetitive, restricted, and stereotype behavioral patterns.

2. Autism spectrum disorder impairments range from mild to severe; types include autism, Asperger syndrome, Rett syndrome).
3. Symptoms are usually noticed by the parents by 3 years of age.
4. The cause of the disorder is not specifically known; however, it has been linked to a wide range of antepartum, intrapartum, and newborn conditions and exposure to hazardous chemicals; genetic predisposition is also linked to the disorder.
5. The disorder is accompanied by intellectual and social behavioral deficits, and the child exhibits peculiar and bizarre characteristics with social interactions, communication, and behaviors.
6. Despite their relatively moderate to severe disability, some children with autism (known as *savants*) excel in particular areas, such as art, music, memory, mathematics, or perceptual skills such as puzzle building.
7. Diagnosis is established on the basis of symptoms and the use of several screening tools.

## **B. Assessment**

### **1. Social**

- a. Abnormal or lack of comfort-seeking behaviors
- b. Abnormal or lack of social play
- c. Impairment in peer relationships
- d. Lack of awareness of the existence or feelings of others
- e. Abnormal or lack of imitation of others

## 2. Communication

- a. Lack of, impaired, or abnormal speech such as producing a monotone voice or echolalia
- b. Abnormal nonverbal communication (does not use gestures to communicate)
- c. Lack of imaginative play

## 3. Behavior

- a. Persistent preoccupation or attachment to objects; range of interests restricted
- b. Self-injurious behaviors
- c. Must maintain routine; any environmental change produces marked distress
- d. Produces repetitive body movements such as rocking or head banging

## C. Interventions

1. Determine the child's routines, habits, and preferences and maintain consistency as much as possible.
2. Determine the specific ways in which the child communicates and use these methods.
3. Avoid placing demands on the child. ▲
4. Implement safety precautions as necessary for self-injurious behaviors such as head banging. ▲
5. Initiate referrals to special programs as required.
6. Provide support to parents.

 Ensuring a safe environment for a child with autism is a priority.

## **XI. Intellectual Disability (Mental Retardation)**

### **A. Description**

1. In intellectual disability, a child manifests subaverage intellectual functioning along with deficits in adaptive skills.
2. Down syndrome is a congenital condition that results in moderate to severe retardation and has been linked to an extra group G chromosome, chromosome 21 (trisomy 21).

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Deficits in cognitive skills and level of adaptive functioning
2. Delays in fine and gross motor skills
3. Speech delays
4. Decreased spontaneous activity
5. Nonresponsiveness
6. Irritability
7. Poor eye contact during feeding

### **C. Interventions**

1. Medical strategies are focused on correcting structural deformities and treating associated behaviors. ▲
2. Implement community and educational services, using a multidisciplinary approach.
3. Promote care skills as much as possible.
4. Assist with communication and socialization skills.

5. Facilitate appropriate play time.
6. Initiate safety precautions as necessary. ▲
7. Assist the family with decisions regarding care.
8. Provide information regarding support services and community agencies.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Following insertion of a ventriculoperitoneal shunt for the treatment of hydrocephalus, the nurse should monitor the child for signs of increased ICP. In the child, early signs include a change of level of consciousness, headache, nausea, vomiting, visual disturbances (diplopia), and seizures. Normally, the surgeon prescribes that the child be kept flat to avoid rapid reduction of intracranial fluid. If increased ICP occurs, the nurse should elevate the head of the bed to 15 to 30 degrees to enhance gravity flow through the shunt. The surgeon is also notified immediately.

### ***Reference***

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 414.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**454.** The parents of a child recently diagnosed with cerebral palsy ask the nurse about the disorder. The nurse bases the response on the understanding that cerebral palsy is which type of condition?

1. An infectious disease of the central nervous system
2. An inflammation of the brain as a result of a viral illness
3. A congenital condition that results in moderate to severe retardation
4. A chronic disability characterized by impaired muscle movement and posture

**455.** The nurse notes documentation that a child with meningitis is exhibiting a positive Kernig's sign. Which observation is characteristic of this sign?

1. The child complains of muscle and joint pain.
2. Petechial and purpuric rashes are noted on the child's trunk.
3. Neck flexion causes adduction and flexion movements of the lower extremities.
4. The child is not able to extend the leg when the thigh is flexed anteriorly at the hip.

**456.** A mother arrives at an emergency department with her 5-year-old child and states that the child fell off a bunk bed. A head injury is suspected, and the nurse checks the child's airway status and assesses the child for early and late signs of increased intracranial pressure (ICP). Which is a **late** sign of increased ICP?

1. Nausea
2. Irritability

3. Headache
4. Bradycardia

**457.** The nurse is assigned to care for an 8-year-old child with a diagnosis of a basilar skull fracture. The nurse reviews the health care provider's (HCPs) prescriptions and should contact the HCP to question which prescription?

1. Suction as needed.
2. Obtain daily weight.
3. Provide clear liquid intake.
4. Maintain a patent intravenous line.

**458.** The nurse is reviewing the record of a child with increased intracranial pressure and notes that the child has exhibited signs of decerebrate posturing. On assessment of the child, the nurse expects to note which characteristic of this type of posturing?

1. Flaccid paralysis of all extremities
2. Adduction of the arms at the shoulders
3. Rigid extension and pronation of the arms and legs
4. Abnormal flexion of the upper extremities and extension and adduction of the lower extremities

**459.** A child is diagnosed with Reye's syndrome. The nurse develops a nursing care plan for the child and should include which intervention in the plan?

1. Assessing hearing loss

2. Monitoring urine output
3. Changing body position every 2 hours
4. Providing a quiet atmosphere with dimmed lighting

**460.** The nurse develops a plan of care for a child at risk for tonic-clonic seizures. In the plan of care, the nurse identifies seizure precautions and documents that which item(s) need to be placed at the child's bedside?

1. Emergency cart
2. Tracheotomy set
3. Padded tongue blade
4. Suctioning equipment and oxygen

**461.** A lumbar puncture is performed on a child suspected to have bacterial meningitis, and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) is obtained for analysis. The nurse reviews the results of the CSF analysis and determines that which results would verify the diagnosis?

1. Clear CSF, decreased pressure, and elevated protein level
2. Clear CSF, elevated protein, and decreased glucose levels
3. Cloudy CSF, elevated protein, and decreased glucose levels
4. Cloudy CSF, decreased protein, and decreased glucose levels

**462.** The nurse is planning care for a child with acute bacterial meningitis. Based on the mode of transmission of this infection, which precautionary intervention should be included in the plan of care?

1. Maintain enteric precautions.
2. Maintain neutropenic precautions.
3. No precautions are required as long as antibiotics have been started.
4. Maintain respiratory isolation precautions for at least 24 hours after the initiation of antibiotics.

**463.** An infant with a diagnosis of hydrocephalus is scheduled for surgery. Which is the **priority** nursing intervention in the preoperative period?

1. Test the urine for protein.
2. Reposition the infant frequently.
3. Provide a stimulating environment.
4. Assess blood pressure every 15 minutes.

**464.** The nurse is developing a plan of care for a child who is at risk for seizures.

Which interventions apply if the child has a seizure? **Select all that apply.**

1. Time the seizure.
2. Restrain the child.
3. Stay with the child.
4. Place the child in a prone position.
5. Move furniture away from the child.
6. Insert a padded tongue blade in the child's mouth.

# ANSWERS

454. 4

**Rationale:** Cerebral palsy is a chronic disability characterized by impaired movement and posture resulting from an abnormality in the extrapyramidal or pyramidal motor system. Meningitis is an infectious process of the central nervous system. Encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain that occurs as a result of viral illness or central nervous system infection. Down syndrome is an example of a congenital condition that results in moderate to severe retardation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first, noting that they are **comparable or alike**. Next, note the relationship between the words *palsy* in the question and *impaired muscle movement* in the correct option.

**Review:** Cerebral palsy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Mobility

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 559.

455. 4

**Rationale:** Meningitis is an infectious process of the central nervous system caused by bacteria and viruses. The inability to extend the leg when the thigh is flexed anteriorly at the hip is a positive Kernig's sign, noted in meningitis. Muscle and joint pain is characteristic of meningococcal infection and *H. influenzae* infection. A petechial or

purpuric rash is characteristic of meningococcal infection. A positive Brudzinski's sign is noted when neck flexion causes adduction and flexion movements of the lower extremities in children and adolescents. This is also a characteristic of meningitis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of Kernig's sign. Knowledge regarding this sign is needed to answer correctly. Think about the neurological exam and physical assessment findings to answer correctly.

**Review:** Characteristics of **Kernig's sign**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1539.

#### 456. 4

**Rationale:** Head injury is the pathological result of any mechanical force to the skull, scalp, meninges, or brain. A head injury can cause bleeding in the brain and result in increased intracranial pressure (ICP). In a child, early signs include a slight change in level of consciousness, headache, nausea, vomiting, visual disturbances (diplopia), seizures. Late signs of increased ICP include a significant decrease in level of consciousness, bradycardia, decreased motor and sensory responses, alterations in pupil size and reactivity, posturing, Cheyne-Stokes respirations, and coma.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the age of the child and the **strategic word** *late*. Think about the pathophysiology that occurs when pressure increases in the cranial vault to assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** Early and late signs of **increased intracranial pressure (ICP)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 1420.

**457. 1**

**Rationale:** A basilar skull fracture is a type of head injury. Nasotracheal suctioning is contraindicated in a child with a basilar skull fracture: Because of the nature of the injury, there is a possibility that the catheter will enter the brain through the fracture, creating a high risk of secondary infection. Fluid balance is monitored closely by daily weight determination, intake and output measurement, and serum osmolality determination to detect early signs of water retention, excessive dehydration, and states of hypertonicity or hypotonicity. The child is maintained on NPO status or restricted to clear liquids until it is determined that vomiting will not occur. An intravenous line is maintained to administer fluids or medications if necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the words *question which prescription*. Eliminate options 2, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** in that they address the subject of fluids. Remember that nasotracheal suctioning is contraindicated in a child with a skull fracture because of the risk of infection.

**Review:** Care of the child with a **skull fracture**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1530, 1532.

**458. 3**

**Rationale:** Decerebrate (extension) posturing is characterized by the rigid extension and pronation of the arms and legs. Option 1 is incorrect. Options 2 and 4 describe decorticate (flexion) posturing.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, characteristics of decerebrate (extension) posturing. Recalling the clinical manifestations associated with decerebrate posturing will direct you to the correct option. Remember that decerebrate posturing is characterized by the rigid extension and pronation of the arms and legs.

**Review:** Characteristics of **decorticate** and **decerebrate posturing**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1516-1517.

**459. 4**

**Rationale:** Reye's syndrome is an acute encephalopathy that follows a viral illness and is characterized pathologically by cerebral edema and fatty changes in the liver. A definitive diagnosis is made by liver biopsy. In Reye's syndrome, supportive care is directed toward monitoring and managing cerebral edema. Decreasing stimuli

in the environment by providing a quiet environment with dimmed lighting would decrease the stress on the cerebral tissue and neuron responses. Hearing loss and urine output are not affected. Changing the body position every 2 hours would not affect the cerebral edema directly. The child should be positioned with the head elevated to decrease the progression of the cerebral edema and promote drainage of cerebrospinal fluid.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, nursing care for the child with Reye's syndrome. Think about the pathophysiology associated with Reye's syndrome. Recalling that cerebral edema is a concern for a child with Reye's syndrome will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the child with **Reye's syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1550.

#### **460. 4**

**Rationale:** A seizure results from the excessive and unorganized neuronal discharges in the brain that activate associated motor and sensory organs. A type of generalized seizure is a tonic-clonic seizure. This type of seizure causes rigidity of all body muscles, followed by intense jerking movements. Because increased oral secretions and apnea can occur during and after the seizure, oxygen and suctioning equipment are placed at the bedside. A tracheotomy is not performed during a seizure. No object, including a padded tongue blade, is placed into the child's mouth during a seizure. An emergency cart would not be left at the bedside, but would be available in the treatment room or nearby on the nursing unit.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, seizure precautions. Note the words *need to be placed at the child's bedside*. Eliminate option 2, knowing that a tracheotomy is not performed. Next, recalling that no object is placed into the mouth of a child experiencing a seizure assists in eliminating option 3. From the remaining options, focus on the primary concern during seizure activity. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Seizure precautions

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1558.

### 461. 3

**Rationale:** Meningitis is an infectious process of the central nervous system caused by bacteria and viruses; it may be acquired as a primary disease or as a result of complications of neurosurgery, trauma, infection of the sinus or ears, or systemic infections. Meningitis is diagnosed by testing cerebrospinal fluid obtained by lumbar puncture. In the case of bacterial meningitis, findings usually include an elevated pressure; turbid or cloudy cerebrospinal fluid; and elevated leukocyte, elevated protein, and decreased glucose levels.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge regarding the diagnostic findings in meningitis. Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike**; recall that clear cerebrospinal fluid is not likely to be found in an infectious process such as meningitis. From this point, recall that an elevated protein level indicates a possible diagnosis of meningitis to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Diagnostic findings associated with **meningitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Intracranial Regulation

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1541; Swearingen (2012), pp. 256-257.

**462. 4**

**Rationale:** Meningitis is an infectious process of the central nervous system caused by bacteria and viruses; it may be acquired as a primary disease or as a result of complications of neurosurgery, trauma, infection of the sinus or ears, or systemic infections. A major priority of nursing care for a child suspected to have meningitis is to administer the antibiotic as soon as it is prescribed. The child also is placed on respiratory isolation precautions for at least 24 hours while culture results are obtained and the antibiotic is having an effect. Enteric precautions and neutropenic precautions are not associated with the mode of transmission of meningitis. Enteric precautions are instituted when the mode of transmission is through the gastrointestinal tract. Neutropenic precautions are instituted when a child has a low neutrophil count.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the mode of transmission of meningitis. Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike**, and are unrelated to the mode of transmission. Recalling that it takes about 24 hours for antibiotics to reach a therapeutic blood level will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Mode of transmission of **meningitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1539.

**463. 2**

**Rationale:** Hydrocephalus occurs as a result of an imbalance of cerebrospinal fluid absorption or production that is caused by malformations, tumors, hemorrhage, infections, or trauma. It results in head enlargement and increased intracranial pressure. In infants with hydrocephalus, the head grows at an abnormal rate, and if the infant is not repositioned frequently, pressure ulcers can occur on the back and side of the head. An egg crate mattress under the head is also a nursing intervention that can help prevent skin breakdown. Proteinuria is not specific to hydrocephalus. Stimulus should be kept at a minimum because of the increase in intracranial pressure. It is not necessary to check the blood pressure every 15 minutes.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Focus on the child's diagnosis. Eliminate option 4 because of the words *15 minutes*. From the remaining options, recall that because of the severe head enlargement, the nursing intervention that has priority is to reposition the infant frequently to prevent the development of pressure areas.

**Review:** Complications associated with **hydrocephalus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 878.

❖ 464. 1, 3, 5

**Rationale:** A seizure is a disorder that occurs as a result of excessive and unorganized neuronal discharges in the brain that activate associated motor and sensory organs. During a seizure, the child is placed on his or her side in a lateral position. Positioning on the side prevents aspiration because saliva drains out the corner of the child's mouth. The child is not restrained because this could cause injury to the child. The nurse would loosen clothing around the child's neck and ensure a patent airway. Nothing is placed into the child's mouth during a seizure because this action may cause injury to the child's mouth, gums, or teeth. The nurse would stay with the child to reduce the risk of injury and allow for observation and timing of the seizure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** and visualize this clinical situation. Recalling that airway patency and safety is the priority will assist in determining the appropriate interventions.

**Review:** Care of the child experiencing **seizures**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1556-1558.



## CHAPTER 46

# Musculoskeletal Disorders

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse is assessing an infant with clubfoot who is in a cast. The nurse notes that the tissue distal to the cast is pale and edematous and the infant shows signs of pain with passive movement. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 526.*

### **I. Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip**

#### **A. Description**

1. Disorders related to abnormal development of the hip that may develop during fetal life, infancy, or childhood; in these disorders, the head of the femur is seated improperly in the acetabulum, or hip socket, of the pelvis
2. Degrees of developmental dysplasia of the hip ([Box 46-1](#))

#### **BOX 46-1** Degrees of Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip

### **Acetabular Dysplasia (Preluxation)**

- Mildest form
- Neither subluxation nor dislocation
- Delay in acetabular development occurs
- Femoral head remains in acetabulum

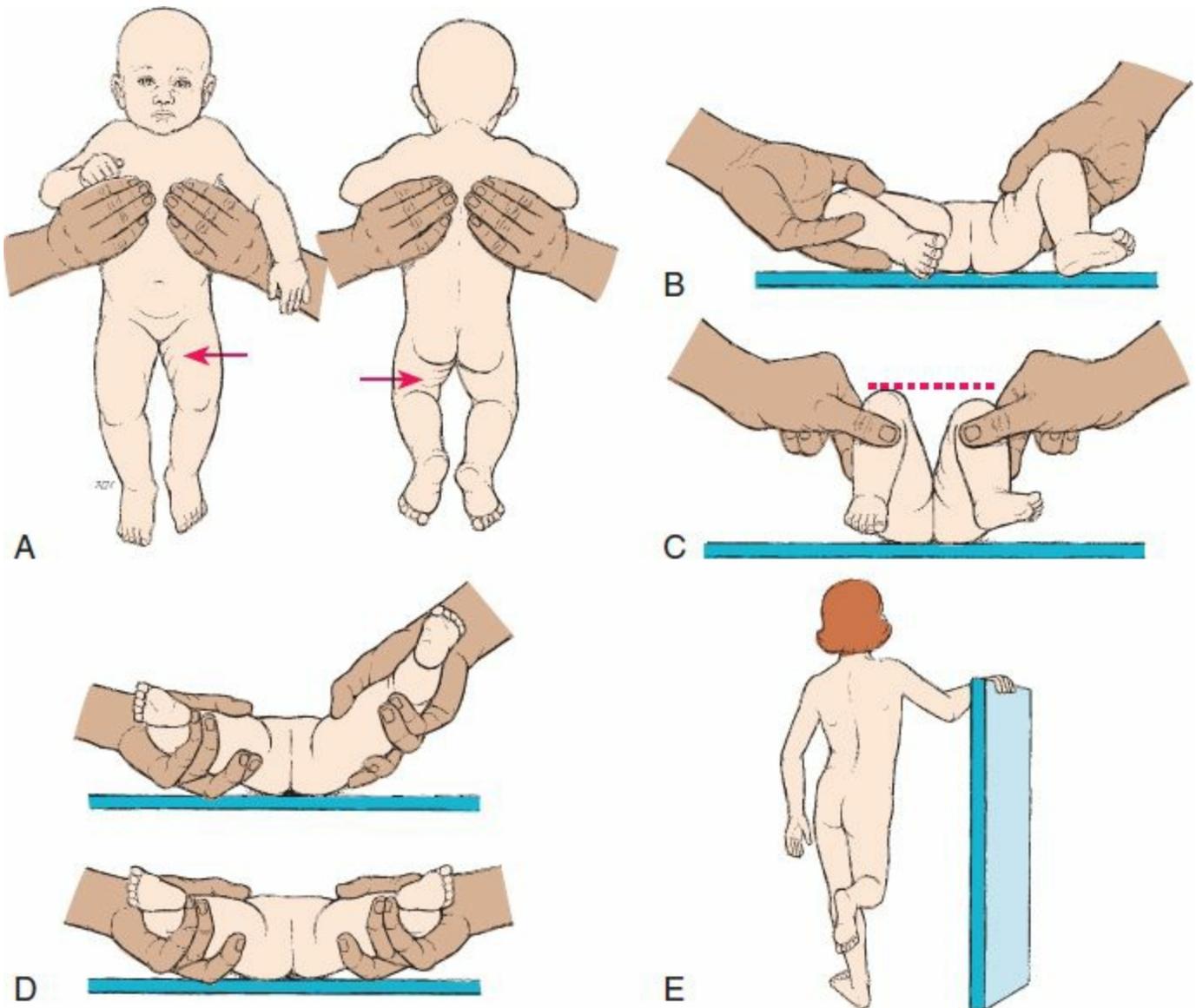
### **Subluxation**

- Incomplete dislocation of the hip
- Femoral head remains in acetabulum
- Stretched capsule and ligamentum teres causes head of the femur to be partially displaced

### **Dislocation**

- Femoral head loses contact with acetabulum and is displaced posteriorly and superiorly over fibrocartilaginous rim
- Ligamentum teres is elongated and taut

**B. Assessment (Fig. 46-1) ▲**



**FIGURE 46-1** Signs of development dysplasia of the hip. **A**, Asymmetry of gluteal and thigh folds. **B**, Limited hip abduction, as seen in flexion. **C**, Apparent shortening of the femur, as indicated by the level of the knees in flexion. **D**, Ortolani click (if infant is younger than 4 weeks old). **E**, Positive Trendelenburg's sign or gait (if child is weight bearing). (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

1. Neonate: Laxity of the ligaments around the hip
2. Infant

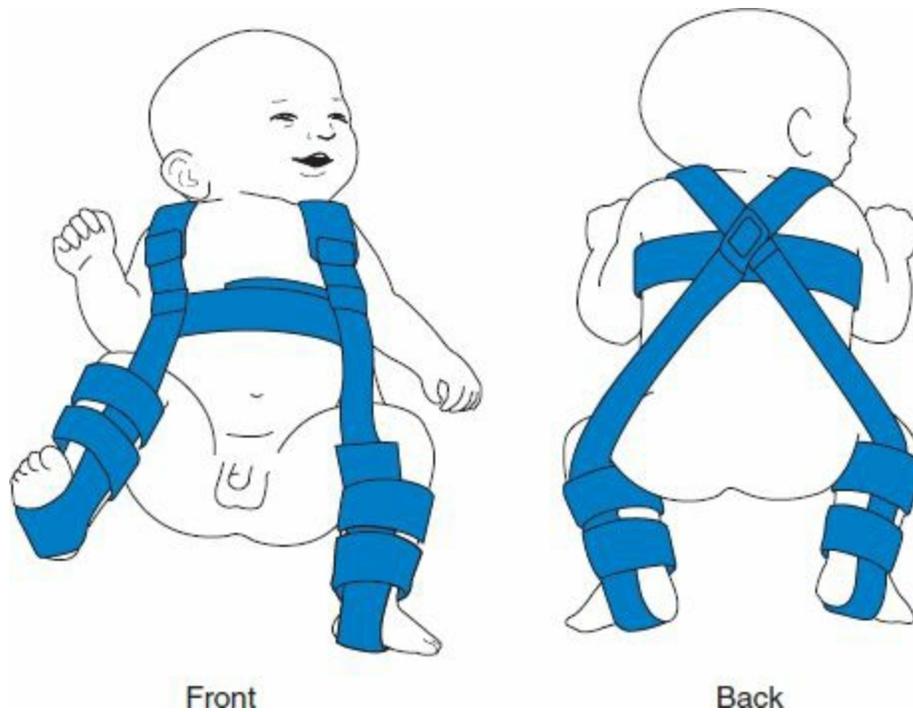
- a. Shortening of the limb on the affected side (Galeazzi's sign, Allis's sign)
- b. Restricted abduction of the hip on the affected side when the infant is placed supine with knees and hips flexed (limited range of motion in the affected hip)
- c. Unequal gluteal folds when the infant is prone and legs are extended against the examining table
- d. Positive Ortolani's test: Ortolani's maneuver is a test to assess for hip instability. The examiner abducts the thigh and applies gentle pressure forward over the greater trochanter. A "clicking" sensation indicates a dislocated femoral head moving into the acetabulum.
- e. Positive Barlow's test: The examiner adducts the hips and applies gentle pressure down and back with the thumbs. In hip dysplasia, the examiner can feel the femoral head move out of the acetabulum.

### 3. Older infant and child

- a. Affected leg is shorter than the other.
- b. The head of the femur can be felt to move up and down in the buttock when the extended thigh is pushed first toward the child's head and then pulled distally.
- c. Positive Trendelenburg's sign: The child stands on one foot and then the other foot, holding onto a support and bearing weight on the affected hip; the pelvis tilts downward on the normal side instead of upward, as it would with normal stability.
- d. Greater trochanter is prominent.
- e. Marked lordosis or waddling gait is noted in bilateral dislocations.

## C. Interventions

1. Birth to 6 months of age: Splinting of the hips with a Pavlik harness to maintain flexion and abduction and external rotation (worn continuously until hip is stable in about 3 to 6 months) (Fig. 46-2) ▲



**FIGURE 46-2** Child in Pavlik harness. (From Ball JW: *Mosby's pediatric patient teaching guides*, St. Louis, 1998, Mosby.)

2. Age 6 to 18 months: Gradual reduction by traction followed by closed reduction or open reduction (if necessary) under general anesthesia; child is then placed in a hip spica cast for 2 to 4 months until the hip is stable, and then a flexion-abduction brace is applied for approximately 3 months
3. Older child: Operative reduction and reconstruction is usually required.
4. Parents are instructed regarding proper care of a Pavlik harness, spica cast, or

abduction brace.

## II. Congenital Clubfoot

### A. Description ▲

1. Complex deformity of the ankle and foot that includes forefoot adduction, midfoot supination, hindfoot varus, and ankle equinus; defect may be unilateral or bilateral
2. The goal of treatment is to achieve a painless plantigrade (able to walk on the sole of the foot with the heel on the ground) and stable foot.
3. Long-term interval follow-up care is required until the child reaches skeletal maturity.

### B. Assessment: Deformities are described on the basis of the position of the ankle and foot.

1. Talipes varus: Inversion or bending inward
2. Talipes valgus: Eversion or bending outward
3. Talipes equinus: Plantar flexion in which the toes are lower than the heel
4. Talipes calcaneus: Dorsiflexion in which the toes are higher than the heel

### C. Interventions

1. Treatment begins as soon after birth as possible. ▲
2. Manipulation and casting are performed weekly for about 8 to 12 weeks because of the rapid **growth** of early infancy; a splint is then applied if casting and manipulation are successful. ▲
3. Surgical intervention may be necessary if normal alignment is not achieved by

about 6 to 12 weeks of age.

4. Monitor for pain, and monitor the neurovascular status of the toes. ▲

⚠ Contact the health care provider (HCP) immediately if signs of neurovascular impairment are noted in a child with a cast or brace.

### III. Idiopathic Scoliosis

#### A. Description

1. Three-dimensional spinal deformity that usually involves lateral curvature, spinal rotation resulting in rib asymmetry, and hypokyphosis of the thorax (Fig. 46-3)



**FIGURE 46-3** Scoliosis in a standing erect posture. (From Lemmi FO, Lemmi CAE: *Physical assessment findings CD-ROM*, Philadelphia, 2000, Saunders.)

2. Idiopathic scoliosis usually is diagnosed during the preadolescent **growth** spurt; screenings are important when growth spurts occur.
3. Surgical (spinal fusion, which may be done by thoracoscopic surgery, placement of an instrumentation system, or use of metallic staples placed into vertebral bodies) and nonsurgical (bracing) interventions are used; the type of treatment depends on the location and degree of the curvatures, the age of the child, the amount of growth that is yet anticipated, and any underlying disease processes. ▲
4. Long-term monitoring is essential to detect any progression of the curve.

#### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Asymmetry of the ribs and flanks is noted when the child bends forward at the waist and hangs the arms down toward the feet (Adam's test).
2. Hip height, rib positioning, and shoulder height are asymmetrical (can be noted when standing behind an undressed child); leg-length discrepancy is also apparent.
3. Radiographs are obtained to confirm the diagnosis.

#### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor progression of the curvatures.
2. Prepare the child and parents for the use of a brace if prescribed.
3. Prepare the child and parents for surgery (spinal fusion, placement of internal

instrumentation systems) if prescribed.

**⚠** The potential for altered role performance, body image disturbance, fear, anger, and isolation exists for a child with a disabling condition and a condition that requires wearing a body brace.

#### **D. Braces** ▲

1. Braces are not curative, but may slow the progression of the curvature to allow skeletal growth and maturity.
2. Braces usually are prescribed to be worn 16 to 23 hours a day.
3. Inspect the skin for signs of redness or breakdown.
4. Keep the skin clean and dry, and avoid lotions and powders because these cake and lead to skin breakdown.
5. Advise the child to wear soft nonirritating clothing under the brace.
6. Instruct in prescribed exercises (exercises help maintain and strengthen spinal and abdominal muscles during treatment).
7. Encourage verbalization about body image and other psychosocial issues.

#### **E. Postoperative interventions**

1. Maintain proper alignment; avoid twisting movements.
2. Logroll the child when turning to maintain alignment.
3. Assess extremities for adequate neurovascular status.
4. Encourage coughing and deep breathing and the use of incentive spirometry.
5. Assess pain and administer prescribed analgesics.
6. Monitor for incontinence.

7. Monitor for signs and symptoms of infection.
8. Monitor for superior mesenteric artery syndrome (caused by mechanical changes in the position of the child's abdominal contents during surgery) and notify the HCP if it occurs; symptoms include emesis and abdominal distention similar to what occurs with intestinal obstruction or paralytic ileus. ▲
9. Instruct in activity restrictions.
10. Instruct the child how to roll from a side-lying position to a sitting position, and assist with ambulation.
11. Address a body image disturbance when formulating a plan of nursing care.

#### IV. Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

##### A. Description

1. Autoimmune inflammatory disease affecting the joints and other tissues, such as articular cartilage; occurs most often in girls.
2. Treatment is supportive (there is no cure) and directed toward preserving joint function, controlling inflammation, minimizing deformity, and reducing the impact that the disease may have on the development of the child. ▲
3. Treatment includes medications, physical and occupational therapies, and child and family education.
4. Surgical intervention may be implemented if the child has problems with joint contractures and unequal **growth** of extremities.

##### B. Assessment (Box 46-2) ▲

---

**BOX 46-2****Assessment Findings: Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis**

Stiffness, swelling, and limited motion occur in affected joints.

Affected joints are warm to touch, tender, and painful.

Joint stiffness is present on arising in the morning and after inactivity.

Uveitis (inflammation of structures in the uveal tract) can occur and cause blindness.

1. There are no definitive tests to diagnose juvenile idiopathic arthritis.
2. Some laboratory tests, such as an elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate or determination of the presence of leukocytosis, may support evidence of the disease.
3. Radiographs may show soft tissue swelling and joint space widening from increased synovial fluid in the joint.

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Facilitate social and emotional development.
2. Instruct parents and child in the administration of medications; medications may be given alone or in combination and are prescribed in a steplike manner depending on the disease response to each level ([Box 46-3](#)).

**BOX 46-3****Medications Used in Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis****Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)**

- First medications used
- May cause gastrointestinal irritation and easy bruising

## **Methotrexate**

- Used if NSAIDs are ineffective
- Complete blood cell counts and liver function studies are monitored closely

## **Corticosteroids**

- Potent immunosuppressives used for life-threatening complications, incapacitating arthritis, and uveitis
- Administered at lowest effective dose for the shortest time period; discontinued on a tapering schedule
- Prolonged use can cause Cushing's syndrome, osteoporosis, increased infection risk, glucose intolerance, hypokalemia, cataracts, growth suppression

## **Tumor Necrosis Factor Receptor Inhibitors**

- Etanercept (Enbrel)
- Infliximab (Remicade)
- Adverse effects include allergic reaction at injection site, increased risk for infection, demyelinating disease, pancytopenia

## **Slower Acting Antirheumatic Drugs**

- Usually prescribed in combination with NSAIDs
- Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine), hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil), gold sodium thiomalate (Myochrysine), penicillamine

3. Assist the child with range-of-motion exercises and instruct in prescribed

exercises.

4. Encourage normal performance of activities of daily living.
5. Instruct parents and child in the use of hot or cold packs, splinting, and positioning the affected joint in a neutral position during painful episodes.
6. Encourage and support prescribed physical and occupational therapy.
7. Instruct in the importance of preventive eye care and reporting visual disturbances.
8. Assess the child's and family's perceptions regarding the chronic illness; plan to discuss the nature of a chronic illness and the associated life alterations that result from the chronic progression of the disorder.

## V. Marfan Syndrome

### A. Description

1. Disorder of connective tissue that affects the skeletal system, cardiovascular system, eyes, and skin. 🟩
2. Marfan syndrome is caused by defects in the fibrillin-1 gene, which serves as a building block for elastic tissue in the body; also, the disorder may be inherited.
3. There is no cure for the disorder.

### B. Assessment

1. Tall and thin body structure: slender fingers, long arms and legs, curvature of the spine
2. Presence of visual problems
3. Presence of cardiac problems

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor for vision problems and obtain visual examinations on a regular schedule.
2. Monitor for curvature of the spine, especially during adolescence.
3. Cardiac medications may be prescribed to slow the heart rate, to decrease stress on the aorta.
4. Instruct parents that the child should avoid participating in competitive athletics and contact sports to avoid injuring the heart.
5. Instruct parents to inform the dentist of the condition; antibiotics should be taken before dental procedures to prevent endocarditis.
6. Surgical replacement of the aortic root and valve may be necessary.

## VI. Fractures

### A. Description (see also [Chapter 68](#))

1. A break in the continuity of the bone as a result of trauma, twisting, or bone decalcification
2. Fractures in children usually occur as a result of increased mobility and inadequate or immature motor and cognitive skills; they may result from trauma or bone diseases such as congenital bone disease or bone tumors. 

 Fractures in infancy are generally rare and warrant further investigation to rule out the possibility of child abuse and to identify bone structure defects.

### B. Assessment

1. Pain or tenderness over the involved area
2. Obvious deformity
3. Edema
4. Ecchymosis
5. Muscle spasm
6. Loss of function
7. Crepitation

C. Initial care of a fracture (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take if a Child Sustains an Extremity Fracture

1. Assess extent of injury and immobilize the affected extremity.
2. If a compound fracture exists, cover the wound with a sterile dressing (apply a clean dressing if a sterile dressing is unavailable).
3. Elevate the injured extremity.
4. Apply cold to injured area.
5. Continue to monitor neurovascular status.
6. Transport to the nearest emergency department.

If a child sustains a fracture, the extent of the injury is immediately assessed using the five “P’s”—pain and point of tenderness, pulses distal to fracture site, pallor, paresthesia (sensation) distal to the fracture site, and paralysis (movement distal to

fracture site). The extremity is immobilized to prevent movement and further injury to soft tissues. If an open wound is present, it is covered to reduce the risk of infection. The extremity is elevated to reduce swelling, and cold packs are applied to assist in reducing the swelling and to reduce the pain. The neurovascular status is monitored closely, and the child is transported to the nearest emergency facility.

### ***References***

Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby, p. 1639; Swearingen P: *All-in-one care planning resource*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, pp. 587-588.

## **D. Interventions**

### **1. Reduction**

- a.** Restoring the bone to proper alignment
- b.** Closed reduction: Accomplished by manual alignment of the fragments, followed by immobilization
- c.** Open reduction: Surgical insertion of internal fixation devices, such as rods, wires, or pins, that help maintain alignment while healing occurs

- 2.** Retention: Application of traction or a cast to maintain alignment until healing occurs

## **E. Traction (see [Chapter 68](#))**

### **1. Russell skin traction**

- a. Used to stabilize a fractured femur before surgery
- b. Similar to Buck's traction, but provides a double pull using a knee sling that pulls at the knee and foot

## 2. Balanced suspension

- a. Used with skin or skeletal traction to approximate fractures of the femur, tibia, or fibula
- b. Balanced suspension is produced by a counterforce other than the child.
- c. Provide pin care if pins are used with the skeletal traction.

## 3. 90-degree–90-degree traction

- a. The lower leg is supported by a boot cast or a calf sling.
- b. A skeletal Steinmann pin or Kirschner wire is placed in the distal fragment of the femur, allowing 90-degree flexion at the hip and the knee.

## 4. Interventions ▲

- a. Maintain correct amount of weight as prescribed.
- b. Ensure that weights hang freely.
- c. Check all ropes for fraying and all knots for tightness; be sure that the ropes are appropriately tracking in the grooves of the pulley wheels.
- d. Monitor neurovascular status of the involved extremity.
- e. Protect the skin from breakdown.
- f. Monitor for signs and symptoms of complications of immobilization, such as constipation, skin breakdown, lung congestion, renal complications, and disuse syndrome of unaffected extremities.

**g.** Provide therapeutic and diversional play.

## **F.** Casts (see [Chapter 68](#))

### **1.** Description

- a.** Made of plaster or fiberglass to provide immobilization of bone and joints after a fracture or injury
- b.** Fractures of the hip or knee may require a spica cast

### **2.** Interventions

- a.** Examine the cast for pressure areas.
- b.** Ensure that no rough casting material remains in contact with the skin; petal the cast edges with waterproof adhesive tape as necessary to ensure a smooth cast edge.
- c.** If a hip spica cast is placed, the cast edges around the perineum and buttocks may need to be taped with waterproof tape.
- d.** Monitor the extremity for circulatory impairment, such as pain greater than that expected for the type of injury, edema, rubor, pallor, numbness and tingling, coolness, decreased sensation or mobility, or diminished pulse.
- e.** Notify the HCP if circulatory impairment occurs.
- f.** Prepare for bivalving or cutting the cast if circulatory impairment occurs; prepare for emergency fasciotomy if cast removal does not improve the neurocirculatory compromise.
- g.** Instruct parents and child not to stick objects down the cast.
- h.** Teach parents and child to keep the cast clean and dry.

- i. Instruct parents and child in isometric exercises to prevent muscle atrophy.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Compartment syndrome is a condition in which pressure increases in a confined anatomical space, leading to decreased blood flow, ischemia, and dysfunction of these tissues. This complication can occur with casts. Signs of this complication include unrelieved or increased pain in the limb; pale, dusky, or edematous tissue distal to the involved area; pain with passive movement; loss of sensation (paresthesia); and pulselessness (a late sign). The nurse should contact the health care provider (HCP) immediately if signs of neurovascular impairment are noted in a child with a cast or brace because of the risk of tissue ischemia and necrosis.

### **Reference**

Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 886.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**465.** A child has a right femur fracture caused by a motor vehicle crash and is placed in skin traction temporarily until surgery can be performed. During assessment, the nurse notes that the dorsalis pedis pulse is absent on the right foot. Which action should the nurse take?

1. Administer an analgesic.
2. Release the skin traction.
3. Apply ice to the extremity.
4. Notify the health care provider (HCP).

**466.** A child is placed in skeletal traction for treatment of a fractured femur. The nurse develops a plan of care and includes which intervention?

1. Ensure that all ropes are outside the pulleys.
2. Ensure that the weights are resting lightly on the floor.
3. Restrict diversional and play activities until the child is out of traction.
4. Check the health care provider's (HCP's) prescriptions for the amount of weight to be applied.

**467.** A 4-year-old child sustains a fall at home and after an x-ray examination, the child is determined to have a fractured arm and a plaster cast is applied. The nurse provides instructions to the parents regarding care for the child's cast.

Which statement by the parents indicates a **need for further instruction**?

1. "The cast may feel warm as the cast dries."

2. "I can use lotion or powder around the cast edges to relieve itching."
3. "A small amount of white shoe polish can touch up a soiled white cast."
4. "If the cast becomes wet, a blow drier set on the cool setting may be used to dry the cast."

**468.** The parents of a child with juvenile idiopathic arthritis call the clinic nurse because the child is experiencing a painful exacerbation of the disease. The parents ask the nurse if the child can perform range-of-motion exercises at this time. The nurse should make which response?

1. "Avoid all exercise during painful periods."
2. "Range-of-motion exercises must be performed every day."
3. "Have the child perform simple isometric exercises during this time."
4. "Administer additional pain medication before performing range-of-motion exercises."

**469.** A child who has undergone spinal fusion for scoliosis complains of abdominal discomfort and begins to have episodes of vomiting. On further assessment, the nurse notes abdominal distention. On the basis of these findings, the nurse should take which action?

1. Administer an antiemetic.
2. Increase the intravenous fluids.
3. Place the child in a Sims's position.
4. Notify the health care provider (HCP).

**470.** The nurse is providing instructions to the parents of a child with scoliosis regarding the use of a brace. Which statement by the parents indicates a **need for further instruction**?

1. "I will encourage my child to perform prescribed exercises."
2. "I will have my child wear soft fabric clothing under the brace."
3. "I should apply lotion under the brace to prevent skin breakdown."
4. "I should avoid the use of powder because it will cake under the brace."

**471.** The nurse is assisting a health care provider (HCP) examining an infant with developmental dysplasia of the hip perform an Ortolani maneuver. The nurse understands that this maneuver is performed for which purpose?

1. To assess for hip instability
2. To assess for movement of the hips
3. To push the femoral head out of the acetabulum
4. To ensure that hyperextension and full range of motion exist

**472.** A 1-month-old infant is seen in a clinic and is diagnosed with developmental dysplasia of the hip. On assessment, the nurse understands that which finding should be noted in this condition?

1. Limited range of motion in the affected hip
2. An apparent lengthened femur on the affected side
3. Asymmetrical adduction of the affected hip when the infant is placed supine with the knees and hips flexed

4. Symmetry of the gluteal skinfolds when the infant is placed prone and the legs are extended against the examining table

473. Parents bring their 2-week-old infant to a clinic for treatment after a diagnosis of clubfoot made at birth. Which statement by the parents indicates a **need for further teaching** regarding this disorder?

1. "Treatment needs to be started as soon as possible."
2. "I realize my infant will require follow-up care until fully grown."
3. "I need to bring my infant back to the clinic in 1 month for a new cast."
4. "I need to come to the clinic every week with my infant for the casting."

474. The nurse prepares a list of home care instructions for the parents of a child who has a plaster cast applied to the left forearm. Which instructions should be included on the list? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Use the fingertips to lift the cast while it is drying.
2. Keep small toys and sharp objects away from the cast.
3. Use a padded ruler or another padded object to scratch the skin under the cast if it itches.
4. Place a heating pad on the lower end of the cast and over the fingers if the fingers feel cold.
5. Elevate the extremity on pillows for the first 24 to 48 hours after casting to prevent swelling.
6. Contact the health care provider (HCP) if the child complains of numbness or

tingling in the extremity.

## ANSWERS

465. 4

**Rationale:** An absent pulse to an extremity of the affected limb after a bone fracture could mean that the child is developing or experiencing compartment syndrome. This is an emergency situation, and the HCP should be notified immediately. Administering analgesics would not improve circulation. The skin traction should not be released without an HCP's prescription. Applying ice to an extremity with absent perfusion is incorrect. Ice may be prescribed when perfusion is adequate to decrease swelling.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. Focusing on the data in the question indicates that circulation is impaired. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the child in **traction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1649.

466. 4

**Rationale:** When a child is in traction, the nurse would check the HCP's prescription to verify the prescribed amount of traction weight. The nurse would maintain the correct amount of weight as prescribed, ensure that the

weights hang freely, check the ropes for fraying and ensure that they are on the pulleys appropriately, monitor the neurovascular status of the involved extremity, and monitor for signs and symptoms of immobilization. The nurse would provide therapeutic and diversional play activities for the child.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the child in traction. Eliminate option 3 first because of the word *restrict*. Next recall the general principles related to traction, recalling that weights should hang freely and ropes should remain in the pulleys.

**Review:** Care of the child in **traction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1649.

467. 2

**Rationale:** Teaching about cast care is essential to prevent complications from the cast. The parents need to be instructed not to use lotion or powders on the skin around the cast edges or inside the cast. Lotions or powders can become sticky or caked and cause skin irritation. Options 1, 3, and 4 are appropriate statements.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Remember that lotions or powders can become sticky or caked and cause skin irritation.

**Review:** Home care instructions regarding **cast care**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Skin Integrity

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1645; Swearingen (2012), p. 588.

### 468. 3

**Rationale:** Juvenile idiopathic arthritis is an autoimmune inflammatory disease affecting the joints and other tissues, such as articular cartilage. During painful episodes of juvenile idiopathic arthritis, hot or cold packs and splinting and positioning the affected joint in a neutral position help reduce the pain. Although resting the extremity is appropriate, beginning simple isometric or tensing exercises as soon as the child is able is important. These exercises do not involve joint movement.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, exercise during an acute exacerbation of the disease. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 4 because of the **closed-ended words** *all*, *must*, and *additional* in these options.

**Review:** **Juvenile idiopathic arthritis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Pain

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1679.

### 469. 4

**Rationale:** Scoliosis is a three-dimensional spinal deformity that usually involves lateral curvature, spinal rotation resulting in rib asymmetry, and hypokyphosis of the thorax. A complication after surgical treatment of scoliosis is superior mesenteric artery syndrome. This disorder is caused by mechanical changes in the position of the child's abdominal contents, resulting from lengthening of the child's body. The disorder results in a syndrome of emesis and abdominal distention similar to that which occurs with intestinal obstruction or paralytic ileus. Postoperative vomiting in children with body casts or children who have undergone spinal fusion warrants attention because of the possibility of superior mesenteric artery syndrome. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, complications following surgical treatment for scoliosis. Eliminate option 2 first because it should not be implemented unless prescribed by the HCP. Eliminate option 3 next because this child requires logrolling, and Sims's position may cause injury after surgery. From the remaining options, note the assessment signs and symptoms in the question. These should alert you that notification of the HCP is necessary.

**Review:** Manifestations of **superior mesenteric artery syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mobility

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1671.

470. 3

**Rationale:** A brace may be prescribed to treat scoliosis. Braces are not curative, but may slow the progression of the curvature to allow skeletal growth and maturity. The use of lotions or powders under a brace should be avoided

because they can become sticky and cake under the brace, causing irritation. Options 1, 2, and 4 are appropriate interventions in the care of a child with a brace.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Careful reading of the options will assist in directing you to the correct option. Also, applying the principles associated with cast care will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Home care instructions regarding care of a child in a **brace**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Mobility

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1669-1670, 1672.

471. 1

**Rationale:** In developmental dysplasia of the hip, the head of the femur is seated improperly in the acetabulum or hip socket of the pelvis. Ortolani's maneuver is a test to assess for hip instability. The examiner abducts the thigh and applies gentle pressure forward over the greater trochanter. A "clicking" sensation indicates a dislocated femoral head moving into the acetabulum. This maneuver does not assess for hip movement or ensure that hyperextension and full range of motion exist. Pushing the femoral head out of the acetabulum is not the purpose of Ortolani's maneuver.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 2 and 4 can be eliminated first because they are **comparable or alike**. To select

from the remaining options, remember that Ortolani's maneuver is an assessment technique. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The purpose of **Ortolani's maneuver**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mobility

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 420-421.

472. 1

**Rationale:** In developmental dysplasia of the hip, the head of the femur is seated improperly in the acetabulum or hip socket of the pelvis. Asymmetrical and restricted abduction of the affected hip, when the child is placed supine with the knees and hips flexed, would be an assessment finding in developmental dysplasia of the hip in infants beyond the newborn period. Other findings include an apparent short femur on the affected side, asymmetry of the gluteal skinfolds, and limited range of motion in the affected extremity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, assessment findings in developmental dysplasia of the hip. Also, note the age of the infant and focus on the infant's diagnosis. Visualizing each of the assessment findings described in the options will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Hip dysplasia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mobility

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 420, 422.

473. 3

**Rationale:** Clubfoot is a complex deformity of the ankle and foot that includes forefoot adduction, midfoot supination, hindfoot varus, and ankle equinus; the defect may be unilateral or bilateral. Treatment for clubfoot is started as soon as possible after birth. Serial manipulation and casting are performed at least weekly. If sufficient correction is not achieved in 3 to 6 months, surgery usually is indicated. Because clubfoot can recur, all children with clubfoot require long-term interval follow-up until they reach skeletal maturity to ensure an optimal outcome.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. This will assist you in eliminating options 1 and 2. Recalling that serial manipulations and casting are required weekly will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Treatment for **clubfoot**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Mobility

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 424-425.

❖ 474. 2, 5, 6

**Rationale:** While the cast is drying, the palms of the hands are used to lift the cast. If the fingertips are used, indentations in the cast could occur and cause constant pressure on the underlying skin. Small toys and sharp objects are kept away from the cast, and no objects (including padded objects) are placed inside the cast because of the risk of altered skin integrity. The extremity is elevated to prevent swelling, and the HCP is notified immediately if any signs of neurovascular impairment develop. A heating pad is not applied to the cast or fingers. Cold fingers could indicate neurovascular impairment, and the HCP should be notified.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use of the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—and safety principles related to care of a child with a cast will assist in answering this question.

**Review:** **Cast care**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1645; Swearingen (2012), p. 588.



## CHAPTER 47

# Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

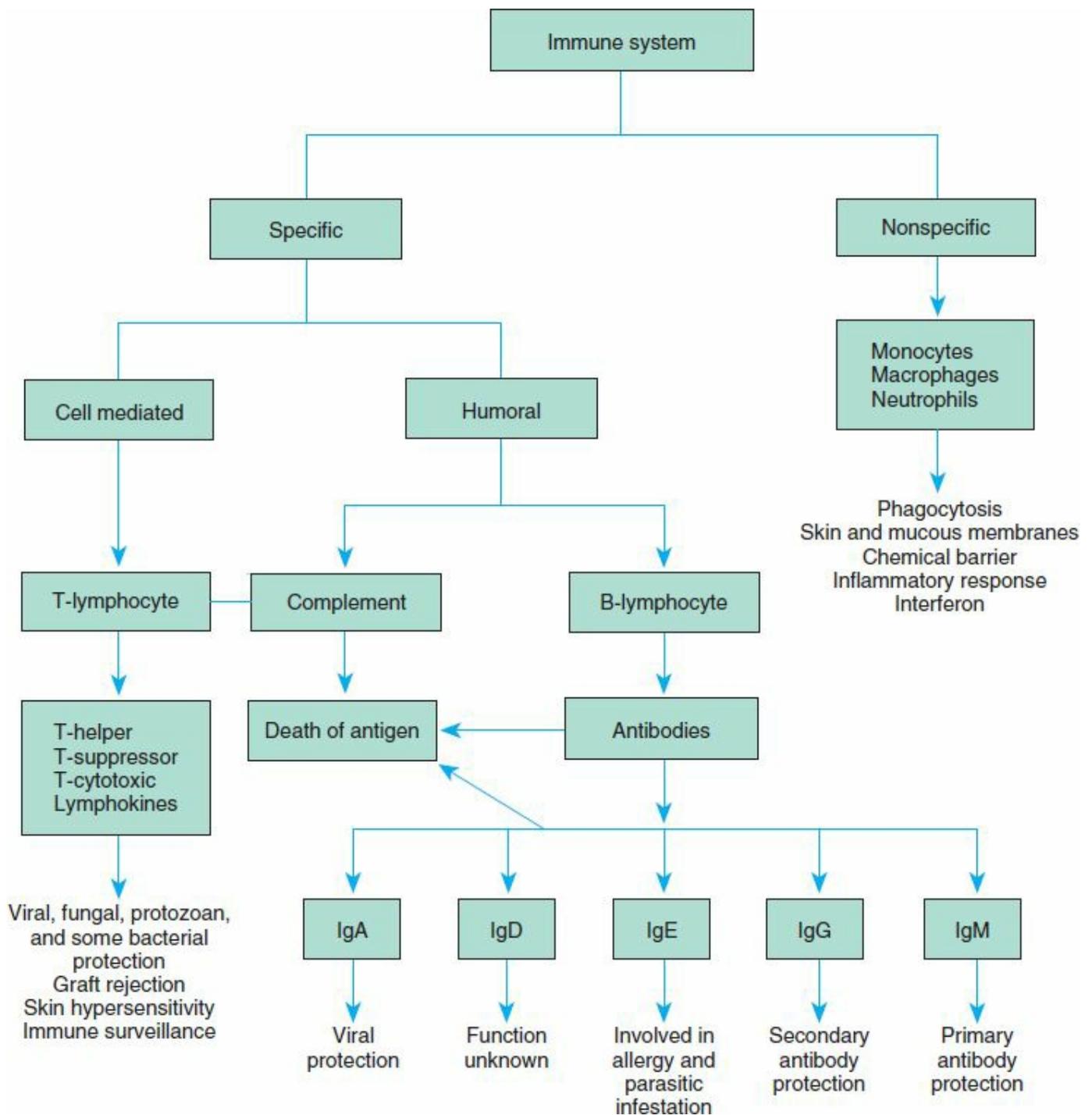
The nurse notes that a 1-year-old infant with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has a temperature of 101.2 ° F axillary. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 533.*

## **I. Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome**

### **A. Description** ▲

1. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a disorder caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and characterized by generalized dysfunction of the immune system (Fig. 47-1).



**FIGURE 47-1** Components of the immune system. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

2. The diagnosis of AIDS is associated with certain illnesses or conditions.
3. HIV infects CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells; a gradual decrease in CD4<sup>+</sup> T-cell count occurs and

this results in a progressive immunodeficiency; the risk for opportunistic infections is present (Box 47-1).

### **BOX 47-1** Common Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)– Defining Conditions in Children

- Candidal esophagitis
- Cryptosporidiosis
- Cytomegalovirus disease
- Herpes simplex disease
- Human immunodeficiency virus encephalopathy
- Lymphoid interstitial pneumonitis
- *Mycobacterium avium-intracellulare* infection
- *Pneumocystis jiroveci* pneumonia
- Pulmonary candidiasis
- Recurrent bacterial infections
- Wasting syndrome

Data from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

4. HIV is transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk; the incubation period is months to years.
5. Horizontal transmission occurs through intimate sexual contact or parenteral exposure to blood or body fluids that contain the virus.

6. Vertical (perinatal) transmission occurs from an HIV-infected pregnant woman to her fetus (see [Chapter 29](#)).
7. The most common opportunistic infection that occurs in children infected with HIV is *Pneumocystis jiroveci* pneumonia (formerly known as *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia); *P. jiroveci* pneumonia most frequently occurs between the ages of 3 and 6 months.

 An infant or child infected with HIV is at risk for developing a life-threatening opportunistic infection. Monitor the infant or child closely for signs of infection and report these signs immediately if they occur.

**B. Assessment** (see [Box 47-1](#) and [Box 47-2](#)) 

**BOX 47-2** Common Assessment Findings in Children with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

- Chronic cough
- Chronic or recurrent diarrhea
- Developmental delay or regression of developmental milestones
- Failure to thrive
- Hepatosplenomegaly
- Lymphadenopathy
- Malaise and fatigue
- Night sweats
- Oral candidiasis
- Parotitis

- Weight loss

Adapted from Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

C. Diagnostic tests: Before testing, counseling should be provided to parents; issues that should be addressed include the causes of HIV, reasons for testing, implications of positive test results, confidentiality issues, and beneficial effects of early intervention (Table 47-1). ▲

**TABLE 47-1 Diagnostic Tests for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**

Test	Age-Appropriate Use	Test Determines	Special Considerations
Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay	≥ 18 mo	Response of antibodies to HIV	If used and found to be positive in infants < 18 mo, indicates only that mother is infected because maternal antibodies are transmitted transplacentally; use another diagnostic test
Western blot	≥ 18 mo	Presence of HIV antibodies	Same as above
Polymerase chain reaction	< 18 mo	Presence of proviral DNA	Very accurate for diagnosing infants 1-4 mo of age
p24 antigen	< 18 mo	HIV antigen specific	Very accurate for diagnosing infants 1-4 mo of age
CD4 <sup>+</sup> lymphocyte count, T-lymphocyte count	Infant–13 yr	Immune system status related specifically to suppression	Age adjustment is essential because normal counts are relatively high in infants and steadily decline until 6 yr of age. Severe suppression in all age groups is < 15% total lymphocytes (< 750 cells/L in infant < 12 mo, < 500 cells/L in child 1-5 yr, < 200 cells/L in child 6-12 yr)

Branson BM, Handsfield HH, Lampe MA, et al; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Revised recommendations for HIV testing of adults, adolescents, and

pregnant women in health-care settings. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2006, 55(RR14):1-17.  
Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5514a1.htm>.

## II. Care of the Child with HIV Infection or AIDS

- A.** A multidisciplinary health care approach is taken; primary goals are to decelerate the replication of the virus, prevent opportunistic infections, provide nutritional support, treat symptoms, and treat opportunistic infections. ▲
- B.** Prophylaxis (*P. jiroveci* pneumonia and other opportunistic infections)
1. Provide prophylaxis as prescribed against *P. jiroveci* pneumonia and other opportunistic infections, particularly during the first year of life of an infant born to an HIV-infected mother.
  2. After 1 year of age, the need for prophylaxis is determined on the basis of the presence and severity of immunosuppression or a history of *P. jiroveci* pneumonia.
  3. Continuing prophylaxis is based on the child's HIV status, history of opportunistic infections, and CD4<sup>+</sup> counts.
- C.** Antiretroviral medications (Box 47-3)

### BOX 47-3 Antiretroviral Medications

#### Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors

**Action:** Inhibit enzymes required for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

replication

### **Nucleoside/Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors**

- Abacavir (Ziagen)
- Didanosine (Videx)
- Emtricitabine (Emtriva)
- Lamivudine (Epivir)
- Stavudine (Zerit)
- Tenofovir (Viread)
- Zidovudine (Retrovir)

### **Nonnucleoside/Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors**

- Delavirdine (Rescriptor)
- Efavirenz (Sustiva)
- Etravirine (Intelence)
- Nevirapine (Viramune)

### **Integrase Inhibitor**

**Action:** Inhibits enzymes required for HIV replication

- Raltegravir (Isentress)

### **Protease Inhibitors**

**Action:** Inhibit enzymes required for HIV replication

- Amprenavir

- Atazanavir (Reyataz)
- Darunavir (Prezista)
- Fosamprenavir (Lexiva)
- Indinavir (Crixivan)
- Lopinavir/ritonavir (Kaletra)
- Nelfinavir (Viracept)
- Ritonavir (Norvir)
- Saquinavir (Invirase)
- Tipranavir (Aptivus)

### **Fusion Inhibitor**

**Action:** Blocks viral entry into cells

- Enfuvirtide (Fuzeon)

### **Chemokine Receptor 5 (CCR5) Antagonist**

**Action:** Blocks viral entry into cells

- Maraviroc (Selzentry)

 Before administering an antiretroviral medication, ensure that the medication is safe for pediatric administration. Also check the contraindications for use and the adverse effects.

1. The goal of antiretroviral medications is to suppress viral replication to slow the

decline in the number of CD4<sup>+</sup> cells, preserve immune function, reduce the incidence and severity of opportunistic infections, and delay disease progression.



2. The medications affect different stages of the HIV life cycle to prevent reproduction of new virus particles.
3. Combination therapy may be prescribed and includes the use of more than one antiretroviral medication.

Adapted from Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.

#### D. Immunizations

 **Immunization against childhood diseases is recommended for all children exposed to and infected with HIV.**

1. If a child has symptomatic HIV infection or has severe immunosuppression, guidelines are as follows:
  - a. Only the inactivated influenza **vaccine** that is given intramuscularly should be used (influenza vaccine should be given yearly).
  - b. Measles vaccine should not be given; immunoglobulin may be prescribed after measles exposure.
  - c. Only the inactivated polio vaccine that is given intramuscularly should be used.
  - d. Rotavirus vaccine should not be given.
  - e. Varicella-zoster virus vaccine should not be given; varicella-zoster immunoglobulin may be prescribed after chickenpox exposure.

f. Tetanus immunoglobulin may be prescribed for tetanus-prone wounds.

2. See also [Chapter 48](#).

#### E. Caregiver instructions

1. Wash hands frequently.
2. Assess the child for fever, malaise, fatigue, weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, altered activity level, and oral lesions; notify the health care provider if any of these occur.
3. Assess the child for signs and symptoms of opportunistic infections, such as pneumonia.
4. Administer antiretroviral medications and other medications to the child as prescribed.
5. The child needs to be restricted from having contact with persons who have infections or other contagious or potentially contagious illnesses.
6. Keep the child's immunizations up to date.
7. Keep the child home when sick.
8. Avoid direct unprotected contact with the child's body fluids.
9. Monitor the child's weight.
10. Provide a high-calorie and high-protein diet to the child.
11. Administer appetite stimulants to the child as prescribed and as needed.
12. Do not share eating utensils with the child.
13. Wash all eating utensils in the dishwasher.
14. Cover any of the child's unused food and formula and refrigerate (discard unused

refrigerated formula and food after 24 hours).

15. Do not allow the child to eat fresh fruits or vegetables or raw meat or fish (neutropenic diet if immunosuppressed).
16. Wear gloves when caring for the child, especially when in contact with body fluids and changing diapers.
17. Change the child's diapers frequently, away from food areas.
18. Fold the child's soiled disposable diapers inward, close with the tabs, and dispose in a tightly covered plastic-lined container.
19. Dispose of trash daily.
20. Clean up any of the child's body fluid spills with a bleach solution (10:1 ratio of water to bleach).

#### F. Education for an adolescent infected with HIV ▲

1. High-risk behaviors and the importance of avoiding high-risk behaviors
2. Methods of transmission of HIV
3. The importance of abstinence from sexual contact, such as intercourse
4. The importance of using safe condoms if intercourse is planned
5. Resources available for support and other issues

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* An infant or child infected with HIV is at risk for developing a life-threatening opportunistic infection. The nurse should monitor the infant or child closely for signs of infection and report these signs immediately if they occur. The

normal axillary temperature for a 1-year-old infant is 97° to 99 ° F. A temperature of 101.2 ° F axillary may be indicative of the presence of an opportunistic infection and needs to be reported to the health care provider (HCP).

***Reference***

Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1453.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**475.** An infant of a mother infected with HIV is seen in the clinic each month and is being monitored for symptoms indicative of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. The nurse assesses the infant, knowing that which infection is the **most** common opportunistic infection of children infected with HIV?

1. Meningitis
2. Gastroenteritis
3. Cytomegalovirus infection
4. *Pneumocystis jiroveci* pneumonia

**476.** The nurse provides home care instructions to the parent of a child with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Which statement by the parent indicates the **need for further teaching**?

1. "I will wash my hands frequently."
2. "I will keep my child's immunizations up to date."
3. "I will avoid direct unprotected contact with my child's body fluids."
4. "I can send my child to day care if he has a fever, as long as it is a low-grade fever."

**477.** The clinic nurse is instructing the parent of a child with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection regarding immunizations. The nurse should provide which instruction to the parent?

1. The hepatitis B vaccine will not be given to the child.

2. The inactivated influenza vaccine will be given yearly.
3. The varicella vaccine will be given before 6 months of age.
4. A Western blot test needs to be performed and the results evaluated before immunizations.

478. A health care provider prescribes laboratory studies for an infant of a woman positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to determine the presence of HIV antigen in the infant. The nurse anticipates that which laboratory study will be prescribed for the infant?

1. Chest x-ray
2. Western blot
3. CD4<sup>+</sup> cell count
4. p24 antigen assay

479. The mother with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection brings her 10-month-old infant to the clinic for a routine checkup. The health care provider has documented that the infant is asymptomatic for HIV infection. After the checkup, the mother tells the nurse that she is so pleased that the infant will not get HIV. The nurse should make which **most appropriate** response to the mother?

1. "I am so pleased also that everything has turned out fine."
2. "Because symptoms have not developed, it is unlikely that your infant will develop HIV infection."
3. "Everything looks great, but be sure that you return with your infant next month"

for the scheduled visit.”

4. “Most children infected with HIV develop symptoms within the first 9 months of life, and some become symptomatic sometime before they are 3 years old.”

**480.** A 6-year-old child with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has been admitted to the hospital for pain management. The child asks the nurse if the pain will ever go away. The nurse should make which **best** response to the child?

1. “The pain will go away if you lie still and let the medicine work.”
2. “Try not to think about it. The more you think it hurts, the more it will hurt.”
3. “I know it must hurt, but if you tell me when it does, I will try and make it hurt a little less.”
4. “Every time it hurts, press on the call button and I will give you something to make the pain go all away.”

**481.** The nurse is caring for a 4-year-old child with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. The nurse should plan care with the understanding that which childhood psychosocial need occurs at this age?

1. Expressing fear, withdrawal, and denial
2. Beginning to understand that something is wrong
3. Unable to grasp the concept of illness and death
4. Beginning to conceptualize the death process as involving physical harm

**482.** The home care nurse provides instructions regarding basic infection control to the parent of an infant with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

Which statement, if made by the parent, indicates the **need for further instruction**?

1. “I will clean up any spills from the diaper with diluted alcohol.”
2. “I will wash baby bottles, nipples, and pacifiers in the dishwasher.”
3. “I will be sure to prepare foods that are high in calories and high in protein.”
4. “I will be sure to wash my hands carefully before and after caring for my infant.”

**483.** Which home care instructions should the nurse provide to the parent of a child with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Monitor the child’s weight.
2. Frequent hand-washing is important.
3. The child should avoid exposure to other illnesses.
4. The child’s immunization schedule will need revision.
5. Clean up body fluid spills with bleach solution (10:1 ratio of water to bleach).
6. Fever, malaise, fatigue, weight loss, vomiting, and diarrhea are expected to occur and do not require special intervention.

## ANSWERS

475. 4

**Rationale:** AIDS is a disorder caused by HIV and characterized by generalized dysfunction of the immune system.

The most common opportunistic infection of children infected with HIV is *P. jiroveci* pneumonia, which occurs

most frequently between the ages of 3 and 6 months, when HIV status may be indeterminate. Cytomegalovirus infection is also characteristic of HIV infection; however, it is not the most common opportunistic infection.

Although neurological abnormalities and gastrointestinal disturbances may occur in a child with HIV infection, options 1 and 2 are not specific opportunistic infections noted in the HIV-infected child.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. This focus will direct you to the correct option. Remember that the most common opportunistic infection of children infected with HIV is *P. jiroveci* pneumonia.

**Review:** Complications associated with **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** in an infant or child

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1453-1454.

476. 4

**Rationale:** AIDS is a disorder caused by HIV and characterized by generalized dysfunction of the immune system.

A child with AIDS who is sick or has a fever should be kept home and not brought to a day care center. Options 1, 2, and 3 are correct statements and would be actions a caregiver should take when the child has AIDS.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Noting the word *fever* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Teaching points and home care instructions for the child with **acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Immunity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1456.

477. 2

**Rationale:** Immunizations against common childhood illnesses are recommended for all children exposed to or infected with HIV. The inactivated influenza vaccine that is given intramuscularly will be administered (influenza vaccine should be given yearly). The hepatitis B vaccine is administered according to the recommended immunization schedule. Varicella-zoster virus vaccine should not be given because it is a live virus vaccine; varicella-zoster immunoglobulin may be prescribed after chickenpox exposure. Option 4 is unnecessary and is inaccurate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, immunizations for the child with HIV. Option 4 can be eliminated first because the Western blot is a diagnostic test, not an evaluative test. From the remaining options, recalling that the child infected with HIV is at risk for opportunistic infections and that live virus vaccines are not administered to an immunodeficient child will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Immunizations** in the immunodeficient child

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Immunity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1455.

478. 4

**Rationale:** The detection of HIV in infants is confirmed by a p24 antigen assay, virus culture of HIV, or polymerase chain reaction. A Western blot test confirms the presence of HIV antibodies. The CD4<sup>+</sup> cell count indicates how well the immune system is working. A chest x-ray evaluates the presence of other manifestations of HIV infection, such as pneumonia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, laboratory study to determine the presence of HIV antigen, and note the word *infant*. Recall the laboratory tests used to determine the presence of HIV infection in the infant to answer this question.

**Review:** **Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay, Western blot, CD4+ cell count, and p24 antigen assay**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1454; Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 850-851.

479. 4

**Rationale:** AIDS is caused by HIV and characterized by generalized dysfunction of the immune system. Most children infected with HIV develop symptoms within the first 9 months of life. The remaining infected children

become symptomatic sometime before age 3 years. With their immature immune systems, children have a much shorter incubation period than adults. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are **comparable or alike** in content. The correct option is the only one that provides specific and accurate data regarding HIV infection in an infant.

**Review:** Assessment findings associated with **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** in an infant

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Immunity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1452-1453.

### 480. 3

**Rationale:** The multiple complications associated with HIV are accompanied by a high level of pain. Aggressive pain management is essential for the child to have an acceptable quality of life. The nurse must acknowledge the child's pain and let the child know that everything will be done to decrease the pain. Telling the child that movement or lack thereof would eliminate the pain is inaccurate. Allowing a child to think that he or she can control the pain simply by thinking or not thinking about it oversimplifies the pain cycle associated with HIV. Giving false hope by telling the child that the pain will be taken "all away" is neither truthful nor realistic.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Recall the general concept of pain and growth and development concepts of a 6-year-old child. Giving the child information about the pain in words that he or she can understand, but without providing false hope or not telling the truth, should guide you to the correct option. Options 1

and 2 provide inaccurate information about pain management. Option 4 provides false hope that the pain can be alleviated completely.

**Review:** Concepts associated with **pain management** in a child

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Immunity; Pain

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1456.

#### 481. 4

**Rationale:** A preschool child begins to conceptualize the death process as involving physical harm. A child from birth to 2 years of age is unable to grasp the concept of illness and death. A school-age child begins to understand that something is wrong. An adolescent expresses fear, withdrawal, and denial.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a preschooler, and use concepts of growth and development and related psychosocial issues to answer the question. Noting the age of the child will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Growth and development**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Infancy to Adolescence

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Immunity

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1455.

482. 1

**Rationale:** HIV is transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. The mother of an infant with HIV should be instructed to use a bleach solution for disinfecting contaminated objects or cleaning up spills from the child's diaper. Alcohol would not be effective in destroying the virus. Options 2, 3, and 4 are accurate instructions related to basic infection control.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Recalling basic infection control measures and the measures to prevent the spread of HIV will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Home care measures to prevent the transmission of **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1456.

❖ 483. 1, 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** AIDS is a disorder caused by HIV and is characterized by a generalized dysfunction of the immune system. Home care instructions include the following: frequent hand-washing; monitoring for fever, malaise, fatigue, weight loss, vomiting, and diarrhea and notifying the health care provider if these occur; monitoring for signs and

symptoms of opportunistic infections; administering antiretroviral medications and other medications as prescribed; avoiding exposure to other illnesses; keeping immunizations up to date; monitoring weight and providing a high-calorie, high-protein diet; washing eating utensils in the dishwasher; and avoiding sharing eating utensils. Gloves are worn for care, especially when in contact with body fluids and changing diapers; diapers are changed frequently and away from food areas, and soiled disposable diapers are folded inward, closed with the tabs, and disposed of in a tightly covered plastic-lined container. Any body fluid spills are cleaned with a bleach solution (10:1 ratio of water to bleach).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the child with AIDS. Recalling that AIDS is characterized by a generalized dysfunction of the immune system and recalling the modes of transmission of the virus will assist in selecting the correct home care instructions.

**Review:** Home care instructions that will prevent the transmission of **acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1455-1456.



## CHAPTER 48

# Infectious and Communicable Diseases

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is admitting a child with a diagnosis of mumps to the pediatric unit. What should the nurse do to prevent the transmission of mumps to others?

*Answer located on p. 545.*

### I. Rubeola (Measles)

#### A. Description

1. Agent: Paramyxovirus
2. Incubation period: 10 to 20 days
3. Communicable period: From 4 days before to 5 days after rash appears, mainly during the **prodromal** stage (pertaining to early symptoms that may mark the onset of disease)
4. Source: Respiratory tract secretions, blood, or urine of infected person
5. Transmission: Airborne particles or direct contact with infectious droplets;

transplacental ▲

## B. Assessment (Fig. 48-1)



**FIGURE 48-1** Rubeola (measles). (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.)

1. Fever
2. Malaise
3. The three “C’s”—coryza, cough, conjunctivitis ▲
4. Rash appears as red, erythematous maculopapular eruption starting on the face and spreading downward to the feet; blanches easily with pressure and gradually turns a brownish color (lasts 6 to 7 days); may have desquamation
5. Koplik’s spots: Small red spots with a bluish white center and a red base; located on the buccal mucosa and last 3 days ▲

## C. Interventions

1. Use airborne droplet and contact precautions if the child is hospitalized. ▲
2. Restrict child to quiet activities and bed rest.
3. Use a cool mist vaporizer for cough and coryza.
4. Dim lights if photophobia is present.
5. Administer antipyretics for fever.
6. Administer vitamin A supplementation as prescribed.

## II. Roseola (Exanthema Subitum)

### A. Description

1. Agent: Human herpesvirus type 6
2. Incubation period: 5 to 15 days
3. Communicable period: Unknown, but thought to extend from the febrile stage to the time the rash first appears
4. Source: Unknown
5. Transmission: Unknown

### B. Assessment (Fig. 48-2) ▲





**FIGURE 48-2** Roseola (exanthema subitum). (From Habif TP: *Clinical dermatology; A color guide to diagnosis and therapy*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2004, Mosby.)

1. Sudden high ( $> 38.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  [ $> 102^{\circ}\text{F}$ ]) fever of 3 to 5 days' duration in a child who appears well, followed by a rash (rose-pink macules that blanch with pressure)
2. Rash appears several hours to 2 days after the fever subsides and lasts 1 to 2 days.

C. Interventions: Supportive

### III. Rubella (German Measles)

A. Description

1. Agent: Rubella virus
2. Incubation period: 14 to 21 days
3. Communicable period: From 7 days before to about 5 days after rash appears
4. Source: Nasopharyngeal secretions; virus is also present in blood, stool, and urine
5. Transmission 
  - a. Airborne or direct contact with infectious droplets
  - b. Indirectly via articles freshly contaminated with nasopharyngeal secretions, feces, or urine
  - c. Transplacental

B. Assessment (Fig. 48-3)



**FIGURE 48-3** Rubella (German measles). (From Zitelli BJ, Davis HW: *Atlas of pediatric physical diagnosis*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby. Courtesy of Dr. Michael Sherlock, Lutherville, MD.)

1. Low-grade fever
2. Malaise
3. Pinkish red maculopapular rash that begins on the face and spreads to the entire body within 1 to 3 days ▲
4. Petechiae (red, pinpoint spots) may occur on the soft palate.

#### C. Interventions ▲

1. Use airborne droplet and contact precautions if the child is hospitalized; provide supportive treatment.
2. Isolate the infected child from pregnant women.

## IV. Mumps

### A. Description

1. Agent: Paramyxovirus
2. Incubation period: 14 to 21 days
3. Communicable period: Immediately before and after parotid gland swelling begins
4. Source: Saliva of infected person and possibly urine
5. Transmission: Direct contact or droplet spread from an infected person ▲

### B. Assessment

1. Fever
2. Headache and malaise
3. Anorexia
4. Jaw or ear pain aggravated by chewing, followed by parotid glandular swelling ▲
5. Orchitis may occur
6. Aseptic meningitis may occur

### C. Interventions

1. Institute airborne droplet and contact precautions. ▲
2. Provide bed rest until the parotid gland swelling subsides.
3. Avoid foods that require chewing.
4. Apply hot or cold compresses as prescribed to the neck.
5. Apply warmth and local support with snug-fitting underpants to relieve orchitis.
6. Monitor for signs of aseptic meningitis (see [Chapter 45](#) for information on

meningitis)

## V. Chickenpox (Varicella)

### A. Description

1. Agent: Varicella-zoster virus
2. Incubation period: 13 to 17 days
3. Communicable period: From 1 to 2 days before the onset of the rash to 6 days after the first crop of vesicles, when crusts have formed
4. Source: Respiratory tract secretions of infected person; skin lesions
5. Transmission: Direct contact, droplet (airborne) spread, and contaminated objects



### B. Assessment (Fig. 48-4)



**FIGURE 48-4** Chickenpox (varicella). (From Habif TP: *Clinical dermatology: A color guide to diagnosis and therapy*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2004, Mosby.)

1. Slight fever, malaise, and anorexia are followed by a macular rash that first

appears on the trunk and scalp and moves to the face and extremities.

2. Lesions become pustules, begin to dry, and develop a crust.
3. Lesions may appear on the mucous membranes of the mouth, the genital area, and the rectal area.

### C. Interventions

1. In the hospital, ensure strict isolation (contact and droplet (airborne) precautions). 
2. At home, isolate the infected child until the vesicles have dried. 
3. The antiviral agent acyclovir (Zovirax) may be used to treat varicella infections in susceptible immunocompromised persons to decrease the number of lesions; shorten the duration of fever; and decrease itching, lethargy, and anorexia.
4. The use of VCZ immune globulin (VariZIG) or intravenous immune globulin (IVIG) is recommended for children who are immunocompromised, who have no previous history of varicella, and who are likely to contract the disease and have complications as a result.
5. Provide supportive care.

 Isolate high-risk children, such as children who have immunosuppressive disorders, from a child with a communicable disease.

## VI. Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

### A. Description

1. Agent: *Bordetella pertussis*
2. Incubation period: 5 to 21 days (usually 10 days)

3. Communicable period: Greatest during the catarrhal stage (when discharge from respiratory secretions occurs)
4. Source: Discharge from the respiratory tract of the infected person
5. Transmission: Direct contact or droplet spread from infected person; indirect contact with freshly contaminated articles ▲

## B. Assessment

1. Symptoms of respiratory infection followed by increased severity of cough, with a loud whooping inspiration ▲
2. May experience **cyanosis**, respiratory distress, and tongue protrusion
3. Listlessness, irritability, anorexia

## C. Interventions

1. Isolate child during the catarrhal stage; if the child is hospitalized, institute airborne droplet and contact precautions. ▲
2. Administer antimicrobial therapy as prescribed.
3. Reduce environmental factors that cause coughing spasms, such as dust, smoke, and sudden changes in temperature. ▲
4. Ensure adequate hydration and nutrition.
5. Provide suction and humidified oxygen if needed.
6. Monitor cardiopulmonary status (via monitor as prescribed) and pulse oximetry.
7. Infants do not receive maternal immunity to pertussis. ▲

## VII. Diphtheria

## A. Description

1. Agent: *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*
2. Incubation period: 2 to 5 days
3. Communicable period: Variable, until virulent bacilli are no longer present (three negative cultures of discharge from the nose and nasopharynx, skin, and other lesions); usually 2 weeks, but can be 4 weeks
4. Source: Discharge from the mucous membrane of the nose and nasopharynx, skin, and other lesions of the infected person
5. Transmission: Direct contact with infected person, carrier, or contaminated articles ▲

## B. Assessment ▲

1. Low-grade fever, malaise, sore throat
2. Foul-smelling, mucopurulent nasal discharge
3. Dense pseudomembrane formation in the throat that may interfere with eating, drinking, and breathing
4. Lymphadenitis, neck edema, “bull neck”

## C. Interventions

1. Ensure strict isolation for the hospitalized child. ▲
2. Administer diphtheria antitoxin as prescribed (after a skin or conjunctival test to rule out sensitivity to horse serum). ▲
3. Provide bed rest.
4. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

5. Provide suction and humidified oxygen as needed.
6. Provide tracheostomy care if a tracheotomy is necessary.

## VIII. Poliomyelitis

### A. Description

1. Agent: Enteroviruses
2. Incubation period: 7 to 14 days
3. Communicable period: Unknown; the virus is present in the throat and feces shortly after infection and persists for about 1 week in the throat and 4 to 6 weeks in the feces
4. Source: Oropharyngeal secretions and feces of the infected person
5. Transmission: Direct contact with infected person; fecal-oral and oropharyngeal routes 

### B. Assessment

1. Fever, malaise, anorexia, nausea, headache, sore throat
2. Abdominal pain followed by soreness and stiffness of the trunk, neck, and limbs that may progress to central nervous system paralysis

### C. Interventions

1. Enteric and contact precautions 
2. Supportive treatment
3. Bed rest
4. Monitoring for respiratory paralysis
5. Physical therapy

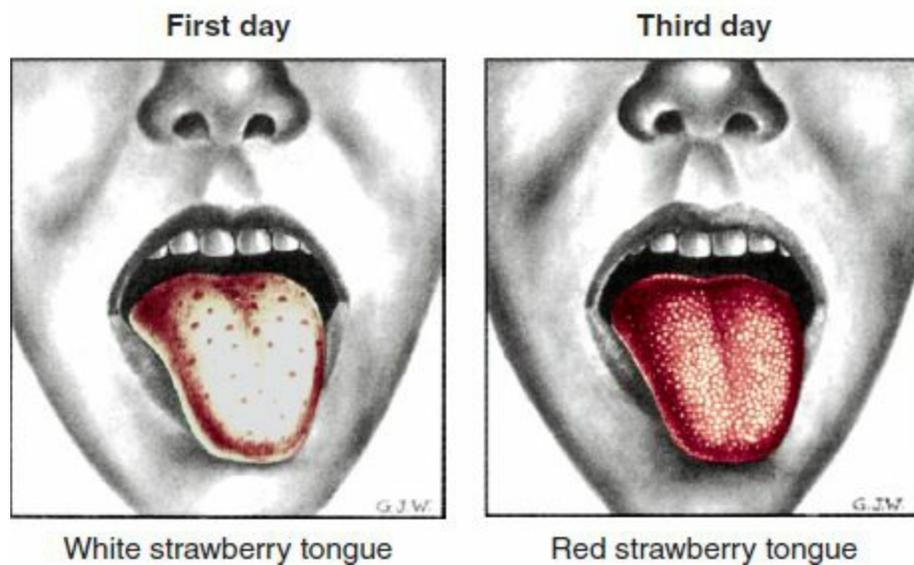
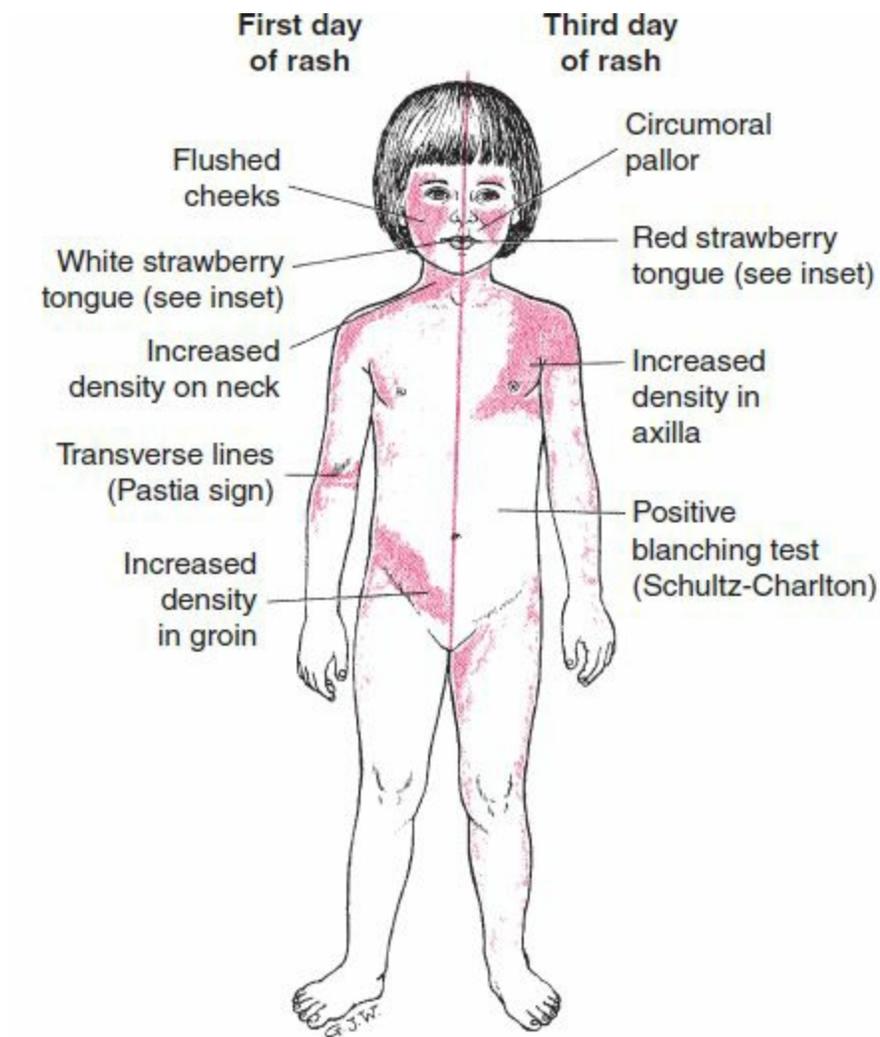
## IX. Scarlet Fever

### A. Description

1. Agent: Group A  $\beta$ -hemolytic streptococci
2. Incubation period: 1 to 7 days
3. Communicable period: About 10 days during the incubation period and clinical illness; during the first 2 weeks of the carrier stage, although may persist for months
4. Source: Nasopharyngeal secretions of infected person and carriers
5. Transmission: Direct contact with infected person or droplet spread; indirectly by contact with contaminated articles, ingestion of contaminated milk, or other foods



### B. Assessment (Fig. 48-5)



**FIGURE 48-5** Scarlet fever. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

1. Abrupt high fever, flushed cheeks, vomiting, headache, enlarged lymph nodes in the neck, malaise, abdominal pain
2. A red, fine sandpaper–like rash develops in the axilla, groin, and neck that spreads to cover the entire body except the face.
3. Rash blanches with pressure (Schultz-Charlton reaction) except in areas of deep creases and folds of the joints (Pastia’s sign).
4. Desquamation, sheetlike sloughing of the skin on palms and soles, appears by weeks 1 to 3.
5. The tongue is initially coated with a white, furry covering with red projecting papillae (white strawberry tongue); by the third to fifth day, the white coat sloughs off, leaving a red swollen tongue (red strawberry tongue).
6. Tonsils are reddened, edematous, and covered with exudate.
7. Pharynx is edematous and beefy red.

#### C. Interventions

1. Institute contact precautions and respiratory precautions until 24 hours after initiation of antibiotics. 🟢
2. Provide supportive therapy.
3. Provide bed rest.
4. Encourage fluid intake.

## X. Erythema Infectiosum (Fifth Disease)

### A. Description

1. Agent: Human parvovirus B19
2. Incubation period: 4 to 14 days; may be 20 days
3. Communicable period: Uncertain, but before the onset of symptoms in most children
4. Source: Infected person
5. Transmission: Unknown; possibly respiratory secretions and blood ▲

## B. Assessment

1. Before rash: Asymptomatic or mild fever, malaise, headache, runny nose
2. Stages of rash
  - a. Erythema of the face (slapped-cheek appearance) develops and disappears by 1 to 4 days (Fig. 48-6). ▲



**FIGURE 48-6** Erythema infectiosum (fifth disease): Slapped-face appearance.

(From Habif TP: *Clinical dermatology: A color guide to diagnosis and therapy*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2004, Mosby.)

- b. About 1 day after the rash appears on the face, maculopapular red spots appear, symmetrically distributed on the extremities; the rash progresses from proximal to distal surfaces and may last a week or more.
- c. The rash subsides, but may reappear if the skin becomes irritated by the sun, heat, cold, exercise, or friction.

### C. Interventions

- 1. Child is not usually hospitalized.
- 2. Pregnant women should avoid the infected individual. ▲
- 3. Provide supportive care.
- 4. Administer antipyretics, analgesics, and antiinflammatory medications as prescribed.

## XI. Infectious Mononucleosis

### A. Description

- 1. Agent: Epstein-Barr virus
- 2. Incubation period: 4 to 6 weeks
- 3. Communicable period: Unknown
- 4. Source: Oral secretions
- 5. Transmission: Direct intimate contact ▲

### B. Assessment

- 1. Fever, malaise, headache, fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, sore throat, enlarged red tonsils
- 2. Lymphadenopathy and hepatosplenomegaly ▲

3. Discrete macular rash most prominent over the trunk may occur.

### C. Interventions

1. Provide supportive care.

2. Monitor for signs of splenic rupture. ▲

⚠️ Teach the parents of a child with mononucleosis to monitor for signs of splenic rupture, which include abdominal pain, left upper quadrant pain, and left shoulder pain.

## XII. Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

### A. Description

1. Agent: *Rickettsia rickettsii*

2. Incubation period: 2 to 14 days

3. Source: Tick from a mammal, most often from wild rodents and dogs

4. Transmission: Bite of infected tick ▲

### B. Assessment

1. Fever, malaise, anorexia, vomiting, headache, myalgia

2. Maculopapular or petechial rash primarily on the extremities (ankles and wrists), but may spread to other areas, characteristically on the palms and soles

### C. Interventions

1. Provide vigorous supportive care.

2. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

3. Teach the child and parents about protection from tick bites (Box 48-1). ▲

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- Wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants tucked into long socks (socks should be pulled up over the pant legs), and a hat when walking in tick-infested areas
- Wearing light-colored clothing to make ticks more visible if they get onto the child
- Checking children for the presence of ticks after being in high-risk or tick-infested areas
- Following paths rather than walking in tall grass and shrub areas because these are the places where most ticks are found
- Applying insect repellents containing diethyltoluamide (DEET) and permethrin before possible exposure to areas where ticks are found (use with caution in infants and small children)
- Keeping yards at home trimmed and free of accumulating leaves and other brush
- Applying tick repellent to dogs
- Saving the tick for later identification if it is removed from the child's body

### XIII. Community-Associated Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

#### A. Description (also see [Chapter 16](#))

1. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacterium that is normally located on the skin or in the nose of healthy people; when present without symptoms, it is called *colonization*, and when symptoms are present, it is called an *infection*.
2. MRSA is a strain of *S. aureus* that is resistant to methicillin and most often occurs in people who were hospitalized or treated at a health care facility (hospital-

acquired MRSA).

3. Community-associated MRSA is an MRSA infection that occurs in a healthy person who has not been hospitalized or had a medical procedure done within the past year.
4. Persons at risk for community-associated MRSA include athletes, prisoners, day care attendees, military recruits, persons who **abuse** intravenous drugs, persons living in crowded settings, persons with poor hygiene practices, persons who use contaminated items, persons who get tattoos, and persons with a compromised immune system.
5. Community-associated MRSA is spread through person-to-person contact, through contact with contaminated items, or through infection of a preexisting cut or wound that is not protected by a dressing.
6. The bacteria can enter the bloodstream through the cut or wound and cause sepsis, cellulitis, endocarditis, osteomyelitis, septic arthritis, toxic shock syndrome, pneumonia, organ failure, and death.

## **B. Prevention measures** ▲

1. Hand-washing and practicing good personal hygiene
2. Avoiding sharing of personal items
3. Regular cleaning of shared equipment such as athletic equipment, whirlpools, or saunas
4. Cleaning a cut or wound thoroughly

## **C. Assessment**

1. Appearance of a skin infection: Red, swollen area, warmth around the area, drainage of pus, pain at the site, fever.
2. Symptoms of a more serious infection: Chest pain, cough, fatigue, chills, fever, malaise, headache, muscle aches, shortness of breath, rash

#### D. Interventions

1. Assess skin lesions.
2. Prepare to drain an infected skin site and culture the wound and wound drainage.
3. Prepare to obtain blood cultures, sputum cultures, and urine cultures.
4. Prepare to administer antibiotics as prescribed.
5. Educate the child and family about the causes and modes of transmission, signs and symptoms, and importance of treatment measures prescribed. ▲

### XIV. Influenza

#### A. Description

1. Various strains of influenza can occur.
2. It is a viral infection that affects the respiratory system and is highly contagious.
3. Children, pregnant women, persons with preexisting health conditions, and persons with a compromised immune system are at high risk for developing complications. ▲
4. It is caused by contact with an infected person or by touching something such as a toy or tissue that the infected person has touched.

#### B. Prevention ▲

1. Flu **vaccine**

2. Wash the child's hands frequently and teach hand-washing techniques.
3. Avoid children who are ill.
4. Keep the child home from school or away from others until the child has been fever-free (without the use of antipyretics) for at least 24 hours.
5. For additional information, refer to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.

 The signs and symptoms of flu usually last a week. If they last longer, the presence of complications should be suspected.

#### C. Assessment

1. Fever that occurs suddenly and is high
2. Headache, body aches, fatigue, chills, cough, congestion, sore throat, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea

#### D. Interventions

1. Antiviral medications if prescribed, fluids, rest, pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin IB)
2. Family and child teaching about prevention measures

### XV. Immunizations

#### A. Guidelines (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take When Administering a Parenteral Vaccine

1. Verify the prescription for the vaccine.
2. Obtain an immunization history from the parents and assess for allergies.
3. Provide information to the parents about the vaccine.
4. Obtain parental consent.
5. Check the lot number and expiration date and prepare the injection.
6. Select the appropriate site for administration.
7. Administer the vaccine.
8. Document the administration and site of administration and lot number and expiration date of the vaccine.
9. Provide a vaccination record to the parents.

The nurse should first verify the prescription and then obtain an immunization history from the parents to ensure that the immunizations are up to date. The nurse should also question the parents about the presence of any allergies in the child because some vaccines contain components to which the child may be allergic. The nurse next provides information to the parents about the vaccine and obtains consent. The expiration date and the lot number (located on the medication vial) of the vaccine should be checked before preparing the vaccine for administration. When the vaccine is prepared, the nurse prepares the child for the procedure, selects an appropriate site, and administers the vaccine. The nurse documents that the vaccination has been administered and provides an updated immunization record to the parents.

## ***Reference***

Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Nursing care of infants and children*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby; Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 8, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

1. In the United States, the recommended age for beginning primary immunizations of infants is at birth.
2. Children who began primary immunizations at the recommended age but failed to receive all the required doses do not need to begin the series again; they need to receive only the missed doses.
3. If there is suspicion that the parent will not bring the child to the pediatrician or health care clinic for follow-up immunizations according to the optimal immunization schedule, any of the recommended vaccines can be administered simultaneously. ▲

## **B. General contraindications and precautions**

1. A vaccine is contraindicated if the child experienced an anaphylactic reaction to a previously administered vaccine or a component in the vaccine.
2. Live virus vaccines generally are not administered to individuals with severely deficient immune systems, individuals with a severe sensitivity to gelatin, or pregnant women.
3. A vaccine is administered with caution to an individual with a moderate or severe

acute illness, with or without fever.

4. See [Section XVI](#), Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunizations, for specific information for each type of vaccine.

### C. Guidelines for administration ([Box 48-2](#))

#### **BOX 48-2** Guidelines for Administration of Vaccines

Follow manufacturer's recommendations for route of administration, storage, and reconstitution of the vaccine.

If refrigeration is necessary, store on a central shelf and not on the door; frequent temperature changes from opening the refrigerator door can alter the vaccine's potency.

A vaccine information statement needs to be given to the parents or individual, and informed consent for administration needs to be obtained.

Check the expiration date on the vaccine bottle.

Parenteral vaccines are given in separate syringes in different injection sites.

Vaccines administered intramuscularly are given in the vastus lateralis muscle (best site) or ventrogluteal muscle (the deltoid can be used for children 36 months of age and older); the dorsogluteal site (buttocks) is avoided.

Vaccines administered subcutaneously are given into the fatty areas in the lateral upper arms and anterior thighs.

Adequate needle length and gauge are as follows: intramuscular, 1 inch, 23-25 gauge; subcutaneous,  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch, 25 gauge (needle length may vary depending on the child's

size).

Mild side effects include fever, soreness, swelling, or redness at injection site.

A topical anesthetic may be applied to injection site before the injection.

For painful or red injection sites, advise the parent to apply cool compresses for the first 24 hours, and then use warm or cold compresses as long as needed.

An age-appropriate dose of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin IB), per health care provider's preference may be administered every 4 to 6 hours for vaccine-associated discomfort.

Maintain an immunization record—document day, month, year of administration; manufacturer and lot number of vaccine; name, address, title of person administering the vaccine; and site and route of administration.

A vaccine adverse event report needs to be filed and the health department needs to be notified if an adverse reaction to an immunization occurs.

 Children born preterm should receive the full dose of each vaccine at the appropriate chronological age.

## XVI. Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunizations (Box 48-3)

### **BOX 48-3** Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunizations: 2013\*

**Birth:** Hepatitis B vaccine (HepB)

**1 month:** HepB

**2 months:** Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV); diphtheria, tetanus, acellular

pertussis (DTaP) vaccine; *Haemophilus influenzae* type b conjugate vaccine (Hib); pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), rotavirus (RV)

**4 months:** DTaP, Hib, IPV, PCV, RV

**6 months:** DTaP, Hib, HepB, IPV, PCV, RV (dose may be needed depending on type of vaccine used for first and second doses)

**12-15 months:** Hib; PCV; measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine; hepatitis A, first dose (second dose is given 6-18 months after the first dose); varicella vaccine

**15 -18 months:** DTaP

**18-33 months:** Hepatitis A (second dose given 6-18 months after the first dose)

**4-6 years:** DTaP, IPV, MMR, varicella vaccine

**11-12 years:** MMR (if not administered at 4-6 years); diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis adolescent preparation (Tdap); meningococcal vaccine (MCV4) with a booster at age 16; human papillomavirus (HPV) (first dose to girls at age 11 to 12 years, second dose 2 months after first dose, and third dose 6 months after first dose)

\*Updated yearly. See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html> for current schedule.

*Note:* Influenza vaccine is recommended annually for children beginning at age 6 months.

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): *Immunization schedules*. Atlanta, GA, 2012, CDC. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.

**A.** For the most up-to-date information, refer to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.

**B.** Hepatitis B **vaccine** (HepB)

1. Administered by the intramuscular route
2. Contraindications: Severe allergic reaction to previous dose or vaccine component (components include aluminum hydroxide, yeast protein)
3. Precautions: An infant weighing less than 2000 g or an infant with moderate or severe acute illness with or without fever
4. HBsAg (hepatitis B surface antigen)-positive mothers
  - a. Infant should receive HepB vaccine and hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) within 12 hours of birth.
  - b. Infant should be tested for HBsAg and antibody to HBsAg after completion of HepB series (9 to 18 months of age).
5. Mother whose HBsAg status is unknown
  - a. Infant should receive the first dose of hepatitis vaccine series within 12 hours of birth.
  - b. Maternal blood should be drawn as soon as possible to determine the mother's HBsAg status.
  - c. If the mother's HBsAg test result is positive, the infant should receive HBIG as soon as possible (no later than 1 week of age).

**C.** Rotavirus vaccine (RV)

1. Rotavirus is a cause of serious gastroenteritis and is a nosocomial (hospital-acquired) pathogen that is most severe in children 3 to 24 months of age; children younger than 3 months have some protection because of maternally acquired antibodies.
2. Two vaccines are available (RotaTeq and Rotarix) and are administered by the oral route because the vaccine must replicate in the infant's gut.
3. Vaccine may be withheld if an infant is experiencing severe vomiting and diarrhea; it is administered as soon as the infant recovers.

**D. Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP); tetanus toxoid; reduced diphtheria toxoid and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap adolescent preparation)**

1. Administered by intramuscular route
2. The Tdap (adolescent preparation) is recommended at 11 to 12 years of age for children who have completed the recommended childhood DTaP series but have not received a tetanus and diphtheria toxoid (Td) booster dose; children 13 to 18 years old who have not received Tdap should receive a dose.
3. Td does not provide protection against pertussis; Td is used as a booster every 10 years after Tdap is administered at 11 to 18 years of age.
4. Encephalopathy is a complication.
5. Contraindications: Encephalopathy within 7 days of a previous dose or a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or to a vaccine component

**E. *Haemophilus influenzae* type b conjugate vaccine (Hib)**

1. Protects against numerous serious infections caused by *H. influenzae* type b, such

as bacterial meningitis, epiglottitis, bacterial pneumonia, septic arthritis, and sepsis

2. Administered by the intramuscular route

3. Contraindications: Severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or vaccine component

**F. Influenza vaccine:** Vaccine is recommended annually for children beginning at age 6 months.

**G. Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV)**

1. IPV is administered by the subcutaneous route (it may also be given by the intramuscular route).

2. Contraindications: Severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or vaccine component; components may include formalin, neomycin, streptomycin, or polymyxin B

**H. Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine**

1. Vaccine is administered by the subcutaneous route.

2. Contraindications: Severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or vaccine component (gelatin, neomycin, eggs), pregnancy, known immunodeficiency

3. If the child received immunoglobulin, the MMR vaccine should be postponed for at least 3 to 6 months (immunoglobulin can inhibit the immune response to the MMR vaccine).

**I. Varicella vaccine**

1. It is administered by the subcutaneous route.

2. Children receiving the vaccine should avoid aspirin or aspirin-containing products because of the risk of Reye's syndrome.
3. Contraindications: Severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or vaccine component (gelatin, bovine albumin, neomycin), significant suppression of cellular immunity, pregnancy

#### **J. Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV)**

1. PCV prevents infection with *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, which may cause meningitis, pneumonia, septicemia, sinusitis, and otitis media.
2. It is administered by the intramuscular route.
3. Contraindications: Severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or vaccine component

#### **K. Hepatitis A vaccine (HepA)**

1. It is administered by the intramuscular route.
2. Contraindications: Severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or vaccine component

#### **L. Meningococcal vaccine (MCV)**

1. Vaccine protects against *Neisseria meningitidis*.
2. Meningococcal (MCV4) vaccine is the preferred type of vaccine and is given intramuscularly.
3. MCV4 should be administered to all children at age 11 to 12 years and to unvaccinated adolescents at high school entry (age 15 years); all college freshman living in dormitories should be vaccinated.

4. Revaccination is recommended for children who remain at increased risk after 3 years (if the first dose was administered at age 2 to 6 years) or after 5 years (if the first dose was administered at age 7 years or older).
5. It is contraindicated in children with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome.

#### **M. Human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV)**

1. Depending on the type of vaccine used (HPV2 or HPV4), the HPV vaccine guards against diseases that are caused by HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18, such as cervical cancer, cervical abnormalities that can lead to cervical cancer, and genital warts.
2. The vaccine is most effective for boys and girls if administered before exposure to HPV through sexual contact.
3. The vaccine is administered as three injections over 6 months—first dose to girls at age 11 to 12 years, the second dose 2 months after the first dose, and the third dose 6 months after the first dose.
4. A three-dose series may be administered to boys 9 to 18 years old to reduce their likelihood of acquiring genital warts.
5. The vaccine can cause pain, swelling, itching, and redness at the injection site; fever; nausea; and dizziness.
6. The vaccine is contraindicated in individuals with a reaction to a previous injection and in pregnant women.

## **XVII. Reactions to a Vaccine**

### **A. Local reactions**

1. Tenderness, erythema, swelling at injection site

2. Low-grade fever

3. Behavioral changes such as drowsiness, unusual crying, decreased appetite

**B. Minimizing local reactions** ▲

1. Select a needle of adequate length to deposit vaccine deep into the muscle or subcutaneous mass.

2. Inject into the appropriate recommended site.

**C. Anaphylactic reactions** ▲

1. Goals of treatment are to secure and protect the airway, restore adequate circulation, and prevent further exposure to the antigen.

2. For a mild reaction with no evidence of respiratory distress or cardiovascular compromise, a subcutaneous injection of an antihistamine, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), and epinephrine (Adrenalin) may be administered.

3. For moderate or severe distress, establish an airway; provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation if the child is not breathing; elevate the head; administer epinephrine, fluids, and vasopressors as prescribed; monitor vital signs; and monitor urine output.

**CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Airborne droplet and contact precautions should be instituted for the child with mumps to prevent its transmission. It is transmitted by direct contact or droplet spread from an infected person. Transmission-based precautions of this type indicate

the use of a negative pressure room with at least 12 exchanges per hour. All health care personnel should wear a N95 respirator mask. Additional precautions include wearing gowns and gloves, and performing hand hygiene before and after client contact.

### ***Reference***

Potter et al (2013), pp. 415-416.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 484.** The nurse provides home care instructions to the parents of a child hospitalized with pertussis who is in the convalescent stage and is being prepared for discharge. Which statement by a parent indicates a **need for further instruction**?
1. “We need to encourage our child to drink fluids.”
  2. “Coughing spells may be triggered by dust or smoke.”
  3. “Vomiting may occur when our child has coughing episodes.”
  4. “We need to maintain droplet precautions and a quiet environment for at least 2 weeks.”
- 485.** An infant receives a diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis (DTaP) immunization at a well-baby clinic. The parent returns home and calls the clinic to report that the infant has developed swelling and redness at the site of injection. Which intervention should the nurse suggest to the parent?
1. Monitor the infant for a fever.
  2. Bring the infant back to the clinic.
  3. Apply a hot pack to the injection site.
  4. Apply a cold pack to the injection site.
- 486.** A child is scheduled to receive inactivated polio vaccine (IPV), and the nurse preparing to administer the vaccine reviews the child’s record. The nurse questions the administration of IPV if which is documented in the child’s record?
1. Recent recovery from a cold

2. A history of frequent respiratory infections
3. A history of an anaphylactic reaction to neomycin
4. A local reaction at the site of injection of a previous IPV

**487.** A child is receiving a series of the hepatitis B vaccine and arrives at the clinic with his parent for the second dose. Before administering the vaccine, the nurse should ask the child and parent about a history of a severe allergy to which substance?

1. Eggs
2. Penicillin
3. Sulfonamides
4. A previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine or component

**488.** The home health nurse visits a child with infectious mononucleosis and provides home care instructions to the parents about the care of the child. Which instruction should the nurse give to the parents?

1. Maintain the child on bed rest for 2 weeks.
2. Maintain respiratory precautions for 1 week.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP) if the child develops a fever.
4. Notify the HCP if the child develops abdominal pain or left shoulder pain.

**489.** A parent brings her 4-month-old infant to a well-baby clinic for immunizations. The child is up to date with the immunization schedule. The nurse should prepare to administer which immunizations to this infant?

1. Varicella, hepatitis B vaccine (HepB)
2. Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP); measles, mumps, rubella (MMR); inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV)
3. MMR, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), DTaP
4. DTaP, Hib, IPV, pneumococcal vaccine (PCV), rotavirus (RV)

**490.** The clinic nurse prepares to administer a measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine to a 5-year-old child. The nurse should administer this vaccine by which **best** route and in which **best** site?

1. Subcutaneously in the gluteal muscle
2. Intramuscularly in the deltoid muscle
3. Subcutaneously in the outer aspect of the upper arm
4. Intramuscularly in the anterolateral aspect of the thigh

**491.** A child with rubeola (measles) is being admitted to the hospital. In preparing for the admission of the child, the nurse should plan to place the child on which precautions?

1. Enteric
2. Airborne
3. Protective
4. Neutropenic

**492.** The clinic nurse is assessing a child who is scheduled to receive a live virus vaccine (immunization). What are the general contraindications associated with

receiving a live virus vaccine? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. The child has symptoms of a cold.
2. The child had a previous anaphylactic reaction to the vaccine.
3. Mother reports that the child is having intermittent episodes of diarrhea.
4. Mother reports that the child has not had an appetite and has been fussy.
5. The child has a disorder that caused a severely deficient immune system.
6. Mother reports that the child has recently been exposed to an infectious disease.

## ANSWERS

484. 4

**Rationale:** Pertussis is transmitted by direct contact or respiratory droplets from coughing. The communicable period occurs primarily during the catarrhal stage. Respiratory precautions are not required during the convalescent phase. Options 1, 2, and 3 are accurate components of home care instructions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Also, note the word *convalescent* in the question. Options 1 and 3 can be eliminated because they are generally associated with convalescence. Knowing that 2 weeks of respiratory precautions is not required during the convalescent period will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Home care instructions for the client with **pertussis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 612, 1248.

**485. 4**

**Rationale:** On occasion, tenderness, redness, or swelling may occur at the site of the DTaP injection. This can be relieved with cold packs for the first 24 hours, followed by warm or cold compresses if the inflammation persists. Bringing the infant back to the clinic is unnecessary. Option 1 may be an appropriate intervention, but is not specific to the subject of the question, a localized reaction at the injection site. Hot packs are not applied and can be harmful by causing burning of the skin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a localized reaction at the injection site. Option 1 can be eliminated first because it does not relate specifically to the subject of the question. Eliminate option 2 next as an unnecessary intervention. From the remaining options, general principles related to the effects of heat and cold will direct you to the correct option. Also noting the word *hot* in option 3 will assist in eliminating this option.

**Review:** Follow-up care after **immunization**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Health Promotion

**References:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>; Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 495.

**486. 3**

**Rationale:** Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) contains neomycin. A history of an anaphylactic reaction to neomycin is considered a contraindication to IPV. The presence of a minor illness such as the common cold is not a contraindication. In addition, a history of frequent respiratory infections is not a contraindication to receiving a vaccine. A local reaction to an immunization is not a contraindication to receiving a vaccine.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, questioning the administration of IPV. Recalling that a general contraindication to all immunizations is a severe illness (not a mild illness) will assist you in eliminating options 1 and 2. From the remaining options, note that option 4 identifies a local reaction. This will direct you to the correct option, the systemic reaction and a potential life-threatening condition.

**Review:** Contraindications to receiving **immunizations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 505-506.

**487. 4**

**Rationale:** A contraindication to receiving the hepatitis B vaccine is a previous anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine or to a component (aluminum hydroxide or yeast protein) of the vaccine. An allergy to eggs, penicillin, and sulfonamides is unrelated to the contraindication to receiving this vaccine.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a contraindication to receiving the hepatitis B vaccine. Note the relationship of the words *hepatitis B vaccine* in the question and the correct option.

**Review:** **Hepatitis B vaccine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>; Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 496.

**488. 4**

**Rationale:** Infectious mononucleosis is caused by Epstein-Barr virus. The parents need to be instructed to notify the HCP if abdominal pain, especially in the left upper quadrant, or left shoulder pain occurs because this may indicate splenic rupture. Children with enlarged spleens also are instructed to avoid contact sports until splenomegaly resolves. Bed rest is unnecessary, and children usually self-limit their activity. Respiratory precautions are not required, although transmission can occur via direct intimate contact or contact with infected blood. Fever is treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin IB) per health care provider preference.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge regarding the organs affected in mononucleosis. Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated first because they are **comparable or alike** and are unnecessary interventions in this disease. From the remaining options, recalling that splenic rupture is a concern will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Complications associated with **infectious mononucleosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 1230-1231.

**489. 4**

**Rationale:** Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis vaccine (DTaP), *Haemophilus influenzae* type b conjugate vaccine (Hib), inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV), pneumococcal vaccine (PCV), and rotavirus vaccine (RV) are administered at 4 months of age. DTaP is administered at 2, 4, and 6 months of age; at 15 to 18 months of age; and at 4 to 6 years of age. Hib is administered at 2, 4, and 6 months of age and at 12 to 15 months of age. IPV is administered at 2, 4, and 6 months of age and at 4 to 6 years of age. PCV is administered at 2, 4, and 6 months of age and at 12 to 15 months of age. The first dose of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine is administered at 12 to 15 months of age; the second dose is administered at 4 to 6 years of age (if the second dose was not given by 4 to 6 years of age, it should be given at the next visit). The first dose of hepatitis B vaccine is administered at birth, the second dose is administered at 1 month of age, and the third dose is administered at 6 months of age. Varicella-zoster vaccine is administered at 12 to 15 months of age and again at 4 to 6 years of age.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, immunization schedule for a 4-month-old infant, and use knowledge regarding the immunization schedule to answer this question. Noting the age of the infant will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Immunization schedule** for infants, children, and adolescents

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Health Promotion

**References:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>; Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 497.

**490. 3**

**Rationale:** Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine is administered subcutaneously in the outer aspect of the upper arm. The gluteal muscle is not recommended for injections. MMR vaccine is not administered by the intramuscular route.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Recalling that MMR vaccine is administered subcutaneously will assist you in eliminating options 2 and 4. From the remaining options, recalling that the gluteal muscle is not used for injections will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Administration of **MMR vaccine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 506.

**491. 2**

**Rationale:** Rubeola is transmitted via airborne particles or direct contact with infectious droplets. Airborne droplet precautions are required, and persons in contact with the child should wear masks. The child is placed in a private room if hospitalized, and the hospital room door remains closed. Gowns and gloves are unnecessary, but standard precautions are used. Articles that are contaminated should be bagged and labeled. Special enteric precautions and protective (neutropenic) isolation are not indicated in rubeola.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 3 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike**. Remember that rubeola is transmitted via the airborne route. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Route of transmission and therapeutic management of **rubeola**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 611.

❖ 492. 2, 5

**Rationale:** The general contraindications for receiving live virus vaccines include a previous anaphylactic reaction to a vaccine or a component of a vaccine. In addition, live virus vaccines generally are not administered to individuals with a severely deficient immune system, individuals with a severe sensitivity to gelatin, or pregnant women. A vaccine is administered with caution to an individual with a moderate or severe acute illness, with or without fever. Options 1, 3, 4, and 6 are not contraindications to receiving a vaccine.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, contraindications for a live virus vaccine. This indicates that you

need to select the situations in which a live virus vaccine cannot be given because doing so can cause harm to the child. Noting the word *anaphylactic* in option 2 and the words *severely deficient* in option 5 will direct you to these options.

**Review:** Contraindications to receiving a **live virus vaccine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Infectious and Communicable Diseases

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>; Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 505-506.



## CHAPTER 49

# Pediatric Medication Administration and Calculations

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is preparing to administer a medication that has an unpleasant taste to an infant. What should the nurse do to minimize this unpleasant effect?

*Answer located on p. 553.*

### I. Oral Medications

- A. Most oral pediatric medications are in liquid or suspension form because children usually are unable to swallow a tablet.
- B. Solutions may be measured by using an oral plastic syringe or other acceptable measurement or administration device; the device used depends on the **developmental age** of the child (Fig. 49-1).



**FIGURE 49-1** Acceptable devices for measuring and administering oral medication to children (*clockwise from bottom left*): Measuring spoon, plastic syringes, calibrated nipple, plastic medicine cup, calibrated dropper, hollow-handled medicine spoon. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2005, Mosby.)

- C. Medications in suspension settle to the bottom of the bottle between uses, and thorough mixing is required before pouring the medication.
- D. Suspensions must be administered immediately after measurement to prevent settling and resultant administration of an incomplete dose.
- E. Administer oral medications with a child sitting in an upright position and with the head elevated to prevent aspiration if the child cries or resists. ▲
- F. Place a small child sideways on the lap; the child's closest arm should be placed under the adult's arm and behind the adult's back; cradle the child's head and hold the child's hand, and administer the medication slowly with a plastic spoon, small

plastic cup, or syringe.

- G.** If a tablet or capsule has been administered, check the child’s mouth to ensure that it has been swallowed; if swallowing is a problem, some tablets can be crushed and given in small amounts of puréed food or flavored syrup (enteric-coated tablets, timed-release tablets, and capsules should not be crushed). ▲
- H.** Follow generally accepted medication administration guidelines for children (Box 49-1).

### **BOX 49-1** Medication Administration Guidelines for Children

Two identifiers are required before medication administration—such as name, medical record number, birth date.

Obtain information from parents about successful methods for administering medications to their children.

Ask parents about any known allergies.

To avoid aspiration, liquid forms of medication are safer to swallow than other forms.

Straws often help older children swallow pills.

Avoid putting medications in foods such as milk, cereal, or baby food because it may cause an unpleasant taste to the food, and the child may refuse to accept the same food in the future. In addition, the child may not consume the entire serving and would not receive the required medication dosage.

If the taste of the medication is unpleasant, it is acceptable to have the child pinch the

nose and drink the medication through a straw.

Offer juice, a soft drink, or a frozen juice bar after the child swallows a medication.

Always read the pharmacological indications for administration. Some items such as fruit syrups can be acidic and should not be used with medications that react negatively in an acid medium.

Record the most successful method of administering medications and pertinent nursing prescriptions on the child's care plan for other nursing staff to follow; this notation also saves the child frustration, fear, and anxiety.

Data from Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby; and Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.

 Newborns and infants have an immature liver and immature kidneys, and therefore metabolism and elimination of medications is delayed.

## II. Parenteral Medications

### A. Subcutaneously and intramuscularly administered medications

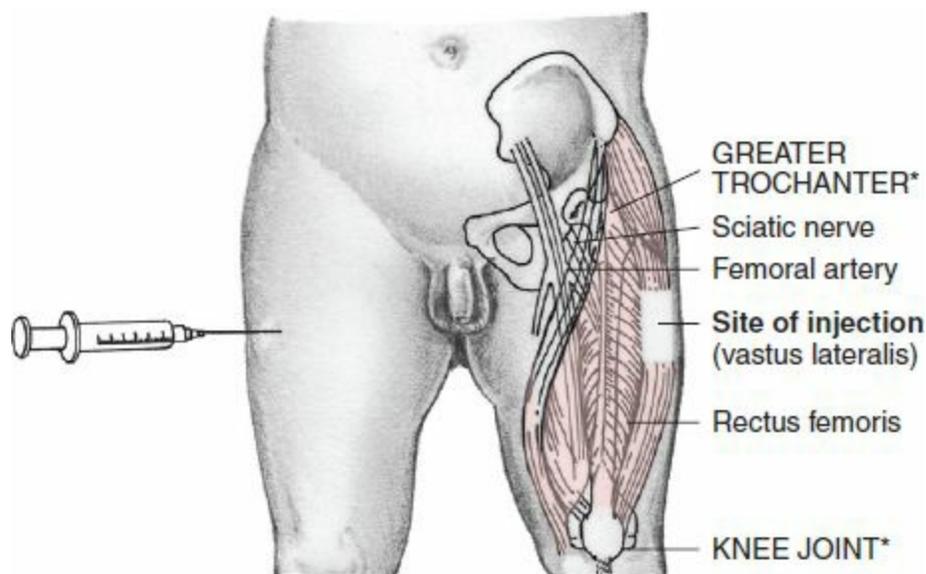
1. Medications most often given via the subcutaneous route are insulin and some immunizations.
2. Any site with sufficient subcutaneous tissue may be used for subcutaneous injections; common sites include the central third of the lateral aspect of the upper arm, the abdomen, and the central third of the anterior thigh. 

3. The safe use of injection sites is based on normal muscle development and the size of the child; the preferred site for intramuscular injections in infants is the vastus lateralis, but agency policies and procedures need to be followed (Table 49-1 and Fig. 49-2). ▲

**TABLE 49-1 Intramuscular Injections: Amount of Medication (mL) by Muscle Group**

Muscle	Neonate	Infant (1-12 mo old)	Toddler (1-2 yr old)	Preschool to Child (3-12 yr old)	Adolescent (12-18 yr old)
Vastus lateralis	0.5	0.5-1	0.5-2	2	2
Rectus femoris	Not safe	Not safe	0.5-1	2	2
Ventrogluteal	Not safe	Not safe	Not safe	0.5-3	2-3
Dorsal gluteal	Not safe	Not safe	Not safe	0.5-2	2-3
Deltoid	Not safe	Not safe	0.5-1	0.5-1	1-1.5

Data from Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.



**FIGURE 49-2** Intramuscular injection site—vastus lateralis. Landmarks are

indicated by asterisks. (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby.)

4. The usual needle length and gauge for pediatric clients are 1/2 to 1 inch and 22 to 25 gauge; needle length also can be estimated by grasping the muscle between the thumb and forefinger—half the resulting distance would be the needle length.
5. Pediatric dosages for subcutaneous and intramuscular administration are calculated to the nearest hundredth and measured by using a tuberculin syringe; always follow agency guidelines. ▲
6. Place a plain or decorated adhesive bandage over the puncture site to help the child view the experience in a pleasant way.

#### **B. Intravenously administered medications**

1. Intravenous (IV) medications are diluted for administration.
2. When an infant or child is receiving an IV medication, the IV site needs to be assessed for signs of inflammation and infiltration or extravasation immediately before, during, and after completion of each medication. ▲
3. IV medication may be administered continuously by adding the medication to an IV solution bag and infusing it through a primary infusion line.
4. IV medications may be administered intermittently; several doses may be administered in a 24-hour period.
5. Medications for IV administration are diluted according to the directions accompanying the medication and according to the health care provider's

(HCP's) prescriptions and agency procedures.

6. Infusion time for IV medications is determined on the basis of the directions accompanying the medication, the HCP's prescription, and agency procedures.
7. Determine agency procedures related to the volume of flush (normal saline) for peripheral IV lines and for central lines.
8. The flush volume (3 to 20 mL) must be included in the child's intake; the flush is usually administered before administering an IV medication and after the IV medication is completed and is infused at the same rate as the medication. ▲

### C. Intermittent IV medication administration

1. Children receiving IV medications intermittently may or may not have a primary IV solution infusing.
2. If a primary IV solution is infusing, the medication may be administered by IV piggyback via a secondary line.
3. If a primary IV solution does not exist, an indwelling infusion catheter is used for medication administration, and the medication may be administered by push, piggyback, or retrograde method; medication administration instructions must be checked for dilution and infusion time procedures.
4. All intermittent medication administrations are preceded and followed by a normal saline flush to ensure that the medication has cleared the IV tubing and that the total dose has been administered. ▲
5. Electronic devices such as controllers or pumps are used to regulate and administer IV fluids and intermittent IV medications. ▲

#### **D. Special IV administration sets**

1. Special IV administration sets, such as a burette, may be used for medication preparation and administration via piggyback.
2. These special sets are all microdrip sets calibrated to deliver 60 drops (gtt)/mL.
3. The total capacity of these special IV administration sets is 100 to 150 mL, calibrated in 1-mL increments so that exact measurements of small volumes are possible.
4. The medication is mixed with the appropriate amount of diluent, added to the special IV administration set, and allowed to infuse at the prescribed rate.
5. The special IV administration set needs to be labeled clearly to identify the medication and fluid dosage added. ▲
6. During medication infusion time, a label is attached that indicates that the medication is infusing.
7. During the flush infusion time, a label is attached indicating that the flush is infusing.

#### **E. Retrograde IV injection ▲**

1. In this method of administration, the medication is mixed with the appropriate amount of diluent in a syringe.
2. The IV tubing is clamped close to the child, the medication is injected through the port in the direction of the burette, the tubing is unclamped, the prescribed rate is set, and the medication is allowed to infuse over the prescribed time.

#### **F. Syringe pump for IV medication administration**

1. A syringe containing the medication is fitted into a pump that is connected to the IV tubing through a Y connector.
2. The medication is administered over the prescribed time.

**⚠** The 24-hour fluid intake must be monitored closely, and all IV fluid amounts including the amount of flush volume need to be documented accurately to prevent overhydration. For children, the maximal amount of IV fluid administered in a 24-hour period varies and is usually based on body weight and other factors. Check the HCP's prescription and agency guidelines for the procedures for the administration of IV fluids and medications.

### III. Calculation of Medication Dosage by Body Weight

#### A. Conversion of body weight (Box 49-2)

#### **BOX 49-2** Conversion of Body Weight

##### Measurements

$$1 \text{ lb} = 16 \text{ oz}$$

$$1 \text{ kg} = 2.2 \text{ lb}$$

##### Pounds to Kilograms

$$1 \text{ kg} = 2.2 \text{ lb}$$

When converting from pounds to kilograms, divide by 2.2. Kilograms are expressed to the nearest tenth.

##### Kilograms to Pounds

$$1 \text{ kg} = 2.2 \text{ lb}$$

When converting from kilograms to pounds, multiply by 2.2. Pounds are expressed to the nearest tenth.

## B. Calculation of daily dosages

### 1. Abbreviations (Box 49-3)

#### **BOX 49-3** Common Measurement Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
BSA	Body surface area
g	Gram(s)
gr	Grain(s)
kg	Kilogram(s)
lb	Pound(s)
m <sup>2</sup>	Square meters
mcg	Microgram(s)
mg	Milligram(s)
mL	Milliliter(s)
SA	Surface area

2. Dosages are expressed in terms of milligrams per kilogram per day, milligrams per pound per day, or milligrams per kilogram per dose.
3. The total daily dosage usually is administered in divided (more than one) doses per day.
4. Express the child's body weight in kilograms or pounds to correlate with the dosage specifications.

5. Calculate the total daily dosage.

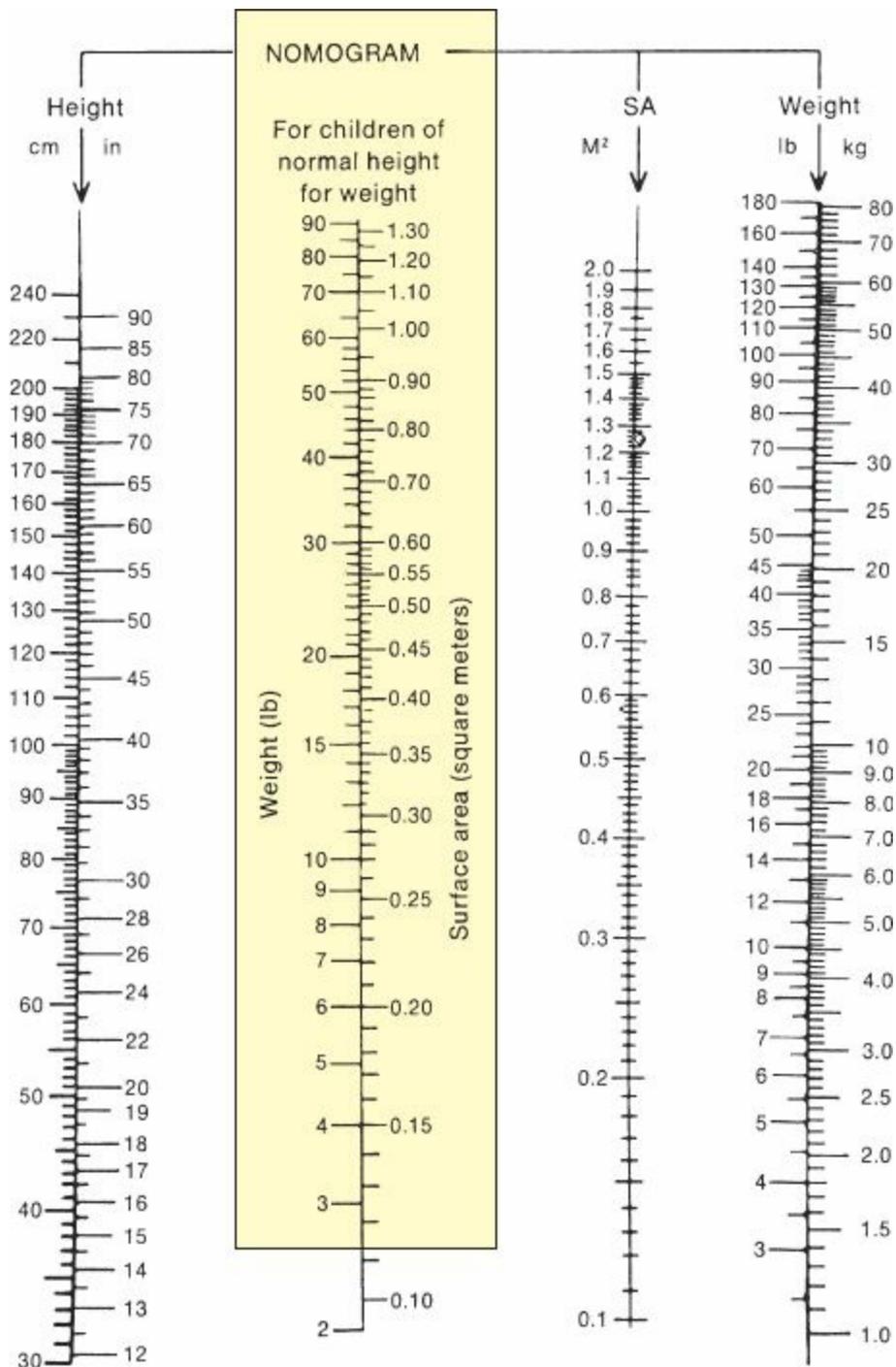
6. Divide the total daily dosage by the number of doses to be administered in 1 day.

#### **IV. Calculation of Body Surface Area (BSA)**

**A.** The BSA is determined by comparing body weight and height with averages or norms on a graph called a *nomogram*.

**B.** Not all children are the same size at the same age; the nomogram is used to determine the BSA of a child.

**C.** Look at the nomogram ([Fig. 49-3](#)), and note that the height is on the left-hand side of the chart and the weight is on the right-hand side of the chart.



**FIGURE 49-3** West nomogram for estimation of surface areas in infants and children. First, find height; next, find weight; finally, draw a straight line connecting the height and weight. The body surface area (in square meters [m<sup>2</sup>]) is indicated where a straight line connecting the height and weight intersects the surface area (SA) column or, if the child is approximately of normal proportion, from weight alone (yellow area). (From Hockenberry M, Wilson D: *Wong's essentials of pediatric*

nursing, ed 7, St. Louis, 2005, Mosby.)

- D. Place a ruler across the chart.
- E. Line up the left side of the ruler on the height and the right side of the ruler on the weight; read the BSA at the point where the straight edge of the ruler intersects the surface area (SA) column.
- F. The estimated SA is given in square meters ( $m^2$ ).
- G. [Box 49-4](#) gives a sample practice question using the nomogram.

#### **BOX 49-4** How to Use the Nomogram

**Example:** Use the nomogram (see [Fig. 49-3](#)) and calculate the body surface area (BSA) for a child whose height is 58 inches and weight is 12 kg.

1. Look at the nomogram chart and note that the height is on the left-hand side of the chart and the weight is on the right-hand side.
2. Place a ruler on the chart and line up the left side of the ruler on the height and the right side of the ruler on the weight; read the BSA at the point where the straight edge of the ruler intersects the surface area (SA) column.
3. The estimated SA is given in square meters.

**Answer:**  $0.66 m^2$

#### **V. Calculation Based on BSA**

- A. When dosage recommendations for children specify milligrams, micrograms, or units

per square meter, calculating the dosage is simple multiplication (Box 49-5).

### BOX 49-5 Calculating Medication Dosage

When dosage recommendations for children specify milligrams, micrograms, or units per square meter, calculating the dosage is simple multiplication.

**Example:** The dosage recommendation is 4 mg/m<sup>2</sup>. The child has a body surface area of 1.1 m<sup>2</sup>. What is the dosage to be administered?

**Answer:**

$$1.1 \times 4 \text{ mg} = 4.4 \text{ mg}$$

**B.** When dosage recommendations are specified only for adults, a formula is used to calculate a child's dosage from the adult dosage (Box 49-6). ▲

### BOX 49-6 Calculating a Child's Dosage from the Adult Dosage

When dosages are specified only for adults, a formula is used to calculate a child's dosage from the adult dosage. The adult dosage is based on a standardized body surface area (BSA) of 1.73 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Example:** A health care provider has prescribed an antibiotic for a child. The average adult dose is 250 mg. The child has a BSA of 0.41 m<sup>2</sup>. What is the dose for the child?

**Answer:** 59.24 mg

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{BSA of child (m}^2\text{)}}{1.73 \text{ m}^2} \times \text{Adult dose} = \text{Child's dose}$$

$$\frac{0.41}{1.73} \times 250 \text{ mg} = 59.24 \text{ mg}$$

## VI. Developmental Considerations for Administering Medications

A. When administering medications to children, **developmental age** must be taken into consideration to ensure safe and effective administration. ▲

### B. General interventions

1. Always be prepared for the procedure with all necessary equipment and assistance.
2. For a hospitalized child, ask the parent or child or both if the parent should or should not remain for the procedure.
3. Determine appropriate preadministration and postadministration comfort measures.
4. Try to make the event as pleasant as possible.

C. [Box 49-7](#) lists developmental considerations when giving medications. ▲

### **BOX 49-7** Developmental Considerations for Administering Medications

#### **Infants**

Perform procedure quickly, allowing the infant to swallow; then offer comfort measures, such as holding, rocking, and cuddling.

Allow self-comforting measures, such as the use of a pacifier.

## **Toddlers**

Offer a brief, concrete explanation of the procedure and then perform it.

Accept aggressive behavior, within reasonable limits, as a healthy response, and provide outlets for the toddler.

Provide comfort measures immediately after the procedure, such as touch, holding, cuddling, and providing a favorite toy.

## **Preschoolers**

Offer a brief, concrete explanation of the procedure and then perform it.

Accept aggressive behavior, within reasonable limits, as a healthy response, and provide outlets for the child.

Provide comfort measures after the procedure, such as touch, holding, or providing a favorite toy.

## **School-Age Children**

Explain the procedure, allowing for some control over the body and situation.

Explore feelings and concepts through therapeutic play, drawings of own body and self in the hospital, and the use of books and realistic hospital equipment.

Set appropriate behavior limits, such as it is all right to cry or scream, but not to bite.

Provide activities for releasing aggression and anger.

Use the opportunity to teach about how medication helps the disorder.

## **Adolescents**

Explain the procedure, allowing for some control over body and situation.

Explore concepts of self, hospitalization, and illness, and correct any misconceptions.

Encourage self-expression, individuality, and self-care needs.

Encourage participation in the procedure.

Data from McKenry L, Salerno E: *Mosby's pharmacology in nursing*, St. Louis, 2003, Mosby.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** When administering a medication with an unpleasant taste to an infant, the nurse should draw the required dose into a syringe without the needle, and place the syringe into the side and toward the back of the infant's mouth; the medication should be administered slowly, allowing the infant to swallow.

### **Reference**

Hockenberry, Wilson (2010), p. 1033.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 493.** The nurse is providing medication instructions to a parent. Which statement by the parent indicates a **need for further instruction**?
1. “I should cuddle my child after giving the medication.”
  2. “I can give my child a frozen juice bar after he swallows the medication.”
  3. “I should mix the medication in the baby food and give it when I feed my child.”
  4. “If my child does not like the taste of the medicine, I should encourage him to pinch his nose and drink the medication through a straw.”
- 494.** A health care provider’s prescription reads “ampicillin sodium 125 mg IV every 6 hours.” The medication label reads “1 g and reconstitute with 7.4 mL of bacteriostatic water.” The nurse prepares to draw up how many milliliters to administer one dose?
1. 1.1 mL
  2. 0.54 mL
  3. 7.425 mL
  4. 0.925 mL
- 495.** A pediatric client with ventricular septal defect repair is placed on a maintenance dosage of digoxin (Lanoxin). The dosage is 0.07 mg/kg/day, and the client’s weight is 7.2 kg. The health care provider (HCP) prescribes the digoxin to be given twice daily. The nurse prepares how much digoxin to administer to

the client at each dose?

1. 0.5 mg
2. 2.5 mg
3. 0.25 mg
4. 0.37 mg

**496.** Sulfisoxazole (Gantrisin), 1 g orally four times daily, is prescribed for an adolescent with a urinary tract infection. The medication label reads “500-mg tablets.” The nurse has determined that the dosage prescribed is safe. The nurse administers how many tablets per dose to the adolescent?

1. 1/2 tablet
2. 1 tablet
3. 2 tablets
4. 3 tablets

**497.** Penicillin G procaine (Wycillin), 1,000,000 units IM (intramuscularly), is prescribed for a child with an infection. The medication label reads “1,200,000 units per 2 mL.” The nurse has determined that the dose prescribed is safe. The nurse administers how many milliliters per dose to the child?

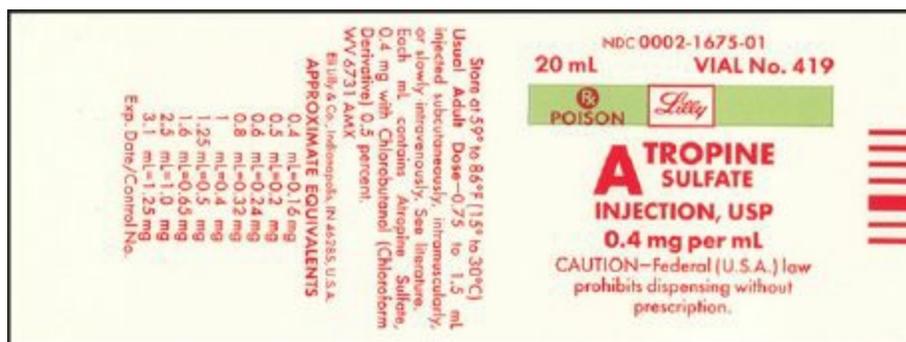
1. 0.8 mL
2. 1.2 mL
3. 1.44 mL
4. 1.66 mL

498. The nurse prepares to administer an intramuscular injection to a 4-month-old infant. The nurse selects which **best** site to administer the injection?

1. Ventrogluteal
2. Dorsal gluteal
3. Rectus femoris
4. Vastus lateralis

499. Atropine sulfate, 0.6 mg intramuscularly, is prescribed for a child preoperatively. The nurse has determined that the dose prescribed is safe and prepares to administer how many milliliters to the child? **Fill in the blank (refer to figure).** ❖

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL



## ANSWERS

493. 3

**Rationale:** The nurse would teach the parent to avoid putting medications in foods because it may give an unpleasant taste to the food, and the child may refuse to accept the same food in the future. In addition, the child

may not consume the entire serving and would not receive the required medication dosage. The mother should provide comfort measures immediately after medication administration, such as touching, holding, cuddling, and providing a favorite toy. The mother should offer juice, a soft drink, or a frozen juice bar to the child after the child swallows the medication. If the taste of the medication is unpleasant, the child should pinch the nose and drink the medication through a straw.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select the incorrect statement made by the mother. Read each statement carefully and think about the statement that may be unsafe and may not provide an accurate dose to the child. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Medication administration guidelines** for children

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 591.

**494. 4**

**Rationale:** Convert 1 g to milligrams. In the metric system, to convert larger to smaller, multiply by 1000 or move the decimal point three places to the right:

$$1 \text{ g} = 1000 \text{ mg}$$

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Volume} = \frac{125 \text{ mg}}{1000 \text{ mg}} \times 7.4 \text{ mL} = 0.925 \text{ mL per dose}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, milliliters per dose. Convert grams to milligrams first. Next, use the formula to determine the correct dose, knowing that when reconstituted, 1000 mg = 7.4 mL. Verify the answer using a calculator.

**Review: Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry et al (2012), pp. 494-495.

**495. 3**

**Rationale:** Calculate the daily dosage by weight first:

$$0.07 \text{ mg/day} \times 7.2 \text{ kg} = 0.5 \text{ mg/day}$$

The HCP prescribes digoxin twice daily; two doses in 24 hours will be administered:

$$\frac{0.5 \text{ mg/day}}{2 \text{ doses}} = 0.25 \text{ mg for each dose}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, mg per dose, and note that the question states *twice daily* and *each dose*. Calculate the dosage per day by weight first, and then determine the milligrams per each dose by dividing the total daily dose by 2. Verify the answer using a calculator.

**Review: Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 576-577.

**496. 3**

**Rationale:** Change 1 g to milligrams, knowing that 1000 mg = 1g. Also, when converting from grams to milligrams (larger to smaller), move the decimal point three places to the right:

$$1 \text{ g} = 1000 \text{ mg}$$

Next, use the formula to calculate the correct dose.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Tablet} = \frac{1000 \text{ mg}}{500 \text{ mg}} \times \text{Tablet} = 2 \text{ tablets}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, tablets per dose. Convert grams to milligrams first. Next, use the formula to determine the correct dose and verify the answer using a calculator.

**Review:** **Medication calculations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 574-575.

497. 4

**Rationale:** Use the medication calculation formula.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Volume} = \frac{1,000,000}{1,200,000} \times 2 \text{ mL} = 1.66 \text{ mL per dose}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, milliliters per dose. Use the formula to determine the correct dose, and verify the answer using a calculator.

**Review:** Medication calculations

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 576-577.

498. 4

**Rationale:** Intramuscular injection sites are selected on the basis of the child's age and muscle development of the child. The vastus lateralis is the only safe muscle group to use for intramuscular injection in a 4-month-old infant.

The sites identified in options 1, 2, and 3 are unsafe.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*, and focus on the age of the child identified in the question.

Thinking about the physiological development of the muscle groups in an infant at 4 months of age will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Pediatric medication administration guidelines

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), p. 1035.

❖ 499. 1.5 mL

**Rationale:** Use the formula for calculating the medication dose.

**Formula:**

$$\frac{\text{Desired}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Volume} = \frac{0.6 \text{ mg}}{0.4 \text{ mg}} \times 1 \text{ mL} = 1.5 \text{ mL}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the milliliters to be administered. Note that the medication label indicates that there is 0.4 mg/mL. Use the formula to determine the correct dose, and verify the answer using a calculator.

**Review:** **Medication administration guidelines**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medications/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), p. 494.

# UNIT VIII



## Integumentary Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**burn** Cell destruction of the layers of the skin caused by heat, friction, electricity, radiation, or chemicals.

**carbon monoxide poisoning** Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that has an affinity for hemoglobin 200 times greater than that of oxygen.

Poisoning occurs from the inhalation of carbon monoxide. Oxygen molecules are displaced and carbon monoxide reversibly binds to hemoglobin to form carboxyhemoglobin. Tissue hypoxia results.

**deep full-thickness burn** Injury extends beyond the skin into underlying fascia and tissues, and muscle, bone, and tendons are damaged.

**deep partial-thickness burn** Injury extends deep into the dermis.

**full-thickness burn** Involves injury and destruction of the epidermis and the dermis.

**herpes zoster (shingles)** An acute viral infection of the nerve structure caused by varicella-zoster. Herpes zoster is contagious to individuals who never had chickenpox and have not been vaccinated against the disease.

**pressure ulcer** Area of tissue damage that occurs as a result of skin and underlying soft tissue compression from pressure between a surface and a bony prominence.

**shingles** Same as the herpes zoster infection. An acute viral infection of the nerve structure caused by varicella-zoster, shingles is contagious to individuals who never had chickenpox and have not been vaccinated against the disease.

**skin cancer** A malignant lesion of the skin that may or may not metastasize.

**smoke inhalation injury** Respiratory injury that occurs due to inhalation of products of combustion during a fire.

**superficial partial-thickness burn** Involves injury that extends into the dermis.

**superficial-thickness burn** Involves injury to the epidermis.

## Pyramid to Success

The Pyramid to Success focuses on the concept that the integumentary system provides the first line of defense against infections. Focus is on the protective measures necessary to prevent infection, including infection with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). Pyramid Points address the risk factors related to the development of integumentary disorders, and the preventive measures related to skin cancer. Also described are the emergency measures related to a client with a burn, fluid resuscitation, monitoring for complications, and skin grafting. Psychosocial issues relate to the body image disturbances that can occur as the result of an integumentary disorder.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Consulting with members of the health care team regarding treatments

Establishing priorities of care

Handling of hazardous and infectious materials

Instituting standard and other precautions

Maintaining confidentiality related to the disorder

Making referrals to appropriate health care providers

Obtaining informed consent for treatments and procedures

Practicing asepsis techniques and preventing infection

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Implementing disease prevention measures

Performing physical assessment techniques for the integumentary system

Promoting health screening and health promotion programs to prevent skin disorders

Providing instructions to the client regarding prevention measures and care for an  
integumentary disorder

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

Addressing end-of-life issues

Discussing unexpected body image changes

Identifying coping mechanisms

Identifying situational role changes

Using support systems

## **Physiological Integrity**

Assessing for alterations in body systems

Providing adequate nutrition for healing

Providing basic care and comfort

Providing emergency care

Monitoring for expected effects of treatments

Monitoring for fluid and electrolyte imbalances and other complications

Monitoring laboratory values



## CHAPTER 50

# Integumentary System

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A burn client undergoes autograft to the lower right leg. What should the nurse do when caring for the graft site?

*Answer located on p. 575.*

### I. Anatomy and Physiology

A. The skin is the largest sensory organ of the body, with a surface area of 15 to 20 square feet and a weight of about 9 lb.

### B. Functions

1. Acts as the first line of defense against infections 
2. Protects underlying tissues and organs from injury
3. Receives stimuli from the external environment; detects touch, pressure, pain, and temperature stimuli; relays information to the nervous system
4. Maintains normal body temperature

5. Excretes salts, water, and organic wastes
6. Protects the body from excessive water loss
7. Synthesizes vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, which converts to calcitriol, for normal calcium metabolism
8. Stores nutrients

### C. Layers

1. Epidermis
2. Dermis
3. Hypodermis (subcutaneous fat)

### D. Epidermal appendages

1. Nails
2. Hair
3. Glands
  - a. Sebaceous
  - b. Sweat

### E. Normal bacterial flora

1. Types of normal bacterial flora include the following: 
  - a. Gram-positive and gram-negative staphylococci
  - b. *Pseudomonas* sp.
  - c. *Streptococcus* sp.
2. Organisms are shed with normal exfoliation.
3. A pH of 4.2 to 5.6 halts the growth of bacteria.

## **II. Risk Factors for Integumentary Disorders ▲**

- A.** Exposure to chemical and environmental pollutants
- B.** Exposure to radiation
- C.** Race and age
- D.** Exposure to the sun or use of indoor tanning
- E.** Lack of personal hygiene habits
- F.** Use of harsh soaps or other harsh products
- G.** Some medications, such as long-term glucocorticoid use or herbal preparations
- H.** Nutritional deficiencies
- I.** Moderate to severe emotional stress
- J.** Infection, with injured areas as the potential entry points for infection
- K.** Repeated injury and irritation
- L.** Genetic predisposition
- M.** Systemic illnesses

## **III. Psychosocial Impact ▲**

- A.** Change in body image, decreased general well-being, and decreased self-esteem
- B.** Social isolation and fear of rejection (because of embarrassment about changes in skin appearance)
- C.** Restrictions in physical activity
- D.** Pain
- E.** Disruption or loss of employment

**F.** Cost of medications, hospitalizations, and follow-up care including dressing supplies

## **IV. Phases of Wound Healing**

### **A. Phases**

1. **Inflammatory:** Begins at the time of injury and lasts 3 to 5 days; manifestations include local edema, pain, redness, and warmth.
2. **Fibroblastic:** Begins the fourth day after injury and lasts 2 to 4 weeks; scar tissue forms and granulation tissue forms in the tissue bed.
3. **Maturation:** Begins as early as 3 weeks after the injury and may last for 1 year; scar tissue becomes thinner and is firm and inelastic on palpation.

### **B. Healing by intention**

1. **First intention:** Wound edges are approximated and held in place (i.e., with sutures) until healing occurs; wound is easily closed and dead space is eliminated.
2. **Second intention:** This type of healing occurs with injuries or wounds that have tissue loss and require gradual filling in of the dead space with connective tissue.
3. **Third intention:** This type of healing involves delayed primary closure and occurs with wounds that are intentionally left open for several days for irrigation or removal of debris and exudates; once debris has been removed and inflammation resolves, the wound is closed by first intention.

**C.** Types of wound drainage: Refer to [Box 50-1](#)

## Serous

- Clear or straw colored
- Occurs as a normal part of the healing process

## Serosanguineous

- Pink colored due to the presence of a small amount of blood cells mixed with serous drainage
- Occurs as a normal part of the healing process

## Sanguineous

- Red drainage from trauma to a blood vessel
- May occur with wound cleansing or other trauma to the wound bed
- Sanguineous drainage is uncommon in wounds

## Hemorrhaging

- Frank blood from a leaking blood vessel
- May require emergency treatment to control bleeding
- Hemorrhage is an abnormal wound exudate

## Purulent

- Yellow, gray, or green drainage due to infection in the wound

## V. Diagnostic Tests

### A. Skin biopsy

#### 1. Description

- a. Skin biopsy is the collection of a small piece of skin tissue for histopathological

study.

**b.** Methods include punch, excisional, and shave.

**2.** Preprocedure interventions

**a.** Verify informed consent has been obtained.

**b.** Cleanse site as prescribed.

**3.** Postprocedure interventions

**a.** Place specimen in the appropriate container and send to pathology laboratory for analysis.

**b.** Use surgically aseptic technique for biopsy site dressings.

**c.** Assess the biopsy site for bleeding and infection.

**d.** Instruct the client to keep dressing in place for at least 8 hours, and then clean daily and use antibiotic ointment as prescribed (sutures are usually removed in 7 to 10 days). ▲

**e.** Instruct the client to report signs of excessive drainage or redness or other signs of infection.

**B.** Skin/wound cultures

**1.** A small skin culture sample is obtained with a sterile applicator and the appropriate type of culture tube (e.g., bacterial or viral). Methods include scraping, punch biopsy, and collecting fluid.

**2.** Postprocedure intervention

**a.** Viral culture is placed immediately on ice.

**b.** Sample is sent to laboratory to identify an existing organism.

**!** Obtain skin culture samples or any other type of culture specimens before instituting antibiotic therapy.

### C. Wood's light examination

1. Description: Skin is viewed under ultraviolet light through a special glass (Wood's glass) to identify superficial infections of the skin.
2. Preprocedure intervention: Darken the room before the examination.
3. Postprocedure intervention: Assist the client during adjustment from the darkened room.

### D. Diascopy

1. Technique allows clearer inspection of lesions by eliminating the erythema caused by increased blood flow to the area.
2. A glass slide is pressed over the lesion, causing blanching and revealing the lesion more clearly.

E. Skin assessment: See [Chapter 25](#).

## VI. *Candida albicans*

### A. Description

1. A superficial fungal infection of the skin and mucous membranes
2. Also known as a yeast infection, or *thrush* when it occurs in the mouth
3. Risk factors include immunosuppression, such as in clients with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; cancer clients receiving chemotherapy; clients undergoing long-term antibiotic therapy; clients with diabetes mellitus; and obese

clients.

4. Common areas of occurrence include the mucous membranes of the mouth, perineum, vagina, axilla, and under the breasts.

## B. Assessment

1. Skin: Red and irritated appearance that itches and stings
2. Mucous membranes of the mouth: Red and whitish patches

## C. Interventions ▲

1. Teach the client to keep skin fold areas clean and dry.
2. For the hospitalized client, inspect skin fold areas frequently, turn and reposition the client frequently, and keep the skin and bed linens clean and dry.
3. Provide frequent mouth care as prescribed and avoid irritating products.
4. Provide food and fluids that are tepid in temperature and nonirritating to mucous membranes.
5. Antifungal medications may be prescribed.

## VII. Herpes Zoster (Shingles) ▲

### A. Description

1. With a history of chickenpox, shingles is caused by reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus; shingles can occur during any immunocompromised state in a client with a history of chickenpox.
2. The dormant virus is located in the dorsal nerve root ganglia of the sensory cranial and spinal nerves.
3. Herpes zoster eruptions occur in a segmental distribution on the skin area along

the infected nerve and show up after several days of discomfort in the area.

4. Diagnosis is determined by visual examination, and by Tzanck smear and viral culture that identify the organism.
5. Postherpetic neuralgia (severe pain) can remain after the lesions resolve.
6. Herpes zoster is contagious to individuals who never had chickenpox and who have not been vaccinated against the disease.
7. Herpes simplex virus is another type of virus; type 1 infection causes a cold sore (usually on the lip) and type 2 causes genital herpes (both types are contagious).

## **B. Assessment**

1. Unilaterally clustered skin vesicles along peripheral sensory nerves on the trunk, thorax, or face
2. Fever, malaise
3. Burning and pain
4. Paresthesia
5. Pruritus

## **C. Interventions**

1. Isolate the client because exudate from the lesions contains the virus (maintain standard and other precautions as appropriate, such as contact precautions).
2. Assess for signs and symptoms of infection, including skin infections and eye infections; skin necrosis can also occur.
3. Assess neurovascular status and seventh cranial nerve function; Bell's palsy is a complication.

4. Use an air mattress and bed cradle on the client's bed if hospitalized, and keep the environment cool; warmth and touch aggravate the pain.
5. Prevent the client from scratching and rubbing the affected area.
6. Instruct the client to wear lightweight, loose cotton clothing and to avoid wool and synthetic clothing.
7. Teach the client about the prescribed therapies; astringent compresses may be prescribed to relieve irritation and pain and to promote crust formation and healing.
8. Teach the client about measures to keep the skin clean to prevent infection.
9. Teach the client about topical treatment or antiviral medications if prescribed.
10. Zostavax, the vaccination for shingles, is recommended for adults 60 years of age and older to reduce the risk of occurrence and the associated long-term pain.
11. Antiviral medications may be prescribed; refer to [Chapter 71](#) for information on antiviral medications.

## **VIII. Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)**

### **A. Description**

1. Skin or wound becomes infected with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).
2. MRSA is also referred to as a health care-associated infection. See [Chapter 16](#) for additional types of health care-associated infections.
3. Infection can range from mild to severe and can present as folliculitis or furuncles.

4. Folliculitis is a superficial infection of the follicle caused by *Staphylococcus* and presents as a raised red rash and pustules; furuncles are also caused by *Staphylococcus* and occur deep in the follicle, presenting as very painful large raised bumps that may or may not have a pustule.
5. If MRSA infects the blood, sepsis, organ damage, and death can occur.

**!** MRSA is contagious and is spread to others by direct contact with infected skin or infected articles; for the client with MRSA, the infection can also be spread to other parts of the body.

**B. Assessment:** A culture and sensitivity test of the skin or wound confirms the presence of MRSA and leads to choice of appropriate antibiotic therapy.

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Maintain standard precautions and contact precautions as appropriate to prevent spread of infection to others.
2. Monitor the client closely for signs of further infection, which may result in systemic illness or organ damage.
3. Administer antibiotic therapy as prescribed.
4. For additional information on MRSA, refer to [Chapters 16](#) and [48](#).

## **IX. Erysipelas and Cellulitis**

**A. Description**

1. Erysipelas is an acute, superficial, rapidly spreading inflammation of the dermis and lymphatics caused by group A *Streptococcus*, which enters the tissue via an

abrasion, bite, trauma, or wound.

2. Cellulitis is an infection of the dermis and underlying hypodermis; the causative organism is usually group A *Streptococcus* or *Staphylococcus aureus*.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Pain and tenderness
2. Erythema and warmth
3. Edema
4. Fever

## **C. Interventions**

1. Promote rest of the affected area.
2. Apply warm compresses as prescribed to promote circulation and to decrease discomfort, erythema, and edema.
3. Apply antibacterial dressings, ointments, or gels as prescribed.
4. Administer antibiotics as prescribed for an infection; obtain a culture of the area before initiating the antibiotics.

## **X. Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, and Poison Sumac**

- ### **A. Description:** A dermatitis that develops from contact with urushiol from poison ivy, oak, or sumac plants

## **B. Assessment**

1. Papulovesicular lesions
2. Severe pruritus

## **C. Interventions**

1. Cleanse the skin of the plant oils immediately. ▲
2. Apply cool, wet compresses to relieve the itching.
3. Apply topical products to relieve the itching and discomfort.
4. Topical or oral glucocorticoids may be prescribed for severe reactions.

## **XI. Bites and Stings** ▲

### **A. Spider bites**

1. Almost all types of spider bites are venomous and most are not harmful, but bites or stings from brown recluse spiders, black widow spiders, and tarantulas (and from scorpions, bees, and wasps as well) can produce toxic reactions in humans.
2. Brown recluse spider
  - a. Bite can cause a skin lesion, a necrotic wound, or systemic effects from the toxin (loxoscelism).
  - b. Application of ice to decrease enzyme activity of the venom and limit tissue necrosis should be done immediately and intermittently for up to 4 days after the bite.
  - c. Topical antiseptics and antibiotics may be necessary if the site becomes infected.
3. Black widow spider
  - a. Bite causes a small red papule.
  - b. Venom causes neurotoxicity.
  - c. Ice is applied immediately to inhibit the action of the neurotoxin.

**d.** Systemic toxicity can occur and the victim may require supportive therapy in the hospital.

#### **4. Tarantulas**

**a.** Bite causes swelling, redness, numbness, lymph inflammation, and pain at the bite site.

**b.** The tarantula launches its barbed hairs, which penetrate the skin and eyes of the victim, producing a severe inflammatory reaction.

**c.** Tarantula hairs are removed as soon as possible, using sticky tape to pull hairs from the skin, and the skin is thoroughly irrigated; saline irrigations are done for eye exposure.

**d.** The involved extremity is elevated and immobilized to reduce pain and swelling.

**e.** Antihistamines and topical or systemic corticosteroids may be prescribed; tetanus prophylaxis is necessary.

#### **B. Scorpion stings**

**1.** Scorpions inject venom into the victim through a stinging apparatus on their tail.

**2.** Most stings cause local pain, inflammation, and mild systemic reactions that are treated with analgesics, wound care, and supportive treatment.

**3.** The bark scorpion can inflict a severe and fatal systemic response; the venom is neurotoxic; the victim should be taken to the emergency department immediately (an antivenom is administered for bark scorpion bites).

#### **C. Bees and wasps**

1. Stings usually cause a wheal and flare reaction.
2. Emergency care involves quick removal of the stinger and application of an ice pack.
3. The stinger is removed by gently scraping or brushing it off with the edge of a needle or similar object; tweezers are not used because there is a risk of pinching the venom sac.
4. If the victim is allergic to the venom of a bee or wasp, a severe allergic response can occur (hives, pruritus, swelling of the lips and tongue) that can progress to life-threatening anaphylaxis; immediate emergency care is required.
5. Individuals who are allergic should carry an EpiPen (epinephrine autoinjector) for self-administration of intramuscular epinephrine if a bee or wasp sting occurs.

#### **D. Snake bites**

1. Some snakes are venomous and can cause a serious systemic reaction in the victim.
2. The victim should be immediately moved to a safe area away from the snake and should rest to decrease venom circulation; the extremity is immobilized and kept below the level of the heart.
3. Constricting clothing and jewelry are removed before swelling occurs.
4. The victim is kept warm and is not allowed to consume caffeinated or alcoholic beverages, which may speed absorption of the venom.
5. If transport to the emergency department is not done immediately, a constricting band may be applied proximal to the wound to slow the venom circulation;

monitor the circulation frequently and loosen the band if edema occurs.

6. The wound is not incised or sucked to remove the venom; ice is not applied to the wound.
7. Emergency care in a hospital is required as soon as possible; an antivenom may be administered along with supportive care.

 For spider bites, scorpion bites, or other stings or bites, the Poison Control Center should be contacted as soon as possible to determine the best initial management.

## **XII. Frostbite**

### **A. Description**

1. Frostbite is damage to tissues and blood vessels as a result of prolonged exposure to cold.
2. Fingers, toes, face, nose, and ears often are affected.

### **B. Assessment**

1. First-degree: Involves white plaque surrounded by a ring of hyperemia and edema
2. Second-degree: Large, clear fluid-filled blisters with partial-thickness skin necrosis
3. Third-degree: Involves the formation of small hemorrhagic blisters, usually followed by eschar formation involving the hypodermis requiring debridement.
4. Fourth-degree: No blisters or edema noted; full-thickness necrosis with visible tissue loss extending into muscle and bone, which may result in gangrene. Amputation may be required.

## C. Interventions

1. Rewarm the affected part rapidly and continuously with a warm water bath or towels at 104° F to 107.6° F (40° C to 42° C) to thaw the frozen part.
2. Handle the affected area gently and immobilize.
3. Avoid using dry heat, and never rub or massage the part, which may result in further tissue damage.
4. The rewarming process may be painful; analgesics may be necessary.
5. Avoid compression of the injured tissues and apply only loose and nonadherent sterile dressings.
6. Monitor for signs of compartment syndrome.
7. Tetanus prophylaxis is necessary, and topical and systemic antibiotics may be prescribed.
8. Debridement of necrotic tissue may be necessary; amputation may be necessary if gangrene develops.

## XIII. Actinic Keratoses

- A. Actinic keratoses are caused by chronic exposure to the sun and appear as rough, scaly, red, or brown lesions that are usually found on the face, scalp, arms, and backs of the hands.
- B. Lesions can progress to squamous cell carcinoma.
- C. Treatment includes medications, excision, cryotherapy, curettage, and laser therapy.
- D. See [Chapter 51](#) for information on medications to treat this disorder.

## XIV. Skin Cancer ▲

### A. Description

1. Skin cancer is a malignant lesion of the skin, which may or may not metastasize.
2. Overexposure to the sun is a primary cause; other causes and conditions that place the individual at risk include chronic skin damage from repeated injury and irritation, genetic predisposition, ionizing radiation, light-skinned race, age older than 60 years, an outdoor occupation, and exposure to chemical carcinogens.
3. Diagnosis is confirmed by skin biopsy.

### B. Types

1. Basal cell: Basal cell cancer arises from the basal cells contained in the epidermis; metastasis is rare but underlying tissue destruction can progress to organ tissue.
2. Squamous cell: Squamous cell cancer is a tumor of the epidermal keratinocytes and can infiltrate surrounding structures and metastasize to lymph nodes.
3. Melanoma: Melanoma may occur any place on the body, especially where birthmarks or new moles are apparent; it is highly metastatic to the brain, lungs, bone, and liver, with survival depending on early diagnosis and treatment.

### C. Assessment (Table 50-1)

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## TABLE 50-1 Appearance of Skin Cancer Lesions

### Basal Cell Carcinoma



Waxy border  
Papule, red, central crater  
Metastasis is rare

### Squamous Cell Carcinoma



Oozing, bleeding,  
crusting lesion  
Potentially metastatic  
Larger tumors  
associated with a higher  
risk for metastasis

### Melanoma



Irregular, circular,  
bordered lesion with  
hues of tan, black, or blue  
Rapid infiltration into  
tissue, highly metastatic

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Figures from Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

1. Change in color, size, or shape of preexisting lesion
2. Pruritus
3. Local soreness

 The client needs to be informed about the risks associated with overexposure to the sun and taught about the importance of performing monthly self-skin assessments.

#### D. Interventions

1. Instruct the client regarding the risk factors and preventive measures.
2. Instruct the client to perform monthly self-skin assessments and to monitor for lesions that do not heal or that change characteristics.
3. Advise the client to have moles or lesions removed that are subject to chronic irritation.
4. Advise the client to avoid contact with chemical irritants.
5. Instruct the client to wear layered clothing and use sunscreen lotions with an appropriate skin protection factor when outdoors.
6. Instruct the client to avoid sun exposure between 10 AM and 4 PM.
7. Management may include surgical or nonsurgical interventions; if medication is prescribed provide instructions about its use.
8. Assist with surgical management, which may include cryosurgery, curettage and electrodesiccation, or surgical excision of the lesion.

## **XV. Psoriasis**

### **A. Description**

1. Psoriasis is a chronic, noninfectious skin inflammation involving keratin synthesis that results in psoriatic patches; however, a break in skin integrity can lead to an infection in the affected area.
2. Various forms exist, with psoriasis vulgaris being the most common.
3. Possible causes of the disorder include stress, trauma, infection, hormonal changes, obesity, an autoimmune reaction, and climate changes; a genetic predisposition may also be a cause.
4. The disorder may be exacerbated by the use of certain medications.
5. Koebner phenomenon is the development of psoriatic lesions at a site of injury, such as a scratched or sunburned area.
6. In some individuals with psoriasis, arthritis develops that leads to joint changes similar to those seen in rheumatoid arthritis.
7. The goal of therapy is to reduce cell proliferation and inflammation, and the type of therapy prescribed depends on the extent of the disease and the client's response to treatment.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Pruritus
2. Shedding: Silvery, white scales on a raised, reddened, round plaque that usually affects the scalp, knees, elbows, extensor surfaces of arms and legs, and sacral regions

3. Yellow discoloration, pitting, and thickening of the nails are noted if they are affected.
  4. Joint inflammation with psoriatic arthritis
- C. Pharmacological therapy: Refer to [Chapter 51](#) for medications used to treat psoriasis.
- D. Interventions and client education 
1. Provide emotional support to the client with associated altered body image and decreased self-esteem.
  2. Instruct the client in the use of prescribed therapies and to avoid over-the-counter medications.
  3. Instruct the client not to scratch the affected areas and to keep the skin lubricated as prescribed to minimize itching.
  4. Monitor for and instruct the client to recognize the signs and symptoms of secondary skin problems, such as infection, and to report these signs.
  5. Instruct the client to wear light cotton clothing over affected areas.
  6. Assist the client to identify ways to reduce stress if stress is a predisposing factor.

## **XVI. Acne Vulgaris**

### **A. Description**

1. Acne is a chronic skin disorder that usually begins in puberty and is more common in males; lesions develop on the face, neck, chest, shoulders, and back.
2. Acne requires active treatment for control until it resolves.
3. The types of lesions include comedones (open and closed), pustules, papules, and

nodules.

4. The exact cause is unknown but may include androgenic influence on sebaceous glands, increased sebum production, and proliferation of *Propionibacterium acnes* (the enzymes reduce lipids to irritating fatty acids).
5. Exacerbations coincide with the menstrual cycle in female clients because of hormonal activity; oily skin and a genetic predisposition may be contributing factors.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Closed comedones are whiteheads and noninflamed lesions that develop as follicles and enlarge, with the retention of horny cells.
2. Open comedones are blackheads that result from continuing accumulation of horny cells and sebum, which dilates the follicles.
3. Pustules and papules result as the inflammatory process progresses.
4. Nodules result from total disintegration of a comedone and subsequent collapse of the follicle.
5. Deep scarring can result from nodules.

## **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Instruct the client in prescribed skin-cleansing methods, with emphasis on not scrubbing the face and using only prescribed topical agents.
2. Instruct the client in the administration of topical or oral medications as prescribed.
3. Instruct the client not to squeeze, prick, or pick at lesions.

4. Instruct the client to use products labeled noncomedogenic and cosmetics that are water-based, and to avoid contact with products with an excessive oil base.
5. Instruct the client on the importance of follow-up treatment.
6. Refer to [Chapter 51](#) for information on the medications used to treat acne.

## **XVII. Stevens-Johnson Syndrome**

- A. A drug-induced skin reaction that occurs through an immunological response
- B. Similar to toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN), another drug-induced skin reaction that results in diffuse erythema and large blister formation on the skin and mucous membranes.
- C. May be mild or severe, and may cause vesicles, erosions, and crusts on the skin; if severe, systemic reactions occur that involve the respiratory system, renal system, and eyes, resulting in blindness.
- D. Most commonly occurs in clients with cancer who are receiving chemotherapy or immunotherapy
- E. Treatment includes immediate discontinuation of the medication causing the syndrome; antibiotics, corticosteroids, and supportive therapy may be necessary.

## **XVIII. Pressure Ulcer**

### **A. Description**

1. A pressure ulcer is an impairment of skin integrity.
2. A pressure ulcer can occur anywhere on the body; tissue damage results when the skin and underlying tissue are compressed between a bony prominence and an

external surface for an extended period of time.

3. The tissue compression restricts blood flow to the skin, which can result in tissue ischemia, inflammation, and necrosis; once a pressure ulcer forms, it is difficult to heal.
4. Prevention of skin breakdown in any part of the client's body is a major role for the nurse. ▲

**B. Risk factors** ▲

1. Skin pressure
2. Skin shearing and friction
3. Immobility
4. Malnutrition
5. Incontinence
6. Decreased sensory perception

**C. Assessment and staging** ([Table 50-2](#))

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**TABLE 50-2 Stages of Pressure Ulcers**

### Stage I



Skin is intact  
Area is red and does not blanch with external pressure  
Area may be painful, firm, soft, warmer or cooler compared with adjacent tissue

### Stage IV



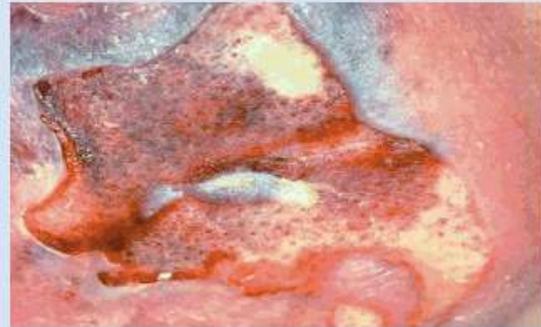
Full-thickness skin loss is present with exposed bone, tendon, or muscle  
Slough or eschar may be present  
Undermining and tunneling may develop

### Stage II



Skin is not intact  
Partial-thickness skin loss of the dermis occurs  
Presents as a shallow open ulcer with a red-pink wound bed or as intact or open/ruptured serum-filled blister

### Suspected Deep-Tissue Injury



Ischemic subcutaneous tissue injury under intact skin  
Appears purple or maroon colored  
May be painful, firm, or boggy

### Stage III



Full-thickness skin loss extends into the dermis and subcutaneous tissues, and slough may be present  
Subcutaneous tissue may be visible  
Undermining and tunneling may or may not be present

### Unstageable



Full-thickness tissue loss in which the wound bed is covered by slough and/or eschar  
The true depth, and therefore stage, of the wound cannot be determined until the slough and/or eschar is removed to visualize the wound bed

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Adapted from and figures from Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

#### D. Interventions

 **Avoid direct massage to a reddened skin area because massage can damage the capillary beds and cause tissue necrosis.**

1. Identify clients at risk for developing a pressure ulcer.
2. Institute measures to prevent pressure ulcers such as appropriate positioning, using pressure relief devices, ensuring adequate nutrition, and developing a plan for skin cleansing and care.
3. Perform frequent skin assessments and monitor for an alteration in skin integrity.
4. Keep the client's skin dry and the sheets wrinkle-free; if the client is incontinent, check the client frequently and change pads or any items placed under the client immediately after they are soiled.
5. Use creams and lotions to lubricate the skin and a barrier protection ointment for the incontinent client.
6. Turn and reposition the immobile client every 2 hours or more frequently if necessary; provide active and passive range of motion exercises at least every 8 hours.
7. If a pressure ulcer is present, record the location and size of the wound (length, width, depth), monitor and record the type and amount of exudates (a culture of

the exudate may be prescribed), and assess for undermining and tunneling.

8. Serosanguineous exudate (blood-tinged amber fluid) is expected for the first 48 hours; purulent exudates indicate colonization of the wound with bacteria.

9. Use agency protocols for skin assessment and management of a wound.

10. Treatment may include wound dressings and debridement; skin grafting may be necessary (Tables 50-3 and 50-4).

**TABLE 50-3 Types of Dressings and Mechanism of Action**

Dressing Type	Mechanism of Action
Wet-to-damp saline-moistened gauze	Mechanically removes necrotic debris
Continuous wet gauze	Wound is continually bathed with a prescribed solution; promotes dilution of exudates and softens dry eschar
Topical enzyme preparations	Provides proteolytic action on thick and adherent eschar; this causes breakdown of the denatured protein and more rapid separation of necrotic tissue
Moisture-retentive dressing	Spontaneous separation of necrotic tissue is promoted by autolysis

Data from Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

**TABLE 50-4 Types of Dressing Materials**

Type	Indications, Uses, Considerations	Frequency of Dressing Changes
Alginate	Provides hemostasis, debridement, absorption, and protection  Can be used as packing for deep wounds and for infected wounds  Requires a secondary dressing for securing	When dressing is saturated (every 3 to 5 days) or more frequently
Biological	Provides protection, and debridement after eschar removal	Topical growth factors: Changed

	<p>May be used for dormant and nonhealing wounds that do not respond to other topical therapies</p> <p>May be used for burns or before pigskin and cadaver skin grafts</p> <p>Conforms to uneven wound surfaces; reduces pain</p> <p>Requires a secondary dressing for securing</p>	<p>daily</p> <p>Skin substitutes: The need for dressing change varies</p>
Cotton gauze	<p>Continuous dry dressing provides absorption and protection</p> <p>Continuous wet dressing provides protection, a means for the delivery of topical treatment, and debridement</p> <p>Wet to damp dressing provides atraumatic mechanical debridement</p> <p>May be painful on removal</p>	<p>Clean base: every 12 to 24 hr</p> <p>Necrotic base: every 4 to 6 hr</p>
Foam	<p>Provides absorption, protection, insulation, and debridement</p> <p>Conforms to uneven wound surfaces</p> <p>Requires a secondary dressing for securing</p>	<p>When dressing is saturated or more frequently</p>
Hydrocolloidal	<p>Provides absorption, protection, and debridement</p> <p>Is waterproof and is painless on removal</p>	<p>Clean base: On leakage of exudates</p> <p>Necrotic base: Every 24 hr</p>
Hydrogel	<p>Provides absorption, protection, and debridement</p> <p>Conducive to use with topical agents</p> <p>Conforms to uneven wound surfaces but allows only partial wound visualization</p> <p>Requires a secondary dressing for securing</p> <p>Can promote the growth of <i>Pseudomonas</i> and other microorganisms</p>	<p>Clean base: every 24 hr</p> <p>Necrotic base: every 6 to 8 hr</p>
Adhesive transparent film	<p>Provides protection for partial-thickness lesions, debridement, and serves as a secondary (cover) dressing</p> <p>Provides good wound visualization</p> <p>Is waterproof and reduces pain</p> <p>Use is limited to superficial lesions</p> <p>Is nonabsorbent, adheres to normal and healing tissue</p> <p>Dressing may be difficult to apply</p>	<p>Clean base: On leakage of exudates</p> <p>Necrotic base: every 24 hr</p>

From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

**11.** Other treatments may include electrical stimulation to the wound area (increases blood vessel growth and stimulates granulation), vacuum-assisted wound closure

(removes infectious material from the wound and promotes granulation), hyperbaric oxygen therapy (administration of oxygen under high pressure raises tissue oxygen concentration), and the use of topical growth factors (biologically active substances that stimulate cell growth).

## **XIX. Burn Injuries (see Priority Nursing Actions)**

### **PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS!**

#### **Actions to Take in the Emergency Department for a Client with a Burn Injury**

- 1.** Assess for airway patency.
- 2.** Administer oxygen as prescribed.
- 3.** Obtain vital signs.
- 4.** Initiate an intravenous (IV) line and begin fluid replacement as prescribed.
- 5.** Elevate the extremities if no fractures are obvious.
- 6.** Keep the client warm and place the client on NPO status.

The primary goal for a burn injury is to maintain a patent airway, administer IV fluids to prevent hypovolemic shock, and preserve vital organ functioning. Therefore the priority action is to assess for airway patency and to maintain a patent airway.

The nurse then prepares to administer oxygen. The type of oxygen delivery system is prescribed by the health care provider. Oxygen is necessary to perfuse tissues and

organs. Vital signs should be assessed so that a baseline is obtained, which is needed for comparison of subsequent vital signs once fluid resuscitation is initiated. The nurse then initiates an IV line and begins fluid replacement as prescribed. The extremities are elevated (if no obvious fractures are present) to assist in preventing shock. The client is kept warm (using sterile linens) and is placed on NPO status because of the altered gastrointestinal function that occurs as a result of the burn injury. A Foley catheter may be inserted so that the response to the fluid resuscitation can be carefully monitored. Once these actions are taken the nurse performs a complete assessment, stays with the client, and monitors the client closely. In addition, tetanus toxoid may be prescribed for prophylaxis.

### ***Reference***

Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby, pp. 477, 481-482.

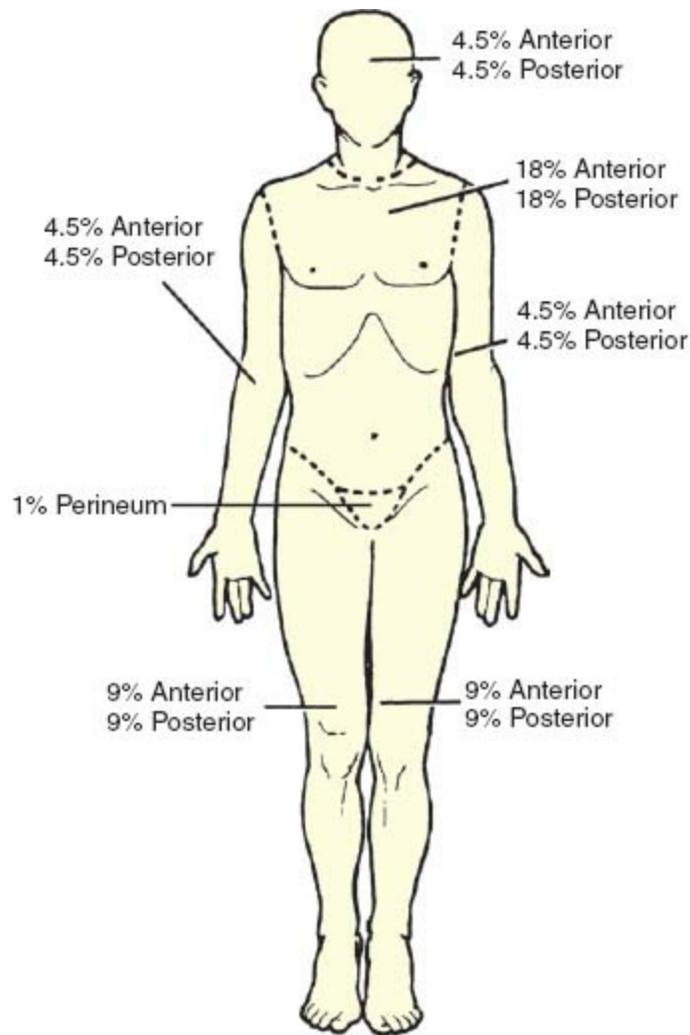
- A.** Description: Cell destruction of the layers of the skin caused by heat, friction, electricity, radiation, or chemicals.
- B.** Burn size
  - 1. Small burns: The response of the body to injury is localized to the injured area.
  - 2. Large or extensive burns:
    - a. Major or extensive burns consist of 25% or more of the total body surface area

for an adult and 10% or more of the total body surface for a child.

b. The response of the body to the injury is systemic.

c. The burn affects all major systems of the body.

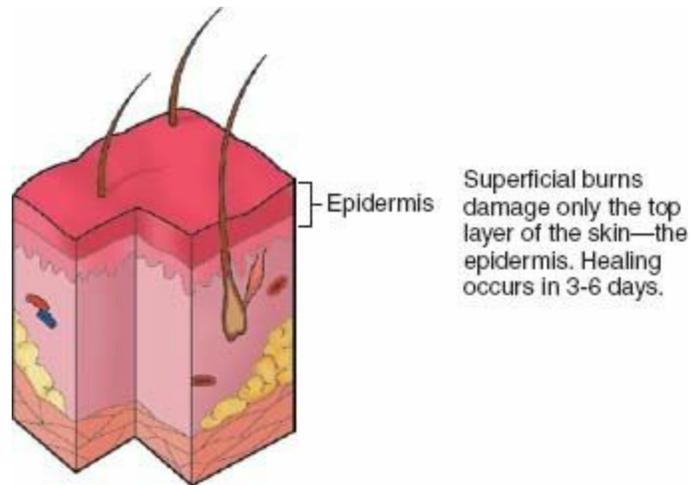
C. Estimating the extent of injury (Fig. 50-1) ▲



**FIGURE 50-1** The rule of nines for estimating burn percentage. (Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

D. Burn depth ▲

1. **Superficial-thickness burn** (Fig. 50-2)



**FIGURE 50-2** Tissues involved in superficial burns. (Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Involves injury to the epidermis; the blood supply to the dermis is still intact.
- b. Mild to severe erythema (pink to red) is present, but no blisters.
- c. Skin blanches with pressure.
- d. Burn is painful, with tingling sensation, and the pain is eased by cooling.
- e. Discomfort lasts about 48 hours; healing occurs in about 3 to 6 days.
- f. No scarring occurs and skin grafts are not required.

**2. Superficial partial-thickness burn (Fig. 50-3)**



**FIGURE 50-3** Typical appearance of superficial partial-thickness burn injury. (Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Involves injury deeper into the dermis; the blood supply is reduced.
- b. Large blisters may cover an extensive area.
- c. Edema is present.
- d. Mottled pink to red base and broken epidermis, with a wet, shiny, and weeping surface is characteristic.
- e. Burn is painful and sensitive to cold air.
- f. Heals in 10 to 21 days with no scarring, but some minor pigment changes may occur.
- g. Grafts may be used if the healing process is prolonged.

### 3. **Deep partial-thickness burn** (Fig. 50-4)



**FIGURE 50-4** Typical appearance of deep partial-thickness burn injury.

(Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Extends deeper into the skin dermis
- b. Blister formation usually does not occur because the dead tissue layer is thick and sticks to underlying viable dermis.
- c. Wound surface is red and dry with white areas in deeper parts.
- d. May or may not blanch and edema is moderate.
- e. Can convert to full-thickness burn if tissue damage increases with infection, hypoxia, or ischemia.
- f. Generally heals in 3 to 6 weeks, but scar formation results, and skin grafting may be necessary.

#### 4. **Full-thickness burn** (Fig. 50-5)



**FIGURE 50-5** Typical appearance of full-thickness burn injury. (Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Involves injury and destruction of the epidermis and the dermis; the wound will not heal by reepithelialization and grafting may be required.
- b. Appears as a dry, hard, leathery eschar (burn crust or dead tissue must slough off or be removed from the wound before healing can occur).
- c. Appears waxy white, deep red, yellow, brown, or black.
- d. Injured surface appears dry.
- e. Edema is present under the eschar.
- f. Sensation is reduced or absent because of nerve ending destruction.
- g. Healing may take weeks to months and depends on establishing an adequate blood supply.
- h. Burn requires removal of eschar and split- or full-thickness skin grafting.
- i. Scarring and wound contractures are likely to develop.

**5. Deep full-thickness burn** (Fig. 50-6)



**FIGURE 50-6** Typical appearance of deep full-thickness burn injury. (Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Injury extends beyond the skin into underlying fascia and tissues, and muscle, bone, and tendons are damaged.
- b. Injured area appears black and sensation is completely absent.
- c. Eschar is hard and inelastic.
- d. There is lack of pain because nerve endings have been destroyed.
- e. Healing takes months and grafts are required.

#### E. Age and general health

1. Mortality rates are higher for children younger than 4 years of age, particularly for children from birth to 1 year of age, and for clients older than 65 years.
2. Debilitating disorders, such as cardiac, respiratory, endocrine, and renal disorders, negatively influence the client's response to injury and treatment.
3. Mortality rate is higher when the client has a preexisting disorder at the time of the burn injury.

## F. Burn location ▲

1. Burns of the head, neck, and chest are associated with pulmonary complications.
2. Burns of the face are associated with corneal abrasion.
3. Burns of the ear are associated with auricular chondritis.
4. Hands and joints require intensive therapy to prevent disability.
5. The perineal area is prone to autocontamination by urine and feces.
6. Circumferential burns of the extremities can produce a tourniquet-like effect and lead to vascular compromise (compartment syndrome).
7. Circumferential thorax burns lead to inadequate chest wall expansion and pulmonary insufficiency.

## XX. Inhalation Injuries

### A. Smoke inhalation injury

1. Description: Respiratory injury that occurs when the victim inhales products of combustion during a fire.

 The airway is a priority concern in an inhalation injury.

### 2. Assessment ▲

- a. Facial burns
- b. Erythema
- c. Swelling of oropharynx and nasopharynx
- d. Singed nasal hairs
- e. Flaring nostrils

- f. Stridor, wheezing, and dyspnea
- g. Hoarse voice
- h. Sooty (carbonaceous) sputum and cough
- i. Tachycardia
- j. Agitation and anxiety

**B. Carbon monoxide poisoning**

**1. Description**

- a. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that has an affinity for hemoglobin 200 times greater than that of oxygen.
- b. Oxygen molecules are displaced and carbon monoxide reversibly binds to hemoglobin to form carboxyhemoglobin.
- c. Tissue hypoxia occurs.

**2. Assessment (Table 50-5) ▲**

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**TABLE 50-5 Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

Blood Level (%)	Clinical Manifestations
1-10	Normal level
11-20 (mild poisoning)	Headache Flushing Decreased visual acuity Decreased cerebral functioning Slight breathlessness
21-40 (moderate poisoning)	Headache Nausea and vomiting Drowsiness Tinnitus and vertigo Confusion and stupor

	Pale to reddish-purple skin Decreased blood pressure Increased and irregular heart rate
41-60 (severe poisoning)	Coma Seizures
61-80 (fatal poisoning)	Death

Modified from Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

### C. Direct thermal heat injury

#### 1. Description

- a. Thermal heat injury can occur to the lower airways by the inhalation of steam or explosive gases or the aspiration of scalding liquids.
- b. Injury can occur to the upper airways, which appear erythematous and edematous, with mucosal blisters and ulcerations.
- c. Mucosal edema can lead to upper airway obstruction, especially during the first 24 to 48 hours.
- d. All clients with head or neck burns should be monitored closely for the development of airway obstruction and are considered immediately for endotracheal intubation if obstruction occurs.

#### 2. Assessment

- a. Erythema and edema of the upper airways
- b. Mucosal blisters and ulcerations

## XXI. Pathophysiology of Burns

- A.** Following a burn, vasoactive substances are released from the injured tissue, and these substances cause an increase in capillary permeability, allowing the plasma to seep into the surrounding tissues.
- B.** The direct injury to the vessels increases capillary permeability (capillary permeability decreases 18 to 26 hours after the burn, but does not normalize until 2 to 3 weeks following injury).
- C.** Extensive burns result in generalized body edema and a decrease in circulating intravascular blood volume. ▲
- D.** The fluid losses result in a decrease in organ perfusion. ▲
- E.** The heart rate increases, cardiac output decreases, and blood pressure drops.
- F.** Initially, hyponatremia and hyperkalemia occur.
- G.** The hematocrit level increases as a result of plasma loss; this initial increase falls to below normal by the third to fourth day after the burn as a result of red blood cell damage and loss at the time of injury.
- H.** Initially, the body shunts blood from the kidneys, causing oliguria; then the body begins to reabsorb fluid, and diuresis of the excess fluid occurs over the next days to weeks.
- I.** Blood flow to the gastrointestinal tract is diminished, leading to intestinal ileus and gastrointestinal dysfunction.
- J.** Immune system function is depressed, resulting in immunosuppression and thus increasing the risk of infection and sepsis.
- K.** Pulmonary hypertension can develop, resulting in a decrease in the arterial oxygen

tension level and a decrease in lung compliance.

**L.** Evaporative fluid losses through the burn wound are greater than normal, and the losses continue until complete wound closure occurs.

**M.** If the intravascular space is not replenished with intravenously administered fluids, hypovolemic shock and ultimately death occur.

## XXII. Management of the Burn Injury

**A.** Resuscitation/emergent phase (Table 50-6)

**TABLE 50-6 Phases of Management of the Burn Injury**

Phase	Goal
<p><b>Resuscitation/Emergent Phase</b>            Begins at the time of injury Ends with the restoration of normal capillary permeability Duration usually 48 to 72 hr Includes prehospital care and emergency department care</p>	<p>The primary goal is to maintain a patent airway, administer intravenous fluids to prevent hypovolemic shock, and preserve vital organ functioning.</p>
<p><b>Resuscitative Phase</b>            Begins with the initiation of fluids Ends when capillary integrity returns to near-normal levels and large fluid shifts have decreased            Amount of fluid administered is based on client’s weight and extent of injury            (Most fluid replacement formulas are calculated from the time of injury and not from the time of arrival at the hospital)</p>	<p>The goal is to prevent shock by maintaining adequate circulating blood volume and maintaining vital organ perfusion.</p>
<p><b>Acute Phase</b>            Begins when the client is hemodynamically stable, capillary permeability is restored, and diuresis has begun            Usually begins 48 to 72 hr after time of injury            Focus on infection control, wound care, wound closure, nutritional support, pain management, physical therapy</p>	<p>The emphasis during this phase is placed on restorative therapy, and the phase continues until wound closure is achieved.</p>
<p><b>Rehabilitative Phase</b>            Overlaps acute phase of care Extends beyond hospitalization</p>	<p>The goals of this phase are designed so that the client can gain independence and achieve maximal function.</p>

### 1. Prehospital care

- a. Begins at the scene of the accident and ends when emergency care is obtained.
  - b. Remove the victim from the source of the burn.
  - c. Assess the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation.
  - d. Assess for associated trauma, including inhalation injury.
  - e. Conserve body heat.
  - f. Cover burns with sterile or clean cloths.
  - g. Remove constricting jewelry and clothing.
  - h. Insert intravenous (IV) access.
  - i. Transport to the emergency department.
2. Emergency department care is a continuation of care administered at the scene of the injury.
3. Major burns
- a. Evaluate the degree and extent of the burn and treat life-threatening conditions.
  - b. Ensure a patent airway and administer 100% oxygen as prescribed.
  - c. Monitor for respiratory distress and assess the need for intubation.
  - d. Assess the oropharynx for blisters and erythema; assess vocal quality and for singed nasal hairs and auscultate lung sounds.
  - e. Monitor arterial blood gases and carboxyhemoglobin levels.
  - f. For an inhalation injury, administer 100% oxygen via a tight-fitting nonrebreather face mask as prescribed until the carboxyhemoglobin level falls below 15%.
  - g. Initiate peripheral IV access to nonburned skin proximal to any extremity burn,

or prepare for the insertion of a central venous line as prescribed.

**h.** Assess for hypovolemia and prepare to administer fluids intravenously to maintain fluid balance.

**i.** Monitor vital signs closely.

**j.** Insert a Foley catheter as prescribed, and maintain urine output at 30 to 50 mL/hour.

**k.** Maintain NPO status.

**l.** Insert a nasogastric tube as prescribed to remove gastric secretions and prevent aspiration.

**m.** Administer tetanus prophylaxis as prescribed.

**n.** Administer pain medication, as prescribed, by the IV route.

**o.** Prepare the client for an escharotomy or fasciotomy as prescribed.

#### **4.** Minor burns

**a.** Administer pain medication as prescribed.

**b.** Instruct the client in the use of oral analgesics as prescribed.

**c.** Administer tetanus prophylaxis as prescribed.

**d.** Administer wound care as prescribed, which may include cleansing, debriding loose tissue, and removing any damaging agents, followed by the application of topical antimicrobial cream and a sterile dressing.

**e.** Instruct the client in follow-up care, including active range-of-motion exercises and wound care treatments.

### **B.** Resuscitative phase (see [Table 50-6](#))

1. Fluid resuscitation (Table 50-7) ▲

**TABLE 50-7 Common Fluid Resuscitation Formulas for First 24 Hours after a Burn Injury**

Formula	Solution	Amount
Modified Brooke	5% albumin in isotonic saline Lactated Ringer's without dextrose	0.5 mL to 15 mL/kg/% TBSA burn
Parkland (Baxter)	Crystalloid only (lactated Ringer's)	4 mL/kg/% TBSA burn
Modified Parkland	Crystalloid only (lactated Ringer's)	4 mL/kg/% TBSA burn + 15 mL/m <sup>2</sup> of TBSA

TBSA, Total body surface area.

From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

- a. The amount of fluid administered depends on how much IV fluid per hour is required to maintain a urinary output of 30 to 50 mL/hour.
- b. Successful fluid resuscitation is evaluated by stable vital signs, an adequate urine output, palpable peripheral pulses, and intact level of consciousness and thought processes.
- c. IV fluid replacement may be titrated (adjusted) on the basis of urinary output plus serum electrolyte levels to meet the perfusion needs of the client with burns.
- d. If the hemoglobin and hematocrit levels decrease or if the urinary output exceeds 50 mL/hour, the rate of IV fluid administration may be decreased.

 **Urinary output is the most reliable and most sensitive noninvasive assessment parameter for cardiac output and tissue perfusion.**

## **2. Interventions**

- a.** Monitor for tracheal or laryngeal edema and administer respiratory treatments as prescribed.
- b.** Monitor pulse oximetry and prepare for arterial blood gases and carboxyhemoglobin levels if inhalation injury is suspected.
- c.** Elevate the head of the bed to 30 degrees or more for burns of the face and head.
- d.** Initiate electrocardiographic monitoring.
- e.** Monitor temperature and assess for infection.
- f.** Initiate protective isolation techniques; maintain strict hand washing; use sterile sheets and linens when caring for the client; and use gloves, cap, masks, shoe covers, scrub clothes, and plastic aprons.
- g.** Clip body hair around wound margins.
- h.** Monitor daily weights, expecting a weight gain of 15 to 20 pounds in the first 72 hours.
- i.** Monitor gastric output and pH levels and for gastric discomfort and bleeding, indicating a stress ulcer.
- j.** Administer antacids, H<sub>2</sub> receptor antagonists, and antiulcer medications as prescribed to prevent a stress ulcer.
- k.** Auscultate bowel sounds for ileus and monitor for abdominal distention and

gastrointestinal dysfunction.

**l.** Monitor stools for occult blood.

**m.** Obtain urine specimen for myoglobin and hemoglobin levels.

**n.** Monitor IV fluids and hourly intake and output to determine the adequacy of fluid replacement therapy; notify the HCP if urine output is less than 30 or greater than 50 mL/hour.

**o.** Elevate circumferential burns of the extremities on pillows above the level of the heart to reduce dependent edema if no obvious fractures are present; diuretics increase the risk of hypovolemia and are generally avoided as a means of decreasing edema.

**p.** Monitor pulses and capillary refill of the affected extremities and assess perfusion of the distal extremity with a circumferential burn.

**q.** Prepare to obtain chest x-rays and other radiographs to rule out fractures or associated trauma.

**r.** Keep the room temperature warm.

**s.** Place the client on an air-fluidized bed or other special mattress and use a bed cradle to keep sheets off the client's skin.

### **3.** Pain management

**a.** Administer opioid analgesics as prescribed by the IV route.

**b.** Avoid administering medication by the oral route because of the possibility of gastrointestinal dysfunction.

**c.** Medicate the client as prescribed and before painful procedures.

**⚠** Avoid the intramuscular or subcutaneous medication route for medication administration because absorption through the soft tissue is unreliable when hypovolemia and large fluid shifts occur.

#### 4. Nutrition

- a. Proper nutrition is essential to promote wound healing and prevent infection.
- b. The basal metabolic rate is 40 to 100 times higher than normal with a burn injury.
- c. Maintain NPO status until bowel sounds are heard, and then advance to clear liquids as prescribed.
- d. Nutrition may be provided via enteral tube feeding or parenteral nutrition through a central line.
- e. Provide a diet high in protein, carbohydrates, fats, and vitamins.
- f. Monitor calorie intake.

#### 5. Escharotomy

- a. A lengthwise incision is made through the burn eschar to relieve constriction and pressure and to improve circulation.
- b. Escharotomy is performed for circulatory compromise caused by circumferential burns.
- c. Escharotomy is performed at the bedside without anesthesia because nerve endings have been destroyed by the burn injury.
- d. Escharotomy can be performed on the thorax to improve ventilation.
- e. Following the escharotomy, assess pulses, color, movement, and sensation of

affected extremity and control any bleeding with pressure.

f. Pack the incision gently with fine mesh gauze as prescribed after escharotomy.

g. Apply topical antimicrobial agents to the area as prescribed.

#### 6. Fasciotomy

a. An incision is made extending through the subcutaneous tissue and fascia.

b. The procedure is performed if adequate tissue perfusion does not return following an escharotomy.

c. Fasciotomy is performed in the operating room with the client under general anesthesia.

d. Following the procedure, assess pulses, color, movement, and sensation of affected extremity and control any bleeding with pressure.

e. Apply topical antimicrobial agents and dressings to the area, as prescribed.

#### C. Acute phase (see [Table 50-6](#)) ▲

1. Continue with protective isolation techniques.

2. Provide wound care as prescribed and prepare for wound closure.

3. Provide pain management.

4. Provide adequate nutrition as prescribed.

5. Prepare the client for rehabilitation.

#### D. Wound care ([Table 50-8](#)) ▲

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**TABLE 50-8 Open Method Versus Closed Method of Wound Care**

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
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<p><b>Open</b> Antimicrobial cream is applied as prescribed, and wound is left open to the air without a dressing</p>	<p>Visualization of the wound Easier mobility and joint range of motion Simplicity in wound care</p>	<p>Increased chance of hypothermia from exposure</p>
<p><b>Closed</b> Gauze dressings are carefully wrapped from the distal to the proximal area of the extremity to ensure that circulation is not compromised</p> <p>No two burn surfaces should be allowed to touch; touching can promote webbing of digits, contractures, and poor cosmetic outcome Dressings are changed usually every 8 to 12 hr</p>	<p>Decreases evaporative fluid and heat loss Aids in debridement</p>	<p>Mobility limitations Prevents effective range-of-motion exercises Wound assessment limited</p>

### 1. Description: Cleansing, debridement, and dressing of burn wounds

### 2. Hydrotherapy

- a. Wounds are cleansed by immersion, showering, or spraying.
- b. Hydrotherapy occurs for 30 minutes or less to prevent increased sodium loss through the burn wound, heat loss, pain, and stress.
- c. Client should be premedicated before procedure.
- d. Hydrotherapy generally is not used for clients who are hemodynamically unstable or those with new skin grafts.
- e. Care is taken to minimize bleeding and maintain body temperature during the procedure.
- f. If hydrotherapy is not used, wounds are washed and rinsed with the client in bed before the application of antimicrobial agents.

### 3. Debridement (Box 50-2)

## **Mechanical**

- Performed during hydrotherapy; involves use of washcloths or sponges to cleanse and debride eschar and the use of scissors and forceps to lift and trim away loose eschar
- May include wet-to-dry or wet-to-wet dressing changes
- Painful procedure; may cause bleeding

## **Enzymatic**

- Application of topical enzyme agents directly to the wound; the agent digests collagen in necrotic tissue

## **Surgical**

- Excision of eschar or necrotic tissue via a surgical procedure in the operating room

## **Tangential Technique**

- Very thin layers of the necrotic burn surface are excised until bleeding occurs (bleeding indicates that a healthy dermis or subcutaneous fat has been reached).

## **Fascial Technique**

- The burn wound is excised to the level of superficial fascia; this technique is usually reserved for very deep and extensive burns.

- a. Debridement is removal of eschar or necrotic tissue to prevent bacterial proliferation under the eschar and to promote wound healing.
- b. Debridement may be mechanical, enzymatic, or surgical.

- c. Deep partial-thickness burns or deep full-thickness burns: Wound is cleansed and debrided, and topical antimicrobial agents are applied once or twice daily.

## E. Wound closure

### 1. Description

- a. Wound closure prevents infection and loss of fluid.
- b. Closure promotes healing.
- c. Closure prevents contractures.
- d. Wound closure is performed usually on day 5 to 21 following the injury, depending on the extent of the burn.

### 2. Wound coverings (Box 50-3) ▲

## BOX 50-3 Wound Coverings

### Biological

#### *Amniotic Membranes*

- Amniotic membrane from human placenta is used; adheres to the wound
- Effective as a dressing until epithelial cell regrowth occurs
- Requires frequent changes because it does not develop a blood supply and disintegrates in about 48 hours

#### *Allograft or Homograft (Human Tissue)*

- Donated human cadaver skin provided through a skin bank
- Monitor for wound exudate and signs of infection

- Rejection—can occur within 24 hours
- Risk of transmitting blood-borne infection exists when used

### ***Xenograft or Heterograft (Animal Tissue)***

- Pigskin harvested after slaughter is preserved for storage and use.
- Monitor for infection and wound adherence
- Placed over granulation tissue; replaced every 2 to 5 days until wound heals naturally or until closure with autograft is complete.

### ***Cultured Skin***

- Grown in laboratory from a small specimen of epidermal cells from an unburned portion of client's body
- Cell sheets are grafted on the client to generate permanent skin surface.
- Cell sheets are not durable; care must be taken when applying to ensure adherence, and prevent sloughing.

### ***Artificial Skin***

- Consists of two layers—Silastic epidermis and porous dermis made from bovine hide collagen and shark cartilage
- After application, fibroblasts move into the collagen part of the artificial skin and create a structure similar to normal dermis.
- Artificial dermis then dissolves; it is then replaced with normal blood vessels and connective tissue called *neodermis*.
- Neodermis supports the standard autograft placed over it when the Silastic layer is

removed.

### **Biosynthetic**

- Combination of biosynthetic and synthetic materials
- Placed in contact with the wound surface; forms an adherent bond until epithelialization occurs
- Porous substance allows exudate to pass through.
- Monitor for wound exudate and signs of infection.

### **Synthetic**

- Applied directly to the surface of a clean or surgically prepared wound; remains in place until it falls off or is removed
- Covering is transparent or translucent; therefore wound can be inspected without removing dressing.
- Pain at the wound site is reduced because covering prevents contact of the wound with air.

### **Autograft**

- Skin taken from a remote unburned area of client's own body; transplanted to cover burn wound
- Graft placed on a clean granulated bed or over surgically excised area of the burn
- Provides for permanent skin coverage

## **3. Autografting** ▲

- a. Autografting provides permanent wound coverage.
  - b. Autografting is the surgical removal of a thin layer of the client's own unburned skin, which then is applied to the excised burn wound.
  - c. Autografting is performed in the operating room under anesthesia.
  - d. Monitor for bleeding following the graft procedure because bleeding beneath an autograft can prevent adherence.
  - e. If prescribed, small amounts of blood or serum can be removed by gently rolling the fluid from the center of the graft to the periphery with a sterile gauze pad, where it can be absorbed.
  - f. For large accumulations of blood, the HCP may aspirate the blood using a small-gauge needle and syringe.
  - g. Autografts are immobilized following surgery for 3 to 7 days to allow time to adhere and attach to the wound bed.
  - h. Position the client for immobilization and elevation of the graft site to prevent movement and shearing of the graft.
4. Care of the graft site 
- a. Elevate and immobilize the graft site.
  - b. Keep the site free from pressure.
  - c. Avoid weight-bearing.
  - d. When the graft takes, if prescribed, roll a cotton-tipped applicator over the graft to remove exudate, because exudate can lead to infection and prevent graft adherence.

- e. Monitor for foul-smelling drainage, increased temperature, increased white blood cell count, hematoma formation, and fluid accumulation.
- f. Instruct the client to avoid using fabric softeners and harsh detergents in the laundry.
- g. Instruct the client to lubricate the healing skin with prescribed agents.
- h. Instruct the client to protect the affected area from sunlight.
- i. Instruct the client to use splints and support garments as prescribed.

#### 5. Care of the donor site

- a. Method of care varies, depending on the HCP's preference.
- b. A nonadherent gauze dressing may be applied at the time of the surgery to maintain pressure and stop any oozing; always check surgeon's preference.
- c. The HCP may prescribe site treatment with gauze impregnated with petrolatum or with a biosynthetic dressing.
- d. Keep the donor site clean, dry, and free from pressure.
- e. Prevent the client from scratching the donor site.
- f. Apply lubricating lotions to soften the area and reduce the itching after the donor site is healed.
- g. Donor site can be reused once healing has occurred (heals spontaneously within 7 to 14 days with proper care).

#### F. Physical therapy

- 1. An individualized program of splinting, positioning, exercises, ambulation, and activities of daily living is implemented early in the acute phase of recovery to

maximize functional and cosmetic outcomes.

2. Perform range-of-motion exercises as prescribed to reduce edema and maintain strength and joint function.
3. Ambulate the client as prescribed to maintain the strength of the lower extremities.
4. Apply splints as prescribed to maintain proper joint position and prevent contractures.
  - a. Static splints immobilize the joint and are applied for periods of immobilization, during sleeping, and for clients who cannot maintain proper positioning.
  - b. Dynamic splints exercise the affected joint.
  - c. Avoid pressure to skin areas when applying splints, which could lead to further tissue and nerve damage.
5. Scarring is controlled by elastic wraps and bandages that apply continuous pressure to the healing skin during the time in which the skin is vulnerable to shearing.
6. Anti-burn scar support garments are usually prescribed to be worn 23 hours a day until the burn scar tissue has matured, which takes 18 to 24 months.

#### **G. Rehabilitative phase (see [Table 50-6](#))**

1. Description: Rehabilitation is the final phase of burn care.
2. Goals 
  - a. Promote wound healing.
  - b. Minimize deformities.

- c. Increase strength and function.
- d. Provide emotional support.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The nurse should elevate and immobilize the graft site, keep the site free from pressure, and not allow the client to bear weight on the extremity. When the graft takes, if prescribed, the nurse should roll a cotton-tipped applicator over the graft to remove exudate, because exudate can lead to infection and prevent graft adherence. The nurse should monitor for signs of infection such as foul-smelling drainage, increased temperature, and increased white blood cell count; and monitor for hematoma formation, or fluid accumulation.

### **Reference**

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 534.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 500.** The nurse is conducting a session about the principles of first aid and is discussing the interventions for a snakebite to an extremity. The nurse should inform those attending the session that the **first priority** intervention in the event of this occurrence is which action?
1. Immobilize the affected extremity.
  2. Remove jewelry and constricting clothing from the victim.
  3. Place the extremity in a position so that it is below the level of the heart.
  4. Move the victim to a safe area away from the snake and encourage the victim to rest.
- 501.** A client calls the emergency department and tells the nurse that he came directly into contact with poison ivy shrubs. The client tells the nurse that he cannot see anything on the skin and asks the nurse what to do. The nurse should make which response?
1. “Come to the emergency department.”
  2. “Apply calamine lotion immediately to the exposed skin areas.”
  3. “Take a shower immediately, lathering and rinsing several times.”
  4. “It is not necessary to do anything if you cannot see anything on your skin.”
- 502.** A client is being admitted to the hospital for treatment of acute cellulitis of the lower left leg and asks the admitting nurse to explain what cellulitis means. The nurse bases the response on the understanding that cellulitis has which

characteristic?

1. An inflammation of the epidermis only
2. A skin infection of the dermis and underlying hypodermis
3. An acute superficial infection of the dermis and lymphatics
4. An epidermal and lymphatic infection caused by *Staphylococcus*

**503.** The clinic nurse assesses the skin of a client with a diagnosis of psoriasis. The nurse understands that which characteristic is associated with this skin disorder?

1. Oily skin
2. Clear, thin nail beds
3. Red-purplish scaly lesions
4. Silvery-white scaly patches

**504.** The clinic nurse notes that the health care provider has documented a diagnosis of herpes zoster (shingles) in the client's chart. Based on an understanding of the cause of this disorder, the nurse determines that this definitive diagnosis was made by which diagnostic test?

1. Patch test
2. Skin biopsy
3. Culture of the lesion
4. Wood's light examination

**505.** A client returns to the clinic for follow-up treatment following a skin biopsy of a suspicious lesion performed 1 week ago. The biopsy report indicates that the

lesion is a melanoma. The nurse understands that melanoma has which characteristic?

1. Metastasis is rare.
2. It is encapsulated.
3. It is highly metastatic.
4. It is characterized by local invasion.

**506.** When assessing a lesion diagnosed as malignant melanoma, the nurse **most likely** expects to note which finding?

1. An irregularly shaped lesion
2. A small papule with a dry, rough scale
3. A firm, nodular lesion topped with crust
4. A pearly papule with a central crater and a waxy border

**507.** A client arriving at the emergency department has experienced frostbite to the right hand. Which finding would the nurse note on assessment of the client's hand?

1. A pink, edematous hand
2. A fiery red skin with edema in the nail beds
3. Black fingertips surrounded by an erythematous rash
4. A white color to the skin, which is insensitive to touch

**508.** The evening nurse reviews the nursing documentation in a client's chart and notes that the day nurse has documented that the client has a stage II pressure ulcer in

the sacral area. Which finding would the nurse expect to note on assessment of the client's sacral area?

1. Intact skin
2. Full-thickness skin loss
3. Exposed bone, tendon, or muscle
4. Partial-thickness skin loss of the dermis

**509.** An adult client was burned in an explosion. The burn initially affected the client's entire face (anterior half of the head) and the upper half of the anterior torso, and there were circumferential burns to the lower half of both arms. The client's clothes caught on fire, and the client ran, causing subsequent burn injuries to the posterior surface of the head and the upper half of the posterior torso.

Using the rule of nines, what would be the extent of the burn injury?

1. 18%
2. 24%
3. 36%
4. 48%

**510.** The nurse is preparing to care for a burn client scheduled for an escharotomy procedure being performed for a third-degree circumferential arm burn. The nurse understands that which finding is the anticipated therapeutic outcome of the escharotomy?

1. Return of distal pulses

2. Brisk bleeding from the site
3. Decreasing edema formation
4. Formation of granulation tissue

**511.** A client is undergoing fluid replacement after being burned on 20% of her body 12 hours ago. The nursing assessment reveals a blood pressure of 90/50 mm Hg, a pulse rate of 110 beats/minute, and a urine output of 20 mL over the past hour. The nurse reports the findings to the health care provider (HCP) and anticipates which prescription?

1. Transfusing 1 unit of packed red blood cells
2. Administering a diuretic to increase urine output
3. Increasing the amount of intravenous (IV) lactated Ringer's solution administered per hour
4. Changing the IV lactated Ringer's solution to one that contains dextrose in water

**512.** A client is brought to the emergency department with partial thickness burns to his face, neck, arms, and chest after trying to put out a car fire. The nurse should implement which nursing actions for this client? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Restrict fluids.
2. Assess for airway patency.
3. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
4. Place a cooling blanket on the client.

5. Elevate extremities if no fractures are present.
6. Prepare to give oral pain medication as prescribed.

**513.** The nurse is caring for a client who sustained superficial partial-thickness burns on the anterior lower legs and anterior thorax. Which finding does the nurse expect to note during the resuscitation/emergent phase of the burn injury?

1. Decreased heart rate
2. Increased urinary output
3. Increased blood pressure
4. Elevated hematocrit levels

**514.** The nurse manager is planning the clinical assignments for the day. Which staff members can be assigned to care for a client with herpes zoster? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. The nurse who never had roseola
2. The nurse who never had mumps
3. The nurse who never had chickenpox
4. The nurse who never had German measles
5. The nurse who never received the varicella-zoster vaccine

**515.** A client arrives at the emergency department following a burn injury that occurred in the basement at home, and an inhalation injury is suspected. What would the nurse anticipate to be prescribed for the client?

1. 100% oxygen via an aerosol mask

2. Oxygen via nasal cannula at 6 L/minute
3. Oxygen via nasal cannula at 15 L/minute
4. 100% oxygen via a tight-fitting, nonrebreather face mask

**516.** The nurse is administering fluids intravenously as prescribed to a client who sustained superficial partial-thickness burn injuries of the back and legs. In evaluating the adequacy of fluid resuscitation, the nurse understands that which assessment would provide the **most** reliable indicator for determining the adequacy?

1. Vital signs
2. Urine output
3. Mental status
4. Peripheral pulses

**517.** The nurse manager is observing a new nursing graduate caring for a burn client in protective isolation. The nurse manager intervenes if the new nursing graduate planned to implement which unsafe component of protective isolation technique?

1. Using sterile sheets and linens
2. Performing strict hand washing technique
3. Wearing gloves and a gown only when giving direct care to the client
4. Wearing protective garb, including a mask, gloves, cap, shoe covers, gowns, and plastic apron

**518.** The nurse is caring for a client following an autograft and grafting to a burn

wound on the right knee. What would the nurse anticipate to be prescribed for the client?

1. Out-of-bed activities
2. Bathroom privileges
3. Immobilization of the affected leg
4. Placing the affected leg in a dependent position

**519.** The nurse is caring for a client who suffered an inhalation injury from a wood stove. The carbon monoxide blood report reveals a level of 12%. Based on this level, the nurse would anticipate noting which sign in the client?

1. Coma
2. Flushing
3. Dizziness
4. Tachycardia

## ANSWERS

**500. 4**

**Rationale:** In the event of a snakebite, the first priority is to move the victim to a safe area away from the snake and encourage the victim to rest to decrease venom circulation. Next, jewelry and constricting clothing are removed before swelling occurs. Immobilizing the extremity and maintaining the extremity below heart level would be done next; these actions limit the spread of the venom. The victim is kept warm and calm. Stimulants such as alcohol or caffeinated beverages are not given to the victim because these products may speed the absorption of the venom.

The victim should be transported to an emergency facility as soon as is possible.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *first priority*. Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike** and relate to positioning of the affected extremity. For the remaining options, think about them and visualize each. Moving the victim to a safe area is the priority to prevent further injury from the snake.

**Review:** Care of the client in the event of a **snake bite**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 140-141.

### 501. 3

**Rationale:** When an individual comes in contact with a poison ivy plant, the sap from the plant forms an invisible film on the human skin. The client should be instructed to cleanse the area by showering immediately and to lather the skin several times and rinse each time in running water. Calamine lotion may be one product recommended for use if dermatitis develops. The client does not need to be seen in the emergency department at this time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, contact with poison ivy. Recalling that dermatitis can develop from contact with an allergen and that contact with poison ivy results in an invisible film will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Immediate treatment for contact with **poison ivy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1780.

**502. 2**

**Rationale:** Cellulitis is an infection of the dermis and underlying hypodermis that results in a deep red erythema without sharp borders and spreads widely throughout tissue spaces. The skin is erythematous, edematous, tender, and sometimes nodular. Erysipelas is an acute, superficial, rapidly spreading inflammation of the dermis and lymphatics.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 3 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and address the lymphatics. Eliminate option 1 because of the **closed-ended word only**.

**Review:** Characteristics of **cellulitis** and **erysipelas**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 454.

**503. 4**

**Rationale:** Psoriatic patches are covered with silvery white scales. Affected areas include the scalp, elbows,

knees, shins, sacral area, and trunk. Thickening, pitting, and discoloration of the nails occur. Pruritus may occur. The lesions in psoriasis are not red-purplish scaly lesions and the skin is dry.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestations of psoriasis. Use knowledge regarding the pathophysiology associated with psoriasis. Recall that psoriasis is associated with the presence of silvery white scaly patches. This will direct you to the correct option and assist in answering questions similar to this one.

**Review:** Manifestations associated with **psoriasis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 498-499.

### 504. 3

**Rationale:** With the classic presentation of herpes zoster, the clinical examination is diagnostic. However, a viral culture of the lesion provides the definitive diagnosis. Herpes zoster (shingles) is caused by a reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, the virus that causes chickenpox. A patch test is a skin test that involves the administration of an allergen to the surface of the skin to identify specific allergies. A biopsy would provide a cytological examination of tissue. In a Wood's light examination, the skin is viewed under ultraviolet light to identify superficial infections of the skin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, diagnosing herpes zoster. Recalling that herpes zoster is caused by a virus will assist in directing you to the correct option. Also remember that a biopsy will determine tissue type, whereas a culture will identify an organism.

**Review:** Herpes zoster (shingles)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 494.

### 505. 3

**Rationale:** Melanomas are pigmented malignant lesions originating in the melanin-producing cells of the epidermis.

This skin cancer is highly metastatic, and a person's survival depends on early diagnosis and treatment. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not characteristics of a melanoma.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and indicate a localized lesion rather than one that will spread to other areas of the body. Also, recalling that melanomas are highly metastatic will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Characteristics of melanoma

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 502.

**506. 1**

**Rationale:** A melanoma is an irregularly shaped pigmented papule or plaque with a red-, white-, or blue-toned color. Actinic keratosis, a premalignant lesion, appears as a small macule or papule with a dry, rough, adherent yellow or brown scale. Squamous cell carcinoma is a firm, nodular lesion topped with a crust or a central area of ulceration. Basal cell carcinoma appears as a pearly papule with a central crater and rolled waxy border.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Remembering that irregularly shaped lesions are a cause for concern will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Characteristics of **malignant melanoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 452.

**507. 4**

**Rationale:** Assessment findings in frostbite include a white or blue color; the skin will be hard, cold, and insensitive to touch. As thawing occurs, flushing of the skin, the development of blisters or blebs, or tissue edema appears. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessment findings in frostbite. Noting the words *insensitive to touch* in the correct option should direct you to this option.

**Review:** Characteristics associated with **frostbite**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**References:** Emergency Nurses Association (2010), pp. 538-539; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 149-150.

#### 508. 4

**Rationale:** In a stage II pressure ulcer, the skin is not intact. Partial-thickness skin loss of the dermis has occurred.

It presents as a shallow open ulcer with a red-pink wound bed, without slough. It may also present as an intact, open or ruptured, serum-filled blister. The skin is intact in stage I. Full-thickness skin loss occurs in stage III.

Exposed bone, tendon, or muscle is present in stage IV.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessment of a pressure ulcer. Focusing on the words *stage II* and visualizing the appearance of a stage II pressure ulcer will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Stages of **pressure ulcers**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 480-481.

#### 509. 3

**Rationale:** According to the rule of nines, with the initial burn, the anterior half of the head equals 4.5%, the upper

half of the anterior torso equals 9%, and the lower half of both arms equals 9%. The subsequent burn included the posterior half of head, equaling 4.5%, and the upper half of posterior torso, equaling 9%. This totals 36%.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the rule of nines. Recalling the percentages associated with the rule of nines and focusing on the burn injury described in the question will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The **rule of nines**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Baird (2011), pp. 282-283.

## 510. 1

**Rationale:** Escharotomies are performed to relieve the compartment syndrome that can occur when edema forms under nondistensible eschar in a circumferential third-degree burn. Escharotomies are performed through avascular eschar to subcutaneous fat. Although bleeding may occur from the site, it is considered a complication rather than an anticipated therapeutic outcome. Usually, direct pressure with a bulky dressing and elevation control the bleeding, but occasionally an artery is damaged and may require ligation. Escharotomy does not affect the formation of edema. Formation of granulation tissue is not the intent of an escharotomy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use **the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to answer the question. The correct option is the only one that addresses circulation.

**Review:** The purpose of an **escharotomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Baird (2011), p. 291.

### 511.3

**Rationale:** Fluid management during the first 24 hours following a burn injury generally includes the infusion of (usually) lactated Ringer's solution. Fluid resuscitation is determined by urine output and hourly urine output should be at least 30 mL/hour. The client's urine output is indicative of insufficient fluid resuscitation, which places the client at risk for inadequate perfusion of the brain, heart, kidneys, and other body organs. Therefore the HCP would prescribe an increase in the amount of IV lactated Ringer's solution administered per hour. Blood replacement is not used for fluid therapy for burn injuries. Administering a diuretic would not correct the problem because it would not replace needed fluid. Diuretics promote the removal of the circulating volume, thereby further compromising the inadequate tissue perfusion. Dextrose in water is an isotonic solution, and an isotonic solution maintains fluid balance. This type of solution may be administered after the first 24 hours following the burn injury, depending on the client's physiological needs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, fluid replacement therapy, and think about the pathophysiology that occurs in a burn injury. Noting that the burn injury occurred 12 hours ago and that the client's urine output is 20 mL/hour, indicative of insufficient fluid resuscitation, will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Fluid resuscitation** in a client with a **burn injury**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 526-257.

❖ **512. 2, 3, 5**

**Rationale:** The primary goal for a burn injury is to maintain a patent airway, administer IV fluids to prevent hypovolemic shock, and preserve vital organ functioning. Therefore the priority actions are to assess for airway patency and maintain a patent airway. The nurse then prepares to administer oxygen. Oxygen is necessary to perfuse vital tissues and organs. An IV line should be obtained and fluid resuscitation started. The extremities are elevated to assist in preventing shock. The client is kept warm and placed on NPO status because of the altered gastrointestinal function that occurs as a result of a burn injury.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, actions in a burn injury. Think about the pathophysiology that occurs and how the body reacts to a major burn injury. This assists in eliminating options 1, 4, and 6.

**Review:** Pathophysiology associated with **burn injuries**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Critical Care: Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 481-482.

**513. 4**

**Rationale:** The resuscitation/emergent phase begins at the time of injury and ends with the restoration of capillary permeability, usually at 48 to 72 hours following the injury. During the resuscitation/emergent phase, the hematocrit level increases to above normal because of hemoconcentration from the large fluid shifts. Hematocrit levels of 50% to 55% are expected during the first 24 hours after injury, with return to normal by 36 hours after injury. Initially, blood is shunted away from the kidneys, and renal perfusion and glomerular filtration are decreased, resulting in low urine output. Pulse rates are typically higher than normal, and the blood pressure is decreased as a result of the large fluid shifts.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, resuscitation/emergent phase, and think about how the body would react in such a traumatizing event; this eliminates options 1 and 2. Knowledge that the blood pressure would decrease as a result of the decrease in circulating blood volume will direct you to the correct option from the remaining options.

**Review:** Pathophysiology associated with **burn injuries**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Tissue Integrity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 524; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 479-480.

❖ **514.** 1, 2, 4

**Rationale:** Herpes zoster (shingles) is caused by a reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, the causative virus of

chickenpox. Individuals who have not been exposed to the varicella-zoster virus or who did not receive the varicella-zoster vaccine are susceptible to chickenpox. Health care workers who are unsure of their immune status should have varicella titers done before exposure to a person with herpes zoster.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, transmission of herpes zoster. Recalling that herpes zoster is caused by a reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, the causative virus of chickenpox, will direct you to the correct options.

**Review:** The relationship between **herpes zoster** and **chickenpox**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 492; Lewis et al (2011), p. 456.

#### 515. 4

**Rationale:** If an inhalation injury is suspected, administration of 100% oxygen via a tight-fitting nonrebreather face mask is prescribed until carboxyhemoglobin levels fall (usually below 15%). In inhalation injuries, the oropharynx is inspected for evidence of erythema, blisters, or ulcerations. The need for endotracheal intubation also is assessed. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect and would not provide the necessary oxygen supply needed for adequate tissue perfusion.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an inhalation injury. Recalling that 100% oxygen is required following an inhalation injury will assist you in eliminating options 2 and 3. From the remaining options, recall that a tight-fitting nonrebreather mask is preferred so that the client will not rebreathe exhaled air.

**Review:** Inhalation injury

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Critical Care: Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 478.

**516. 2**

**Rationale:** Successful or adequate fluid resuscitation in the client is signaled by stable vital signs, adequate urine output, palpable peripheral pulses, and clear sensorium. However, the most reliable indicator for determining adequacy of fluid resuscitation is the urine output. For an adult, the hourly urine volume should be 30 to 50 mL.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Also note the **subject** of the question, fluid resuscitation.

Urine output is most similar to the subject of administering fluids.

**Review:** Care of the burn client during **fluid resuscitation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 481, 483.

**517. 3**

**Rationale:** Thorough hand washing should be done before and after each contact with the burn-injured client.

Sterile sheets and linens are used because of the client's high risk for infection. Protective garb, including gloves, cap, masks, shoe covers, gowns, and plastic apron, need to be worn when in the client's room and when directly caring for the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the word *incorrect* in the question. Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated easily because of the words *sterile* and *strict* in these options. Next, note the **closed-ended word** *only* in the correct option. Also, the correct option identifies the least thorough technique to prevent infection.

**Review:** **Protective isolation** technique when caring for the **burn client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 484; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 62-63, 69-71.

### 518. 3

**Rationale:** Autografts placed over joints or on the lower extremities after surgery often are elevated and immobilized for 3 to 7 days. This period of immobilization allows the autograft time to adhere to the wound bed.

Options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike** and allow out-of-bed activities. From the remaining options, note that the autograft was placed over a joint. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of an **autograft** placed over a joint

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 488-489.

## 519. 2

**Rationale:** Carbon monoxide levels between 11% and 20% result in flushing, headache, decreased visual activity, decreased cerebral functioning, and slight breathlessness; levels of 21% to 40% result in nausea, vomiting, dizziness, tinnitus, vertigo, confusion, drowsiness, pale to reddish-purple skin, tachycardia; levels of 41% to 60% result in seizure and coma; and levels higher than 60% result in death.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a carbon monoxide level of 12%. Remember that flushing occurs with levels between 11% and 20%; this will assist you in answering questions similar to this one.

**Review:** Effects of an **inhalation injury, carbon monoxide levels**, and the associated clinical manifestations

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health/Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**Reference:** Baird (2011), p. 285.



## CHAPTER 51

# Integumentary Medications

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A topical glucocorticoid is prescribed for a hospitalized client to treat an inflammatory skin condition on the neck. What should the nurse do when administering the medication?

*Answer located on p. 588.*

### **I. Poison Ivy Treatment (Fig. 51-1; Box 51-1)**



**FIGURE 51-1** Poison ivy. Note “streaked” blisters surrounding one large blister.

(From Habif TP: *Clinical dermatology: A color guide to diagnosis and therapy*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2004, Mosby.)

#### **BOX 51-1** Poison Ivy Treatment Products

- Bentoquatam—for preventive use (Ivy Block)
- Calamine lotion (Caladryl lotion)
- Hydrocortisone (Ivy Soothe, Ivy Stat)
- Isopropanol; cetyl alcohol (Ivy Cleanse)
- Zinc acetate; isopropanol (Ivy Dry)
- Zinc acetate; isopropanol; benzyl alcohol (Ivy Super Dry)

**A.** Treatment of lesions includes calamine lotion and other products that soothe lesions, Burow’s solution compresses, Domeboro solution, and/or Aveeno baths to relieve discomfort.

- B. Topical corticosteroids are effective to prevent or relieve inflammation, especially when used before blisters form.
- C. Oral corticosteroids may be prescribed for severe reactions and a sedative such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) may be prescribed.

## II. Medications to Treat Atopic Dermatitis (Box 51-2)

### BOX 51-2 Medications to Treat Atopic Dermatitis

#### Systemic Immunosuppressants

- Azathioprine (Imuran)
- Cyclosporine (Sandimmune)
- Methotrexate
- Oral glucocorticoids

#### Topical Immunosuppressants

- Pimecrolimus 1% cream (Elidel)
- Tacrolimus (Protopic)

#### A. Description

1. A chronic inflammatory skin disease that is also known as *eczema* and is characterized by dry and scaly skin.
2. May be treated with moisturizer and topical glucocorticoids; systemic immunosuppressants may also be prescribed if topical treatment is ineffective.
3. Systemic immunosuppressants may include methotrexate, cyclosporine

(Sandimmune), or azathioprine (Imuran), and oral glucocorticoids.

## B. Topical immunosuppressants

1. Tacrolimus (Protopic 0.03% or 0.1% cream) and pimecrolimus 1% cream (Elidel).
2. Side/adverse effects include redness, burning, and itching; causes sensitization of the skin to sunlight.
3. Tacrolimus increases the risk of varicella-zoster infection in children.
4. Tacrolimus may cause **skin cancer** and lymphoma.

## III. Topical Glucocorticoids ▲

### A. Description

1. Antiinflammatory, antipruritic, and vasoconstrictive actions
2. Preparations vary in potency and depend on the concentration and type of preparation, and method of application (occlusive dressings enhance absorption, increasing the effects).
3. Systemic effects are more likely to occur with prolonged therapy and when extensive skin surfaces are treated.

**⚠** Topical glucocorticoids can be absorbed into the systemic circulation; absorption is greater in permeable skin areas (scalp, axilla, face and neck, eyelids, perineum) and less in areas where permeability is poor (palms, soles, back).

### B. Contraindications

1. Clients demonstrating previous sensitivity to corticosteroids
2. Clients with current systemic fungal, viral, or bacterial infections
3. Clients with current complications related to glucocorticoid therapy

**C. Local side/adverse effects**

1. Burning, dryness, irritation, itching
2. Skin atrophy
3. Thinning of the skin, striae, purpura, telangiectasia
4. Acneiform eruptions
5. Hypopigmentation
6. Overgrowth of bacteria, fungi, and viruses

**D. Systemic side/adverse effects**

1. Growth retardation in children
2. Adrenal suppression
3. Cushing's syndrome
4. Striae, skin atrophy
5. Ocular effects (glaucoma and cataracts)

**E. Interventions**

1. Monitoring plasma cortisol levels may be prescribed if prolonged therapy is necessary.
2. Wash the area just before application to increase medication penetration.
3. Apply sparingly in a thin film, rubbing gently.
4. Avoid use of a dry occlusive dressing unless specifically prescribed by the health

care provider (HCP).

5. Instruct client to report signs of adverse effects to the HCP.

**⚠** In the adult, intact skin is generally impermeable to most topical medications. However, medications should not be applied to denuded areas unless prescribed because undesired absorption can occur.

#### IV. Medications to Treat Actinic Keratosis (Box 51-3)

##### **BOX 51-3** Medications to Treat Actinic Keratosis

- Aminolevulinic acid (Levulan Kerastick)
- Diclofenac sodium 3% gel (Solaraze)
- Fluorouracil (Carac, Efudex, Fluoroplex)
- Imiquimod 5% cream (Aldara)

#### A. Description

1. Actinic keratoses are caused by prolonged exposure to the sun and appear as rough, scaly, red or brown lesions usually found on the face, scalp, arms, and back of the hands.
2. Lesions can progress to squamous cell carcinoma.
3. Treatment includes medications and therapies such as excision, cryotherapy, curettage, and laser therapy.

**B.** Medications include fluorouracil (Carac, Efudex, Fluoroplex), diclofenac sodium (Solaraze), imiquimod 5% cream (Aldara), and aminolevulinic acid (Levulan

Kerastick).

**1. Fluorouracil (Carac, Efudex, Fluoroplex)**

- a.** A topical medication that affects DNA and RNA synthesis and causes a sequence of responses that results in healing; results are usually seen in 2 to 6 weeks but may take 1 to 2 months longer for complete healing
- b.** Side effects include itching, burning, inflammation, rash, and increased sensitivity to sunlight.

**2. Diclofenac sodium (Solaraze)**

- a.** A nonsteroidal antiinflammatory topical medication; may take 3 months to be effective
- b.** Side effects include dry skin, itching, redness, and rash.

**3. Imiquimod 5% cream (Aldara)**

- a.** In addition to treating actinic keratoses, this topical medication has been used to treat venereal warts; it may take up to 4 months to be effective.
- b.** Side effects include redness, skin swelling, itching, burning, sores, blisters, scabbing, and crusting of the skin.

**4. Aminolevulinic acid (Levulan Kerastick)**

- a.** A topical medication used in conjunction with blue light photoactivation; the medication is applied and 14 to 18 hours later the medication is activated by exposing the lesions to the blue light.
- b.** Side effects include burning, stinging, redness, and swelling of the skin; treated areas need to be protected from sunlight and bright indoor lights.

## V. Sunscreens ▲

- A. Ultraviolet (UV) light can damage the skin and can cause premalignant actinic keratoses and some types of skin cancer.
- B. Sunscreens prevent the penetration of UV light and protect the skin.
- C. Organic (chemical) sunscreens absorb UV light; inorganic (physical) sunscreens reflect and scatter UV light.
- D. A sunscreen that protects against both UVB and UVA rays and one that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 should be used.
- E. Sunscreens are most effective when applied at least 30 minutes before exposure to the sun (sunscreens containing *para*-aminobenzoic acid [PABA] or padimate O require application 2 hours before sun exposure).
- F. Sunscreen should be reapplied every 2 to 3 hours and after swimming or sweating; otherwise, the duration of protection is reduced.
- G. Products containing PABA need to be avoided by individuals allergic to benzocaine, sulfonamides, or thiazides.
- H. Sunscreens can cause contact dermatitis and photosensitivity reactions.

▲ The client should be informed that UV light is greatest between the hours of 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM, and sunglasses, protective clothing, and a hat should be worn to reduce the risk of skin damage from the sun.

## VI. Medications to Treat Psoriasis (Box 51-4)

## Topical Medications

- Anthralin (Dritho-Scalp, Psoriatec)
- Calcipotriene (Dovonex)
- Coal tar
- Glucocorticoids
- Keratolytics (topical salicylic acid; sulfur)
- Tazarotene (Tazorac)

## Systemic Medications

- Acitretin (Soriatane)
- Cyclosporine
- Methotrexate

## Systemic Biological Medications

- Alefacept (Amevive)
- Ustekinumab (Stelara)

## Phototherapy

- Coal tar and ultraviolet B irradiation
- Photochemotherapy (PUVA [psoralen and ultraviolet A] therapy)

### A. Description

1. Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory disorder that has varying degrees of severity.
2. Treatment is based on the severity of symptoms and aims to suppress the proliferation of keratinocytes or suppress the activity of inflammatory cells.

## **B. Topical medications**

### **1. Glucocorticoids**

- a.** Used for mild psoriasis
- b.** Should not be applied to the face, groin, axilla, or genitalia because the medication is readily absorbable, making the skin vulnerable to glucocorticoid-induced atrophy

### **2. Anthralin (Dritho-Scalp, Psoriatec)**

- a.** Can cause local irritation and skin redness
- b.** Is applied to lesions at bedtime and allowed to remain on the skin overnight
- c.** Client should be informed that the medication can stain clothing, skin, and hair.

### **3. Tazarotene (Tazorac)**

- a.** Is a vitamin A derivative
- b.** Local reactions include itching, burning, stinging, dry skin, and redness; other, less common effects include rash, desquamation, contact dermatitis, inflammation, fissuring, and bleeding.
- c.** Sensitization to sunlight can occur and the client should be instructed to use sunscreen and wear protective clothing.
- d.** Medication is usually applied once daily in the evening to dry skin.

### **4. Calcipotriene (Dovonex)**

- a.** Is an analogue of vitamin D
- b.** May take up to 1 to 3 weeks to produce a desired effect
- c.** Can cause local irritation; high-dose applications may cause hypercalcemia

## 5. Coal tar

- a. Suppresses DNA synthesis, mitotic activity, and cell proliferation
- b. Has an unpleasant odor and may cause irritation, burning, and stinging; can also stain the skin and hair

## 6. Keratolytics

- a. Soften scales and loosen the horny layer of the skin, resulting in minimal peeling to extensive desquamation
- b. Salicylic acid: Can be absorbed systemically and can cause salicylism, which is characterized by dizziness and tinnitus, hyperpnea, and psychological disturbances; salicylic acid is not applied to large surface areas or open wounds because of the risk of systemic effects. ▲
- c. Sulfur: Promotes peeling and drying and is used to treat acne, dandruff, seborrheic dermatitis, and psoriasis

## C. Systemic medications

### 1. Methotrexate

- a. Reduces proliferation of epidermal cells
- b. Can be toxic; causes gastrointestinal effects such as diarrhea and ulcerative stomatitis and bone marrow depression leading to blood dyscrasias
- c. Can be hepatotoxic; hepatic function should be monitored during therapy

### 2. Acitretin (Soriatane)

- a. Inhibits keratinization, proliferation, and differentiation of cells; has antiinflammatory and immunomodulator actions; used for severe psoriasis and

reserved for use in those who have not responded to safer medications.

- b.** Is embryotoxic and teratogenic: Medication is contraindicated during pregnancy; pregnancy must be ruled out and two reliable forms of contraception need to be implemented before the medication is started (contraception must be implemented at least 1 month before treatment starts and be continued for at least 3 years after treatment is discontinued). ▲
- c.** If pregnancy occurs during treatment with the medication, the medication is discontinued immediately and possible termination of the pregnancy is discussed.
- d.** Dermatological effects include hair loss, skin peeling, dry skin, rash, pruritus, and nail disorders; other effects include rhinitis from mucous membrane irritation, inflammation of the lips, dry mouth, dry eyes, nosebleed, gingivitis, stomatitis, bone and joint pain, and spinal disorders.
- e.** Can be hepatotoxic; can elevate triglyceride levels and reduce levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol
- f.** Medication should be taken with meals to facilitate absorption; alcohol must be avoided.
- g.** This derivative of vitamin A can cause vitamin A toxicity if taken at the same time as vitamin A supplements.
- h.** Should not be taken concurrently with tetracycline because it can cause increased intracranial pressure

### 3. Cyclosporine

- a. An immunosuppressant that inhibits proliferation of B and T cells
- b. Can be toxic and cause kidney damage
- c. Used for severe psoriasis and reserved for use in those who have not responded to safer medications

#### **D. Systemic biological medications**

##### **1. Alefacept (Amevive)**

- a. The medication reduces the number and activity of memory CD4<sup>+</sup> T lymphocytes; therefore the medication is contraindicated in clients with human immunodeficiency virus infection.
- b. CD4 T-cell counts should be monitored before each dose and discontinued if the count falls below 250 cells/mL.
- c. Risk of cancer is increased and the medication should not be administered to a client with a history of malignancy; medication should be discontinued if cancer develops.
- d. Can cause chills, cough, pruritus, myalgia, and inflammation and pain at the intramuscular injection site

##### **2. Ustekinumab (Stelara)**

- a. A human monoclonal antibody
- b. Can decrease the activity of the immune system and increase the risk for certain types of cancer
- c. Side effects of the medication include upper respiratory infections, headache, and tiredness.

- d.** Contraindicated in clients who have a history of cancer; also contraindicated in clients with infection, or reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (rare condition that affects the brain and can cause death)
- e.** The client should not receive any live virus vaccines because the viruses used in some types of vaccines can cause infection in those with a weakened immune system; in addition, the HCP needs to be informed if anyone in the household needs a vaccine.
- f.** The client should not receive the bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine during the 1 year before taking or 1 year after taking the medication.
- g.** The client should inform the HCP if he or she is receiving phototherapy, has any other medical condition, is pregnant or plans to become pregnant, or is breast-feeding or plans to breast-feed.

## **E. Phototherapy**

- 1.** Coal tar and ultraviolet B irradiation: Treatment that involves the application of coal tar for 8 to 10 hours; coal tar is washed off and the area is exposed to short-wave UV radiation (ultraviolet B, or UVB)
- 2.** Photochemotherapy (PUVA [psoralen and ultraviolet A] therapy)
  - a.** Combines the use of long-wave radiation (ultraviolet A, or UVA) with oral methoxsalen (photosensitive medication)
  - b.** Can cause pruritus, nausea, erythema; may accelerate the aging process of the skin; may increase the risk of skin cancer

## **VII. Acne Products (Box 51-5; Fig. 51-2)**

### Topical Antibiotics

- Benzoyl peroxide
- Clindamycin (Cleocin) and erythromycin (Erythroderm)
- Clindamycin/tretinoin combination gel (Ziana)
- Dapsone (Aczone)
- *Fixed dose combinations*: Clindamycin/benzoyl peroxide (BenzaClin) and erythromycin/benzoyl peroxide (Benzamycin)

### Topical Retinoids

- Adapalene (Differin)
- Azelaic acid (Azelex)
- Tazarotene (Tazorac)
- Tretinoin (Retin-A, Avita)

### Oral Medications

- Doxycycline (Vibramycin)
- Erythromycin (Ery-Tab)
- Isotretinoin (Amnesteem or Claravis)
- Minocycline (Dynacin, Minocin, Solodyn)
- Sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (Bactrim DS)
- Tetracycline (Sumycin)

### Hormonal Medications

- Oral contraceptives
- Spironolactone (Aldactone)



**FIGURE 51-2** Acne vulgaris. **A**, Comedones with a few inflammatory pustules. **B**, Papulopustular acne. (From Perry S, Hockenberry M, Lowdermilk D, Wilson D: *Maternal-child nursing care*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

#### A. Description

1. Acne lesions that are mild may be treated with nonpharmacological measures such as gentle cleansing two or three times daily (oil-based moisturizing products need to be avoided), dermabrasion, or comedo extraction.
2. Mild acne is usually treated pharmacologically with topical agents (antimicrobials and retinoids).
3. Moderate acne is usually treated with oral antibiotics and comedolytics.
4. Severe acne is usually treated with isotretinoin (Amnesteem or Claravis).
5. Hormonal medications such as oral contraceptives and spironolactone

(Aldactone) may be prescribed to treat acne in female clients.

6. Combination therapy may be prescribed to treat the acne.
7. Actions of the medications may include suppressing the growth of *Propionibacterium acnes*, reducing inflammation, promoting keratolysis, unplugging existing comedones and preventing their development, and normalizing hyperproliferation of epithelial cells within the hair follicles; some medications cause thinning of the skin, which facilitates penetration of other medications.
8. For topical applications: Site should be washed and allowed to completely dry before application; hands should be washed after application.
9. All topical products are kept away from the eyes, inside the nose, lips, mucous membranes, hair, and inflamed or denuded skin.

## **B. Topical antibiotic products**

### **1. Benzoyl peroxide**

- a. Can produce drying and peeling
- b. Severe local irritation (burning, blistering, scaling, swelling) may require reducing the frequency of applications.
- c. Some products may contain sulfites; monitor for allergic reactions.

### **2. Clindamycin (Cleocin) and erythromycin (Erythroderm)**

- a. Both products may be prescribed to prevent emergence of resistance.
- b. Combination therapy with benzoyl peroxide can be prescribed to prevent emergence of resistance; fixed-dose combinations include clindamycin/benzoyl

peroxide (BenzaClin) and erythromycin/benzoyl peroxide (Benzamycin).

3. Dapsone (Aczone): Side effects include oiliness, peeling, dryness, and erythema of the skin.

## C. Topical retinoids

### 1. Tretinoin

- a. A derivative of vitamin A (vitamin A supplements should be discontinued during therapy)
- b. In addition to treating acne, it may be prescribed to reduce fine wrinkles, skin roughness, mottled hyperpigmentation such as that which occurs with age spots.
- c. Can cause localized side effects such as blistering, peeling, crusting, burning, and swelling of the skin
- d. The use of abrasive products and keratolytic products should be discontinued before using tretinoin because they can cause localized side effects.
- e. Medication sensitizes the skin to ultraviolet light (UVL); the client needs to be instructed to apply a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater and to wear protective clothing when outdoors because the medication increases susceptibility to sunburn.

2. Adapalene (Differin): Similar to tretinoin and sensitizes the skin to UVL; side effects include burning and itching after application, redness, dryness, and scaling of the skin.

### 3. Tazarotene (Tazorac)

- a. Is a derivative of vitamin A (vitamin A supplements should be discontinued

during therapy)

**b.** In addition to acne, it is used to treat wrinkles and psoriasis.

**c.** Can cause itching, burning, and dry skin and sensitizes the skin to UVL.

**4.** Azelaic acid (Azelex) can cause burning, itching, stinging, and redness of the skin; it can also cause hypopigmentation of the skin in clients with a dark complexion.

#### **D.** Oral antibiotics

**1.** Includes doxycycline (Vibramycin), minocycline (Dynacin, Minocin, Solodyn), tetracycline (Sumycin), and erythromycin (Ery-Tab)

**2.** Improvement develops slowly with the use of oral antibiotics and may take 3 to 6 months for some improvement to be noted; following control of symptoms the client is usually switched to a topical antibiotic.

#### **E.** Isotretinoin (Amnesteem or Claravis). 🟢

**1.** Derivative of vitamin A (vitamin A supplements should be discontinued during therapy); in addition, the use of tetracyclines can increase the risk of adverse effects and should be discontinued before use of isotretinoin

**2.** Used to treat severe cystic acne; reserved for persons who have not responded to other therapies, including systemic antibiotics

**3.** Side effects include nosebleeds; inflammation of the lips or eyes; dryness or itching of the skin, nose, or mouth; pain, tenderness, or stiffness in the joints, bones, or muscles; and back pain.

**4.** Less common side effects include rash, hair loss, peeling of the skin, headache, and reduction in night vision.

5. Causes sensitization of the skin to UVL
6. The medication elevates triglyceride levels, which should be measured before and during therapy; alcohol consumption should be eliminated during therapy because alcohol could potentiate elevation of serum triglyceride levels.
7. The medication may cause depression in some clients; if depression occurs, the medication should be discontinued.

 Isotretinoin (Amnesteem or Claravis) is highly teratogenic and can cause fetal abnormalities. If prescribed, the client needs to follow strict rules of the iPLEDGE Program. It must not be used if the client is pregnant.

#### F. iPLEDGE Program

1. A risk management program that ensures that no woman starting isotretinoin is pregnant and that no woman taking this medication becomes pregnant
2. Access to the medication is controlled through a central automated system.
3. Strict rules must be followed by the client, HCP prescribing the medication, pharmacist dispensing the medication, and the wholesaler of the medication to ensure safety and to ensure that no woman is pregnant on initiation of therapy or becomes pregnant while taking the medication.
4. Web site on the iPLEDGE Program from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration:  
<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/PostmarketDrugSafetyInformationforPatien>

#### G. Hormonal medications

1. Hormonal medications such as oral contraceptives and spironolactone (Aldactone) may be prescribed to treat acne in female clients.

2. These medications decrease androgen activity, resulting in decreased production of sebum (substance that combines with keratin to create a plug within a pore).
3. Spironolactone is teratogenic; therefore contraception during its use is necessary.
4. Adverse effects of spironolactone include breast tenderness, menstrual irregularities, and hyperkalemia.

### VIII. Burn Products (Box 51-6)

#### BOX 51-6 Burn Products

- Mafenide acetate (Sulfamylon)
- Nitrofurazone (Furacin)
- Silver sulfadiazine (Silvadene, Thermazene, SSD cream)
- Bacitracin topical ointment

#### A. Nitrofurazone (Furacin)

1. Applied topically to the **burn** as a solution, ointment, or cream
2. Has a broad spectrum of antibacterial activity
3. Used for burns when bacterial resistance to other agents is a problem
4. Topical: Apply 1/16-inch film directly to burn.
5. Side effects: Contact dermatitis, rash
6. Less common side effects: Pruritus, local edema

#### B. Mafenide acetate (Sulfamylon)

1. Water-soluble cream that is bacteriostatic for gram-negative and gram-positive organisms
2. Used to treat burns to reduce the bacteria present in avascular tissues
3. Diffuses through the devascularized areas of the skin and may precipitate metabolic acidosis (usually compensated for by hyperventilation)
4. Apply 1/16-inch film directly to the burn.
5. Side effects can include local pain and rash.
6. Adverse effects include bone marrow depression, hemolytic anemia, and metabolic acidosis.
7. Keep burn covered with mafenide acetate at all times.
8. Notify HCP if hyperventilation occurs; if acidosis develops, mafenide acetate is washed off the skin and is usually discontinued for 1 to 2 days.

C. Silver sulfadiazine (Silvadene, Thermazene, SSD cream)

1. Has broad spectrum of activity against gram-negative bacteria, gram-positive bacteria, and yeast
2. Released slowly from the cream, which is selectively toxic to bacteria
3. Used primarily to prevent sepsis in clients with burns
4. Not a carbonic anhydrase inhibitor; does not cause acidosis
5. Apply 1/16-inch film (keep burn covered at all times with silver sulfadiazine).
6. Side effects include rash and itching.
7. Adverse effects include leukopenia and interstitial nephritis.
8. Monitor complete blood cell count, particularly the white blood cells, frequently;

if leukopenia develops, the HCP is notified (medication is usually discontinued).

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Topical glucocorticoids can be absorbed into the systemic circulation; absorption is greater in permeable skin areas (scalp, axilla, face and neck, eyelids, perineum). The nurse should wash the area just before application and apply sparingly in a thin film, rubbing the area gently. The nurse should also monitor the client for signs of systemic absorption.

### *Reference*

Kizior, Hodgson (2012), p. 99.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**520.** Salicylic acid is prescribed for a client with a diagnosis of psoriasis. The nurse monitors the client, knowing that which finding indicates the presence of systemic toxicity from this medication?

1. Tinnitus
2. Diarrhea
3. Constipation
4. Decreased respirations

**521.** The health education nurse provides instructions to a group of clients regarding measures that will assist in preventing skin cancer. Which instructions should the nurse provide? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Sunscreen should be applied every 8 hours.
2. Use sunscreen when participating in outdoor activities.
3. Wear a hat, opaque clothing, and sunglasses when in the sun.
4. Avoid sun exposure in the late afternoon and early evening hours.
5. Examine your body monthly for any lesions that may be suspicious.

**522.** Mafenide acetate (Sulfamylon) is prescribed for a client with a burn injury. When applying the medication, the client complains of local discomfort and burning. The nurse should take which **most appropriate** action?

1. Discontinue the medication.
2. Notify the health care provider.

3. Inform the client that this is expected.
4. Apply a thinner film than prescribed to the burn site.

**523.** A burn client is receiving treatments of topical mafenide acetate (Sulfamylon) to the site of injury. The nurse monitors the client, knowing that which finding indicates that a systemic effect has occurred?

1. Hyperventilation
2. Local rash at the burn site
3. Elevated blood pressure
4. Local pain at the burn site

**524.** Isotretinoin (Amnesteem or Claravis) is prescribed for a client with severe acne. Before the administration of this medication, the nurse anticipates that which laboratory test will be prescribed?

1. Platelet count
2. Triglyceride level
3. Complete blood count
4. White blood cell count

**525.** A client with severe acne is seen in the clinic and the health care provider (HCP) prescribes isotretinoin (Amnesteem or Claravis). The nurse reviews the client's medication record and would contact the HCP if the client is taking which medication?

1. Vitamin A

2. Digoxin (Lanoxin)
3. Furosemide (Lasix)
4. Phenytoin (Dilantin)

526. The nurse is applying a topical corticosteroid to a client with eczema. The nurse should monitor for the potential for increased systemic absorption of the medication if the medication were being applied to which body area?

1. Back
2. Axilla
3. Soles of the feet
4. Palms of the hands

527. The clinic nurse is performing an admission assessment on a client and notes that the client is taking azelaic acid (Azelex). Because of the medication prescription, the nurse would suspect that the client is being treated for which condition?

1. Acne
2. Eczema
3. Hair loss
4. Herpes simplex

528. Silver sulfadiazine (Silvadene, Thermazene, SSD cream) is prescribed for a client with a partial-thickness burn and the nurse provides teaching about the medication. Which statement made by the client indicates a **need for further teaching** about the treatments?

1. “The medication is an antibacterial.”
2. “The medication will help heal the burn.”
3. “The medication will permanently stain my skin.”
4. “The medication should be applied directly to the wound.”

**529.** The camp nurse asks the children preparing to swim in the lake if they have applied sunscreen. The nurse reminds the children that chemical sunscreens are **most effective** when applied at which times?

1. Immediately before swimming
2. 5 minutes before exposure to the sun
3. Immediately before exposure to the sun
4. At least 30 minutes before exposure to the sun

## ANSWERS

**520. 1**

**Rationale:** Salicylic acid is absorbed readily through the skin, and systemic toxicity (salicylism) can result.

Symptoms include tinnitus, dizziness, hyperpnea, and psychological disturbances. Constipation and diarrhea are not associated with salicylism.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, systemic toxicity. Noting the name of the medication will assist in directing you to the correct option if you can recall the toxic effects that occur with acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin).

**Review:** Toxic effects of **salicylic acid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lilley et al (2011), p. 682.

❖ 521. 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** The client should be instructed to avoid sun exposure between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM.

Sunscreen, a hat, opaque clothing, and sunglasses should be worn for outdoor activities. The client should be instructed to examine the body monthly for the appearance of any possible cancerous or any precancerous lesions. Sunscreen should be reapplied every 2 to 3 hours and after swimming or sweating; otherwise, the duration of protection is reduced.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, measures to prevent skin cancer. Read each option carefully. Noting the time frames in options 1 and 4 will assist in eliminating these options.

**Review:** Client teaching points for the prevention of **skin cancer**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Integumentary

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 503.

522. 3

**Rationale:** Mafenide acetate is bacteriostatic for gram-negative and gram-positive organisms and is used to treat burns to reduce bacteria present in avascular tissues. The client should be informed that the medication will cause local discomfort and burning and that this is a normal reaction. Therefore options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate options 1 and 4 because it is not within the scope of nursing practice to alter or discontinue a medication therapy. Recalling that this is a normal expected occurrence will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Mafenide acetate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 757.

**523. 1**

**Rationale:** Mafenide acetate is a carbonic anhydrase inhibitor and can suppress renal excretion of acid, thereby causing acidosis. Clients receiving this treatment should be monitored for signs of an acid-base imbalance (hyperventilation). If this occurs, the medication will probably be discontinued for 1 to 2 days. Options 2 and 4 describe local rather than systemic effects. An elevated blood pressure may be expected from the pain that occurs with a burn injury.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the words *systemic effect*. Options 2 and 4 can be eliminated because they are **comparable or alike** and are local rather than systemic effects. From the remaining options, recall that the client in pain would likely have an elevated blood pressure. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Systemic effects of **mafenide acetate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 756-757.

524. 2

**Rationale:** Isotretinoin can elevate triglyceride levels. Blood triglyceride levels should be measured before treatment and periodically thereafter until the effect on the triglycerides has been evaluated. Options 1, 3, and 4 do not need to be monitored specifically during this treatment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** in that a complete blood count also measures the white blood cell count. From the remaining options, recall that the medication can affect triglyceride levels in the client.

**Review:** **Isotretinoin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), p. 640.

**525. 1**

**Rationale:** Isotretinoin is a metabolite of vitamin A and can produce generalized intensification of isotretinoin toxicity. Because of the potential for increased toxicity, vitamin A supplements should be discontinued before isotretinoin therapy. Options 2, 3, and 4 are not contraindicated with the use of isotretinoin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the need to contact the HCP. Recalling that isotretinoin is a metabolite of vitamin A will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Isotretinoin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), p. 640.

**526. 2**

**Rationale:** Topical corticosteroids can be absorbed into the systemic circulation. Absorption is higher from regions where the skin is especially permeable (scalp, axilla, face, eyelids, neck, perineum, genitalia), and lower from regions where permeability is poor (back, palms, soles).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, permeability and the potential for increased systemic absorption.

Eliminate options 3 and 4 because these body areas are **comparable or alike** in terms of skin substance. From the remaining options, think about permeability of the skin area. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Administration of **topical corticosteroids**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 463.

**527. 1**

**Rationale:** Azelaic acid is a topical medication used to treat mild to moderate acne. The acid appears to work by suppressing the growth of *Propionibacterium acnes* and by decreasing the proliferation of keratinocytes. Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the purpose and use of azelaic acid. Focusing on the name of the medication will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Azelaic acid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 1332.

**528. 3**

**Rationale:** Silver sulfadiazine (Silvadene, Thermazene, SSD cream) is an antibacterial that has a broad spectrum of

activity against gram-negative bacteria, gram-positive bacteria, and yeast. It is applied directly to the wound to assist in healing. It does not stain the skin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Recall the characteristics of this medication. Noting the words *permanently stain* in the correct option will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Silver sulfadiazine

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lilley et al (2011), p. 866.

529. 4

**Rationale:** Sunscreens are most effective when applied at least 30 minutes before exposure to the sun so that they can penetrate the skin. All sunscreens should be reapplied after swimming or sweating.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Knowledge that sunscreens need to penetrate the skin will assist in eliminating options 2 and 3. Next, noting the **strategic words** *most effective* will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Sunscreen and other protective skin measures

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Integumentary Medications

***Priority Concepts:*** Client Education; Safety

***Reference:*** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 754-756.

# UNIT IX



## Hematological and Oncological Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**adenocarcinoma** A tumor that arises from glandular epithelial tissue.

**benign** Usually refers to growths that are encapsulated, remain localized, and are slow growing.

**cancer** A neoplastic disorder that can involve all body organs. Cells lose their normal growth-controlling mechanism, and the growth of cells is uncontrolled.

**carcinogen** A physical, chemical, or biological stressor that causes neoplastic changes in normal cells.

**carcinoma** A new growth or malignant tumor that originates from epithelial cells, the skin, gastrointestinal tract, lungs, uterus, breast, or other organ.

**carcinoma in situ** A premalignant lesion with all the histological characteristics of

cancer except invasion of the basement membrane.

**leukemia** Neoplasm involving abnormal overproduction of leukocytes, usually at an immature stage, in the bone marrow.

**lymphoma** Neoplasm that originates from lymphoid tissue.

**malignant** Term for growths that are not encapsulated but grow and metastasize. These growths are cancerous lesions having the characteristics of disorderly, uncontrolled, and chaotically proliferating cells.

**metastasis** The transfer of disease from one organ or part to another not directly connected with it. Secondary malignant lesions, originating from the primary tumor, are located in anatomically distant places.

**myeloma** A malignant proliferation of plasma cells within the bone.

**nadir** The period of time during which an antineoplastic medication has its most profound effects on the bone marrow.

**neoplasm** An abnormal growth, which may be benign or malignant.

**sarcoma** Neoplasm that originates from muscle, bone, fat, the lymph system, or connective tissue.

**staging** A method of classifying malignancies on the basis of the presence and extent of the tumor within the body.

**tumor marker** Specific bodily substances that seem to indicate tumor progression or regression.

**undifferentiated cells** Cells that have lost the capacity for specialized functions.

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points focus on treatment modalities related to an oncological disorder, such as pain management, internal and external radiation, and chemotherapy. In preparation for the NCLEX<sup>®</sup>, focus on the following oncological disorders: skin cancer; leukemia; breast cancer; testicular cancer; stomach, bowel, and pancreatic cancer; bladder cancer; prostate cancer; and lung cancer. Particular attention is given to the nursing care related to these disorders and treatment modalities, client adaptation, and the impact of the treatment on the disorder. Also, concentrate on the complications related to chemotherapy and the nursing measures required in monitoring for these complications and preventing life-threatening conditions, such as infection and bleeding.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Discussing oncology-related consultations and referrals

Ensuring advocacy related to the client's decisions

Ensuring that advance directives are in the client's medical record

Establishing priorities

Handling hazardous and infectious materials related to radiation and chemotherapy safely

Implementing protective, standard, and other precautions

Maintaining medical and surgical asepsis and preventing infection

Providing confidentiality regarding diagnosis

Providing informed consent for treatments and procedures

Upholding the client's rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing expected body image changes related to chemotherapy and treatments

Providing the client and family instructions regarding home care

Providing instructions regarding monthly breast or testicular self-examinations

Respecting the client's lifestyle choices

Teaching about health promotion programs regarding risks for cancer

Teaching about health screening measures for cancer

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing the client's ability to cope, adapt, and/or solve problems during illness or stressful events

Assisting the client and family to cope with the alteration in body image

Discussing end-of-life and grief and loss issues related to death and the dying process

Mobilizing appropriate support and resource systems

Promoting a positive environment to maintain optimal quality of life

Respecting religious and cultural preferences

Assessing the concerns of the client who survived cancer

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering blood and blood products

Caring for central venous access devices

Caring for the client receiving chemotherapy or radiation therapy

Managing pain

Monitoring diagnostic tests and laboratory values, such as white blood cell and platelet counts

Monitoring for expected and unexpected responses to radiation and chemotherapy

Protecting the client from the life-threatening adverse effects of treatments

Providing basic care and comfort

Providing nutrition



## CHAPTER 52

# Hematological and Oncological Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The laboratory reports that a client's platelet count is 19,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 618.*

## I. Cancer

### A. Description

1. Cancer is a neoplastic disorder that can involve all body organs with manifestations that vary according to the body system affected and type of tumor cells.
2. Cells lose their normal growth-controlling mechanism, and the growth of cells is uncontrolled.
3. Cancer produces serious health problems such as impaired immune and

hematopoietic (blood-producing) function, altered gastrointestinal tract structure and function, motor and sensory deficits, and decreased respiratory function.

## **B. Metastasis** (Box 52-1)

### **BOX 52-1** Common Sites of Metastasis

#### **Bladder Cancer**

- Lung
- Bone
- Liver
- Pelvic, retroperitoneal structures

#### **Brain Tumors**

- Central nervous system

#### **Breast Cancer**

- Bone
- Lung
- Brain
- Liver

#### **Colorectal Cancer**

- Liver

#### **Lung Cancer**

- Brain
- Liver

## Prostate Cancer

- Bone
- Spine
- Lung
- Liver
- Kidneys

## Testicular Cancer

- Lung
- Bone
- Liver
- Adrenal glands
- Retroperitoneal lymph nodes

1. Cancer cells move from their original location to other sites.

2. Routes of metastasis

- Local seeding: Distribution of shed cancer cells occurs in the local area of the primary tumor.
- Blood-borne metastasis: Tumor cells enter the blood, which is the most common cause of cancer spread.
- Lymphatic spread: Primary sites rich in lymphatics are more susceptible to early metastatic spread.

C. Cancer classification

1. Solid tumors: Associated with the organs from which they develop, such as breast cancer or lung cancer
2. Hematological cancers: Originate from blood cell-forming tissues, such as **leukemias, lymphomas**, and multiple **myeloma**

#### D. Grading and staging (Box 52-2)

### BOX 52-2 Grading and Staging

#### Grading

**Grade I:** Cells differ slightly from normal cells and are well differentiated (mild dysplasia).

**Grade II:** Cells are more abnormal and are moderately differentiated (moderate dysplasia).

**Grade III:** Cells are very abnormal and are poorly differentiated (severe dysplasia).

**Grade IV:** Cells are immature (anaplasia) and undifferentiated; cell of origin is difficult to determine.

#### Staging

**Stage 0:** Carcinoma in situ

**Stage I:** Tumor limited to the tissue of origin; localized tumor growth

**Stage II:** Limited local spread

**Stage III:** Extensive local and regional spread

**Stage IV:** Distant metastasis

1. Grading and **staging** are methods used to describe the tumor.
2. These methods describe the extent of the tumor, the extent to which malignancy has increased in size, the involvement of regional nodes, and metastatic development.
3. Grading a tumor classifies the cellular aspects of the cancer.
4. Staging classifies the clinical aspects of the cancer and degree of metastasis at diagnosis.

#### E. Factors that influence cancer development

##### 1. Environmental factors

- a. Chemical **carcinogen**: Factors include industrial chemicals, drugs, and tobacco.
- b. Physical carcinogen: Factors include ionizing radiation (diagnostic and therapeutic x-rays) and ultraviolet radiation (sun, tanning beds, and germicidal lights), chronic irritation, and tissue trauma.
- c. Viral carcinogen: Viruses capable of causing cancer are known as oncoviruses, such as Epstein-Barr virus, hepatitis B virus, and human papillomavirus.
- d. *Helicobacter pylori* infection is associated with an increased risk of gastric cancer.

2. Obesity and dietary factors including preservatives, contaminants, additives, and nitrates.

3. Genetic predisposition: Factors include an inherited predisposition to specific cancers, inherited conditions associated with cancer, familial clustering, and chromosomal aberrations.

4. Age: Advancing age is a significant risk factor for the development of cancer.

5. Immune function: The incidence of cancer is higher in immunosuppressed individuals, such as those with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and organ transplant recipients who are taking immunosuppressive medications.

F. Prevention: Avoidance of known or potential carcinogens and avoidance or modification of the factors associated with the development of cancer cells.

G. Early detection ([Box 52-3](#))

### **BOX 52-3** Warning Signs of Cancer

- Any sore that does not heal
- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- Indigestion
- Nagging cough or hoarseness
- Obvious change in wart or mole
- Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere
- Unusual bleeding or discharge

From WebMD: Understanding Cancer—Symptoms. Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/cancer/understanding-cancer-symptoms>.

1. Mammography
2. Papanicolaou's (Pap) test
3. Rectal exams and stools for occult blood
4. Sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy

5. Breast self-examination and clinical breast examination
6. Testicular self-examination
7. Skin inspection

## II. Diagnostic Tests

A. Diagnostic tests to be performed depend on the suspected primary or metastatic site of the cancer; invasive procedures require informed consent (Box 52-4).

### BOX 52-4 Diagnostic Tests

- Biopsy
- Bone marrow examination (particularly if a hematolymphoid malignancy is suspected)
- Chest radiograph
- Complete blood count (CBC)
- Computed tomography (CT)
- Cytological studies (Papanicolaou's smear)
- Liver function studies
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)
- Evaluation of serum tumor markers (e.g., carcinoembryonic antigen and alpha-fetoprotein)
- Proctoscopic examination (including guaiac test for occult blood)
- Radiographic studies (mammography)
- Radioisotope scanning (liver, brain, bone, lung)

## B. Biopsy ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Biopsy is the definitive means of diagnosing cancer and provides histological proof of malignancy.
- b. Biopsy involves the surgical incision of a small piece of tissue for microscopic examination.

### 2. Types

- a. Needle: Aspiration of cells
- b. Incisional: Removal of a wedge of suspected tissue from a larger mass
- c. Excisional: Complete removal of the entire lesion
- d. Staging: Multiple needle or incisional biopsies in tissues where metastasis is suspected or likely (see [Boxes 52-1](#) and [52-2](#))

### 3. Tissue examination

- a. Following excision, a frozen section or a permanent paraffin section is prepared to examine the specimen.
- b. The advantage of the frozen section is the speed with which the section can be prepared and the diagnosis made, because only minutes are required for this test.
- c. Permanent paraffin section takes about 24 hours; however, it provides clearer details than the frozen section.

#### 4. Interventions

- a. The procedure usually is performed in an outpatient surgical setting.
- b. Prepare the client for the diagnostic procedure, and provide postprocedure instructions.
- c. Ensure that informed consent has been obtained.

### III. Pain Control ▲

#### A. Causes of pain

1. Bone destruction
2. Obstruction of an organ
3. Compression of peripheral nerves
4. Infiltration, distention of tissue
5. Inflammation, necrosis
6. Psychological factors, such as fear or anxiety

#### B. Interventions

1. Collaborate with other members of the health care team to develop a pain management program.
2. Administer oral preparations if possible and if they provide adequate relief of pain; the transdermal route may also be prescribed.
3. Mild or moderate pain may be treated with salicylates, acetaminophen (Tylenol), and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
4. Severe pain is treated with opioids, such as codeine sulfate, morphine sulfate,

methadone, and hydromorphone hydrochloride (Dilaudid). Neuropathic pain may be treated with a variety of anticonvulsants and antidepressants, as well as opioids.

5. Subcutaneous injections and continuous intravenous (IV) infusions of opioids provide rapid pain control; equianalgesic comparison charts should be used when switching routes of administration of opioids.
6. Monitor vital signs and for side effects of medications.
7. Monitor for effectiveness of medications.
8. Provide nonpharmacological techniques of pain control, such as relaxation, guided imagery, biofeedback, massage, and heat-cold application.

 **Assess the client's pain; pain is what the client describes or says that it is. Do not undermedicate the cancer client who is in pain.**

#### **IV. Surgery**

**A.** Description: Surgery is indicated to diagnose, stage, and treat **cancer**.

**B.** Prophylactic surgery

1. Prophylactic surgery is performed in clients with an existing premalignant condition or a known family history that strongly predisposes the person to the development of cancer.
2. An attempt is made to remove the tissue or organ at risk and thus prevent the development of cancer.

**C.** Curative surgery: All gross and microscopic tumor is removed or destroyed.

**D.** Control (cytoreductive or “debulking”) surgery

1. Control surgery is a debulking procedure that consists of removing a large portion of a locally invasive tumor, such as advanced ovarian cancer.
2. Surgery decreases the number of cancer cells; therefore, it may increase the chance that other therapies will be successful.

#### **E. Palliative surgery**

1. Palliative surgery is performed to improve quality of life during the survival time.
2. Palliative surgery is performed to reduce pain, relieve airway obstruction, relieve obstructions in the gastrointestinal or urinary tract, relieve pressure on the brain or spinal cord, prevent hemorrhage, remove infected or ulcerated tumors, or drain abscesses.

**F. Reconstructive or rehabilitative surgery** is performed to improve quality of life by restoring maximal function and appearance, such as breast reconstruction after mastectomy.

#### **G. Adverse effects of surgery**

1. Loss or loss of function of a specific body part
2. Reduced function as a result of organ loss
3. Scarring or disfigurement
4. Grieving about altered body image or imposed change in lifestyle

## **V. Chemotherapy**

### **A. Description**

1. Chemotherapy kills or inhibits the reproduction of neoplastic cells and kills

normal cells.

2. The effects are systemic because chemotherapy is usually administered systemically.
  3. Normal cells most profoundly affected include those of the skin, hair, and lining of the gastrointestinal tract, spermatocytes, and hematopoietic cells.
  4. Usually, several chemotherapy and biotherapy agents are used in combination (combination therapy) to increase the therapeutic response.
  5. Combination chemotherapy is planned by the health care provider (HCP) so that medications with overlapping toxicities and **nadirs** (the time during which bone marrow activity and white blood cell counts are at their lowest) are not administered at or near the same time; this will minimize immunosuppression.
  6. Chemotherapy may be combined with other treatments, such as surgery and radiation.
- B.** Common side effects include fatigue, alopecia, nausea and vomiting, mucositis, skin changes, and myelosuppression (neutropenia, anemia, and thrombocytopenia). ▲
- C.** See [Chapter 53](#) for information regarding the care of the client receiving chemotherapy.

## **VI. Radiation Therapy**

### **A. Description**

1. Radiation therapy destroys cancer cells, with minimal exposure of normal cells to the damaging effects of radiation; the damaged cells die or become unable to divide.

2. Radiation therapy is effective on tissues directly within the path of the radiation beam.
  3. Side effects include local skin changes and irritation, alopecia (hair loss), fatigue (most common side effect of radiation), and altered taste sensation; the effects vary according to the site of treatment.
  4. External beam radiation (also called teletherapy) and brachytherapy are the types of radiation therapy most commonly used to treat cancer.
- B. External beam radiation (teletherapy):** The actual radiation source is external to the client. ▲
1. Instruct the client regarding self-care of the skin ([Box 52-5](#)).

#### **BOX 52-5**

#### **Client Education Guide: Radiation Therapy for Cancer**

Wash the irradiated area gently each day with warm water alone or with mild soap and water.

Use the hand rather than a washcloth to wash the area.

Rinse soap thoroughly from the skin.

Take care not to remove the markings that indicate exactly where the beam of radiation is to be focused.

Dry the irradiated area with patting motions rather than rubbing motions; use a clean, soft towel or cloth.

Use no powders, ointments, lotions, or creams on the skin at the radiation site unless they are prescribed by the radiologist.

Wear soft clothing over the skin at the radiation site.

Avoid wearing belts, buckles, straps, or any type of clothing that binds or rubs the skin at the radiation site.

Avoid exposure of the irradiated area to the sun.

Avoid heat exposure.

2. The client does not emit radiation and does not pose a hazard to anyone else.

### C. Brachytherapy

1. The radiation source comes into direct, continuous contact with tumor tissues for a specific time.
2. The radiation source is within the client; for a period of time, the client emits radiation and can pose a hazard to others.
3. Brachytherapy includes an unsealed source or a sealed source of radiation.
4. Unsealed radiation source
  - a. Administration is via the oral or IV route or by instillation into body cavities.
  - b. The source is not confined completely to one body area, and it enters body fluids and eventually is eliminated via various excreta, which are radioactive and harmful to others. Most of the source is eliminated from the body within 48 hours; then neither the client nor the excreta is radioactive or harmful.
5. Sealed radiation source ([Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ([Box 52-6](#))

## Actions to Take if a Sealed Radiation Implant Becomes Dislodged

1. Encourage the client to lie still.
2. Use a long-handled forceps to retrieve the radioactive source.
3. Deposit the radioactive source in a lead container.
4. Contact the radiation oncologist.
5. Document the occurrence and the actions taken.

The client with a sealed radiation implant can emit radiation. Therefore the nurse and any other person who is in contact with the client needs to take special precautions to protect himself or herself from radiation exposure. In the event that a radiation source becomes dislodged, the nurse would first encourage the client to lie still until the radioactive source has been placed in a safe, closed lead container. The nurse would never touch the dislodged radiation source with his or her hands and would use a long-handled forceps to place the source in the lead container that should be kept in the client's room. The nurse calls the radiation oncologist and then documents the occurrence and the actions taken. In the event that the radiation source cannot be located, the nurse ensures that no linens or other articles in the client's room are disposed of, prohibits visitors, and notifies the radiation oncologist.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders., p. 413.

**BOX 52-6****Care of the Client with a Sealed Radiation Implant**

Place the client in a private room with a private bath.

Place a caution sign on the client's door.

Organize nursing tasks to minimize exposure to the radiation source.

Nursing assignments to a client with a radiation implant should be rotated.

Limit time to 30 minutes per care provider per shift.

Wear a dosimeter film badge to measure radiation exposure.

Wear a lead shield to reduce the transmission of radiation.

The nurse should never care for more than one client with a radiation implant at one time.

Do not allow a pregnant nurse to care for the client.

Do not allow children younger than 16 years or a pregnant woman to visit the client.

Limit visitors to 30 minutes per day; visitors should be at least 6 feet from the source.

Save bed linens and dressings until the source is removed; then dispose of the linens and dressings in the usual manner.

Other equipment can be removed from the room at any time.

- a. A sealed, temporary or permanent radiation source (solid implant) is implanted within the tumor target tissues.
- b. The client emits radiation while the implant is in place, but the excreta are not radioactive.

## 6. Removal of sealed radiation sources

- a. The client is no longer radioactive.
- b. Inform the client that cancer is not contagious.
- c. Inform the female client that she may resume sexual intercourse after 7 to 10 days if the implant was cervical or vaginal.
- d. Provide a douche, as prescribed, if the implant was placed into the cervix.
- e. Administer a ready-to-use saline enema if prescribed.
- f. Advise the client who had a cervical or vaginal implant to notify the HCP if nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, frequent urination, vaginal or rectal bleeding, hematuria, foul-smelling vaginal discharge, abdominal pain or distention, or fever occurs.

## VII. Bone Marrow Transplantation

### A. Description

1. Bone marrow transplantation (BMT) and peripheral blood stem cell transplantation (PBSCT) are procedures that replace stem cells that have been destroyed by high doses of chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy.
2. BMT and PBSCT are most commonly used in the treatment of leukemia and lymphoma, but are also used to treat other cancers, such as neuroblastoma and multiple myeloma.
3. The goal of treatment is to rid the client of all leukemic or other **malignant** cells through treatment with high doses of chemotherapy and whole-body irradiation.
4. Because these treatments are damaging to bone marrow cells, without the

replacement of blood-forming stem cell function through transplantation, the client would die of infection or hemorrhage.

## **B. Types of donor stem cells**

1. Allogeneic: Stem cell donor is usually a sibling, parent with a similar tissue type, or a person who is not related to the client (unrelated donor).
2. Syngeneic: Stem cells are from an identical twin.
3. Autologous
  - a. Autologous donation is the most common type.
  - b. The client receives his or her own stem cells.
  - c. Stem cells are harvested during disease remission and are stored frozen to be reinfused later.

## **C. Procedure**

### **1. Harvest**

- a. The stem cells used in PBSCT come from the bloodstream in a 4- to 6-hour process called *apheresis* or *leukapheresis* (the blood is removed through a central venous catheter and an apheresis machine removes the stem cells and returns the remainder of the blood to the donor).
- b. In BMT, marrow is harvested through multiple aspirations from the iliac crest to retrieve sufficient bone marrow for the transplant.
- c. Marrow from the client is filtered for residual cancer cells.
- d. Allogeneic marrow is transfused immediately; autologous marrow is frozen for later use (cryopreservation).

e. Harvesting is done before the initiation of the conditioning regimen.

2. *Conditioning* refers to an immunosuppression therapy regimen used to eradicate all malignant cells, provide a state of immunosuppression, and create space in the bone marrow for the engraftment of the new marrow.

### 3. Transplantation

a. Stem cells are administered through the client's central line in a manner similar to that for a blood transfusion.

b. Stem cells may be administered by IV infusion or by IV push directly into the central line.

### 4. Engraftment

a. The transfused stem cells move to the marrow-forming sites of the recipient's bones.

b. Engraftment occurs when the white blood cell, erythrocyte, and platelet counts begin to rise.

c. When successful, the engraftment process takes 2 to 5 weeks.

**D.** Posttransplantation period: Infection, bleeding, or neutropenia and thrombocytopenia are major concerns until engraftment occurs. ▲

**⚠** During the posttransplantation period, the client remains without any natural immunity until the donor stem cells begin to proliferate and engraftment occurs.

### **E.** Complications ▲

1. Failure to engraft: If the transplanted stem cells fail to engraft, the client will die

unless another transplantation is attempted and is successful.

## 2. Graft-versus-host disease in allogeneic transplants

- a. Although the recipient cannot recognize the donated stem cells as foreign or non-self because of the total immunosuppression, the immune-competent cells of the donor recognize the recipient's cells as foreign and mount an immune offense against them.
- b. Graft-versus-host disease is managed cautiously with immunosuppressive agents to avoid suppressing the new immune system to such an extent that the client becomes more susceptible to infection, or the transplanted cells stop engrafting.

## 3. Veno-occlusive disease

- a. The disease involves occlusion of the hepatic venules by thrombosis or phlebitis.
- b. Signs include right upper quadrant abdominal pain, jaundice, ascites, weight gain, and hepatomegaly.
- c. Early detection is critical because there is no known way to open the hepatic vessels.
- d. The client will be treated with fluids and supportive therapy.

## VIII. Skin Cancer (see Chapter 50)

## IX. Leukemia (Box 52-7)

## BOX 52-7

### Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia

- Mostly lymphoblasts present in bone marrow
- Age of onset is younger than 15 years.

### Acute Myelogenous Leukemia

- Mostly myeloblasts present in bone marrow
- Age of onset is between 15 and 39 years.

### Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia

- Mostly granulocytes present in bone marrow
- Age of onset is in the fourth decade.

### Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia

- Mostly lymphocytes present in bone marrow
- Age of onset is after 50 years.

## A. Description

1. **leukemias** are a group of hematological malignancies involving abnormal overproduction of leukocytes, usually at an immature stage, in the bone marrow.
2. The two major types of leukemia are lymphocytic (involving abnormal cells from the lymphoid pathway) and myelocytic or myelogenous (involving abnormal cells from the myeloid pathways).
3. Leukemia may be acute, with a sudden onset, or chronic, with a slow onset and persistent symptoms over a period of years.

4. Leukemia affects the bone marrow, causing anemia, leukopenia, the production of immature cells, thrombocytopenia, and a decline in immunity.
5. The cause is unknown and appears to involve genetically damaged cells, leading to the transformation of cells from a normal state to a malignant state.
6. Risk factors include genetic, viral, immunological, and environmental factors and exposure to radiation, chemicals, and medications, such as previous chemotherapy.

## **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Anorexia, fatigue, weakness, weight loss
2. Anemia
3. Overt bleeding (nosebleeds, gum bleeding, rectal bleeding, hematuria, increased menstrual flow) and occult bleeding (e.g., as detected in a fecal occult blood test)
4. Ecchymoses, petechiae
5. Prolonged bleeding after minor abrasions or lacerations
6. Elevated temperature
7. Enlarged lymph nodes, spleen, liver
8. Palpitations, tachycardia, orthostatic hypotension
9. Pallor and dyspnea on exertion
10. Headache
11. Bone pain and joint swelling
12. Normal, elevated, or reduced white blood cell count
13. Decreased hemoglobin and hematocrit levels

**14.** Decreased platelet count

**15.** Positive bone marrow biopsy identifying leukemic blast-phase cells

**C.** Infection ▲

- 1.** Infection can occur through autocontamination or cross-contamination. The white blood cell (WBC) count may be extremely low during the period of greatest bone marrow depression, known as the *nadir*.
- 2.** Common sites of infection are the skin, respiratory tract, and gastrointestinal tract.
- 3.** Initiate protective isolation procedures.
- 4.** Ensure frequent and thorough hand washing by the client, family, and health care providers.
- 5.** Staff and visitors with known infections or exposure to communicable diseases should avoid contact with the client until risk of infectious spread has passed.
- 6.** Use strict aseptic technique for all procedures.
- 7.** Keep supplies for the client separate from supplies for other clients; keep frequently used equipment in the room for the client's use only.
- 8.** Limit the number of staff entering the client's room to reduce the risk of cross-infection.
- 9.** Maintain the client in a private room with the door closed.
- 10.** Place the client in a room with high-efficiency particulate air filtration or a laminar airflow system if possible.
- 11.** Reduce exposure to environmental organisms by eliminating fresh or raw fruits and vegetables (low-bacteria diet) from the diet; eliminate fresh flowers and live

plants from the client's room and avoid leaving standing water in the client's room.

12. Be sure that the client's room is cleaned daily.
13. Assist the client with daily bathing, using an antimicrobial soap.
14. Assist the client to perform oral hygiene frequently.
15. Initiate a bowel program to prevent constipation and prevent rectal trauma.
16. Avoid invasive procedures such as injections, insertion of rectal thermometers, and urinary catheterization.
17. Change wound dressings daily, and inspect the wounds for redness, swelling, or drainage.
18. Assess the urine for cloudiness and other characteristics of infection.
19. Assess skin and oral mucous membranes for signs of infection ([Box 52-8](#)).

### **BOX 52-8** Mouth Care for the Client with Mucositis

Inspect the mouth daily.

Offer complete mouth care before and after every meal and at bedtime.

Brush the teeth and tongue with a soft-bristled toothbrush or sponges.

Provide mouth rinses every 12 hours with the prescribed solution.

Administer topical anesthetic agents to mouth sores as prescribed.

Avoid the use of alcohol- or glycerin-based mouthwashes or swabs because they are irritating to the mucosa.

Offer soft foods that are cool to warm in temperature rather than foods that are hard

or spicy.

20. Auscultate lung sounds, and encourage the client to cough and deep-breathe.
21. Monitor temperature, pulse, respirations, blood pressure, and for pain.
22. Monitor white blood cell and neutrophil counts.
23. Notify the HCP if signs of infection are present, and prepare to obtain specimens for culture of the blood, open lesions, urine, and sputum; chest radiograph may also be prescribed.
24. Administer prescribed antibiotic, antifungal, and antiviral medications.
25. Instruct the client to avoid crowds and those with infections.
26. Instruct the client about a low-bacteria diet.
27. Instruct the client to avoid activities that expose the client to infection, such as changing a pet's litter box or working with house plants or in the garden.
28. Instruct the client that neither they nor their household contacts should receive immunization with a live virus such as measles, mumps, rubella, polio, varicella, shingles, and some influenza, including the H1N1 vaccine.

 Infection is a major cause of death in the immunosuppressed client.

#### D. Bleeding

1. During the period of greatest bone marrow suppression (the nadir), the platelet count may be extremely low.
2. The client is at risk for bleeding when the platelet count falls below 50,000

cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, and spontaneous bleeding frequently occurs when the platelet count is lower than 20,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>.

3. Clients with platelet counts lower than 20,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> may need a platelet transfusion.
4. For clients with anemia and fatigue, packed red blood cells may be prescribed.
5. Monitor laboratory values.
6. Examine the client for signs and symptoms of bleeding; examine all body fluids and excrement for the presence of blood.
7. Handle the client gently; use caution when taking blood pressures to prevent skin injury.
8. Monitor for signs of internal hemorrhage (e.g., pain, rapid and weak pulse, increased abdominal girth, and abdomen guarding).
9. Provide soft foods that are cool to warm to avoid oral mucosa damage.
10. Avoid injections, if possible, to prevent trauma to the skin and bleeding; apply firm and gentle pressure to a needle stick site for at least 5 minutes, or longer if needed.
11. Pad side rails and sharp corners of the bed and furniture.
12. Avoid rectal suppositories, enemas, and thermometers.
13. If the female client is menstruating, count the number of pads or tampons used.
14. Administer blood products as prescribed.
15. Instruct the client to use a soft toothbrush and avoid dental floss.
16. Instruct the client to use only an electric razor for shaving.

17. Instruct the client to avoid blowing the nose.
18. Discourage the client from engaging in activities involving the use of sharp objects; contact sports also need to be avoided.
19. Instruct the client to avoid using nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs and products that contain aspirin.

#### E. Fatigue and nutrition ▲

1. Assist the client in selecting a well-balanced diet.
2. Provide small, frequent meals (high calorie, high protein, high carbohydrate) that require little chewing to reduce energy expenditure at mealtimes.
3. Assist the client in self-care and mobility activities.
4. Allow adequate rest periods during care.
5. Do not perform activities unless they are essential; assist the client in scheduling important or pleasurable activities during periods of highest energy.
6. Administer blood products for anemia as prescribed.

#### F. Additional interventions

##### 1. Chemotherapy

- a. Induction therapy is aimed at achieving a rapid, complete remission of all manifestations of the disease.
- b. Consolidation therapy is administered early in remission with the aim of curing.
- c. Maintenance therapy may be prescribed for months or years following successful induction and consolidation therapy; the aim is to maintain remission.

2. Administer antibiotic, antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal medications as prescribed.
3. Administer colony-stimulating factors as prescribed.
4. Administer blood replacements as prescribed.
5. Maintain infection and bleeding precautions.
6. Prepare the client for transplantation if indicated.
7. Instruct the client in appropriate home care measures.
8. Provide psychosocial support and support services for home care.

## **X. Lymphoma: Hodgkin's Disease**

### **A. Description**

1. **Lymphomas**, classified as Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's depending on the cell type, are characterized by abnormal proliferation of lymphocytes.
2. Hodgkin's disease is a malignancy of the lymph nodes that originates in a single lymph node or a chain of nodes.
3. Metastasis occurs to other, adjacent lymph structures and eventually invades nonlymphoid tissue.
4. The disease usually involves lymph nodes, tonsils, spleen, and bone marrow and is characterized by the presence of Reed-Sternberg cells in the nodes.
5. Possible causes include viral infections; clients treated with combination chemotherapy for Hodgkin's disease have a greater risk of developing acute leukemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, among other secondary malignancies.
6. Prognosis depends on the stage of the disease.

## B. Assessment

1. Fever
2. Malaise, fatigue, and weakness
3. Night sweats
4. Loss of appetite and significant weight loss
5. Anemia and thrombocytopenia
6. Enlarged lymph nodes, spleen, and liver
7. Positive biopsy of lymph nodes, with cervical nodes most often affected first ▲
8. Presence of Reed-Sternberg cells in nodes ▲
9. Positive computed tomography (CT) scan of the liver and spleen

## C. Interventions

1. For earlier stages (stages I and II), without mediastinal node involvement, the treatment of choice is extensive external radiation of the involved lymph node regions.
2. With more extensive disease, radiation and multiagent chemotherapy are used.
3. Monitor for side effects related to chemotherapy or radiation therapy.
4. Monitor for signs of infection and bleeding.
5. Maintain infection and bleeding precautions.
6. Discuss the possibility of sterility with the male client receiving radiation, and inform the client of fertility options such as sperm banking.

## XI. Multiple myeloma

## A. Description

1. A malignant proliferation of plasma cells within the bone
2. Excessive numbers of abnormal plasma cells invade the bone marrow and ultimately destroy bone; invasion of the lymph nodes, spleen, and liver occurs.
3. The abnormal plasma cells produce an abnormal antibody (myeloma protein or the Bence Jones protein) found in the blood and urine.
4. Multiple myeloma causes decreased production of immunoglobulin and antibodies and increased levels of uric acid and calcium, which can lead to kidney failure.
5. The disease typically develops slowly and the cause is unknown.

## B. Assessment

1. Bone (skeletal) pain, especially in the ribs, spine, and pelvis
2. Weakness and fatigue
3. Recurrent infections
4. Anemia
5. Urinalysis shows Bence Jones proteinuria and elevated total serum protein level.
6. Osteoporosis (bone loss and the development of pathological fractures)
7. Thrombocytopenia and leukopenia
8. Elevated calcium and uric acid levels
9. Kidney failure
10. Spinal cord compression and paraplegia
11. Bone marrow aspiration shows an abnormal number of immature plasma cells.

 The client with multiple myeloma is at risk for pathological fractures. Therefore, provide skeletal support during moving, turning, and ambulating and provide a hazard-free environment.

### C. Interventions

1. Administer chemotherapy as prescribed.
2. Provide supportive care to control symptoms and prevent complications, especially bone fractures, hypercalcemia, kidney failure, and infections. 
3. Maintain neutropenic and bleeding precautions as necessary.
4. Monitor for signs of bleeding, infection, and skeletal fractures.
5. Encourage the consumption of at least 2 L of fluids per day to offset potential problems associated with hypercalcemia, hyperuricemia, and proteinuria, and encourage additional fluid as indicated and tolerated. 
6. Monitor for signs of kidney failure.
7. Encourage ambulation to prevent renal problems and to slow down bone resorption.
8. Administer IV fluids and diuretics as prescribed to increase renal excretion of calcium.
9. Administer blood transfusions as prescribed for anemia.
10. Administer analgesics as prescribed and provide nonpharmacological therapies to control pain.
11. Administer antibiotics as prescribed for infection.
12. Prepare the client for local radiation therapy if prescribed.

13. Instruct the client in home care measures and the signs and symptoms of infection.
14. Administer bisphosphonate medications as prescribed to slow bone damage and reduce pain and risk of fractures.

## **XII. Testicular Cancer**

### **A. Description**

1. Testicular cancer arises from germinal epithelium from the sperm-producing germ cells or from nongerminal epithelium from other structures in the testicles.
  2. Testicular cancer most often occurs between the ages of 15 and 40 years.
  3. The cause of testicular cancer is unknown, but a history of undescended testicle (cryptorchidism) and genetic predisposition have been associated with testicular tumor development.
  4. Metastasis occurs to the lung, liver, bone, and adrenal glands via the blood, and to the retroperitoneal lymph nodes via lymphatic channels.
- B. Early detection:** Perform monthly testicular self-examination (Fig. 52-1) ▲



**FIGURE 52-1** Testicular self-examination. The best time to perform this examination is right after a shower when your scrotal skin is moist and relaxed, making the testicles easy to feel. First, gently lift each testicle. Each one should feel like an egg, firm but not hard, and smooth with no lumps. Then, using both hands, place your middle fingers on the underside of each testicle and your thumbs on top. Gently roll the testicle between the thumb and fingers to feel for any lumps, swelling, or mass. If you notice any changes from one month to the next, notify your health care provider. (From Harkreader H, Hogan MA: *Fundamentals of nursing: Caring and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)

1. Performing testicular self-examination: Perform monthly; a day of the month is selected and the examination is performed on the same day each month.

2. Client instructions (see [Fig. 52-1](#))

### C. Assessment ▲

1. Painless testicular swelling occurs.

2. “Dragging” or “pulling” sensation is experienced in the scrotum.

3. Palpable lymphadenopathy, abdominal masses, and gynecomastia may indicate metastasis.
4. Late signs include back or bone pain and respiratory symptoms.

#### **D. Interventions**

1. Administer chemotherapy as prescribed.
2. Prepare the client for radiation therapy as prescribed.
3. Prepare the client for unilateral orchiectomy, if prescribed, for diagnosis and primary surgical management or radical orchiectomy (surgical removal of the affected testis, spermatic cord, and regional lymph nodes).
4. Prepare the client for retroperitoneal lymph node dissection, if prescribed, to stage the disease and reduce tumor volume so that chemotherapy and radiation therapy are more effective.
5. Discuss reproduction, sexuality, and fertility information and options with the client.
6. Identify reproductive options such as sperm storage, donor insemination, and adoption.

#### **E. Postoperative interventions**

1. Monitor for signs of bleeding and wound infection; antibiotics may be administered to prevent wound infection.
2. Monitor intake and output.
3. Provide and explain pain management methods; to reduce swelling in the first 48 hours, apply an ice pack with an intervening protective layer of cloth.

4. Notify the HCP if chills, fever, increasing pain or tenderness at the incision site, or drainage from the incision occurs.
5. After the orchiectomy, instruct the client to avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity for the length of time prescribed by the HCP.
6. Instruct the client to perform a monthly testicular self-examination on the remaining testicle (see [Fig. 52-1](#)). ▲
7. Inform the client that sutures will be removed approximately 7 to 10 days after surgery.

### XIII. Cervical Cancer

#### A. Description

1. Preinvasive cancer is limited to the cervix ([Box 52-9](#)).

#### **BOX 52-9** Premalignant Cancers: Stages of Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia

**Stage I:** Mild dysplasia

**Stage II:** Moderate dysplasia

**Stage III:** Severe dysplasia to carcinoma in situ

2. Invasive cancer is in the cervix and other pelvic structures.
3. Metastasis usually is confined to the pelvis, but distant metastasis occurs through lymphatic spread.
4. Premalignant changes are described on a continuum from dysplasia, which is the

earliest premalignancy change, to **carcinoma in situ**, the most advanced premalignant change.

## **B. Risk factors**

1. Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection (vaccination against HPV is effective to avoid HPV infection, and thus cervical cancer)
2. Cigarette smoking, both active and passive
3. Reproductive behavior including early first intercourse (before age 17), multiple sex partners, or male partners with multiple sex partners.
4. Screening via regular gynecological examinations and Papanicolaou smear (Pap test), with treatment of precancerous abnormalities, decreases the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. ▲

## **C. Assessment**

1. Painless vaginal postmenstrual and postcoital bleeding
2. Foul-smelling or serosanguineous vaginal discharge
3. Pelvic, lower back, leg, or groin pain
4. Anorexia and weight loss
5. Leakage of urine and feces from the vagina
6. Dysuria
7. Hematuria
8. Cytological changes on Pap test

## **D. Interventions (Box 52-10)**



**Nonsurgical**

- Chemotherapy
- Cryosurgery
- External radiation
- Internal radiation implants (intracavitary)
- Laser therapy

**Surgical**

- Conization
- Hysterectomy
- Pelvic exenteration

**E. Laser therapy**

1. Laser therapy is used when all boundaries of the lesion are visible during colposcopic examination.
2. Energy from the beam is absorbed by fluid in the tissues, causing them to vaporize.
3. Minimal bleeding is associated with the procedure.
4. Slight vaginal discharge is expected following the procedure, and healing occurs in 6 to 12 weeks.

**F. Cryosurgery**

1. Cryosurgery involves freezing of the tissues, using a probe, with subsequent

necrosis and sloughing.

2. No anesthesia is required, although cramping may occur during the procedure.
3. A heavy watery discharge will occur for several weeks following the procedure.
4. Instruct the client to avoid intercourse and the use of tampons while the discharge is present.

## **G. Conization**

1. A cone-shaped area of the cervix is removed.
2. Conization allows the woman to retain reproductive capacity.
3. Long-term follow-up care is needed because new lesions can develop.
4. The risks of the procedure include hemorrhage, uterine perforation, incompetent cervix, cervical stenosis, and preterm labor in future pregnancies.

## **H. Hysterectomy** ▲

### **1. Description**

- a. Hysterectomy is performed for microinvasive cancer if childbearing is not desired.
- b. A vaginal approach is most commonly used.
- c. A radical hysterectomy and bilateral lymph node dissection may be performed for cancer that has spread beyond the cervix but not to the pelvic wall.

### **2. Postoperative interventions** ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs
- b. Assist with coughing and deep-breathing exercises.
- c. Assist with range-of-motion exercises and provide early ambulation.

- d. Apply antiembolism stockings or sequential compression devices as prescribed.
- e. Monitor intake and output, Foley catheter drainage, and hydration status.
- f. Monitor bowel sounds.
- g. Assess incision site for signs of infection.
- h. Administer pain medication as prescribed.
- i. Instruct the client to limit stair climbing for 1 month as prescribed and to avoid tub baths and sitting for long periods.
- j. Avoid strenuous activity or lifting anything weighing more than 20 pounds.
- k. Instruct the client to consume foods that promote tissue healing.
- l. Instruct the client to avoid sexual intercourse for 3 to 6 weeks as prescribed.
- m. Instruct the client in the signs associated with complications.

 **Monitor vaginal bleeding following hysterectomy. More than one saturated pad per hour may indicate excessive bleeding.**

## I. Pelvic exenteration (Box 52-11)

### **BOX 52-11**

### **Types of Pelvic Exenteration**

#### **Anterior**

- Removal of the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, vagina, bladder, urethra, and pelvic lymph nodes

#### **Posterior**

- Removal of the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, descending colon, rectum, and anal

canal

## Total

- Combination of anterior and posterior

### 1. Description

- Pelvic exenteration, the removal of all pelvic contents, including bowel, vagina, and bladder, is a radical surgical procedure performed for recurrent cancer if no evidence of tumor outside the pelvis and no lymph node involvement exist.
- When the bladder is removed, an ileal conduit is created and located on the right side of the abdomen to divert urine.
- A colostomy may need to be created on the left side of the abdomen for the passage of feces.

### 2. Postoperative interventions ▲

- Similar to postoperative interventions following hysterectomy.
- Monitor for signs of altered respiratory status.
- Monitor incision site for infection.
- Monitor intake and output and for signs of dehydration.
- Monitor for hemorrhage, shock, and deep vein thrombosis.
- Apply antiembolism stockings or sequential compression devices as prescribed.
- Administer prophylactic heparin as prescribed.
- Administer perineal irrigations and sitz baths as prescribed.
- Instruct the client to avoid strenuous activity for 6 months.

- j. Instruct the client that the perineal opening, if present, may drain for several months.
- k. Instruct the client in the care of the ileal conduit and colostomy, if created.
- l. Provide sexual counseling because vaginal intercourse is not possible after anterior and total pelvic exenteration.

## **XIV. Ovarian Cancer**

### **A. Description**

1. Ovarian cancer grows rapidly, spreads fast, and is often bilateral.
2. Metastasis occurs by direct spread to the organs in the pelvis, by distal spread through lymphatic drainage, or by peritoneal seeding.
3. In its early stages, ovarian cancer is often asymptomatic; because most women are diagnosed in advanced stages, ovarian cancer has a higher mortality rate than any other cancer of the female reproductive system, particularly among white women between 55 and 65 years of age of North American or European descent.
4. An exploratory laparotomy is performed to diagnose and stage the tumor.

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Abdominal discomfort or swelling
2. Gastrointestinal disturbances
3. Dysfunctional vaginal bleeding
4. Abdominal mass
5. Elevated **tumor marker** (i.e., CA-125)

## C. Interventions

1. External radiation may be used if the tumor has invaded other organs; intraperitoneal radioisotopes may be instilled for stage I disease.
2. Chemotherapy is used postoperatively for most stages of ovarian cancer.
3. Intraperitoneal chemotherapy involves the instillation of chemotherapy into the abdominal cavity.
4. Total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy with tumor debulking may be necessary.

## XV. Endometrial (Uterine) Cancer

### A. Description

1. Endometrial cancer is a slow-growing tumor arising from the endometrial mucosa of the uterus, associated with the menopausal years.
2. Metastasis occurs through the lymphatic system to the ovaries and pelvis; via the blood to the lungs, liver, and bone; or intraabdominally to the peritoneal cavity.

### B. Risk factors

1. Use of estrogen replacement therapy (ERT)
2. Nulliparity
3. Polycystic ovary disease
4. Increased age
5. Late menopause
6. Family history of uterine cancer or hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer

7. Obesity

8. Hypertension

9. Diabetes mellitus

**C. Assessment** ▲

1. Abnormal bleeding, especially in postmenopausal women

2. Vaginal discharge

3. Low back, pelvic, or abdominal pain (pain occurs late in the disease process)

4. Enlarged uterus (in advanced stages)

**D. Nonsurgical interventions**

1. External or internal radiation is used alone or in combination with surgery, depending on the stage of cancer.

2. Chemotherapy is used to treat advanced or recurrent disease.

3. Progesterone therapy with medication may be prescribed for estrogen-dependent tumors.

4. Tamoxifen, an antiestrogen medication, also may be prescribed.

**E. Surgical interventions:** Total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy

**XVI. Breast Cancer** ▲

**A. Description**

1. Breast cancer is classified as invasive when it penetrates the tissue surrounding the mammary duct and grows in an irregular pattern.

2. Metastasis occurs via lymph nodes.
3. Common sites of metastasis are the bone and lungs; metastasis may also occur to the brain and liver.
4. Diagnosis is made by breast biopsy through a needle aspiration or by surgical removal of the tumor with microscopic examination for malignant cells.

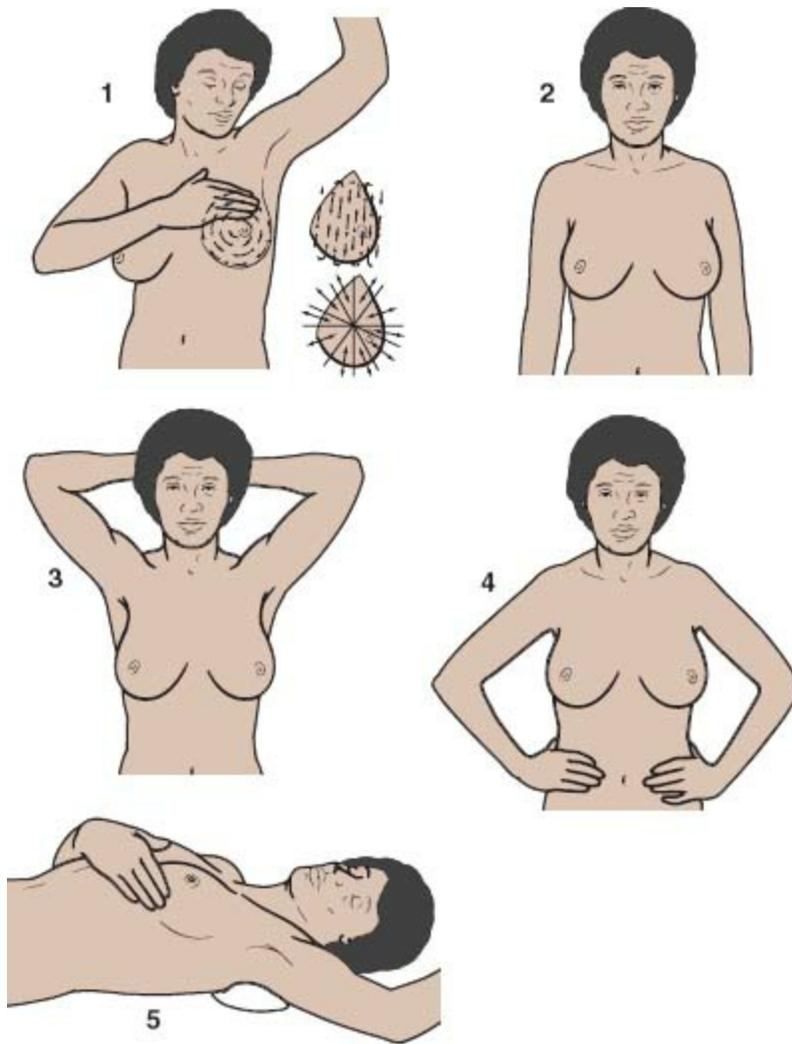
## **B. Risk factors**

1. Age
2. Family history of breast cancer
3. Early menarche and late menopause
4. Previous cancer of the breast, uterus, or ovaries
5. Nulliparity, late first birth
6. Obesity
7. High-dose radiation exposure to chest

## **C. Assessment**

1. Mass felt during breast self-examination (BSE) (usually felt in the upper outer quadrant, beneath the nipple, or in axilla)
2. Presence of the lesion on mammography
3. A fixed, irregular nonencapsulated mass; typically painless except in the late stages
4. Asymmetry, with the affected breast being higher
5. Bloody or clear nipple discharge
6. Nipple retraction or elevation

7. Skin dimpling, retraction, or ulceration
  8. Skin edema or peau d'orange skin
  9. Axillary lymphadenopathy
  10. Lymphedema of the affected arm
  11. Symptoms of bone or lung metastasis in late stage
- D. Early detection: Monthly BSE** ▲
1. Performing BSE
    - a. Perform monthly 7 to 10 days after menses.
    - b. Postmenopausal clients or clients who have had a hysterectomy should select a specific day of the month and perform BSE monthly on that day.
  2. Client instructions ([Fig. 52-2](#))



**FIGURE 52-2** Breast self-examination and client instructions. 1, While in the shower or bath, when the skin is slippery with soap and water, examine your breasts. Use the pads of your second, third, and fourth fingers to press every part of the breast firmly. Use your right hand to examine your left breast, and use your left hand to examine your right breast. Using the pads of the fingers on your left hand, examine the entire right breast using small circular motions in a spiral or up-and-down motion so that the entire breast area is examined. Repeat the procedure using your right hand to examine your left breast. Repeat the pattern of palpation under the arm. Check for any lump, hard knot, or thickening of the tissue. 2, Look at your breasts in a mirror. Stand with your arms at your side. 3, Raise your arms overhead and check for any changes in the shape of your breasts, dimpling of the skin, or any changes in the nipple. 4,

Next, place your hands on your hips and press down firmly, tightening the pectoral muscles. Observe for asymmetry or changes, keeping in mind that your breasts probably do not match exactly. 5, While lying down, feel your breasts as described in step 1. When examining your right breast, place a folded towel under your right shoulder and put your right hand behind your head. Repeat the procedure while examining your left breast. Mark your calendar that you have completed your breast self-examination; note any changes or unique characteristics you want to check with your health care provider. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

#### E. Nonsurgical interventions

1. Chemotherapy
2. Radiation therapy
3. Hormonal manipulation via the use of medication in postmenopausal women or other medications for estrogen receptor–positive tumors

F. Surgical interventions: Surgical breast procedures, with possible breast reconstruction ([Box 52-12](#))

#### **BOX 52-12**

#### **Surgical Breast Procedures**

##### **Lumpectomy**

- Tumor is excised and removed.
- Lymph node dissection may also be performed.

##### **Simple Mastectomy**

- Breast tissue and the nipple are removed.
- Lymph nodes are usually left intact.

### **Modified Radical Mastectomy**

- Breast tissue, nipple, and lymph nodes are removed.
- Muscles are left intact.

## **G. Postoperative interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Position the client in a semi-Fowler's position; turn from the back to the unaffected side, with the affected arm elevated above the level of the heart to promote drainage and prevent lymphedema. ▲
3. Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
4. If a drain (usually a Jackson-Pratt) is in place, maintain suction and record the amount of drainage and drainage characteristics; teach the client about home management of the drain (Fig. 52-3).



**FIGURE 52-3** Jackson-Pratt device. **A**, Drainage tubes and reservoir. **B**, Emptying drainage reservoir. (From Potter P, Perry A, Stockel P, Hall A: *Fundamentals of nursing*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Mosby.)

5. Assess operative site for infection, swelling, or the presence of fluid collection under the skin flaps or in the arm.
6. Monitor incision site for restriction of dressing, impaired sensation, or color changes of the skin.
7. If breast reconstruction was performed, the client will return from surgery usually with a surgical brassiere and a prosthesis in place.
8. Provide the use of a pressure sleeve as prescribed if edema is severe.
9. Maintain fluid and electrolyte balance; administer diuretics and provide a low-salt diet as prescribed for severe lymphedema.
10. Consult with the HCP and physical therapist regarding the appropriate exercise program and assist client with prescribed exercise.
11. Instruct the client about home care measures ([Box 52-13](#)).

### **BOX 52-13**

### **Client Instructions Following Mastectomy**

Avoid overuse of the arm during the first few months.

To prevent lymphedema, keep the affected arm elevated; consultation with lymphedema specialist may be prescribed.

Provide incision care with an emollient as prescribed, to soften and prevent wound contracture.

Encourage use of Reach to Recovery volunteers.

Encourage the client to perform breast self-examination on the remaining breast.

Protect the affected hand and arm.

Avoid strong sunlight on the affected arm.

Do not let the affected arm hang dependent.

Do not carry a pocketbook or anything heavy over the affected arm.

Avoid trauma, cuts, bruises, or burns to the affected side.

Avoid wearing constricting clothing or jewelry on the affected side.

Wear gloves when gardening.

Use thick oven mitts when cooking.

Use a thimble when sewing.

Apply hand cream several times daily.

Use cream cuticle remover.

Call the health care provider if signs of inflammation occur in the affected arm.

Wear a Medic-Alert bracelet stating which arm is lymphedematous.

 No IVs, no injections, no blood pressure measurements, and no venipunctures should be done in the arm on the side of the mastectomy. The arm on the side of the mastectomy is protected, and any intervention that could traumatize the affected arm is avoided.

## **XVII. Esophageal Cancer**

### **A. Description**

1. Esophageal cancer is a malignancy found in the esophageal mucosa, formed by squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) or **adenocarcinoma**.
2. The cause is unknown but major risk factors include cigarette smoking, alcohol

consumption, and chronic reflux.

3. Complications include dysphagia, painful swallowing, loss of appetite, and malaise.
4. The goal of treatment is to inhibit tumor growth and maintain nutrition.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Dysphagia
2. Odynophagia
3. Epigastric pain or sternal pain

#### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor nutritional status, including daily weight, intake and output, and calories consumed. ▲
2. Instruct the client about diet changes that make eating easier.
3. Surgical interventions may be prescribed.

### **XVIII. Gastric Cancer**

#### **A. Description**

1. Gastric cancer is a malignant growth of the mucosal cells in the inner lining of the stomach, with invasion to the muscle and beyond in advanced disease.
2. No single causative agent has been identified but it is believed that *Helicobacter pylori* infection and a diet of smoked, highly salted, processed, or spiced foods have carcinogenic effects; other risk factors include smoking, alcohol and nitrate ingestion, and a history of gastric ulcers.
3. Complications include hemorrhage, obstruction, metastasis, and dumping

syndrome.

4. The goal of treatment is to remove the tumor and provide a nutritional program.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Early:

- a. Indigestion
- b. Abdominal discomfort
- c. Full feeling
- d. Epigastric, back, or retrosternal pain

2. Late:

- a. Weakness and fatigue
- b. Anorexia and weight loss
- c. Nausea and vomiting
- d. A sensation of pressure in the stomach
- e. Dysphagia and obstructive symptoms
- f. Iron deficiency anemia
- g. Ascites
- h. Palpable epigastric mass

## **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor hemoglobin and hematocrit and administer blood transfusions as prescribed.
3. Monitor weight.

4. Assess nutritional status; encourage small, bland, easily digestible meals with vitamin and mineral supplements.
5. Administer pain medication as prescribed.
6. Prepare the client for chemotherapy or radiation therapy as prescribed.
7. Prepare the client for surgical resection of the tumor as prescribed (Box 52-14).

## BOX 52-14

## Surgical Interventions for Gastric Cancer

### Subtotal Gastrectomy

#### ***Billroth I***

- Also called *gastroduodenostomy*
- Partial gastrectomy, with remaining segment anastomosed to the duodenum

#### ***Billroth II***

- Also called *gastrojejunostomy*
- Partial gastrectomy, with remaining segment anastomosed to the jejunum

### Total Gastrectomy

- Also called *esophagojejunostomy*
- Removal of the stomach, with attachment of the esophagus to the jejunum or duodenum

## D. Postoperative interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Place in Fowler's position for comfort. ▲

3. Administer analgesics, antiemetics, as prescribed.
4. Monitor intake and output; administer fluids and electrolyte replacement by IV as prescribed; administer parenteral nutrition as indicated.
5. Maintain NPO status as prescribed for 1 to 3 days until peristalsis returns; assess for bowel sounds.
6. Monitor nasogastric suction.
7. Do not irrigate or remove the nasogastric tube (follow agency procedures); assist the HCP with irrigation or removal. ▲
8. Advance the diet from NPO to sips of clear water to six small bland meals a day, as prescribed.
9. Monitor for complications such as hemorrhage, dumping syndrome, diarrhea, hypoglycemia, and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency.

## **XIX. Pancreatic Cancer**

### **A. Description**

1. Most pancreatic tumors are highly malignant, rapidly growing adenocarcinomas originating from the epithelium of the ductal system.
2. Pancreatic cancer is associated with increased age, a history of diabetes mellitus, alcohol use, history of previous pancreatitis, smoking, ingestion of a high-fat diet, and exposure to environmental chemicals.
3. Symptoms usually do not occur until the tumor is large; therefore, the prognosis is poor. ▲

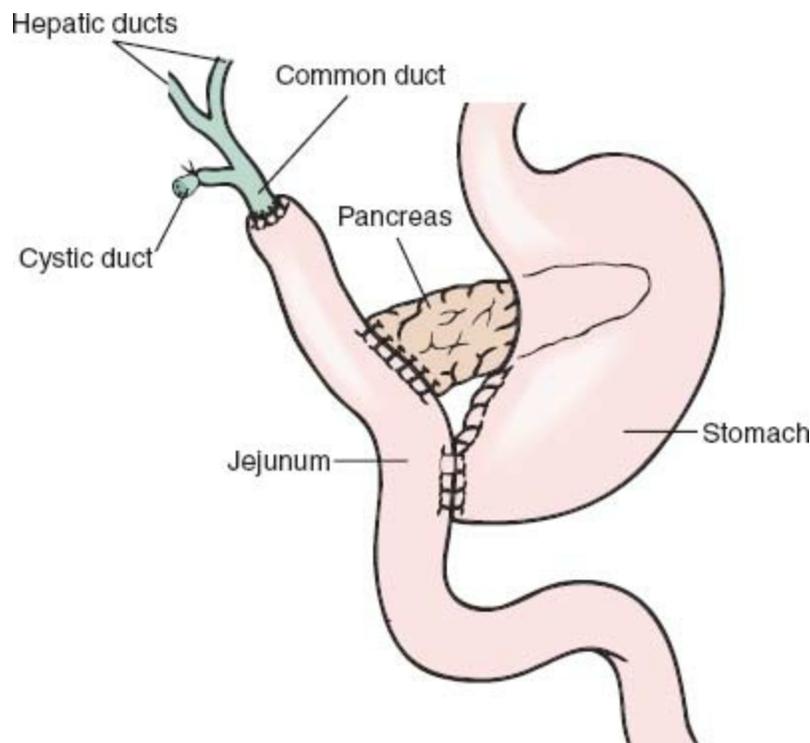
4. Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography for visualization of the pancreatic duct and biliary system and collection of tissue and secretions may be done.

**B. Assessment** ▲

1. Nausea and vomiting
2. Jaundice
3. Unexplained weight loss
4. Clay-colored stools
5. Glucose intolerance
6. Abdominal pain

**C. Interventions**

1. Radiation
2. Chemotherapy
3. Whipple procedure, which involves a pancreaticoduodenectomy with removal of the distal third of the stomach, pancreaticojejunostomy, gastrojejunostomy, and choledochojejunostomy (Fig. 52-4)



**FIGURE 52-4** Whipple procedure, or radical pancreaticoduodenectomy. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

4. Postoperative care measures and complications are similar to those for the care of a client with pancreatitis and the client following gastric surgery; monitor blood glucose levels for transient hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia resulting from surgical manipulation of the pancreas. ▲

## XX. Intestinal Tumors

### A. Description

1. Intestinal tumors are malignant lesions that develop in the cells lining the bowel wall or develop as adenomatous polyps in the colon or rectum.
2. Tumor spread is by direct invasion and through the lymphatic and circulatory

systems.

3. Complications include bowel perforation with peritonitis, abscess and fistula formation, hemorrhage, and complete intestinal obstruction.

## **B. Risk factors for colorectal cancer**

1. Age older than 50 years
2. Familial polyposis, family history of colorectal cancer
3. Previous colorectal polyps, history of colorectal cancer
4. History of chronic inflammatory bowel disease
5. History of ovarian or breast cancer

## **C. Assessment**

1. Blood in stool (most common manifestation)
2. Anorexia, vomiting, and weight loss
3. Anemia
4. Abnormal stools
  - a. Ascending colon tumor: Diarrhea
  - b. Descending colon tumor: Constipation or some diarrhea, or flat, ribbon-like stool caused by a partial obstruction
  - c. Rectal tumor: Alternating constipation and diarrhea
5. Guarding or abdominal distention, abdominal mass (late sign)
6. Cachexia (late sign)
7. Masses noted on barium enema, colonoscopy, CT scan, sigmoidoscopy

## **D. General interventions**

1. Monitor for signs of complications, which include bowel perforation with peritonitis, abscess or fistula formation (fever associated with pain), hemorrhage (signs of shock), and complete intestinal obstruction. ▲
2. Monitor for signs of bowel perforation, which include low blood pressure, rapid and weak pulse, distended abdomen, and elevated temperature.
3. Monitor for signs of intestinal obstruction, which include vomiting (may be fecal contents), pain, constipation, and abdominal distention; provide comfort measures.
4. Note that an early sign of intestinal obstruction is increased peristaltic activity, which produces an increase in bowel sounds; as the obstruction progresses, hypoactive bowel sounds may be heard.
5. Prepare for radiation preoperatively to facilitate surgical resection, and postoperatively to decrease the risk of recurrence or to reduce pain, hemorrhage, bowel obstruction, or metastasis.

#### **E. Nonsurgical interventions**

1. Preoperative radiation for local control and postoperative radiation for palliation may be prescribed.
2. Postoperative chemotherapy to control symptoms and the spread of disease

#### **F. Surgical interventions: Bowel, local lymph node resection, and creation of a colostomy or ileostomy**

#### **G. Colostomy, ileostomy**

1. Preoperative interventions

- a. Consult with the enterostomal therapist to assist in identifying optimal placement of the ostomy.
- b. Instruct the client in prescribed preoperative diet; bowel preparation (laxatives and enemas), may be prescribed.
- c. Intestinal antiseptics and antibiotics may be prescribed, to decrease the bacterial content of the colon and to reduce the risk of infection from the surgical procedure.

## 2. Postoperative: Colostomy

- a. If a pouch system is not in place, apply a petroleum jelly gauze over the stoma to keep it moist, covered with a dry sterile dressing; place a pouch system on the stoma as soon as possible.
- b. Monitor the pouch system for proper fit and signs of leakage; empty the pouch when one-third full.
- c. Monitor the stoma for size, unusual bleeding, color changes, or necrotic tissue.
- d. Note that the normal stoma color is red or pink, indicating high vascularity.
- e. Note that a pale pink stoma indicates low hemoglobin and hematocrit levels.
- f. Assess the functioning of the colostomy.
- g. Expect that stool will be liquid postoperatively but will become more solid, depending on the area of the colostomy.
- h. Expect liquid stool from an ascending colon colostomy, loose to semiformal stool from a transverse colon colostomy, or close to normal stool from a descending colon colostomy.

- i. Fecal matter should not be allowed to remain on the skin.
- j. Administer analgesics and antibiotics as prescribed.
- k. Irrigate perineal wound if present and if prescribed, and monitor for signs of infection; provide comfort measures for perineal itching and pain.
- l. Instruct the client to avoid foods that cause excessive gas formation and odor.
- m. Instruct the client in stoma care and irrigations as prescribed.
- n. Instruct the client on how to resume normal activities, including work, travel, and sexual intercourse, as prescribed; provide psychosocial support.

### 3. Postoperative: Ileostomy

- a. Healthy stoma is red in color.
- b. Postoperative drainage will be dark green and progress to yellow as the client begins to eat.
- c. Stool is liquid.
- d. Risk for dehydration and electrolyte imbalance exists. ▲

▲ Monitor stoma color. A dark blue, purple, or black stoma indicates compromised circulation, requiring HCP notification.

## XXI. Lung Cancer

### A. Description

1. Lung cancer is a malignant tumor of the bronchi and peripheral lung tissue.
2. The lungs are a common target for metastasis from other organs.
3. Bronchogenic cancer (tumors originate in the epithelium of the bronchus) spreads

through direct extension and lymphatic dissemination.

4. Classified according to histological cell type; types include: small cell lung cancer (SCLC) and non–small cell lung cancer (NSCLC); epidermal (squamous cell), adenocarcinoma, and large cell anaplastic **carcinoma** are classified as NSCLC because of their similar responses to treatment.
5. Diagnosis is made by a chest x-ray study, CT scan, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), which shows a lesion or mass, and by bronchoscopy and sputum studies, which demonstrate a positive cytological study for cancer cells.

## **B. Causes**

1. Cigarette smoking; also exposure to “passive” tobacco smoke
2. Exposure to environmental and occupational pollutants

## **C. Assessment**

1. Cough
2. Wheezing, dyspnea
3. Hoarseness
4. Hemoptysis, blood-tinged or purulent sputum
5. Chest pain
6. Anorexia and weight loss
7. Weakness
8. Diminished or absent breath sounds, respiratory changes

## **D. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.

2. Monitor breathing patterns and breath sounds and for signs of respiratory impairment; monitor for hemoptysis.
3. Assess for tracheal deviation.
4. Administer analgesics as prescribed for pain management.
5. Place in a Fowler's position to help ease breathing. ▲
6. Administer oxygen as prescribed and humidification to moisten and loosen secretions. ▲
7. Monitor pulse oximetry.
8. Provide respiratory treatments as prescribed.
9. Administer bronchodilators and corticosteroids as prescribed to decrease bronchospasm, inflammation, and edema.
10. Provide a high-calorie, high-protein, high-vitamin diet.
11. Provide activity as tolerated, rest periods, and active and passive range-of-motion exercises.

#### **E. Nonsurgical interventions**

1. Radiation therapy may be prescribed for localized intrathoracic lung cancer and for palliation of hemoptysis, obstructions, dysphagia, superior vena cava syndrome, and pain.
2. Chemotherapy may be prescribed for treatment of nonresectable tumors or as adjuvant therapy.

#### **F. Surgical interventions**

1. Laser therapy: To relieve endobronchial obstruction

2. Thoracentesis and pleurodesis: To remove pleural fluid and relieve hypoxia
3. Thoracotomy (opening into the thoracic cavity) with pneumonectomy: Surgical removal of one entire lung
4. Thoracotomy with lobectomy: Surgical removal of one lobe of the lung for tumors confined to a single lobe
5. Thoracotomy with segmental resection: Surgical removal of a lobe segment

#### G. Preoperative interventions

1. Explain the potential postoperative need for chest tubes.
2. Note that closed chest drainage usually is not used for a pneumonectomy and the serous fluid that accumulates in the empty thoracic cavity eventually consolidates, preventing shifts of the mediastinum, heart, and remaining lung. ▲

#### H. Postoperative interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess cardiac and respiratory status; monitor lung sounds. ▲
3. Maintain the chest tube drainage system, which drains air and blood that accumulates in the pleural space; monitor for excess bleeding. (See [Chapter 21](#) for care of the client with a chest tube.) ▲
4. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
5. Check the HCP's prescriptions regarding client positioning; avoid complete lateral turning.
6. Monitor pulse oximetry.
7. Provide activity as tolerated.

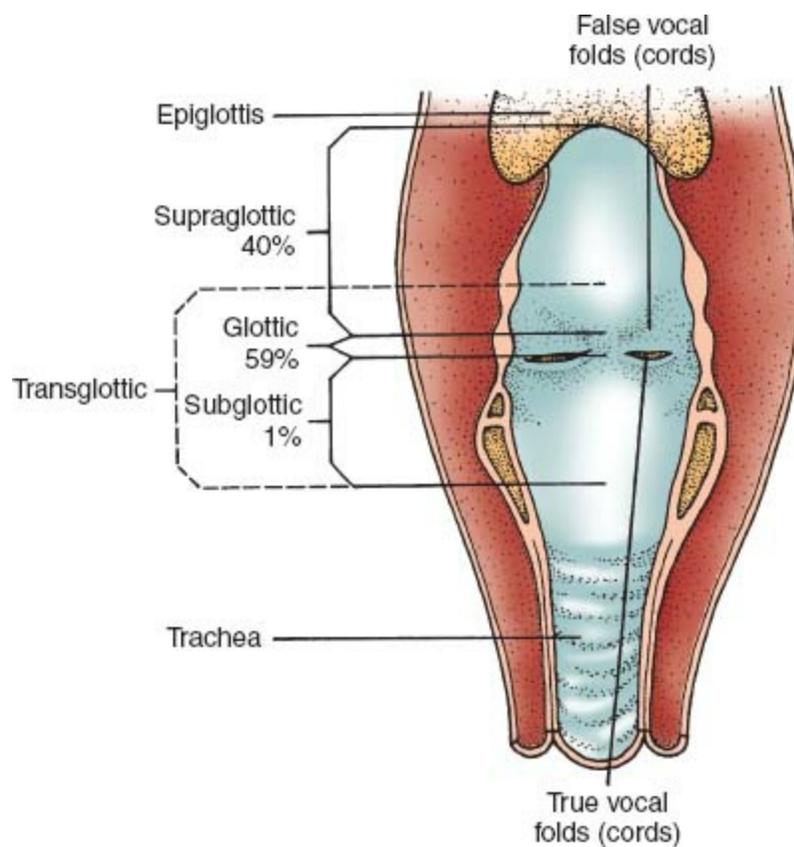
8. Encourage active range-of-motion exercises of the operative shoulder as prescribed.

⚠ The airway is the priority for a client with lung or laryngeal cancer.

## XXII. Laryngeal Cancer

### A. Description

1. Laryngeal cancer is a malignant tumor of the larynx (Fig. 52-5).



**FIGURE 52-5** Sites and incidence of primary laryngeal tumors. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 5, Philadelphia, 2006, Saunders.)

2. Laryngeal cancer presents as malignant ulcerations with underlying infiltration and

is spread by local extension to adjacent structures in the throat and neck, and by the lymphatic system.

3. Diagnosis is made by laryngoscopy and biopsy showing a positive cytological study for cancer cells.
4. Laryngoscopy allows for evaluation of the throat and biopsy of tissues; chest radiography, CT, and MRI are used for staging.

## **B. Risk factors**

1. Cigarette smoking
2. Heavy alcohol use and the combined use of tobacco and alcohol
3. Exposure to environmental pollutants (e.g., asbestos, wood dust)
4. Exposure to radiation

## **C. Assessment** ▲

1. Persistent hoarseness or sore throat
2. Painless neck mass
3. Feeling of a lump in the throat
4. Burning sensation in the throat
5. Dysphagia
6. Change in voice quality
7. Dyspnea
8. Weakness and weight loss
9. Hemoptysis
10. Foul breath odor

## D. Interventions

1. Place in Fowler's position to promote optimal air exchange. ▲
2. Monitor respiratory status.
3. Monitor for signs of aspiration of food and fluid.
4. Administer oxygen as prescribed. ▲
5. Provide respiratory treatments as prescribed.
6. Provide activity as tolerated.
7. Provide a high-calorie and high-protein diet.
8. Provide nutritional support via parenteral nutrition, nasogastric tube feedings, or gastrostomy or jejunostomy tube, as prescribed.
9. Administer analgesics as prescribed for pain.

## E. Nonsurgical interventions

1. Radiation therapy if the cancer is limited to a small area in one vocal cord
2. Chemotherapy, which may be given in combination with radiation and surgery

## F. Surgical interventions

1. The goal is to remove the cancer while preserving as much normal function as possible.
2. Surgical intervention depends on the tumor size, location, and amount of tissue to be resected.
3. Types of resection include cordal stripping, cordectomy, partial laryngectomy, and total laryngectomy.
4. A tracheostomy is performed with a total laryngectomy; this airway opening is

permanent and is referred to as a *laryngectomy stoma*.

#### **G. Preoperative interventions**

1. Discuss self-care of the airway, alternative methods of communication, suctioning, pain control methods, the critical care environment, and nutritional support. ▲
2. Encourage the client to express feelings about changes in body image and loss of voice.
3. Describe the rehabilitation program and information about the tracheostomy and suctioning.

#### **H. Postoperative interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor respiratory status; monitor airway patency and provide frequent suctioning to remove bloody secretions. ▲
3. Place the client in a high Fowler's position. ▲
4. Maintain mechanical ventilator support or a tracheostomy collar with humidification, as prescribed.
5. Monitor pulse oximetry.
6. Maintain surgical drains in the neck area if present.
7. Observe for hemorrhage and edema in the neck.
8. Monitor IV fluids or parenteral nutrition until nutrition is administered via a nasogastric, gastrostomy, or jejunostomy tube.
9. Provide oral hygiene.
10. Assess gag and cough reflexes and the ability to swallow.

11. Increase activity as tolerated.
12. Assess the color, amount, and consistency of sputum.
13. Provide stoma and laryngectomy care ([Box 52-15](#)).

### **BOX 52-15**

### **Stoma Care Following Laryngectomy**

Protect the neck from injury.

Instruct the client in how to clean the incision and provide stoma care.

Instruct the client to wear a stoma guard to shield the stoma.

Demonstrate ways to prevent debris from entering the stoma.

Advise the client to wear loose-fitting, high-collared clothing to cover the stoma.

Avoid swimming, showering, and using aerosol sprays.

Teach the client clean suctioning technique.

Advise the client to increase humidity in the home.

Increase fluid intake to 3000 mL/day as prescribed.

Avoid exposure to persons with infections.

Alternate rest periods with activity.

Instruct the client in range-of-motion exercises for the arms, shoulders, and neck as prescribed.

Advise the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

14. Provide consultation with speech and language pathologist as prescribed.
15. Reinforce method of communication established preoperatively.

16. Prepare the client for rehabilitation and speech therapy (Box 52-16).

## BOX 52-16

### Speech Rehabilitation Following Laryngectomy

#### Esophageal Speech

The client produces esophageal speech by “burping” the air swallowed.

The voice produced is monotone, cannot be raised or lowered, and carries no pitch.

The client must have adequate hearing because his or her mouth shapes words as they are heard.

#### Mechanical Devices

One device, the *electrolarynx*, is placed against the side of the neck; the air inside the neck and pharynx is vibrated, and the client articulates.

Another device consists of a plastic tube that is placed inside the client’s mouth and vibrates on articulation.

#### Tracheoesophageal Fistula

A fistula is created surgically between the trachea and the esophagus, with eventual placement of a prosthesis to produce speech.

The prosthesis provides the client with a means to divert air from the trachea into the esophagus, and out of the mouth.

Lip and tongue movement produce the speech.

## XXIII. Prostate Cancer

### A. Description

1. Prostate cancer, a slow-growing malignancy of the prostate gland, is a common cancer in American men; most prostate tumors are adenocarcinomas arising from androgen-dependent epithelial cells.
2. The risk increases in men with each decade after the age of 50 years.
3. Prostate cancer can spread via direct invasion of surrounding tissues or by metastasis through the bloodstream and lymphatics, to the bony pelvis and spine.
4. Bone metastasis is a concern, as is spread to the lungs, liver, and kidneys.
5. The cause of prostate cancer is unclear, but advancing age, heavy metal exposure, smoking, and history of sexually transmitted infection are contributing factors.

## **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Asymptomatic in early stages
2. Hard, pea-sized nodule or irregularities palpated on rectal examination
3. Gross, painless hematuria
4. Late symptoms such as weight loss, urinary obstruction, and bone pain radiating from the lumbosacral area down the leg
5. The prostate-specific antigen level is elevated in various noncancerous conditions; therefore, it should not be used as a screening test without a digital rectal examination. It is routinely used to monitor response to therapy.
6. Diagnosis is made through biopsy of the prostate gland.

## **C. Nonsurgical interventions**

1. Prepare the client for hormone manipulation therapy as prescribed.
2. Luteinizing hormone may be prescribed to slow the rate of growth of the tumor.

3. Pain medication, radiation therapy, corticosteroids, and bisphosphonates may be prescribed for palliation of advanced prostate cancer.
4. Prepare the client for external beam radiation or brachytherapy, which may be prescribed alone or with surgery, preoperatively or postoperatively, to reduce the lesion and limit metastasis.
5. Prepare the client for the administration of chemotherapy in cases of hormone-resistant tumors.

#### **D. Surgical interventions**

1. Prepare the client for orchiectomy (palliative), if prescribed, which will limit the production of testosterone.
2. Prepare the client for prostatectomy, if prescribed.
3. The radical prostatectomy can be performed via a retropubic, perineal, or suprapubic approach.
4. Cryosurgical ablation is a minimally invasive procedure that may be an alternative to radical prostatectomy; liquid nitrogen freezes the gland, and the dead cells are absorbed by the body.

#### **E. Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) may be performed for palliation in prostate cancer clients. ▲**

1. The procedure involves insertion of a scope into the urethra to excise prostatic tissue.
2. Monitor for hemorrhage; bleeding is common following TURP.
3. Postoperative continuous bladder irrigation (CBI) may be prescribed, which

prevents catheter obstruction from clots.

4. Assess for signs of transurethral resection syndrome, which include signs of cerebral edema and increased intracranial pressure, such as increased blood pressure, bradycardia, confusion, disorientation, muscle twitching, visual disturbances, and nausea and vomiting.
5. Antispasmodics may be prescribed for bladder spasm.
6. Instruct the client to monitor and report dribbling or incontinence postoperatively and teach perineal exercises.
7. Sterility is possible following the surgical procedure.

#### **F. Suprapubic prostatectomy**

1. Suprapubic prostatectomy is removal of the prostate gland by an abdominal incision with a bladder incision.
2. The client will have an abdominal dressing that may drain copious amounts of urine, and the abdominal dressing will need to be changed frequently. ▲
3. Severe hemorrhage is possible, and monitoring for blood loss is an important nursing intervention.
4. Antispasmodics may be prescribed for bladder spasms.
5. CBI is prescribed and carried out to maintain pink-colored urine.
6. Sterility occurs with this procedure.

#### **G. Retropubic prostatectomy**

1. Retropubic prostatectomy is removal of the prostate gland by a low abdominal incision without opening the bladder.

2. Less bleeding occurs with this procedure compared with the suprapubic procedure, and the client experiences fewer bladder spasms.
3. Abdominal drainage is minimal.
4. CBI may be used.
5. Sterility occurs with this procedure.

#### **H. Perineal prostatectomy**

1. The prostate gland is removed through an incision made between the scrotum and anus.
2. Minimal bleeding occurs with this procedure.
3. The client needs to be monitored closely for infection, because the risk of infection is increased with this type of prostatectomy.
4. Urinary incontinence is common.
5. The procedure causes sterility.
6. Teach the client how to perform perineal exercises.

#### **I. Postoperative interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor urinary output and urine for hemorrhage or clots.
3. Increase fluids to 2400 to 3000 mL/day, unless contraindicated.
4. Monitor for arterial bleeding as evidenced by bright red urine with numerous clots; if it occurs, increase CBI and notify the HCP immediately.
5. Monitor for venous bleeding as evidenced by burgundy-colored urine output; if it occurs, inform the HCP, who may apply traction on the catheter.

6. Monitor hemoglobin and hematocrit levels.
7. Expect red to light pink urine for 24 hours, turning to amber in 3 days.
8. Ambulate the client as early as possible and as soon as urine begins to clear in color.
9. Inform the client that a continuous feeling of an urge to void is normal.
10. Instruct the client to avoid attempts to void around the catheter because this will cause bladder spasms.
11. Administer antibiotics, analgesics, stool softeners, and antispasmodics as prescribed.
12. Monitor the three-way Foley catheter, which usually has a 30- to 45-mL retention balloon.
13. Maintain CBI with sterile bladder irrigation solution as prescribed to keep the catheter free of obstruction and keep the urine pink in color ([Box 52-17](#)).

## **BOX 52-17**

## **Continuous Bladder Irrigation**

### **Description**

A three-way (lumen) irrigation is used to decrease bleeding and to keep the bladder free from clots—one lumen is for inflating the balloon (30 mL); one lumen is for instillation (inflow); one lumen is for outflow.

### **Interventions**

Maintain traction on the catheter, if applied, to prevent bleeding by pulling the catheter taut and taping it to the abdomen or thigh.

Instruct the client to keep the leg straight if traction is applied to the catheter and it is taped to the thigh.

Catheter traction is not released without a health care provider's (HCP's) prescription; it usually is released after any bright red drainage has diminished.

Use only sterile bladder irrigation solution or prescribed solution to prevent water intoxication.

Run the solution at a rate, as prescribed, to keep the urine pink. Run the solution rapidly if bright red drainage or clots are present; monitor output closely. Run the solution at about 40 drops (gtt)/minute when the bright red drainage clears.

If the urinary catheter becomes obstructed, turn off the CBI and irrigate the catheter with 30 to 50 mL of normal saline, if prescribed; notify the HCP if obstruction does not resolve.

Discontinue CBI and the Foley catheter as prescribed, usually 24 to 48 hours after surgery.

Monitor for continence and urinary retention when the catheter is removed. Inform the client that some burning, frequency, and dribbling may occur following catheter removal.

Inform the client that he should be voiding 150 to 200 mL of clear yellow urine every 3 to 4 hours by 3 days after surgery.

Inform the client that he may pass small clots and tissue debris for several days.

Teach the client to avoid heavy lifting, stressful exercise, driving, the Valsalva maneuver, and sexual intercourse for 2 to 6 weeks to prevent strain, and to call the

HCP if bleeding occurs or if there is a decrease in urinary stream.

Instruct the client to drink 2400 to 3000 mL of fluid each day, preferably before 8 PM to avoid nocturia.

Instruct the client to avoid alcohol, caffeinated beverages, and spicy foods, and overstimulation of the bladder.

Instruct the client that if the urine becomes bloody, to rest and increase fluid intake and, if the bleeding does not subside, to notify the HCP.

 Following TURP, monitor for transurethral resection syndrome or severe hyponatremia (water intoxication) caused by the excessive absorption of bladder irrigation during surgery. (Signs include altered mental status, bradycardia, increased blood pressure, and confusion.)

#### J. Postoperative interventions: Suprapubic prostatectomy

1. Monitor suprapubic and Foley catheter drainage.
2. Monitor CBI if prescribed.
3. Note that the Foley catheter will be removed 2 to 4 days postoperatively if the client has a suprapubic catheter.
4. If prescribed, clamp the suprapubic catheter after the Foley catheter is removed, and instruct the client to attempt to void; after the client has voided, assess the residual urine in the bladder by unclamping the suprapubic catheter and measuring the output.
5. Prepare for removal of the suprapubic catheter when the client consistently

empties the bladder and residual urine is 75 mL or less.

6. Monitor the suprapubic incision dressing, which may become saturated with urine, until the incision heals; dressing may need to be changed frequently.

#### **K. Postoperative interventions: Retropubic prostatectomy ▲**

1. Note that because the bladder is not entered, there is no urinary drainage on the abdominal dressing; if urinary or purulent drainage is noted on the dressing, notify the HCP.
2. Monitor for fever and increased pain, which may indicate an infection.

#### **L. Postoperative interventions: Perineal prostatectomy ▲**

1. Note that the client will have an incision, which may or may not have a drain.
2. Avoid the use of rectal thermometers, rectal tubes, and enemas because they may cause trauma and bleeding.

## **XXIV. Bladder Cancer**

### **A. Description**

1. Bladder cancer is a papillomatous growth in the bladder urothelium that undergoes malignant changes and that may infiltrate the bladder wall.
2. Predisposing factors include cigarette smoking, exposure to industrial chemicals, and exposure to radiation.
3. Common sites of metastasis include the liver, bones, and lungs.
4. As the tumor progresses, it can extend into the rectum, vagina, other pelvic soft tissues, and retroperitoneal structures.

### **B. Assessment ▲**

1. Gross or microscopic, painless hematuria
2. Frequency, urgency, dysuria
3. Clot-induced obstruction
4. Bladder wash specimens and biopsy confirm diagnosis

### C. Radiation

1. Radiation therapy is indicated for advanced disease that cannot be eradicated by surgery; palliative radiation may be used to relieve pain and bowel obstruction and control potential hemorrhage and leg edema caused by venous or lymphatic obstruction.
2. Intracavitary radiation may be prescribed, which protects adjacent tissue.
3. External beam radiation combined with chemotherapy or surgery may be prescribed to improve survival.
4. Complications of radiation
  - a. Abacterial cystitis
  - b. Proctitis
  - c. Fistula formation
  - d. Ileitis or colitis
  - e. Bladder ulceration and hemorrhage

### D. Chemotherapy

1. Intravesical instillation
  - a. An alkylating chemotherapeutic agent is instilled into the bladder.
  - b. This method provides a concentrated topical treatment with little systemic

absorption.

- c. The medication is injected into a urethral catheter and retained for 2 hours.
- d. Following instillation, the client's position is rotated every 15 to 30 minutes, starting in the supine position, to avoid lying on a full bladder.
- e. After 2 hours, the client voids in a sitting position and is instructed to increase fluids to flush the bladder.
- f. Treat the urine as a biohazard and send to the radioisotope laboratory for monitoring. ▲
- g. For 6 hours following intravesical chemotherapy, disinfect the toilet with household bleach after the client has voided.

2. Systemic chemotherapy: Used to treat inoperable tumors or distant metastasis.

3. Complications of chemotherapy

- a. Bladder irritation
- b. Hemorrhagic cystitis

E. Surgical interventions

1. Transurethral resection of bladder tumor

- a. Local resection and fulguration (destruction of tissue by electrical current through electrodes placed in direct contact with the tissue)
- b. Performed for early tumors for cure or for inoperable tumors for palliation

2. Partial cystectomy

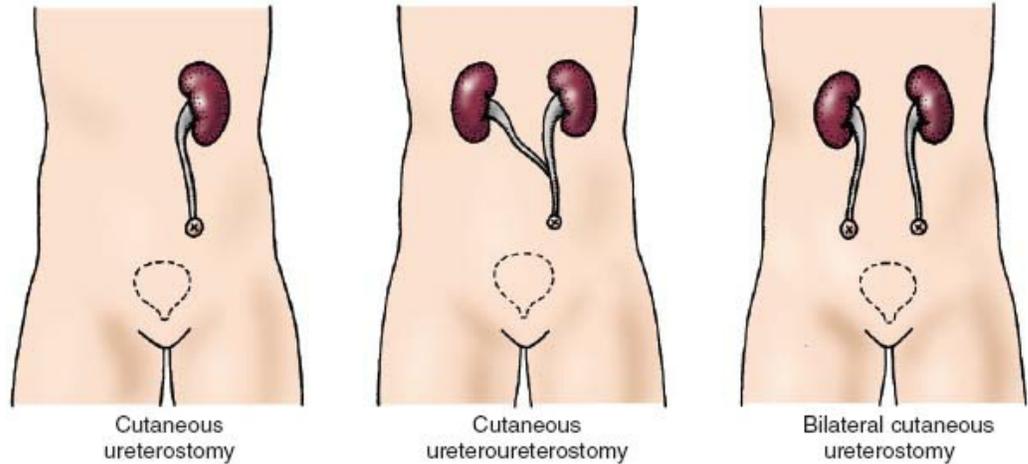
- a. Partial cystectomy is the removal of up to half the bladder.
- b. The procedure is done for early-stage tumors and for clients who cannot

tolerate a radical cystectomy.

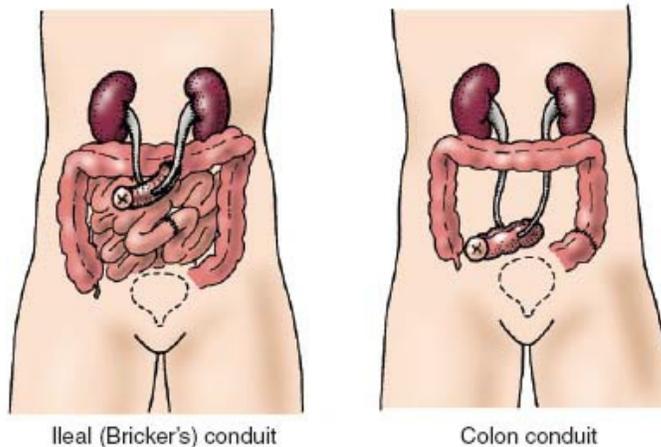
- c.** During the initial postoperative period, bladder capacity is reduced greatly to about 60 mL; however, as the bladder tissue expands, the capacity increases to 200 to 400 mL.
- d.** Maintenance of a continuous output of urine following surgery is critical to prevent bladder distention and stress on the suture line.
- e.** A urethral catheter and a suprapubic catheter may be in place, and the suprapubic catheter may be left in place for 2 weeks until healing occurs.

**3.** Cystectomy and urinary diversion ([Fig. 52-6](#))

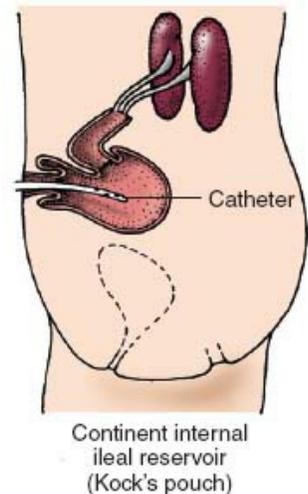
**Ureterostomies** divert urine directly to the skin surface through a ureteral-skin opening (stoma). After ureterostomy, the client must wear a pouch.



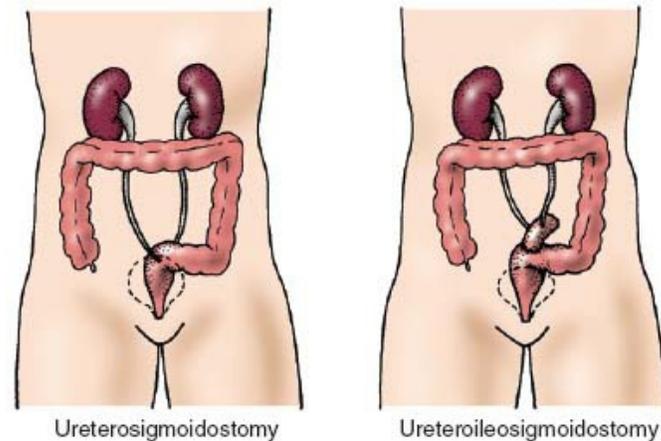
**Conduits** collect urine in a portion of the intestine, which is then opened onto the skin surface as a stoma. After the creation of a conduit, the client must wear a pouch.



**Ileal reservoirs** divert urine into a surgically created pouch, or pocket, that functions as a bladder. The stoma is continent, and the client removes urine by regular self-catheterization.



**Sigmoidostomies** divert urine to the large intestine, so no stoma is required. The client excretes urine with bowel movements, and bowel incontinence may result.



**FIGURE 52-6** Urinary diversion procedures used in the treatment of bladder cancer. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

a. Various surgical procedures performed to create alternative pathways for urine

collection and excretion

- b. Urinary diversion may be performed with or without cystectomy (bladder removal).
- c. The surgery may be performed in two stages if the tumor is extensive, with the creation of the urinary diversion first and the cystectomy several weeks later.
- d. If a radical cystectomy is performed, lower extremity lymphedema may occur as a result of lymph node dissection, and male impotence may occur.

#### 4. Ileal conduit

- a. The ileal conduit is also called a ureteroileostomy, or Bricker's procedure.
- b. Ureters are implanted into a segment of the ileum, with the formation of an abdominal stoma.
- c. The urine flows into the conduit and is propelled continuously out through the stoma by peristalsis.
- d. The client is required to wear an appliance over the stoma to collect the urine (Box 52-18).

#### **BOX 52-18**

#### **Urinary Stoma Care**

Instruct the client to change the appliance in the morning, when urinary production is slowest.

Collect equipment, remove collection bag, and use water or commercial solvent to loosen adhesive.

Hold a rolled gauze pad against the stoma to collect and absorb urine during the

procedure.

Cleanse the skin around stoma and under the drainage bag with mild nonresidue soap and water.

Inspect the skin for excoriation, and instruct the client to prevent urine from coming into contact with the skin.

After the skin is dry, apply skin adhesive around the appliance.

Instruct the client to cut the stoma opening of the skin barrier just large enough to fit over the stoma (no more than 3 mm larger than the stoma).

Instruct the client that the stoma will begin to shrink, requiring a smaller stoma opening on the skin barrier.

Apply skin barrier before attaching the pouch or face plate.

Place the appliance over the stoma and secure in place.

Encourage self-care; teach the client to use a mirror.

Instruct the client that the pouch may be drained by a bedside bag or leg bag, especially at night.

Instruct the client to empty the urinary collection bag when it is one-third full to prevent pulling of the appliance and leakage.

Instruct the client to check the appliance seal if perspiring occurs.

Instruct the client to leave the urinary pouch in place as long as it is not leaking and to change it every 5 to 7 days.

During appliance changes, leave the skin open to air as long as possible.

Use a nonkaraya gum product, because urine erodes karaya gum.

To control odor, instruct the client to drink adequate fluids, wash the appliance thoroughly with soap and lukewarm water, and soak the collection pouch in dilute white vinegar for 20 to 30 minutes; a special deodorant tablet can also be placed into the pouch while it is being worn.

Instruct the client who takes baths to keep the level of the water below the stoma and to avoid oily soaps.

If the client plans to shower, instruct the client to direct the flow of water away from the stoma.

- e. Complications include obstruction, pyelonephritis, leakage at the anastomosis site, stenosis, hydronephrosis, calculi, skin irritation and ulceration, and stomal defects.

## 5. Kock pouch

- a. The Kock pouch is a continent internal ileal reservoir created from a segment of the ileum and ascending colon.
- b. The ureters are implanted into the side of the reservoir, and a special nipple valve is constructed to attach the reservoir to the skin.
- c. Postoperatively, the client will have a Foley catheter in place to drain urine continuously until the pouch has healed.
- d. The Foley catheter is irrigated gently with normal saline to prevent obstruction from mucus or clots.
- e. Following removal of the Foley catheter, the client is instructed in how to self-

catheterize and to drain the reservoir at 4- to 6-hour intervals (Box 52-19).

## **BOX 52-19**

## **Self-Irrigation and Catheterization of Stoma**

### **Irrigation**

Instruct the client to wash hands and use clean technique.

Instruct the client to use a catheter and syringe, instill 60 mL of normal saline or water into the reservoir, and aspirate gently or allow to drain.

Instruct the client to irrigate until the drainage remains free of mucus but to be careful not to overirrigate.

### **Catheterization**

Instruct the client to wash hands and use clean technique.

Initially, instruct the client to insert a catheter every 2 to 3 hours to drain the reservoir; during each week thereafter, increase the interval by 1 hour until catheterization is done every 4 to 6 hours.

Lubricate the catheter well with water-soluble lubricant, and instruct the client never to force the catheter into the reservoir.

If resistance is met, instruct the client to pause, rotate the catheter, and apply gentle pressure to insert.

Instruct the client to notify the health care provider if the client is unable to insert the catheter.

When urine has stopped, instruct the client to take several deep breaths and move the catheter in and out 2 to 3 inches to ensure that the pouch is empty.

Instruct the client to withdraw the catheter slowly and pinch the catheter when withdrawn so that it does not leak urine.

Instruct the client to carry catheterization supplies with him or her.

## **6. Indiana pouch**

- a.** A continent reservoir is created from the ascending colon and terminal ileum, making a pouch larger than the Kock pouch (additional continent reservoirs include the Mainz and Florida pouch systems).
- b.** Postoperatively, care is similar as with the Kock pouch.

## **7. Creation of a neobladder**

- a.** Creation of a neobladder is similar to the creation of an internal reservoir, with the difference being that instead of emptying through an abdominal stoma, the bladder empties through a pelvic outlet into the urethra.
- b.** The client empties the neobladder by relaxing the external sphincter and creating abdominal pressure or by intermittent self-catheterization.

## **8. Percutaneous nephrostomy or pyelostomy**

- a.** These procedures are used to prevent or treat obstruction.
- b.** The procedures involve a percutaneous or surgical insertion of a nephrostomy tube into the kidney for drainage.
- c.** Nursing interventions involve stabilizing the tube to prevent dislodgment and monitoring output.

## **9. Ureterostomy**

- a. Ureterostomy may be performed as a palliative procedure if the ureters are obstructed by the tumor.
- b. The ureters are attached to the surface of the abdomen, where the urine flows directly into a drainage appliance without a conduit.
- c. Potential problems include infection, skin irritation, and obstruction to urinary flow as a result of strictures at the opening.

#### **10. Vesicostomy**

- a. The bladder is sutured to the abdomen, and a stoma is created in the bladder wall.
- b. The bladder empties through the stoma.

#### **F. Preoperative interventions**

1. Instruct the client in preoperative, operative, and postoperative management including diet, medications, nasogastric tube placement, IV lines, NPO status, pain control, coughing and deep breathing, leg exercises, and postoperative activity.
2. Demonstrate appliance application and use for those clients who will have a stoma.
3. Arrange an enterostomal nurse consult and for a visit with a person who has had urinary diversion.
4. Administer antimicrobials for bowel preparation as prescribed.
5. Encourage discussion of feelings including the effects on sexual activities.

#### **G. Postoperative interventions**

**⚠** Monitor urinary output closely following bladder surgery. Irrigate the ureteral catheter (if present and if prescribed) gently to prevent obstruction. Follow the HCP's prescriptions and agency policy regarding irrigation.

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess incision site.
3. Assess stoma (should be red and moist) every hour for the first 24 hours.
4. Monitor for edema in the stoma, which may be present in the immediate postoperative period.
5. Notify the HCP if the stoma appears dark and dusky (indicates necrosis).
6. Monitor for prolapse or retraction of the stoma.
7. Assess bowel function; monitor for expected return of peristalsis in 3 to 4 days.
8. Maintain NPO status as prescribed until bowel sounds return.
9. Monitor for continuous urine flow (30 to 60 mL/hour).
10. Notify the HCP if the urine output is less than 30 mL/hour or if no urine output occurs for more than 15 minutes.
11. Ureteral stents or catheters, if present, may be in place for 2 to 3 weeks or until healing occurs; maintain stability with catheters to prevent dislodgment.
12. Monitor for hematuria.
13. Monitor for signs of peritonitis.
14. Monitor for bladder distention following a partial cystectomy.
15. Monitor for shock, hemorrhage, thrombophlebitis, and lower extremity lymphedema after a radical cystectomy.

16. Monitor the urinary drainage pouch for leaks, and check skin integrity (see [Box 52-19](#)).
17. Monitor the pH of the urine (do not place the dipstick in the stoma) because highly alkaline or acidic urine can cause skin irritation and facilitate crystal formation.
18. Instruct the client regarding the potential for urinary tract infection or the development of calculi.
19. Instruct the client to assess the skin for irritation, monitor the urinary drainage pouch, and report any leakage.
20. Encourage the client to express feelings about changes in body image, embarrassment, and sexual dysfunction.

## **XXV. Oncological Emergencies** ▲

### **A. Sepsis and disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC)**

1. Description: The client with cancer is at increased risk for infection, particularly gram-negative organisms, in the bloodstream (sepsis or septicemia) and DIC, a life-threatening problem frequently associated with sepsis.
2. Interventions
  - a. Prevent the complication through early identification of clients at high risk for sepsis and DIC.
  - b. Maintain strict aseptic technique with the immunocompromised client and monitor closely for infection.
  - c. Administer antibiotics intravenously as prescribed.

- d. Administer anticoagulants as prescribed during the early phase of DIC.
- e. Administer cryoprecipitated clotting factors, as prescribed, when DIC progresses and hemorrhage is the primary problem.

 **Notify the HCP immediately if signs of an oncological emergency occur.**

## **B. Syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone (SIADH)**

### **1. Description**

- a. Tumors can produce, secrete, or stimulate substances that mimic antidiuretic hormone.
- b. Mild symptoms include weakness, muscle cramps, loss of appetite, and fatigue; serum sodium levels range from 115 to 120 mEq/L.
- c. More serious signs and symptoms relate to water intoxication and include weight gain, personality changes, confusion, and extreme muscle weakness.
- d. As the serum sodium level approaches 110 mEq/L, seizures, coma, and eventually death will occur, unless the condition is treated rapidly.

### **2. Interventions**

- a. Initiate fluid restriction and increased sodium intake as prescribed.
- b. As prescribed, administer an antagonist to antidiuretic hormone.
- c. Monitor serum sodium levels.
- d. Treat the underlying cause with chemotherapy or radiation to reduce the tumor.

## **C. Spinal cord compression**

### **1. Description**

- a. Spinal cord compression occurs when a tumor directly enters the spinal cord or when the vertebral column collapses from tumor entry, impinging on the spinal cord.
- b. Spinal cord compression causes back pain, usually before neurological deficits occur.
- c. Neurological deficits relate to the spinal level of compression and include numbness; tingling; loss of urethral, vaginal, and rectal sensation; and muscle weakness.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Early recognition: Assess for back pain and neurological deficits.
- b. Administer high-dose corticosteroids to reduce swelling around the spinal cord and relieve symptoms.
- c. Prepare the client for immediate radiation and/or chemotherapy to reduce the size of the tumor and relieve compression.
- d. Surgery may need to be performed to remove the tumor and relieve the pressure on the spinal cord.
- e. Instruct the client in the use of neck or back braces if they are prescribed.

## D. Hypercalcemia

### 1. Description

- a. Hypercalcemia is a late manifestation of extensive malignancy that occurs most often with bone metastasis, when the bone releases calcium into the bloodstream.

- b.** Decreased physical mobility contributes to or worsens hypercalcemia.
- c.** Early signs include fatigue, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, constipation, and polyuria.
- d.** More serious signs and symptoms include severe muscle weakness, diminished deep tendon reflexes, paralytic ileus, dehydration, and changes in the electrocardiogram.

## **2. Interventions**

- a.** Monitor serum calcium level and electrocardiographic changes.
- b.** Administer oral or parenteral fluids as prescribed.
- c.** Administer medications that lower the calcium level as prescribed.
- d.** Prepare the client for dialysis if the condition becomes life-threatening or is accompanied by renal impairment.

## **E. Superior vena cava syndrome**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Superior vena cava (SVC) syndrome occurs when the SVC is compressed or obstructed by tumor growth (commonly associated with lung cancer and lymphoma).
- b.** Signs and symptoms result from blockage of blood flow in the venous system of the head, neck, and upper trunk.
- c.** Early signs and symptoms generally occur in the morning and include edema of the face, especially around the eyes, and tightness of the shirt or blouse collar (Stokes' sign).

- d.** As the condition worsens, edema in the arms and hands, dyspnea, erythema of the upper body, and epistaxis occur.
- e.** Life-threatening signs and symptoms include airway obstruction, hemorrhage, cyanosis, mental status changes, decreased cardiac output, and hypotension.

## **2. Interventions**

- a.** Assess for early signs and symptoms of superior vena cava syndrome.
- b.** Prepare the client for high-dose radiation therapy to the mediastinal area, and possible surgery to insert a metal stent in the vena cava.

## **F. Tumor lysis syndrome**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Tumor lysis syndrome occurs when large quantities of tumor cells are destroyed rapidly and intracellular components such as potassium and uric acid are released into the bloodstream faster than the body can eliminate them.
- b.** Tumor lysis syndrome can indicate that cancer treatment is destroying tumor cells; however, if left untreated, it can cause severe tissue damage and death.
- c.** Hyperkalemia, hyperphosphatemia with resultant hypocalcemia, and hyperuricemia occur; hyperuricemia can lead to acute kidney injury.

### **2. Interventions**

- a.** Encourage oral hydration; IV hydration may be prescribed for the client experiencing nausea; monitor renal function.
- b.** Administer diuretics to increase the urine flow through the kidneys as prescribed.

- c. Administer medications that increase the excretion of purines, such as allopurinol (Zyloprim), as prescribed.
- d. Prepare to administer IV infusion of glucose and insulin to treat hyperkalemia.
- e. Prepare the client for dialysis if hyperkalemia and hyperuricemia persist despite treatment.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The normal platelet count is 150,000 to 450,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. If the count is low, the nurse should place the client on bleeding precautions. The nurse should examine the client for signs of bleeding, including checking all body fluids and excrement and monitoring for signs of internal hemorrhage (e.g., pain, rapid and weak pulse, increased abdominal girth, and abdomen guarding). The nurse should handle the client gently and use caution when taking blood pressures to prevent skin injury. Other interventions include soft foods that are cool to warm to avoid oral mucosa damage; avoiding injections to prevent trauma to the skin and bleeding; applying firm and gentle pressure to a needle stick site for at least 5 minutes, or longer if needed; padding corners of the bed and furniture; and avoiding rectal suppositories, enemas, and thermometers. The client should use a soft toothbrush and avoid dental floss, use only an electric razor for shaving, and avoid blowing the nose.

### **Reference**

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 669.



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**530.** The nurse is reviewing the laboratory results of a client diagnosed with multiple myeloma. Which would the nurse expect to note specifically in this disorder?

1. Increased calcium level
2. Increased white blood cells
3. Decreased blood urea nitrogen level
4. Decreased number of plasma cells in the bone marrow

**531.** The nurse is developing a plan of care for the client with multiple myeloma and includes which **priority** intervention in the plan?

1. Encouraging fluids
2. Providing frequent oral care
3. Coughing and deep breathing
4. Monitoring the red blood cell count

**532.** When caring for a client with an internal radiation implant, the nurse should observe which principles? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Limiting the time with the client to 1 hour per shift.
2. Keeping pregnant women out of the client's room.
3. Placing the client in a private room with a private bath.
4. Wearing a lead shield when providing direct client care.
5. Removing the dosimeter film badge when entering the client's room.
6. Allowing individuals younger than 16 years old in the room as long as they are

6 feet away from the client.

**533.** While giving care to a client with an internal cervical radiation implant, the nurse finds the implant in the bed. The nurse should take which **initial** action?

1. Call the health care provider (HCP).
2. Reinsert the implant into the vagina.
3. Pick up the implant with gloved hands and flush it down the toilet.
4. Pick up the implant with long-handled forceps and place it in a lead container.

**534.** The nurse should plan to implement which intervention in the care of a client experiencing neutropenia as a result of chemotherapy?

1. Restrict all visitors.
2. Restrict fluid intake.
3. Teach the client and family about the need for hand hygiene.
4. Insert an indwelling urinary catheter to prevent skin breakdown.

**535.** The home health care nurse is caring for a client with cancer who is complaining of acute pain. The **most appropriate** determination of the client's pain should include which assessment?

1. The client's pain rating
2. Nonverbal cues from the client
3. The nurse's impression of the client's pain
4. Pain relief after appropriate nursing intervention

**536.** The nurse is caring for a client who is postoperative following a pelvic exenteration and the health care provider changes the client's diet from NPO status to clear liquids. The nurse should check which **priority** item before administering the diet?

1. Bowel sounds
2. Ability to ambulate
3. Incision appearance
4. Urine specific gravity

**537.** A client is admitted to the hospital with a suspected diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease. Which assessment finding would the nurse expect to note specifically in the client?

1. Fatigue
2. Weakness
3. Weight gain
4. Enlarged lymph nodes

**538.** During the admission assessment of a client with advanced ovarian cancer, the nurse recognizes which symptom as typical of the disease?

1. Diarrhea
2. Hypermenorrhea
3. Abnormal bleeding
4. Abdominal distention

**539.** The nurse is caring for a client with bladder cancer and bone metastasis. What signs/symptoms would the nurse recognize as indications of a possible oncological emergency? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Facial edema in the morning
2. Serum calcium level of 12 mg/dL
3. Weight loss of 20 lb in 1 month
4. Serum sodium level of 136 mg/dL
5. Serum potassium level of 3.4 mg/dL
6. Numbness and tingling of the lower extremities

**540.** A client who has been receiving radiation therapy for bladder cancer tells the nurse that it feels as if she is voiding through the vagina. The nurse interprets that the client may be experiencing which condition?

1. Rupture of the bladder
2. The development of a vesicovaginal fistula
3. Extreme stress caused by the diagnosis of cancer
4. Altered perineal sensation as a side effect of radiation therapy

**541.** The nurse is instructing a client to perform a testicular self-examination (TSE). The nurse should provide the client with which information about the procedure?

1. To examine the testicles while lying down
2. That the best time for the examination is after a shower
3. To gently feel the testicle with one finger to feel for a growth

4. That testicular self-examinations should be done at least every 6 months

542. A client is diagnosed with multiple myeloma and the client asks the nurse about the diagnosis. The nurse bases the response on which description of this disorder?

1. Altered red blood cell production
2. Altered production of lymph nodes
3. Malignant exacerbation in the number of leukocytes
4. Malignant proliferation of plasma cells within the bone

543. A gastrectomy is performed on a client with gastric cancer. In the immediate postoperative period, the nurse notes bloody drainage from the nasogastric tube. The nurse should take which **most appropriate** action?

1. Measure abdominal girth.
2. Irrigate the nasogastric tube.
3. Continue to monitor the drainage.
4. Notify the health care provider (HCP).

544. The nurse is teaching a client about the risk factors associated with colorectal cancer. The nurse determines that **further teaching is necessary** related to colorectal cancer if the client identifies which item as an associated risk factor?

1. Age younger than 50 years
2. History of colorectal polyps
3. Family history of colorectal cancer

4. Chronic inflammatory bowel disease

545. The nurse is assessing the perineal wound in a client who has returned from the operating room following an abdominal perineal resection and notes serosanguineous drainage from the wound. Which nursing intervention is **most appropriate**?

1. Clamp the Penrose drain.
2. Change the dressing as prescribed.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Remove and replace the perineal packing.

546. The nurse is assessing the colostomy of a client who has had an abdominal perineal resection for a bowel tumor. Which assessment finding indicates that the colostomy is beginning to function?

1. The passage of flatus
2. Absent bowel sounds
3. The client's ability to tolerate food
4. Bloody drainage from the colostomy

547. The nurse is reviewing the history of a client with bladder cancer. The nurse expects to note documentation of which **most** common symptom of this type of cancer?

1. Dysuria
2. Hematuria

3. Urgency on urination
4. Frequency of urination

548. The nurse is assessing a client who has a new ureterostomy. Which statement by the client indicates the **need for more education** about urinary stoma care?

1. "I change my pouch every week."
2. "I change the appliance in the morning."
3. "I empty the urinary collection bag when it is two-thirds full."
4. "When I'm in the shower I direct the flow of water away from my stoma."

549. A client with carcinoma of the lung develops syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone (SIADH) as a complication of the cancer. The nurse anticipates that the health care provider will request which prescriptions? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Radiation
2. Chemotherapy
3. Increased fluid intake
4. Decreased oral sodium intake
5. Serum sodium level determination
6. Medication that is antagonistic to antidiuretic hormone

550. The nurse is monitoring a client for signs and symptoms related to superior vena cava syndrome. Which is an **early** sign of this oncological emergency?

1. Cyanosis

2. Arm edema
3. Periorbital edema
4. Mental status changes

551. The nurse manager is teaching the nursing staff about signs and symptoms related to hypercalcemia in a client with metastatic prostate cancer and tells the staff that which is a **late** sign of this oncological emergency?

1. Headache
2. Dysphagia
3. Constipation
4. Electrocardiographic changes

552. As part of chemotherapy education, the nurse teaches a female client about the risk for bleeding and self-care during the period of greatest bone marrow suppression (the nadir). The nurse understands that **further teaching is needed** if the client makes which statement?

1. "I should avoid blowing my nose."
2. "I may need a platelet transfusion if my platelet count is too low."
3. "I'm going to take aspirin for my headache as soon as I get home."
4. "I will count the number of pads and tampons I use when menstruating."

553. The community health nurse is instructing a group of young female clients about breast self-examination. The nurse should instruct the clients to perform the examination at which time?

1. At the onset of menstruation
2. Every month during ovulation
3. Weekly at the same time of day
4. 1 week after menstruation begins

**554.** A client is diagnosed as having a bowel tumor. The nurse should monitor the client for which complications of this type of tumor? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Flatulence
2. Peritonitis
3. Hemorrhage
4. Fistula formation
5. Bowel perforation
6. Lactose intolerance

**555.** The nurse is caring for a client following a mastectomy. Which nursing intervention would assist in preventing lymphedema of the affected arm?

1. Placing cool compresses on the affected arm
2. Elevating the affected arm on a pillow above heart level
3. Avoiding arm exercises in the immediate postoperative period
4. Maintaining an intravenous site below the antecubital area on the affected side

# ANSWERS

**530. 1**

**Rationale:** Findings indicative of multiple myeloma are an increased number of plasma cells in the bone marrow, anemia, hypercalcemia caused by the release of calcium from the deteriorating bone tissue, and an elevated blood urea nitrogen level. An increased white blood cell count may or may not be present and is not related specifically to multiple myeloma.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, laboratory findings in multiple myeloma. Noting the name of the disorder and recalling the pathophysiology of the disease and that proliferation of plasma cells in the bone occurs will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Multiple myeloma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 894.

**531. 1**

**Rationale:** Hypercalcemia caused by bone destruction is a priority concern in the client with multiple myeloma. The nurse should administer fluids in adequate amounts to maintain a urine output of 1.5 to 2 L/day; this requires about 3 L of fluid intake per day. The fluid is needed not only to dilute the calcium overload but also to prevent protein

from precipitating in the renal tubules. Options 2, 3, and 4 may be components of the plan of care but are not the priority in this client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Recalling the pathophysiology of this disorder and that hypercalcemia can occur will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Hypercalcemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 704.

❖ 532. 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** The time that the nurse spends in a room of a client with an internal radiation implant is 30 minutes per 8-hour shift. The client must be placed in a private room with a private bath. The nurse should wear a lead shield to reduce the transmission of radiation. The dosimeter film badge must be worn when in the client's room. Children younger than 16 years of age and pregnant women are not allowed in the client's room.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, radiation precautions. Recalling the time frame related to exposure to the client will assist in eliminating option 1. From the remaining options, select the correct options because of the possible risks associated with exposure to radiation.

**Review:** Care of the client with an **internal radiation implant**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 413.

**533. 4**

**Rationale:** In the event that a radiation source becomes dislodged, the nurse would first encourage the client to lie still until the radioactive source has been placed in a safe closed container. The nurse would use a long-handled forceps to place the source in the lead container that should be in the client's room. The nurse should then call the radiation oncologist and then document the event and the actions taken. It is not within the scope of nursing practice to insert a radiation implant.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial*. The initial action would be to prevent self-contamination from radiation exposure. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Nursing actions to take if a **sealed radiation implant** becomes dislodged

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 413.

**534. 3**

**Rationale:** In the neutropenic client, meticulous hand hygiene education is implemented for the client, family, visitors, and staff. Not all visitors are restricted, but the client is protected from persons with known infections. Fluids should be encouraged. Invasive measures such as an indwelling urinary catheter should be avoided to prevent infections.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate option 1 because of the **closed-ended word** *all*. Next, eliminate option 2 because it is not reasonable to restrict fluids in a client receiving chemotherapy who is at risk for fluid and electrolyte imbalances. Eliminate option 4 because of the risk of infection that exists with this measure.

**Review:** Interventions for the client with **neutropenia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 420, 438.

**535. 1**

**Rationale:** The client's self-report is a critical component of pain assessment. The nurse should ask the client to describe the pain and listen carefully to the words the client uses to describe the pain. Nonverbal cues from the client are important but are not the most appropriate pain assessment measure. The nurse's impression of the client's pain is not appropriate in determining the client's level of pain. Assessing pain relief is an important measure, but this option is not related to the subject of the question.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate option 3 because the nurse is not

the client of the question. From the remaining options, the subjective data from the client will provide the most accurate description of the pain.

**Review:** Pain assessment techniques

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Pain

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Pain

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 47-48.

**536. 1**

**Rationale:** The client is kept NPO until peristalsis returns, usually in 4 to 6 days. When signs of bowel function return, clear fluids are given to the client. If no distention occurs, the diet is advanced as tolerated. The most important assessment is to assess bowel sounds before feeding the client. Options 2, 3, and 4 are unrelated to the data in the question.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority* and the words *NPO status to clear liquids* in the question. The correct option is the only one that relates to gastrointestinal function.

**Review:** Pelvic exenteration

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Nutrition

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 290.

**537. 4**

**Rationale:** Hodgkin's disease is a chronic progressive neoplastic disorder of lymphoid tissue characterized by the painless enlargement of lymph nodes with progression to extralymphatic sites, such as the spleen and liver. Weight loss is most likely to be noted. Fatigue and weakness may occur but are not related significantly to the disease.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 1 and 2 are **comparable or alike** and are rather vague symptoms that can occur in many disorders. Option 3 can be eliminated because, in such a disorder, weight loss is most likely to occur. Also, recalling that Hodgkin's disease affects the lymph nodes will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Manifestations associated with **Hodgkin's disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 701.

**538. 4**

**Rationale:** Clinical manifestations of ovarian cancer include abdominal distention, urinary frequency and urgency, pleural effusion, malnutrition, pain from pressure caused by the growing tumor and the effects of urinary or bowel obstruction, constipation, ascites with dyspnea, and ultimately general severe pain. Abnormal bleeding, often resulting in hypermenorrhea, is associated with uterine cancer.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining

options, consider the anatomical location of the cancer. This will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Manifestations associated with **ovarian cancer**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1626-1627.

❖ **539. 1, 2, 6**

**Rationale:** Oncological emergencies include sepsis, disseminated intravascular coagulation, syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone, spinal cord compression, hypercalcemia, superior vena cava syndrome, and tumor lysis syndrome. Blockage of blood flow to the venous system of the head resulting in facial edema is a sign of superior vena cava syndrome. A serum calcium level of 12 mg/dL indicates hypercalcemia. Numbness and tingling of the lower extremities could be a sign of spinal cord compression. Mild hypokalemia and weight loss are not oncological emergencies. A sodium level of 136 mg/dL is a normal level.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, an oncological emergency. Recalling the signs and symptoms of oncological emergencies will help you identify the correct options. Also, recalling the normal calcium, potassium, and sodium levels will direct you to the correct options.

**Review:** **Oncological emergencies**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 419, 424; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 281-282.

**540. 2**

**Rationale:** A vesicovaginal fistula is a genital fistula that occurs between the bladder and vagina. The fistula is an abnormal opening between these two body parts and, if this occurs, the client may experience drainage of urine through the vagina. The client's complaint is not associated with options 1, 3, or 4.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a complication of bladder cancer. Noting the words *voiding through the vagina* should direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Vesicovaginal fistula**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1372.

**541. 2**

**Rationale:** The testicular-self examination is recommended monthly after a warm bath or shower when the scrotal skin is relaxed. The client should stand to examine the testicles. Using both hands, with fingers under the scrotum and thumbs on top, the client should gently roll the testicles, feeling for any lumps.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for performing TSE. Eliminate option 4 first because

of the words *6 months*. Next, eliminate option 3 because of the word *one*. From the remaining options, eliminate option 1 by trying to visualize the process of the self-examination.

**Review:** Testicular self-examination

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1643.

542. 4

**Rationale:** Multiple myeloma is a B-cell neoplastic condition characterized by abnormal malignant proliferation of plasma cells and the accumulation of mature plasma cells in the bone marrow. Options 1 and 2 are not characteristics of multiple myeloma. Option 3 describes the leukemic process.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, characteristics of malignant myeloma. Think about the pathophysiology of the disorder to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Characteristics of **multiple myeloma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Client Education

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 894.

**543. 3**

**Rationale:** Following gastrectomy, drainage from the nasogastric tube is normally bloody for 24 hours postoperatively, changes to brown-tinged, and is then yellow or clear. Because bloody drainage is expected in the immediate postoperative period, the nurse should continue to monitor the drainage. The nurse does not need to notify the HCP at this time. Measuring abdominal girth is performed to detect the development of distention. Following gastrectomy, a nasogastric tube should not be irrigated unless there are specific HCP prescriptions to do so.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*, and focus on the **subject**, the immediate postoperative period. This should direct you to the correct option. Remember that drainage from the nasogastric tube is normally bloody for 24 hours postoperatively, changes to brown-tinged and then to yellow or clear.

**Review:** Postoperative findings following **gastrectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 998.

**544. 1**

**Rationale:** Colorectal cancer risk factors include age older than 50 years, a family history of the disease, colorectal polyps, and chronic inflammatory bowel disease.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *further teaching is necessary*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Noting the words *younger than* in option 1 will direct you to this option.

**Review:** Risk factors associated with **colorectal cancer**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1035.

545. 2

**Rationale:** Immediately after surgery, profuse serosanguineous drainage from the perineal wound is expected. Therefore the nurse should change the dressing as prescribed. A Penrose drain should not be clamped because this action will cause the accumulation of drainage within the tissue. The nurse does not need to notify the HCP at this time. Penrose drains and packing are removed gradually over a period of 5 to 7 days as prescribed. The nurse should not remove the perineal packing.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words**, *most appropriate*. Eliminate options 1 and 4, knowing that these are inappropriate interventions. Recalling that serosanguineous drainage is expected following this type of surgery will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Postoperative nursing care following **abdominal perineal resection**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1251.

**546. 1**

**Rationale:** Following abdominal perineal resection, the nurse would expect the colostomy to begin to function within 72 hours after surgery, although it may take up to 5 days. The nurse should assess for a return of peristalsis, listen for bowel sounds, and check for the passage of flatus. Absent bowel sounds would not indicate the return of peristalsis. The client would remain NPO until bowel sounds return and the colostomy is functioning. Bloody drainage is not expected from a colostomy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the colostomy beginning to function. This should assist in eliminating option 2. Knowledge of general postoperative measures will assist in eliminating option 3. Focus on the **subject** to assist in eliminating option 4 as a correct option.

**Review:** Postoperative care following **abdominal perineal resection**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Perioperative Care

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1250-1251.

547. 2

**Rationale:** The most common symptom in clients with cancer of the bladder is hematuria. The client also may experience irritative voiding symptoms such as frequency, urgency, and dysuria, and these symptoms often are associated with carcinoma in situ. Dysuria, urgency, and frequency of urination are also signs of a bladder infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, bladder cancer, and note the **strategic word** *most* in the question.

Options 1, 3, and 4 are symptoms that are associated most often with bladder infection.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations associated with **bladder cancer**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Elimination

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1145.

548. 3

**Rationale:** The urinary collection bag should be changed when it is one-third full to prevent pulling of the appliance and leakage. The remaining options identify correct statements about the care of a urinary stoma.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for more education*, and eliminate the options that indicate client understanding. Noting the words, *two-thirds full*, will assist in directing you to this option.

**Review:** Urinary **stoma** care

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Elimination

**Reference:** Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 479-480.

❖ 549. 1, 2, 5, 6

**Rationale:** Cancer is a common cause of syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone (SIADH). In SIADH, excessive amounts of water are reabsorbed by the kidney and put into the systemic circulation. The increased water causes hyponatremia (decreased serum sodium levels) and some degree of fluid retention. The syndrome is managed by treating the condition and cause and usually includes fluid restriction, increased sodium intake, and medication with a mechanism of action that is antagonistic to antidiuretic hormone. Sodium levels are monitored closely because hypernatremia can develop suddenly as a result of treatment. The immediate institution of appropriate cancer therapy, usually radiation or chemotherapy, can cause tumor regression so that antidiuretic hormone synthesis and release processes return to normal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focusing on the **subject**, treatment for SIADH, and recall that in SIADH excessive amounts of water are reabsorbed by the kidney and put into the systemic circulation. This will assist in answering this question.

**Review:** Syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone (SIADH)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 430-431, 1380-1381.

**550. 3**

**Rationale:** Superior vena cava syndrome occurs when the superior vena cava is compressed or obstructed by tumor growth. Early signs and symptoms generally occur in the morning and include edema of the face, especially around the eyes, and client complaints of tightness of a shirt or blouse collar. As the compression worsens, the client experiences edema of the hands and arms. Cyanosis and mental status changes are late signs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. Think about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder and focus on the strategic word to assist in eliminating options 1, 2, and 4.

**Review:** Superior vena cava syndrome

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 431-432.

**551. 4**

**Rationale:** Hypercalcemia is a manifestation of bone metastasis in late-stage cancer. Headache and dysphagia are not associated with hypercalcemia. Constipation may occur early in the process. Electrocardiogram changes include shortened ST segment and a widened T wave.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *late*. Focus on the name of the oncological emergency,

*hypercalcemia*, to direct you to the correct option. Eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are not signs of hypercalcemia. Eliminate option 3 because it is an early sign of hypercalcemia.

**Review:** Early and late signs of **hypercalcemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Baird (2011), pp. 60-62.

**552. 3**

**Rationale:** During the period of greatest bone marrow suppression (the nadir), the platelet count may be low, less than 20,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. The correct option describes an incorrect statement by the client. Aspirin and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs and products that contain aspirin should be avoided because of their antiplatelet activity.

Options 1, 2, and 4 are correct statements by the client to prevent and monitor bleeding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *further teaching is needed*. Recalling the effects of bone marrow suppression will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Bone marrow suppression** and **nadir**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 683-684.

**553. 4**

**Rationale:** The breast self-examination should be performed monthly, 7 days after the onset of the menstrual period. Performing the examination weekly is not recommended. At the onset of menstruation and during ovulation, hormonal changes occur that may alter breast tissue.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Option 3 can be eliminated easily because of the word *weekly*. Eliminate options 1 and 2 next because they are **comparable or alike** in the similarity that exists regarding the hormonal changes that occur during these times.

**Review: Breast self-examination**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Health Promotion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1594; Potter et al (2013), pp. 538-539.

❖ **554. 2, 3, 4, 5**

**Rationale:** Complications of bowel tumors include bowel perforation, which can result in hemorrhage and peritonitis. Other complications include bowel obstruction, and fistula formation. Flatulence can occur but is not a complication; lactose intolerance also is not a complication of intestinal tumor.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, complications of a bowel tumor. Think about the location and pathophysiology associated with this type of tumor to answer correctly.

**Review:** Complications associated with **intestinal tumors**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1255; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1032-1033.

**555. 2**

**Rationale:** Following mastectomy, the arm should be elevated above the level of the heart. Simple arm exercises should be encouraged. No blood pressure readings, injections, intravenous lines, or blood draws should be performed on the affected arm. Cool compresses are not a suggested measure to prevent lymphedema from occurring.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, preventing lymphedema. Note the relationship between *lymphedema* in the question and *elevating* in the correct option. Also, using general principles related to gravity will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Postoperative care measures following **mastectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1602-1603.





## CHAPTER 53

# Antineoplastic Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

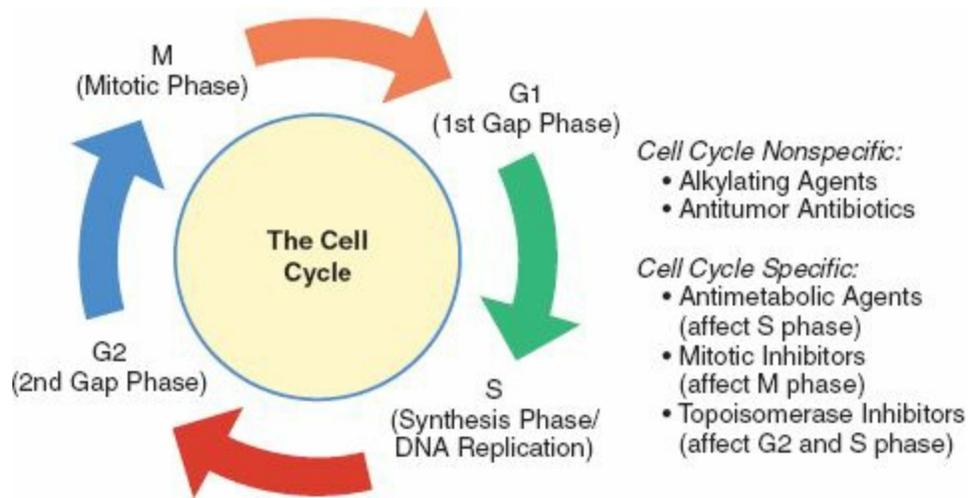
The nurse notes that a client who needs to receive a scheduled antineoplastic medication has a neutrophil count of 1000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 632.*

### I. Antineoplastic Medications

#### A. Description

1. Antineoplastic medications kill or inhibit the reproduction of neoplastic cells.
2. Antineoplastic medications are used to cure, increase survival time, and decrease life-threatening complications.
3. The effect of antineoplastic medications may not be limited to neoplastic cells; normal cells also are affected by the medication.
4. Cell cycle phase-specific medications affect cells only during a certain phase of the reproductive cycle (Fig. 53-1).



**FIGURE 53-1** The cell cycle. *G1*, The cell is preparing for division; *S* (synthesis phase, DNA replication), the cell doubles its DNA content through DNA synthesis; *G2*, the cell produces proteins to be used in cell division and in normal physiological function after cell division is complete; *M* (mitotic phase), the single cell splits apart into two cells.

5. Cell cycle phase–nonspecific medications affect cells in any phase of the reproductive cycle (see [Fig. 53-1](#)).
6. Usually, several medications are used in combination to increase the therapeutic response.
7. Antineoplastic medications may be combined with other treatments, such as surgery and radiation.
8. Although the intravenous (IV) route is most common for administration, antineoplastic medication may be given by the oral, intraarterial, isolated limb perfusion, or intracavitary route; dosing is usually based on the client's body surface area (BSA) and type of **cancer**.
9. Chemotherapy dosing is usually based on total BSA, which requires a current,

accurate height and weight for BSA calculation (before each medication administration) to ensure that the client receives optimal doses of chemotherapy medications.

**⚠ Side and adverse effects from chemotherapy result from the effects of the antineoplastic medication on normal cells.**

## **B. Side/adverse effects** ▲

1. Mucositis
2. Alopecia
3. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
4. Diarrhea
5. Anemia
6. Low white blood cell count (neutropenia)
7. Thrombocytopenia
8. Infertility, sexual alterations

## **C. General interventions** ▲

1. Physiological integrity
  - a. Monitor complete blood cell count, white blood cell count, platelet count, uric acid level, and electrolytes.
  - b. Initiate bleeding precautions if thrombocytopenia occurs.
  - c. When the platelet count is less than 50,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, minor trauma can lead to episodes of prolonged bleeding; when less than 20,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, spontaneous

and uncontrollable bleeding can occur; withhold the medication if the platelet count drops (according to agency policy) and notify the health care provider (HCP). Bleeding precautions are initiated.

- d.** Monitor for petechiae, ecchymoses, bleeding of the gums, and nosebleeds because the decreased platelet count can precipitate bleeding tendencies.
- e.** Avoid intramuscular injections and venipunctures as much as possible to prevent bleeding.
- f.** Withhold the medication and initiate neutropenic precautions if the neutrophil count decreases below 1800 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> (normal is 1800 to 7800 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>); notify the health care provider.
- g.** Monitor for fever, sore throat, unusual bleeding, and signs and symptoms of infection.
- h.** Inform the client that loss of appetite also may be the result of taste changes or a bitter taste in the mouth from the medications.
- i.** Monitor for nausea and vomiting and provide a high-calorie diet with protein supplements.
- j.** Administer antiemetics several hours before chemotherapy and for 12 to 48 hours after as prescribed, because antineoplastic medications stimulate the vomiting center in the brain.
- k.** Encourage hydration; IV fluids are administered before and during therapy.
- l.** Promote a fluid intake of at least 2000 mL/day to maintain adequate renal function.

**⚠ Antineoplastic medication causes the rapid destruction of cells, resulting in the release of uric acid. Allopurinol (Zyloprim) may be prescribed to lower the serum uric acid level.**

## 2. Safe and effective care environment

- a. Prepare IV chemotherapy in an air-vented space (biohazard cabinet area).
- b. Wear gloves, gown, eye protectors, and mask when handling IV chemotherapy medications.
- c. Nurses who are pregnant should avoid chemotherapy preparation or the administration of chemotherapy.
- d. Discard IV equipment in designated (biohazard) containers.
- e. Administer antineoplastic medication precisely as prescribed to maximize antineoplastic effects while allowing normal cells to recover.
- f. Monitor for phlebitis with IV administration because these medications may irritate the veins.
- g. As prescribed, reduce IV site pain by altering IV rates or warming the injection site to distend the vein and increase blood flow.
- h. Monitor for extravasation (leakage of medication into surrounding skin and subcutaneous tissue, which causes tissue necrosis) and notify the health care provider (HCP) if this occurs; heat or ice is applied depending on the medication, and an antidote may be injected into the site.

## 3. Psychosocial integrity

- a. Instruct the client about the possibility of hair loss and that varying degrees of

hair loss may occur after the first or second treatment.

- b.** Discuss the purchase of a wig before treatment starts.
- c.** Inform the client that new hair growth will occur several months after the final treatment.
- d.** Instruct the client about the need for contraception because these medications have teratogenic effects.
- e.** Discuss the potential effect of infertility, which may be irreversible.
- f.** Encourage pretreatment counseling.

#### **4.** Health promotion and maintenance

- a.** Instruct the client, if diarrhea is a problem, to avoid spicy foods and high-fiber foods and foods that are hot in temperature, which increase peristalsis.
- b.** Instruct the client to inspect the oral mucosa frequently for erythema and ulcers, rinse the mouth after meals, and carry out good oral hygiene.
- c.** Instruct the client to use mouth rinses as prescribed for mouth sores if necessary.
- d.** Instruct the client in the use of antifungal agents for mouth sores, if prescribed, for the development of a fungal infection.
- e.** Instruct the client to avoid crowds and persons with infections and to report signs of infection such as a low-grade fever, chills, or sore throat.
- f.** Instruct individuals with colds or infections to wear a mask when visiting or to avoid visiting the client.
- g.** Instruct the client to use a soft toothbrush and electric razor to minimize the risk of bleeding.

- h.** Instruct the client to avoid aspirin-containing products to minimize the risk of bleeding.
- i.** Instruct the client to consult the HCP before receiving vaccinations (live vaccines should not be administered).

## **D.** Anaphylactic reactions

### **1.** Precautions

- a.** Obtain an allergy history.
- b.** Administer a test dose when prescribed by the HCP.
- c.** Stay with the client during the administration of medication. ▲
- d.** Monitor vital signs.
- e.** Have emergency equipment and medications readily available.
- f.** Provide an IV line for the administration of emergency medications if needed.



### **2.** Signs of an anaphylactic reaction ▲

- a.** Dyspnea
- b.** Chest tightness or pain
- c.** Pruritus or urticaria
- d.** Tachycardia
- e.** Dizziness
- f.** Anxiety or agitation
- g.** Flushed appearance
- h.** Hypotension
- i.** Decreased sensorium

j. Cyanosis

3. Interventions for an anaphylactic reaction (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take if an Anaphylactic Reaction Occurs from Medication

1. Assess respiratory status.
2. Stop the medication.
3. Contact the health care provider (HCP) and the Rapid Response Team if necessary.
4. Administer oxygen.
5. Maintain the IV access with normal saline.
6. Raise the client's feet and legs, if not contraindicated.
7. Administer prescribed emergency medications.
8. Monitor vital signs.
9. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

If anaphylaxis occurs, the nurse immediately assesses the client's respiratory status. The medication is also immediately stopped. If the client's airway needs to be established or stabilized the Rapid Response Team is called. In addition, the HCP is contacted. The IV line is not removed because IV access is needed to administer emergency medications such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) or epinephrine. The

client is positioned appropriately. The legs and feet are elevated. The head of the bed is elevated to improve ventilation; elevate the head of the bed 10 degrees if hypotension is present and 45 degrees or higher if the blood pressure is normal. The nurse stays with the client and monitors the client's status, including the vital signs. The nurse documents the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, pp. 389-390.

## **II. Alkylating Medications (Box 53-1)**

### **BOX 53-1 Alkylating Medications**

#### **Nitrogen Mustards**

- Bendamustine (Treanda)
- Chlorambucil (Leukeran)
- Cyclophosphamide
- Ifosfamide (Ifex)
- Mechlorethamine (Mustargen)
- Melphalan (Alkeran)

#### **Nitrosoureas**

- Carmustine (BiCNU, Gliadel)
- Lomustine (CeeNU)
- Streptozocin (Zanosar)

### **Alkylating-Like Medications**

- Altretamine (Hexalen)
- Busulfan (Myleran, Busulfex)
- Carboplatin (Paraplatin)
- Cisplatin
- Dacarbazine (DTIC-Dome)
- Oxaliplatin (Eloxatin)
- Temozolomide (Temodar)
- Thiotepa

#### **A. Description**

1. Break the DNA helix, thereby interfering with DNA replication
2. Cell cycle phase–nonspecific medications

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting may occur.
2. Stomatitis may occur.
3. Rash may occur.
4. Client may feel IV site pain during IV administration.
5. Busulfan (Myleran, Busulfex) may cause hyperuricemia.

6. Chlorambucil (Leukeran) and mechlorethamine (Mustargen) may cause gonadal suppression and hyperuricemia.
7. Cisplatin, a platinum compound, may cause ototoxicity, tinnitus, hypokalemia, hypocalcemia, hypomagnesemia, and nephrotoxicity.
8. Cyclophosphamide may cause alopecia, gonadal suppression, hemorrhagic cystitis, and hematuria.

C. Interventions: Refer to Section I,C (Antineoplastic Medications—General Interventions).

1. Assess results of pulmonary function tests.
2. Assess results of chest radiography and renal and liver function studies.
3. When administering cisplatin, assess the client for dizziness, tinnitus, hearing loss, incoordination, and numbness or tingling of extremities.
4. Mesna (Mesnex) may be administered with ifosfamide to reduce the potential for ifosfamide-induced cystitis.
5. Instruct the client that cyclophosphamide, when prescribed orally, is administered without food.
6. Instruct the client to follow a diet low in purines to alkalinize the urine and lower uric acid blood levels.
7. Instruct the client about how to avoid infection.
8. Instruct the client to report signs of infection or bleeding.
9. Instruct the client about good oral hygiene and the use of a soft toothbrush.

**!** Cyclophosphamide and ifosfamide (Ifex) are medications that can cause hemorrhagic cystitis. Encourage the client to drink increased fluids (2 to 3 L/day) during therapy, unless contraindicated.

### III. Antitumor Antibiotic Medications (Box 53-2)

#### BOX 53-2 Antitumor Antibiotic Medications

- Bleomycin sulfate
- Dactinomycin (Cosmegen)
- Daunorubicin (DaunoXome)
- Doxorubicin (Adriamycin, Doxil)
- Epirubicin (Ellence)
- Idarubicin (Idamycin)
- Mitomycin (Mutamycin)
- Mitoxantrone (Novantrone)
- Valrubicin (Valstar)

#### A. Description

1. Interfere with DNA and RNA synthesis
2. Cell cycle phase–nonspecific medications

#### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Nausea and vomiting
2. Fever

3. Bone marrow depression
  4. Rash
  5. Alopecia
  6. Stomatitis
  7. Gonadal suppression
  8. Hyperuricemia
  9. Vesication (blistering of tissue at IV site)
  10. Daunorubicin (DaunoXome) may cause heart failure and dysrhythmias. ▲
  11. Doxorubicin (Adriamycin, Doxil) and idarubicin (Idamycin) may cause cardiotoxicity, cardiomyopathy, and electrocardiographic changes (dexrazoxane [Zinecard], which is a cardioprotective agent, may be administered with doxorubicin to reduce cardiomyopathy). ▲
  12. Pulmonary toxicity can occur with bleomycin. ▲
- C. Interventions: Refer to Section I,C (Antineoplastic Medications—General Interventions). ▲
1. Assess results of pulmonary function tests.
  2. Monitor for electrocardiographic changes.
  3. Assess lung sounds for crackles.
  4. Assess for signs of heart failure, including dyspnea, crackles, peripheral edema, and weight gain.
  5. Assess results of chest radiography and renal and liver function studies.
  6. Assess for myocardial toxicity, dyspnea, dysrhythmias, hypotension, and weight

gain when administering doxorubicin (Adriamycin, Doxil) or idarubicin

7. Monitor pulmonary status when administering bleomycin.

#### IV. Antimetabolite Medications (Box 53-3)

##### **BOX 53-3** Antimetabolite Medications

- Capecitabine (Xeloda)
- Cladribine (Leustatin)
- Clofarabine (Clolar)
- Cytarabine (Cytosar-U, DepoCyt, Tarabine PFS)
- Floxuridine (FUDR)
- Fludarabine (Fludara)
- Fluorouracil (Adrucil)
- Gemcitabine (Gemzar)
- Hydroxyurea (Hydrea, Mylocel)
- Mercaptopurine (Purinethol)
- Methotrexate (Rheumatrex, Trexall)
- Pemetrexed (Alimta)
- Pentostatin (Nipent)
- Pralatrexate (Folotyn)
- Thioguanine (Tabloid)

#### A. Description

1. Antimetabolite medications halt the synthesis of cell protein; their presence impairs cell division.
2. Antimetabolite medications are cell cycle phase–specific and affect the S phase.

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
2. Diarrhea
3. Alopecia
4. Stomatitis
5. Depression of bone marrow
6. Cytarabine (Cytosar-U, DepoCyt, Tarabine PFS) may cause alopecia, stomatitis, hyperuricemia, and hepatotoxicity.
7. Fluorouracil (Adrucil) may cause alopecia, stomatitis, diarrhea, phototoxicity reactions, and cerebellar dysfunction. ▲
8. Mercaptopurine (Purinethol) may cause hyperuricemia and hepatotoxicity. ▲
9. Methotrexate (Rheumatrex, Trexall) may cause alopecia, stomatitis, hyperuricemia, photosensitivity, hepatotoxicity, and hematological, gastrointestinal, and skin toxicity. ▲

**C. Interventions: Refer to Section I,C (Antineoplastic Medications—General Interventions). ▲**

1. Monitor renal function studies.
2. Monitor for cerebellar dysfunction.
3. Assess for photosensitivity.

4. When administering fluorouracil, assess for signs of cerebellar dysfunction, such as dizziness, weakness, and ataxia, and assess for stomatitis and diarrhea, which may necessitate medication discontinuation.
5. When administering fluorouracil or methotrexate, instruct the client to use sunscreen and wear protective clothing to prevent photosensitivity reactions.

 When administering methotrexate in large doses, prepare to administer leucovorin (folinic acid or citrovorum factor) as prescribed to prevent toxicity. This is known as *leucovorin rescue*.

## V. Mitotic Inhibitor Medications (*Vinca* Alkaloids) (Box 53-4)

### BOX 53-4 Mitotic Inhibitors

#### *Vinca* Alkaloids

- Vinblastine sulfate
- Vincristine sulfate
- Vinorelbine (Navelbine)

#### Taxanes

- Docetaxel (Docefrez, Taxotere)
- Paclitaxel (Onxol)

### A. Description

1. Mitotic inhibitors prevent mitosis, causing cell death.

2. Mitotic inhibitors are cell cycle phase–specific and act on the M phase.

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Leukopenia

2. Neurotoxicity with vincristine (Vincasar) manifested as numbness and tingling in the fingers and toes, constipation, paralytic ileus. ▲

3. Ptosis

4. Hoarseness

5. Motor instability

6. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting

7. Peripheral neuropathy

8. Alopecia

9. Stomatitis

10. Hyperuricemia

11. Phlebitis at IV site

**C. Interventions: Refer to Section I,C (Antineoplastic Medications—General Interventions). ▲**

1. Monitor for hoarseness.

2. Assess eyes for ptosis.

3. Assess motor stability and initiate safety precautions as necessary.

4. Monitor for neurotoxicity with vincristine manifested as numbness and tingling in the fingers and toes.

5. Monitor for constipation and paralytic ileus.

## VI. Topoisomerase Inhibitors (Box 53-5)

### BOX 53-5 Topoisomerase Inhibitors

- Etoposide (Toposar)
- Irinotecan (Camptosar)
- Teniposide (Vumon)
- Topotecan (Hycamtin)

#### A. Description

1. Block an enzyme needed for DNA synthesis and cell division
2. Cell cycle phase-specific; act on the G<sub>2</sub> and S phases

#### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, anemia
2. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
3. Diarrhea
4. Alopecia
5. Orthostatic hypotension
6. Hypersensitivity reaction

C. Interventions: Refer to Section I,C (Antineoplastic Medications—General Interventions). ▲

## VII. Hormonal Medications and Enzymes (Box 53-6)

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**Estrogens**

- Estramustine (Emcyt)
- Ethinyl estradiol (Estinyl)

**Antiestrogens**

- Anastrozole (Arimidex)
- Exemestane (Aromasin)
- Fulvestrant (Faslodex)
- Letrozole (Femara)
- Raloxifene (Evista)
- Tamoxifen citrate
- Toremifene (Fareston)

**Antiandrogens**

- Bicalutamide (Casodex)
- Flutamide
- Goserelin acetate (Zoladex)
- Nilutamide (Nilandron)
- Triptorelin (Trelstar)

**Progestins**

- Medroxyprogesterone (Depo-Provera)
- Megestrol acetate (Megace)

## Other Hormonal Antagonists and Enzymes

- Asparaginase (Elspar)
- Leuprolide acetate (Lupron)
- Mitotane (Lysodren)

### A. Description

1. Suppress the immune system and block normal hormones in hormone-sensitive tumors
2. Change the hormonal balance and slow the growth rates of certain tumors

### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
2. Leukopenia
3. Impaired pancreatic function with asparaginase (Elspar)
4. Sex characteristic alterations
  - a. Masculinizing effect in women: Chest and facial hair, menses stops
  - b. Feminine manifestations in men: Gynecomastia
5. Breast swelling
6. Hot flashes
7. Weight gain
8. Hemorrhagic cystitis, hypouricemia, and hypercholesterolemia, with mitotane (Lysodren)
9. Hypertension

10. Thromboembolic disorders

11. Edema

12. Electrolyte imbalances

13. Tamoxifen citrate may cause edema, hypercalcemia, and elevated cholesterol and triglyceride levels. ▲

14. Tamoxifen citrate decreases the effects of estrogen. ▲

C. Interventions: Refer to Section I,C (Antineoplastic Medications—General Interventions). ▲

1. Assess medications that the client is taking currently.
2. Monitor serum calcium levels with androgens.
3. Monitor for signs of alterations in sexual characteristics.
4. Monitor pancreatic function with asparaginase.
5. Monitor uric acid and cholesterol levels.
6. Monitor for signs of hemorrhagic cystitis.

## VIII. Immunomodulator Agents: Biological Response Modifiers (Box 53-7)

### BOX 53-7 Immunomodulator Agents

- Aldesleukin (Proleukin, interleukin-2)
- Interferon alfa-2a
- Interferon alfa-2b
- Interferon alfa-n3 (Alferon N)

- Recombinant interferon alfa-2a (Intron A)
- Recombinant interferon alfa-2b (Roferon-A)

### Common Monoclonal Antibodies

- Alemtuzumab (Campath)
- Gemtuzumab ozogamicin (Mylotarg)
- Ibritumomab (Zevalin)
- Infliximab (Remicade)
- Rituximab (Rituxan)
- Trastuzumab (Herceptin)

#### A. Description

1. Immunomodulators stimulate the immune system to recognize cancer cells and take action to eliminate or destroy them.
2. Interleukins help various immune system cells recognize and destroy abnormal body cells.
3. Interferons slow tumor cell division, stimulate proliferation, and cause cancer cells to differentiate into nonproliferative forms.

**B.** Colony-stimulating factors induce more rapid bone marrow recovery after suppression by chemotherapy (Box 53-8).

### **BOX 53-8** Colony-Stimulating Factors

#### Granulocyte-Macrophage Colony-Stimulating Factor

- Sargramostim (Leukine)

### **Granulocyte Colony-Stimulating Factor**

- Filgrastim (Neupogen)
- Pegfilgrastim (Neulasta)

### **Erythropoietin**

- Epoetin alfa (Epogen)
- Darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp)

### **Thrombopoietic Growth Factor**

- Oprelvekin (interleukin-11)

## **IX. Targeted Therapy**

### **A. Description**

1. Medications used as targeted therapies are monoclonal antibodies that target a cellular element of the cancer cell or antisense medications that work at the gene level.
2. Examples of monoclonal antibodies are rituximab (Rituxan), tositumomab (Bexxar), trastuzumab (Herceptin), alemtuzumab (Campath), and cetuximab (Erbix).

**B. Side/adverse effects:** Allergic reactions (monoclonal antibodies)

## **X. Other Antineoplastic Medications**

- A. Altretamine (Hexalen): Cytotoxic agent used to treat ovarian cancer
- B. Denileukin diftitox (Ontak): Recombinant DNA-derived medication used to treat cutaneous T-cell **lymphoma**
- C. Gemcitabine (Gemzar): Used to treat non–small cell lung cancer and **adenocarcinoma** of the pancreas, as well as metastatic breast cancer and lung cancer (in combination with paclitaxel [Onxol])
- D. Irinotecan (Camptosar): Used to treat colorectal or rectal cancer
- E. Paclitaxel (Onxol): Used to treat ovarian or metastatic breast cancer
- F. Pegaspargase (Oncaspar): Used in combination chemotherapies for acute lymphoblastic **leukemia** in clients unable to take asparaginase (Elspar)
- G. Topotecan (Hycamtin): Indicated for the treatment of relapsed or refractory metastatic ovarian cancer after other therapies have failed
- H. Trastuzumab (Herceptin): Used in combination chemotherapy to treat breast cancer
- I. Bexarotene (Targretin): Use to treat advanced-stage cutaneous T-cell lymphoma

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** For the client receiving an antineoplastic medication, the nurse should withhold the medication if the neutrophil count is less than 1800 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. The health care provider (HCP) is notified for further prescriptions and neutropenic precautions are initiated to protect the client from infection.

### **Reference**

Lehne (2013), p. 1190.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**556.** Chemotherapy dosage is frequently based on total body surface area (BSA), so it is important for the nurse to perform which assessment before administering chemotherapy?

1. Measure the client's abdominal girth.
2. Calculate the client's body mass index.
3. Ask the client about his or her weight and height.
4. Measure the client's current weight and height.

**557.** A client with squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx is receiving bleomycin intravenously. The nurse caring for the client anticipates that which diagnostic study will be prescribed?

1. Echocardiography
2. Electrocardiography
3. Cervical radiography
4. Pulmonary function studies

**558.** A client with acute myelocytic leukemia is being treated with busulfan (Myleran, Busulfex). Which laboratory value would the nurse specifically monitor during treatment with this medication?

1. Clotting time

2. Uric acid level
3. Potassium level
4. Blood glucose level

**559.** A client with small cell lung cancer is being treated with etoposide (Toposar).

The nurse monitors the client during administration, knowing that which adverse effect is specifically associated with this medication?

1. Alopecia
2. Chest pain
3. Pulmonary fibrosis
4. Orthostatic hypotension

**560.** A clinic nurse prepares a teaching plan for a client receiving an antineoplastic medication. When implementing the plan, the nurse should make which statement to the client?

1. "You can take aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) as needed for headache."
2. "You can drink beverages containing alcohol in moderate amounts each evening."
3. "You need to consult with the health care provider (HCP) before receiving immunizations."
4. "It is fine to receive a flu vaccine at the local health fair without HCP approval because the flu is so contagious."

**561.** A client with ovarian cancer is being treated with vincristine (Vincasar). The

nurse monitors the client, knowing that which manifestation indicates an adverse effect specific to this medication?

1. Diarrhea
2. Hair loss
3. Chest pain
4. Peripheral neuropathy

**562.** The nurse is reviewing the history and physical examination of a client who will be receiving asparaginase (Elspar), an antineoplastic agent. The nurse contacts the health care provider before administering the medication if which disorder is documented in the client's history?

1. Pancreatitis
2. Diabetes mellitus
3. Myocardial infarction
4. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

**563.** Tamoxifen citrate is prescribed for a client with metastatic breast carcinoma. The nurse administering the medication understands that which is the **primary** action of this medication?

1. It increases DNA and RNA synthesis.
2. It promotes the biosynthesis of nucleic acids.
3. It increases estrogen concentration and estrogen response.
4. It competitively binds to estrogen receptors on tumors and other tissue targets.

**564.** A client with metastatic breast cancer is receiving tamoxifen. The nurse specifically monitors which laboratory value while the client is taking this medication?

1. Glucose level
2. Calcium level
3. Potassium level
4. Prothrombin time

**565.** Megestrol acetate (Megace), an antineoplastic medication, is prescribed for a client with metastatic endometrial carcinoma. The nurse reviews the client's history and should contact the health care provider if which diagnosis is documented in the client's history?

1. Gout
2. Asthma
3. Thrombophlebitis
4. Myocardial infarction

**566.** The nurse is monitoring the intravenous (IV) infusion of an antineoplastic medication. During the infusion, the client complains of pain at the insertion site. On inspection of the site, the nurse notes redness and swelling and that the infusion of the medication has slowed in rate. The nurse suspects extravasation and should take which actions? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Stop the infusion.

2. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
3. Prepare to apply ice or heat to the site.
4. Restart the IV at a distal part of the same vein.
5. Prepare to administer a prescribed antidote into the site.
6. Increase the flow rate of the solution to flush the skin and subcutaneous tissue.

**567.** The nurse is analyzing the laboratory results of a client with leukemia who has received a regimen of chemotherapy. Which laboratory value would the nurse specifically note as a result of the massive cell destruction that occurred from the chemotherapy?

1. Anemia
2. Decreased platelets
3. Increased uric acid level
4. Decreased leukocyte count

**568.** The nurse is providing medication instructions to a client with breast cancer who is receiving cyclophosphamide. The nurse should tell the client to take which action?

1. Take the medication with food.
2. Increase fluid intake to 2000 to 3000 mL daily.
3. Decrease sodium intake while taking the medication.
4. Increase potassium intake while taking the medication.

**569.** A client with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is receiving daunorubicin (DaunoXome).

Which finding would indicate to the nurse that the client is experiencing an adverse effect related to the medication?

1. Fever
2. Sores in the mouth and throat
3. Complaints of nausea and vomiting
4. Crackles on auscultation of the lungs

**570.** The nurse is monitoring the laboratory results of a client receiving an antineoplastic medication by the intravenous route. The nurse plans to initiate bleeding precautions if which laboratory result is noted?

1. A clotting time of 10 minutes
2. An ammonia level of 20 mcg/dL
3. A platelet count of 50,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>
4. A white blood cell count of 5000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

## ANSWERS

**556. 4**

**Rationale:** To ensure that the client receives optimal doses of chemotherapy, dosing is usually based on the total body surface area (BSA), which requires a current accurate height and weight for BSA calculation (before each medication administration). Asking the client about his or her height and weight may lead to inaccuracies in determining a true BSA and dosage. Calculating body mass index and measuring abdominal girth will not provide the data needed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Recall the basis for dosing chemotherapy. Recalling that a current accurate height and weight need to be obtained for BSA calculation and chemotherapy dosing will direct you to the correct option. Eliminate option 3 because it is an unreliable way of obtaining the information. Next, eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are **comparable or alike** and do not relate to chemotherapy dosing.

**Review:** **Body surface area** and **chemotherapy** dosing

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 58, 100.

**557. 4**

**Rationale:** Bleomycin is an antineoplastic medication that can cause interstitial pneumonitis, which can progress to pulmonary fibrosis. Pulmonary function studies along with hematological, hepatic, and renal function tests need to be monitored. The nurse needs to monitor lung sounds for dyspnea and crackles, which indicate pulmonary toxicity. The medication needs to be discontinued immediately if pulmonary toxicity occurs. Options 1, 2, and 3 are unrelated to the specific use of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are cardiac-related and are therefore **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Bleomycin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 210.

**558. 2**

**Rationale:** Busulfan (Myleran, Busulfex) can cause an increase in the uric acid level. Hyperuricemia can produce uric acid nephropathy, renal stones, and acute kidney injury. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not specifically related to this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a specific laboratory value. It is necessary to know the adverse effects associated with this medication. Recalling that busulfan increases the uric acid level will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **busulfan**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 525; Lehne (2013), p. 1277.

**559. 4**

**Rationale:** An adverse effect specific to etoposide is orthostatic hypotension. Etoposide should be administered slowly over 30 to 60 minutes to avoid hypotension. The client's blood pressure is monitored during the infusion. Hair loss occurs with nearly all the antineoplastic medications. Chest pain and pulmonary fibrosis are unrelated to this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate option 1 first because this adverse effect is associated with many of the antineoplastic agents. Eliminate options 2 and 3 next because they are **comparable or alike** and are unrelated to etoposide. Note that the question asks for the adverse effect *specific* to this medication. Correlate hypotension with etoposide.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **etoposide**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 584.

### 560. 3

**Rationale:** Because antineoplastic medications lower the resistance of the body, clients must be informed not to receive immunizations without an HCP's approval. Clients also need to avoid contact with individuals who have recently received a live virus vaccine. Clients need to avoid aspirin and aspirin-containing products to minimize the risk of bleeding, and they need to avoid alcohol to minimize the risk of toxicity and side/adverse effects.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client teaching about an antineoplastic medication, and think about the side/adverse effects of antineoplastic medications. Recalling that antineoplastic medications lower the resistance

of the body will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Client teaching points regarding **antineoplastic medications**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Client Education

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 508.

#### 561. 4

**Rationale:** An adverse effect specific to vincristine is peripheral neuropathy, which occurs in almost every client.

Peripheral neuropathy can be manifested as numbness and tingling in the fingers and toes. Depression of the

Achilles tendon reflex may be the first clinical sign indicating peripheral neuropathy. Constipation rather than

diarrhea is most likely to occur with this medication, although diarrhea may occur occasionally. Hair loss occurs

with nearly all the antineoplastic medications. Chest pain is unrelated to this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike** and are side/adverse

effects associated with many of the antineoplastic agents. Note that the question asks for the adverse effect

*specific* to this medication. Correlate peripheral neuropathy with vincristine.

**Review:** Side/adverse effects of **vincristine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), p. 1208.

**562. 1**

**Rationale:** Asparaginase (Elspar) is contraindicated if hypersensitivity exists, in pancreatitis, or if the client has a history of pancreatitis. The medication impairs pancreatic function and pancreatic function tests should be performed before therapy begins and when a week or more has elapsed between dose administrations. The client needs to be monitored for signs of pancreatitis, which include nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. The conditions noted in options 2, 3, and 4 are not contraindicated with this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a contraindication of asparaginase (Elspar). It is necessary to know the contraindications associated with this medication. Recalling that this medication affects pancreatic function will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Asparaginase (Elspar)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), p. 85.

**563. 4**

**Rationale:** Tamoxifen is an antineoplastic medication that competes with estradiol for binding to estrogen in tissues

containing high concentrations of receptors. Tamoxifen is used to treat metastatic breast carcinoma in women and men. Tamoxifen is also effective in delaying the recurrence of cancer following mastectomy. Tamoxifen reduces DNA synthesis and estrogen response.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *primary*. Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike**: nucleic acids include DNA and RNA. From this point, select the correct option, because it is unlikely that treatment of metastatic breast carcinoma would focus on increasing estrogen concentration and estrogen response.

**Review:** **Tamoxifen**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), p. 1094.

**564. 2**

**Rationale:** Tamoxifen may increase calcium, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels. Before the initiation of therapy, a complete blood count, platelet count, and serum calcium level should be assessed. These blood levels, along with cholesterol and triglyceride levels, should be monitored periodically during therapy. The nurse should assess for hypercalcemia while the client is taking this medication. Signs of hypercalcemia include increased urine volume, excessive thirst, nausea, vomiting, constipation, hypotonicity of muscles, and deep bone and flank pain.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the laboratory value to monitor for tamoxifen. Think about the action of this medication. Recalling that this medication causes hypercalcemia will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Tamoxifen**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), pp. 1094-1095.

**565. 3**

**Rationale:** Megestrol acetate (Megace) suppresses the release of luteinizing hormone from the anterior pituitary by inhibiting pituitary function and regressing tumor size. Megestrol is used with caution if the client has a history of thrombophlebitis. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not contraindications for this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a contraindication to megestrol acetate. It is necessary to know the adverse effects associated with this medication. Recalling that megestrol acetate is a hormonal antagonist enzyme and that an adverse effect is thrombotic disorders will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Megestrol acetate (Megace)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), p. 726.

❖ 566. 1, 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** Redness and swelling and a slowed infusion indicate signs of extravasation. If the nurse suspects extravasation during the intravenous administration of an antineoplastic medication, the infusion is stopped and the HCP is notified. Ice or heat may be prescribed for application to the site and an antidote may be prescribed to be administered into the site. Increasing the flow rate can increase damage to the tissues. Restarting an IV in the same vein can increase damage to the site and vein.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the assessment signs in the question and the words, *suspects extravasation*.

Visualize the situation to identify the nursing actions. Think about the actions that will cause further damage. Note that options 4 and 6 are **comparable or alike** and can cause further damage.

**Review:** Nursing actions to take if **extravasation** occurs

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 417-418.

567. 3

**Rationale:** Hyperuricemia is especially common following treatment for leukemias and lymphomas because chemotherapy results in massive cell kill. Although options 1, 2, and 4 also may be noted, an increased uric acid level is related specifically to cell destruction.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the laboratory value that reflects massive cell destruction.

Remember that uric acid is released when cells are destroyed. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The effects of **chemotherapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 525; Lehne (2013), p. 1177.

**568. 2**

**Rationale:** Hemorrhagic cystitis is an adverse effect that can occur with the use of cyclophosphamide. The client needs to be instructed to drink copious amounts of fluid during the administration of this medication. Clients also should monitor urine output for hematuria. The medication should be taken on an empty stomach, unless gastrointestinal upset occurs. Hyperkalemia can result from the use of the medication; therefore, the client would not be told to increase potassium intake. The client would not be instructed to alter sodium intake.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, adverse effects of cyclophosphamide. Recalling that cyclophosphamide can cause hemorrhagic cystitis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adverse effects associated with **cyclophosphamide**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Client Education

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2012), p. 289.

**569. 4**

**Rationale:** Cardiotoxicity noted by abnormal electrocardiographic findings or cardiomyopathy manifested as heart failure (lung crackles) is an adverse effect of daunorubicin. Bone marrow depression is also an adverse effect. Fever is a frequent side effect and sores in the mouth and throat can occur occasionally. Nausea and vomiting is a frequent side effect associated with the medication that begins a few hours after administration and lasts 24 to 48 hours. Options 1, 2, and 3 are not adverse effects.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Keep in mind that the question is asking about an adverse effect. Use of the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **daunorubicin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Oncology Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 1282.

**570. 3**

**Rationale:** Bleeding precautions need to be initiated when the platelet count decreases. The normal platelet count is 150,000 to 450,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. When the platelet count decreases, the client is at risk for bleeding. The normal white blood cell count is 4500 to 11,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. When the white blood cell count drops, neutropenic precautions need to be implemented. The normal clotting time is 8 to 15 minutes. The normal ammonia value is 10 to 80 mcg/dL.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge regarding normal laboratory values. Options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and identify normal laboratory values. Remember to correlate a low platelet count with the need for bleeding precautions and a low white blood cell count with the need for neutropenic precautions.

**Review:** Indications to implement **bleeding precautions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Safety

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 422; Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 525.

# UNIT X



## Endocrine Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**addisonian crisis** A life-threatening disorder caused by adrenal hormone insufficiency.

Crisis is precipitated by infection, trauma, stress, or surgery. Death can occur from shock, vascular collapse, or hyperkalemia.

**Addison's disease** Hyposecretion of adrenal cortex hormones (glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids) from the adrenal gland, resulting in deficiency of the corticosteroid hormones. The condition is fatal if left untreated.

**adrenalectomy** The surgical removal of an adrenal gland. Lifelong replacement of glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids is necessary with a bilateral adrenalectomy. Temporary replacement may be necessary for up to 2 years for a unilateral adrenalectomy.

**Chvostek's sign** A sign of hypocalcemia. A spasm of the facial muscles elicited by

tapping the facial nerve just anterior to the ear.

**Cushing's disease** A metabolic disorder characterized by abnormally increased secretion (endogenous) of cortisol, caused by increased amounts of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) secreted by the pituitary gland.

**Cushing's syndrome** A metabolic disorder resulting from the chronic and excessive production of cortisol by the adrenal cortex or by the administration of glucocorticoids in large doses for several weeks or longer (exogenous or iatrogenic).

**dawn phenomenon** A nocturnal release of growth hormone, which may cause blood glucose level elevations before breakfast in the client with diabetes mellitus. Treatment includes administering an evening dose of intermediate-acting insulin at 10 PM.

**diabetes insipidus** The hyposecretion of antidiuretic hormone from the posterior pituitary gland, resulting in failure of tubular reabsorption of water in the kidneys and diuresis.

**diabetes mellitus** A chronic disorder of glucose intolerance and impaired carbohydrate, protein, and lipid metabolism caused by a deficiency of insulin or resistance to the action of insulin. A deficiency of effective insulin results in hyperglycemia.

**diabetic ketoacidosis** A life-threatening complication of diabetes mellitus that develops when a severe insulin deficiency occurs. Hyperglycemia progresses to ketoacidosis over a period of several hours to several days. Acidosis occurs in clients with type 1 diabetes mellitus, persons with undiagnosed diabetes, and persons

who stop prescribed treatment for diabetes.

**hyperglycemia** Elevated blood glucose as a result of too little insulin or the inability of the body to use insulin properly.

**hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome (HHNS)** Extreme hyperglycemia without acidosis. A complication of type 2 diabetes mellitus, which may result in dehydration or vascular collapse but does not include the acidosis component of diabetic ketoacidosis. Onset is usually slow, taking from hours to days.

**hyperthyroidism** A condition that occurs as a result of excessive thyroid hormone secretion.

**hypoglycemia** Low blood glucose level that results from too much insulin, not enough food, or excess activity.

**hypothyroidism** A hypothyroid state resulting from a hyosecretion of thyroid hormone.

**myxedema coma** A rare but serious disorder that results from persistently low thyroid production. Coma can be precipitated by acute illness, rapid withdrawal of thyroid medication, anesthesia and surgery, hypothermia, and the use of sedatives and opioid analgesics.

**Somogyi phenomenon** A rebound phenomenon that occurs in clients with type 1 diabetes mellitus. Normal or elevated blood glucose levels are present at bedtime; hypoglycemia occurs at about 2 to 3 AM. Counterregulatory hormones, produced to prevent further hypoglycemia, result in hyperglycemia (evident in the prebreakfast blood glucose level). Treatment includes decreasing the evening (predinner or bedtime) dose of intermediate-acting insulin or increasing the bedtime snack.

**thyroidectomy** Surgical removal of the thyroid gland to treat persistent hyperthyroidism or thyroid tumors.

**thyroid storm** An acute, potentially fatal exacerbation of hyperthyroidism that may result from manipulation of the thyroid gland during surgery, severe infection, or stress.

**Trousseau's sign** A sign of hypocalcemia. Carpal spasm can be elicited by compressing the brachial artery with a blood pressure cuff for 3 minutes.

## Pyramid to Success

The endocrine system is made up of organs or glands that secrete hormones and release them directly into the circulation. The endocrine system can be understood easily if you remember that basically one of two situations can occur—hypersecretion or hyposecretion of hormones from the organ or gland. When an excess of the hormone occurs, treatment is aimed at blocking the hormone release through medication or surgery. When a deficit of the hormone exists, treatment is aimed at replacement therapy. Pyramid Points focus on diabetes mellitus, including its prevention, the prevention and treatment of complications, insulin therapy, hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic reactions, and diabetic ketoacidosis; Addison's disease and Addisonian crisis; Cushing's disease or Cushing's syndrome; thyroid disorders and thyroid storm; and care of the client after thyroidectomy or adrenalectomy.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Acting as a client advocate

Collaborating with multidisciplinary team and appropriate care providers regarding treatment

Establishing priorities of care

Handling hazardous and infectious materials

Obtaining informed consent for treatments and procedures

Maintaining confidentiality related to the disorder

Preventing accidents and client injury

Using medical and surgical asepsis to prevent infection

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing expected body image changes

Identifying lifestyle choices related to treatment

Performing physical assessment of the endocrine system

Preventing disease

Providing health screening

Teaching about self-care measures

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

Discussing grief and loss issues related to complications of the disorder

Discussing situational role changes related to the disorder

Discussing unexpected body image changes

Identifying coping mechanisms

Monitoring for sensory and perceptual alterations as a result of the disorder

Using support systems

## **Physiological Integrity**

Monitoring for alterations in body systems as a result of the disorder

Monitoring for complications from surgical procedures and health alterations

Monitoring for complications of diagnostic tests, treatments, procedures

Monitoring for expected outcomes and effects of pharmacological therapy

Monitoring for fluid and electrolyte imbalances that can occur

Monitoring for unexpected response to therapies

Monitoring laboratory values

Preparing the client for diagnostic tests

Providing emergency care to the client

Providing nonpharmacological comfort interventions

Providing nutrition and oral hydration measures



## CHAPTER 54

# Endocrine System

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse suspects that a client with pheochromocytoma is developing hypertensive crisis. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 657.*

## I. Anatomy and Physiology of Endocrine Glands (Box 54-1)

### **BOX 54-1** Endocrine Glands

- Adrenal
- Hypothalamus
- Ovaries
- Pancreas
- Parathyroid
- Pituitary

- Testes
- Thyroid

## A. Functions

1. Maintenance and regulation of vital functions
2. Response to stress and injury
3. Growth and development
4. Energy metabolism
5. Reproduction
6. Fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base balance

## B. Risk factors for endocrine disorders ([Box 54-2](#))

### **BOX 54-2** Risk Factors for Endocrine Disorders

- Age
- Heredity
- Congenital factors
- Trauma
- Environmental factors
- Consequence of other disorders

## C. Hypothalamus ([Box 54-3](#))

### **BOX 54-3** Hypothalamus Hormones

- Corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH)
- Gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH)
- Growth hormone–inhibiting hormone (GHIH)
- Growth hormone–releasing hormone (GHRH)
- Melanocyte-inhibiting hormone (MIH)
- Prolactin-inhibiting hormone (PIH)
- Thyrotropin-releasing hormone (TRH)

1. Portion of the diencephalon of the brain, forming the floor and part of the lateral wall of the third ventricle
2. Activates, controls, and integrates the peripheral autonomic nervous system, endocrine processes, and many somatic functions, such as body temperature, sleep, and appetite

**D. Pituitary gland** (Box 54-4; Fig. 54-1)

**BOX 54-4 Pituitary Gland Hormones**

**Anterior Lobe Production**

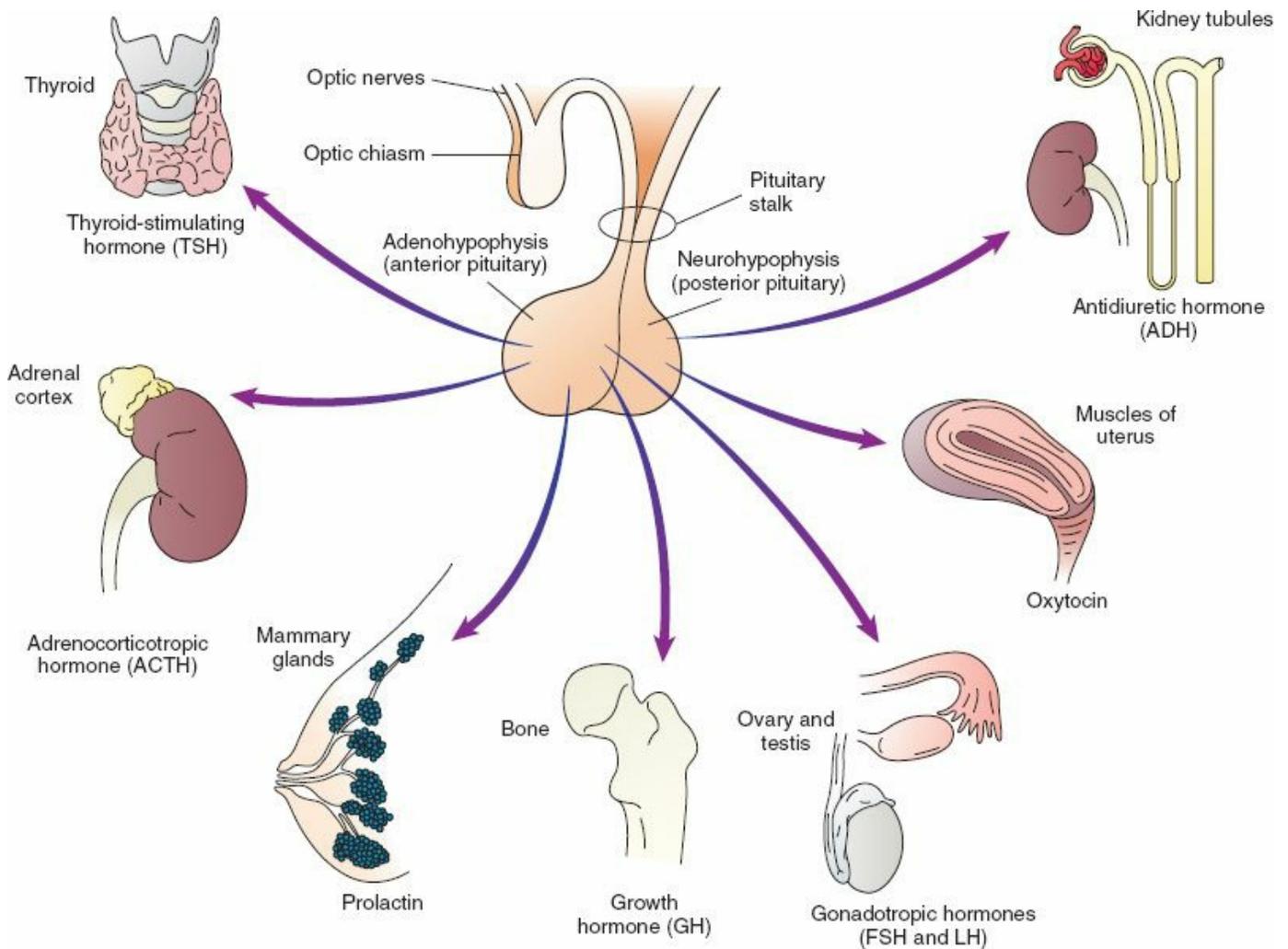
- Adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH)
- Follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH)
- Growth hormone (GH)
- Luteinizing hormone (LH)

- Melanocyte-stimulating hormone (MSH)
- Prolactin (PRL)
- Somatotropic growth-stimulating hormone
- Thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH)

### **Posterior Lobe**

These hormones are produced by the hypothalamus, stored in the posterior lobe, and secreted into the blood when needed:

- Oxytocin
- Vasopressin, antidiuretic hormone (ADH)



**FIGURE 54-1** Pituitary hormones. *FSH*, Follicle-stimulating hormone; *LH*, luteinizing hormone. (From Lilley L, Harrington S, Snyder J: *Pharmacology and the nursing process*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2008, Mosby.)

1. The master gland; located at the base of the brain
2. Influenced by the hypothalamus; directly affects the function of the other endocrine glands
3. Promotes growth of body tissue, influences water absorption by the kidney, and controls sexual development and function

## E. Adrenal gland

1. One adrenal gland is on top of each kidney.
2. Regulates sodium and electrolyte balance; affects carbohydrate, fat, and protein metabolism; influences the development of sexual characteristics; and sustains the fight-or-flight response
3. Adrenal cortex
  - a. The cortex is the outer shell of the adrenal gland.
  - b. The cortex synthesizes glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids and secretes small amounts of sex hormones (androgens, estrogens; [Box 54-5](#)).

#### **BOX 54-5** Adrenal Cortex

##### **Glucocorticoids: Cortisol, Cortisone, Corticosterone**

- Responsible for glucose metabolism, protein metabolism, fluid and electrolyte balance, suppression of the inflammatory response to injury, protective immune response to invasion by infectious agents, and resistance to stress

##### **Mineralocorticoids: Aldosterone**

- Regulation of electrolyte balance by promoting sodium retention and potassium excretion

4. Adrenal medulla
  - a. The medulla is the inner core of the adrenal gland.
  - b. The medulla works as part of the sympathetic nervous system and produces epinephrine and norepinephrine.

## **F. Thyroid gland**

1. Located in the anterior part of the neck
2. Controls the rate of body metabolism and growth and produces thyroxine ( $T_4$ ), triiodothyronine ( $T_3$ ), and thyrocalcitonin

## **G. Parathyroid glands**

1. Located on the thyroid gland
2. Control calcium and phosphorus metabolism; produce parathyroid hormone

## **H. Pancreas**

1. Located posteriorly to the stomach
2. Influences carbohydrate metabolism, indirectly influences fat and protein metabolism, and produces insulin and glucagon

## **I. Ovaries and testes**

1. The ovaries are located in the pelvic cavity and produce estrogen and progesterone.
2. The testes are located in the scrotum, control the development of the secondary sex characteristics, and produce testosterone.

## **J. Negative-feedback loop**

1. Regulates hormone secretion by the hypothalamus and pituitary gland
2. Increased amounts of target gland hormones in the bloodstream decrease secretion of the same hormone and other hormones that stimulate its release.

## **II. Diagnostic Tests**

## **A. Stimulation and suppression tests**

### **1. Stimulation testing**

- a.** In the client with suspected underactivity of an endocrine gland, a stimulus may be provided to determine whether the gland is capable of normal hormone production.
- b.** Measured amounts of selected hormones or substances are administered to stimulate the target gland to produce its hormone.
- c.** Hormone levels produced by the target gland are measured.
- d.** Failure of the hormone level to increase with stimulation indicates hypofunction.

### **2. Suppression tests**

- a.** Suppression tests are used when hormone levels are high or in the upper range of normal.
- b.** Agents that normally induce a suppressed response are administered to determine whether normal negative feedback is intact.
- c.** Failure of hormone production to be suppressed during standardized testing indicates hyperfunction.

## **B. Radioactive iodine uptake**

- 1.** This thyroid function test measures the absorption of an iodine isotope to determine how the thyroid gland is functioning.
- 2.** A small dose of radioactive iodine is given by mouth or intravenously; the amount of radioactivity is measured in 2 to 4 hours and again at 24 hours.

3. Normal values are 3% to 10% at 2 to 4 hours, and 5% to 30% in 24 hours.
4. Elevated values indicate **hyperthyroidism**, decreased iodine intake, or increased iodine excretion.
5. Decreased values indicate a low  $T_4$  level, the use of antithyroid medications, thyroiditis, myxedema, or **hypothyroidism**.
6. The test is contraindicated in pregnancy.

**C.  $T_3$  and  $T_4$  resin uptake test ▲**

1. Blood tests are used to diagnose thyroid disorders.
2.  $T_3$  and  $T_4$  regulate thyroid-stimulating hormone.
3. Normal values (normal findings vary between laboratory settings)
  - a.  $T_3$ : 80 to 230 ng/dL
  - b.  $T_4$ : 5 to 12 mcg/dL
  - c. Thyroxine, free ( $FT_4$ ): 0.8 to 2.4 ng/dL
4. The  $T_3$  level is elevated in hyperthyroidism, decreases with the aging process, and may be decreased in hypothyroidism.
5. The  $T_4$  level is elevated in hyperthyroidism and decreased in hypothyroidism.

**D. Thyroid-stimulating hormone ▲**

1. Blood test is used to differentiate the diagnosis of primary hypothyroidism.
2. Normal value is 0.2 to 5.4 microunits/mL (normal findings vary among laboratories).
3. Elevated values indicate primary hypothyroidism.
4. Decreased values indicate hyperthyroidism or secondary hypothyroidism.

## E. Thyroid scan

1. A thyroid scan is performed to identify nodules or growths in the thyroid gland.
2. A radioisotope of iodine or technetium is administered before scanning the thyroid gland.
3. Reassure the client that the level of radioactive medication is not dangerous to self or others. ▲
4. Determine whether the client has received radiographic contrast agents within the past 3 months, because these may invalidate the scan.
5. Check with the health care provider (HCP) regarding discontinuing medications containing iodine for 14 days before the test and the need to discontinue thyroid medication before the test. ▲
6. Instruct the client to maintain NPO status after midnight on the day before the test; if iodine is used, the client will fast for an additional 45 minutes after ingestion of the oral isotope and the scan will be performed in 24 hours.
7. If technetium is used, it is administered by the intravenous (IV) route 30 minutes before the scan.
8. The test is contraindicated in pregnancy. ▲

## F. Needle aspiration of thyroid tissue

1. Aspiration of thyroid tissue is done for cytological examination.
2. No client preparation is necessary.
3. Light pressure is applied to the aspiration site after the procedure.

## G. Glucose tolerance test

1. The glucose tolerance test aids in the diagnosis of **diabetes mellitus**.
2. A 2-hour postload glucose level (2 hours after injection or ingestion of glucose) higher than 200 mg/dL confirms the diagnosis of diabetes mellitus.
3. Client preparation (**Box 54-6**)

#### **BOX 54-6** Client Preparation: Glucose Tolerance Test

Eat a diet with at least 150 g of carbohydrates for 3 days before the test.

Avoid alcohol, coffee, and smoking for 36 hours before testing.

Fast for 10 to 12 hours before the test.

Avoid strenuous exercise for 8 hours before and after the test.

Withhold morning insulin or oral hypoglycemic medication (client with diabetes mellitus).

A sample is drawn for determination of the fasting blood glucose level and then the client will be given a high-glucose drink.

Blood samples will be drawn at 30-minute intervals for a minimum of 2 hours.

4. Many factors can alter the results and therefore it is not always a reliable test.

#### **H. Glycosylated hemoglobin** ▲

##### **1. Description**

- a. Glycosylated hemoglobin is blood glucose bound to hemoglobin.
- b. Glycosylated hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> (HbA<sub>1c</sub>) indicates how well blood glucose levels have been controlled for the prior 3 to 4 months.

**!** Hyperglycemia in a client with diabetes mellitus is usually the cause of an increase in the HbA<sub>1c</sub> value.

## 2. Values

- a. Values are expressed as a percentage of the total hemoglobin.
- b. The goal for clients with diabetes mellitus is 7% or lower.
- c. For clients without diabetes mellitus, the normal range is 4% to 6%.

3. Nursing consideration: Fasting is not required.

### III. Pituitary Gland Disorders (Box 54-7)

#### BOX 54-7 Pituitary Gland Disorders

##### Anterior Pituitary

- Hyperpituitarism
- Hypopituitarism

##### Posterior Pituitary

These disorders can be caused by damage to the posterior pituitary or hypothalamus:

- Diabetes insipidus
- Syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion (SIADH)

#### A. Hypopituitarism

1. Description: Hyposecretion of one or more of the pituitary hormones caused by tumors, trauma, encephalitis, autoimmunity, or stroke

2. Hormones most often affected are growth hormone (GH) and gonadotropic hormones (luteinizing hormone, follicle-stimulating hormone), but thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), or antidiuretic hormone (ADH) may be involved.

3. Assessment ▲

- a. Mild to moderate obesity (GH, TSH)
- b. Reduced cardiac output (GH, ADH)
- c. Infertility, sexual dysfunction (gonadotropins, ACTH)
- d. Fatigue, low blood pressure (TSH, ADH, ACTH, GH)
- e. Tumors of the pituitary also may cause headaches and visual defects (pituitary is located near the optic nerve).

4. Interventions ▲

- a. Provide emotional support to the client and family.
- b. Encourage the client and family to express feelings related to disturbed body image or sexual dysfunction.
- c. Client may need hormone replacement for the specific deficient hormones.
- d. Client education is needed regarding the signs and symptoms of hypofunction and hyperfunction related to insufficient or excess hormone replacement

**B. Hyperpituitarism**

1. Description

- a. Hypersecretion of growth hormone by the anterior pituitary gland in an adult; caused primarily by pituitary tumors

b. Leads to conditions such as acromegaly and **Cushing's disease**

## 2. Assessment ▲

- a. Large hands and feet
- b. Thickening and protrusion of the jaw
- c. Arthritic changes and joint pain
- d. Visual disturbances
- e. Diaphoresis
- f. Oily, rough skin
- g. Organomegaly
- h. Hypertension
- i. Dysphagia
- j. Deepening of the voice

## 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Provide emotional support to the client and family, and encourage the client and family to express feelings related to disturbed body image.
- b. Provide frequent skin care.
- c. Provide pharmacological and nonpharmacological interventions for joint pain.
- d. Prepare the client for radiation of the pituitary gland if prescribed.
- e. Prepare the client for hypophysectomy if planned.

## C. Hypophysectomy (pituitary adenectomy, transsphenoidal pituitary surgery)

### 1. Description

- a. Removal of a pituitary tumor via craniotomy or a transsphenoidal (endoscopic

transnasal) approach (latter approach is preferred because it is associated with fewer complications)

- b.** Complications for craniotomy include increased intracranial pressure, bleeding, meningitis, and hypopituitarism.
- c.** Complications for the transsphenoidal surgery include cerebrospinal fluid leak, infection, and hypopituitarism. ▲

## 2. Postoperative interventions ▲

- a.** Initial postoperative care is similar to craniotomy care.
- b.** Monitor vital signs, neurological status, and level of consciousness.
- c.** Elevate the head of the bed.
- d.** Monitor for increased intracranial pressure.
- e.** Monitor for bleeding.
- f.** Instruct the client to avoid sneezing, coughing, and blowing the nose.
- g.** Monitor for signs of temporary **diabetes insipidus** or syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion resulting from ADH disturbances.
- h.** Monitor intake and output, and avoid water intoxication.
- i.** Administer glucocorticoids and other hormone replacements as prescribed.
- j.** Administer antibiotics, analgesics, and antipyretics as prescribed.
- k.** Instruct the client in the administration of prescribed medications.
- l.** Administer oral mouth rinse as prescribed.
- m.** As prescribed, instruct the client to brush teeth gently with an ultrasoft toothbrush for at least 2 weeks following surgery.

([http://www.cc.nih.gov/ccc/patient\\_education/pepubs/transsphenoidal.pdf](http://www.cc.nih.gov/ccc/patient_education/pepubs/transsphenoidal.pdf)).

**⚠** Following transsphenoidal hypophysectomy, monitor for any postnasal drip or nasal drainage, which might indicate leakage of cerebrospinal fluid (check the nasal drainage for glucose).

## **D. Diabetes insipidus**

### **1. Description** ▲

- a. Hyposecretion of ADH caused by stroke or trauma, or may be idiopathic
- b. Kidney tubules fail to reabsorb water.

### **2. Assessment** ▲

- a. Excretion of large amounts of dilute urine
- b. Polydipsia
- c. Dehydration (decreased skin turgor and dry mucous membranes)
- d. Inability to concentrate urine
- e. Low urinary specific gravity, 1.006 or lower
- f. Fatigue
- g. Muscle pain and weakness
- h. Headache
- i. Postural hypotension that may progress to vascular collapse without rehydration
- j. Tachycardia

### **3. Interventions** ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs and neurological and cardiovascular status.
- b. Provide a safe environment, particularly for the client with postural

hypotension.

- c. Monitor electrolyte values and for signs of dehydration.
- d. Maintain client intake of adequate fluids.
- e. Monitor intake and output, weight, serum osmolality, and specific gravity of urine.
- f. Instruct the client to avoid foods or liquids that produce diuresis.
- g. Vasopressin tannate (Pitressin) or desmopressin acetate (DDAVP, Stimate, Minirin) may be prescribed; these are used when the ADH deficiency is severe or chronic.
- h. Instruct the client in the administration of medications as prescribed; DDAVP may be administered by injection, intranasally, or orally.
- i. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## E. Syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion (SIADH)

### 1. Description

- a. Excess ADH is released, but not in response to the body's need for it.
- b. Causes include trauma, stroke, malignancies (often in the lungs or pancreas), medications, and stress.
- c. The syndrome results in water intoxication and hyponatremia. ▲

### 2. Assessment ▲

- a. Signs of fluid volume overload
- b. Changes in level of consciousness and mental status changes
- c. Weight gain

- d. Hypertension
- e. Tachycardia
- f. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
- g. Hyponatremia

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs and cardiac and neurological status.
- b. Provide a safe environment, particularly for the client with changes in level of consciousness or mental status.
- c. Monitor intake and output and obtain weight daily.
- d. Monitor fluid and electrolyte balance.
- e. Monitor serum and urine osmolality.
- f. Restrict fluid intake as prescribed.
- g. Administer diuretics and IV fluids (usually normal saline or hypertonic saline) as prescribed; monitor IV fluids carefully because of the risk for fluid volume overload (IV solutions containing water are contraindicated because of the risk of water intoxication).
- h. Medications that inhibit ADH-induced water reabsorption and produce water diuresis may be prescribed.

## IV. Adrenal Gland Disorders (Box 54-8)

**BOX 54-8**

**Adrenal Gland Disorders**

## Adrenal Cortex

- Addison's disease
- Primary hyperaldosteronism (Conn's syndrome)
- Cushing's disease
- Cushing's syndrome

## Adrenal Medulla

- Pheochromocytoma

### A. Addison's disease

#### 1. Description

- Hyposecretion of adrenal cortex hormones (glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids)
- Can be primary or secondary
- The condition is fatal if left untreated.

#### 2. Assessment (Table 54-1) ▲

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**TABLE 54-1 Assessment: Addison's Disease and Cushing's Disease (Cushing's Syndrome)**

Addison's Disease	Cushing's Disease and Syndrome
Lethargy, fatigue, and muscle weakness	Generalized muscle wasting and weakness
Gastrointestinal disturbances	Moon face, buffalo hump
Weight loss	Truncal obesity with thin extremities, supraclavicular fat pads; weight gain
Menstrual changes in women; impotence in men	Hirsutism (masculine characteristics in females)

Hypoglycemia, hyponatremia	Hyperglycemia, hypernatremia
Hyperkalemia, hypercalcemia	Hypokalemia, hypocalcemia
Hypotension	Hypertension
Hyperpigmentation of skin (bronzed) with primary disease	Fragile skin that easily bruises Reddish-purple striae on the abdomen and upper thighs

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs, particularly blood pressure, weight, and intake and output.
- b. Monitor white blood cell (WBC) count; blood glucose; and potassium, sodium, and calcium levels.
- c. Administer glucocorticoid or mineralocorticoid medications as prescribed.
- d. Observe for **addisonian crisis** caused by stress, infection, trauma, or surgery.

### 4. Client education ▲

- a. Avoid individuals with an infection.
- b. Diet: High protein and high carbohydrate, normal sodium intake
- c. Avoid strenuous exercise and stressful situations.
- d. Need for lifelong glucocorticoid therapy
- e. Avoid over-the-counter medications.
- f. Wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.
- g. Signs and symptoms of complications such as underreplacement and overreplacement of hormones

## B. Addisonian crisis

### 1. Description (Box 54-9)

**BOX 54-9**

**Addisonian Crisis**

- A life-threatening disorder caused by acute adrenal insufficiency
- Precipitated by stress, infection, trauma, surgery, or abrupt withdrawal of exogenous corticosteroid use
- Can cause hyponatremia, hyperkalemia, hypoglycemia, and shock

## 2. Assessment

- a. Severe headache
- b. Severe abdominal, leg, and lower back pain
- c. Generalized weakness
- d. Irritability and confusion
- e. Severe hypotension
- f. Shock

## 3. Interventions

- a. Prepare to administer glucocorticoids intravenously as prescribed; intravenous hydrocortisone sodium succinate usually is prescribed initially.
- b. Following resolution of the crisis, administer glucocorticoid and mineralocorticoid orally as prescribed.
- c. Monitor vital signs, particularly blood pressure.
- d. Monitor neurological status, noting irritability and confusion.
- e. Monitor intake and output.
- f. Monitor laboratory values, particularly the sodium, potassium, and blood glucose levels.

- g. Administer IV fluids as prescribed to restore electrolyte balance.
- h. Protect the client from infection.
- i. Maintain bed rest and provide a quiet environment.

 Addison's disease is characterized by the hyposecretion of adrenal cortex hormones (glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids), whereas Cushing's disease is characterized by a hypersecretion of glucocorticoids.

## C. **Cushing's disease** and **Cushing's syndrome** (hypercortisolism)

### 1. Description

- a. Characterized by a hypersecretion of glucocorticoids from the adrenal cortex
- b. Cushing's disease is a metabolic disorder characterized by abnormally increased secretion (endogenous) of cortisol, caused by increased amounts of ACTH secreted by the pituitary gland.
- c. Cushing's syndrome is a metabolic disorder resulting from the chronic and excessive production of cortisol by the adrenal cortex or by the administration of glucocorticoids in large doses for several weeks or longer (exogenous or iatrogenic).

### 2. Assessment (Fig. 54-2; see Table 54-1)



**FIGURE 54-2** Typical appearance of a client with Cushing's syndrome. Note truncal obesity, moon face, buffalo hump, thinner arms and legs, and abdominal striae. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 6, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs, particularly blood pressure.
- b. Monitor intake and output and weight.
- c. Monitor laboratory values, particularly the white blood cell count, and serum glucose, sodium, potassium, and calcium levels.
- d. Provide meticulous skin care.
- e. Allow the client to discuss feelings related to body appearance.
- f. Administer chemotherapeutic agents as prescribed for inoperable adrenal tumors.
- g. Prepare the client for radiation as prescribed if the condition results from a pituitary adenoma.

- h.** Prepare the client for removal of pituitary tumor (hypophysectomy, transsphenoidal adenectomy) if the condition results from increased pituitary secretion of ACTH.
- i.** Prepare the client for **adrenalectomy** if the condition results from an adrenal adenoma; glucocorticoid replacement may be required following adrenalectomy.

#### **D. Primary hyperaldosteronism (Conn's syndrome)**

##### **1. Description**

- a.** Hypersecretion of mineralocorticoids (aldosterone) from the adrenal cortex of the adrenal gland
- b.** Most commonly caused by an adenoma

##### **2. Assessment**

- a.** Symptoms related to hypokalemia, hypernatremia, and hypertension
- b.** Headache, fatigue, muscle weakness, nocturia
- c.** Polydipsia and polyuria
- d.** Paresthesias
- e.** Visual changes
- f.** Low urine specific gravity and increased urinary aldosterone level
- g.** Elevated serum aldosterone levels

##### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Monitor vital signs, particularly blood pressure.
- b.** Monitor for signs of hypokalemia and hypernatremia.

- c. Monitor intake and output and urine for specific gravity.
- d. Spironolactone (Aldactone) may be prescribed to promote fluid balance and control hypertension; this is a potassium-sparing diuretic and aldosterone antagonist, and clients need to be monitored for hyperkalemia, particularly those with impaired renal function or excessive potassium intake.
- e. Administer potassium supplements as prescribed.
- f. Prepare the client for adrenalectomy.
- g. Maintain sodium restriction, if prescribed, preoperatively.
- h. Administer glucocorticoids preoperatively, as prescribed, to prevent adrenal hypofunction.
- i. Monitor the client for adrenal insufficiency postoperatively.
- j. Instruct the client regarding the need for glucocorticoid therapy following adrenalectomy.
- k. Instruct the client about the need to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## E. Pheochromocytoma

### 1. Description

- a. Catecholamine-producing tumor usually found in the adrenal medulla, but extraadrenal locations include the chest, bladder, abdomen, and brain; typically is a benign tumor but can be malignant
- b. Excessive amounts of epinephrine and norepinephrine are secreted.
- c. Diagnostic tests include a 24-hour urine collection for vanillylmandelic acid (VMA), a product of catecholamine metabolism, metanephrine, and

catecholamines, all of which are elevated in the presence of pheochromocytoma; the normal range of urinary catecholamines is up to 14 mcg/100 mL of urine, with higher levels occurring in pheochromocytoma.

- d. Surgical removal of the adrenal gland is the primary treatment.
- e. Symptomatic treatment is initiated if surgical removal is not possible.
- f. The complications associated with pheochromocytoma include hypertensive crisis, including hypertensive retinopathy and nephropathy, cardiac enlargement, and dysrhythmias, heart failure, myocardial infarction, increased platelet aggregation, and stroke.
- g. Death can occur from shock, stroke, renal failure, dysrhythmias, or dissecting aortic aneurysm.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Paroxysmal or sustained hypertension
- b. Severe headaches
- c. Palpitations
- d. Flushing and profuse diaphoresis
- e. Pain in the chest or abdomen with nausea and vomiting
- f. Heat intolerance
- g. Weight loss
- h. Tremors
- i. **Hyperglycemia**

## 3. Interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs, particularly the blood pressure and heart rate.
- b. Monitor for hypertensive crisis; monitor for complications that can occur with hypertensive crisis, such as stroke, cardiac dysrhythmias, myocardial infarction.
- c. Instruct the client not to smoke, drink caffeine-containing beverages, or change position suddenly.
- d. Prepare to administer a  $\beta$ -adrenergic blocking agent as prescribed to control hypertension.
- e. Monitor serum glucose level.
- f. Promote rest and a nonstressful environment.
- g. Provide a diet high in calories, vitamins, and minerals.
- h. Prepare the client for adrenalectomy.

 For the client with pheochromocytoma, avoid stimuli that can precipitate a hypertensive crisis, such as increased abdominal pressure and vigorous abdominal palpation.

## F. Adrenalectomy

### 1. Description (Box 54-10)

#### **BOX 54-10**

#### **Adrenalectomy**

Surgical removal of an adrenal gland

Lifelong glucocorticoid and mineralocorticoid replacement is necessary with bilateral adrenalectomy.

Temporary glucocorticoid replacement, usually up to 2 years, is necessary after a unilateral adrenalectomy.

Catecholamine levels drop as a result of surgery, which can result in cardiovascular collapse, hypotension, and shock, and the client needs to be monitored closely.

Hemorrhage also can occur because of the high vascularity of the adrenal glands.

## 2. Preoperative interventions

- a. Monitor electrolyte levels and correct electrolyte imbalances.
- b. Assess for dysrhythmias.
- c. Monitor for hyperglycemia.
- d. Protect the client from infections.
- e. Administer glucocorticoids as prescribed.

## 3. Postoperative interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor intake and output; if the urinary output is lower than 30 mL/hour, notify the HCP, because this may indicate renal failure and impending shock. ▲
- c. Monitor weight daily.
- d. Monitor electrolyte and serum glucose levels.
- e. Monitor for signs of hemorrhage and shock, particularly during the first 24 to 48 hours.
- f. Monitor for manifestations of adrenal insufficiency (see [Table 54-1](#)).
- g. Assess the dressing for drainage.

- h.** Monitor for paralytic ileus. Administer IV fluids as prescribed to maintain blood volume.
- i.** Administer glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids as prescribed.
- j.** Administer pain medication as prescribed.
- k.** Provide pulmonary interventions to prevent atelectasis (cough and deep breathing, incentive spirometry, splinting of incision).
- l.** Instruct the client in the importance of hormone replacement therapy following surgery.
- m.** Instruct the client regarding signs and symptoms of complications such as underreplacement and overreplacement of hormones.
- n.** Instruct the client regarding the need to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## V. Thyroid Gland Disorders

### A. Hypothyroidism

#### 1. Description

- a.** Hypothyroid state resulting from hyposecretion of thyroid hormones T<sub>3</sub> and T<sub>4</sub>.
- b.** Characterized by a decreased rate of body metabolism

#### 2. Assessment ([Table 54-2](#))

**TABLE 54-2 Assessment: Hypothyroidism and Hyperthyroidism**

Hypothyroidism	Hyperthyroidism
Lethargy and fatigue	Personality changes such as irritability, agitation, and mood swings
Weakness, muscle aches, paresthesias	Nervousness and fine tremors of the hands

Intolerance to cold	Heat intolerance
Weight gain	Weight loss
Dry skin and hair and loss of body hair	Smooth, soft skin and hair
Bradycardia	Palpitations, cardiac dysrhythmias, such as tachycardia or atrial fibrillation
Constipation	Diarrhea
Generalized puffiness and edema around the eyes and face (myxedema)	Protruding eyeballs (exophthalmos) may be present (see <a href="#">Fig. 54-3</a> )
Forgetfulness and loss of memory	Diaphoresis
Menstrual disturbances	Hypertension
Cardiac enlargement, tendency to develop heart failure Goiter may or may not be present	Enlarged thyroid gland (goiter)

### 3. Interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs, including heart rate and rhythm.
- b. Administer thyroid replacement; levothyroxine sodium (Synthroid) is most commonly prescribed.
- c. Instruct the client about thyroid replacement therapy and about the clinical manifestations of both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism related to underreplacement or overreplacement of the hormone.
- d. Instruct the client in a low-calorie, low-cholesterol, low-saturated fat diet.
- e. Assess the client for constipation; provide roughage and fluids to prevent constipation.
- f. Provide a warm environment for the client.
- g. Avoid sedatives and opioid analgesics because of increased sensitivity to these medications.
- h. Monitor for overdose of thyroid medications, characterized by tachycardia, chest pain, restlessness, nervousness, and insomnia.
- i. Instruct the client to report episodes of chest pain or other signs of overdose

immediately.

## B. Myxedema coma ▲

### 1. Description (Box 54-11)

#### BOX 54-11

#### Myxedema Coma

This rare but serious disorder results from persistently low thyroid production. Coma can be precipitated by acute illness, rapid withdrawal of thyroid medication, anesthesia and surgery, hypothermia, or the use of sedatives and opioid analgesics.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Hypotension
- b. Bradycardia
- c. Hypothermia
- d. Hyponatremia
- e. **Hypoglycemia**
- f. Generalized edema
- g. Respiratory failure
- h. Coma

### 3. Interventions

- a. Maintain a patent airway.
- b. Institute aspiration precautions.
- c. Administer IV fluids (normal or hypertonic saline) as prescribed.

- d. Administer levothyroxine sodium intravenously as prescribed.
- e. Administer glucose intravenously as prescribed.
- f. Administer corticosteroids as prescribed.
- g. Assess client's temperature hourly.
- h. Monitor blood pressure frequently.
- i. Keep the client warm.
- j. Monitor for changes in mental status.
- k. Monitor electrolyte and glucose levels.

## C. **Hyperthyroidism**

### 1. Description ▲

- a. Hyperthyroid state resulting from hypersecretion of thyroid hormones ( $T_3$  and  $T_4$ )
- b. Characterized by an increased rate of body metabolism
- c. A common cause is Graves' disease, also known as toxic diffuse goiter.
- d. Clinical manifestations are referred to as *thyrotoxicosis*.

### 2. Assessment (see [Table 54-2](#); [Fig. 54-3](#)) ▲



**FIGURE 54-3** Exophthalmos. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Provide adequate rest.
- b. Administer sedatives as prescribed.
- c. Provide a cool and quiet environment.
- d. Obtain weight daily.
- e. Provide a high-calorie diet.
- f. Avoid the administration of stimulants.
- g. Administer antithyroid medications (propylthiouracil, PTU) that block thyroid synthesis as prescribed.
- h. Administer iodine preparations that inhibit the release of thyroid hormone as prescribed.

- i. Administer propranolol (Inderal) for tachycardia as prescribed.
- j. Prepare the client for radioactive iodine therapy, as prescribed, to destroy thyroid cells.
- k. Prepare the client for **thyroidectomy** if prescribed.

#### D. **Thyroid storm**

##### 1. Description (Box 54-12)

#### **BOX 54-12**

#### **Thyroid Storm**

This acute and life-threatening condition occurs in a client with uncontrollable hyperthyroidism.

It can be caused by manipulation of the thyroid gland during surgery and the release of thyroid hormone into the bloodstream; it also can occur from severe infection and stress.

Antithyroid medications,  $\beta$ -blockers, glucocorticoids, and iodides may be administered to the client before thyroid surgery to prevent its occurrence.

##### 2. Assessment

- a. Elevated temperature (fever)
- b. Tachycardia
- c. Systolic hypertension
- d. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- e. Agitation, tremors, anxiety

**f.** Irritability, agitation, restlessness, confusion, and seizures as the condition progresses

**g.** Delirium and coma

### **3.** Interventions ▲

**a.** Maintain a patent airway and adequate ventilation.

**b.** Administer antithyroid medications, iodides, propranolol, and glucocorticoids as prescribed.

**c.** Monitor vital signs.

**d.** Monitor continually for cardiac dysrhythmias.

**e.** Administer nonsalicylate antipyretics as prescribed (salicylates increase free thyroid hormone levels).

**f.** Use a cooling blanket to decrease temperature as prescribed.

## **E.** Thyroidectomy

### **1.** Description

**a.** Removal of the thyroid gland

**b.** Performed when persistent hyperthyroidism exists

### **2.** Preoperative interventions

**a.** Obtain vital signs and weight.

**b.** Assess electrolyte levels.

**c.** Assess for hyperglycemia.

**d.** Instruct the client in how to perform coughing and deep-breathing exercises and how to support the neck in the postoperative period when coughing and moving.

- e. Administer antithyroid medications, iodides, propranolol, and glucocorticoids as prescribed to prevent the occurrence of thyroid storm.

### 3. Postoperative interventions ▲

- a. Monitor for respiratory distress.
- b. Have a tracheotomy set, oxygen, and suction at the bedside.
- c. Limit client talking, and assess level of hoarseness.
- d. Monitor for laryngeal nerve damage, as evidenced by respiratory obstruction, dysphonia, high-pitched voice, stridor, dysphagia, and restlessness.
- e. Monitor for signs of hypocalcemia and tetany, which can be caused by trauma to the parathyroid gland ([Box 54-13](#)).

#### **BOX 54-13**

#### **Signs of Tetany**

- Cardiac dysrhythmias
- Carpopedal spasm
- Dysphagia
- Muscle and abdominal cramps
- Numbness and tingling of the face and extremities
- Positive Chvostek's sign
- Positive Trousseau's sign
- Visual disturbances (photophobia)
- Wheezing and dyspnea (bronchospasm, laryngospasm)
- Seizures

- f. Prepare to administer calcium gluconate as prescribed for tetany.
- g. Monitor for thyroid storm.

 Following thyroidectomy, maintain the client in a semi-Fowler's position. Monitor the surgical site for edema and for signs of bleeding and check the dressing anteriorly and at the back of the neck.

## VI. Parathyroid Gland Disorders

### A. Hypoparathyroidism

#### 1. Description

- a. Condition caused by hyposecretion of parathyroid hormone by the parathyroid gland
- b. Can occur following **thyroidectomy** because of removal of parathyroid tissue

#### 2. Assessment

- a. Hypocalcemia and hyperphosphatemia 
- b. Numbness and tingling in the face 
- c. Muscle cramps and cramps in the abdomen or in the extremities 
- d. Positive **Trousseau's sign** or **Chvostek's sign** 
- e. Signs of overt tetany, such as bronchospasm, laryngospasm, carpopedal spasm, dysphagia, photophobia, cardiac dysrhythmias, seizures
- f. Hypotension
- g. Anxiety, irritability, depression

### 3. Interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor for signs of hypocalcemia and tetany.
- c. Initiate seizure precautions.
- d. Place a tracheotomy set, oxygen, and suctioning equipment at the bedside.
- e. Prepare to administer calcium gluconate intravenously for hypocalcemia.
- f. Provide a high-calcium, low-phosphorus diet.
- g. Instruct the client in the administration of calcium supplements as prescribed.
- h. Instruct the client in the administration of vitamin D supplements as prescribed;  
vitamin D enhances the absorption of calcium from the gastrointestinal tract.
- i. Instruct the client in the administration of phosphate binders as prescribed to  
promote the excretion of phosphate through the gastrointestinal tract.
- j. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

### B. Hyperparathyroidism

1. Description: Condition caused by hypersecretion of parathyroid hormone by the  
parathyroid gland
2. Assessment
  - a. Hypercalcemia and hypophosphatemia 
  - b. Fatigue and muscle weakness
  - c. Skeletal pain and tenderness
  - d. Bone deformities that result in pathological fractures 
  - e. Anorexia, nausea, vomiting, epigastric pain

- f.** Weight loss
- g.** Constipation
- h.** Hypertension
- i.** Cardiac dysrhythmias
- j.** Renal stones

### **3.** Interventions

- a.** Monitor vital signs, particularly the blood pressure.
- b.** Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias.
- c.** Monitor intake and output and for signs of renal stones.
- d.** Monitor for skeletal pain; move the client slowly and carefully.
- e.** Encourage fluid intake.
- f.** Administer furosemide (Lasix) as prescribed to lower calcium levels.
- g.** Administer normal saline intravenously as prescribed to maintain hydration.
- h.** Administer phosphates, which interfere with calcium reabsorption, as prescribed.
- i.** Administer calcitonin (Fortical; Miacalcin) as prescribed to decrease skeletal calcium release and increase renal excretion of calcium.
- j.** Monitor calcium and phosphorus levels.
- k.** Prepare the client for parathyroidectomy as prescribed.

### **C.** Parathyroidectomy

- 1.** Description: Removal of one or more of the parathyroid glands
- 2.** Preoperative interventions

- a. Monitor electrolytes, calcium, phosphate, and magnesium levels.
  - b. Ensure that calcium levels are decreased to near-normal values.
  - c. Inform the client that talking may be painful for the first day or two after surgery.
3. Postoperative interventions ▲
- a. Monitor for respiratory distress.
  - b. Place a tracheotomy set, oxygen, and suctioning equipment at the bedside.
  - c. Monitor vital signs.
  - d. Position the client in a semi-Fowler's position.
  - e. Assess neck dressing for bleeding.
  - f. Monitor for hypocalcemic crisis, as evidenced by tingling and twitching in the extremities and face.
  - g. Assess for positive Trousseau's sign or Chvostek's sign, which signals the potential for tetany.
  - h. Monitor for changes in voice pattern and hoarseness.
  - i. Monitor for laryngeal nerve damage.
  - j. Instruct the client in the administration of calcium and vitamin D supplements as prescribed.

## VII. Disorders of the Pancreas

### A. Diabetes mellitus

1. Description ▲
- a. Chronic disorder of impaired carbohydrate, protein, and lipid metabolism

caused by a deficiency of insulin

- b.** An absolute or relative deficiency of insulin results in **hyperglycemia**.
- c.** Type 1 diabetes mellitus is a nearly absolute deficiency of insulin (primary beta cell destruction); if insulin is not given, fats are metabolized for energy, resulting in ketonemia (acidosis).
- d.** Type 2 diabetes mellitus is a relative lack of insulin or resistance to the action of insulin; usually, insulin is sufficient to stabilize fat and protein metabolism but not carbohydrate metabolism.
- e.** Metabolic syndrome is also known as syndrome X and the individual has coexisting risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes mellitus; these risk factors include abdominal obesity, hyperglycemia, hypertension, high triglyceride level, and a lowered HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol level.
- f.** Diabetes mellitus can lead to chronic health problems and early death as a result of complications that occur in the large and small blood vessels in tissues and organs.
- g.** Macrovascular complications include coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy, hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, and peripheral vascular disease. (Refer to [Chapter 60](#) for information on cardiovascular disorders.)
- h.** Microvascular complications include retinopathy, nephropathy, and neuropathy.
- i.** Infection is also a concern because of reduced healing ability.
- j.** Male erectile dysfunction can also occur as a result of the disease.

 Obesity is a major risk factor for diabetes mellitus.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Polyuria, polydipsia, polyphagia (more common in type 1 diabetes mellitus)
- b. Hyperglycemia
- c. Weight loss (common in type 1 diabetes mellitus, rare in type 2 diabetes mellitus)
- d. Blurred vision
- e. Slow wound healing
- f. Vaginal infections
- g. Weakness and paresthesias
- h. Signs of inadequate circulation to the feet
- i. Signs of accelerated atherosclerosis (renal, cerebral, cardiac, peripheral)

## 3. Diet

- a. The diabetic client's diet should take into account weight, medication, activity level, and other health problems.
- b. Day-to-day consistency in timing and amount of food intake helps control the blood glucose level.
- c. As prescribed by the HCP, the client may be advised to follow the recommendations of the American Diabetic Association diet or U.S. dietary guidelines (MyPlate; <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>) issued by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services.
- d. Carbohydrate counting may be a simpler approach for some clients; it focuses

on the total grams of carbohydrates eaten per meal. The client may be more compliant with carbohydrate counting, resulting in better glycemic control; it is usually necessary for clients undergoing intense insulin therapy.

- e. Incorporate the diet into individual client needs, lifestyle, and cultural and socioeconomic patterns.

#### 4. Exercise ▲

- a. Exercise lowers the blood glucose level, encourages weight loss, reduces cardiovascular risks, improves circulation and muscle tone, decreases total cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and decreases insulin resistance and glucose intolerance.
- b. Instruct the client in dietary adjustments when exercising; dietary adjustments are individualized.
- c. If the client requires extra food during exercise to prevent hypoglycemia, it need not be deducted from the regular meal plan.
- d. If the blood glucose level is higher than 250 mg/dL and urinary ketones (type 1 diabetes mellitus) are present, the client is instructed not to exercise until the blood glucose level is closer to normal and urinary ketones are absent.

**⚠ Instruct the client with diabetes mellitus to monitor the blood glucose level before, during, and after exercising.**

- 5. Oral hypoglycemic medications: Oral medications are prescribed for clients with diabetes mellitus type 2 when diet and weight control therapy have failed to

maintain satisfactory blood glucose levels (see [Chapter 55](#)). ▲

⚠ To prevent a serious reaction, inform the client taking a sulfonylurea to avoid consuming alcohol.

## 6. Insulin ▲

- a. Insulin is used to treat types 1 and 2 diabetes mellitus when diet, weight control therapy, and oral hypoglycemic agents have failed to maintain satisfactory blood glucose levels.
- b. Illness, infection, and stress increase the blood glucose level and the need for insulin; insulin should not be withheld during illness, infection, or stress because hyperglycemia and **diabetic ketoacidosis** can result.
- c. The peak action time of insulin is important to explain to the client because of the possibility of hypoglycemic reactions occurring during this time. ▲

⚠ Only short-duration insulin (lispro, aspart, glulisine, and regular insulin) can be administered intravenously.

## B. Complications of insulin therapy

### 1. Local allergic reactions ▲

- a. Redness, swelling, tenderness, and induration or a wheal at the site of injection may occur 1 to 2 hours after administration.
- b. Reactions usually occur during the early stages of insulin therapy.
- c. Instruct the client to cleanse the skin with alcohol before injection.

### 2. Insulin lipodystrophy

- a. Lipoatrophy is loss of subcutaneous fat and appears as slight dimpling or more serious pitting of subcutaneous fat; the use of human insulin helps prevent this complication (Fig. 54-4).



**FIGURE 54-4** Lipoatrophy at insulin injection site. (From Belchetz PE, Hammond P: *Mosby's color atlas and text of diabetes and endocrinology*, St. Louis, 2003, Mosby.)

- b. Lipohypertrophy is the development of fibrous fatty masses at the injection site and is caused by repeated use of an injection site (Fig. 54-5). ▲



**FIGURE 54-5** Lipohypertrophy at insulin injection site. (From Belchetz PE, Hammond P: *Mosby's color atlas and text of diabetes and endocrinology*, St. Louis, 2003, Mosby.)

- c. Instruct the client to avoid injecting insulin into affected sites.
- d. Instruct the client about the importance of rotating insulin injection sites.

### 3. Insulin resistance

- a. The client receiving insulin develops immune antibodies that bind the insulin, thereby decreasing the insulin available for use in the body.
- b. Treatment consists of administering a purer insulin preparation.
- c. *Insulin resistance* is also the term used for lack of tissue sensitivity to the insulin from the body, which results in hyperglycemia.

### 4. Dawn phenomenon

- a. Dawn phenomenon results from reduced tissue sensitivity to insulin, and usually develops between 5 and 8 AM (prebreakfast hyperglycemia occurs); it may be caused by nocturnal release of growth hormone.
- b. Treatment includes administering an evening dose (or increasing the amount of a current dose) of intermediate-acting insulin at about 10 PM.

### 5. Somogyi phenomenon

- a. Normal or elevated blood glucose levels are present at bedtime; hypoglycemia occurs at about 2 to 3 AM, which causes an increase in the production of counterregulatory hormones.

- b.** By about 7 AM, in response to the counterregulatory hormones, the blood glucose rebounds significantly to the hyperglycemic range.
- c.** Treatment includes decreasing the evening (predinner or bedtime) dose of intermediate-acting insulin or increasing the bedtime snack.

### **C.** Insulin administration

**1.** Subcutaneous injections and mixing insulin: See [Chapter 55](#).

#### **2.** Insulin pumps

- a.** Continuous subcutaneous insulin infusion is administered by an externally worn device that contains a syringe attached to a long, thin, narrow-lumen tube with a needle or Teflon catheter attached to the end.
- b.** The client inserts the needle or Teflon catheter into the subcutaneous tissue (usually on the abdomen) and secures it with tape or a transparent dressing; the pump is worn on a belt or in a pocket; the needle or Teflon catheter is changed at least every 2 to 3 days.
- c.** A continuous basal rate of insulin infuses; in addition, on the basis of the blood glucose level, the anticipated food intake, and the activity level, the client delivers a bolus of insulin before each meal.
- d.** Both rapid-acting and regular short-acting insulin (buffered to prevent the precipitation of insulin crystals within the catheter) are appropriate for use in these pumps.

#### **3.** Insulin pump and skin sensor

- a.** A skin sensor device that monitors the client's blood glucose continuously; the

information is transmitted to the pump, determines the need for insulin, and then the insulin is injected.

- b. The pump holds up to a 3-day supply of insulin and can be easily disconnected for activities such as bathing.

#### 4. Pancreas transplants

- a. The goal of pancreatic transplantation is to halt or reverse the complications of diabetes mellitus.
- b. Transplantations are performed on a limited number of clients (in general, these are clients who are undergoing kidney transplantation simultaneously).
- c. Immunosuppressive therapy is prescribed to prevent and treat rejection.

#### D. Self-monitoring of blood glucose level

1. Self-monitoring provides the client with the current blood glucose level and information to maintain good glycemic control.
2. Monitoring requires a finger prick to obtain a drop of blood for testing.
3. Alternative site testing (obtaining blood from the forearm, upper arm, abdomen, thigh, or calf) is now available, using specific measurement devices.
4. Tests must be used with caution in clients with diabetic neuropathy.
5. Client instructions ([Box 54-14](#))

#### **BOX 54-14**

#### **Client Instructions: Monitoring of Blood Glucose Level**

Use the proper procedure to obtain the sample for determining the blood glucose level.

Perform the procedure precisely to obtain accurate results.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the glucometer.

Wash hands before and after performing the procedure to prevent infection.

Calibrate the monitor as instructed by the manufacturer.

Check the expiration date on the test strips.

If the blood glucose level results do not seem reasonable, reread the instructions, reassess technique, check the expiration date of the test strips, and perform the procedure again to verify results.

#### E. Urine testing

1. Urine testing for glucose is not a reliable indicator of the blood glucose level and is not used for monitoring purposes.
2. Instruct the client in the procedure for testing for urine ketones.
3. The presence of ketones may indicate impending ketoacidosis.
4. Urine ketone testing should be performed during illness and whenever the client with type 1 diabetes mellitus has persistently elevated blood glucose levels (higher than 240 mg/dL or as prescribed for two consecutive testing periods).

## VIII. Acute Complications of Diabetes Mellitus

### A. Hypoglycemia (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ▲

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take if the Client Experiences a Hypoglycemic Reaction

1. Check the client's blood glucose level.
2. Give the client a 10- to 15-g carbohydrate item such as ½ cup of fruit juice to drink.
3. Take the client's vital signs.
4. Retest the blood glucose level
5. Give the client a small snack of carbohydrate and protein.
6. Document the client's complaints, actions taken, and outcome.

If the client experiences symptoms of a hypoglycemic reaction such as hunger, irritability, shakiness, or weakness, the nurse first would check the client's blood glucose level to verify that the client is experiencing hypoglycemia. Once this is verified, the nurse would give the client 10 to 15 g of carbohydrates. The nurse would retest the blood glucose level in 15 minutes. In the meantime, the nurse would check the client's vital signs. The nurse would give the client another 10- to 15-g carbohydrate food item if the client's symptoms do not resolve. Otherwise, the nurse would provide a small snack of carbohydrates and protein if the client's next scheduled meal is more than an hour away from the time of the occurrence.

Following treatment and resolution of the hypoglycemic event, the nurse would document the occurrence, actions taken, and outcome.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered*

## 1. Description

- a. Hypoglycemia occurs when the blood glucose level falls below 70 mg/dL or when the blood glucose level drops rapidly from an elevated level.
- b. Hypoglycemia is caused by too much insulin or oral hypoglycemic agents, too little food, or excessive activity.
- c. The client needs to be instructed always to carry some form of fast-acting simple carbohydrate with him or her.
- d. If the client has a hypoglycemic reaction and does not have any of the recommended emergency foods available, any available food should be eaten; high-fat foods slow the absorption of glucose and the hypoglycemic symptoms may not resolve quickly.

## 2. Assessment (Box 54-15) ▲

### BOX 54-15

### Assessment of Hypoglycemia

#### Mild

- Hunger
- Nervousness
- Palpitations
- Sweating

- Tachycardia

- Tremor

### **Moderate**

- Confusion

- Double vision

- Drowsiness

- Emotional changes

- Headache

- Impaired coordination

- Inability to concentrate

- Irrational or combative behavior

- Light headedness

- Numbness of the lips and tongue

- Slurred speech

### **Severe**

- Difficulty arousing

- Disoriented behavior

- Loss of consciousness

- Seizures

a. Mild hypoglycemia: The client remains fully awake but displays adrenergic

symptoms; the blood glucose level is usually lower than 60 mg/dL.

**b.** Moderate hypoglycemia: The client displays symptoms of worsening hypoglycemia; the blood glucose level is usually lower than 40 mg/dL.

**c.** Severe hypoglycemia: The client displays severe neuroglycopenic symptoms; the blood glucose level is usually lower than 20 mg/dL.

**3.** Interventions: Mild hypoglycemia ▲

**a.** Give 10 to 15 g of a fast-acting simple carbohydrate ([Box 54-16](#)).

#### **BOX 54-16**

#### **Simple Carbohydrates to Treat Hypoglycemia**

- Commercially prepared glucose tablets
- 6 to 10 Life Savers or hard candy
- 4 tsp of sugar
- 4 sugar cubes
- 1 Tbsp of honey or syrup
- ½ cup of fruit juice or regular (nondiet) soft drink
- 8 oz low-fat milk
- 6 saltine crackers
- 3 graham crackers

**b.** Retest the blood glucose level in 15 minutes and repeat the treatment if symptoms do not resolve.

**c.** Once symptoms resolve, a snack containing protein and carbohydrates, such as

low-fat milk or cheese and crackers, is recommended unless the client plans to eat a regular meal within 60 minutes.

**4. Interventions: Moderate hypoglycemia ▲**

- a. Administer 15 to 30 g of a fast-acting simple carbohydrate.
- b. Administer additional food such as low-fat milk or cheese and crackers after 10 to 15 minutes.

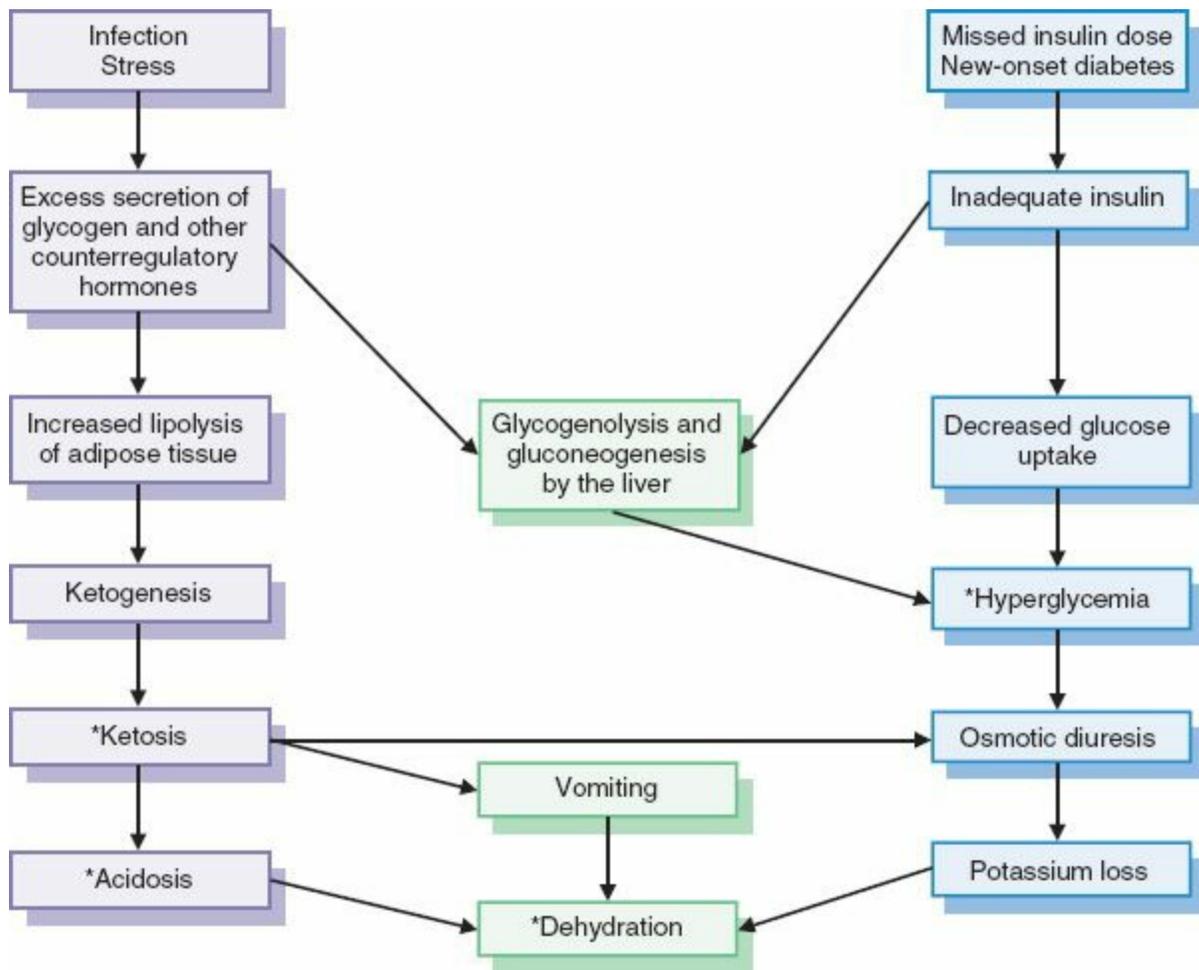
**5. Interventions: Severe hypoglycemia ▲**

- a. If the client is unconscious and cannot swallow, an injection of glucagon is administered subcutaneously or intramuscularly.
- b. Administer a second dose in 10 minutes if the client remains unconscious.
- c. A small meal is given to the client when the client awakens as long as the client is not nauseated.
- d. The HCP is notified if a severe hypoglycemic reaction occurs.
- e. Family members need to be instructed about the administration of glucagon.

**⚠** Do not attempt to administer oral food or fluids to the client experiencing a severe hypoglycemic reaction who is semiconscious or unconscious and is unable to swallow. This client is at risk for aspiration. For this client, an injection of glucagon is administered subcutaneously or intramuscularly. In the hospital or emergency department, the client may be treated with an IV injection of 25 to 50 mL of 50% dextrose in water.

**B. Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) ▲**

**1. Description (Fig. 54-6)**



\*Hallmarks of DKA

**FIGURE 54-6** Pathophysiology of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). (From Black J, Hawks J: *Medical-surgical nursing: Clinical management for positive outcomes*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2009, Saunders.)

- a. Diabetic ketoacidosis is a life-threatening complication of type 1 diabetes mellitus that develops when a severe insulin deficiency occurs.
- b. The main clinical manifestations include hyperglycemia, dehydration, ketosis, and acidosis.

2. Assessment (Table 54-3) ▲

**TABLE 54-3 Differences between Diabetic Ketoacidosis and Hyperglycemic-Hyperosmolar Nonketotic Syndrome**

	<b>Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA)</b>	<b>Hyperglycemic Hyperosmolar Nonketotic Syndrome (HHNS)</b>
Onset	Sudden	Gradual
Precipitating factors	Infection	Infection
	Other stressors	Other stressors
	Inadequate insulin dose	Poor fluid intake
Manifestations	Ketosis: Kussmaul’s respiration, “fruity” breath, nausea, abdominal pain	Altered central nervous system function with neurologic symptoms
	Dehydration or electrolyte loss: Polyuria, polydipsia, weight loss, dry skin, sunken eyes, soft eyeballs, lethargy, coma	Dehydration or electrolyte loss: Same as for DKA
<b>Laboratory Findings</b>		
Serum glucose	> 300 mg/dL (16.7 mmol/L)	> 800 mg/dL (44.5 mmol/L)
Osmolarity	Variable	> 350 mOsm/L
Serum ketones	Positive at 1:2 dilution	Negative
Serum pH	< 7.35	> 7.4
Serum HCO <sub>3</sub>	< 15 mEq/L	> 20 mEq/L
Serum Na	Low, normal, or high	Normal or low
Serum K	Normal; elevated with acidosis, low following dehydration	Normal or low
BUN	> 20 mg/dL; elevated because of dehydration	Elevated
Creatinine	> 1.5 mg/dL; elevated because of dehydration	Elevated
Urine ketones	Positive	Negative

*BUN*, Blood urea nitrogen; *HCO<sub>3</sub>*, bicarbonate.

From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.

### 3. Interventions

- a. Restore circulating blood volume and protect against cerebral, coronary, and renal hypoperfusion.
- b. Treat dehydration with rapid IV infusions of 0.9% or 0.45% normal saline (NS)

as prescribed; dextrose is added to IV fluids when the blood glucose level reaches 250 to 300 mg/dL.

- c.** Treat hyperglycemia with insulin administered intravenously as prescribed.
- d.** Correct electrolyte imbalances (potassium level may be elevated as a result of dehydration and acidosis).
- e.** Monitor potassium level closely because when the client receives treatment for the dehydration and acidosis, the serum potassium level will decrease and potassium replacement may be required.

#### **4.** Insulin IV administration

- a.** Use short-duration insulin only.
- b.** An IV bolus dose of insulin (usually 5 to 10 units) may be prescribed before a continuous infusion is begun.
- c.** Mix the prescribed IV dose of insulin for continuous infusion in 0.9% or 0.45% NS as prescribed.
- d.** Flush the insulin solution through the entire intravenous infusion set and discard the first 50 to 100 mL of solution before connecting and administering it to the client (insulin molecules adhere to the plastic of IV infusion sets)
- e.** Always place the insulin infusion on an IV infusion controller.
- f.** Insulin is infused continuously until subcutaneous administration resumes to prevent a rebound of the blood glucose level.
- g.** Monitor vital signs.
- h.** Monitor urinary output and for signs of fluid overload.

- i. Monitor potassium and glucose levels and for signs of increased intracranial pressure.
- j. The potassium level will fall rapidly within the first hour of treatment as the dehydration and the acidosis are treated.
- k. Potassium is administered intravenously in a diluted solution as prescribed when the potassium reaches a normal level to prevent hypokalemia; ensure adequate renal function before administering potassium.

#### 5. Client education (Box 54-17)

##### **BOX 54-17**

##### **Client Education: Guidelines during Illness**

Take insulin or oral antidiabetic medications as prescribed.

Determine the blood glucose level and test the urine for ketones every 3 to 4 hours.

If the usual meal plan cannot be followed, substitute soft foods six to eight times a day.

If vomiting, diarrhea, or fever occurs, consume liquids every 30 to 60 minutes to prevent dehydration and to provide calories.

Notify the health care provider if vomiting, diarrhea, or fever persists, if blood glucose levels are higher than 250 to 300 mg/dL, when ketonuria is present for more than 24 hours, when unable to take food or fluids for a period of 4 hours, or when illness persists for more than 2 days.



**Monitor the client being treated for DKA closely for signs of increased**

intracranial pressure. If the blood glucose level falls too far or too fast before the brain has time to equilibrate, water is pulled from the blood to the cerebrospinal fluid and the brain, causing cerebral edema and increased intracranial pressure.

### C. **Hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome (HHNS)**

#### 1. Description

- a. Extreme hyperglycemia occurs without ketosis or acidosis.
- b. The syndrome occurs most often in individuals with type 2 diabetes mellitus.
- c. The major difference between HHNS and DKA is that ketosis and acidosis do not occur with HHNS; enough insulin is present with HHNS to prevent the breakdown of fats for energy, thus preventing ketosis. ▲

#### 2. Assessment (see [Table 54-3](#)) ▲

#### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Treatment is similar to that for DKA.
- b. Treatment includes fluid replacement, correction of electrolyte imbalances, and insulin administration.
- c. Fluid replacement in the older client must be done very carefully because of the potential for heart failure.
- d. Insulin plays a less critical role in the treatment of HHNS than it does for the treatment of DKA because ketosis and acidosis do not occur; rehydration alone may decrease glucose levels.

## **IX. Chronic Complications of Diabetes Mellitus** ▲

## **A. Diabetic retinopathy**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Chronic and progressive impairment of the retinal circulation that eventually causes hemorrhage
- b.** Permanent vision changes and blindness can occur.
- c.** The client has difficulty with carrying out the daily tasks of blood glucose testing and insulin injections.

### **2. Assessment**

- a.** A change in vision is caused by the rupture of small microaneurysms in retinal blood vessels.
- b.** Blurred vision results from macular edema.
- c.** Sudden loss of vision results from retinal detachment.
- d.** Cataracts result from lens opacity.

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Maintain safety.
- b.** Early prevention via the control of hypertension and blood glucose levels ▲
- c.** Photocoagulation (laser therapy) may be done to remove hemorrhagic tissue to decrease scarring and prevent progression of the disease process.
- d.** Vitrectomy may be done to remove vitreous hemorrhages and thus decrease tension on the retina, preventing detachment.
- e.** Cataract removal with lens implantation improves vision.

## **B. Diabetic nephropathy ▲**

**1. Description: Progressive decrease in kidney function**

**2. Assessment**

- a. Microalbuminuria**
- b. Thirst**
- c. Fatigue**
- d. Anemia**
- e. Weight loss**
- f. Signs of malnutrition**
- g. Frequent urinary tract infections**
- h. Signs of a neurogenic bladder**

**3. Interventions**

- a. Early prevention measures include the control of hypertension and blood glucose levels.**
- b. Assess vital signs.**
- c. Monitor intake and output.**
- d. Monitor the blood urea nitrogen, creatinine and urine albumin levels.**
- e. Restrict dietary protein, sodium, and potassium intake as prescribed.**
- f. Avoid nephrotoxic medications.**
- g. Prepare the client for dialysis procedures if planned.**
- h. Prepare the client for kidney transplant if planned.**
- i. Prepare the client for pancreas transplant if planned.**

**C. Diabetic neuropathy**

## 1. Description

- a. General deterioration of the nervous system throughout the body
- b. Complications include the development of nonhealing ulcers of the feet, gastric paresis, and erectile dysfunction. ▲

## 2. Classifications

- a. Focal neuropathy or mononeuropathy: Involves a single nerve or group of nerves, most frequently cranial nerves III (oculomotor) and VI (abducens), resulting in diplopia
- b. Sensory or peripheral neuropathy: Affects distal portion of nerves, most frequently in the lower extremities
- c. Autonomic neuropathy: Symptoms vary according to organ system involved
- d. Cardiovascular: Cardiac denervation syndrome (heart rate does not respond to changes in oxygenation needs) and orthostatic hypotension occur.
- e. Pupillary: Pupil does not dilate in response to decreased light.
- f. Gastric: Decreased gastric emptying (gastroparesis)
- g. Urinary: Neurogenic bladder
- h. Skin: Decreased sweating
- i. Adrenal: Hypoglycemic unawareness
- j. Reproductive: Impotence (male), painful intercourse (female)

## 3. Assessment: Findings depend on the classification ▲

- a. Paresthesias
- b. Decreased or absent reflexes

- c. Decreased sensation to vibration or light touch
  - d. Pain, aching, and burning in the lower extremities
  - e. Poor peripheral pulses
  - f. Skin breakdown and signs of infection
  - g. Weakness or loss of sensation in cranial nerves III (oculomotor), IV (trochlear), V (trigeminal), and VI (abducens)
  - h. Dizziness and postural hypotension
  - i. Nausea and vomiting
  - j. Diarrhea or constipation
  - k. Incontinence
  - l. Dyspareunia
  - m. Impotence
  - n. Hypoglycemic unawareness
4. Interventions
- a. Early prevention measures include the control of hypertension and blood glucose levels.
  - b. Careful foot care is required to prevent trauma ([Box 54-18](#)).

#### **BOX 54-18**

#### **Preventive Foot Care Instructions**

Provide meticulous skin care and proper foot care.

Inspect feet daily and monitor feet for redness, swelling, or break in skin integrity.

Notify the health care provider if redness or a break in the skin occurs.

Avoid thermal injuries from hot water, heating pads, and baths.

Wash feet with warm (not hot) water and dry thoroughly (avoid foot soaks).

Avoid treating corns, blisters, or ingrown toenails.

Do not cross legs or wear tight garments that may constrict blood flow.

Apply moisturizing lotion to the feet but not between the toes.

Prevent moisture from accumulating between the toes.

Wear loose socks and well-fitting (not tight) shoes; do not go barefoot.

Wear clean cotton socks to keep the feet warm and change the socks daily.

Avoid wearing the same pair of shoes 2 days in a row.

Avoid wearing open-toed shoes or shoes with a strap that goes between the toes.

Check shoes for cracks or tears in the lining and for foreign objects before putting them on.

Break in new shoes gradually.

Cut toenails straight across and smooth nails with an emery board.

Avoid smoking.

**c.** Administer medications as prescribed for pain relief.

**d.** Initiate bladder training programs.

**e.** Instruct in the use of estrogen-containing lubricants for women with dyspareunia.

**f.** Prepare the male client with impotence for penile injections or other possible treatment options as prescribed.

- g. Prepare for surgical decompression of compression lesions related to the cranial nerves as prescribed.

## **X. Care of the Diabetic Client Undergoing Surgery** ▲

### **A. Preoperative care**

1. Check with HCP regarding withholding oral hypoglycemic medications or insulin.
2. Some long-acting oral antidiabetic medications are discontinued 24 to 48 hours before surgery.
3. Metformin (Glucophage) may need to be discontinued 48 hours before surgery and may not be restarted until renal function is normal postoperatively.
4. All other oral antidiabetic medications are usually withheld the day of surgery.
5. Insulin dose may be adjusted or withheld if IV insulin administration during surgery is planned.
6. Monitor blood glucose level.
7. Administer IV fluids as prescribed.

### **B. Intraoperative care**

1. Monitor blood glucose levels frequently.
2. Administer IV short- or rapid-acting insulin as prescribed to maintain the blood glucose level lower than 200 mg/dL.

### **C. Postoperative care**

1. Administer IV glucose and insulin infusions as prescribed until the client can tolerate oral feedings.
2. Administer supplemental short-acting insulin as prescribed based on blood

glucose results.

3. Monitor blood glucose levels frequently if the client is receiving parenteral nutrition.
4. When the client is tolerating food, ensure that the client receives an adequate amount of carbohydrates daily to prevent hypoglycemia.
5. Client is at higher risk for cardiovascular and renal complications postoperatively.
6. Client is also at risk for impaired wound healing.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Hypertensive crisis can occur as a complication of pheochromocytoma.

This can result in stroke, cardiac dysrhythmias, or myocardial infarction.

Manifestations include severe headache, extremely high blood pressure (BP), dizziness, blurred vision, shortness of breath, epistaxis (nosebleed), and severe anxiety. If the nurse suspects a hypertensive crisis, the nurse should place the client in a semi-Fowler's position. The health care provider should be notified immediately and, as prescribed, the nurse should prepare to administer oxygen, start an intravenous (IV) infusion of 0.9% normal saline (NS) solution and infuse it slowly to prevent fluid overload (which would increase blood pressure), administer intravenous medications to lower the BP, monitor the blood pressure frequently, and monitor for complications.

## *Reference*

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 784.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**571.** A client is brought to the emergency department in an unresponsive state, and a diagnosis of hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome is made. The nurse would **immediately** prepare to initiate which anticipated health care provider's prescription?

1. Endotracheal intubation
2. 100 units of NPH insulin
3. Intravenous infusion of normal saline
4. Intravenous infusion of sodium bicarbonate

**572.** An external insulin pump is prescribed for a client with diabetes mellitus and the client asks the nurse about the functioning of the pump. The nurse bases the response on which information about the pump?

1. Is timed to release programmed doses of short-duration or NPH insulin into the bloodstream at specific intervals
2. Continuously infuses small amounts of NPH insulin into the bloodstream while regularly monitoring blood glucose levels
3. Is surgically attached to the pancreas and infuses regular insulin into the pancreas, which in turn releases the insulin into the bloodstream
4. Gives a small continuous dose of short-duration insulin subcutaneously, and the client can self-administer a bolus with an additional dose from the pump before each meal

**573.** A client with a diagnosis of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is being treated in the emergency department. Which findings would the nurse expect to note as confirming this diagnosis? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Increase in pH
2. Comatose state
3. Deep, rapid breathing
4. Decreased urine output
5. Elevated blood glucose level
6. Low plasma bicarbonate level

**574.** The nurse teaches a client with diabetes mellitus about differentiating between hypoglycemia and ketoacidosis. The client demonstrates an understanding of the teaching by stating that a form of glucose should be taken if which symptoms develop? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Polyuria
2. Shakiness
3. Palpitations
4. Blurred vision
5. Lightheadedness
6. Fruity breath odor

**575.** A client with diabetes mellitus demonstrates acute anxiety when first admitted to the hospital for the treatment of hyperglycemia. What is the **most appropriate**

intervention to decrease the client's anxiety?

1. Administer a sedative.
2. Convey empathy, trust, and respect toward the client.
3. Ignore the signs and symptoms of anxiety so that they will soon disappear.
4. Make sure that the client knows all the correct medical terms to understand what is happening.

576. The nurse provides instructions to a client newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes mellitus. The nurse recognizes accurate understanding of measures to prevent diabetic ketoacidosis when the client makes which statement?

1. "I will stop taking my insulin if I'm too sick to eat."
2. "I will decrease my insulin dose during times of illness."
3. "I will adjust my insulin dose according to the level of glucose in my urine."
4. "I will notify my health care provider (HCP) if my blood glucose level is higher than 250 mg/dL."

577. A client is admitted to a hospital with a diagnosis of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). The initial blood glucose level was 950 mg/dL. A continuous intravenous infusion of short-acting insulin is initiated, along with intravenous rehydration with normal saline. The serum glucose level is now 240 mg/dL. The nurse would **next** prepare to administer which item?

1. Ampule of 50% dextrose
2. NPH insulin subcutaneously

3. Intravenous fluids containing dextrose
4. Phenytoin (Dilantin) for the prevention of seizures

578. The nurse is monitoring a client newly diagnosed with diabetes mellitus for signs of complications. Which sign, if exhibited in the client, would indicate hyperglycemia?

1. Polyuria
2. Diaphoresis
3. Hypertension
4. Increased pulse rate

579. The nurse is preparing a plan of care for a client with diabetes mellitus who has hyperglycemia. The nurse places **highest priority** on which client problem?

1. Lack of knowledge
2. Inadequate fluid volume
3. Compromised family coping
4. Inadequate consumption of nutrients

580. The home health nurse visits a client with a diagnosis of type 1 diabetes mellitus. The client relates a history of vomiting and diarrhea and tells the nurse that no food has been consumed for the last 24 hours. Which additional statement by the client indicates a **need for further teaching**?

1. "I need to stop my insulin."
2. "I need to increase my fluid intake."

3. "I need to monitor my blood glucose every 3 to 4 hours."
4. "I need to call the health care provider (HCP) because of these symptoms."

**581.** The nurse is caring for a client after hypophysectomy and notes clear nasal drainage from the client's nostril. The nurse should take which **initial** action?

1. Lower the head of the bed.
2. Test the drainage for glucose.
3. Obtain a culture of the drainage.
4. Continue to observe the drainage.

**582.** After several diagnostic tests, a client is diagnosed with diabetes insipidus. The nurse performs an assessment on the client, knowing that which symptom is **most** indicative of this disorder?

1. Fatigue
2. Diarrhea
3. Polydipsia
4. Weight gain

**583.** A client is admitted to an emergency department, and a diagnosis of myxedema coma is made. Which action would the nurse prepare to carry out **initially**?

1. Warm the client.
2. Maintain a patent airway.
3. Administer thyroid hormone.
4. Administer fluid replacement.

**584.** The nurse is caring for a client admitted to the emergency department with diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). In the acute phase, the nurse plans for which **priority** intervention?

1. Correct the acidosis.
2. Administer 5% dextrose intravenously.
3. Apply a monitor for an electrocardiogram.
4. Administer short-duration insulin intravenously.

**585.** A client with type 1 diabetes mellitus calls the nurse to report recurrent episodes of hypoglycemia with exercising. Which statement by the client indicates an inadequate understanding of the peak action of NPH insulin and exercise?

1. "The best time for me to exercise is after I eat."
2. "The best time for me to exercise is after breakfast."
3. "The best time for me to exercise is mid- to late afternoon."
4. "The best time for me to exercise is after my morning snack."

**586.** The nurse is completing an assessment on a client who is being admitted for a diagnostic workup for primary hyperparathyroidism. Which client complaint would be characteristic of this disorder?

1. Diarrhea
2. Polyuria
3. Polyphagia
4. Weight gain

**587.** The nurse is caring for a postoperative parathyroidectomy client. Which client complaint would indicate that a life-threatening complication may be developing, requiring notification of the health care provider **immediately**?

1. Laryngeal stridor
2. Abdominal cramps
3. Difficulty in voiding
4. Mild to moderate incisional pain

**588.** A client is diagnosed with pheochromocytoma. The nurse understands that pheochromocytoma is a condition that has which characteristic?

1. Causes profound hypotension
2. Is manifested by severe hypoglycemia
3. Is not curable and is treated symptomatically
4. Causes the release of excessive amounts of catecholamines

**589.** The nurse is monitoring a client who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes mellitus and is being treated with NPH and regular insulin. Which client complaint(s) would alert the nurse to the presence of a possible hypoglycemic reaction?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Tremors
2. Anorexia
3. Irritability
4. Nervousness

5. Hot, dry skin
6. Muscle cramps

**590.** The nurse is performing an assessment on a client with pheochromocytoma.

Which assessment data would indicate a potential complication associated with this disorder?

1. A coagulation time of 5 minutes
2. A urinary output of 50 mL/hour
3. A blood urea nitrogen level of 20 mg/dL
4. A heart rate that is 90 beats/minute and irregular

**591.** The nursing instructor asks a student to describe the pathophysiology that occurs in Cushing's disease. Which statement by the student indicates an accurate understanding of this disorder?

1. "Cushing's disease results from an oversecretion of insulin."
2. "Cushing's disease results from an undersecretion of corticotropic hormones."
3. "Cushing's disease results from an undersecretion of mineralocorticoid hormones."
4. "Cushing's disease results from an increased pituitary secretion of adrenocorticotrophic hormone."

**592.** The nurse performs a physical assessment on a client with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Findings include a fasting blood glucose level of 120 mg/dL, temperature of 101° F, pulse of 88 beats/minute, respirations of 22

breaths/minute, and blood pressure of 100/72 mm Hg. Which finding would be of **most** concern to the nurse?

1. Pulse
2. Respiration
3. Temperature
4. Blood pressure

**593.** The nurse is interviewing a client with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Which statement by the client indicates an understanding of the treatment for this disorder?

1. "I take oral insulin instead of shots."
2. "By taking these medications, I am able to eat more."
3. "When I become ill, I need to increase the number of pills I take."
4. "The medications I'm taking help release the insulin I already make."

**594.** The nurse is providing discharge instructions to a client who has Cushing's syndrome. Which client statement indicates that instructions related to dietary management are understood?

1. "I will need to limit the amount of protein in my diet."
2. "I should eat foods that have a lot of potassium in them."
3. "I am fortunate that I can eat all the salty foods I enjoy."
4. "I am fortunate that I do not need to follow any special diet."

**595.** The nurse is caring for a client who is 2 days postoperative following an abdominal hysterectomy. The client has a history of diabetes mellitus and has

been receiving regular insulin according to capillary blood glucose testing four times a day. A carbohydrate-controlled diet has been prescribed but the client has been complaining of nausea and is not eating. On entering the client's room, the nurse finds the client to be confused and diaphoretic. Which action is **most appropriate** at this time?

1. Call a code to obtain needed assistance immediately.
2. Obtain a capillary blood glucose level and perform a focused assessment.
3. Ask the unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) to stay with the client while obtaining 15 to 30 g of a carbohydrate snack for the client to eat.
4. Stay with the client and ask the UAP to call the health care provider (HCP) for a prescription for intravenous 50% dextrose.

**596.** The nurse is caring for a client with pheochromocytoma who is scheduled for adrenalectomy. In the preoperative period, what should the nurse monitor as the **priority**?

1. Vital signs
2. Intake and output
3. Blood urea nitrogen results
4. Urine for glucose and ketones

**597.** The nurse is preparing a client with a new diagnosis of hypothyroidism for discharge. The nurse determines that the client understands discharge instructions if the client states that which symptoms are associated with this diagnosis?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Tremors
2. Weight loss
3. Feeling cold
4. Loss of body hair
5. Persistent lethargy
6. Puffiness of the face

**598.** A client has just been admitted to the nursing unit following thyroidectomy.

Which assessment is the **priority** for this client?

1. Hypoglycemia
2. Level of hoarseness
3. Respiratory distress
4. Edema at the surgical site

**599.** A client has been diagnosed with hyperthyroidism. Which signs and symptoms

may indicate thyroid storm, a complication of this disorder? **Select all that**

**apply.** ❖

1. Fever
2. Nausea
3. Lethargy
4. Tremors
5. Confusion

## 6. Bradycardia

# ANSWERS

571. 3

**Rationale:** The primary goal of treatment in hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome (HHNS) is to rehydrate the client to restore fluid volume and to correct electrolyte deficiency. Intravenous fluid replacement is similar to that administered in diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) and begins with IV infusion of normal saline. Regular insulin, not NPH insulin, would be administered. The use of sodium bicarbonate to correct acidosis is avoided because it can precipitate a further drop in serum potassium levels. Intubation and mechanical ventilation are not required to treat HHNS.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, treatment of HHNS, and note the **strategic word**, *immediately*. If you can recall the treatment for DKA, you will be able to answer this question easily. Treatment for HHNS is similar to the treatment for DKA and begins with rehydration.

**Review:** **Hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome (HHNS)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1458.

572. 4

**Rationale:** An insulin pump provides a small continuous dose of short-duration (rapid or short-acting) insulin subcutaneously throughout the day and night, and the client can self-administer a bolus with an additional dose from the pump before each meal as needed. Short-duration insulin is used in an insulin pump. An external pump is not attached surgically to the pancreas.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, use of an insulin pump. Recalling that short-duration insulin is used in an insulin pump will assist in eliminating options 1 and 2. Noting the word *external* in the question will assist in eliminating option 3.

**Review:** **Insulin pumps** and **insulin therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1227-1228, 1234.

❖ **573. 3, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** In DKA, the arterial pH is lower than 7.35, plasma bicarbonate is lower than 15 mEq/L, the blood glucose level is higher than 250 mg/dL, and ketones are present in the blood and urine. The client would be experiencing polyuria, and Kussmaul's respirations (deep and rapid breathing pattern) would be present. A comatose state may occur if DKA is not treated, but coma would not confirm the diagnosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, findings associated with DKA. Eliminate option 1 because in acidosis the pH would be low. Next, eliminate option 2 because a comatose state can exist in many conditions. Remember

that in acidosis the pH is low as is the plasma bicarbonate and that the client exhibits Kussmaul's respirations and experiences polyuria.

**Review:** **Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1244; Swearingen (2012), pp. 358-359, 365.

❖ 574. 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** Shakiness, palpitations, and lightheadedness are signs of hypoglycemia and would indicate the need for food or glucose. Polyuria, blurred vision, and a fruity breath odor are signs of hyperglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the treatment of hypoglycemia. Think about its pathophysiology and the manifestations that occur. Recalling the signs of hypoglycemia will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of **hypoglycemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1451-1452.

**Rationale:** The appropriate intervention is to address the client's feelings related to the anxiety. Administering a sedative is not the most appropriate intervention. The nurse should not ignore the client's anxious feelings. A client will not relate to medical terms, particularly when anxiety exists.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Use **therapeutic communication techniques** to answer the question. Remember that the client's feelings are the priority. Keeping this in mind will direct you easily to the correct option.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Professionalism

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1460-1461; Potter et al (2013), pp. 320-322.

#### 576. 4

**Rationale:** During illness, the client should monitor blood glucose levels and should notify the HCP if the level is higher than 250 mg/dL. Insulin should never be stopped. In fact, insulin may need to be increased during times of illness. Doses should not be adjusted without the HCP's advice and are usually adjusted on the basis of blood glucose levels, not urinary glucose readings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use general medication guidelines to answer the question. Note that options 1, 2, and 3 are **comparable or alike** and all relate to adjustment of insulin doses.

**Review:** **Sick day rules** for diabetic management

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1456.

### 577. 3

**Rationale:** During management of DKA, when the blood glucose level falls to 250 to 300 mg/dL, the infusion rate is reduced and a dextrose solution is added to maintain a blood glucose level of about 250 mg/dL, or until the client recovers from ketosis. Fifty percent dextrose is used to treat hypoglycemia. NPH insulin is not used to treat DKA. Phenytoin (Dilantin) is not a usual treatment measure for DKA.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, *next*. Focus on the **subject**, management of DKA. Eliminate option 2 first, knowing that short-duration (rapid-acting) insulin is used in the management of DKA. Eliminate option 1 next, knowing that this is the treatment for hypoglycemia. Note the words *the serum glucose level is now 240 mg/dL*. This should indicate that the IV solution containing dextrose is the next step in the management of care.

**Review:** **Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment: Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1455.

**578. 1**

**Rationale:** Classic symptoms of hyperglycemia include polydipsia, polyuria, and polyphagia. Diaphoresis may occur in hypoglycemia. Options 2, 3, and 4 are not signs of hyperglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs and symptoms of hyperglycemia. Remember the three P's associated with hyperglycemia—polyuria, polydipsia, polyphagia.

**Review:** Signs of **hyperglycemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1412-1413.

**579. 2**

**Rationale:** An increased blood glucose level will cause the kidneys to excrete the glucose in the urine. This glucose is accompanied by fluids and electrolytes, causing an osmotic diuresis leading to dehydration. This fluid loss must be replaced when it becomes severe. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not related specifically to the subject of the question.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *highest priority*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory**. The correct option indicates a physiological need and is the priority. Options 1, 3, and 4 are problems that may need to be addressed after providing for the high-priority physiological needs.

**Review:** **Hyperglycemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1412; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1242-1243.

**580. 1**

**Rationale:** When a client with diabetes mellitus is unable to eat normally because of illness, the client still should take the prescribed insulin or oral medication. The client should consume additional fluids and should notify the HCP. The client should monitor the blood glucose level every 3 to 4 hours. The client should also monitor the urine for ketones.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select the incorrect statement. Remembering that the client needs to take insulin will direct you easily to the correct option.

**Review:** **Sick day guidelines**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1456.

**581. 2**

**Rationale:** After hypophysectomy, the client should be monitored for rhinorrhea, which could indicate a cerebrospinal fluid leak. If this occurs, the drainage should be collected and tested for the presence of cerebrospinal fluid. The head of the bed should not be lowered to prevent increased intracranial pressure. Clear nasal drainage would not indicate the need for a culture. Continuing to observe the drainage without taking action could result in a serious complication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial*. This indicates that an action is required. Option 1 can be eliminated first by recalling that this action can increase intracranial pressure. Option 3 can be eliminated also, because the drainage is clear. Because an action is required, eliminate option 4.

**Review:** Complications following **hypophysectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1377.

**582. 3**

**Rationale:** Diabetes insipidus is characterized by hyposecretion of antidiuretic hormone, and the kidney tubules fail to reabsorb water. Polydipsia and polyuria are classic symptoms of diabetes insipidus. The urine is pale, and the specific gravity is low. Anorexia and weight loss occur. Option 1 is a vague symptom. Options 2 and 4 are not specific to this disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Eliminate option 1 first because this symptom is rather vague and occurs in many conditions. Knowledge of the pathophysiology and manifestations of diabetes insipidus will assist you in eliminating options 2 and 4.

**Review:** **Diabetes insipidus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 345.

**583. 2**

**Rationale:** The initial nursing action would be to maintain a patent airway. Oxygen would be administered, followed by fluid replacement, keeping the client warm, monitoring vital signs, and administering thyroid hormones by the intravenous route.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initially*. All the options are appropriate interventions, but use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—in selecting the correct option.

**Review:** **Myxedema coma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1404.

**584. 4**

**Rationale:** Lack (absolute or relative) of insulin is the primary cause of DKA. Treatment consists of insulin administration (short or rapid-acting), intravenous fluid administration (normal saline initially), and potassium replacement, followed by correcting acidosis. Applying an electrocardiogram monitor is not the priority action.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the client's diagnosis. Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Remember that in DKA, the initial treatment is short or rapid-acting insulin. Normal saline is administered initially; therefore, option 2 is incorrect. Options 1 and 3 may be components of the treatment plan but are not the priority.

**Review:** **Diabetic ketoacidosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1455.

**585. 3**

**Rationale:** A hypoglycemic reaction may occur in response to increased exercise. Clients should avoid exercise during the peak time of insulin. NPH insulin peaks at 4 to 12 hours; therefore, afternoon exercise takes place during the peak of the medication. Options 1, 2, and 4 do not address peak action times.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the words *inadequate understanding*. Focus on the **subject**, peak action of NPH

insulin. Recalling that NPH insulin peaks at 4 to 12 hours will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Peak action of NPH insulin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1441-1442; Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 785.

**586. 2**

**Rationale:** Hypercalcemia is the hallmark of hyperparathyroidism. Elevated serum calcium levels produce osmotic diuresis and thus polyuria. This diuresis leads to dehydration (weight loss rather than weight gain). Options 1, 3, and 4 are not associated with hyperparathyroidism. Some gastrointestinal symptoms include anorexia, nausea, vomiting, and constipation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an assessment finding. Think about the pathophysiology associated with hyperparathyroidism. Remember that hypercalcemia is associated with this disorder and that hypercalcemia leads to diuresis.

**Review: Hyperparathyroidism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1406.

**587. 1**

**Rationale:** During the postoperative period, the nurse carefully observes the client for signs of hemorrhage, which causes swelling and compression of adjacent tissue. Laryngeal stridor is a harsh, high-pitched sound heard on inspiration and expiration; stridor is caused by compression of the trachea, leading to respiratory distress. Stridor is an acute emergency situation that requires immediate attention to avoid complete obstruction of the airway. Options 2, 3, and 4 do not identify signs of a life-threatening complication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Consider the anatomical location of the surgical procedure and use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to select the correct option. Also note the **strategic word** *immediately*. Options 2, 3, and 4 are postoperative findings that can occur but are not life-threatening. The correct option addresses the airway.

**Review: Parathyroidectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1399, 1407.

**588. 4**

**Rationale:** Pheochromocytoma is a catecholamine-producing tumor and causes secretion of excessive amounts of epinephrine and norepinephrine. Hypertension is the principal manifestation, and the client has episodes of high

blood pressure accompanied by pounding headaches. The excessive release of catecholamine also results in excessive conversion of glycogen into glucose in the liver. Consequently, hyperglycemia and glucosuria occur during attacks. Pheochromocytoma is curable. The primary treatment is surgical removal of one or both of the adrenal glands, depending on whether the tumor is unilateral or bilateral.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of pheochromocytoma. Recalling that pheochromocytoma is a catecholamine-producing tumor will assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** **Pheochromocytoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1284.

❖ **589. 1, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** Decreased blood glucose levels produce autonomic nervous system symptoms, which are manifested classically as nervousness, irritability, and tremors. Option 5 is more likely to occur with hyperglycemia. Options 2 and 6 are unrelated to the signs of hypoglycemia. In hypoglycemia, usually the client feels hunger.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a hypoglycemic reaction. Think about the manifestations that occur when the blood glucose is low. Recalling the signs of this type of reaction will direct you easily to the correct options.

**Review:** Signs of **hypoglycemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1452.

#### 590. 4

**Rationale:** The complications associated with pheochromocytoma include hypertensive retinopathy and nephropathy, myocarditis, increased platelet aggregation, and stroke. Death can occur from shock, stroke, kidney failure, dysrhythmias, or dissecting aortic aneurysm. An irregular heart rate indicates the presence of a dysrhythmia. A coagulation time of 5 minutes is normal. A urinary output of 50 mL/hour is an adequate output. A blood urea nitrogen level of 20 mg/dL is a normal finding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. An irregular heart rate is associated with circulation. In addition, if you knew the normal hourly expectations associated with urinary output and the normal laboratory values for coagulation time and blood urea nitrogen level, you would be easily directed to the correct option.

**Review:** Complications associated with **pheochromocytoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1390-1391.

**591. 4**

**Rationale:** Cushing's disease is a metabolic disorder characterized by abnormally increased secretion (endogenous) of cortisol, caused by increased amounts of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) secreted by the pituitary gland.

Addison's disease is characterized by the hyopsecretion of adrenal cortex hormones (glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids) from the adrenal gland, resulting in deficiency of the corticosteroid hormones. Options 1, 2, and 3 are inaccurate regarding Cushing's disease.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the pathophysiology of Cushing's disease. Options 2 and 3 can be eliminated easily if you remember that in *Cushing's (up)* disease there is an oversecretion and in *Addison's disease (down)* there is an undersecretion. Next, eliminate option 1 because this disease is unrelated to insulin.

**Review:** **Cushing's disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1276.

**592. 3**

**Rationale:** An elevated temperature may indicate infection. Infection is a leading cause of hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome or diabetic ketoacidosis. The other findings noted in the question are within normal limits.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Use knowledge of the normal values of vital signs to direct you to the correct option. The client's temperature is the only abnormal value. Remember that an elevated temperature can indicate an infectious process that can lead to complications in the client with diabetes mellitus.

**Review:** Normal and abnormal findings for the client with **diabetes mellitus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Glucose Regulation; Infection

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1455; Swearingen (2012), pp. 352-353.

**593. 4**

**Rationale:** Clients with type 2 diabetes mellitus have decreased or impaired insulin secretion. Oral hypoglycemic agents are given to these clients to facilitate glucose uptake. Insulin injections may be given during times of stress-induced hyperglycemia. Oral insulin is not available because of the breakdown of the insulin by digestion. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, type 2 diabetes mellitus. Eliminate option 1 because *oral insulin* is not available. Treatment with medication does not mean that the client can eat more; therefore, eliminate option 2. Recalling that during times of illness insulin may be required will eliminate option 3.

**Review:** Treatment measures for type 2 **diabetes mellitus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1235-1236.

**594. 2**

**Rationale:** A diet low in carbohydrates and sodium but ample in protein and potassium is encouraged for a client with Cushing's syndrome. Such a diet promotes weight loss, reduction of edema and hypertension, control of hypokalemia, and rebuilding of wasted tissue.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, dietary guidelines for Cushing's syndrome. Eliminate option 4 because it reflects that no dietary change is necessary. Eliminate option 1 next because protein most likely is limited in liver or renal disorders (not in Cushing's syndrome). From the remaining options, eliminate option 3 because excess sodium is not normally healthy.

**Review:** Dietary management in **Cushing's syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1387.

**595. 2**

**Rationale:** Diaphoresis and confusion are signs of moderate hypoglycemia. A likely cause of the client's change in

condition could be related to the administration of insulin without the client eating enough food. However, an assessment is necessary to confirm the presence of hypoglycemia. The nurse would obtain a capillary blood glucose level to confirm the hypoglycemia and perform a focused assessment to determine the extent and cause of the client's condition. Once hypoglycemia is confirmed, the nurse stays with the client and asks the unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) to obtain the appropriate carbohydrate snack. A code is called if the client is not breathing or if the heart is not beating.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the data in the question and note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*.

Eliminate option 1 because there are no data in the question indicating the need to call a code. Eliminate option 3 next because it is inappropriate to ask a UAP to call the HCP for a prescription. To select from the remaining options, use the **steps of the nursing process**, recalling that assessment is the first step.

**Review:** **Hypoglycemic reaction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 365.

**596. 1**

**Rationale:** Pheochromocytoma is a catecholamine-producing tumor. Hypertension is the hallmark of pheochromocytoma. Severe hypertension can precipitate a stroke or sudden blindness. Although all the options are accurate nursing interventions for the client with pheochromocytoma, the priority nursing action is to monitor the vital signs, particularly the blood pressure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**.

Monitoring vital signs is the nursing action that would assess airway, breathing, and circulation. Also, options 2, 3, and 4 refer to the assessment of the renal system, whereas the correct option does not.

**Review:** Preoperative care of the client with **pheochromocytoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1284.

**597. 3, 4, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** Feeling cold, hair loss, lethargy, and facial puffiness are signs of hypothyroidism. Tremors and weight loss are signs of hyperthyroidism.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, pathophysiology associated with hypothyroidism. Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated if you remember that in *hypothyroidism* there is an *under*-secretion of thyroid hormone that causes the metabolism to *slow* down.

**Review:** **Hypothyroidism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1264.

**598. 3**

**Rationale:** Thyroidectomy is the removal of the thyroid gland, which is located in the anterior neck. It is very important to monitor airway status as any swelling to the surgical site could cause respiratory distress. Although all the options are important for the nurse to monitor, the priority nursing action is to monitor the airway.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**, to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review: Thyroidectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1268-1269.

❖ **599. 1, 2, 4, 5**

**Rationale:** Thyroid storm is an acute and life-threatening condition that occurs in a client with uncontrollable hyperthyroidism. Symptoms of thyroid storm include elevated temperature (fever), nausea, and tremors. In addition, as the condition progresses, the client becomes confused. The client is restless and anxious and experiences tachycardia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs and symptoms of thyroid storm. Options 3 and 6 can be

eliminated if you remember that thyroid storm is caused by the release of thyroid hormones into the bloodstream, causing uncontrollable *hyper*thyroidism. Lethargy and bradycardia (think: slow down) are signs of *hypo*thyroidism (slow metabolism).

**Review:** **Thyroid storm**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Caregiving

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1265.



## CHAPTER 55

# Endocrine Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is reviewing the medical record of a client scheduled for a computerized tomography (CT) scan with an intravenous iodine contrast dye and notes that the client has diabetes mellitus and is taking metformin (Glucophage). What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 676.*

### I. Pituitary Medications

#### A. Description

1. The anterior pituitary gland secretes growth hormone (GH), thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), prolactin, melanocyte-stimulating hormone (MSH), and gonadotropins (follicle-stimulating hormone [FSH] and luteinizing hormone [LH]).
2. The posterior pituitary gland secretes antidiuretic hormone (vasopressin) and

oxytocin.

## B. Growth hormones and related medications (Box 55-1)

### BOX 55-1 Growth Hormones and Related Medications

#### Growth Hormones

- Somatropin (Humatrope, Omnitrope)
- Mecasermin (Increlex)

#### Growth Hormone Receptor Antagonists

- Octreotide acetate (Sandostatin)
- Pegvisomant (Somavert)

#### 1. Uses

- a. Growth hormones are used to treat pediatric or adult growth hormone deficiency.
- b. Growth hormone receptor antagonists are used to treat acromegaly.
- c. Growth hormone–releasing factor is used to evaluate anterior pituitary function.

#### 2. Side/adverse effects

- a. May vary depending on the medication
- b. Development of antibodies to growth hormone
- c. Headache, muscle pain, weakness, vertigo
- d. Diarrhea, nausea, abdominal discomfort
- e. Mild **hyperglycemia**

f. Hypertension

g. Weight gain

h. Allergic reaction (rash, swelling), pain at injection site

i. Elevated aspartate aminotransferase (AST) and alanine aminotransferase (ALT)

### 3. Interventions ▲

a. Assess the child's physical growth and compare growth with standards.

b. Recommend annual bone age determinations for children receiving growth hormones.

c. Monitor vital signs, blood glucose levels, AST and ALT levels, and thyroid function tests.

d. Teach the client and family about the clinical manifestations of hyperglycemia and about other side/adverse effects of therapy and the importance of follow-up regarding periodic blood tests.

## II. Antidiuretic Hormones ▲

A. Desmopressin acetate (DDAVP, Stimate, Minirin); vasopressin (Pitressin)

### B. Description

1. Antidiuretic hormones enhance reabsorption of water in the kidneys, promoting an antidiuretic effect and regulating fluid balance.

2. Antidiuretic hormones are used in **diabetes insipidus**.

### C. Side/adverse effects ▲

1. Flushing

2. Headache

3. Nausea and abdominal cramps
4. Water intoxication
5. Hypertension with water intoxication
6. Nasal congestion with nasal administration

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor weight.
2. Monitor intake and output and urine osmolality.
3. Monitor electrolyte levels.
4. Monitor for signs of dehydration, indicating the need to increase the dosage.
5. Monitor for signs of water intoxication (drowsiness, listlessness, shortness of breath, and headache), indicating need to decrease dosage. ▲
6. Monitor blood pressure.
7. Instruct the client in how to use the intranasal medication.
8. Instruct the client to weigh him- or herself daily to identify weight gain.
9. Instruct the client to report signs of water intoxication or symptoms of headache or shortness of breath.

### III. Thyroid Hormones (Box 55-2)

#### BOX 55-2 Thyroid Hormones

- Levothyroxine sodium (Synthroid, Levothroid, Levoxyl)
- Liothyronine sodium (Cytomel, Triostat)

- Liotrix (Thyrolar)
- Thyroid (Armour Thyroid, Nature-Thyroid, Thyroid USP, Westhroid)

## A. Description

1. Thyroid hormones control the metabolic rate of tissues and accelerate heat production and oxygen consumption. ▲
2. Thyroid hormones are used to replace the thyroid hormone deficit in conditions such as **hypothyroidism** and **myxedema coma**.
3. Thyroid hormones enhance the action of oral anticoagulants, sympathomimetics, and antidepressants and decrease the action of insulin, oral hypoglycemics, and digitalis preparations; the action of thyroid hormones is decreased by phenytoin (Dilantin) and carbamazepine (Tegretol).
4. Thyroid hormones should be given at least 4 hours apart from multivitamins, aluminum hydroxide and magnesium hydroxide, simethicone, calcium carbonate, bile acid sequestrants, iron, and sucralfate (Carafate) because these medications decrease the absorption of thyroid replacements. ▲

## B. Side/adverse effects ▲

1. Nausea and decreased appetite
2. Abdominal cramps and diarrhea
3. Weight loss
4. Nervousness and tremors
5. Insomnia

6. Sweating
7. Heat intolerance (mild, side effect; extreme, adverse effect)
8. Tachycardia, dysrhythmias, palpitations, chest pain
9. Hypertension
10. Headache
11. Toxicity: **Hyperthyroidism**

### C. Interventions

1. Assess the client for a history of medications currently being taken.
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Monitor weight.
4. Monitor triiodothyronine, thyroxine, and thyroid-stimulating hormone levels.
5. Instruct the client to take the medication at the same time each day, in the morning without food. 
6. Instruct the client in how to monitor the pulse rate.
7. Instruct the client to avoid foods that can inhibit thyroid secretion, such as strawberries, peaches, pears, cabbage, turnips, spinach, kale, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, radishes, and peas.
8. Advise the client to avoid over-the-counter medications.
9. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

 Advise the client taking a thyroid hormone to report symptoms of hyperthyroidism, such as tachycardia, chest pain, palpitations, and excessive sweating. These indicate signs of toxicity.

## IV. Antithyroid Medications (Box 55-3)

### BOX 55-3 Antithyroid Medications

- Methimazole (Tapazole)
- Propylthiouracil (PTU)
- Strong iodine solution (Lugol's solution)
- Potassium iodide (SSKI, ThyroShield)
- Sodium iodide,  $^{131}\text{I}$

#### A. Description

1. Antithyroid medications inhibit the synthesis of thyroid hormone.
2. Antithyroid medications are used for hyperthyroidism, or Graves' disease.

#### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Nausea and vomiting
2. Diarrhea
3. Drowsiness, headache, fever
4. Hypersensitivity with rash
5. Agranulocytosis with leukopenia and thrombocytopenia
6. Alopecia and hyperpigmentation
7. Toxicity: Hypothyroidism
8. Iodism: Characterized by vomiting, abdominal pain, metallic or brassy taste in the mouth, rash, and sore gums and salivary glands ▲

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor triiodothyronine, thyroxine, and thyroid-stimulating hormone levels.
3. Monitor weight.
4. Instruct the client to take medication with meals to avoid gastrointestinal upset.
5. Instruct the client in how to monitor the pulse rate.
6. Inform the client of side/adverse effects and when to notify the health care provider (HCP).
7. Instruct the client in the signs of hypothyroidism.
8. Instruct the client regarding the importance of medication compliance and that abruptly stopping the medication could cause **thyroid storm**. ▲
9. Instruct the client to monitor for signs and symptoms of thyroid storm (fever, flushed skin, confusion and behavioral changes, tachycardia, dysrhythmias, and signs of heart failure). ▲
10. Instruct the client to monitor for signs of iodism.
11. Advise the client to consult the HCP before eating iodized salt and iodine-rich foods. ▲
12. Instruct the client to avoid acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) and medications containing iodine. ▲

**⚠ Propylthiouracil (PTU) causes agranulocytosis. Therefore, advise the client to contact the HCP if a fever or sore throat develops.**

## V. Parathyroid Medications (Box 55-4)

### BOX 55-4 Medications to Treat Calcium Disorders

#### Oral Calcium Supplements

- Calcium acetate (PhosLo)
- Calcium carbonate (Rolaids, Tums, others)
- Calcium chloride
- Calcium citrate (Citracal)
- Calcium glubionate (Calcionate, Calciquid)
- Calcium gluconate
- Calcium lactate (Cal-Lac)
- Tribasic calcium phosphate (Posture)

#### Vitamin D Supplements

- Cholecalciferol (vitamin D<sub>3</sub>)
- Ergocalciferol (vitamin D<sub>2</sub>)

#### Bisphosphonates and Calcium Regulators

- Alendronate sodium (Fosamax)
- Calcitonin salmon (Fortical, Miacalcin)
- Etidronate disodium (Didronel)
- Ibandronate (Boniva)
- Pamidronate disodium

- Risedronate sodium (Actonel)
- Tiludronate disodium (Skelid)
- Zoledronate (Reclast)
- Zoledronate (Zometa)

### Medications to Treat Hypercalcemia

- Cinacalcet hydrochloride (Sensipar)
- Doxercalciferol (Hectorol)
- Gallium nitrate (Ganite)
- Paricalcitol (Zemlar)

#### A. Description

1. Parathyroid hormone regulates serum calcium levels. ▲
2. Low serum levels of calcium stimulate parathyroid hormone release.
3. Hyperparathyroidism results in a high serum calcium level and bone demineralization; medication is used to lower the serum calcium level.
4. Hypoparathyroidism results in a low serum calcium level, which increases neuromuscular excitability; treatment includes calcium and vitamin D supplements.
5. Calcium salts administered with digoxin (Lanoxin) increase the risk of digoxin toxicity.
6. Oral calcium salts reduce the absorption of tetracycline hydrochloride.

#### B. Interventions

1. Monitor electrolyte and calcium levels.
2. Assess for signs and symptoms of hypocalcemia and hypercalcemia.
3. Assess for symptoms of tetany in the client with hypocalcemia. ▲
4. Assess for renal calculi in the client with hypercalcemia.
5. Instruct the client in the signs and symptoms of hypercalcemia and hypocalcemia.
6. Instruct the client to check over-the-counter medication labels for the possibility of calcium content.
7. Instruct the client receiving oral calcium supplements to maintain an adequate intake of vitamin D because vitamin D enhances absorption of calcium. ▲
8. Instruct the client receiving calcium regulators such as alendronate sodium (Fosamax) to swallow the tablet whole with water at least 30 minutes before breakfast and not to lie down for at least 30 minutes. ▲
9. Instruct the client using nasal spray of calcitonin (Fortical; Miacalcin) to alternate nares.
10. Instruct the client using antihypercalcemic agents to avoid foods rich in calcium such as green, leafy vegetables; dairy products; shellfish; and soy. ▲
11. Instruct the client not to take other medications within 1 hour of taking a calcium supplement. ▲
12. Instruct the client to increase fluid and fiber in the diet to prevent constipation associated with calcium supplements.

## **VI. Corticosteroids (Mineralocorticoids)**

## A. Fludrocortisone acetate (Florinef)

### B. Description

1. Mineralocorticoids are steroid hormones that enhance the reabsorption of sodium and chloride and promote the excretion of potassium and hydrogen from the renal tubules, thereby helping maintain fluid and electrolyte balance.
2. Mineralocorticoids are used for replacement therapy in primary and secondary adrenal insufficiency in **Addison's disease**. ▲

### C. Side/adverse effects

1. Sodium and water retention (hypernatremia and edema), hypertension ▲
2. Hypokalemia
3. Hypocalcemia
4. Osteoporosis, compression fractures
5. Weight gain
6. Heart failure

### D. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor intake and output, weight, and for edema.
3. Monitor electrolyte and calcium levels.
4. Instruct the client to take medication with food or milk. ▲
5. Instruct the client to consume a high-potassium diet.
6. Instruct the client to report illness, such as severe diarrhea, vomiting, and fever.
7. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if low blood pressure, weakness, cramping,

palpitations, or changes in mental status occur.

8. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

 Instruct the client taking a corticosteroid not to stop the medication abruptly because this could result in adrenal insufficiency.

## VII. Corticosteroids (Glucocorticoids) (Box 55-5)

### BOX 55-5 Corticosteroids: Glucocorticoids

- Betamethasone (Celestone)
- Cortisone acetate
- Dexamethasone
- Hydrocortisone
- Methylprednisolone (Medrol)
- Prednisolone (Millipred, Prelone)
- Prednisone
- Triamcinolone (Kenalog, Nasacort AQ)

#### A. Description

1. Glucocorticoids affect glucose, protein, and bone metabolism; alter the normal immune response and suppress inflammation; and produce antiinflammatory, antiallergic, and antistress effects.
2. Glucocorticoids may be used as a replacement in adrenocortical insufficiency.

#### B. Side/adverse effects

**1. Hyperglycemia**

2. Hypokalemia

3. Hypocalcemia, osteoporosis

4. Sodium and fluid retention

5. Weight gain

6. Mood swings

7. Moon face, buffalo hump, truncal obesity

8. Increased susceptibility to infection and masking of the signs and symptoms of infection

9. Cataracts

10. Hirsutism, acne, fragile skin, bruising

11. Growth retardation in children

12. Gastrointestinal (GI) irritation, peptic ulcer, pancreatitis

13. Seizures, psychosis

**C. Contraindications and cautions ▲**

1. Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity, psychosis, and fungal infections

2. Should be used with caution in clients with **diabetes mellitus**

3. Should be used with extreme caution in clients with infections because they mask the signs and symptoms of an infection

4. Increase the potency of medications taken concurrently, such as aspirin, and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs, thus increasing the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding and ulceration.

5. Use of potassium-wasting diuretics increases potassium loss, resulting in hypokalemia.
6. Dexamethasone decreases the effects of orally administered anticoagulants and antidiabetic agents.
7. Barbiturates, phenytoin (Dilantin), and rifampin (Rifadin) decrease the effect of prednisone.

**D. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor serum electrolyte and blood glucose levels.
3. Monitor for hypokalemia and hyperglycemia.
4. Monitor intake and output, weight, and for edema.
5. Monitor for hypertension.
6. Assess medical history for glaucoma, cataracts, peptic ulcer, mental health disorders, or diabetes mellitus.
7. Monitor the older client for signs and symptoms of increased osteoporosis.
8. Assess for changes in muscle strength.
9. Prepare a schedule as needed, for the client with information on short-term tapered doses.
10. Instruct the client that it is best to take medication in the early morning with food or milk.
11. Advise the client to eat foods high in potassium.
12. Instruct the client to avoid individuals with respiratory infections.

13. Advise the client to inform all health care providers of the medication regimen.
14. Instruct the client to report signs and symptoms of a medication overdose or **Cushing's syndrome**, including a moon face, puffy eyelids, edema in the feet, increased bruising, dizziness, bleeding, and menstrual irregularities.
15. Note that the client may need additional doses during periods of stress, such as surgery.
16. Instruct the client not to stop the medication abruptly because abrupt withdrawal can result in severe adrenal insufficiency.
17. Advise the client to consult with the HCP before receiving vaccinations.
18. Advise the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## VIII. Androgens (Box 55-6)

### BOX 55-6 Androgens

- Fluoxymesterone
- Methyltestosterone (Testred)

#### Testosterone Preparations

- Testosterone, pellets (Testopel)
- Testosterone, transdermal (Androderm)
- Testosterone cypionate (Depo-Testosterone)
- Testosterone enanthate (Delatestryl)
- Testosterone, buccal patch (Striant)

## ■ Testosterone, topical gel (AndroGel)

### A. Description ▲

1. Used to replace deficient hormones or to treat hormone-sensitive disorders
2. Can cause bleeding if the client is taking oral anticoagulants (increase the effect of anticoagulants)
3. Can cause decreased serum glucose concentration, thereby reducing insulin requirements in the client with diabetes mellitus
4. Hepatotoxic medications are avoided with the use of androgens because of the risk of additive damage to the liver.
5. Androgens usually are avoided in men with known prostate or breast carcinoma because androgens often stimulate growth of these tumors.

### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Masculine secondary sexual characteristics (body hair growth, lowered voice, muscle growth)
2. Bladder irritation and urinary tract infections
3. Breast tenderness
4. Gynecomastia
5. Priapism
6. Menstrual irregularities
7. Virilism
8. Sodium and water retention with edema

9. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

10. Acne

11. Changes in libido

12. Hepatotoxicity, jaundice

13. Hypercalcemia ▲

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.

2. Monitor for edema, weight gain, and skin changes.

3. Assess mental status and neurological function.

4. Assess for signs of liver dysfunction, including right upper quadrant abdominal pain, malaise, fever, jaundice, and pruritus.

5. Assess for the development of secondary sexual characteristics.

6. Instruct the client to take medication with meals or a snack.

7. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if priapism develops.

8. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if fluid retention occurs.

9. Instruct women to use a nonhormonal contraceptive while on therapy.

10. For women, monitor for menstrual irregularities and decreased breast size.

## IX. Estrogens and Progestins

### A. Description

1. Estrogens are steroids that stimulate female reproductive tissue.

2. Progestins are steroids that specifically stimulate the uterine lining.

3. Estrogen and progestin preparations may be used to stimulate the endogenous

hormones to restore hormonal balance or to treat hormone-sensitive tumors (suppress tumor growth) or for contraception ([Boxes 55-7](#) and [55-8](#)). ▲

### **BOX 55-7** Estrogens

- Esterified estrogens (Menest)
- Estradiol (Estrace, Climara)
- Estrogens, conjugated (Premarin, Cenestin, Enjuvia)
- Ethinyl estradiol (Estinyl)

### **BOX 55-8** Progestins

- Estradiol/drospirenone (Angelic)
- Estradiol/norgestimate (Prefest)
- Estradiol/northindrone (Femhrt, Junel, Loestrin)
- Estradiol/etonogestrel (NuvaRing)
- Medroxyprogesterone acetate (Depo-Provera, Provera)
- Medroxyprogesterone and conjugated estrogens (Premphase, Prempro)
- Megestrol acetate (Megace)
- Norethindrone acetate (Aygestin)
- Norgestrel
- Progesterone (Prometrium)

## **B. Contraindications and cautions**

### **1. Estrogens**

- a.** Estrogens are contraindicated in clients with breast cancer, endometrial hyperplasia, endometrial cancer, history of thromboembolism, known or suspected pregnancy, or lactation. ▲
- b.** Use estrogens with caution in clients with hypertension, gallbladder disease, or liver or kidney dysfunction.
- c.** Estrogens increase the risk of toxicity when used with hepatotoxic medications.
- d.** Barbiturates, phenytoin (Dilantin), and rifampin (Rifadin) decrease the effectiveness of estrogen. ▲

- 2.** Progestins are contraindicated in clients with thromboembolic disorders and should be avoided in clients with breast tumors or hepatic disease.

## **C. Side/adverse effects**

- 1.** Breast tenderness, menstrual changes
- 2.** Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- 3.** Malaise, depression, excessive irritability
- 4.** Weight gain
- 5.** Edema and fluid retention
- 6.** Atherosclerosis
- 7.** Hypertension, stroke, myocardial infarction ▲
- 8.** Thromboembolism (estrogen) ▲
- 9.** Migraine headaches and vomiting (estrogen)

## D. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor for hypertension.
3. Assess for edema and weight gain.
4. Advise the client not to smoke.
5. Advise the client to undergo routine breast and pelvic examinations.

## X. Contraceptives

### A. Description

1. These medications contain a combination of estrogen and a progestin or a progestin alone.
2. Estrogen-progestin combinations suppress ovulation and change the cervical mucus, making it difficult for sperm to enter.
3. Medications that contain only progestins are less effective than the combined medications.
4. Contraceptives usually are taken for 21 consecutive days and stopped for 7 days; the administration cycle is then repeated. ▲
5. Contraceptives provide reversible prevention of pregnancy.
6. Contraceptives are useful in controlling irregular or excessive menstrual cycles.
7. Risk factors associated with the development of complications related to the use of contraceptives include smoking, obesity, and hypertension. ▲
8. Contraceptives are contraindicated in women with hypertension, thromboembolic disease, cerebrovascular or coronary artery disease, estrogen-dependent cancers,

and pregnancy. ▲

9. Contraceptives should be avoided with the use of hepatotoxic medications. ▲
10. Contraceptives interfere with the activity of bromocriptine mesylate (Parlodel) and anticoagulants and increase the toxicity of tricyclic antidepressants.
11. Contraceptives may alter blood glucose levels.
12. Antibiotics may decrease the absorption and effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Breakthrough bleeding
2. Excessive cervical mucus formation
3. Breast tenderness
4. Hypertension
5. Nausea, vomiting

#### **C. Interventions ▲**

1. Monitor vital signs and weight.
2. Instruct the client in the administration of the medication (it may take up to 1 week for full contraceptive effect to occur when the medication is begun).
3. Instruct the client with diabetes mellitus to monitor blood glucose levels carefully.
4. Instruct the client to report signs of thromboembolic complications.
5. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if vaginal bleeding or menstrual irregularities occur or if pregnancy is suspected.
6. Advise the client to use an alternative method of birth control when taking antibiotics because these may decrease absorption of the oral contraceptive.

7. Instruct the client to perform breast self-examination monthly and about the importance of annual physical examinations.

**8. Contraceptive patches**

- a. Designed to be worn for 3 weeks and removed for a 1-week period
- b. Applied on clean, dry, intact skin on the buttocks, abdomen, upper outer arm, or upper torso
- c. Instruct the client to peel away half of the backing on a patch, apply the sticky surface to the skin, remove the other half of the backing, and then press down on the patch with the palm for 10 seconds.
- d. Instruct the client to change the patch weekly, using a new location for each patch.
- e. If the patch falls off and remains off for less than 24 hours (such as when the client is sleeping or is unaware that it has fallen off), it can be reapplied if still sticky, or it can be replaced with a new patch. ▲
- f. If the patch is off for more than 24 hours, a new 4-week cycle must be started immediately. ▲

**9. Vaginal ring**

- a. Inserted into the vagina by the client, left in place for 3 weeks, and removed for 1 week
- b. The medication is absorbed through mucous membranes of the vagina.
- c. Removed rings should be wrapped in a foil pouch and discarded, not flushed down the toilet.

**10.** Implants and depot injections provide long-acting forms of birth control, from 3 months to 5 years in duration.

**⚠️** If the client decides to discontinue the contraceptive to become pregnant, recommend that the client use an alternative form of birth control for 2 months after discontinuation to ensure more complete excretion of hormonal agents before conception.

## **XI. Fertility Medications (Box 55-9)**

### **BOX 55-9 Fertility Medications**

- Chorionic gonadotropin (Novarel, Pregnyl)
- Clomiphene citrate (Clomid, Serophene)
- Follitropin alfa (Gonal-f)
- Follitropin beta (Follistim AQ)
- Menotropins (Repronex, Menopur)
- Urofollitropin (Bravelle)
- Lutropin alfa (Luveris)

#### **A. Description**

1. Fertility medications act to stimulate follicle development and ovulation in functioning ovaries and are combined with human chorionic gonadotropin to maintain the follicles once ovulation has occurred.
2. Fertility medications are contraindicated in the presence of primary ovarian

dysfunction, thyroid or adrenal dysfunction, ovarian cysts, pregnancy, or idiopathic uterine bleeding. ▲

3. Fertility medications should be used with caution in clients with thromboembolic or respiratory disease. ▲

## **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Risk of multiple births and birth defects ▲
2. Ovarian overstimulation (abdominal pain, distention, ascites, pleural effusion) ▲
3. Headache, irritability
4. Fluid retention and bloating
5. Nausea, vomiting
6. Uterine bleeding
7. Ovarian enlargement
8. Gynecomastia
9. Rash
10. Orthostatic hypotension
11. Febrile reactions

## **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Instruct the client regarding administration of the medication.
2. Provide a calendar of treatment days and instructions on when intercourse should occur to increase therapeutic effectiveness of the medication.
3. Provide information about the risks and hazards of multiple births.
4. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if signs of ovarian overstimulation occur.

5. Inform the client about the need for regular follow-up for evaluation.

## **XII. Medications for Erectile Dysfunction**

### **A. Description**

1. Alprostadil (Caverject, Edex, Muse) is a prostaglandin that relaxes smooth muscle and promotes blood flow when injected directly into the corpus cavernosum.
2. Sildenafil (Viagra), tadalafil (Cialis), and vardenafil (Levitra) cause smooth muscle relaxation and allow blood flow into the corpus cavernosum.
3. Erectile dysfunction medications are contraindicated in the presence of any anatomical obstruction or condition that might predispose to priapism and in clients with penile implants. ▲
4. Caution should be used in clients with bleeding disorders.
5. Sildenafil, tadalafil, and vardenafil are used cautiously in clients with coronary artery disease, active peptic ulcer disease, bleeding disorders, or retinitis pigmentosa. ▲
6. Sildenafil, tadalafil, and vardenafil cannot be administered to clients taking nitrates, nitroprusside, or  $\beta$ -blockers. ▲

### **B. Side/adverse effects ▲**

1. Alprostadil: Pain at the injection site, infection, priapism, penile fibrosis, rash
2. Sildenafil, tadalafil, and vardenafil: Headache, flushing, dyspepsia, urinary tract infection, diarrhea, hypotension, dizziness, rash, neuralgia, insomnia

### 3. Blurred vision and changes in color vision

#### C. Interventions

1. Perform a thorough assessment of health and medication history.
2. Instruct the client regarding administration of the medication; alprostadil is injected intracavernously; sildenafil, tadalafil, and vardenafil are taken orally.
3. Inform the client of side/adverse effects necessitating the need to notify the HCP.



## XIII. Medications for Diabetes Mellitus

### A. Insulin and oral hypoglycemic medications

#### 1. Description

- a. Insulin increases glucose transport into cells and promotes conversion of glucose to glycogen, decreasing serum glucose levels.
- b. Oral hypoglycemic agents stimulate the pancreas to produce more insulin, increase the sensitivity of peripheral receptors to insulin, decrease hepatic glucose output, or delay intestinal absorption of glucose, thus decreasing serum glucose levels.

#### 2. Contraindications and concerns

- a. Insulin is contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity.
- b. Oral hypoglycemic agents are contraindicated in type 1 diabetes mellitus.
- c.  $\beta$ -Adrenergic blocking agents may mask signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia associated with hypoglycemic medications. 
- d. Anticoagulants, chloramphenicol (Chloromycetin), salicylates, propranolol

(Inderal), monoamine oxidase inhibitors, pentamidine (Pentam 300, Nebupent), and sulfonamides may cause hypoglycemia.

- e. Corticosteroids, sympathomimetics, thiazide diuretics, phenytoin (Dilantin), thyroid preparations, oral contraceptives, and estrogen compounds may cause hyperglycemia. ▲
- f. Side/adverse effects of the sulfonylureas include gastrointestinal symptoms and dermatological reactions; hypoglycemia can occur when an excessive dose is administered or when meals are omitted or delayed, food intake is decreased, or activity is increased. ▲

⚠ **Sulfonylureas can cause a disulfiram type of reaction when alcohol is ingested.**

## B. Oral hypoglycemic medications

1. Prescribed for clients with type 2 diabetes mellitus
2. Sulfonylureas (Box 55-10)

### BOX 55-10

### Sulfonylureas and Nonsulfonylureas

#### Sulfonylureas

- Chlorpropamide
- Glimepiride (Amaryl)
- Glipizide (Glucotrol)
- Glyburide (DiaBeta, Micronase)
- Tolazamide (Tolinase)

- Tolbutamide

### Biguanide

- Metformin (Glucophage)

### $\alpha$ -Glucosidase Inhibitors

- Acarbose (Precose)
- Miglitol (Glyset)

### Thiazolidinediones

- Pioglitazone (Actos)
- Rosiglitazone (Avandia)

### Meglitinides

- Nateglinide (Starlix)
- Repaglinide (Prandin)

### Gliptins

- Sitagliptin (Januvia)
- Saxagliptin (Onglyza)

- a. Sulfonylureas may be classified as first- or second-generation sulfonylureas.
  - b. Sulfonylureas stimulate the beta cells to produce more insulin.
3. Biguanide (see [Box 55-10](#))
  - a. May be used alone or in combination with a sulfonylurea

- b.** Suppresses hepatic production of glucose and increases insulin sensitivity
- c.** Side/adverse effects: Diarrhea (most common), lactic acidosis (most serious)

**4.**  $\alpha$ -Glucosidase inhibitors (see [Box 55-10](#))

- a.** Delay absorption of ingested carbohydrates (sucrose and complex carbohydrates), resulting in smaller increase in blood glucose level after meals.
- b.** Do not increase insulin production.
- c.** Can be given alone or in combination with sulfonylureas
- d.** Will not cause hypoglycemia when given alone
- e.** Given with first bite of meal

**5.** Thiazolidinediones (see [Box 55-10](#))

- a.** Insulin-sensitizing agents that lower blood glucose by decreasing hepatic glucose production and improving target cell response to insulin
- b.** May cause liver toxicity

**6.** Meglitinides (see [Box 55-10](#))

- a.** Stimulate pancreatic insulin secretion.
- b.** Quicker and shorter duration of action; therefore, less chance of hypoglycemia because blood glucose–lowering effect wears off quickly
- c.** Very fast onset of action allows client to take the medication with meals and skip a dose when a meal is skipped.

**7.** Interventions 

- a.** Assess the client's knowledge of diabetes mellitus and the use of oral

antidiabetic agents. ▲

- b. Obtain a medication history regarding the medications that the client is taking currently. ▲
- c. Assess vital signs and blood glucose levels.
- d. Instruct the client to recognize the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia.
- e. Instruct the client to avoid over-the-counter medications unless prescribed by the health care provider.
- f. Instruct the client not to ingest alcohol with sulfonylureas. ▲
- g. Inform the client that insulin may be needed during stress, surgery, or infection. ▲
- h. Instruct the client in the necessity for compliance with prescribed medication.
- i. Instruct the client on how to take each specific medication, such as with the first bite of the meal for meglitinides and  $\alpha$ -glucosidase inhibitors.
- j. Advise the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

**⚠ Metformin (Glucophage) may need to be withheld temporarily before and for 48 hours after having any radiologic study that involves the administration of intravenous contrast dye because of the risk of contrast-induced nephropathy and lactic acidosis. The HCP needs to be consulted for specific prescriptions.**

### C. Insulin ▲

- 1. Insulin acts primarily in the liver, muscle, and adipose tissue by attaching to receptors on cellular membranes and facilitating the passage of glucose, potassium, and magnesium.

2. Insulin is prescribed for clients with type 1 diabetes mellitus and type 2 diabetes mellitus in clients whose blood glucose level is not controlled with oral hypoglycemic agents.
3. The onset, peak, and duration of action depend on the insulin type (Table 55-1).



**TABLE 55-1 Time Activity of Pharmacological Insulin\***

Preparation	Brand	Onset (hr)	Peak (hr)	Duration (hr)
<b>Rapid-Acting Insulin</b>				
Insulin aspart	NovoLog	0.25	1-3	3-5
Insulin glulisine	Apidra	0.3	0.5-1.5	3-4
Human lispro injection	Humalog	0.25	0.5-1.5	5
<b>Short-Acting Insulin</b>				
Regular human insulin injection	Humulin R	0.5	2-4	5-7
	Novolin R	0.5	2.5-5	8
	ReliOn R			
Humulin R (concentrated U-500)	Humulin R (U 500)	1.5	4-12	24
<b>Intermediate-Acting Insulin</b>				
Isophane insulin NPH injection	Humulin N	1.5	4-12	16-24+
	Novolin N	1.5	4-12	16-24+
	ReliOn N			
Insulin detemir injection	Levemir	1	6-8	5-7-24
70% human insulin isophane suspension/30% human insulin injection	Humulin 70/30	0.5	2-12	24
	Novolin 70/30			
	ReliOn 70/30			
50% human insulin isophane suspension/50% human insulin injection	Humulin 50/50	0.5	3-5	24
70% insulin aspart protamine suspension/30% insulin aspart injection	NovoLog Mix 70/30	0.25	1-4	24
75% insulin lispro protamine suspension/25% insulin lispro injection	Humalog Mix 75/25	0.25	1-2	24
<b>Long-Acting Insulin</b>				
Insulin glargine injection	Lantus	2-4	None	24

\*Time activity may be dose related.

From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered*

*collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

#### 4. Storing of insulin (Box 55-11) ▲

##### BOX 55-11

##### Storing Insulin

Avoid exposing insulin to extremes in temperature.

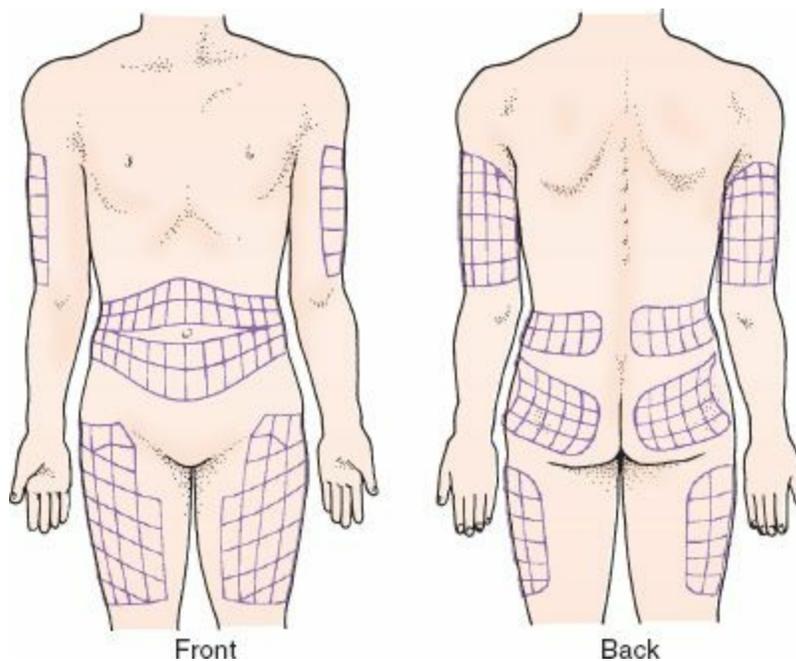
Insulin should not be frozen or kept in direct sunlight or a hot car.

Before injection, insulin should be at room temperature.

If a vial of insulin will be used up in 1 month, it may be kept at room temperature; otherwise, the vial should be refrigerated.

#### 5. Insulin injection sites ▲

- a. The main areas for injections are the abdomen, arms (posterior surface), thighs (anterior surface), and hips (Fig. 55-1).



**FIGURE 55-1** Common insulin injection sites. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

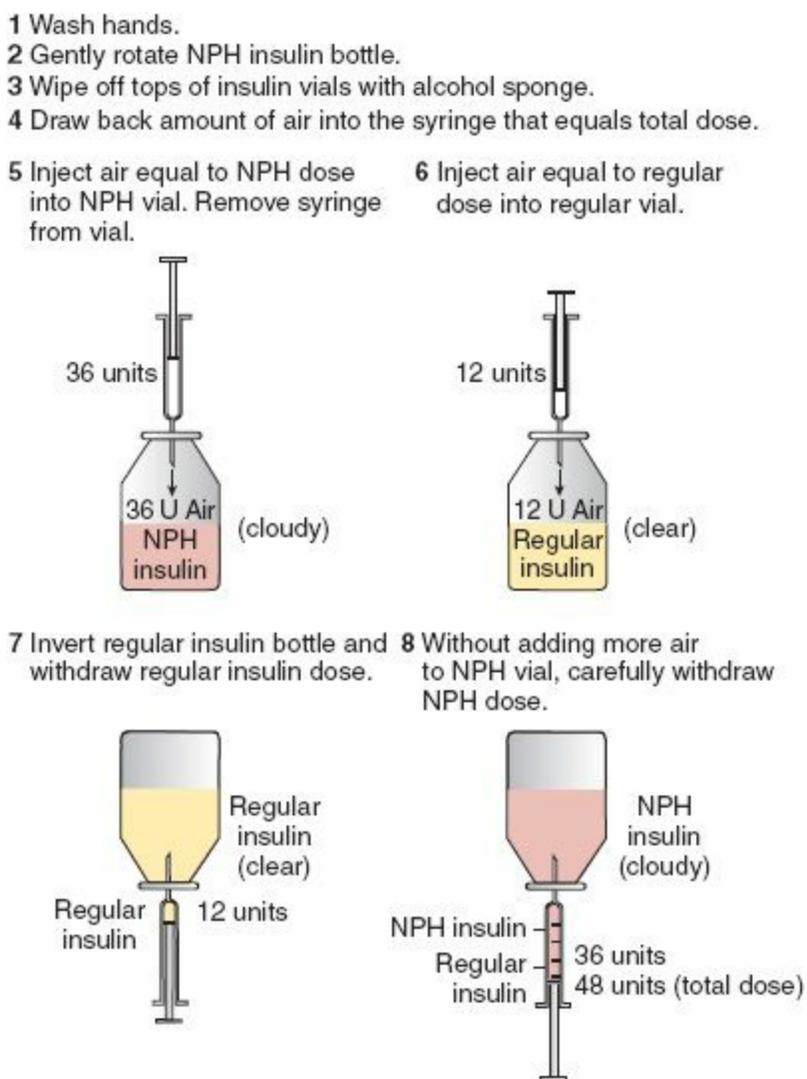
- b. Insulin injected into the abdomen may absorb more evenly and rapidly than at other sites.
- c. Systematic rotation within one anatomical area is recommended to prevent lipodystrophy; client should be instructed not to use the same site more than once in a 2- to 3-week period.
- d. Injections should be 1 1/2 inches apart within the anatomical area.
- e. Heat, massage, and exercise of the injected area can increase absorption rates and may result in hypoglycemia.
- f. Injection into scar tissue may delay absorption of insulin.

#### 6. Administering insulin ▲

**▲ Insulin glargine (Lantus) cannot be mixed with any other types of insulin.**

- a. To prevent dosage errors, be certain that there is a match between the insulin concentration noted on the vial and the calibration of units on the insulin syringe; the usual concentration of insulin is U 100 (100 units/mL).
- b. Most insulin syringes have a 27- to 29-gauge needle that is about 1/2-inch long.
- c. Before use, swirl the insulin vial gently or rotate between the palms to ensure that the insulin and ingredients are mixed well; otherwise, an inaccurate dose will be drawn; vigorously shaking the bottle will cause bubbles to form. ▲

- d. Premixed insulins (NPH and regular insulin; insulin aspart protamine and insulin aspart) are available as 70/30 (most commonly used) and premixed insulin lispro protamine and insulin lispro 75/25 and 50/50 are also available.
- e. Inject air into the insulin bottle (a vacuum makes it difficult to draw up the insulin).
- f. When mixing insulins, draw up the shortest-acting insulin first (Fig. 55-2).



**FIGURE 55-2** Steps for mixing insulins. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

- g.** Short-acting (i.e., regular, lispro, aspart, and glulisine) insulin may be mixed with NPH.
- h.** Lispro insulin may be mixed with Humulin N.
- i.** Insulin aspart protamine may be mixed with NPH insulin only.
- j.** Administer a mixed dose of insulin within 5 to 15 minutes of preparation; after this time, the short-acting insulin binds with the NPH insulin and its action is reduced. ▲
- k.** Aspiration after insertion of the needle generally is not recommended with self-injection of insulin.
- l.** Administer insulin at a 45- to 90-degree angle in clients with normal subcutaneous mass and at a 45- to 60-degree angle in thin persons or those with a decreased amount of subcutaneous mass.

**⚠** Rapid and short-acting insulins are the only types of insulin that can be administered intravenously.

#### **D. Exenatide (Byetta)**

- 1.** A synthetic hormone classified as an incretin mimetic that is administered subcutaneously.
- 2.** Used for clients with type 2 diabetes mellitus (not recommended for clients taking insulin, nor should clients be taken off of insulin and given exenatide) ▲
- 3.** Restores first-phase insulin response (first 10 minutes after food ingestion), lowers the production of glucagon after meals, slows gastric emptying (which

limits the rise in blood glucose level after a meal), reduces fasting and postprandial blood glucose levels, and reduces caloric intake, resulting in weight loss

4. Packaged in premeasured doses (pen) that require refrigeration (cannot be frozen)
5. Administered as a subcutaneous injection in the thigh, abdomen, or upper arm within 60 minutes before morning and evening meals; not taken after meals; if a dose is missed, the treatment regimen is resumed as prescribed with the next scheduled dose. ▲
6. Can cause mild to moderate nausea that abates with use

#### E. Pramlintide (Symlin)

1. Synthetic form of amylin, a naturally occurring hormone secreted by the pancreas
2. Used for clients with types 1 and 2 diabetes mellitus who use insulin; given before meals to lower blood glucose level after meals, leading to less fluctuation during the day and better long-term glucose control ▲
3. Associated with an increased risk of insulin-induced severe hypoglycemia, particularly in clients with type 1 diabetes mellitus
4. Gastrointestinal effects including nausea can occur.
5. Unopened vials are refrigerated; opened vials can be refrigerated or kept at room temperature for up to 28 days.

#### F. Glucagon (also available as GlucaGen)

1. Hormone secreted by the alpha cells of the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas
2. Increases blood glucose level by stimulating glycogenolysis in the liver

3. Can be administered subcutaneously, intramuscularly, or intravenously
4. Used to treat insulin-induced hypoglycemia when the client is semiconscious or unconscious and is unable to ingest liquids ▲
5. The blood glucose level begins to increase within 5 to 20 minutes after administration.
6. Instruct the family in the procedure for administration. ▲
7. See [Chapter 54](#) for additional information regarding interventions for severe hypoglycemia.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The nurse needs to plan to instruct the client to temporarily discontinue the metformin a day or two before the CT scan and for 48 hours after the scan. Health care provider prescriptions and agency procedures are followed regarding timelines for discontinuing the medication. Intravenous contrast that contains iodine poses a risk for contrast-induced nephropathy and lactic acidosis. The serum creatinine level may also be checked before allowing the client to resume the medication.

### **Reference**

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1423-1424.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**600.** The nurse is teaching a client how to mix regular insulin and NPH insulin in the same syringe. Which action, if performed by the client, indicates the **need for further teaching**?

1. Withdraws the NPH insulin first
2. Withdraws the regular insulin first
3. Injects air into NPH insulin vial first
4. Injects an amount of air equal to the desired dose of insulin into each vial

**601.** The home care nurse visits a client recently diagnosed with diabetes mellitus who is taking Humulin NPH insulin daily. The client asks the nurse how to store the unopened vials of insulin. The nurse should tell the client to take which action?

1. Freeze the insulin.
2. Refrigerate the insulin.
3. Store the insulin in a dark, dry place.
4. Keep the insulin at room temperature.

**602.** Glimepiride (Amaryl) is prescribed for a client with diabetes mellitus. The nurse instructs the client to avoid consuming which food while taking this medication?

1. Alcohol
2. Organ meats
3. Whole-grain cereals

4. Carbonated beverages

603. Sildenafil (Viagra) is prescribed to treat a client with erectile dysfunction. The nurse reviews the client's medical record and should question the prescription if which data is noted in the client's history?

1. Insomnia
2. Neuralgia
3. Use of nitroglycerin
4. Use of multivitamins

604. The health care provider (HCP) prescribes exenatide (Byetta) for a client with type 1 diabetes mellitus who takes insulin. The nurse should plan to take which **most appropriate** intervention?

1. Withhold the medication and call the HCP, questioning the prescription for the client.
2. Administer the medication within 60 minutes before the morning and evening meal.
3. Monitor the client for gastrointestinal side effects after administering the medication.
4. Withdraw the insulin from the prefilled pen into an insulin syringe to prepare for administration.

605. A client is taking Humulin NPH insulin and regular insulin every morning. The nurse should provide which instructions to the client? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Hypoglycemia may be experienced before dinnertime.
2. The insulin dose should be decreased if illness occurs.
3. The insulin should be administered at room temperature.
4. The insulin vial needs to be shaken vigorously to break up the precipitates.
5. The NPH insulin should be drawn into the syringe first, then the regular insulin.

**606.** The home health care nurse is visiting a client who was recently diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus. The client is prescribed repaglinide (Prandin) and metformin (Glucophage) and asks the nurse to explain these medications. The nurse should provide which instructions to the client? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Diarrhea may occur secondary to the metformin.
2. The repaglinide is not taken if a meal is skipped.
3. The repaglinide is taken 30 minutes before eating.
4. A simple sugar food item is carried and used to treat mild hypoglycemia episodes.
5. Metformin increases hepatic glucose production to prevent hypoglycemia associated with repaglinide.
6. Muscle pain is an expected effect of metformin and may be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol).

**607** The community health nurse visits a client at home. Prednisone, 10 mg orally daily, has been prescribed for the client and the nurse teaches the client about the medication. Which statement, if made by the client, indicates that **further**

**teaching is necessary?**

1. "I can take aspirin or my antihistamine if I need it."
2. "I need to take the medication every day at the same time."
3. "I need to avoid coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate in my diet."
4. "If I gain more than 5 pounds a week, I will call my health care provider (HCP)."

**608.** A client with hyperthyroidism has been given methimazole (Tapazole). Which nursing considerations are associated with this medication? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Administer methimazole with food.
2. Place the client on a low-calorie, low-protein diet.
3. Assess the client for unexplained bruising or bleeding.
4. Instruct the client to report side/adverse effects such as sore throat, fever, or headaches.
5. Use special radioactive precautions when handling the client's urine for the first 24 hours following initial administration.

**609.** The nurse is monitoring a client receiving levothyroxine sodium (Synthroid) for hypothyroidism. Which findings indicate the presence of a side effect associated with this medication? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Insomnia
2. Weight loss

3. Bradycardia
4. Constipation
5. Mild heat intolerance

**610.** The nurse provides instructions to a client who is taking levothyroxine (Synthroid). The nurse should tell the client to take the medication at which time?

1. With food
2. At lunchtime
3. On an empty stomach
4. At bedtime with a snack

**611.** The nurse provides medication instructions to a client who is taking levothyroxine (Synthroid) and should tell the client to notify the health care provider (HCP) if which problem occurs?

1. Fatigue
2. Tremors
3. Cold intolerance
4. Excessively dry skin

**612.** The nurse performs an admission assessment on a client who visits a health care clinic for the first time. The client tells the nurse that propylthiouracil (PTU) is taken daily. The nurse continues to collect data from the client, suspecting that the client has a history of which condition?

1. Myxedema

2. Graves' disease
3. Addison's disease
4. Cushing's syndrome

**613.** The nurse is instructing a client regarding intranasal desmopressin (DDAVP).

The nurse should tell the client that which occurrence is a side effect of the medication?

1. Headache
2. Vulval pain
3. Runny nose
4. Flushed skin

**614.** A daily dose of prednisone is prescribed for a client. The nurse provides instructions to the client regarding administration of the medication and should instruct the client that which time is **best** to take this medication?

1. At noon
2. At bedtime
3. Early morning
4. Any time, at the same time, each day

**615.** Prednisone is prescribed for a client with diabetes mellitus who is taking Humulin NPH insulin daily. Which prescription change does the nurse anticipate during therapy with the prednisone?

1. An additional dose of prednisone daily

2. A decreased amount of daily Humulin NPH insulin
3. An increased amount of daily Humulin NPH insulin
4. The addition of an oral hypoglycemic medication daily

**616.** A client with diabetes mellitus visits a health care clinic. The client's diabetes mellitus previously had been well controlled with glyburide (DiaBeta) daily, but recently the fasting blood glucose level has been 180 to 200 mg/dL. Which medication, if added to the client's regimen, may have contributed to the hyperglycemia?

1. Prednisone
2. Phenezine (Nardil)
3. Atenolol (Tenormin)
4. Allopurinol (Zyloprim)

## ANSWERS

**600. 1**

**Rationale:** When preparing a mixture of short-acting insulin such as regular insulin with another insulin preparation, the short-acting insulin is drawn into the syringe first. This sequence will avoid contaminating the vial of short-acting insulin with insulin of another type. Options 2, 3, and 4 identify correct actions for preparing NPH and short-acting insulin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect action. Remember *RN*—draw up the Regular

(short-acting) insulin before the NPH insulin.

**Review:** Preparation of NPH and short-acting insulin

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 78, 80-81.

## 601. 2

**Rationale:** Insulin in unopened vials should be stored under refrigeration until needed. Vials should not be frozen.

When stored unopened under refrigeration, insulin can be used up to the expiration date on the vial. Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, how to store unopened vials. Options 3 and 4 are **comparable or alike** and should be eliminated. Remembering that insulin should not be frozen will assist in eliminating option 1.

**Review:** Storage of insulin

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 783-784.

**602. 1**

**Rationale:** When alcohol is combined with glimepiride (Amaryl), a disulfiram-like reaction may occur. This syndrome includes flushing, palpitations, and nausea. Alcohol can also potentiate the hypoglycemic effects of the medication. Clients need to be instructed to avoid alcohol consumption while taking this medication. The items in options 2, 3, and 4 do not need to be avoided.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** in that these food items are allowed in a diabetic diet. Remembering that alcohol can affect the action of many medications will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review: Glimepiride (Amaryl)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 793.

**603. 3**

**Rationale:** Sildenafil (Viagra) enhances the vasodilating effect of nitric oxide in the corpus cavernosum of the penis, thus sustaining an erection. Because of the effect of the medication, it is contraindicated with concurrent use of organic nitrates and nitroglycerin. Sildenafil is not contraindicated with the use of vitamins. Insomnia and neuralgia are side effects of the medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the need to question the prescription. Recalling the action of the

medication and that it enhances vasodilation will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Contraindications associated with **sildenafil (Viagra)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 1060-1061.

#### 604. 1

**Rationale:** Exenatide (Byetta) is an incretin mimetic used for type 2 diabetes mellitus only. It is not recommended for clients taking insulin. Hence, the nurse should withhold the medication and question the HCP regarding this prescription. Although options 2 and 3 are correct statements about the medication, in this situation the medication should not be administered. The medication is packaged in prefilled pens ready for injection without the need for drawing it up into another syringe.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the name of the medication, recalling that it is used for the treatment of type 2 diabetes mellitus. Eliminate option 4 because the medication is packaged in prefilled pens ready for injection without the need for drawing it up into another syringe. From the remaining options, focus on the data in the question. Although options 2 and 3 are appropriate when administering this medication, this client should not receive this medication.

**Review:** **Exenatide (Byetta)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 728.

❖ **605. 1, 3**

**Rationale:** Humulin NPH is an intermediate-acting insulin. The onset of action is 1.5 hours, it peaks in 4 to 12 hours, and its duration of action is 24 hours. Regular insulin is a short-acting insulin. Depending on the type, the onset of action is 0.5 hour, it peaks in 2 to 5.5 hours, and its duration is 5 to 8 hours. Hypoglycemic reactions most likely occur during peak time. Insulin should be at room temperature when administered. Clients may need their insulin dosages increased during times of illness. Insulin vials should never be shaken vigorously. Regular insulin is always drawn up before NPH.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client instructions regarding insulin. Eliminate option 4 because of the word, *vigorously*. Use knowledge regarding the characteristics of insulin; procedures for administration; and the onset, peak, and duration of action for insulin and insulin administration to select from the remaining options.

Remember that NPH insulin peaks in 4 to 12 hours and regular insulin peaks in 0.5 hour.

**Review:** **Regular and NPH insulin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 784-785.

❖ **606. 1, 2, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** Repaglinide, a rapid-acting oral hypoglycemic agent that stimulates pancreatic insulin secretion, should be taken before meals (approximately 30 minutes before meals) and should be withheld if the client does not eat. Hypoglycemia is a side effect of repaglinide and the client should always be prepared by carrying a simple sugar with her or him at all times. Metformin is an oral hypoglycemic given in combination with repaglinide and works by decreasing hepatic glucose production. A common side effect of metformin is diarrhea. Muscle pain may occur as an adverse effect from metformin but it might signify a more serious condition that warrants health care provider notification, not the use of acetaminophen.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, oral medications to treat diabetes mellitus. Thinking about the pathophysiology of diabetes mellitus and recalling the actions and effects of these medications is needed to answer correctly.

**Review:** **Repaglinide (Prandin)** and **metformin (Glucophage)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 735, 737.

**607. 1**

**Rationale:** Aspirin and other over-the-counter medications should not be taken unless the client consults with the

HCP. The client needs to take the medication at the same time every day and should be instructed not to stop the medication. A slight weight gain as a result of an improved appetite is expected, but after the dosage is stabilized, a weight gain of 5 pounds or more weekly should be reported to the HCP. Caffeine-containing foods and fluids need to be avoided because they may contribute to steroid-ulcer development.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *further teaching is necessary*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Remember that a client taking prednisone should not take other medications, especially over-the-counter medications, without first consulting with his or her HCP.

**Review:** Teaching points for the client taking **prednisone**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology: Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 917-918.

❖ **608. 1, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** Common side effects of methimazole include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. To address these side effects, this medication should be taken with food. Because of the increase in metabolism that occurs in hyperthyroidism, the client should consume a high calorie diet. Antithyroid medications can cause agranulocytosis with leukopenia and thrombocytopenia. Sore throat, fever, headache, or bleeding may indicate agranulocytosis and the health care provider (HCP) should be notified immediately. Methimazole is not radioactive and should not be stopped abruptly, due to the risk of thyroid storm.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, nursing considerations for administering methimazole. Focus on the client's diagnosis. Think about the pathophysiology associated with the medication and the actions and effects of antithyroid medications to assist in answering correctly.

**Review: Methimazole (Tapazole)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 748-749.

❖ **609. 1, 2, 5**

**Rationale:** Insomnia, weight loss, and mild heat intolerance are side effects of levothyroxine sodium. Bradycardia and constipation are not side effects associated with this medication, and rather are associated with hypothyroidism, which is the disorder that this medication is prescribed to treat.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, side effects of levothyroxine. Thinking about the pathophysiology of hypothyroidism and the action of the medication will assist you in determining that insomnia, weight loss, and mild heat intolerance are side effects of thyroid hormones.

**Review: Levothyroxine sodium (Synthroid)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 747-748.

### 610. 3

**Rationale:** Oral doses of levothyroxine (Synthroid) should be taken on an empty stomach to enhance absorption.

Dosing should be done in the morning before breakfast.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** in that these options address administering the medication with food.

**Review:** **Levothyroxine sodium (Synthroid)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 747.

### 611. 2

**Rationale:** Excessive doses of levothyroxine (Synthroid) can produce signs and symptoms of hyperthyroidism.

These include tachycardia, chest pain, tremors, nervousness, insomnia, hyperthermia, extreme heat intolerance, and sweating. The client should be instructed to notify the HCP if these occur. Options 1, 3, and 4 are signs of hypothyroidism.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the need to notify the HCP. Recall the symptoms associated with

hypothyroidism, the purpose of administering levothyroxine, and the effects of the medication. Options 1, 3, and 4 are symptoms related to hypothyroidism.

**Review:** Side and adverse effects associated with **levothyroxine sodium (Synthroid)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 687-688.

**612. 2**

**Rationale:** Propylthiouracil (PTU) inhibits thyroid hormone synthesis and is used to treat hyperthyroidism, or Graves' disease. Myxedema indicates hypothyroidism. Cushing's syndrome and Addison's disease are disorders related to adrenal function.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the intended effect of propylthiouracil. Use knowledge regarding the action of the medication and treatment measures for Graves' disease to answer the question. Remember that propylthiouracil is used to treat Graves' disease.

**Review:** **Propylthiouracil (PTU)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 980-981; Lehne (2013), p. 745.

**613. 3**

**Rationale:** Desmopressin administered by the intranasal route can cause a runny or stuffy nose. Options 1, 2, and 4 are side effects if the medication is administered by the intravenous route.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a side effect of desmopressin. Note the relationship between the words *intranasal* in the question and *runny nose* in the correct option.

**Review:** Side effects of **desmopressin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 324-325.

**614. 3**

**Rationale:** Corticosteroids (glucocorticoids) should be administered before 9 AM. Administration at this time helps minimize adrenal insufficiency and mimics the burst of glucocorticoids released naturally by the adrenal glands each morning. Options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Note the suffix *-sone* and recall that medication names that end with these letters are corticosteroids. Remember that a daily dose of a corticosteroid should be administered in the morning.

**Review:** **Glucocorticoids**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 958-959.

### 615. 3

**Rationale:** Glucocorticoids can elevate blood glucose levels. Clients with diabetes mellitus may need their dosages of insulin or oral hypoglycemic medications increased during glucocorticoid therapy. Therefore, options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the effects of prednisone in the client taking insulin. Recalling that glucocorticoids can increase blood glucose levels will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Glucocorticoids**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 918.

### 616. 1

**Rationale:** Prednisone may decrease the effect of oral hypoglycemics, insulin, diuretics, and potassium

supplements. Option 2, a monoamine oxidase inhibitor, and option 3, a  $\beta$ -blocker, have their own intrinsic hypoglycemic activity. Option 4 decreases urinary excretion of sulfonylurea agents, causing increased levels of the oral agents, which can lead to hypoglycemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an increase in the blood glucose level. Recalling that prednisone is a corticosteroid and that corticosteroids decrease the effects of oral hypoglycemics will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Glyburide (DiaBeta)** and **prednisone**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Glucose Regulation

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1384; Lilley et al (2014), pp. 516, 540-541.

# UNIT XI



## Gastrointestinal Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**ascites** The accumulation of fluid within the peritoneal cavity that results from venous congestion of the hepatic capillaries, which leads to plasma leaking directly from the liver surface and portal vein.

**asterixis** A coarse tremor characterized by rapid, nonrhythmic extensions and flexions in the wrist and fingers; also termed *liver flap*.

**Billroth I** Partial gastrectomy with the remaining segment being anastomosed to the duodenum; also termed *gastroduodenostomy*.

**Billroth II** Partial gastrectomy with the remaining segment being anastomosed to the jejunum; also termed *gastrojejunostomy*.

**cholecystectomy** Removal of the gallbladder.

**cholecystitis** An inflammation of the gallbladder that may occur as an acute or chronic process. Acute inflammation is associated with gallstones (cholelithiasis). Chronic cholecystitis results when inefficient bile emptying and gallbladder muscle wall disease causes a fibrotic and contracted gallbladder.

**choledocholithotomy** Incision into the common bile duct to remove a gallstone.

**cirrhosis** A chronic progressive disease of the liver characterized by diffuse degeneration and destruction of hepatocytes. Repeated destruction of hepatic cells causes the formation of scar tissue.

**Crohn's disease** An inflammatory disease that can occur anywhere in the gastrointestinal tract but most often affects the terminal ileum; leads to thickening and scarring, narrowed lumen, fistulas, ulcerations, and abscesses. The disease is characterized by remissions and exacerbations.

**Cullen's sign** Bluish discoloration of the abdomen and periumbilical area seen in acute hemorrhagic pancreatitis.

**diverticulitis** Inflammation of one or more diverticula from penetration of fecal matter through the thin-walled diverticula, resulting in local abscess formation. A perforated diverticulum can progress to intraabdominal perforation with generalized peritonitis.

**diverticulosis** Outpouching or herniations of the intestinal mucosa that can occur in any part of the intestine but is most common in the sigmoid colon.

**dumping syndrome** Rapid emptying of the gastric contents into the small intestine, which occurs following gastric resection.

**esophageal varices** Dilated and tortuous veins in the submucosa of the esophagus caused by portal hypertension, often associated with liver cirrhosis; at high risk for rupture if portal circulation pressure rises.

**fetor hepaticus** The fruity, musty breath odor associated with severe chronic liver disease.

**gastrectomy** Removal of the stomach with attachment of the esophagus to the jejunum or duodenum; also termed *esophagojejunostomy* or *esophagoduodenostomy*.

**gastric resection** Removal of the lower half of the stomach, usually including a vagotomy; also termed *antrectomy*.

**hepatitis** Inflammation of the liver caused by a virus, bacteria, or exposure to medications or hepatotoxins.

**hiatal hernia** A portion of the stomach that herniates through the diaphragm and into the thorax. Herniation results from weakening of the muscles of the diaphragm and is aggravated by factors that increase abdominal pressure, such as pregnancy, ascites, obesity, tumors, and heavy lifting; also termed *esophageal* or *diaphragmatic hernia*.

**melena** Black, tarry stools as a result of bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract.

**Murphy's sign** A sign of gallbladder disease consisting of pain on taking a deep breath when the examiner's fingers are on the approximate location of the gallbladder.

**pancreatitis** An acute or chronic inflammation of the pancreas, with associated escape of pancreatic enzymes into surrounding tissue. Acute pancreatitis can occur suddenly as one attack or can be recurrent with resolution. Chronic pancreatitis is a continual inflammation and destruction of the pancreas, with scar tissue replacing pancreatic

tissue.

**peristalsis** Wavelike rhythmic contractions that propel material through the gastrointestinal tract.

**portal hypertension** A persistent increase in pressure within the portal vein that develops as a result of obstruction to flow.

**pyloroplasty** Enlarging the pylorus to prevent or decrease pyloric obstruction, thereby enhancing gastric emptying.

**Turner's sign** A gray-blue discoloration of the flanks seen in acute hemorrhagic pancreatitis.

**ulcerative colitis** Ulcerative and inflammatory disease of the bowel that results in poor absorption of nutrients. Acute ulcerative colitis results in vascular congestion, hemorrhage, edema, and ulceration of the bowel mucosa. Chronic ulcerative colitis causes muscular hypertrophy, fat deposits, and fibrous tissue with bowel thickening, shortening, and narrowing.

**vagotomy** Surgical division of the vagus nerve to eliminate the vagal impulses that stimulate hydrochloric acid secretion in the stomach.

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points focus on diagnostic tests and nursing care related to the various gastric or intestinal tubes, gastric surgery, cirrhosis, hepatitis, pancreatitis, and colostomy care. Focus on preprocedure and postprocedure care of the client undergoing a gastrointestinal diagnostic test. Remember that an informed consent is required for any invasive procedure. Focus on diet restrictions before and after the diagnostic test and remember that the gag reflex or bowel sounds must return before allowing a client to consume food or fluids. Pyramid Points also include instructions to the client and family regarding the prevention of gastrointestinal disorders and the complications associated with the disorder. Focus on teaching the client and family about diet and nutrition specific to the disorder, tube and wound care, preventing the transmission of infection such as with hepatitis, and care of a colostomy or ileostomy. Remember that body image disturbances can occur in clients with a gastrointestinal disorder. Specific focus relates to the client with a diversion, such as an ileostomy or colostomy, the social isolation issues that can occur, and effective coping strategies.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Consulting with other health care professionals regarding the client's nutritional status

Ensuring that confidentiality issues related to the gastrointestinal disorder are maintained

Establishing priorities of care

Handling infectious drainage and secretions safely

Maintaining standard precautions and other precautions as appropriate

Obtaining informed consent for treatments and surgical procedures

Obtaining referrals for home care and community services

Preventing disease transmission

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Performing physical assessment techniques of the gastrointestinal system

Preventing disease related to the gastrointestinal system

Providing health screening and health promotion programs related to gastrointestinal disorders

Teaching related to colostomy or ileostomy care

Teaching related to prescribed dietary and other treatment measures

Teaching related to preventing the transmission of disease

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing coping mechanisms

Considering end-of-life and grief and loss issues

Identifying available support systems

Monitoring for expected body image changes

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering medications as prescribed specific to the gastrointestinal disorder

Assessing for signs and symptoms of infectious diseases of the gastrointestinal tract

Assisting with personal hygiene

Monitoring for complications related to tests, procedures, and surgical interventions

Monitoring for fluid and electrolyte imbalances

Monitoring elimination patterns

Monitoring laboratory values related to gastrointestinal disorders

Monitoring parenterally administered fluids, including parenteral nutrition

Providing adequate nutrition and oral hydration

Providing care for gastrointestinal tubes

Providing nonpharmacological and pharmacological comfort measures

Providing preprocedure and postprocedure care for diagnostic tests related to the  
gastrointestinal system



## CHAPTER 56

# Gastrointestinal System

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse is preparing a client for a liver biopsy. On review of the client's laboratory results, the nurse notes that the client's bleeding time is 10 minutes and the prothrombin time is 35 seconds. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 705.*

### **I. Anatomy and Physiology**

#### **A. Functions of the gastrointestinal system**

1. Process food substances
2. Absorb the products of digestion into the blood
3. Excrete unabsorbed materials
4. Provide an environment for microorganisms to synthesize nutrients, such as vitamin K
5. For risk factors associated with the gastrointestinal system, see [Box 56-1](#).

- Allergic reactions to food or medications
- Cardiac, respiratory, and endocrine disorders that may lead to slowed gastrointestinal (GI) movement or constipation
- Chronic alcohol use
- Chronic high stress levels
- Chronic laxative use
- Chronic use of aspirin or nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs
- Diabetes mellitus, which may predispose to oral candidal infections or other GI disorders
- Family history of GI disorders
- Long-term GI conditions, such as ulcerative colitis, that may predispose to colorectal cancer
- Neurological disorders that can impair movement, particularly with chewing and swallowing
- Previous abdominal surgery or trauma, which may lead to adhesions
- Tobacco use

## **B. Mouth**

1. Contains the lips, cheeks, palate, tongue, teeth, salivary glands, muscles, and maxillary bones
2. Saliva contains the enzyme amylase (ptyalin), which aids in digestion.

### C. Esophagus

1. Collapsible muscular tube about 10 inches long
2. Carries food from the pharynx to the stomach

### D. Stomach

1. Contains the cardia, fundus, the body, and the pylorus
2. Mucous glands are located in the mucosa and prevent autodigestion by providing an alkaline protective covering.
3. The lower esophageal (cardiac) sphincter prevents reflux of gastric contents into the esophagus.
4. The pyloric sphincter regulates the rate of stomach emptying into the small intestine.
5. Hydrochloric acid kills microorganisms, breaks food into small particles, and provides a chemical environment that facilitates gastric enzyme activation.
6. Pepsin is the chief coenzyme of gastric juice, which converts proteins into proteoses and peptones.
7. Intrinsic factor is necessary for the absorption of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>.
8. Gastrin controls gastric acidity.

### E. Small intestine

1. The duodenum contains the openings of the bile and pancreatic ducts.
2. The jejunum is about 8 feet long.
3. The ileum is about 12 feet long.
4. The small intestine terminates in the cecum.

## **F. Pancreatic intestinal juice enzymes**

1. Amylase digests starch to maltose.
2. Maltase reduces maltose to monosaccharide glucose.
3. Lactase splits lactose into galactose and glucose.
4. Sucrase reduces sucrose to fructose and glucose.
5. Nucleases split nucleic acids to nucleotides.
6. Enterokinase activates trypsinogen to trypsin.

## **G. Large intestine**

1. About 5 feet long
2. Absorbs water and eliminates wastes
3. Intestinal bacteria play a vital role in the synthesis of some B vitamins and vitamin K.
4. Colon: Includes the ascending, transverse, descending, and sigmoid colons and rectum
5. The ileocecal valve prevents contents of the large intestine from entering the ileum.
6. The internal and external anal sphincters control the anal canal.

**H. Peritoneum:** Lines the abdominal cavity and forms the mesentery that supports the intestines and blood supply

## **I. Liver**

1. The largest gland in the body, weighing 3 to 4 pounds
2. Contains Kupffer cells, which remove bacteria in the portal venous blood

3. Removes excess glucose and amino acids from the portal blood
4. Synthesizes glucose, amino acids, and fats
5. Aids in the digestion of fats, carbohydrates, and proteins
6. Stores and filters blood (200 to 400 mL of blood stored)
7. Stores vitamins A, D, and B and iron
8. The liver secretes bile to emulsify fats (500 to 1000 mL of bile/day).
9. Hepatic ducts
  - a. Deliver bile to the gallbladder via the cystic duct and to the duodenum via the common bile duct
  - b. The common bile duct opens into the duodenum, with the pancreatic duct at the ampulla of Vater.
  - c. The sphincter prevents the reflux of intestinal contents into the common bile duct and pancreatic duct.

## **J. Gallbladder**

1. Stores and concentrates bile and contracts to force bile into the duodenum during the digestion of fats
2. The cystic duct joins the hepatic duct to form the common bile duct.
3. The sphincter of Oddi is located at the entrance to the duodenum.
4. The presence of fatty materials in the duodenum stimulates the liberation of cholecystokinin, which causes contraction of the gallbladder and relaxation of the sphincter of Oddi.

## **K. Pancreas**

## 1. Exocrine gland

- a. Secretes sodium bicarbonate to neutralize the acidity of the stomach contents that enter the duodenum
- b. Pancreatic juices contain enzymes for digesting carbohydrates, fats, and proteins.

## 2. Endocrine gland

- a. Secretes glucagon to raise blood glucose levels and secretes somatostatin to exert a hypoglycemic effect
- b. The islets of Langerhans secrete insulin.
- c. Insulin is secreted into the bloodstream and is important for carbohydrate metabolism.

## II. Diagnostic Procedures (Box 56-2)

### **BOX 56-2** Common Gastrointestinal System Diagnostic Studies\*

- Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)
- Endoscopic ultrasound
- Fiberoptic colonoscopy
- Gastric analysis
- Gastrointestinal motility studies
- Hydrogen and urea breath test
- Laparoscopy: Liver and pancreas laboratory studies
- Liver biopsy

- Paracentesis
- Percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography
- Stool specimens
- Upper gastrointestinal endoscopy or esophagogastroduodenoscopy
- Upper gastrointestinal tract study (barium swallow)
- Videofluoroscopic swallowing study

\*Informed consent is obtained for a diagnostic study that is invasive.

#### **A. Upper gastrointestinal tract study (barium swallow)**

1. Description: Examination of the upper gastrointestinal tract under fluoroscopy after the client drinks barium sulfate
2. Preprocedure: NPO after midnight the day of the test
3. Postprocedure
  - a. A laxative may be prescribed.
  - b. Instruct the client to increase oral fluid intake to help pass the barium.
  - c. Monitor stools for the passage of barium (stools will appear chalky white) because barium can cause a bowel obstruction.

#### **B. Gastric analysis**

1. Description
  - a. Gastric analysis requires the passage of a nasogastric tube into the stomach to aspirate gastric contents for the analysis of acidity (pH), appearance, and volume; the entire gastric contents are aspirated, and then specimens are

collected every 15 minutes for 1 hour.

- b.** Medication, such as histamine or pentagastrin, may be administered subcutaneously to stimulate gastric secretions; some medications may produce a flushed feeling.
- c.** Esophageal reflux of gastric acid may be diagnosed by ambulatory pH monitoring; a probe is placed just above the lower esophageal sphincter and connected to an external recording device. It provides a computer analysis and graphic display of results.

## 2. Preprocedure

- a.** Fasting for 8 to 12 hours is required before the test.
- b.** Use of tobacco and chewing gum is avoided for 6 hours before the test.
- c.** Medications that stimulate gastric secretions are withheld for 24 to 48 hours.

## 3. Postprocedure

- a.** Client may resume normal activities.
- b.** Refrigerate gastric samples if not tested within 4 hours.

## C. Upper gastrointestinal endoscopy ▲

### 1. Description

- a.** Also known as *esophagogastroduodenoscopy*
- b.** Following sedation, an endoscope is passed down the esophagus to view the gastric wall, sphincters, and duodenum; tissue specimens can be obtained.

### 2. Preprocedure

- a.** The client must be NPO for 6 to 12 hours before the test.

- b.** A local anesthetic (spray or gargle) is administered along with medication that provides conscious sedation and relieves anxiety, such as intravenous (IV) midazolam, just before the scope is inserted.
- c.** Medication may be administered to reduce secretions, and medication may be administered to relax smooth muscle.
- d.** Client is positioned on the left side to facilitate saliva drainage and to provide easy access of the endoscope.
- e.** Airway patency is monitored during the test and pulse oximetry is used to monitor oxygen saturation; emergency equipment should be readily available.

### **3. Postprocedure**

- a.** Client must be NPO until the gag reflex returns (1 to 2 hours).
- b.** Monitor for signs of perforation (pain, bleeding, unusual difficulty in swallowing, elevated temperature).
- c.** Maintain bed rest for the sedated client until alert.
- d.** Lozenges, saline gargles, or oral analgesics can relieve a minor sore throat (not given to the client until the gag reflex returns).

## **D. Fiberoptic colonoscopy**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Colonoscopy is a fiberoptic endoscopy study in which the lining of the large intestine is visually examined; biopsies and polypectomies can be performed.
- b.** Cardiac and respiratory function are monitored continuously during the test.
- c.** Colonoscopy is performed with the client lying on the left side with the knees

drawn up to the chest; position may be changed during the test to facilitate passing of the scope.

## 2. Preprocedure

- a. Adequate cleansing of the colon is necessary, as prescribed by the health care provider (HCP). ▲
- b. A clear liquid diet is started on the day before the test.
- c. Consult with the HCP regarding medications that must be withheld before the test.
- d. Client is NPO after midnight on the day of the test.
- e. A mild sedative is administered intravenously.
- f. Medication may be administered to relax smooth muscle.

## 3. Postprocedure

- a. Provide bed rest until alert.
- b. Monitor for signs of bowel perforation and peritonitis ([Box 56-3](#)). ▲

### **BOX 56-3** Signs of Bowel Perforation and Peritonitis

- Guarding of the abdomen
- Increased fever and chills
- Pallor
- Progressive abdominal distention and abdominal pain
- Restlessness
- Tachycardia and tachypnea

c. Instruct the client to report any bleeding to the HCP.

 **The client receiving enemas is at risk for fluid and electrolyte imbalances.**

E. Laparoscopy is performed with a fiberoptic laparoscope that allows direct visualization of organs and structures within the abdomen; biopsies may be obtained.

F. Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) 

### 1. Description

- a. Examination of the hepatobiliary system is performed via a flexible endoscope inserted into the esophagus to the descending duodenum; multiple positions are required during the procedure to pass the endoscope.
- b. If medication is administered before the procedure, the client is monitored closely for signs of respiratory and central nervous system depression, hypotension, oversedation, and vomiting.

### 2. Preprocedure

- a. Client is NPO for several hours before the procedure.
- b. Sedation is administered before the procedure.

### 3. Postprocedure

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor for the return of the gag reflex. 
- c. Monitor for signs of perforation (see [Box 56-3](#)) or peritonitis. 

G. Endoscopic ultrasonography

1. Description: Provides images of the gastrointestinal (GI) wall and digestive organs.
2. Preprocedure and postprocedure: Care is similar to that implemented for endoscopy.

 Following endoscopic procedures, monitor for the return of the gag reflex before giving the client any oral substance. If the gag reflex has not returned, the client could aspirate.

## H. Percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography

### 1. Description

- a. The examination involves the injection of dye directly into the biliary tree.
- b. The hepatic ducts within the liver, the entire length of the common bile duct, the cystic duct, and the gallbladder are outlined clearly.

### 2. Preprocedure

- a. Client is NPO, usually from midnight preprocedure.
- b. Sedating medication is administered.

### 3. Postprocedure

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor for signs of bleeding, peritonitis (see [Box 56-3](#)), and septicemia; report the presence of pain immediately.
- c. Administer antibiotics as prescribed to reduce the risk of sepsis.

## I. Paracentesis (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

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# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take in Caring for a Client Undergoing a Paracentesis

1. Ensure that the client understands the procedure and that informed consent has been obtained.
2. Obtain vital signs, including weight.
3. Have the client void.
4. Position the client upright.
5. Assist the health care provider (HCP), monitor vital signs, and provide comfort and support during the procedure.
6. Apply a dressing to the site of puncture.
7. Monitor vital signs, weigh the client, and maintain the client on bed rest.
8. Measure the amount of fluid removed.
9. Label and send the fluid for laboratory analysis.
10. Document the event, client's response, and appearance and amount of fluid removed.

Paracentesis is the transabdominal removal of fluid from the peritoneal cavity. The nurse first ensures that the client understands the procedure and that informed consent has been obtained, because the procedure is invasive. The nurse next obtains preprocedure vital signs, including weight, so that a baseline is obtained. Weight is taken before and after the procedure to provide an indication of the effectiveness of the procedure in fluid removal. The client is positioned upright on the edge of a bed

with the back supported and the feet resting on a stool, or in a Fowler's position in bed. The nurse assists the HCP, monitors vital signs per protocol, and provides comfort and support to the client during the procedure. Once the procedure is complete the nurse applies a dressing to the site of puncture and monitors for leakage or bleeding. The client is placed in a position of comfort, bed rest is maintained as prescribed, and vital signs are monitored to assess for complications. The fluid removed from the client is measured, labeled, and sent to the laboratory for analysis. The nurse documents the event, the client's response, the appearance and amount of fluid removed, and any additional pertinent data.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, p. 1300.

1. Description: Transabdominal removal of fluid from the peritoneal cavity for analysis
2. Preprocedure 
  - a. Have the client void before the start of procedure to empty the bladder and to move the bladder out of the way of the paracentesis needle.
  - b. Measure abdominal girth, weight, and baseline vital signs.
  - c. Note that the client is positioned upright on the edge of the bed, with the back supported and the feet resting on a stool (or in Fowler's position in bed).

**⚠** The rapid removal of fluid from the abdominal cavity during paracentesis leads to decreased abdominal pressure, which can cause vasodilation and resultant shock.

### 3. Postprocedure

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Measure fluid collected, describe, and record.
- c. Label fluid samples and send to the laboratory for analysis.
- d. Apply a dry sterile dressing to the insertion site; monitor site for bleeding.
- e. Measure abdominal girth and weight.
- f. Monitor for hypovolemia, electrolyte loss, mental status changes, or encephalopathy.
- g. Monitor for hematuria caused by bladder trauma.
- h. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if the urine becomes bloody, pink, or red.

### J. Liver biopsy

1. Description: A needle is inserted through the abdominal wall to the liver to obtain a tissue sample for biopsy and microscopic examination.
2. Preprocedure
  - a. Assess results of coagulation tests (prothrombin time, partial thromboplastin time, platelet count). 
  - b. Administer a sedative as prescribed.
  - c. Note that the client is placed in the supine or left lateral position during the

procedure to expose the right side of the upper abdomen. ▲

### 3. Postprocedure

- a. Assess vital signs.
- b. Assess biopsy site for bleeding. ▲
- c. Monitor for peritonitis (see [Box 56-3](#)).
- d. Maintain bed rest for several hours as prescribed. ▲
- e. Place the client on the right side with a pillow (or other agency-approved pressure item such as a sandbag) under the costal margin to decrease the risk of hemorrhage, and instruct the client to avoid coughing and straining. ▲
- f. Instruct the client to avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise for 1 week.

**▲** Following a liver biopsy, place the client on the right side with a pillow under the costal margin at the anatomical location of the liver to decrease the risk of hemorrhage.

### K. Stool specimens

1. Testing of stool specimens includes inspecting the specimen for consistency and color and testing for occult blood.
2. Tests for fecal urobilinogen, fat, nitrogen, parasites, pathogens, food substances, and other substances may be performed; these tests require that the specimen be sent to the laboratory.
3. Random specimens are sent promptly to the laboratory.
4. Quantitative 24- to 72-hour collections must be kept refrigerated until they are taken to the laboratory.

5. Some specimens require that a certain diet be followed or that certain medications be withheld; check agency guidelines regarding specific procedures.

#### L. Urea breath test

1. The urea breath test detects the presence of *Helicobacter pylori*, the bacteria that cause peptic ulcer disease.
2. The client consumes a capsule of carbon-labeled urea and provides a breath sample 10 to 20 minutes later.
3. Certain medications may need to be avoided before testing; these may include antibiotics or bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol) for 1 month before the test; sucralfate (Carafate) and omeprazole (Prilosec) for 1 week before the test; and cimetidine (Tagamet), famotidine (Pepcid), ranitidine (Zantac), and nizatidine (Axid) for 24 hours before breath testing.
4. *H. pylori* can also be detected by assessing serum antibody levels.

#### M. Liver and pancreas laboratory studies (see [Chapter 11](#)) ▲

1. Alkaline phosphatase is released with liver damage or biliary obstruction.
2. Prothrombin time is prolonged with liver damage.
3. The serum ammonia level assesses the ability of the liver to deaminate protein by-products.
4. Liver enzyme levels (transaminase studies) are elevated with liver damage.
5. An increase in cholesterol level indicates **pancreatitis** or biliary obstruction.
6. An increase in bilirubin level indicates liver damage or biliary obstruction.
7. Increased values for amylase and lipase levels indicate pancreatitis.

### **III. Assessment (see Chapter 25 for abdominal assessment techniques)**

### **IV. Gastrointestinal Tubes (see Chapter 21 for information regarding these tubes)**

### **V. Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease**

#### **A. Description**

1. Gastroesophageal reflux is the backflow of gastric and duodenal contents into the esophagus.
2. The reflux is caused by an incompetent lower esophageal sphincter, pyloric stenosis, or motility disorder.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Heartburn
2. Epigastric pain
3. Dyspepsia
4. Nausea; regurgitation
5. Pain and difficulty with swallowing
6. Hypersalivation

#### **C. Interventions**

1. Instruct the client to avoid factors that decrease lower esophageal sphincter pressure or cause esophageal irritation such as peppermint, chocolate, coffee, fried or fatty foods, carbonated beverages, alcoholic beverages, and cigarette smoking.
2. Instruct the client to eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet and to avoid eating and drinking

2 hours before bedtime, and wearing tight clothes; also, elevate the head of the bed on 6- to 8-inch blocks.

3. Avoid the use of anticholinergics, which delay stomach emptying; also, nonsteroidal antiinflammatory medications and other medications that contain acetylsalicylic acid need to be avoided.
4. Instruct the client regarding prescribed medications, such as antacids, H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists, or proton pump inhibitors.
5. Instruct the client regarding the administration of prokinetic medications, if prescribed, which accelerate gastric emptying.
6. Surgery may be required in extreme cases when medical management is unsuccessful; this involves a fundoplication (wrapping a portion of the gastric fundus around the sphincter area of the esophagus); surgery may be performed by laparoscopy.

## VI. Gastritis

### A. Description

1. Inflammation of the stomach or gastric mucosa
2. Acute gastritis is caused by the ingestion of food contaminated with disease-causing microorganisms or food that is irritating or too highly seasoned, the overuse of aspirin or other nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), excessive alcohol intake, bile reflux, or radiation therapy.
3. Chronic gastritis is caused by benign or malignant ulcers or by the bacteria *H. pylori*, and also may be caused by autoimmune diseases, dietary factors,

medications, alcohol, smoking, or reflux.

## B. Assessment (Box 56-4)

### BOX 56-4 Assessment Findings in Acute and Chronic Gastritis

#### Acute

- Abdominal discomfort
- Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
- Headache
- Hiccups
- Reflux

#### Chronic

- Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
- Belching
- Heartburn after eating
- Sour taste in the mouth
- Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency

## C. Interventions

1. Acute gastritis: Food and fluids may be withheld until symptoms subside; afterward, and as prescribed, ice chips can be given, followed by clear liquids, and then solid food.
2. Monitor for signs of hemorrhagic gastritis such as hematemesis, tachycardia, and

hypotension, and notify the HCP if these signs occur.

3. Instruct the client to avoid irritating foods, fluids, and other substances, such as spicy and highly seasoned foods, caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine.
4. Instruct the client in the use of prescribed medications, such as antibiotics and antacids.
5. Provide the client with information about the importance of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> injections if a deficiency is present.

## VII. Peptic Ulcer Disease

### A. Description

1. A peptic ulcer is an ulceration in the mucosal wall of the stomach, pylorus, duodenum, or esophagus in portions accessible to gastric secretions; erosion may extend through the muscle.
2. The ulcer may be referred to as *gastric*, *duodenal*, or *esophageal*, depending on its location.
3. The most common peptic ulcers are gastric ulcers and duodenal ulcers.

### B. Gastric ulcers

#### 1. Description

- a. A gastric ulcer involves ulceration of the mucosal lining that extends to the submucosal layer of the stomach.
- b. Predisposing factors include stress, smoking, the use of corticosteroids, NSAIDs, alcohol, history of gastritis, family history of gastric ulcers, or

infection with *H. pylori*.

c. Complications include hemorrhage, perforation, and pyloric obstruction.

## 2. Assessment (Box 56-5) ▲

### BOX 56-5 Assessment: Gastric and Duodenal Ulcers

#### Gastric

Gnawing, sharp pain in or to the left of the mid-epigastric region occurs 30 to 60 minutes after a meal (food ingestion accentuates the pain).

Hematemesis is more common than melena.

#### Duodenal

Burning pain occurs in the mid-epigastric area 1½ to 3 hours after a meal and during the night (often awakens the client).

Melena is more common than hematemesis.

Pain is often relieved by the ingestion of food.

## 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs and for signs of bleeding.
- b. Administer small, frequent bland feedings during the active phase.
- c. Administer H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists or proton pump inhibitors as prescribed to decrease the secretion of gastric acid.
- d. Administer antacids as prescribed to neutralize gastric secretions.
- e. Administer anticholinergics as prescribed to reduce gastric motility.

- f. Administer mucosal barrier protectants as prescribed 1 hour before each meal.
- g. Administer prostaglandins as prescribed for their protective and antisecretory actions.

#### 4. Client education ▲

- a. Avoid consuming alcohol and substances that contain caffeine or chocolate.
- b. Avoid smoking.
- c. Avoid aspirin or NSAIDs.
- d. Obtain adequate rest and reduce stress.

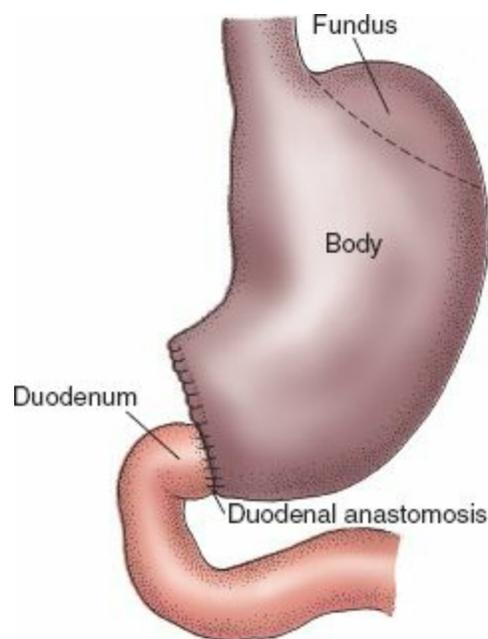
#### 5. Interventions during active bleeding

- a. Monitor vital signs closely.
- b. Assess for signs of dehydration, hypovolemic shock, sepsis, and respiratory insufficiency.
- c. Maintain NPO status and administer IV fluid replacement as prescribed; monitor intake and output.
- d. Monitor hemoglobin and hematocrit.
- e. Administer blood transfusions as prescribed.
- f. Prepare to assist with administering medications as prescribed to induce vasoconstriction and reduce bleeding.

#### 6. Surgical interventions

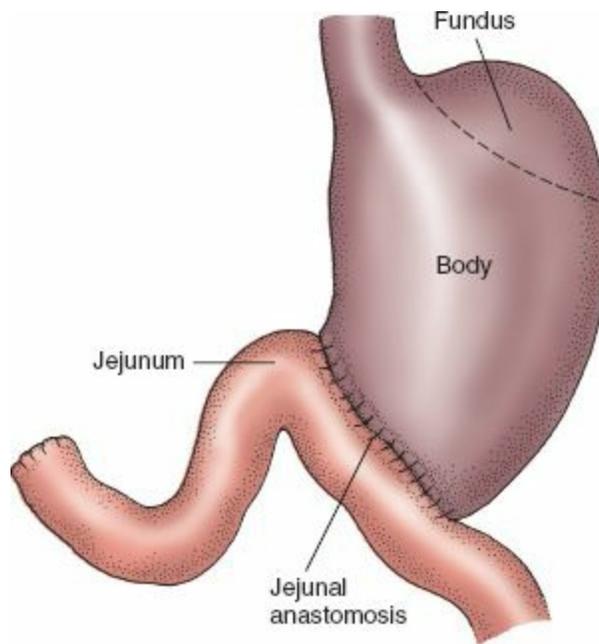
- a. Total **gastrectomy**: Removal of the stomach with attachment of the esophagus to the jejunum or duodenum; also called *esophagojejunostomy* or *esophagoduodenostomy*

- b. **Vagotomy**: Surgical division of the vagus nerve to eliminate the vagal impulses that stimulate hydrochloric acid secretion in the stomach
- c. **Gastric resection**: Removal of the lower half of the stomach and usually includes a vagotomy; also called *antrectomy*
- d. **Billroth I**: Partial gastrectomy, with the remaining segment anastomosed to the duodenum; also called *gastroduodenostomy* (Fig. 56-1)



**FIGURE 56-1** The Billroth I procedure (gastroduodenostomy). The distal portion of the stomach is removed, and the remainder is anastomosed to the duodenum. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- e. **Billroth II**: Partial gastrectomy, with the remaining segment anastomosed to the jejunum; also called *gastrojejunostomy* (Fig. 56-2)



**FIGURE 56-2** The Billroth II procedure (gastrojejunostomy). The lower portion of the stomach is removed, and the remainder is anastomosed to the jejunum. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- f. **Pyloroplasty**: Enlargement of the pylorus to prevent or decrease pyloric obstruction, thereby enhancing gastric emptying

## 7. Postoperative interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Place in a Fowler's position for comfort and to promote drainage. ▲
- c. Administer fluids and electrolyte replacements intravenously as prescribed; monitor intake and output.
- d. Assess bowel sounds.
- e. Monitor nasogastric suction as prescribed.
- f. Maintain NPO status as prescribed for 1 to 3 days until **peristalsis** returns.

- g.** Progress the diet from NPO to sips of clear water to six small bland meals a day, as prescribed when bowel sounds return.
- h.** Monitor for postoperative complications of hemorrhage, **dumping syndrome**, diarrhea, hypoglycemia, and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency. ▲

**⚠** Following gastric surgery, do not irrigate or remove the nasogastric (NG) tube unless specifically prescribed because of the risk for disruption of the gastric sutures. Monitor closely to ensure proper functioning of the NG tube to prevent strain on the anastomosis site. Contact the HCP if the tube is not functioning properly.

## C. Duodenal ulcers

### 1. Description

- a.** A duodenal ulcer is a break in the mucosa of the duodenum.
- b.** Risk factors and causes include infection with *H. pylori*; alcohol intake; smoking; stress; caffeine; the use of aspirin, corticosteroids, and NSAIDs.
- c.** Complications include bleeding, perforation, gastric outlet obstruction, and intractable disease.

### 2. Assessment (see [Box 56-5](#)) ▲

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a.** Monitor vital signs.
- b.** Instruct the client about a bland diet, with small frequent meals.
- c.** Provide for adequate rest.
- d.** Encourage the cessation of smoking.

- e. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol intake, caffeine, the use of aspirin, corticosteroids, and NSAIDs.
  - f. Administer medications to treat *H. pylori* and antacids to neutralize acid secretions as prescribed.
  - g. Administer H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists or proton pump inhibitors as prescribed to block the secretion of acid.
4. Surgical interventions: Surgery is performed only if the ulcer is unresponsive to medications or if hemorrhage, obstruction, or perforation occurs.

#### **D. Dumping syndrome**

1. Description: The rapid emptying of the gastric contents into the small intestine that occurs following gastric resection
2. Assessment 
  - a. Symptoms occurring 30 minutes after eating
  - b. Nausea and vomiting
  - c. Feelings of abdominal fullness and abdominal cramping
  - d. Diarrhea
  - e. Palpitations and tachycardia
  - f. Perspiration
  - g. Weakness and dizziness
  - h. Borborygmi (loud gurgles indicating hyperperistalsis)
3. Client education (Box 56-6) 

Avoid sugar, salt, and milk.

Eat a high-protein, high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet.

Eat small meals and avoid consuming fluids with meals.

Lie down after meals.

Take antispasmodic medications as prescribed to delay gastric emptying.

## VIII. Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> Deficiency

### A. Description

1. Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency results from an inadequate intake of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> or a lack of absorption of ingested vitamin B<sub>12</sub> from the intestinal tract.
2. Pernicious anemia results from a deficiency of intrinsic factor, necessary for intestinal absorption of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>; gastric disease or surgery can result in a lack of intrinsic factor.

### B. Assessment

1. Severe pallor
2. Fatigue
3. Weight loss
4. Smooth, beefy red tongue
5. Slight jaundice
6. Paresthesias of the hands and feet
7. Disturbances with gait and balance

## C. Interventions ▲

1. Increase dietary intake of foods rich in vitamin B<sub>12</sub> if the anemia is the result of a dietary deficiency (Box 56-7).

### **BOX 56-7** Foods Rich in Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>

- Brewer's yeast
- Citrus fruits
- Dried beans
- Green, leafy vegetables
- Liver
- Nuts
- Organ meats

2. Administer vitamin B<sub>12</sub> injections as prescribed, weekly initially and then monthly for maintenance (lifelong) if the anemia is the result of a deficiency of intrinsic factor or disease or surgery of the ileum.

## **IX. Bariatric Surgery**

### A. Description

1. Surgical reduction of gastric capacity that may be performed on a client with morbid obesity to produce long-term weight loss
2. Surgery may be performed by laparoscopy; the decision is based on the client's

weight, body build, history of abdominal surgery, and current medical disorders.

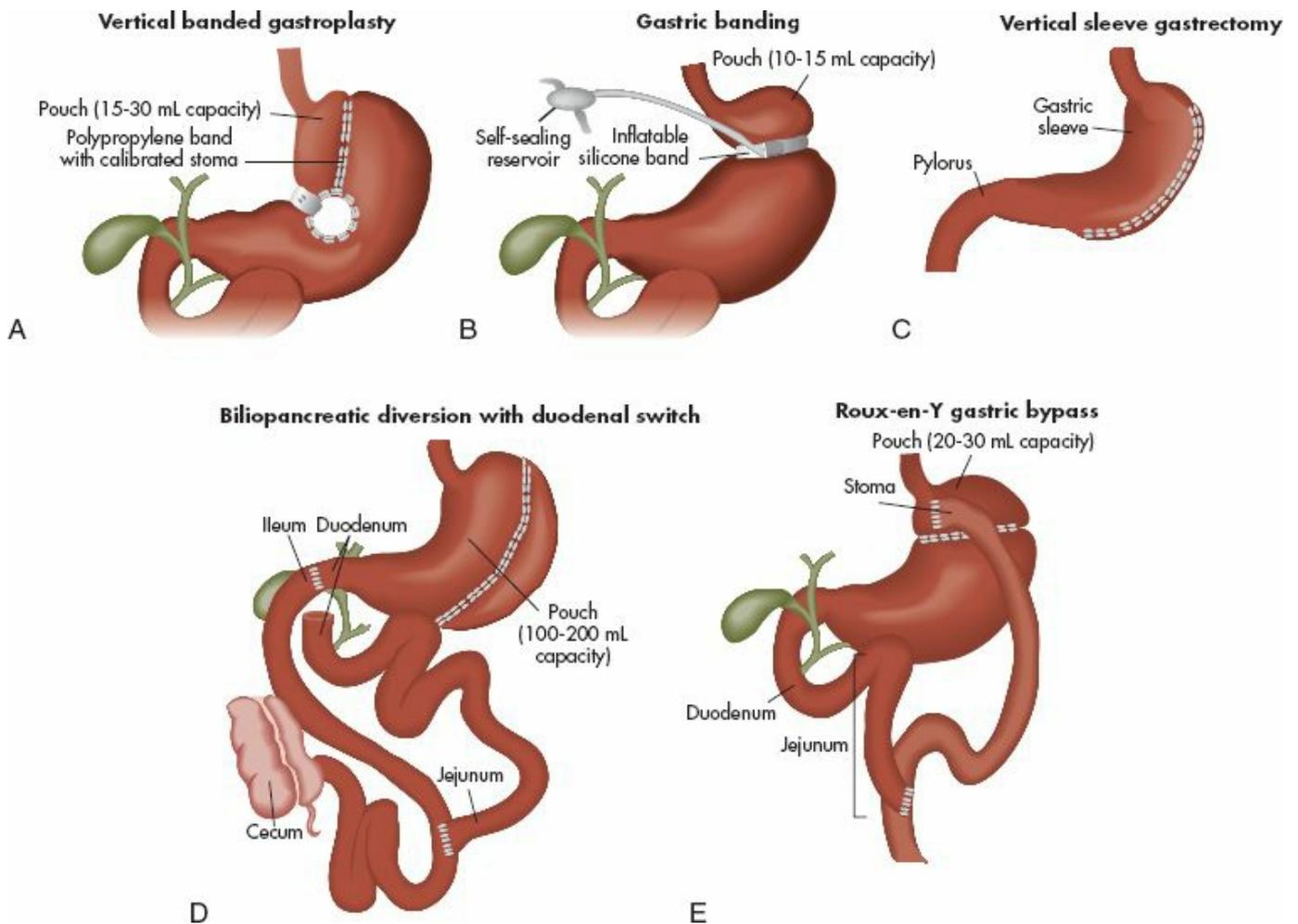
3. Obese clients are at increased postoperative risk for pulmonary and thromboembolic complications and death. ▲
4. Surgery can prevent the complications of obesity, such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension and other cardiovascular disorders, or sleep apnea.
5. The client needs to agree to modify his or her lifestyle, lose weight and keep the weight off, and obtain support from available community resources (Box 56-8).



#### **BOX 56-8** Community Resources Following Bariatric Surgery

- American Obesity Association
- American Society of Bariatric Surgery
- Overeaters Anonymous

#### **B. Types (Fig. 56-3)**



**FIGURE 56-3** Bariatric surgical procedures. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

### C. Postoperative interventions

1. Care is similar to that for the client undergoing abdominal surgery.
2. As prescribed, clear liquids are introduced slowly once bowel sounds have returned and the client passes flatus.
3. As prescribed, clear fluids are followed by puréed foods, juices, thin soups, and milk 24 to 48 hours after clear fluids are tolerated (the diet is usually limited to liquids or puréed foods for 6 weeks); then the diet is progressed to nutrient-dense

regular food.

**D. Client teaching points about diet (Box 56-9) ▲**

**BOX 56-9 Dietary Measures for the Client Following Bariatric Surgery**

Avoid alcohol, high-protein foods, and foods high in sugar and fat.

Eat slowly and chew food well.

Progress food types and amounts as prescribed.

Take nutritional supplements as prescribed, which may include calcium, iron, multivitamins, and vitamin B<sub>12</sub>.

Monitor and report signs and symptoms of complications, such as dehydration.

**X. Gastric Cancer (see Chapter 52)**

**XI. Hiatal Hernia**

**A. Description**

1. A **hiatal hernia** is also known as esophageal or diaphragmatic hernia.
2. A portion of the stomach herniates through the diaphragm and into the thorax.
3. Herniation results from weakening of the muscles of the diaphragm and is aggravated by factors that increase abdominal pressure such as pregnancy, **ascites**, obesity, tumors, and heavy lifting.
4. Complications include ulceration, hemorrhage, regurgitation and aspiration of stomach contents, strangulation, and incarceration of the stomach in the chest with

possible necrosis, peritonitis, and mediastinitis.

## B. Assessment

1. Heartburn
2. Regurgitation or vomiting
3. Dysphagia
4. Feeling of fullness

## C. Interventions ▲

1. Medical and surgical management are similar to those for gastroesophageal reflux disease.
2. Provide small frequent meals and limit the amount of liquids taken with meals.
3. Advise the client not to recline for 1 hour after eating.
4. Avoid anticholinergics, which delay stomach emptying.

## XII. Cholecystitis

### A. Description

1. Inflammation of the gallbladder that may occur as an acute or chronic process
2. Acute inflammation is associated with gallstones (cholelithiasis).
3. Chronic **cholecystitis** results when inefficient bile emptying and gallbladder muscle wall disease cause a fibrotic and contracted gallbladder.
4. Acalculous cholecystitis occurs in the absence of gallstones and is caused by bacterial invasion via the lymphatic or vascular system.

### B. Assessment

1. Nausea and vomiting

2. Indigestion

3. Belching

4. Flatulence

5. Epigastric pain that radiates to the scapula 2 to 4 hours after eating fatty foods and may persist for 4 to 6 hours ▲

6. Pain localized in right upper quadrant

7. Guarding, rigidity, and rebound tenderness

8. Mass palpated in the right upper quadrant

9. **Murphy's sign** (cannot take a deep breath when the examiner's fingers are passed below the hepatic margin because of pain) ▲

10. Elevated temperature

11. Tachycardia

12. Signs of dehydration

C. Biliary obstruction ▲

1. Jaundice

2. Dark orange and foamy urine

3. Steatorrhea and clay-colored feces

4. Pruritus

D. Interventions ▲

1. Maintain NPO status during nausea and vomiting episodes.

2. Maintain nasogastric decompression as prescribed for severe vomiting.

3. Administer antiemetics as prescribed for nausea and vomiting.

4. Administer analgesics as prescribed to relieve pain and reduce spasm.
5. Administer antispasmodics (anticholinergics) as prescribed to relax smooth muscle.
6. Instruct the client with chronic cholecystitis to eat small, low-fat meals.
7. Instruct the client to avoid gas-forming foods.
8. Prepare the client for nonsurgical and surgical procedures as prescribed.

#### E. Surgical interventions

1. **Cholecystectomy** is the removal of the gallbladder.
2. **Cholechoolithotomy** requires incision into the common bile duct to remove the stone.
3. Surgical procedures may be performed by laparoscopy.

#### F. Postoperative interventions

1. Monitor for respiratory complications caused by pain at the incisional site. ▲
2. Encourage coughing and deep breathing. ▲
3. Encourage early ambulation.
4. Instruct the client about splinting the abdomen to prevent discomfort during coughing.
5. Administer antiemetics as prescribed for nausea and vomiting.
6. Administer analgesics as prescribed for pain relief.
7. Maintain NPO status and nasogastric tube suction as prescribed. ▲
8. Advance diet from clear liquids to solids when prescribed and as tolerated by the client.

9. Maintain and monitor drainage from the T-tube, if present (Box 56-10).

## BOX 56-10

### Care of a T-Tube

#### Purpose and Description

A T-tube is placed after surgical exploration of the common bile duct. The tube preserves the patency of the duct and ensures drainage of bile until edema resolves and bile is effectively draining into the duodenum. A gravity drainage bag is attached to the T-tube to collect the drainage.

#### Interventions

Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position to facilitate drainage.

Monitor the output amount, color, consistency, and odor of the drainage.

Report sudden increases in bile output to the health care provider (HCP).

Monitor for inflammation and protect the skin from irritation.

Keep the drainage system below the level of the gallbladder.

Monitor for foul odor and purulent drainage and report its presence to the HCP.

Avoid irrigation, aspiration, or clamping of the T-tube without an HCP's prescription.

As prescribed, clamp the tube before a meal and observe for abdominal discomfort and distention, nausea, chills, or fever; unclamp the tube if nausea or vomiting occurs.

## XIII. Cirrhosis (Box 56-11)

### Laënnec's Cirrhosis

Cirrhosis is alcohol-induced, nutritional, or portal.

Cellular necrosis causes eventual widespread scar tissue, with fibrotic infiltration of the liver.

### Postnecrotic Cirrhosis

Cirrhosis occurs after massive liver necrosis.

Cirrhosis results as a complication of hepatitis or exposure to hepatotoxins.

Scar tissue causes destruction of liver lobules and entire lobes.

### Biliary Cirrhosis

Cirrhosis develops from chronic biliary obstruction, bile stasis, and inflammation, resulting in severe obstructive jaundice.

### Cardiac Cirrhosis

Cirrhosis is associated with severe, right-sided heart failure and results in an enlarged, edematous, congested liver.

The liver becomes anoxic, resulting in liver cell necrosis and fibrosis.

#### A. Description

1. A chronic, progressive disease of the liver characterized by diffuse degeneration and destruction of hepatocytes
2. Repeated destruction of hepatic cells causes the formation of scar tissue.

## B. Complications ▲

1. **Portal hypertension**: A persistent increase in pressure in the portal vein that develops as a result of obstruction to flow
2. **Ascites**
  - a. Accumulation of fluid in the peritoneal cavity that results from venous congestion of the hepatic capillaries
  - b. Capillary congestion leads to plasma leaking directly from the liver surface and portal vein.
3. Bleeding **esophageal varices**: Fragile, thin-walled, distended esophageal veins that become irritated and rupture
4. Coagulation defects
  - a. Decreased synthesis of bile fats in the liver prevents the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins.
  - b. Without vitamin K and clotting factors II, VII, IX, and X, the client is prone to bleeding.
5. Jaundice: Occurs because the liver is unable to metabolize bilirubin and because the edema, fibrosis, and scarring of the hepatic bile ducts interfere with normal bile and bilirubin secretion
6. Portal systemic encephalopathy: End-stage hepatic failure characterized by altered level of consciousness, neurological symptoms, impaired thinking, and neuromuscular disturbances; caused by failure of the diseased liver to detoxify neurotoxic agents such as ammonia.

## 7. Hepatorenal syndrome

- a. Progressive renal failure associated with hepatic failure
- b. Characterized by a sudden decrease in urinary output, elevated blood urea nitrogen and creatinine levels, decreased urine sodium excretion, and increased urine osmolarity

### C. Assessment (Fig. 56-4) ▲

#### NEUROLOGIC FINDINGS

Asterixis  
Paresthesias of feet  
Peripheral nerve degeneration  
Portal-systemic encephalopathy  
Reversal of sleep-wake pattern  
Sensory disturbances

#### GASTROINTESTINAL (GI) FINDINGS

Abdominal pain  
Anorexia  
Ascites  
Clay-colored stools  
Diarrhea  
Esophageal varices  
Fetor hepaticus  
Gallstones  
Gastritis  
Gastrointestinal bleeding  
Hemorrhoidal varices  
Hepatomegaly  
Hiatal hernia  
Hypersplenism  
Malnutrition  
Nausea  
Small nodular liver  
Vomiting

#### RENAL FINDINGS

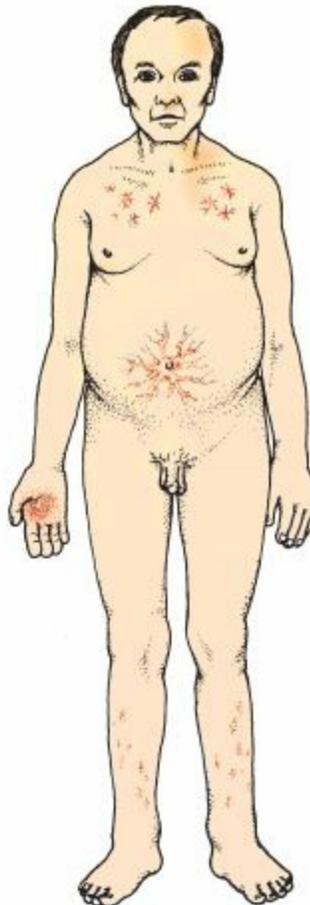
Hepatorenal syndrome  
Increased urine bilirubin

#### ENDOCRINE FINDINGS

Increased aldosterone  
Increased antidiuretic hormone  
Increased circulating estrogens  
Increased glucocorticoids  
Gynecomastia

#### IMMUNE SYSTEM DISTURBANCES

Increased susceptibility to infection  
Leukopenia



#### CARDIOVASCULAR FINDINGS

Cardiac dysrhythmias  
Development of collateral circulation  
Fatigue  
Hyperkinetic circulation  
Peripheral edema  
Portal hypertension  
Spider angiomas

#### PULMONARY FINDINGS

Dyspnea  
Hydrothorax  
Hyperventilation  
Hypoxemia

#### HEMATOLOGIC FINDINGS

Anemia  
Disseminated intravascular coagulation  
Impaired coagulation  
Splenomegaly  
Thrombocytopenia

#### DERMATOLOGIC FINDINGS

Axillary and pubic hair changes  
Caput medusae (dilated abdominal veins)\*  
Ecchymosis; petechiae\*  
Increased skin pigmentation  
Jaundice  
Palmar erythema\*  
Pruritus  
Spider angiomas (chest and thorax)\*

#### FLUID AND ELECTROLYTE DISTURBANCES

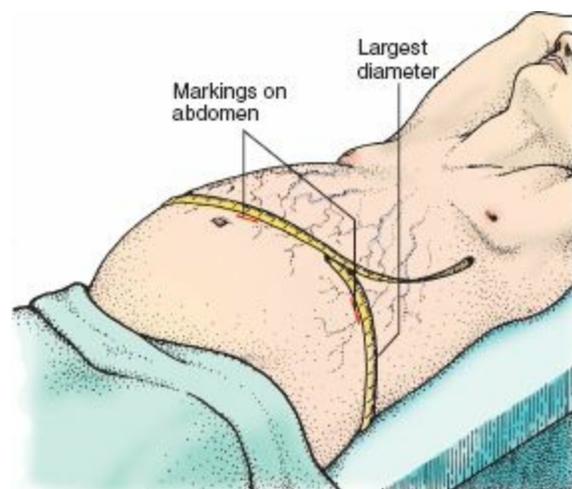
Ascites  
Decreased effective blood volume  
Dilutional hyponatremia or hypernatremia  
Hypocalcemia  
Hypokalemia  
Peripheral edema  
Water retention

**FIGURE 56-4** Clinical picture of a client with liver dysfunction. Manifestations vary according to the progression of the disease. Some dermatological manifestations are

noted in color (and marked with asterisks). (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

#### D. Interventions ▲

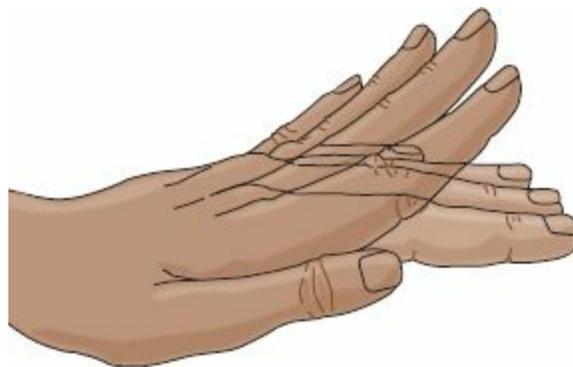
1. Elevate the head of the bed to minimize shortness of breath.
2. If ascites and edema are absent and the client does not exhibit signs of impending coma, a high-protein diet supplemented with vitamins is prescribed.
3. Provide supplemental vitamins (B complex, vitamins A, C, and K, folic acid, and thiamine) as prescribed.
4. Restrict sodium intake and fluid intake as prescribed.
5. Initiate enteral feedings or parenteral nutrition as prescribed.
6. Administer diuretics as prescribed to treat ascites.
7. Monitor intake and output and electrolyte balance.
8. Weigh client and measure abdominal girth daily (Fig. 56-5).



**FIGURE 56-5** How to measure abdominal girth. With the client supine, bring the

tape measure around the client and take a measurement at the level of the umbilicus. Before removing the tape, mark the client's abdomen along the sides of tape on the client's flanks (sides) and midline to ensure that later measurements are taken at the same place. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

9. Monitor level of consciousness; assess for precoma state (tremors, delirium).
10. Monitor for **asterixis**, a coarse tremor characterized by rapid, nonrhythmic extensions and flexions in the wrist and fingers (Fig. 56-6).



**FIGURE 56-6** Eliciting asterixis (flapping tremor). Have the client extend the arm, dorsiflex the wrist, and extend the fingers. Observe for rapid, nonrhythmic extensions and flexions. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

11. Monitor for **fetor hepaticus**, the fruity, musty breath odor of severe chronic liver disease.
12. Maintain gastric intubation to assess bleeding or esophagogastric balloon tamponade to control bleeding varices if prescribed.
13. Administer blood products as prescribed.

14. Monitor coagulation laboratory results; administer vitamin K if prescribed.
15. Administer antacids as prescribed.
16. Administer lactulose (Constulose, Enulose, Generlac) as prescribed, which decreases the pH of the bowel, decreases production of ammonia by bacteria in the bowel, and facilitates the excretion of ammonia.
17. Administer antibiotics as prescribed to inhibit protein synthesis in bacteria and decrease the production of ammonia.
18. Avoid medications such as opioids, sedatives, and barbiturates and any hepatotoxic medications or substances.
19. Instruct the client about the importance of abstinence of alcohol intake.
20. Prepare the client for paracentesis to remove abdominal fluid.
21. Prepare the client for surgical shunting procedures if prescribed to divert fluid from ascites into the venous system.

## **XIV. Esophageal Varices**

### **A. Description**

1. Dilated and tortuous veins in the submucosa of the esophagus.
2. Caused by portal hypertension, often associated with liver **cirrhosis**; are at high risk for rupture if portal circulation pressure rises
3. Bleeding varices are an emergency.
4. The goal of treatment is to control bleeding, prevent complications, and prevent the recurrence of bleeding.

## B. Assessment

1. Hematemesis
2. **Melena**
3. Ascites
4. Jaundice
5. Hepatomegaly and splenomegaly
6. Dilated abdominal veins
7. Signs of shock

 Rupture and resultant hemorrhage of esophageal varices is the primary concern because it is a life-threatening situation.

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Elevate the head of the bed.
3. Monitor for orthostatic hypotension.
4. Monitor lung sounds and for the presence of respiratory distress.
5. Administer oxygen as prescribed to prevent tissue hypoxia.
6. Monitor level of consciousness.
7. Maintain NPO status.
8. Administer fluids intravenously as prescribed to restore fluid volume and electrolyte imbalances; monitor intake and output.
9. Monitor hemoglobin and hematocrit values and coagulation factors.

10. Administer blood transfusions or clotting factors as prescribed.
11. Assist in inserting a nasogastric tube or a balloon tamponade as prescribed;  
balloon tamponade is not used frequently because it is very uncomfortable for the client and its use is associated with complications.
12. Prepare to assist with administering medications to induce vasoconstriction and reduce bleeding.
13. Instruct the client to avoid activities that will initiate vasovagal responses.
14. Prepare the client for endoscopic procedures or surgical procedures as prescribed.

#### **D. Endoscopic injection (sclerotherapy)**

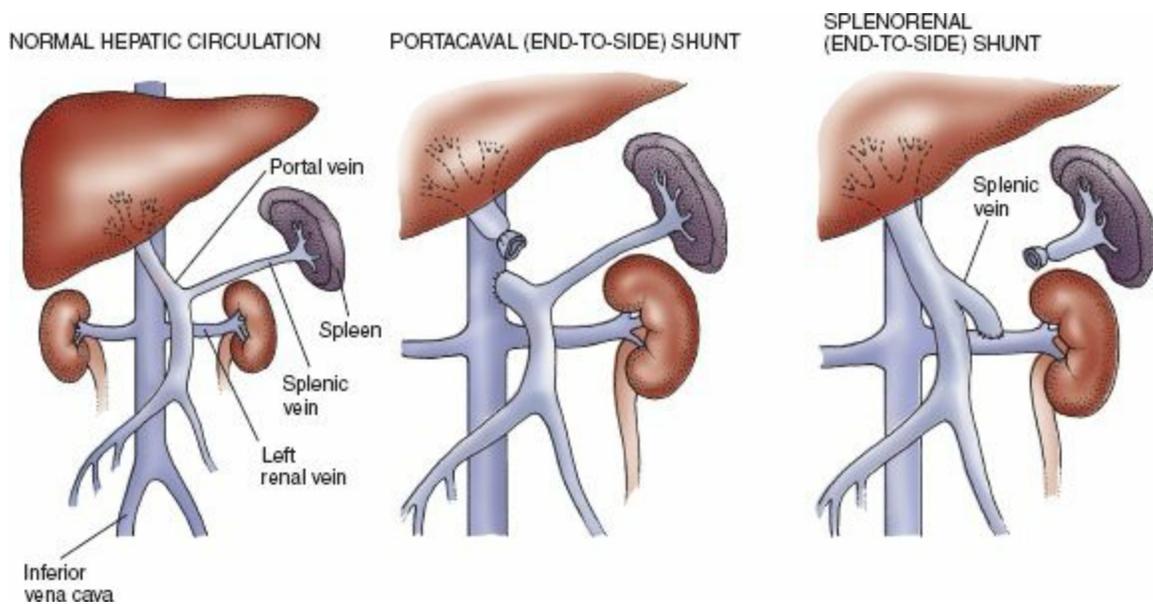
1. The procedure involves the injection of a sclerosing agent into and around bleeding varices.
2. Complications include chest pain, pleural effusion, aspiration pneumonia, esophageal stricture, and perforation of the esophagus.

#### **E. Endoscopic variceal ligation**

1. The procedure involves ligation of the varices with an elastic rubber band.
2. Sloughing, followed by superficial ulceration, occurs in the area of ligation within 3 to 7 days.

#### **F. Shunting procedures**

1. Description: Shunt blood away from the esophageal varices
2. Portacaval shunt involves anastomosis of the portal vein to the inferior vena cava, diverting blood from the portal system to the systemic circulation ([Fig. 56-7](#))



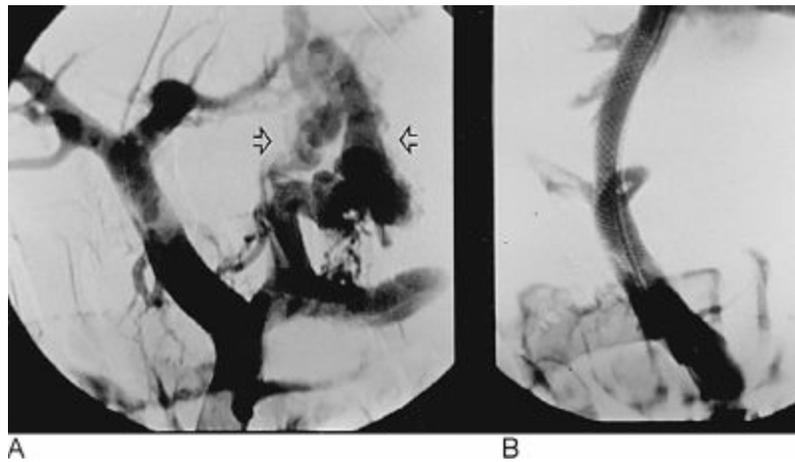
**FIGURE 56-7** Surgical shunting diverts portal venous blood flow from the liver to decrease portal and esophageal pressure. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

**3.** Distal splenorenal shunt (see [Fig. 56-7](#))

- a. The shunt involves anastomosis of the splenic vein to the left renal vein.
- b. The spleen conducts blood from the high-pressure varices to the low-pressure renal vein.

**4.** Mesocaval shunting involves a side anastomosis of the superior mesenteric vein to the proximal end of the inferior vena cava.

**5.** Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS; [Fig. 56-8](#))



**FIGURE 56-8** Total portal diversion after transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS). **A**, Portal venogram before TIPS shows filling of large esophageal varices (*arrows*). **B**, After insertion of a TIPS, flow to varices is eliminated. Intrahepatic portal vein flow is now reversed, with the direction of intrahepatic flow toward the TIPS. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

- a. This procedure uses the normal vascular anatomy of the liver to create a shunt with the use of a metallic stent.
- b. The shunt is between the portal and systemic venous system in the liver and is aimed at relieving portal hypertension.

## **XV. Hepatitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Inflammation of the liver caused by a virus, bacteria, or exposure to medications or hepatotoxins
2. The goals of treatment include resting the inflamed liver to reduce metabolic

demands and increasing the blood supply, thus promoting cellular regeneration and preventing complications.

## B. Types of **hepatitis**

1. Hepatitis A virus (HAV)
2. Hepatitis B virus (HBV)
3. Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
4. Hepatitis D virus (HDV)
5. Hepatitis E virus (HEV)

## C. Stages of viral hepatitis (Box 56-12) ▲

### **BOX 56-12**

### **Stages of Viral Hepatitis**

#### **Preicteric Stage**

- The first stage of hepatitis, preceding the appearance of jaundice; includes flulike symptoms

#### **Icteric Stage**

- The second stage of hepatitis; includes the appearance of jaundice and associated symptoms such as elevated bilirubin levels, dark or tea-colored urine, and clay-colored stools

#### **Posticteric Stage**

- The convalescent stage of hepatitis, in which the jaundice decreases and the color of the urine and stool returns to normal

## **D. Assessment**

### **1. Preicteric stage**

- a.** Flulike symptoms—malaise, fatigue
- b.** Anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- c.** Pain—headache, muscle aches, polyarthrititis
- d.** Serum bilirubin and enzyme levels are elevated.

### **2. Icteric stage**

- a.** Jaundice
- b.** Pruritus
- c.** Dark or tea-colored urine
- d.** Clay-colored stools
- e.** Decrease in preicteric-phase symptoms

### **3. Posticteric stage**

- a.** Increased energy levels
- b.** Subsiding of pain
- c.** Minimal to absent gastrointestinal symptoms
- d.** Serum bilirubin and enzyme levels return to normal.

## **E. Laboratory assessment**

- 1.** Alanine aminotransferase (ALT) level: Elevated into the thousands (normal, 10 to 40 units/L)
- 2.** Aspartate aminotransferase (AST) level: Elevated into the thousands (normal, 10

to 30 units/L)

3. Ammonia: Elevated levels may lead to encephalopathy (normal, 10 to 80 mcg/dL)
4. Total bilirubin levels: Elevated in the serum and urine (normal, lower than 1.5 mg/dL)

## **XVI. Hepatitis A**

### **A. Description**

1. Formerly known as *infectious hepatitis*
2. Commonly seen during the fall and early winter

### **B. Individuals at increased risk**

1. Commonly seen in young children
2. Individuals in institutionalized settings
3. Health care personnel

### **C. Transmission**

1. Fecal-oral route
2. Person-to-person contact
3. Parenteral
4. Contaminated fruits, vegetables, or uncooked shellfish
5. Contaminated water or milk
6. Poorly washed utensils

### **D. Incubation and infectious period**

1. Incubation period is 2 to 6 weeks.
2. Infectious period is 2 to 3 weeks before and 1 week after development of

jaundice.

#### E. Testing

1. Infection is established by the presence of HAV antibodies (anti-HAV) in the blood.
2. Immunoglobulin M (IgM) and IgG are normally present in the blood, and increased levels indicate infection and inflammation.
3. Ongoing inflammation of the liver is evidenced by the presence of elevated levels of IgM antibodies, which persist in the blood for 4 to 6 weeks.
4. Previous infection is indicated by the presence of elevated levels of IgG antibodies.

#### F. Complication: Fulminant (severe acute and often fatal) hepatitis

#### G. Prevention ▲

1. Strict hand washing
2. Stool and needle precautions
3. Treatment of municipal water supplies
4. Serological screening of food handlers
5. Hepatitis A vaccine (HAVRIX, VAQTA)
6. Immune globulin: For individuals exposed to HAV who have never received the hepatitis A vaccine; administer immune globulin during the period of incubation and within 2 weeks of exposure.
7. Immune globulin and hepatitis A vaccine are recommended for household members and sexual contacts of individuals with hepatitis A.

8. Preexposure prophylaxis with immunoglobulin is recommended to individuals traveling to countries with poor or uncertain sanitation conditions.

 Strict and frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of all types of hepatitis.

## **XVII. Hepatitis B**

### **A. Description**

1. Hepatitis B is nonseasonal.
2. All age groups are affected.

### **B. Individuals at increased risk**

1. IV drug users
2. Clients undergoing long-term hemodialysis
3. Health care personnel

### **C. Transmission**

1. Blood or body fluid contact
2. Infected blood products
3. Infected saliva or semen
4. Contaminated needles
5. Sexual contact
6. Parenteral
7. Perinatal period
8. Blood or body fluids contact at birth

**D.** Incubation period: 6 to 24 weeks

**E.** Testing

1. Infection is established by the presence of hepatitis B antigen–antibody systems in the blood.
2. The presence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) is the serological marker establishing the diagnosis of hepatitis B.
3. The client is considered infectious if these antigens are present in the blood.
4. If the serological marker (HBsAg) is present after 6 months, it indicates a carrier state or chronic hepatitis.
5. Normally, the serological marker (HBsAg) level declines and disappears after the acute hepatitis B episode.
6. The presence of antibodies to HBsAg (anti-HBs) indicates recovery and immunity to hepatitis B.
7. Hepatitis B early antigen (HBeAg) is detected in the blood about 1 week after the appearance of HBsAg and its presence determines the infective state of the client.

**F.** Complications

1. Fulminant hepatitis
2. Chronic liver disease
3. Cirrhosis
4. Primary hepatocellular carcinoma

**G.** Prevention 

1. Strict hand washing

2. Screening blood donors
3. Testing of all pregnant women
4. Needle precautions
5. Avoiding intimate sexual contact if test for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) is positive.
6. Hepatitis B vaccine: Engerix-B (adult), Recombivax HB (pediatric); there is also an adult vaccine that protects against hepatitis A and B known as Twinrix.
7. Hepatitis B immune globulin is for individuals exposed to HBV through sexual contact or through the percutaneous or transmucosal routes who have never had hepatitis B and have never received hepatitis B vaccine.

## **XVIII. Hepatitis C**

### **A. Description**

1. Hepatitis C virus infection occurs year-round.
2. Infection can occur in any age group.
3. Infection with HCV is common among IV drug users and is the major cause of posttransfusion hepatitis.
4. Risk factors are similar to those for HBV because hepatitis C is also transmitted parenterally.

### **B. Individuals at increased risk**

1. Parenteral drug users
2. Clients receiving frequent transfusions
3. Health care personnel

C. Transmission: Same as for HBV, primarily through blood ▲

D. Incubation period: 5 to 10 weeks

E. Testing: Anti-HCV is the antibody to HCV and is measured to detect chronic states of hepatitis C.

F. Complications

1. Chronic liver disease
2. Cirrhosis
3. Primary hepatocellular carcinoma

G. Prevention ▲

1. Strict hand-washing
2. Needle precautions
3. Screening of blood donors

## **XIX. Hepatitis D**

A. Description

1. Hepatitis D is common in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas.
2. Hepatitis D occurs with hepatitis B and causes infection only in the presence of active HBV infection.
3. Coinfection with the delta agent (HDV) intensifies the acute symptoms of hepatitis B.
4. Transmission and risk of infection are the same as for HBV, via contact with blood and blood products. ▲

5. Prevention of HBV infection with vaccine also prevents HDV infection, because HDV depends on HBV for replication. ▲

**B. High-risk individuals**

1. Drug users
2. Clients receiving hemodialysis
3. Clients receiving frequent blood transfusions

**C. Transmission:** Same as for HBV

**D. Incubation period:** 7 to 8 weeks

**E. Testing:** Serological HDV determination is made by detection of the hepatitis D antigen (HDAg) early in the course of the infection and by detection of anti-HDV antibody in the later disease stages.

**F. Complications**

1. Chronic liver disease
2. Fulminant hepatitis

**G. Prevention:** Because hepatitis D must coexist with hepatitis B, the precautions that help prevent hepatitis B are also useful in preventing delta hepatitis. ▲

## **XX. Hepatitis E**

**A. Description**

1. Hepatitis E is a waterborne virus.
2. Hepatitis E is prevalent in areas where sewage disposal is inadequate or where communal bathing in contaminated rivers is practiced.

3. Risk of infection is the same as for HAV.

4. Infection with HEV presents as a mild disease except in infected women in the third trimester of pregnancy, who have a high mortality rate.

**B. Individuals with increased risk**

1. Travelers to countries that have a high incidence of hepatitis E such as India, Burma (Myanmar), Afghanistan, Algeria, and Mexico

2. Eating or drinking of food or water contaminated with the virus

**C. Transmission:** Same as for HAV ▲

**D. Incubation period:** 2 to 9 weeks

**E. Testing:** Specific serological tests for HEV include detection of IgM and IgG antibodies to hepatitis E (anti-HEV).

**F. Complications**

1. High mortality rate in pregnant women

2. Fetal demise

**G. Prevention** ▲

1. Strict hand washing

2. Treatment of water supplies and sanitation measures

**XXI. Client and Family Home Care Instructions for Hepatitis (Box 56-13)** ▲

**BOX 56-13**

**Home Care Instructions for the Client with Hepatitis**

Hand washing must be strict and frequent.

Do not share bathrooms unless the client strictly adheres to personal hygiene measures.

Individual washcloths, towels, drinking and eating utensils, and toothbrushes and razors must be labeled and identified.

The client must not prepare food for other family members.

The client should avoid alcohol and over-the-counter medications, particularly acetaminophen (Tylenol) and sedatives, because these medications are hepatotoxic.

The client should increase activity gradually to prevent fatigue.

The client should consume small, frequent meals consisting of high-carbohydrate, low-fat foods.

The client is not to donate blood.

The client may maintain normal contact with persons as long as proper personal hygiene is maintained.

Close personal contact such as kissing should be discouraged until hepatitis B surface antigen test results are negative.

The client is to avoid sexual activity until hepatitis B surface antigen results are negative.

The client needs to carry a Medic-Alert card noting the date of hepatitis onset.

The client needs to inform other health professionals, such as medical or dental personnel, of the onset of hepatitis.

The client needs to keep follow-up appointments with the health care provider.

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## XXII. Pancreatitis

### A. Description

1. Acute or chronic inflammation of the pancreas, with associated escape of pancreatic enzymes into surrounding tissue
2. Acute pancreatitis occurs suddenly as one attack or can be recurrent, with resolutions.
3. Chronic pancreatitis is a continual inflammation and destruction of the pancreas, with scar tissue replacing pancreatic tissue.
4. Precipitating factors include trauma, the use of alcohol, biliary tract disease, viral or bacterial disease, hyperlipidemia, hypercalcemia, cholelithiasis, hyperparathyroidism, ischemic vascular disease, and peptic ulcer disease.

### B. Acute pancreatitis

1. Assessment 
  - a. Abdominal pain, including a sudden onset at a mid-epigastric or left upper quadrant location with radiation to the back
  - b. Pain aggravated by a fatty meal, alcohol, or lying in a recumbent position
  - c. Abdominal tenderness and guarding
  - d. Nausea and vomiting
  - e. Weight loss
  - f. Absent or decreased bowel sounds
  - g. Elevated white blood cell count, and glucose, bilirubin, alkaline phosphatase,

and urinary amylase levels

**h.** Elevated serum lipase and amylase levels

**i.** Cullen's sign

**j.** Turner's sign

 Cullen's sign is the discoloration of the abdomen and periumbilical area. Turner's sign is the bluish discoloration of the flanks. Both signs are indicative of pancreatitis.

## 2. Interventions

- a.** Maintain NPO status and maintain hydration with IV fluids as prescribed. 
- b.** Administer parenteral nutrition for severe nutritional depletion.
- c.** Administer supplemental preparations and vitamins and minerals to increase caloric intake if prescribed.
- d.** Maintain nasogastric tube to decrease gastric distention and suppress pancreatic secretion.
- e.** Administer opiates as prescribed for pain.
- f.** Administer antacids as prescribed to neutralize gastric secretions.
- g.** Administer H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists or proton pump inhibitors as prescribed to decrease hydrochloric acid production and prevent activation of pancreatic enzymes.
- h.** Administer anticholinergics as prescribed to decrease vagal stimulation, decrease gastrointestinal motility, and inhibit pancreatic enzyme secretion.
- i.** Instruct the client in the importance of avoiding alcohol. 

- j.** Instruct the client in the importance of follow-up visits with the HCP.
- k.** Instruct the client to notify the HCP if acute abdominal pain, jaundice, clay-colored stools, or dark-colored urine develops. ▲

## **C. Chronic pancreatitis**

### **1. Assessment** ▲

- a.** Abdominal pain and tenderness
- b.** Left upper quadrant mass
- c.** Steatorrhea and foul-smelling stools that may increase in volume as pancreatic insufficiency increases
- d.** Weight loss
- e.** Muscle wasting
- f.** Jaundice
- g.** Signs and symptoms of diabetes mellitus

### **2. Interventions** ▲

- a.** Instruct the client in the prescribed dietary measures (fat and protein intake may be limited).
- b.** Instruct the client to avoid heavy meals.
- c.** Instruct the client about the importance of avoiding alcohol.
- d.** Provide supplemental preparations and vitamins and minerals to increase caloric intake.
- e.** Administer pancreatic enzymes as prescribed to aid in the digestion and absorption of fat and protein.

- f. Administer insulin or oral hypoglycemic medications as prescribed to control diabetes mellitus, if present.
- g. Instruct the client in the use of pancreatic enzyme medications.
- h. Instruct the client in the treatment plan for glucose management.
- i. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if increased steatorrhea, abdominal distention or cramping, or skin breakdown develops.
- j. Instruct the client in the importance of follow-up visits.

### **XXIII. Pancreatic Tumors, Intestinal Tumors, and Bowel Obstructions (see Chapter 52)**

### **XXIV. Ulcerative Colitis**

#### **A. Description**

1. An ulcerative and inflammatory disease of the bowel that results in poor absorption of nutrients.
2. Commonly begins in the rectum and spreads upward toward the cecum
3. The colon becomes edematous and may develop bleeding lesions and ulcers; the ulcers may lead to perforation.
4. Scar tissue develops and causes loss of elasticity and loss of the ability to absorb nutrients.
5. Colitis is characterized by various periods of remissions and exacerbations.
6. Acute **ulcerative colitis** results in vascular congestion, hemorrhage, edema, and ulceration of the bowel mucosa.

7. Chronic ulcerative colitis causes muscular hypertrophy, fat deposits, and fibrous tissue, with bowel thickening, shortening, and narrowing.

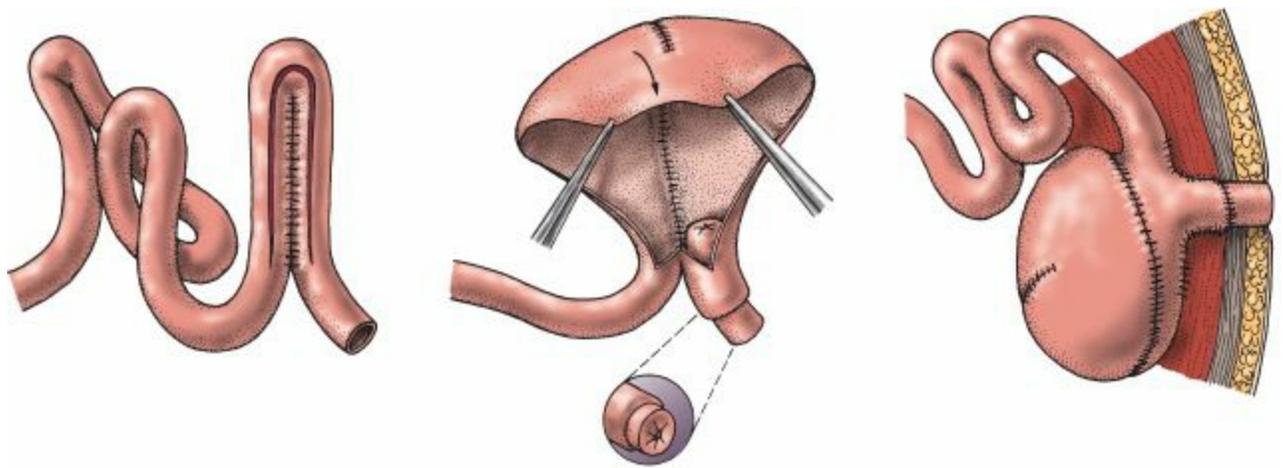
## B. Assessment

1. Anorexia
2. Weight loss
3. Malaise
4. Abdominal tenderness and cramping
5. Severe diarrhea that may contain blood and mucus ▲
6. Malnutrition, dehydration, and electrolyte imbalances ▲
7. Anemia
8. Vitamin K deficiency

## C. Interventions

1. Acute phase: Maintain NPO status and administer fluids and electrolytes intravenously or via parenteral nutrition as prescribed. ▲
2. Restrict the client's activity to reduce intestinal activity.
3. Monitor bowel sounds and for abdominal tenderness and cramping.
4. Monitor stools, noting color, consistency, and the presence or absence of blood.
5. Monitor for bowel perforation, peritonitis (see [Box 56-3](#)), and hemorrhage.
6. Following the acute phase, the diet progresses from clear liquids to a low-fiber diet as tolerated.
7. Instruct the client about diet; usually a low-fiber, high-protein diet with vitamins and iron supplements are prescribed.

- 8.** Instruct the client to avoid gas-forming foods, milk products, and foods such as whole wheat grains, nuts, raw fruits and vegetables, pepper, alcohol, and caffeine-containing products.
  - 9.** Instruct the client to avoid smoking.
  - 10.** Administer medications as prescribed, which may include a combination of medications such as salicylate compounds, corticosteroids, immunosuppressants, and antidiarrheals.
- D.** Surgical interventions: Performed in extreme cases if medical management is unsuccessful.
- 1.** Total proctocolectomy with permanent ileostomy
    - a.** The procedure is curative and involves the removal of the entire colon (colon, rectum, and anus, with anal closure).
    - b.** The end of the terminal ileum forms the stoma, which is located in the right lower quadrant.
  - 2.** Kock ileostomy (continent ileostomy) ([Fig. 56-9](#))



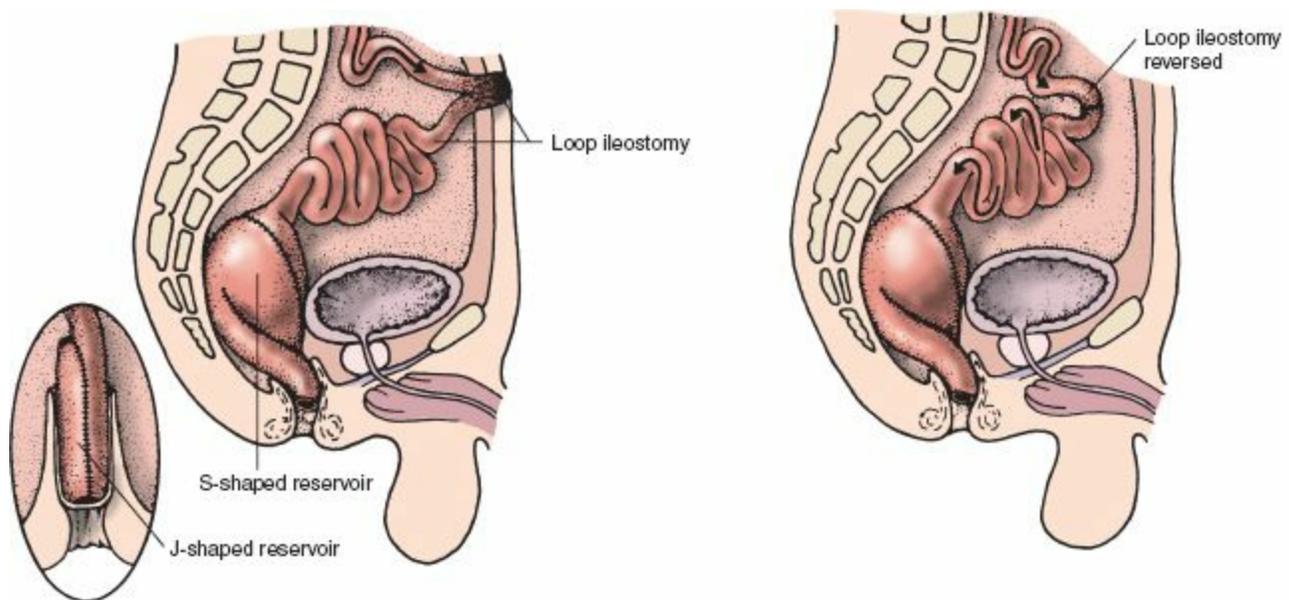
1. A reservoir, in which the client will retain stool until draining it, is constructed from a loop of ileum folded and sutured together, then cut.

2. A portion of the ileum is intussuscepted to form a nipple valve, and the upper part of the stitched and cut ileum is pulled down and sutured to form a pouch.

3. The nipple valve, which shuts tight against pressure from a filled pouch, is pulled through the stoma and sutured flush with the abdomen.

**FIGURE 56-9** Creation of a Kock (continent) ileostomy. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. The Kock ileostomy is an intraabdominal pouch that stores the feces and is constructed from the terminal ileum.
  - b. The pouch is connected to the stoma with a nipple-like valve constructed from a portion of the ileum; the stoma is flush with the skin.
  - c. A catheter is used to empty the pouch, and a small dressing or adhesive bandage is worn over the stoma between emptyings.
3. Ileoanal reservoir (Fig. 56-10)



**Stage 1.**

After removal of the colon, a temporary loop ileostomy is created and an ileoanal reservoir is formed. The reservoir is created in an S-shaped reservoir (using three loops of ileum) or a J-shaped reservoir (suturing a portion of ileum to the rectal cuff, with an upward loop).

**Stage 2.**

After the reservoir has had time to heal—usually several months—the temporary loop ileostomy is reversed, and stool is allowed to drain into the reservoir.

**FIGURE 56-10** Creation of an ileoanal reservoir. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Creation of an ileoanal reservoir is a two-stage procedure that involves the excision of the rectal mucosa, an abdominal colectomy, construction of a reservoir to the anal canal, and a temporary loop ileostomy.
  - b. The ileostomy is closed in 3 to 4 months after the capacity of the reservoir is increased and has had time to heal.
4. Ileoanal anastomosis (ileorectostomy)
- a. Ileorectostomy does not require an ileostomy.
  - b. A 12- to 15-cm rectal stump is left after the colon is removed, and the small intestine is inserted into this rectal sleeve and anastomosed.

c. Ileorectostomy requires a large, compliant rectum.

**5. Preoperative colostomy and ileostomy interventions** ▲

a. Consult with the enterostomal therapist to help identify optimal placement of the ostomy.

b. Instruct the client to eat a low-fiber diet for 1 to 2 days before surgery as prescribed.

c. Administer intestinal antiseptics and antibiotics as prescribed to cleanse the bowel and to decrease the bacterial content of the colon.

d. Administer laxatives and enemas as prescribed.

**6. Postoperative colostomy interventions**

a. Place a petrolatum gauze dressing over the stoma as prescribed to keep it moist, followed by a dry sterile dressing if a pouch (external) system is not in place.

b. Place a pouch system on the stoma as soon as possible.

c. Monitor the stoma for size, unusual bleeding, or necrotic tissue.

d. Monitor for color changes in the stoma.

e. Note that the normal stoma color is pink to bright red and shiny, indicating high vascularity. ▲

f. Note that a pale pink stoma indicates low hemoglobin and hematocrit levels and a purple-black stoma indicates compromised circulation, requiring HCP notification. ▲

g. Assess the functioning of the colostomy.

h. Expect that stool is liquid in the immediate postoperative period but becomes

more solid depending on the area of the colostomy—ascending colon, liquid; transverse colon, loose to semiformal; and descending colon, close to normal.



- i. Monitor the pouch system for proper fit and signs of leakage.
- j. Empty the pouch when it is one-third full.
- k. Fecal matter should not be allowed to remain on the skin.
- l. Administer analgesics and antibiotics as prescribed.
- m. Irrigate the perineal wound (if present) as prescribed and monitor for signs of infection.
- n. Instruct the client to avoid foods that cause excess gas formation and odor.
- o. Instruct the client about stoma care and irrigations as prescribed ([Box 56-14](#)).

## **BOX 56-14**

## **Colostomy Irrigation**

### **Purpose**

An enema is given through the stoma to stimulate bowel emptying.

### **Description**

Irrigation is performed by instilling 500 to 1000 mL of lukewarm tap water through the stoma and allowing the water and stool to drain into a collection bag.

### **Procedure**

If ambulatory, position the client sitting on the toilet.

If on bed rest, position the client on his or her side.

Hang the irrigation bag so that the bottom of the bag is at the level of the client's

shoulder or slightly higher.

Insert the irrigation tube carefully without force.

Begin the flow of irrigation.

Clamp the tubing if cramping occurs; release the tubing as cramping subsides.

Avoid frequent irrigations, which can lead to loss of fluids and electrolytes.

Perform irrigation at about the same time each day.

Perform irrigation preferably 1 hour after a meal.

To enhance effectiveness of the irrigation, massage the abdomen gently.

- p. Instruct the client that normal activities may be resumed when approved by the HCP.

## 7. Postoperative ileostomy interventions

- a. Note that normal stool is liquid.
- b. Monitor for dehydration and electrolyte imbalance.

 A stoma that is purple-black in color indicates compromised circulation, requiring immediate HCP notification.

## XXV. Crohn's Disease

### A. Description

1. An inflammatory disease that can occur anywhere in the gastrointestinal tract but most often affects the terminal ileum and leads to thickening and scarring, a narrowed lumen, fistulas, ulcerations, and abscesses
2. Characterized by remissions and exacerbations

## **B. Assessment**

1. Fever
  2. Cramplike and colicky pain after meals
  3. Diarrhea (semisolid), which may contain mucus and pus ▲
  4. Abdominal distention
  5. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
  6. Weight loss
  7. Anemia
  8. Dehydration ▲
  9. Electrolyte imbalances ▲
  10. Malnutrition (may be worse than that seen in ulcerative colitis) ▲
- C. Interventions:** Care is similar to that for the client with ulcerative colitis; however, surgery may be necessary but is avoided for as long as possible because recurrence of the disease process in the same region is likely to occur.

## **XXVI. Appendicitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Inflammation of the appendix.
2. When the appendix becomes inflamed or infected, rupture may occur within a matter of hours, leading to peritonitis and sepsis.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Pain in the periumbilical area that descends to the right lower quadrant

2. Abdominal pain that is most intense at McBurney's point ▲
3. Rebound tenderness and abdominal rigidity
4. Low-grade fever
5. Elevated white blood cell count
6. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
7. Client in side-lying position, with abdominal guarding and legs flexed ▲
8. Constipation or diarrhea

**C. Peritonitis:** Inflammation of the peritoneum (see [Box 56-3](#))

**D. Appendectomy:** Surgical removal of the appendix

1. Preoperative interventions ▲
  - a. Maintain NPO status.
  - b. Administer fluids intravenously to prevent dehydration.
  - c. Monitor for changes in level of pain.
  - d. Monitor for signs of ruptured appendix and peritonitis (see [Box 56-3](#)).
  - e. Position the client in a right side-lying or low to semi-Fowler's position to promote comfort.
  - f. Monitor bowel sounds.
  - g. Avoid the application of heat to the abdomen.
  - h. Apply ice packs to the abdomen for 20 to 30 minutes every hour as prescribed.
  - i. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.
  - j. Avoid laxatives or enemas.

 **Avoid the application of heat to the abdomen of a client with appendicitis. Heat can cause rupture of the appendix leading to peritonitis, a life-threatening condition.**

## 2. Postoperative interventions

- a. Monitor temperature for signs of infection.
- b. Assess incision for signs of infection such as redness, swelling, and pain.
- c. Maintain NPO status until bowel function has returned.
- d. Advance diet gradually as tolerated and as prescribed, when bowel sounds return.
- e. If rupture of the appendix occurred, expect a Penrose drain to be inserted, or the incision may be left open to heal from the inside out. 
- f. Expect that drainage from the Penrose drain may be profuse for the first 12 hours.
- g. Position the client in a right side-lying or low to semi-Fowler's position, with legs flexed, to facilitate drainage. 
- h. Change the dressing as prescribed and record the type and amount of drainage.
- i. Perform wound irrigations if prescribed.
- j. Maintain nasogastric suction and patency of the nasogastric tube if present.
- k. Administer antibiotics and analgesics as prescribed.

## **XXVII. Diverticulosis and Diverticulitis**

### **A. Description**

#### **1. Diverticulosis**

- a. **Diverticulosis** is an outpouching or herniation of the intestinal mucosa.
- b. The disorder can occur in any part of the intestine but is most common in the sigmoid colon.

## 2. Diverticulitis

- a. **Diverticulitis** is the inflammation of one or more diverticula that occurs from penetration of fecal matter through the thin-walled diverticula; it can result in local abscess formation and perforation.
- b. A perforated diverticulum can progress to intraabdominal perforation with generalized peritonitis.

## B. Assessment

1. Left lower quadrant abdominal pain that increases with coughing, straining, or lifting ▲
2. Elevated temperature
3. Nausea and vomiting
4. Flatulence
5. Cramplike pain
6. Abdominal distention and tenderness
7. Palpable, tender rectal mass may be present.
8. Blood in the stools ▲

## C. Interventions ▲

1. Provide bed rest during the acute phase.
2. Maintain NPO status or provide clear liquids during the acute phase as

prescribed.

3. Introduce a fiber-containing diet gradually, when the inflammation has resolved.
4. Administer antibiotics, analgesics, and anticholinergics to reduce bowel spasms as prescribed.
5. Instruct the client to refrain from lifting, straining, coughing, or bending to avoid increased intraabdominal pressure.
6. Monitor for perforation (see [Box 56-3](#)), hemorrhage, fistulas, and abscesses.
7. Instruct the client to increase fluid intake to 2500 to 3000 mL daily, unless contraindicated.
8. Instruct the client to eat soft high-fiber foods, such as whole grains; the client should avoid high-fiber foods when inflammation occurs because these foods will irritate the mucosa further.
9. Instruct the client to avoid gas-forming foods or foods containing indigestible roughage, seeds, or nuts because these food substances become trapped in diverticula and cause inflammation.
10. Instruct the client to consume a small amount of bran daily and to take bulk-forming laxatives as prescribed to increase stool mass.

#### **D. Surgical interventions**

1. Colon resection with primary anastomosis may be an option.
2. Temporary or permanent colostomy may be required for increased bowel inflammation.

## XXVIII. Hemorrhoids

### A. Description

1. Dilated varicose veins of the anal canal
2. May be internal, external, or prolapsed
3. Internal hemorrhoids lie above the anal sphincter and cannot be seen on inspection of the perianal area.
4. External hemorrhoids lie below the anal sphincter and can be seen on inspection.
5. Prolapsed hemorrhoids can become thrombosed or inflamed.
6. Hemorrhoids are caused from portal hypertension, straining, irritation, or increased venous or abdominal pressure.

### B. Assessment

1. Bright red bleeding with defecation 🟡
2. Rectal pain
3. Rectal itching

### C. Interventions

1. Apply cold packs to the anal-rectal area followed by sitz baths as prescribed.
2. Apply witch hazel soaks and topical anesthetics as prescribed.
3. Encourage a high-fiber diet and fluids to promote bowel movements without straining.
4. Administer stool softeners as prescribed.

**D. Surgical interventions:** May include ultrasound, sclerotherapy, circular stapling, band ligation, or simple resection of the hemorrhoids (hemorrhoidectomy)

## E. Postoperative interventions following hemorrhoidectomy ▲

1. Assist the client to a prone or side-lying position to prevent bleeding.
2. Maintain ice packs over the dressing as prescribed until the packing is removed by the HCP.
3. Monitor for urinary retention.
4. Administer stool softeners as prescribed.
5. Instruct the client to increase fluids and high-fiber foods.
6. Instruct the client to limit sitting to short periods of time.
7. Instruct the client in the use of sitz baths three or four times a day as prescribed.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Bleeding is a primary concern for a liver biopsy because of the high vascularity of the liver. Therefore a preprocedure assessment is to check the client's status related to the risk for bleeding. The normal bleeding time ranges from 1 to 6 minutes depending on the testing method used and the normal prothrombin time ranges from 9.5 to 11.8 seconds. Since the client's bleeding time and prothrombin times are prolonged, the client is at risk for bleeding. Therefore the nurse should immediately notify the health care provider of these abnormal laboratory values.

#### **References**

Chernecky, Berger (2013), pp. 727-728; Lewis et al (2011), p. 913.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 617.** The nurse is monitoring a client admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of appendicitis who is scheduled for surgery in 2 hours. The client begins to complain of increased abdominal pain and begins to vomit. On assessment, the nurse notes that the abdomen is distended and bowel sounds are diminished. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing intervention?
1. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
  2. Administer the prescribed pain medication.
  3. Call and ask the operating room team to perform the surgery as soon as possible.
  4. Reposition the client and apply a heating pad on the warm setting to the client's abdomen.
- 618.** A client has been admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of acute pancreatitis and the nurse is assessing the client's pain. What type of pain is consistent with this diagnosis?
1. Burning and aching, located in the left lower quadrant and radiating to the hip
  2. Severe and unrelenting, located in the epigastric area and radiating to the back
  3. Burning and aching, located in the epigastric area and radiating to the umbilicus
  4. Severe and unrelenting, located in the left lower quadrant and radiating to the groin

619. The nurse is assessing a client who is experiencing an acute episode of cholecystitis. Where should the nurse anticipate the location of the pain?
1. Right lower quadrant, radiating to the back
  2. Right lower quadrant, radiating to the umbilicus
  3. Right upper quadrant, radiating to the left scapula and shoulder
  4. Right upper quadrant, radiating to the right scapula and shoulder
620. A client is admitted to the hospital with viral hepatitis, complaining of “no appetite” and “losing my taste for food.” What instruction should the nurse give the client to provide adequate nutrition?
1. Select foods high in fat.
  2. Increase intake of fluids, including juices.
  3. Eat a good supper when anorexia is not as severe.
  4. Eat less often, preferably only three large meals daily.
621. A client has developed hepatitis A after eating contaminated oysters. The nurse assesses the client for which expected assessment finding?
1. Malaise
  2. Dark stools
  3. Weight gain
  4. Left upper quadrant discomfort
622. A client has just had a hemorrhoidectomy. Which nursing interventions are appropriate for this client? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Administer stool softeners as prescribed.
2. Instruct the client to limit fluid intake to avoid urinary retention.
3. Instruct the client to avoid activities that will initiate vasovagal responses.
4. Encourage a high-fiber diet to promote bowel movements without straining.
5. Apply cold packs to the anal-rectal area over the dressing until the packing is removed.
6. Help the client to a Fowler's position to place pressure on the rectal area and decrease bleeding.

**623.** The nurse is planning to teach a client with gastroesophageal reflux disease about substances to avoid. Which items should the nurse include on this list? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Coffee
2. Chocolate
3. Peppermint
4. Nonfat milk
5. Fried chicken
6. Scrambled eggs

**624.** A client has undergone esophagogastroduodenoscopy. The nurse should place **highest priority** on which item as part of the client's care plan?

1. Monitoring the temperature
2. Monitoring complaints of heartburn

3. Giving warm gargles for a sore throat
4. Assessing for the return of the gag reflex

625. The nurse has taught the client about an upcoming endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography procedure. The nurse determines that the client **needs further information** if the client makes which statement?

1. "I know I must sign the consent form."
2. "I hope the throat spray keeps me from gagging."
3. "I'm glad I don't have to lie still for this procedure."
4. "I'm glad some IV medication will be given to relax me."

626. The health care provider has determined that a client with hepatitis has contracted the infection from contaminated food. The nurse understands that this client is **most likely** experiencing what type of hepatitis?

1. Hepatitis A
2. Hepatitis B
3. Hepatitis C
4. Hepatitis D

627. The nurse is caring for a client with a diagnosis of chronic gastritis. The nurse monitors the client, knowing that this client is at risk for which vitamin deficiency?

1. Vitamin A
2. Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>

3. Vitamin C

4. Vitamin E

628. The nurse is assessing a client 24 hours following a cholecystectomy. The nurse notes that the T-tube has drained 750 mL of green-brown drainage since the surgery. Which nursing intervention is **most appropriate**?

1. Clamp the T-tube.

2. Irrigate the T-tube.

3. Document the findings.

4. Notify the health care provider.

629. The nurse is monitoring a client with a diagnosis of peptic ulcer. Which assessment finding would **most likely** indicate perforation of the ulcer?

1. Bradycardia

2. Numbness in the legs

3. Nausea and vomiting

4. A rigid, boardlike abdomen

630. The nurse is caring for a client following a Billroth II procedure. Which postoperative prescription should the nurse question and verify?

1. Leg exercises

2. Early ambulation

3. Irrigating the nasogastric tube

4. Coughing and deep-breathing exercises

**631.** The nurse is providing discharge instructions to a client following gastrectomy and should instruct the client to take which measure to assist in preventing dumping syndrome?

1. Ambulate following a meal.
2. Eat high-carbohydrate foods.
3. Limit the fluids taken with meals.
4. Sit in a high Fowler's position during meals.

**632.** The nurse is reviewing the prescription for a client admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of acute pancreatitis. Which interventions would the nurse expect to be prescribed for the client? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Administer antacids as prescribed.
2. Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
3. Administer anticholinergics as prescribed.
4. Give small, frequent high-calorie feedings.
5. Maintain the client in a supine and flat position.
6. Give meperidine (Demerol) as prescribed for pain.

**633.** The nurse is reviewing the record of a client with Crohn's disease. Which stool characteristic should the nurse expect to note documented in the client's record?

1. Diarrhea
2. Chronic constipation
3. Constipation alternating with diarrhea

4. Stool constantly oozing from the rectum

634. The nurse is reviewing the record of a client with a diagnosis of cirrhosis and notes that there is documentation of the presence of asterixis. How should the nurse assess for its presence?

1. Dorsiflex the client's foot.
2. Measure the abdominal girth.
3. Ask the client to extend the arms.
4. Instruct the client to lean forward.

635. The nurse is reviewing the laboratory results for a client with cirrhosis and notes that the ammonia level is elevated. Which diet does the nurse anticipate to be prescribed for this client?

1. Low-protein diet
2. High-protein diet
3. Moderate-fat diet
4. High-carbohydrate diet

636. The nurse is doing an admission assessment on a client with a history of duodenal ulcer. To determine whether the problem is currently active, the nurse should assess the client for which symptom(s) of duodenal ulcer?

1. Weight loss
2. Nausea and vomiting
3. Pain relieved by food intake

4. Pain radiating down the right arm

**637.** A client with hiatal hernia chronically experiences heartburn following meals.

The nurse should plan to teach the client to avoid which action because it is contraindicated with a hiatal hernia?

1. Lying recumbent following meals
2. Consuming small, frequent, bland meals
3. Raising the head of the bed on 6-inch blocks
4. Taking H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonist medication

**638.** The nurse is assessing for stoma prolapse in a client with a colostomy. What should the nurse observe if stoma prolapse occurs?

1. Protruding stoma
2. Sunken and hidden stoma
3. Narrowed and flattened stoma
4. Dark- and bluish-colored stoma

**639.** A client had a new colostomy created 2 days earlier and is beginning to pass malodorous flatus from the stoma. What is the correct interpretation by the nurse?

1. This is a normal, expected event.
2. The client is experiencing early signs of ischemic bowel.
3. The client should not have the nasogastric tube removed.
4. This indicates inadequate preoperative bowel preparation.

**640.** A client has just had surgery to create an ileostomy. The nurse assesses the client in the immediate postoperative period for which **most frequent** complication of this type of surgery?

1. Folate deficiency
2. Malabsorption of fat
3. Intestinal obstruction
4. Fluid and electrolyte imbalance

**641.** The nurse is doing preoperative teaching with a client who is about to undergo creation of a Kock pouch. The nurse interprets that the client has the **best** understanding of the nature of the surgery if the client makes which statement?

1. "I will be able to pass stool by the rectum eventually."
2. "The drainage from this type of ostomy will be formed."
3. "I will need to drain the pouch regularly with a catheter."
4. "I will need to wear a drainage bag for the rest of my life."

**642.** The nurse is monitoring a client for the **early** signs and symptoms of dumping syndrome. Which findings indicate this occurrence?

1. Sweating and pallor
2. Bradycardia and indigestion
3. Double vision and chest pain
4. Abdominal cramping and pain

# ANSWERS

617. 1

**Rationale:** On the basis of the signs and symptoms presented in the question, the nurse should suspect peritonitis and notify the HCP. Administering pain medication is not an appropriate intervention. Heat should never be applied to the abdomen of a client with suspected appendicitis because of the risk of rupture. Scheduling surgical time is not within the scope of nursing practice, although the HCP probably would perform the surgery earlier than the prescheduled time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the signs and symptoms in the question and consider the complications that can occur with appendicitis. Noting that the signs presented in the question indicate a complication will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with **appendicitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 396.

618. 2

**Rationale:** The pain associated with acute pancreatitis is often severe and unrelenting, is located in the epigastric region, and radiates to the back. The other options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Noting the word *acute* will assist in eliminating options 1 and 3 because they are

**comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, recalling the anatomical location of the pancreas will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Manifestations of **acute pancreatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Inflammation; Pain

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1323; Swearingen (2012), pp. 430-431.

#### 619. 4

**Rationale:** During an acute episode of cholecystitis, the client may complain of severe right upper quadrant pain that radiates to the right scapula and shoulder. This is determined by the pattern of dermatomes in the body. The other options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the location of pain associated with cholecystitis. Recalling the anatomical location of the gallbladder will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Characteristics of pain associated with **cholecystitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Inflammation; Pain

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), pp. 399-400.

## 620. 2

**Rationale:** Although no special diet is required to treat viral hepatitis, it is generally recommended that clients consume a low-fat diet as fat may be tolerated poorly because of decreased bile production. Small, frequent meals are preferable and may even prevent nausea. Frequently, appetite is better in the morning, so it is easier to eat a good breakfast. An adequate fluid intake of 2500 to 3000 mL/day that includes nutritional juices is also important.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a diet for viral hepatitis. Think about the pathophysiology associated with hepatitis and focus on the client's complaints to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Measures to provide adequate nutrition in the client with **hepatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**References:** Schlenker (2011), pp. 464-465; Swearingen (2012), p. 427.

## 621. 1

**Rationale:** Hepatitis causes gastrointestinal symptoms such as anorexia, nausea, right upper quadrant discomfort, and weight loss. Fatigue and malaise are common. Stools will be light- or clay-colored if conjugated bilirubin is unable to flow out of the liver because of inflammation or obstruction of the bile ducts.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, expected assessment findings. Recalling the function of the liver will direct you to the correct option. Remember that fatigue and malaise are common.

**Review:** The signs and symptoms of **hepatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1305-1306.

❖ 622. 1, 4, 5

**Rationale:** Nursing interventions after a hemorrhoidectomy are aimed at management of pain and avoidance of bleeding and incision rupture. Stool softeners and a high-fiber diet will help the client avoid straining, thereby reducing the chances of rupturing the incision. An ice pack will increase comfort and decrease bleeding. Options 2, 3, and 6 are incorrect interventions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, postoperative hemorrhoidectomy care. Recall that decreasing fluid intake will cause difficulty with defecation because of hard stool. Recognize that Fowler's position will increase pressure in the rectal area, causing increased bleeding and increased pain. From the remaining options, think about the vasovagal response and that prevention of the vasovagal response is not a concern with hemorrhoidectomy.

**Review:** Care of the client following **hemorrhoidectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Pain

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1261-1262.

❖ 623. 1, 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** Foods that decrease lower esophageal sphincter (LES) pressure and irritate the esophagus will increase reflux and exacerbate the symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and therefore should be avoided.

Aggravating substances include chocolate, coffee, fried or fatty foods, peppermint, carbonated beverages, and alcohol. Options 4 and 6 do not promote this effect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, substances that increase lower esophageal pressure. Use knowledge of the effect of various foods on LES pressure and GERD. However, if you are unsure, select the options that identify the most healthful food item(s).

**Review:** The dietary regimen for a client with **gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Inflammation

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1205-1206; Schlenker (2011), p. 451.

624. 4

**Rationale:** The nurse places highest priority on assessing for return of the gag reflex. This assessment addresses the client's airway. The nurse also monitors the client's vital signs and for a sudden increase in temperature, which could indicate perforation of the gastrointestinal tract. This complication would be accompanied by other signs as well, such as pain. Monitoring for sore throat and heartburn are also important; however, the client's airway is the

priority.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *highest priority*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. The correct option addresses the airway.

**Review:** Care of the client following **esophagogastroduodenoscopy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 915.

**625. 3**

**Rationale:** The client does have to lie still for endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), which takes about 1 hour to perform. The client also has to sign a consent form. Intravenous sedation is given to relax the client, and an anesthetic spray is used to help keep the client from gagging as the endoscope is passed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *needs further information*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Invasive procedures require consent, so option 1 can be eliminated. Noting the name of the procedure and considering the anatomical location will assist you in eliminating options 2 and 4.

**Review:** **Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1187-1188; Pagana, Pagana (2013), pp. 389-390.

**626. 1**

**Rationale:** Hepatitis A is transmitted by the fecal-oral route via contaminated food or infected food handlers.

Hepatitis B, C, and D are transmitted most commonly via infected blood or body fluids.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Recalling the modes of transmission of the various types of hepatitis is required to answer this question. Remember that hepatitis A is transmitted by the fecal-oral route.

**Review:** Methods of transmission of **hepatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1305.

**627. 2**

**Rationale:** Chronic gastritis causes deterioration and atrophy of the lining of the stomach, leading to the loss of function of the parietal cells. The source of intrinsic factor is lost, which results in an inability to absorb vitamin B<sub>12</sub>.

This leads to the development of pernicious anemia. The client is not at risk for vitamin A, C, or E deficiency.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, vitamin deficiency in a client with gastritis. Recalling the

pathophysiology related to pernicious anemia and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Inflammation; Nutrition

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1237.

**628. 3**

**Rationale:** Following cholecystectomy, drainage from the T-tube is initially bloody and then turns a greenish-brown color. The drainage is measured as output. The amount of expected drainage will range from 500 to 1000 mL/day.

The nurse would document the output.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words**, *most appropriate*. Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated because a T-tube is not irrigated and would not be clamped with this amount of drainage. From the remaining options, you must know normal expected findings following this surgical procedure.

**Review:** Postoperative assessment findings following **cholecystectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1319; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1100.

**629. 4**

**Rationale:** Perforation of an ulcer is a surgical emergency and is characterized by sudden, sharp, intolerable severe pain beginning in the mid-epigastric area and spreading over the abdomen, which becomes rigid and boardlike.

Nausea and vomiting may occur. Tachycardia may occur as hypovolemic shock develops. Numbness in the legs is not an associated finding.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, perforation. Option 2 can be eliminated easily because it is not related to perforation. Eliminate option 1 next because tachycardia rather than bradycardia would develop if perforation occurs. From the remaining options, note the **strategic words** *most likely* to help direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of a **perforated ulcer**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1227.

**630. 3**

**Rationale:** In a Billroth II procedure, the proximal remnant of the stomach is anastomosed to the proximal jejunum.

Patency of the nasogastric tube is critical for preventing the retention of gastric secretions. The nurse should never irrigate or reposition the gastric tube after gastric surgery, unless specifically prescribed by the health care provider.

In this situation, the nurse should clarify the prescription. Options 1, 2, and 4 are appropriate postoperative interventions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the words *question and verify*. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and are general postoperative measures. Also, consider the anatomical location of the surgical procedure to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Postoperative measures following **Billroth II procedure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1324; Lewis et al (2011), p. 998.

### 631. 3

**Rationale:** *Dumping syndrome* is a term that refers to a constellation of vasomotor symptoms that occurs after eating, especially following a Billroth II procedure. Early manifestations usually occur within 30 minutes of eating and include vertigo, tachycardia, syncope, sweating, pallor, palpitations, and the desire to lie down. The nurse should instruct the client to decrease the amount of fluid taken at meals and to avoid high-carbohydrate foods, including fluids such as fruit nectars; to assume a low Fowler's position during meals; to lie down for 30 minutes after eating to delay gastric emptying; and to take antispasmodics as prescribed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 4 first because these measures are **comparable or alike** and will promote gastric emptying. From the remaining options, select the measure that will delay gastric emptying.

**Review:** **Dumping syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 997.

❖ 632. 1, 2, 3, 6

**Rationale:** The client with acute pancreatitis normally is placed on NPO status to rest the pancreas and suppress gastrointestinal secretions. Because abdominal pain is a prominent symptom of pancreatitis, pain medication such as meperidine is prescribed. Some clients experience lessened pain by assuming positions that flex the trunk, with the knees drawn up to the chest. A side-lying position with the head elevated 45 degrees decreases tension on the abdomen and may help ease the pain. The client is susceptible to respiratory infections because the retroperitoneal fluid raises the diaphragm, which causes the client to take shallow, guarded abdominal breaths. Therefore measures such as turning, coughing, and deep breathing are instituted. Antacids and anticholinergics may be prescribed to suppress gastrointestinal secretions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care for the client with acute pancreatitis. Think about the pathophysiology associated with pancreatitis and note the word *acute*. This will assist in selecting the correct options.

**Review:** Acute pancreatitis

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Inflammation

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1324-1326; Swearingen (2012), pp. 432, 435.

**633. 1**

**Rationale:** Crohn's disease is characterized by nonbloody diarrhea of usually not more than four to five stools daily.

Over time, the diarrhea episodes increase in frequency, duration, and severity. Options 2, 3, and 4 are not characteristics of Crohn's disease.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of Crohn's disease. Eliminate option 4 first as the most unlikely occurrence. From the remaining options, think about the pathophysiology associated with Crohn's disease to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Crohn's disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1281.

**634. 3**

**Rationale:** Asterixis is irregular flapping movements of the fingers and wrists when the hands and arms are outstretched, with the palms down, wrists bent up, and fingers spread. Asterixis is the most common and reliable

sign that hepatic encephalopathy is developing. Options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for assessment of asterixis. Remember that asterixis is irregular flapping movements of the fingers and wrists. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Asterixis

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1077.

635. 1

**Rationale:** Cirrhosis is a chronic, progressive disease of the liver characterized by diffuse degeneration and destruction of hepatocytes. Most of the ammonia in the body is found in the gastrointestinal tract. Protein provided by the diet is transported to the liver by the portal vein. The liver breaks down protein, which results in the formation of ammonia. If the client has hepatic encephalopathy, a low-protein diet would be prescribed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an elevated ammonia level. Recall the physiology of the liver to assist in answering. Also, note that the correct option and option 2 are opposite, which should provide you with the clue that one of these options is correct.

**Review:** Dietary measures for the client with a high ammonia level

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1080.

**636. 3**

**Rationale:** A frequent symptom of duodenal ulcer is pain that is relieved by food intake. These clients generally describe the pain as a burning, heavy, sharp, or “hungry” pain that often localizes in the mid-epigastric area. The client with duodenal ulcer usually does not experience weight loss or nausea and vomiting. These symptoms are more typical in the client with a gastric ulcer.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are **comparable or alike**: if the client is vomiting, weight loss will occur. Next, think about the symptoms of duodenal and gastric ulcer. Choose the correct option over option 4, knowing that the pain does not radiate down the right arm and that a pattern of pain-food-relief occurs with duodenal ulcer.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations of a **duodenal ulcer**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 989.

**637. 1**

**Rationale:** Hiatal hernia is caused by a protrusion of a portion of the stomach above the diaphragm where the

esophagus usually is positioned. The client usually experiences pain from reflux caused by ingestion of irritating foods, lying flat following meals or at night, and eating large or fatty meals. Relief is obtained with the intake of small, frequent, and bland meals, use of H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists and antacids, and elevation of the thorax following meals and during sleep.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the action contraindicated in hiatal hernia. Thinking about the pathophysiology that occurs in hiatal hernia will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Contraindications associated with **hiatal hernia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1208-1209.

**638. 1**

**Rationale:** A prolapsed stoma is one in which the bowel protrudes through the stoma. A stoma retraction is characterized by sinking of the stoma. A stoma with a narrowed opening at the level of the skin or fascia is said to be *stenosed*. Ischemia of the stoma would be associated with a dusky or bluish color.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of prolapsed stoma. Focusing on the word *prolapse* will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Complications associated with a **colostomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1277, 1279.

**639. 1**

**Rationale:** As peristalsis returns following creation of a colostomy, the client begins to pass malodorous flatus. This indicates returning bowel function and is an expected event. Within 72 hours of surgery, the client should begin passing stool via the colostomy. Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, that the client is passing flatus from the stoma. Recalling the normal progression of bowel activity following ostomy formation will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The expected findings following creation of a **colostomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1039, 1042.

**640. 4**

**Rationale:** A frequent complication that occurs following ileostomy is fluid and electrolyte imbalance. The client requires constant monitoring of intake and output to prevent this from occurring. Losses require replacement by intravenous infusion until the client can tolerate a diet orally. Intestinal obstruction is a less frequent complication.

Fat malabsorption and folate deficiency are complications that could occur later in the postoperative period.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most frequent*. Also note the **subject**, an ileostomy. Remember that ileostomy drainage is liquid, placing the client at risk for fluid and electrolyte imbalance.

**Review:** **Postoperative complications**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1043.

### 641. 3

**Rationale:** A Kock pouch is a continent ileostomy. As the ileostomy begins to function, the client drains it every 3 to 4 hours and then decreases the draining to about three times a day, or as needed when full. The client does not need to wear a drainage bag but should wear an absorbent dressing to absorb mucous drainage from the stoma. Ileostomy drainage is liquid. The client would be able to pass stool from the rectum only if an ileal-anal pouch or anastomosis were created. This type of operation is a two-stage procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Think about the anatomy related to the creation of a Kock pouch to assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** **Kock pouch**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1515; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1157.

**642. 1**

**Rationale:** Early manifestations of dumping syndrome occur 5 to 30 minutes after eating. Symptoms include vertigo, tachycardia, syncope, sweating, pallor, palpitations, and the desire to lie down.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. Think about the pathophysiology associated with dumping syndrome and its etiology to answer correctly.

**Review:** Early manifestations of **dumping syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Nutrition

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1236.



## CHAPTER 57

# Gastrointestinal Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse checks the ammonia level of a client with hepatic dysfunction who is receiving lactulose (Constulose) and notes that the level is 40 mcg/dL. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 718.*

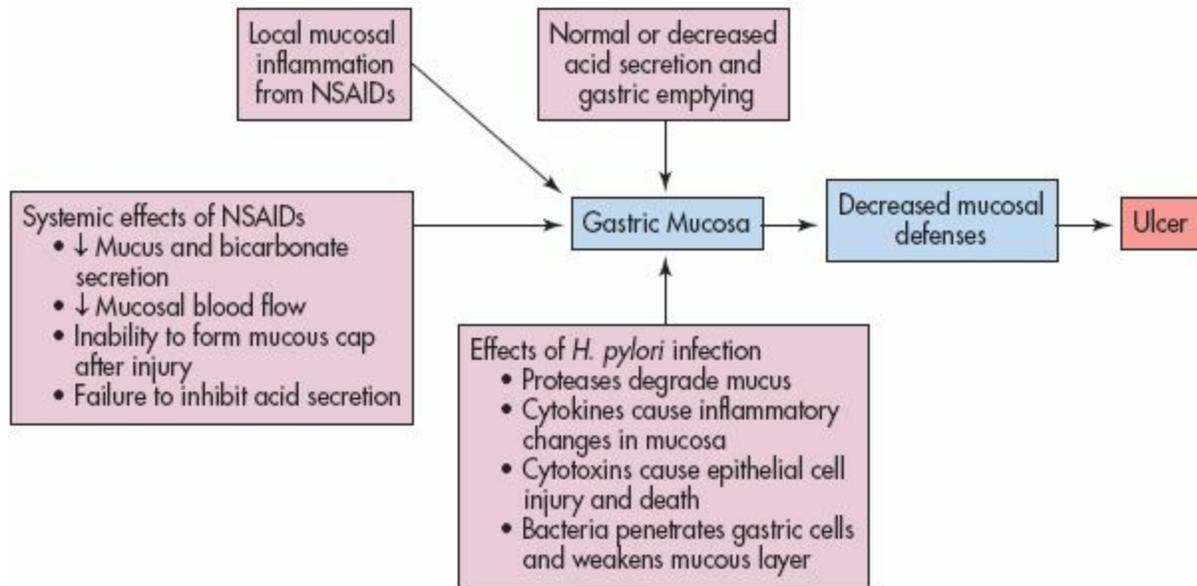
### I. Antacids (Table 57-1; Fig. 57-1)

**TABLE 57-1 Classification of Antacids and Considerations**

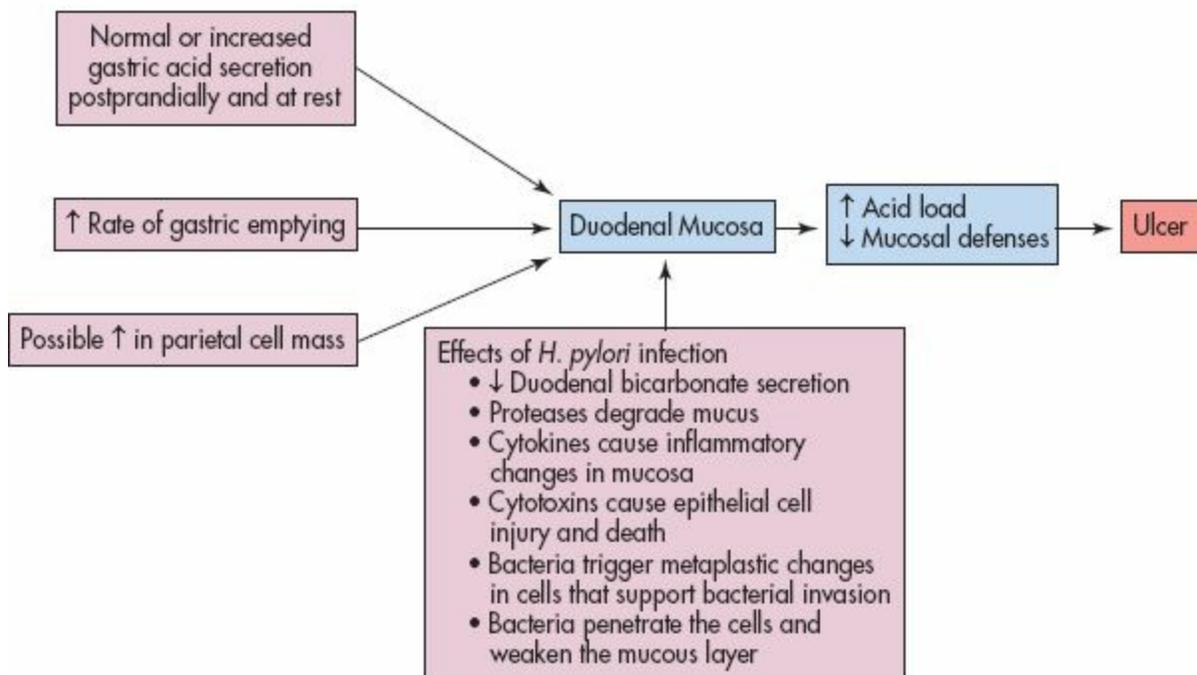
Classification	Considerations
Aluminum compounds	Aluminum hydroxide is used to treat hyperphosphatemia; therefore it can cause hypophosphatemia Aluminum hydroxide can reduce the effects of tetracyclines, warfarin sodium (Coumadin), and digoxin (Lanoxin) and can reduce phosphate absorption and thereby cause hypophosphatemia Aluminum compounds contain significant amounts of sodium; they should be used with caution in clients with hypertension and heart failure The most common side effect is constipation
Magnesium	Magnesium hydroxide is also a saline laxative and the most prominent side effect is diarrhea; it is

compounds	<p>usually administered in combination with aluminum hydroxide, an antacid that assists in preventing diarrhea</p> <p>Magnesium compounds are contraindicated in clients with intestinal obstruction, appendicitis, or undiagnosed abdominal pain</p> <p>In clients with renal impairment, magnesium can accumulate to high levels, causing signs of toxicity</p>
Calcium compounds	<p>Calcium carbonate can cause acid rebound</p> <p>Calcium compounds are rapid-acting and release carbon dioxide in the stomach, causing belching and flatulence</p> <p>A common side effect is constipation. Milk-alkali syndrome (headache, urinary frequency, anorexia, nausea/vomiting, fatigue) can occur (the client should avoid milk products and vitamin D supplements)</p>
Sodium bicarbonate	<p>Sodium bicarbonate has a rapid onset, liberates carbon dioxide, increases intraabdominal pressure, and promotes flatulence</p> <p>Sodium bicarbonate should be used with caution in clients with hypertension and heart failure</p> <p>Sodium bicarbonate can cause systemic alkalosis in clients with renal impairment</p> <p>Sodium bicarbonate is useful for treating acidosis and elevating urinary pH to promote excretion of acidic medications following overdose</p>

## Gastric Ulcer



## Duodenal Ulcer



**FIGURE 57-1** Pathophysiological components of peptic ulcer. *H. pylori*, *Helicobacter pylori*; NSAIDs, nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs. (From Monahan F, Sands J, Neighbors M, Marek J, Green C: *Phipps' medical-surgical nursing: Health and illness perspectives*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

- A. React with gastric acid to produce neutral salts or salts of low acidity
- B. Inactivate pepsin and enhance mucosal protection but do not coat the ulcer crater.
- C. These medications are used for peptic ulcer disease and gastroesophageal reflux disease.
- D. These medications should be taken on a regular schedule; some are prescribed to be taken 1 and 3 hours after each meal and at bedtime. ▲
- E. To provide maximum benefit, treatment should elevate the gastric pH above 5.
- F. Antacid tablets should be chewed thoroughly and followed with a glass of water or milk. ▲
- G. Liquid preparations should be shaken before dispensing.

⚠ To prevent interactions with other medications and interference with the action of other medications, allow 1 hour between antacid administration and the administration of other medications.

## II. Gastric Protectants

### A. Misoprostol (Cytotec)

1. An antisecretory medication that enhances mucosal defenses
2. Suppresses secretion of gastric acid and maintains submucosal blood flow by promoting vasodilation
3. Used to prevent gastric ulcers caused by nonsteroidal antiinflammatory medications and aspirin
4. Administered with meals
5. Causes diarrhea and abdominal pain ▲

6. Contraindicated for use in pregnancy ▲

#### **B. Sucralfate (Carafate)**

1. Creates a protective barrier against acid and pepsin

2. Administered orally; should be taken on an empty stomach ▲

3. May cause constipation ▲

4. May impede absorption of warfarin sodium (Coumadin), phenytoin (Dilantin), theophylline, digoxin (Lanoxin), and some antibiotics; should be administered at least 2 hours apart from these medications ▲

### **III. Muscarinic Antagonist**

**A.** Description: Suppresses acid secretion by blocking muscarinic cholinergic receptors

**B.** Medication: Pirenzepine (Gastrozepin)

### **IV. Histamine (H<sub>2</sub>)-Receptor Antagonists**

**A.** Description

1. Suppress secretion of gastric acid

2. Alleviate symptoms of heartburn and assist in preventing complications of peptic ulcer disease

3. Prevent stress ulcers and reduce the recurrence of all ulcers

4. Promote healing in gastroesophageal reflux disease

5. Are contraindicated in hypersensitive clients

6. Should be used with caution in clients with impaired renal or hepatic function ▲

**B.** Cimetidine (Tagamet)

1. Can be administered orally, intramuscularly, or intravenously
2. Food reduces the rate of absorption; if taken with meals, absorption will be slowed. ▲
3. Intravenous administration can cause hypotension and dysrhythmias.
4. Antacids can decrease the absorption of oral cimetidine. ▲
5. Cimetidine and antacids should be administered at least 1 hour apart from each other. ▲
6. Cimetidine passes the blood-brain barrier, and central nervous system side/adverse effects can occur; it may cause mental confusion, agitation, psychosis, depression, anxiety, and disorientation.
7. Dosage should be reduced in clients with renal impairment. ▲
8. If cimetidine is administered with warfarin sodium (Coumadin), phenytoin (Dilantin), theophylline, or lidocaine, the dosages of these medications should be reduced.

#### C. Ranitidine (Zantac)

1. Can be administered orally, intramuscularly, or intravenously
2. Side effects are uncommon and it does not penetrate the blood-brain barrier as cimetidine does.
3. Ranitidine is not affected by food.

#### D. Famotidine (Pepcid) and nizatidine (Axid)

1. Famotidine and nizatidine are similar to ranitidine and cimetidine.
2. These medications do not need to be administered with food.

## V. Proton Pump Inhibitors (Box 57-1)

### BOX 57-1 Proton Pump Inhibitors

- Esomeprazole (Nexium)
- Lansoprazole (Prevacid)
- Omeprazole (Prilosec)
- Pantoprazole (Protonix)
- Rabeprazole (Aciphex)

- A. Suppress gastric acid secretion
- B. Used to treat active ulcer disease, erosive esophagitis, and pathological hypersecretory conditions
- C. Contraindicated in hypersensitivity
- D. Common side effects include headache, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and nausea

## VI. Medication Regimens to Treat *Helicobacter pylori* Infections (Box 57-2)

### BOX 57-2 Medication Regimens for Treating *Helicobacter pylori* Infections

#### Triple Therapy

- Esomeprazole (Nexium), amoxicillin (Amoxil), clarithromycin (Biaxin)

#### Quadruple Therapies

- Esomeprazole (Nexium), metronidazole (Flagyl), tetracycline, bismuth

subsaliolate

- Ranitidine (Zantac), metronidazole (Flagyl), tetracycline, bismuth subsaliolate

*Note:* Additional medications may be prescribed for each level of therapy.

- A. An antibacterial agent alone is not effective for eradicating *Helicobacter pylori* because the bacterium readily becomes resistant to the agent.
- B. Triple or quadruple therapy with a variety of medication combinations is used (if triple therapy fails, quadruple therapy is recommended).

## VII. Prokinetic Agent

- A. Medication: Metoclopramide (Reglan)
- B. Stimulates motility of the upper gastrointestinal tract and increases the rate of gastric emptying without stimulating gastric, biliary, or pancreatic secretions
- C. Used to treat gastroesophageal reflux and paralytic ileus
- D. May cause restlessness, drowsiness, extrapyramidal reactions, dizziness, insomnia, and headache
- E. Usually administered 30 minutes before meals and at bedtime ▲
- F. Contraindicated in clients with sensitivity and in clients with mechanical obstruction, perforation, or gastrointestinal hemorrhage ▲
- G. Can precipitate hypertensive crisis in clients with pheochromocytoma ▲
- H. Safety in pregnancy has not been established
- I. Metoclopramide (Reglan) can cause parkinsonian reactions; if this occurs, the medication will be discontinued by the health care provider.

- J.** Anticholinergics and opioid analgesics antagonize the effects of metoclopramide.
- K.** Alcohol, sedatives, cyclosporine (Sandimmune), and tranquilizers produce an additive effect.

### VIII. Bile Acid Sequestrants (Box 57-3)

#### **BOX 57-3** Bile Acid Sequestrants

- Colesevelam (Welchol)
- Cholestyramine (Questran, Prevalite)
- Colestipol (Colestid)

- A.** Act by absorbing and combining with intestinal bile salts, which then are secreted in the feces, preventing intestinal reabsorption
- B.** Used to treat hypercholesterolemia in adults, biliary obstruction, and pruritus associated with biliary disease
- C.** With powdered forms, taste and palatability are often reasons for noncompliance and can be improved by the use of flavored products or mixing the medication with various juices.
- D.** Side effects include nausea, bloating, and constipation; fecal impaction and intestinal obstruction can result (adverse effects). ▲
- E.** Stool softeners and other sources of fiber can be used to abate the gastrointestinal side effects.

 Bile acid sequestrants should be used cautiously in clients with suspected bowel obstruction or severe constipation because they can worsen these conditions.

## IX. Treating Hepatic Encephalopathy

- A. Medication: Lactulose (Constulose, Enulose, Generlac)
- B. Used in the prevention and treatment of portal systemic encephalopathy including hepatic precoma and coma; also used in the treatment of chronic constipation
- C. Promotes increased **peristalsis** and bowel evacuation, expelling ammonia from the colon and thus lowering the ammonia level 
- D. Improves protein tolerance in clients with advanced hepatic **cirrhosis**
- E. Administered orally in the form of a syrup or rectally

## X. Pancreatic Enzyme Replacements

- A. Pancreatin, pancrelipase (Pancrease MT, Lipram, Pancrecarb MS, Creon)
- B. Used to supplement or replace pancreatic enzymes and thus improve nutritional status and reduce the amount of fatty stools (a deficiency of pancreatic enzymes can compromise digestion, especially the digestion of fats)
- C. Should be taken with all meals and snacks 
- D. Side effects include abdominal cramps or pain, nausea, and diarrhea.
- E. Products that contain calcium carbonate or magnesium hydroxide interfere with the action of these medications.

## XI. Treatment for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (Box 57-4)

**Antimicrobials**

- Ciprofloxacin (Cipro)
- Metronidazole (Flagyl)
- Rifaximin (Xifaxan)
- Clarithromycin (Biaxin)

**5-Aminosalicylates**

- Balsalazide (Colazal)
- Mesalamine (Pentasa, Canasa)
- Olsalazine (Dipentum)
- Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine)

**Corticosteroids**

- Budesonide (Entocort-EC)
- Prednisone

**Immunosuppressants**

- Azathioprine (Imuran, Azasan)
- Cyclosporine (Sandimmune)
- Mercaptopurine (Purinethol)

**Immunomodulators**

- Adalimumab (Humira)

- Certolizumab (Cimzia)
- Infliximab (Remicade)
- Natalizumab (Tysabri)

- A. Inflammatory bowel disease has two forms including **Crohn's disease** and **ulcerative colitis**.
- B. Antimicrobials: May be prescribed to prevent or treat secondary infection (see [Chapter 71](#) for information on antimicrobials)
- C. 5-Aminosalicylates (5-ASAs): Decrease gastrointestinal inflammation; adverse effects include nausea, rash, arthralgia, and hematological disorders
- D. Corticosteroids: Act as an antiinflammatory to decrease gastrointestinal inflammation (see [Chapter 55](#) for information on glucocorticoids and corticosteroids)
- E. Immunosuppressants: Suppress the immune system; can cause **pancreatitis** and neutropenia secondary to bone marrow depression and their use is reserved for those who have not responded to other, more traditional therapies (see [Chapter 71](#) for information on immunosuppressants)
- F. Immunomodulators: Monoclonal antibodies that modulate the immune response to induce and maintain remission

## **XII. Treatment for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)**

- A. Irritable bowel syndrome is a gastrointestinal disorder that is characterized by

crampy abdominal pain accompanied by diarrhea, constipation, or both.

**B.** Symptomatic relief is sometimes provided with the use of antispasmodics that relax the smooth muscle of the gastrointestinal tract, bulk-forming medications, antidiarrheals, and antidepressants.

**C.** Alosetron (Lotronex)

1. Used for severe IBS
2. Can cause severe adverse effects such as constipation, impaction, bowel obstruction, perforation of the bowel, and ischemic colitis.
3. A strict risk management procedure must be followed by both the prescriber of the medication and the client, which includes several guidelines that must be followed including monitoring for serious adverse effects, reporting them, and immediate discontinuation of the medication if they arise. ▲

**D.** Lubiprostone (Amitiza)

1. Increases intestinal motility and increases the passage of stool, thereby reducing abdominal pain
2. Side effects include nausea, headache, diarrhea, flatulence; adverse effects include urinary tract infection and upper respiratory tract infection.

### **XIII. Antiemetics (Box 57-5)**

#### **BOX 57-5** Commonly Administered Antiemetics

##### **Serotonin Antagonists**

- Dolasetron (Anzemet)

- Granisetron (Kytril, Granisol)
- Ondansetron (Zofran)
- Palonosetron (Aloxi)

### **Glucocorticoids**

- Dexamethasone (Decadron)
- Methylprednisolone (Solu-Medrol)

### **Substance P/Neurokinin-1 Antagonists**

- Aprepitant (Emend)
- Fosaprepitant (Emend)

### **Benzodiazepines**

- Lorazepam (Ativan)
- Diazepam (Valium)
- Midazolam

### **Dopamine Antagonists**

#### ***Phenothiazines***

- Chlorpromazine
- Perphenazine
- Prochlorperazine
- Promethazine (Phenergan)

#### ***Butyrophenones***

- Haloperidol (Haldol)

- Droperidol

### ***Others***

- Metoclopramide (Reglan)

- Domperidone

### **Cannabinoids**

- Dronabinol (Marinol)

- Nabilone (Cesamet)

### **Anticholinergics**

- Scopolamine transdermal (Transderm Scop)

### **Antihistamines**

- Cyclizine (Marezine)

- Dimenhydrinate (Dramamine)

- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)

- Hydroxyzine (Vistaril)

- Meclizine hydrochloride (Bonine, Antivert)

Modified from Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.

**A.** Medications used to control vomiting and motion sickness

- B. The choice of the antiemetic is determined by the cause of the nausea and vomiting.
- C. Monitor vital signs and intake and output.
- D. Limit odors in the client's room when the client is nauseated or vomiting.
- E. Limit oral intake to clear liquids when the client is nauseated or vomiting.

 **Antiemetics can cause drowsiness; therefore a priority intervention is to protect the client from injury.**

#### **XIV. Laxatives (Box 57-6)**

##### **BOX 57-6 Laxatives**

###### **Bulk-Forming**

- Methylcellulose (Citrucel)
- Polycarbophil (FiberCon)
- Psyllium (Metamucil, others)

###### **Stimulants**

- Bisacodyl (Correctol, Dulcolax, Feen-a-mint, Fleet laxative, others)
- Senna (Senokot, Ex-Lax, others), Cascara Sagrada

###### **Surfactant**

- Docusate sodium (Colace, others)

###### **Osmotics**

- Magnesium hydroxide (Milk of Magnesia)

- Magnesium citrate (Citrate of Magnesia)
- Sodium phosphates (Fleet enema, Fleet Phospho-Soda)
- Polyethylene glycol and electrolytes (GoLYTELY)
- Polyethylene glycol 3350 (MiraLax)

### Lubricant

- Mineral oil

## A. Bulk-forming

### 1. Description

- a. Absorb water into the feces and increase bulk to produce large and soft stools
- b. Contraindicated in bowel obstruction ▲
- c. Dependency can occur with long-term use.

2. Side effects include gastrointestinal disturbances; dehydration and electrolyte imbalances are adverse effects.

## B. Stimulants: Stimulate motility of large intestine

## C. Surfactants

1. Inhibit absorption of water so fecal mass remains large and soft
2. Used to avoid straining

## D. Osmotics: Attract water into the large intestine to produce bulk and stimulate peristalsis

## E. Lubricants

1. Act to soften the feces, ease the strain of passing stool, and lessen irritation to

hemorrhoids

2. Mineral oil: Interferes with absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K and can cause lipid pneumonia if accidentally aspirated ▲

⚠ The client receiving a laxative needs to increase fluid intake to prevent dehydration.

## XV. Medications to Control Diarrhea (Box 57-7)

### BOX 57-7 Medications to Control Diarrhea

#### Opioids and Related Medications

- Difenoxin with atropine sulfate (Motofen)
- Diphenoxylate with atropine sulfate (Lomotil)
- Loperamide (Imodium)
- Paregoric (camphorated tincture of opium)
- Tincture of opium

#### Other Antidiarrheals

- Bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol, Kaopectate, Kapectolin)
- Bulk-forming medications
- Anticholinergic antispasmodics

A. Goals: Identify and treat the underlying cause, treat dehydration, replace fluids and electrolytes, relieve abdominal discomfort and cramping, and reduce the passage of

stool ▲

## B. Opioids

1. Opioids are effective antidiarrheal medications that decrease intestinal motility and peristalsis.
2. When poisons, infections, or bacterial toxins are the cause of the diarrhea, opioids worsen the condition by delaying the elimination of toxins. ▲
3. Tincture of opium has an unpleasant taste and can be diluted with 15 to 30 mL of water for administration.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Lactulose is used in the prevention and treatment of portal systemic encephalopathy including hepatic precoma and coma. It promotes increased peristalsis and bowel evacuation, expelling ammonia from the colon and thus lowering the ammonia level. The normal ammonia level is 10 to 80 mcg/dL. If the level is 40 mcg/dL then the nurse determines that the medication is effective in lowering the ammonia level. The nurse should contact the health care provider regarding continuation of the medication.

#### **References**

Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1076, 1080; Pagana, Pagana (2013), p. 48.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**643.** A client with Crohn's disease is scheduled to receive an infusion of infliximab (Remicade). What intervention by the nurse will determine the effectiveness of treatment?

1. Monitoring the leukocyte count for 2 days after the infusion
2. Checking the frequency and consistency of bowel movements
3. Checking serum liver enzyme levels before and after the infusion
4. Carrying out a Hematest on gastric fluids after the infusion is completed

**644.** A client has a PRN prescription for loperamide hydrochloride (Imodium). For which condition should the nurse administer this medication?

1. Constipation
2. Abdominal pain
3. An episode of diarrhea
4. Hematest-positive nasogastric tube drainage

**645.** A client has a PRN prescription for ondansetron (Zofran). For which condition should the nurse administer this medication to the postoperative client?

1. Paralytic ileus
2. Incisional pain
3. Urinary retention
4. Nausea and vomiting

**646.** A client has begun medication therapy with pancrelipase (Pancrease MT<sub>2</sub>). The nurse evaluates that the medication is having the optimal intended benefit if

which effect is observed?

1. Weight loss
2. Relief of heartburn
3. Reduction of steatorrhea
4. Absence of abdominal pain

**647.** An older client recently has been taking cimetidine (Tagamet). The nurse monitors the client for which **most** frequent central nervous system side effect of this medication?

1. Tremors
2. Dizziness
3. Confusion
4. Hallucinations

**648.** A client with a gastric ulcer has a prescription for sucralfate (Carafate), 1 g by mouth four times daily. The nurse should schedule the medication for which times?

1. With meals and at bedtime
2. Every 6 hours around the clock
3. One hour after meals and at bedtime
4. One hour before meals and at bedtime

**649.** A client who chronically uses nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) has been taking misoprostol (Cytotec). The nurse determines that the medication is

having the intended therapeutic effect if which finding is noted?

1. Resolved diarrhea
2. Relief of epigastric pain
3. Decreased platelet count
4. Decreased white blood cell count

**650.** A client has been taking omeprazole (Prilosec) for 4 weeks. The ambulatory care nurse evaluates that the client is receiving the optimal intended effect of the medication if the client reports the absence of which symptom?

1. Diarrhea
2. Heartburn
3. Flatulence
4. Constipation

**651.** A client with a peptic ulcer is diagnosed with a *Helicobacter pylori* infection.

The nurse is teaching the client about the medications prescribed, including clarithromycin (Biaxin), esomeprazole (Nexium), and amoxicillin (Amoxil).

Which statement by the client indicates the **best** understanding of the medication regimen?

1. "My ulcer will heal because these medications will kill the bacteria."
2. "These medications are only taken when I have pain from my ulcer."
3. "The medications will kill the bacteria and stop the acid production."
4. "These medications will coat the ulcer and decrease the acid production in my

stomach.”

**652.** A client has a new prescription for metoclopramide (Reglan). On review of the chart, the nurse identifies that this medication can be safely administered with which condition?

1. Intestinal obstruction
2. Peptic ulcer with melena
3. Diverticulitis with perforation
4. Vomiting following cancer chemotherapy

**653.** A histamine (H<sub>2</sub>)-receptor antagonist will be prescribed for a client. The nurse understands that which medications are H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Nizatidine (Axid)
2. Ranitidine (Zantac)
3. Famotidine (Pepcid)
4. Cimetidine (Tagamet)
5. Esomeprazole (Nexium)
6. Lansoprazole (Prevacid)

**654.** The nurse has given instructions to a client who has just been prescribed cholestyramine (Questran). Which statement by the client indicates a **need for further instructions?**

1. “I will continue taking vitamin supplements.”

2. “This medication will help lower my cholesterol.”
3. “This medication should only be taken with water.”
4. “A high-fiber diet is important while taking this medication.”

## ANSWERS

### 643. 2

**Rationale:** The principal manifestations of Crohn’s disease are diarrhea and abdominal pain. Infliximab (Remicade) is an immunomodulator that reduces the degree of inflammation in the colon, thereby reducing the diarrhea. Options 1, 3, and 4 are unrelated to this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, Crohn’s disease, and evaluating the effectiveness of medication. Eliminate option 4 because gastric bleeding is not a characteristic of Crohn’s disease. Monitoring the leukocyte count and liver enzyme levels is appropriate when infliximab (Remicade) is given but not to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment, eliminating options 1 and 3.

**Review:** Manifestations of **Crohn’s disease** and actions of **infliximab (Remicade)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizor (2013), pp. 611-612.

### 644. 3

**Rationale:** Loperamide is an antidiarrheal agent. It is used to manage acute and chronic diarrhea in conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease. Loperamide also can be used to reduce the volume of drainage from an ileostomy.

It is not used for the conditions in options 1, 2, and 4.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the action of loperamide. Recalling that this medication is an antidiarrheal agent will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Loperamide hydrochloride (Imodium)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 1015.

**645. 4**

**Rationale:** Ondansetron is an antiemetic used to treat postoperative nausea and vomiting, as well as nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy. The other options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the action of ondansetron. Recalling that this medication is an antiemetic will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Ondansetron (Zofran)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 1010-1011.

**646. 3**

**Rationale:** Pancrelipase (Pancrease, Creon) is a pancreatic enzyme used in clients with pancreatitis as a digestive aid. The medication should reduce the amount of fatty stools (steatorrhea). Another intended effect could be improved nutritional status. It is not used to treat abdominal pain or heartburn. Its use could result in weight gain but should not result in weight loss if it is aiding in digestion.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, intended benefit of the medication and on the name of the medication. Use knowledge of physiology of the pancreas to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review: Pancrelipase (Pancrease)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**References:** Hodgson, Kizor (2013), pp. 894-895; Lehne (2013), p. 1023.

**647. 3**

**Rationale:** Cimetidine is a histamine (H<sub>2</sub>)-receptor antagonist. Older clients are especially susceptible to central nervous system side effects of cimetidine. The most frequent of these is confusion. Less common central nervous system side effects include headache, dizziness, drowsiness, and hallucinations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Use knowledge of the older client and medication effects to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Side effects of **cimetidine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizor (2013), pp. 236-238.

**648. 4**

**Rationale:** Sucralfate is a gastric protectant. The medication should be scheduled for administration 1 hour before meals and at bedtime. The medication is timed to allow it to form a protective coating over the ulcer before food intake stimulates gastric acid production and mechanical irritation. The other options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, times to administer sucralfate. Note the client's diagnosis and think about the pathophysiology associated with a gastric ulcer to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Sucralfate (Carafate)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizor (2013), pp. 1088-1089.

**649. 2**

**Rationale:** The client who chronically uses nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) is prone to gastric mucosal injury. Misoprostol is a gastric protectant and is given specifically to prevent this occurrence. Diarrhea can be a side effect of the medication but is not an intended effect. Options 3 and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the intended therapeutic effect of misoprostol for a client who chronically uses NSAIDs. This indicates that the medication is being given to prevent the occurrence of specific symptoms. Recalling that NSAIDs can cause gastric mucosal injury will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Misoprostol (Cytotec)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizor (2013), pp. 780-781.

**650. 2**

**Rationale:** Omeprazole is a proton pump inhibitor classified as an antiulcer agent. The intended effect of the medication is relief of pain from gastric irritation, often called *heartburn* by clients. Omeprazole is not used to treat the conditions identified in options 1, 3, and 4.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the optimal intended effect of omeprazole. Recalling that this medication is a proton pump inhibitor will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Omeprazole (Prilosec)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizor (2013), pp. 865-866.

### 651. 3

**Rationale:** Triple therapy for *Helicobacter pylori* infection usually includes two antibacterial medications and a proton pump inhibitor. Clarithromycin and amoxicillin are antibacterials. Esomeprazole is a proton pump inhibitor. These medications will kill the bacteria and decrease acid production.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the medications and their actions. Eliminate option 1 because the medications do more than kill the bacteria. These medications are taken not only when there is pain but continually until gone, usually for 1 to 2 weeks. This will eliminate option 2. These medications do not coat the ulcer, eliminating option 4.

**Review:** Medication regimens for the treatment of *Helicobacter pylori*

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1224; Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 716.

**652. 4**

**Rationale:** Metoclopramide is a gastrointestinal stimulant and antiemetic. Because it is a gastrointestinal stimulant, it is contraindicated with gastrointestinal obstruction, hemorrhage, or perforation. It is used in the treatment of emesis after surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, safe use of metoclopramide. Recalling the classification and action of this medication and that it is an antiemetic will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Metoclopramide (Reglan)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizor (2013), p. 757; Lehne (2013), p. 1021.

❖ **653. 1, 2, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists suppress secretion of gastric acid, alleviate symptoms of heartburn, and assist in preventing complications of peptic ulcer disease. These medications also suppress gastric acid secretions and are used in active ulcer disease, erosive esophagitis, and pathological hypersecretory conditions. The other medications listed are proton pump inhibitors.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, medications that are classified as H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists. Recalling that these medication names end with *-dine* will assist in answering this question. Also, recall that proton pump

inhibitor medication names end with *-zole*.

**Review:** H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 722.

654. 3

**Rationale:** Cholestyramine (Questran) is a bile acid sequestrant used to lower the cholesterol level, and client compliance is a problem because of its taste and palatability. The use of flavored products or fruit juices can improve the taste. Some side effects of bile acid sequestrants include constipation and decreased vitamin absorption.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Note the **closed-ended word** *only* in the correct option.

**Review:** The action and side effects of **cholestyramine (Questran)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Gastrointestinal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

*Reference:* Hodgson, Kizor (2013), p. 229.

# UNIT XII



## Respiratory Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**asthma** A chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways marked by airway hyperresponsiveness. Asthma causes recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing associated with airflow obstruction that is often reversible with treatment.

**bacille Calmette-Guérin vaccine** A vaccine containing attenuated tubercle bacilli that may be given to persons in foreign countries or to those traveling to foreign countries to produce increased resistance to tuberculosis.

**chronic obstructive pulmonary disease** A disease state characterized by pulmonary airflow obstruction that is usually progressive, not fully reversible, and sometimes accompanied by airway hyperreactivity. Airflow obstruction may be caused by

chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema. In chronic hypercapnia, the stimulus to breathe is a low  $PO_2$  instead of an increased  $PCO_2$ .

**emphysema** Abnormal permanent enlargement of air spaces distal to the terminal bronchioles, with destruction of alveolar walls without obvious fibrosis.

**Mantoux tuberculin skin test (TST)** The standard determinant of infection with tuberculosis. The TST is performed by injecting 0.1 mL of tuberculin purified protein derivative (PPD) intradermally in the forearm. The skin test reaction is read between 48 and 72 hours later. The reaction is measured in millimeters of the induration (raised, hardened area).

**mechanical ventilation** The use of a ventilator to move room air or oxygen-enriched air into and out of the lungs mechanically to maintain proper levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood. Types of ventilators include negative-pressure and positive-pressure ventilators. Various ventilator modes are adjusted to the client's individual needs.

**multidrug-resistant strain of tuberculosis (MDR-TB)** A multidrug-resistant strain of tuberculosis (MDR-TB) can occur as a result of improper or noncompliant use of treatment programs and the development of mutations in the tubercle bacilli.

**pneumothorax** The accumulation of atmospheric air in the pleural space caused by a rupture in the visceral or parietal pleura. The loss of negative intrapleural pressure results in collapse of the lung. Diagnosis of pneumothorax is made by chest radiography.

**suctioning** A sterile procedure involving the removal of respiratory secretions that

accumulate in the tracheobronchial airway when the client is unable to expectorate secretions; performed to maintain a patent airway.

**tuberculosis** A highly communicable disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, an acid-fast rod bacterium. Tuberculosis is transmitted by the airborne route via droplet infection.

## Pyramid to Success

The Pyramid to Success focuses on respiratory acid-base imbalances and reading arterial blood gas results; infectious diseases, particularly tuberculosis; and respiratory care in relation to oxygen delivery systems and mechanical ventilation. Pyramid Points focus on the client with pneumonia, respiratory failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumothorax, influenza, and tuberculosis. The Pyramid to Success includes the care of the client with tuberculosis, especially regarding the importance of the medication regimen, providing adequate nutrition and adequate rest to promote the healing process, and prevention of progression of the disease. Focus on assisting the client to cope with the social isolation issues that exist during the period of illness and on teaching the client and family the critical measures of screening, of preventing respiratory disease, and the transmission of infectious airborne disease.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Collaborating with the multidisciplinary team in the management of the respiratory disorder

Discussing consultations and referrals related to the respiratory disorder

Establishing priorities

Handling infectious materials such as sputum or body fluids safely

Maintaining asepsis when caring for wounds or tracheostomy sites and during mechanical ventilation or suctioning

Maintaining confidentiality related to the respiratory disorder

Maintaining respiratory precautions, standard precautions, and other precautions

Obtaining informed consent related to diagnostic and surgical procedures

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Educating the client about adequate fluid and nutritional intake

Educating the client about breathing exercises and respiratory therapy and care

Educating the client about medication administration

Educating the client about the need for follow-up care

Educating the client about the prevention of transmission of infection

Informing the client about health promotion programs

Performing respiratory assessment techniques

Preventing respiratory disorders and infectious diseases

Providing health screening related to risks for respiratory disorders

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Considering religious, cultural, and spiritual influences when providing care

Discussing body image changes related to tracheostomy if performed

Discussing end-of-life and grief and loss issues

Discussing situational role changes

Identifying coping strategies

Identifying support systems and community resources

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering medications

Caring for the client on mechanical ventilation

Caring for the client receiving respiratory therapy and supplemental oxygen

Managing respiratory illnesses

Monitoring for acid-base imbalances

Monitoring for alterations in body systems

Monitoring for infectious diseases

Providing nutrition and oral hygiene

Providing personal hygiene and promoting rest and sleep

Providing rest and comfort

Reading arterial blood gas results



## CHAPTER 58

# Respiratory System

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A victim of a gunshot wound to the chest sustained a penetrating injury. The emergency medical response team applied a nonporous dressing over the victim's sucking chest wound at the site of the accident. On arrival at the emergency department, the victim is cyanotic, and the nurse notes subcutaneous emphysema (crepitus) and tracheal deviation away from the affected side. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 746.*

### **I. Anatomy and Physiology**

#### **A. Primary functions of the respiratory system**

1. Provides oxygen for metabolism in the tissues
2. Removes carbon dioxide, the waste product of metabolism

#### **B. Secondary functions of the respiratory system**

1. Facilitates sense of smell
2. Produces speech
3. Maintains acid-base balance
4. Maintains body water levels
5. Maintains heat balance

### C. Upper respiratory airway

1. Nose: Humidifies, warms, and filters inspired air
2. Sinuses: Air-filled cavities within the hollow bones that surround the nasal passages and provide resonance during speech
3. Pharynx
  - a. Passageway for the respiratory and digestive tracts located behind the oral and nasal cavities
  - b. Divided into the nasopharynx, oropharynx, and laryngopharynx
4. Larynx
  - a. Located just below the pharynx at the root of the tongue; commonly called the *voice box*
  - b. Contains two pairs of vocal cords, the false and true cords
  - c. The opening between the true vocal cords is the glottis.
  - d. The glottis plays an important role in coughing, which is the most fundamental defense mechanism of the lungs.
5. Epiglottis
  - a. Leaf-shaped elastic flap structure at the top of the larynx

- b.** Prevents food from entering the tracheobronchial tree by closing over the glottis during swallowing

#### **D.** Lower respiratory airway

**1.** Trachea: Located in front of the esophagus; branches into the right and left mainstem bronchi at the carina

**2.** Mainstem bronchi

**a.** Begins at the carina

**b.** The right bronchus is slightly wider, shorter, and more vertical than the left bronchus.

**c.** The mainstem bronchi divide into secondary or lobar bronchi that enter each of the five lobes of the lung.

**d.** The bronchi are lined with cilia, which propel mucus up and away from the lower airway to the trachea, where it can be expectorated or swallowed.

**3.** Bronchioles

**a.** Branch from the secondary bronchi and subdivide into the small terminal and respiratory bronchioles

**b.** The bronchioles contain no cartilage and depend on the elastic recoil of the lung for patency.

**c.** The terminal bronchioles contain no cilia and do not participate in gas exchange.

**4.** Alveolar ducts and alveoli

**a.** *Acinus* (plural, *acini*) is a term used to indicate all structures distal to the

terminal bronchiole.

- b.** Alveolar ducts branch from the respiratory bronchioles.
- c.** Alveolar sacs, which arise from the ducts, contain clusters of alveoli, which are the basic units of gas exchange.
- d.** Type II alveolar cells in the walls of the alveoli secrete surfactant, a phospholipid protein that reduces the surface tension in the alveoli; without surfactant, the alveoli would collapse. ▲

## 5. Lungs ▲

- a.** Located in the pleural cavity in the thorax
- b.** Extend from just above the clavicles to the diaphragm, the major muscle of inspiration
- c.** The right lung, which is larger than the left, is divided into three lobes: the upper, middle, and lower lobes.
- d.** The left lung, which is narrower than the right lung to accommodate the heart, is divided into two lobes.
- e.** The respiratory structures are innervated by the phrenic nerve, the vagus nerve, and the thoracic nerves.
- f.** The parietal pleura lines the inside of the thoracic cavity, including the upper surface of the diaphragm.
- g.** The visceral pleura covers the pulmonary surfaces.
- h.** A thin fluid layer, which is produced by the cells lining the pleura, lubricates the visceral pleura and the parietal pleura, allowing them to glide smoothly and

painlessly during respiration.

- i. Blood flows throughout the lungs via the pulmonary circulation system.
6. Accessory muscles of respiration include the scalene muscles, which elevate the first two ribs; the sternocleidomastoid muscles, which raise the sternum; and the trapezius and pectoralis muscles, which fix the shoulders.
7. The respiratory process ▲
- a. The diaphragm descends into the abdominal cavity during inspiration, causing negative pressure in the lungs.
  - b. The negative pressure draws air from the area of greater pressure, the atmosphere, into the area of lesser pressure, the lungs.
  - c. In the lungs, air passes through the terminal bronchioles into the alveoli to oxygenate the body tissues.
  - d. At the end of inspiration, the diaphragm and intercostal muscles relax and the lungs recoil.
  - e. As the lungs recoil, pressure within the lungs becomes higher than atmospheric pressure, causing the air, which now contains the cellular waste products carbon dioxide and water, to move from the alveoli in the lungs to the atmosphere.
  - f. Effective gas exchange depends on distribution of gas (ventilation) and blood (perfusion) in all portions of the lungs.

## II. Diagnostic Tests

- A. Risk factors for respiratory disorders (Box 58-1) ▲

**BOX 58-1****Risk Factors for Respiratory Disorders**

- Allergies
- Chest injury
- Crowded living conditions
- Exposure to chemicals and environmental pollutants
- Family history of infectious disease
- Frequent respiratory illnesses
- Geographic residence and travel to foreign countries
- Smoking
- Surgery
- Use of chewing tobacco
- Viral syndromes

**B. Chest x-ray film (radiograph)**

1. Description: Provides information regarding the anatomical location and appearance of the lungs
2. Preprocedure
  - a. Remove all jewelry and other metal objects from the chest area.
  - b. Assess the client's ability to inhale and hold his or her breath.
3. Postprocedure: Help the client get dressed.

 Question women regarding pregnancy or the possibility of pregnancy before performing radiography studies.

### C. Sputum specimen

1. Description: Specimen obtained by expectoration or tracheal **suctioning** to assist in the identification of organisms or abnormal cells (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take to Perform Respiratory Suctioning

1. Explain the procedure to the client.
2. Assist the client to an upright position.
3. Perform hand hygiene and don protective garb.
4. Prepare suctioning equipment and turn on the suction.
5. Hyperoxygenate the client.
6. Insert the catheter without suction applied.
7. Once inserted, apply suction intermittently while rotating and withdrawing the catheter.
8. Hyperoxygenate the client.
9. Listen to breath sounds.
10. Document the procedure, client response, and effectiveness.

Once the nurse has assessed the client, the nurse would explain the procedure. The

client is assisted to a sitting upright position such as semi-Fowler's with the head hyperextended (unless contraindicated). The nurse next performs hand hygiene (hand hygiene is also performed before positioning the client) and applies appropriate protective garb, using aseptic technique. The nurse prepares the needed suctioning equipment, turns on the suction device, and sets it to the appropriate pressure. The nurse hyperoxygenates the client with a resuscitation bag, increasing the oxygen flow rate, or asking the client to take deep breaths. The nurse next lubricates the catheter with sterile water or water-soluble lubricant (per agency procedure), inserts the catheter without the application of suction, and then applies intermittent suction for up to 10 seconds while rotating and withdrawing the catheter. After suctioning, the nurse hyperoxygenates the client and encourages the client to take deep breaths if possible. During the procedure the nurse monitors the client for toleration of the procedure and the presence of complications. Finally, the nurse listens to breath sounds to assist in determining effectiveness and documents the procedure, the client's response, and effectiveness.

### ***References***

Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders, p. 574; Perry A, Potter P, Elkin MK: *Nursing interventions & clinical skills*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, pp. 335-338.

## 2. Preprocedure

- a. Determine specific purpose of collection and check with institutional policy for appropriate method for collection of a specimen.
- b. Obtain an early morning sterile specimen by suctioning or expectoration after a respiratory treatment if a treatment is prescribed.
- c. Instruct the client to rinse the mouth with water before collection.
- d. Obtain 15 mL of sputum.
- e. Instruct the client to take several deep breaths and then cough deeply to obtain sputum.
- f. Always collect the specimen before the client begins antibiotic therapy. ▲

## 3. Postprocedure

- a. If a culture of sputum is prescribed, transport the specimen to the laboratory immediately. ▲
- b. Assist the client with mouth care.

## D. Laryngoscopy and bronchoscopy

1. Description: Direct visual examination of the larynx, trachea, and bronchi with a fiberoptic bronchoscope
2. Preprocedure
  - a. Obtain informed consent.
  - b. Maintain NPO status for the client from midnight before the procedure.
  - c. Obtain vital signs.
  - d. Assess the results of coagulation studies.

- e. Remove dentures and eyeglasses.
- f. Prepare suction equipment.
- g. Establish an intravenous (IV) access as necessary and administer medication for sedation as prescribed.
- h. Have emergency resuscitation equipment readily available.

### 3. Postprocedure

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Maintain the client in a semi-Fowler's position.
- c. Assess for the return of the gag reflex.
- d. Maintain NPO status until the gag reflex returns. ▲
- e. Have an emesis basin readily available for the client to expectorate sputum.
- f. Monitor for bloody sputum.
- g. Monitor respiratory status, particularly if sedation has been administered.
- h. Monitor for complications, such as bronchospasm or bronchial perforation, indicated by facial or neck crepitus, dysrhythmias, hemorrhage, hypoxemia, and **pneumothorax**.
- i. Notify the health care provider (HCP) if fever, difficulty in breathing, or other signs of complications occur following the procedure. ▲

### E. Endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS)

1. Tissue samples are obtained from central lung masses and lymph nodes, using a bronchoscope with the help of ultrasound guidance.
2. Minimally invasive procedure performed on an outpatient basis.

3. Tissue samples are used for diagnosing and staging lung cancer, detecting infections, and identifying inflammatory diseases that affect the lungs, such as sarcoidosis.
4. Postprocedure, the client is monitored for signs of bleeding and respiratory distress.

## F. Pulmonary angiography

### 1. Description

- a. An invasive fluoroscopic procedure in which a catheter is inserted through the antecubital or femoral vein into the pulmonary artery or one of its branches
- b. Involves an injection of iodine or radiopaque contrast material

### 2. Preprocedure

- a. Obtain informed consent.
- b. Assess for allergies to iodine, seafood, or other radiopaque dyes.
- c. Maintain NPO status of the client for 8 hours before the procedure.
- d. Monitor vital signs.
- e. Assess results of coagulation studies.
- f. Establish an intravenous access.
- g. Administer sedation as prescribed.
- h. Instruct the client to lie still during the procedure.
- i. Instruct the client that he or she may feel an urge to cough, flushing, nausea, or a salty taste following injection of the dye. ▲
- j. Have emergency resuscitation equipment available.

### **3. Postprocedure**

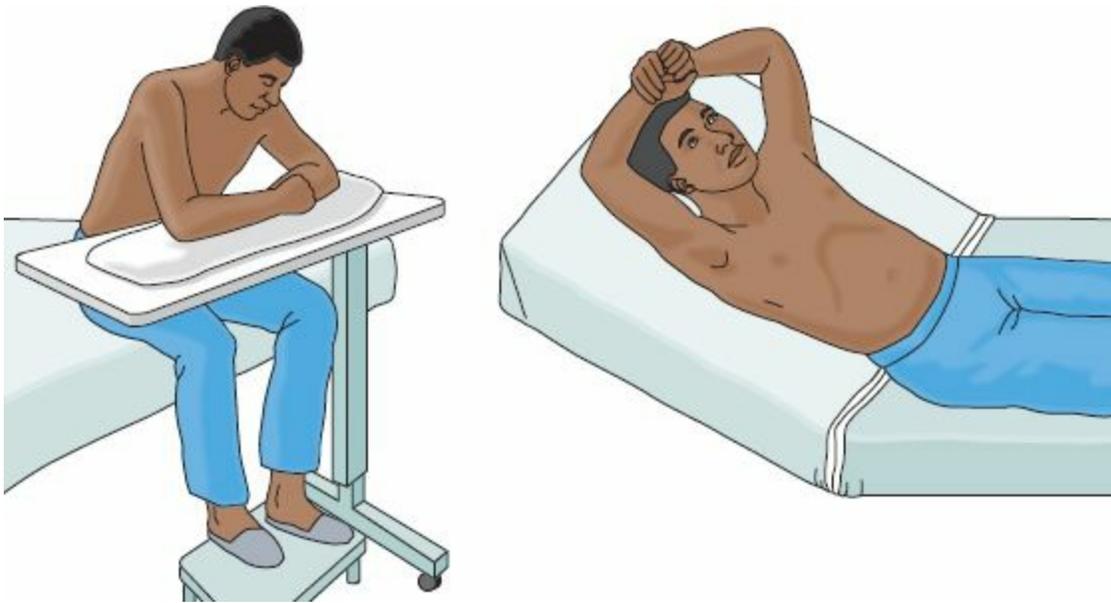
- a.** Monitor vital signs.
- b.** Avoid taking blood pressures for 24 hours in the extremity used for the injection.
- c.** Monitor peripheral neurovascular status of the affected extremity.
- d.** Assess insertion site for bleeding.
- e.** Monitor for delayed reaction to the dye.

### **G. Thoracentesis**

**1.** Description: Removal of fluid or air from the pleural space via transthoracic aspiration

#### **2. Preprocedure**

- a.** Obtain informed consent.
- b.** Obtain vital signs.
- c.** Prepare the client for ultrasound or chest radiograph, if prescribed, before procedure.
- d.** Assess results of coagulation studies.
- e.** Note that the client is positioned sitting upright, with the arms and shoulders supported by a table at the bedside during the procedure (Fig. 58-1).



**FIGURE 58-1** Positions for thoracentesis. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

f. If the client cannot sit up, the client is placed lying in bed toward the unaffected side, with the head of the bed elevated. ▲

g. Instruct the client not to cough, breathe deeply, or move during the procedure.

### 3. Postprocedure

a. Monitor vital signs.

b. Monitor respiratory status.

c. Apply a pressure dressing, and assess the puncture site for bleeding and crepitus.

d. Monitor for signs of pneumothorax, air embolism, and pulmonary edema. ▲

## H. Pulmonary function tests

1. Description: Tests used to evaluate lung mechanics, gas exchange, and acid-base

disturbance through spirometric measurements, lung volumes, and arterial blood gas levels.

## 2. Preprocedure

- a. Determine whether an analgesic that may depress the respiratory function is being administered. ▲
- b. Consult with the HCP regarding withholding bronchodilators before testing.
- c. Instruct the client to void before the procedure and to wear loose clothing.
- d. Remove dentures.
- e. Instruct the client to refrain from smoking or eating a heavy meal for 4 to 6 hours before the test.

3. Postprocedure: Client may resume a normal diet and any bronchodilators and respiratory treatments that were withheld before the procedure.

## I. Lung biopsy

### 1. Description

- a. A transbronchial biopsy and a transbronchial needle aspiration may be performed to obtain tissue for analysis by culture or cytological examination.
- b. An open lung biopsy is performed in the operating room.

### 2. Preprocedure

- a. Obtain informed consent.
- b. Maintain NPO status of the client before the procedure.
- c. Inform the client that a local anesthetic will be used for a needle biopsy but a sensation of pressure during needle insertion and aspiration may be felt.

**d.** Administer analgesics and sedatives as prescribed.

**3.** Postprocedure ▲

**a.** Monitor vital signs.

**b.** Apply a dressing to the biopsy site and monitor for drainage or bleeding.

**c.** Monitor for signs of respiratory distress, and notify the HCP if they occur.

**d.** Monitor for signs of pneumothorax and air emboli, and notify the HCP if they occur.

**e.** Prepare the client for chest radiography if prescribed.

**J.** Ventilation-perfusion lung scan

**1.** Description

**a.** The perfusion scan evaluates blood flow to the lungs.

**b.** The ventilation scan determines the patency of the pulmonary airways and detects abnormalities in ventilation.

**c.** A radionuclide may be injected for the procedure.

**2.** Preprocedure

**a.** Obtain informed consent.

**b.** Assess the client for allergies to dye, iodine, or seafood.

**c.** Remove jewelry around the chest area.

**d.** Review breathing methods that may be required during testing.

**e.** Establish an intravenous access.

**f.** Administer sedation if prescribed.

**g.** Have emergency resuscitation equipment available.

### 3. Postprocedure

- a. Monitor the client for reaction to the radionuclide.
- b. Instruct the client that the radionuclide clears from the body in about 8 hours. ▲

**K.** Skin tests: A skin test uses an intradermal injection to help diagnose various infectious diseases ([Box 58-2](#))

#### **BOX 58-2** Skin Test Procedure

1. Determine hypersensitivity or previous reactions to skin tests.
2. Use a skin site that is free of excessive body hair, dermatitis, and blemishes.
3. Apply the injection at the upper third of the inner surface of the left arm.
4. Circle and mark the injection test site.
5. Document the date, time, and test site.
6. Advise the client not to scratch the test site to prevent infection and possible abscess formation.
7. Instruct the client to avoid washing the test site.
8. Interpret the reaction at the injection site 24 to 72 hours after administration of the test antigen.
9. Assess the test site for the amount of induration (hard swelling) in millimeters and for the presence of erythema and vesiculation (small blister-like elevations).

**L.** Arterial blood gases (ABGs) ([Box 58-3](#))

*pH*: 7.35 to 7.45

*Pco<sub>2</sub>*: 35 to 45 mm Hg

*HCO<sub>3</sub>*: 22 to 27 mEq/L

*Po<sub>2</sub>*: 80 to 100 mm Hg

*O<sub>2</sub>* saturation: 96% to 100%

*Oxyhemoglobin dissociation curve*: No shift

1. Description: Measurement of the dissolved oxygen and carbon dioxide in the arterial blood helps indicate the acid-base state and how well oxygen is being carried to the body.
2. Preprocedure and postprocedure care, and analysis of results: Refer to [Chapter 10](#)

 **Avoid suctioning the client before drawing an ABG sample because the suctioning procedure will deplete the client's oxygen, resulting in inaccurate ABG results.**

## M. Pulse oximetry

### 1. Description

- a. Pulse oximetry is a noninvasive test that registers the oxygen saturation of the client's hemoglobin.
- b. The capillary oxygen saturation ( $\text{SaO}_2$ ) is recorded as a percentage.
- c. The normal value is 96% to 100%.
- d. After a hypoxic client uses up the readily available oxygen (measured as the

arterial oxygen pressure, PaO<sub>2</sub>, on ABG testing), the reserve oxygen, that oxygen attached to the hemoglobin (SaO<sub>2</sub>), is drawn on to provide oxygen to the tissues.

- e. A pulse oximeter reading can alert the nurse to hypoxemia before clinical signs occur.

## 2. Procedure

- a. A sensor is placed on the client's finger, toe, nose, ear lobe, or forehead to measure oxygen saturation, which then is displayed on a monitor.
- b. Maintain the transducer at heart level.
- c. Do not select an extremity with an impediment to blood flow.

 A pulse oximetry reading lower than 91% necessitates HCP notification; if the reading is lower than 85%, oxygenation to body tissues is compromised, and a reading lower than 70% is life-threatening. Agency procedures and health care provider prescriptions are followed regarding actions to take for specific readings.

## III. Respiratory Treatments

### A. Breathing retraining (Box 58-4)

#### **BOX 58-4** Client Education: Breathing Retraining and Huff Coughing

##### **Breathing Retraining**

This includes exercises to decrease use of the accessory muscles of breathing, to decrease fatigue, and to promote CO<sub>2</sub> elimination.

The main types of exercises include pursed-lip breathing and diaphragmatic breathing.

The client should inhale slowly through the nose.

The client should place a hand over the abdomen while inhaling; the abdomen should expand with inhalation and contract during exhalation.

The client should exhale three times longer than inhalation by blowing through pursed lips.

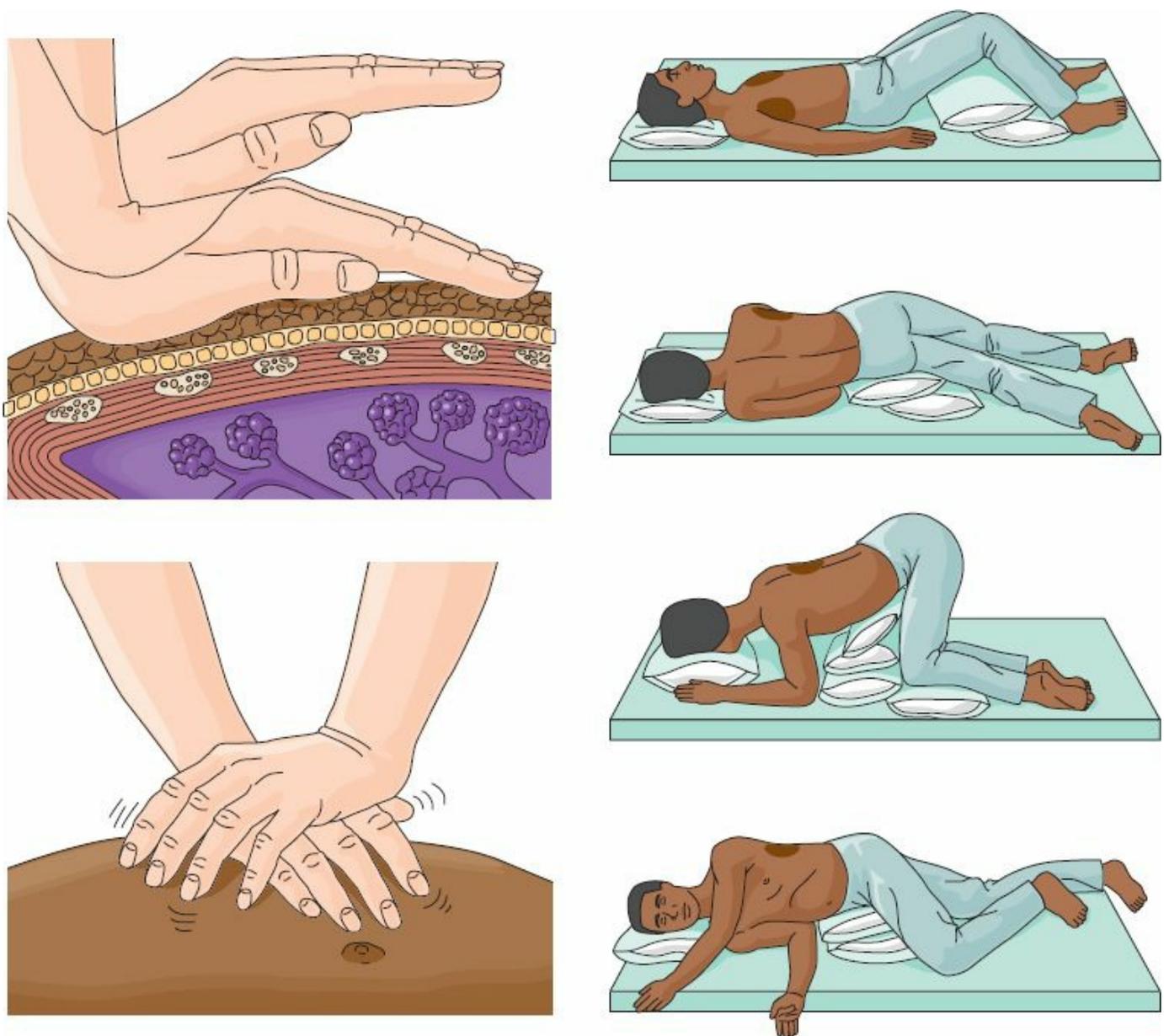
### **Huff Coughing**

This is an effective coughing technique that conserves energy, reduces fatigue, and facilitates mobilization of secretions.

The client should take three or four deep breaths using pursed-lip and diaphragmatic breathing. Leaning slightly forward, the client should cough three or four times during exhalation.

The client may need to splint the thorax or abdomen to achieve a maximum cough.

## **B. Chest physiotherapy (CPT) (Fig. 58-2)**



**FIGURE 58-2** Chest physiotherapy (CPT) and postural drainage. *Left*, Percussion and vibration techniques. The nurse may use one or two hands with vibration, which is performed when the client exhales or coughs. *Right*, Positions for postural drainage of respiratory secretions. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Description: Percussion, vibration, and postural drainage techniques are

performed over the thorax to loosen secretions in the affected area of the lungs and move them into more central airways.

## 2. Interventions (Box 58-5)

### **BOX 58-5** Chest Physiotherapy Procedure

Perform chest physiotherapy (CPT) in the morning on arising, 1 hour before meals, or 2 to 3 hours after meals.

Stop CPT if pain occurs.

If the client is receiving a tube feeding, stop the feeding and aspirate the residual before beginning CPT.

Administer the bronchodilator (if prescribed) 15 minutes before the procedure.

Place a layer of material (gown or pajamas) between the hands or percussion device and the client's skin.

Position the client for postural drainage based on assessment.

Percuss the area for 1 to 2 minutes.

Vibrate the same area while the client exhales four or five deep breaths.

Monitor for respiratory tolerance to the procedure.

Stop the procedure if cyanosis or exhaustion occurs.

Maintain the position for 5 to 20 minutes after the procedure.

Repeat in all necessary positions until the client no longer expectorates mucus.

Dispose of sputum properly.

Provide mouth care after the procedure.

### 3. Contraindications

- a. Unstable vital signs
- b. Increased intracranial pressure
- c. Bronchospasm
- d. History of pathological fractures
- e. Rib fractures
- f. Chest incisions

### C. Incentive spirometry ([Box 58-6](#))

#### **BOX 58-6** Client Instructions for Incentive Spirometry

1. Instruct the client to assume a sitting or upright position.
2. Instruct the client to place the mouth tightly around the mouthpiece of the device.
3. Instruct the client to inhale slowly to raise and maintain the flow rate indicator between the 600 and 900 marks.
4. Instruct the client to hold the breath for 5 seconds and then to exhale through pursed lips.
5. Instruct the client to repeat this process 10 times every hour.

## IV. Oxygen

### A. Supplemental oxygen delivery systems ([Table 58-1](#))

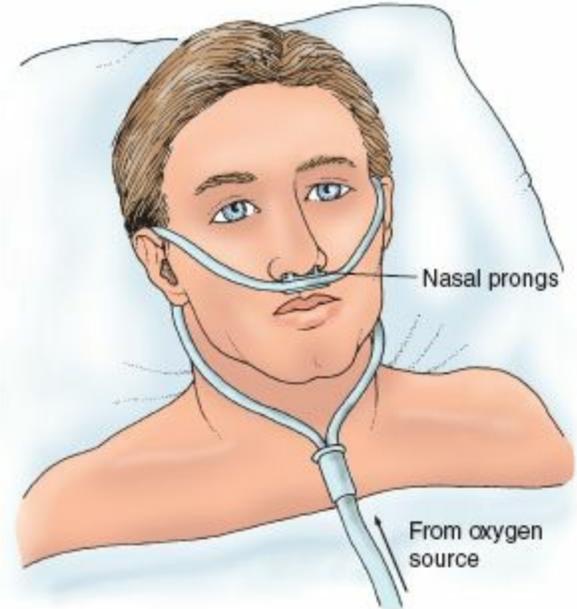
**TABLE 58-1 Supplemental Oxygen Delivery Systems**

Device	Oxygen Delivered	Nursing Considerations
Nasal cannula (nasal prongs) (see Fig. 58-3)	1-6 L/min for oxygen concentration (FIO <sub>2</sub> ) of 24% (at 1 L/min) to 44% (at 6 L/min)	Easily tolerated Can dislodge easily. Doesn't get in the way of eating or talking Effective oxygen concentration can be delivered to nose and mouth breathers Ensure that prongs are in the nares with openings facing the client Assess nasal mucosa for irritation from drying effect of higher flow rates Assess skin integrity as tubing can irritate skin Add humidification as prescribed and check water levels
Simple face mask (see Fig. 58-4)	5-8 L/min oxygen flow for FIO <sub>2</sub> of 40%-60% Minimum flow of 5 L/min needed to flush CO <sub>2</sub> from mask	Interferes with eating and talking Can be warm and confining Ensure that mask fits securely over nose and mouth Remove saliva and mucus from the mask Provide skin care to area covered by mask Provide emotional support to decrease anxiety in the client who feels claustrophobic Monitor for risk of aspiration from inability of client to clear mouth, i.e., if vomiting occurs
Venturi mask (Ventimask) (see Fig. 58-5)	4 to 10-L/min oxygen flow for FIO <sub>2</sub> of 24%-55% Delivers exact desired selected concentrations of O <sub>2</sub>	Keep the air entrapment port for the adapter open and uncovered to ensure adequate oxygen delivery Keep mask snug on the face and ensure tubing is free of kinks because the FIO <sub>2</sub> is altered if kinking occurs or if the mask fits poorly Assess nasal mucosa for irritation; humidity or aerosol can be added to the system as needed
Partial rebreather mask (mask with reservoir bag) (see Fig. 58-6)	6 to 15-L/min oxygen flow for FIO <sub>2</sub> of 70%-90%	The client rebreathes one-third of the exhaled tidal volume, which is high in oxygen, thus providing a high FIO <sub>2</sub> Adjust flow rate to keep the reservoir bag two-thirds full during inspiration Keep mask snug on face Make sure the reservoir bag does not twist or kink Deflation of the bag results in decreased oxygen delivered and rebreathing of exhaled air
Nonrebreather mask (see Fig. 58-7)	FIO <sub>2</sub> of 60%-100% at a rate of flow that maintains the bag two-thirds full	Adjust flow rate to keep the reservoir bag inflated. Keep mask snug on the face Remove mucus and saliva from the mask Provide emotional support to decrease anxiety in the client who feels claustrophobic Ensure that the valves and flaps are intact and functional during each breath (valves should open during expiration and close during inhalation) Make sure the reservoir bag does not twist or kink or that the oxygen source does not disconnect; otherwise, the client will suffocate

<p>Tracheostomy collar and T-bar or T-piece (face tent; face shield) (see Fig. 58-8)</p>	<p>The tracheostomy collar can be used to deliver the desired amount of oxygen to a client with a tracheostomy</p> <p>A special adaptor (T-bar or T-piece) can be used to deliver any desired <math>FIO_2</math> to client with tracheostomy, laryngectomy, or endotracheal tube</p> <p>The face tent provides 8-12 L/min and the <math>FIO_2</math> varies due to environmental loss</p>	<p>Change the delivery system to a nasal cannula during mealtime if indicated for the client with a face shield</p> <p>Ensure that aerosol mist escapes from the vents of the delivery system during inspiration and expiration</p> <p>Empty condensation from the tubing to prevent the client from being lavaged with water and to promote an adequate oxygen flow rate (remove and clean the tubing at least every 4 hr)</p> <p>Keep the exhalation port in the T-piece open and uncovered (if the port is occluded, the client can suffocate)</p> <p>Position the T-piece so that it does not pull on the tracheostomy or endotracheal tube and cause erosion of the skin at the tracheostomy insertion site</p>
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$FIO_2$ , Fraction of inspired oxygen.

1. Nasal cannula for low flow: Used for the client with chronic airflow limitation and for long-term oxygen use (Fig. 58-3)



**FIGURE 58-3** A nasal cannula (prongs). (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

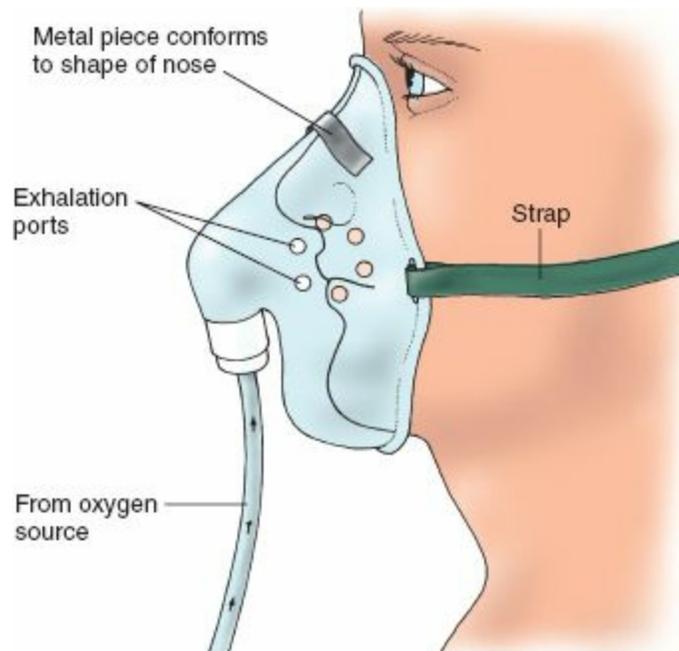
2. Nasal high-flow (NHF) respiratory therapy: Used for hypoxemic clients in mild to

moderate respiratory distress (Box 58-7)

### BOX 58-7 Nasal High-Flow (NHF) Respiratory Therapy

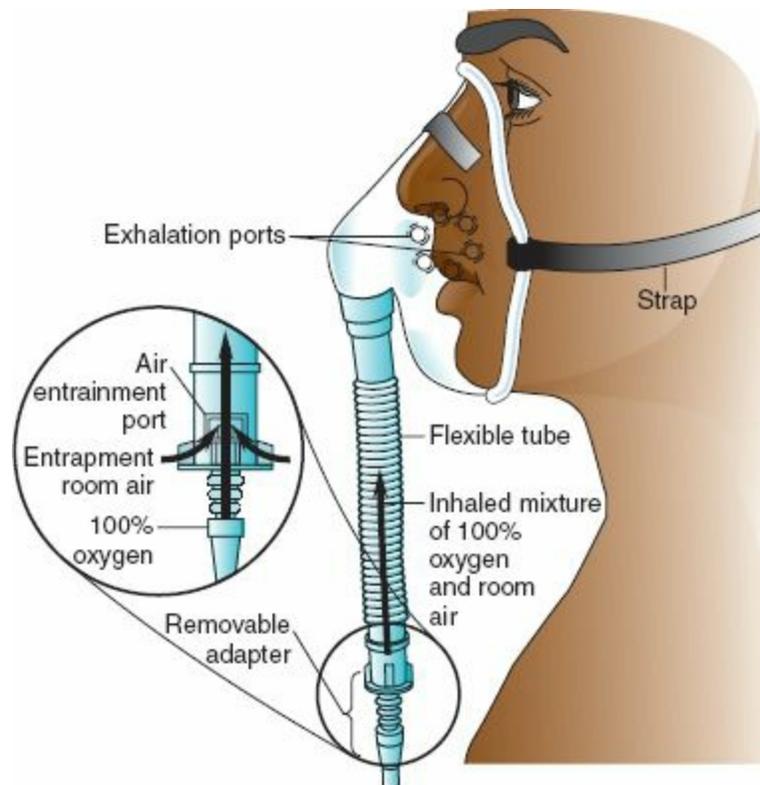
- Comfortably delivers high flows of heated and humidified oxygen through a wide-bore nasal cannula and humidification system
- Can deliver nasal flow rates up to 50 to 60 L/minute to deliver humidified high-flow oxygen therapy

3. Simple face mask: Used for short-term oxygen therapy or to deliver oxygen in an emergency (Fig. 58-4)



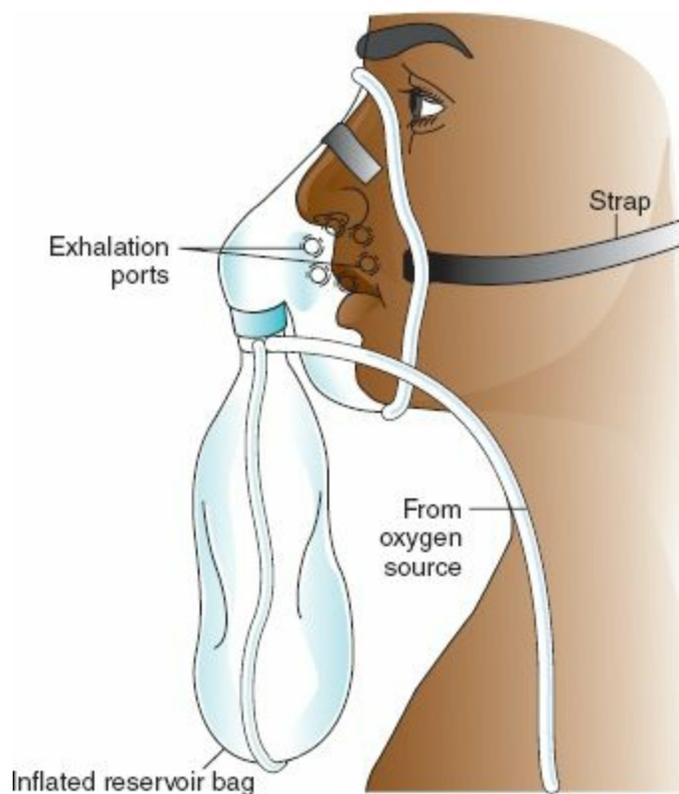
**FIGURE 58-4** A simple face mask used to deliver oxygen. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

4. Venturi mask: Used for clients at risk for or experiencing acute respiratory failure  
(Fig. 58-5)



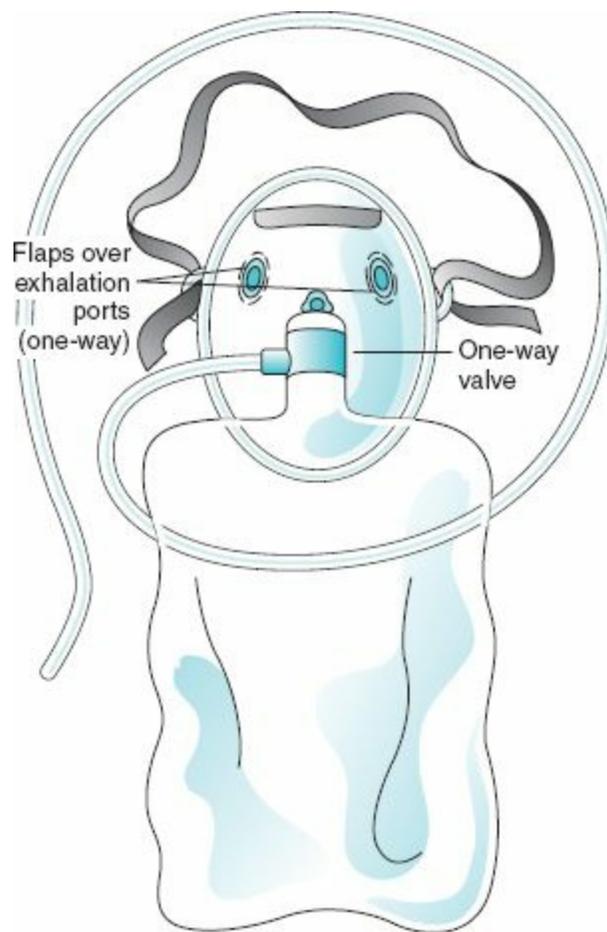
**FIGURE 58-5** A Venturi mask for precise oxygen delivery. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

5. Partial rebreather mask: Useful when the oxygen concentration needs to be raised; not usually prescribed for a client with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (Fig. 58-6)



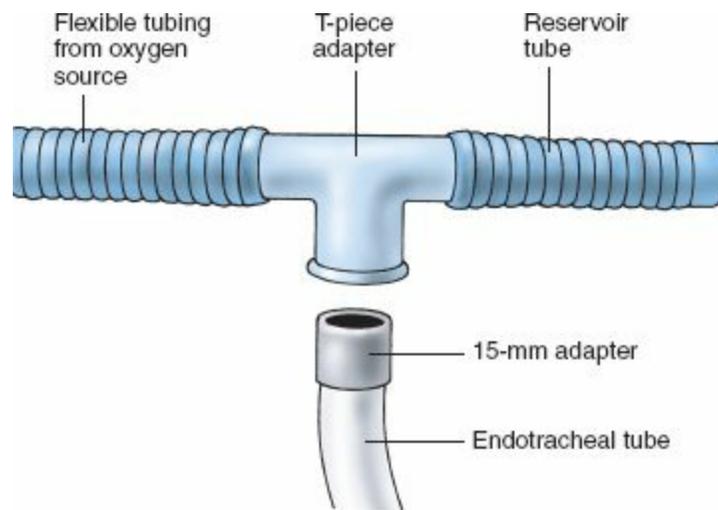
**FIGURE 58-6** A partial rebreather mask. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

6. Nonrebreather mask: Most frequently used for the client with a deteriorating respiratory status who might require intubation (Fig. 58-7)



**FIGURE 58-7** A non-rebreather mask. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

7. Tracheostomy collar and T-bar or T-piece: Tracheostomy collar is used to deliver high humidity and the desired oxygen to the client with a tracheostomy; the T-bar or T-piece is used to deliver the desired  $FIO_2$  to the client with a tracheostomy, laryngectomy, or endotracheal tube (Fig. 58-8)



**FIGURE 58-8** A T-piece apparatus for attachment to an endotracheal tube or tracheostomy tube. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

8. Face tent: Used instead of a tight-fitting mask for the client who has facial trauma or burns.

#### B. General interventions ▲

1. Assess color, pulse oximetry reading, and vital signs before and during treatment.
2. Place an *Oxygen in Use* sign at the client's bedside.
3. Assess for the presence of chronic lung problems.
4. Humidify the oxygen if indicated.
5. For specific interventions for each supplemental oxygen delivery system, see

[Table 58-1.](#)

**⚠** A client who is hypoxemic and has chronic hypercapnia requires low levels of oxygen delivery at 1 to 2 L/minute because a low arterial oxygen level is the client's primary drive for breathing.

## V. Mechanical Ventilation

### A. Types

1. Pressure-cycled ventilator: The ventilator pushes air into the lungs until a specific airway pressure is reached; it is used for short periods, as in the postanesthesia care unit.
2. Time-cycled ventilator: The ventilator pushes air into the lungs until a preset time has elapsed; it is used for the pediatric or neonatal client.
3. Volume-cycled ventilator
  - a. The ventilator pushes air into the lungs until a preset volume is delivered.
  - b. A constant tidal volume is delivered regardless of the changing compliance of the lungs and chest wall or the airway resistance in the client or ventilator.
4. Microprocessor ventilator
  - a. A computer or microprocessor is built into the ventilator to allow continuous monitoring of ventilatory functions, alarms, and client parameters.
  - b. This type of ventilator is more responsive to clients who have severe lung disease or require prolonged weaning.

### B. Modes of ventilation

1. Noninvasive positive pressure ventilation or bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP) (Fig. 58-9)



**FIGURE 58-9** A BiPAP (bilevel positive airway pressure) system using a nasal mask for pressure- and volume-controlled ventilation. (From Potter P, Perry A, Stockert P, Hall A: *Basic nursing*, ed 8, Philadelphia, 2013, Mosby.)

- a. Ventilatory support given without using an invasive artificial airway (endotracheal tube or tracheostomy tube); orofacial masks and nasal masks are used instead.
- b. An inspiratory positive airway pressure (IPAP) and an expiratory positive airway pressure (EPAP) are set on a large ventilator or a small flow generator ventilator with a desired pressure support and positive end-expiratory pressure (PEEP) level. This allows more air to move into and out of the lungs without the normal muscular activity needed to do so.
- c. Can be used in certain situations of COPD distress, heart failure, **asthma**, pulmonary edema, and hypercapnic respiratory failure

 A resuscitation bag should be available at the bedside for all clients receiving BiPAP ventilation.

## 2. Controlled

- a. The client receives a set tidal volume at a set rate.
- b. Used for clients who cannot initiate respiratory effort.
- c. Least used mode; if the client attempts to initiate a breath, the ventilator locks out the client's inspiratory effort.

## 3. Assist-control

- a. Most commonly used mode 
- b. Tidal volume and ventilatory rate are preset on the ventilator.
- c. The ventilator takes over the work of breathing for the client.
- d. The ventilator is programmed to respond to the client's inspiratory effort if the client does initiate a breath.
- e. The ventilator delivers the preset tidal volume when the client initiates a breath while allowing the client to control the rate of breathing.
- f. If the client's spontaneous ventilatory rate increases, the ventilator continues to deliver a preset tidal volume with each breath, which may cause hyperventilation and respiratory alkalosis. 

## 4. Synchronized intermittent mandatory ventilation (SIMV)

- a. Similar to assist-control ventilation in that the tidal volume and ventilatory rate are preset on the ventilator.
- b. Allows the client to breathe spontaneously at her or his own rate and tidal

volume between the ventilator breaths

- c. Can be used as a primary ventilatory mode or as a weaning mode.
- d. When SIMV is used as a weaning mode, the number of SIMV breaths is decreased gradually, and the client gradually resumes spontaneous breathing.



### C. Ventilator controls and settings (Table 58-2)

**TABLE 58-2 Ventilator Controls and Settings and Descriptions**

Controls and Settings	Descriptions
Tidal volume	The volume of air that the client receives with each breath
Rate	The number of ventilator breaths delivered per minute
Sighs	The volumes of air that are 1.5 to 2 times the set tidal volume, delivered 6 to 10 times per hour; may be used to prevent atelectasis
Fraction of inspired oxygen (FIO <sub>2</sub> )	The oxygen concentration delivered to the client; determined by the client's condition and ABG levels
Peak airway inspiratory pressure	The pressure needed by the ventilator to deliver a set tidal volume at a given compliance  Monitoring peak airway inspiratory pressure reflects changes in compliance of the lungs and resistance in the ventilator or client
Continuous positive airway pressure	The application of positive airway pressure throughout the entire respiratory cycle for spontaneously breathing clients  Keeps the alveoli open during inspiration and prevents alveolar collapse; used primarily as a weaning modality  No ventilator breaths are delivered, but the ventilator delivers oxygen and provides monitoring and an alarm system; the respiratory pattern is determined by the client's efforts
Positive end-expiratory pressure (PEEP)	Positive pressure is exerted during the expiratory phase of ventilation, which improves oxygenation by enhancing gas exchange and preventing atelectasis  The need for PEEP indicates a severe gas exchange disturbance  Higher levels of PEEP (more than 15 cm H <sub>2</sub> O) increase the chance of complications, such as barotrauma tension pneumothorax
Pressure support	The application of positive pressure on inspiration that eases the workload of breathing  May be used in combination with PEEP as a weaning method  As the weaning process continues, the amount of pressure applied to inspiration is gradually decreased

*ABG*, Arterial blood gas.

## D. Interventions

 For a client receiving mechanical ventilation, always assess the client first and then assess the ventilator.

1. Assess vital signs, lung sounds, respiratory status, and breathing patterns (the client will never breathe at a rate lower than the rate set on the ventilator).
2. Monitor skin color, particularly in the lips and nail beds.
3. Monitor the chest for bilateral expansion.
4. Obtain pulse oximetry readings.
5. Monitor ABG results.
6. Assess the need for suctioning and observe the type, color, and amount of secretions.
7. Assess ventilator settings.
8. Assess the level of water in the humidifier and the temperature of the humidification system because extremes in temperature can damage the mucosa in the airway.
9. Ensure that the alarms are set.
10. If a cause for an alarm cannot be determined, ventilate the client manually with a resuscitation bag until the problem is corrected.
11. Empty the ventilator tubing when moisture collects.
12. Turn the client at least every 2 hours or get the client out of bed, as prescribed, to

prevent complications of immobility.

13. Have resuscitation equipment available at the bedside.

14. Refer to [Chapter 21](#) for endotracheal tube and tracheostomy tube care.

E. Causes of ventilator alarms ([Box 58-8](#)) ▲

### **BOX 58-8** Causes of Ventilator Alarms

#### **High-Pressure Alarm**

- Increased secretions are in the airway.
- Wheezing or bronchospasm is causing decreased airway size.
- The endotracheal tube is displaced.
- The ventilator tube is obstructed because of water or a kink in the tubing.
- Client coughs, gags, or bites on the oral endotracheal tube.
- Client is anxious or fights the ventilator.

#### **Low-Pressure Alarm**

- Disconnection or leak in the ventilator or in the client's airway cuff occurs.
- The client stops spontaneous breathing.

F. Alarm safety and alarm fatigue ▲

1. It is the responsibility of the nurse to be alert to the sound of an alarm because this signals a client problem.
2. The nurse needs to respond promptly to an alarm and immediately assess the client.

3. According to The Joint Commission (TJC), the most common contributing factor related to alarm-related sentinel events is alarm fatigue.
4. Alarm fatigue results when the numerous alarms and the resulting noise tends to desensitize the nursing staff and cause them to ignore alarms or even disable them.
5. Some recommendations of TJC include establishing alarm safety as a facility policy, identifying default alarm settings, identifying the most important alarms to manage, and establishing important alarms to manage, and establishing policies and procedures for managing alarms, and staff education.
6. For additional information, refer to  
[http://www.pwrnewmedia.com/2013/joint\\_commission/medical\\_alarm\\_safety/do](http://www.pwrnewmedia.com/2013/joint_commission/medical_alarm_safety/do)  
and  
[http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/6/Field\\_Review\\_NPSG\\_Alarms\\_2013](http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/6/Field_Review_NPSG_Alarms_2013)

 **Never set ventilator alarm controls to the off position.**

## G. Complications

1. Hypotension caused by the application of positive pressure, which increases intrathoracic pressure and inhibits blood return to the heart
2. Respiratory complications such as pneumothorax or subcutaneous **emphysema** as a result of positive pressure
3. Gastrointestinal alterations such as stress ulcers
4. Malnutrition if nutrition is not maintained

5. Infections

6. Muscular deconditioning

7. Ventilator dependence or inability to wean

**H. Weaning:** Process of going from ventilator dependence to spontaneous breathing 🟩

1. SIMV

- a. The client breathes between the preset breaths per minute rate of the ventilator.
- b. The SIMV rate is decreased gradually until the client is breathing on his or her own without the use of the ventilator.

2. T-piece

- a. The client is taken off the ventilator and the ventilator is replaced with a T-piece or continuous positive airway pressure, which delivers humidified oxygen.
- b. The client is taken off the ventilator for short periods initially and allowed to breathe spontaneously.
- c. Weaning progresses as the client is able to tolerate progressively longer periods off the ventilator.

3. Pressure support

- a. Pressure support is a predetermined pressure set on the ventilator to assist the client in respiratory effort.
- b. As weaning continues, the amount of pressure is decreased gradually.
- c. With pressure support, pressure may be maintained while the preset breaths per minute of the ventilator gradually are decreased.

## VI. Chest Injuries

### A. Rib fracture

#### 1. Description

- a. Results from direct blunt chest trauma and causes a potential for intrathoracic injury, such as pneumothorax or pulmonary contusion
- b. Pain with movement and chest splinting result in impaired ventilation and inadequate clearance of secretions.

#### 2. Assessment

- a. Pain at the injury site that increases with inspiration ▲
- b. Tenderness at the site
- c. Shallow respirations
- d. Client splints chest
- e. Fractures noted on chest x-ray

#### 3. Interventions

- a. Note that the ribs usually reunite spontaneously.
- b. Place the client in a Fowler's position. ▲
- c. Administer pain medication as prescribed to maintain adequate ventilatory status.
- d. Monitor for increased respiratory distress.
- e. Instruct the client to self-splint with the hands and arms. ▲
- f. Prepare the client for an intercostal nerve block as prescribed if the pain is severe.

## **B. Flail chest**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Occurs from blunt chest trauma associated with accidents, which may result in hemothorax and rib fractures.
- b.** The loose segment of the chest wall becomes paradoxical to the expansion and contraction of the rest of the chest wall.

### **2. Assessment**

- a.** Paradoxical respirations (inward movement of a segment of the thorax during inspiration with outward movement during expiration) ▲
- b.** Severe pain in the chest
- c.** Dyspnea
- d.** Cyanosis
- e.** Tachycardia
- f.** Hypotension
- g.** Tachypnea, shallow respirations
- h.** Diminished breath sounds

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Maintain the client in a Fowler's position. ▲
- b.** Administer humidified oxygen as prescribed.
- c.** Monitor for increased respiratory distress.
- d.** Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
- e.** Administer pain medication as prescribed.

- f. Maintain bed rest and limit activity to reduce oxygen demands.
- g. Prepare for intubation with **mechanical ventilation**, with positive end-expiratory pressure (PEEP) for severe flail chest associated with respiratory failure and shock. ▲

## C. Pulmonary contusion

### 1. Description

- a. Characterized by interstitial hemorrhage associated with intraalveolar hemorrhage, resulting in decreased pulmonary compliance
- b. The major complication is acute respiratory distress syndrome. ▲

### 2. Assessment

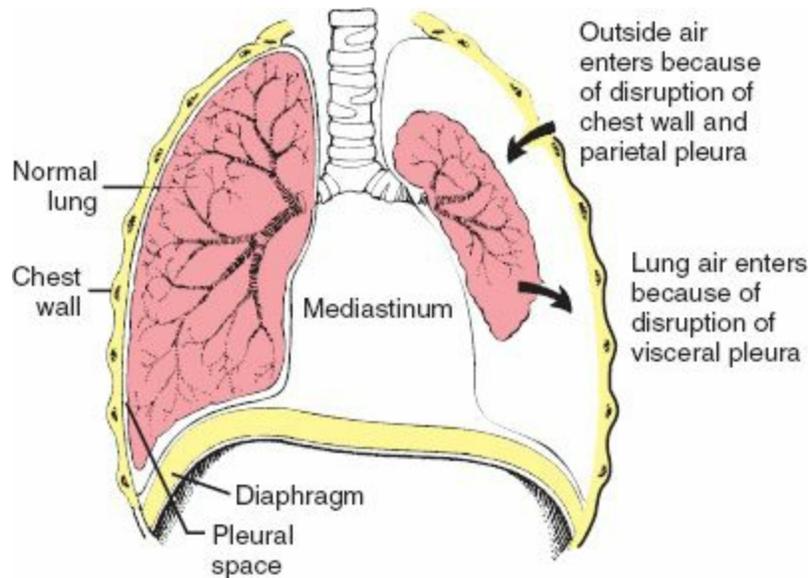
- a. Dyspnea
- b. Hypoxemia
- c. Increased bronchial secretions
- d. Hemoptysis
- e. Restlessness
- f. Decreased breath sounds
- g. Crackles and wheezes

### 3. Interventions

- a. Maintain a patent airway and adequate ventilation.
- b. Place the client in a Fowler's position. ▲
- c. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
- d. Monitor for increased respiratory distress.

- e. Maintain bed rest and limit activity to reduce oxygen demands.
- f. Prepare for mechanical ventilation with PEEP if required. ▲

#### D. Pneumothorax (Fig. 58-10)



**FIGURE 58-10** Pneumothorax. Air in the pleural space causes the lungs to collapse around the hilus and may push the mediastinal contents (heart and great vessels) toward the other lung. (From McCance K, Huether S: *Pathophysiology: The biologic basis for disease in adults and children*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

#### 1. Description ▲

- a. Accumulation of atmospheric air in the pleural space, which results in a rise in intrathoracic pressure and reduced vital capacity
- b. The loss of negative intrapleural pressure results in collapse of the lung.
- c. A spontaneous pneumothorax occurs with the rupture of a pulmonary bleb.
- d. An open pneumothorax occurs when an opening through the chest wall allows the entrance of positive atmospheric air pressure into the pleural space.

e. A tension pneumothorax occurs from a blunt chest injury or from mechanical ventilation with PEEP when a buildup of positive pressure occurs in the pleural space.

f. Diagnosis of pneumothorax is made by chest x-ray.

## 2. Assessment (Box 58-9)

### BOX 58-9 Assessment Findings: Pneumothorax

- Absent breath sounds on affected side
- Cyanosis
- Decreased chest expansion unilaterally
- Dyspnea
- Hypotension
- Sharp chest pain
- Subcutaneous emphysema as evidenced by crepitus on palpation
- Sucking sound with open chest wound
- Tachycardia
- Tachypnea
- Tracheal deviation to the unaffected side with tension pneumothorax

## 3. Interventions

a. Apply a nonporous dressing over an open chest wound.

b. Administer oxygen as prescribed.

- c. Place the client in a Fowler's position.
- d. Prepare for chest tube placement, which will remain in place until the lung has expanded fully.
- e. Monitor the chest tube drainage system.
- f. Monitor for subcutaneous emphysema.
- g. See [Chapter 21](#) for information on caring for a client with chest tubes.

 Clients with a respiratory disorder should be positioned with the head of the bed elevated.

## VII. Acute Respiratory Failure

### A. Description

1. Occurs when insufficient oxygen is transported to the blood or inadequate carbon dioxide is removed from the lungs and the client's compensatory mechanisms fail
2. Causes include a mechanical abnormality of the lungs or chest wall, a defect in the respiratory control center in the brain, or an impairment in the function of the respiratory muscles.
3. In oxygenation failure, or hypoxemic respiratory failure, oxygen may reach the alveoli but cannot be absorbed or used properly, resulting in a  $\text{PaO}_2$  lower than 60 mm Hg, arterial oxygen saturation ( $\text{SaO}_2$ ) lower than 90%, or partial pressure of arterial carbon dioxide ( $\text{PaCO}_2$ ) greater than 50 mm Hg occurring with acidemia. 
4. Many clients experience both hypoxemic and hypercapnic respiratory failure and

retained carbon dioxide in the alveoli displaces oxygen, contributing to the hypoxemia.

5. Manifestations of respiratory failure are related to the extent and rapidity of change in  $\text{Pa}_{\text{O}_2}$  and  $\text{Pa}_{\text{CO}_2}$ .

## **B. Assessment**

1. Dyspnea
2. Headache
3. Restlessness
4. Confusion
5. Tachycardia
6. Hypertension
7. Dysrhythmias
8. Decreased level of consciousness
9. Alterations in respirations and breath sounds

## **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Identify and treat the cause of the respiratory failure
2. Administer oxygen to maintain the  $\text{Pa}_{\text{O}_2}$  level higher than 60 to 70 mm Hg.
3. Place the client in a Fowler's position.
4. Encourage deep breathing.
5. Administer bronchodilators as prescribed.
6. Prepare the client for mechanical ventilation if supplemental oxygen cannot maintain acceptable  $\text{Pa}_{\text{O}_2}$  and  $\text{Pa}_{\text{CO}_2}$  levels.

## VIII. Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome

### A. Description

1. A form of acute respiratory failure that occurs as a complication of some other condition; it is caused by a diffuse lung injury and leads to extravascular lung fluid.
2. The major site of injury is the alveolar capillary membrane.
3. The interstitial edema causes compression and obliteration of the terminal airways and leads to reduced lung volume and compliance.
4. The ABG levels identify respiratory acidosis and hypoxemia that do not respond to an increased percentage of oxygen. ▲
5. The chest x-ray shows bilateral interstitial and alveolar infiltrates; interstitial edema may not be noted until there is a 30% increase in fluid content.
6. Causes include sepsis, fluid overload, shock, trauma, neurological injuries, burns, disseminated intravascular coagulation, drug ingestion, aspiration, and inhalation of toxic substances.

### B. Assessment

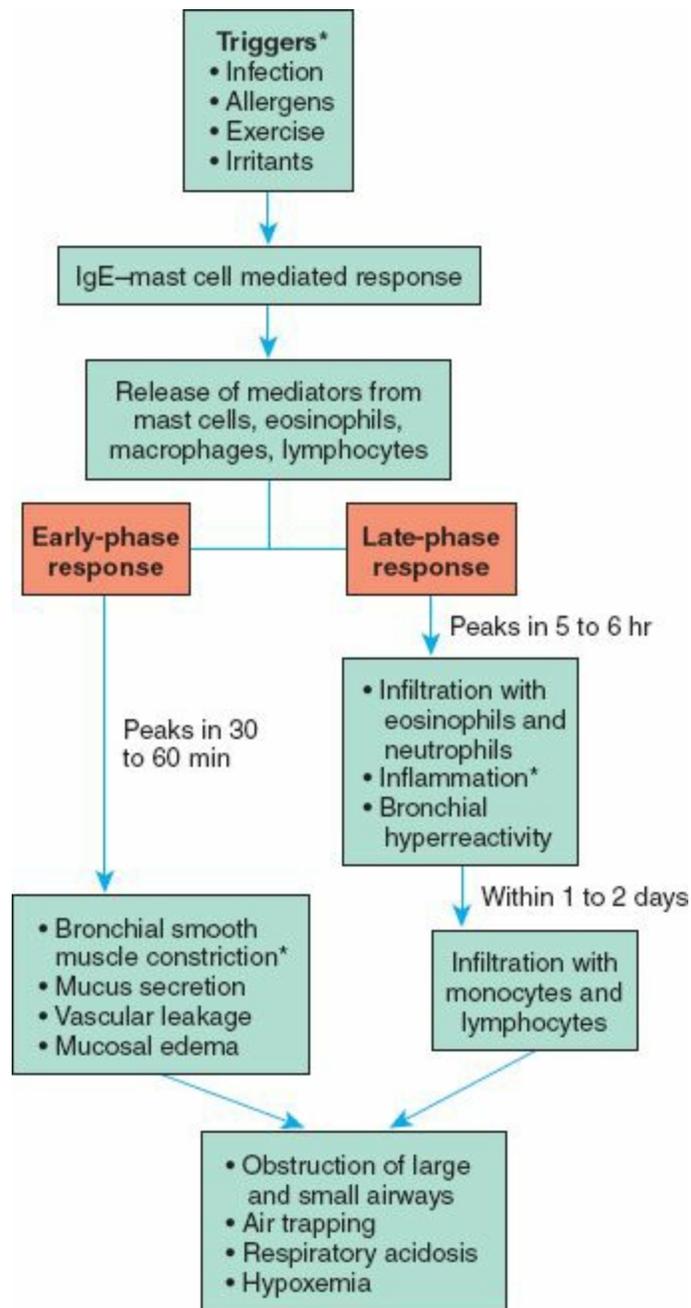
1. Tachypnea
2. Dyspnea
3. Decreased breath sounds
4. Deteriorating ABG levels
5. Hypoxemia despite high concentrations of delivered oxygen
6. Decreased pulmonary compliance

## 7. Pulmonary infiltrates

### C. Interventions

1. Identify and treat the cause of the acute respiratory distress syndrome.
2. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
3. Place the client in a Fowler's position.
4. Restrict fluid intake as prescribed.
5. Provide respiratory treatments as prescribed.
6. Administer diuretics, anticoagulants, or corticosteroids as prescribed.
7. Prepare the client for intubation and mechanical ventilation using PEEP.

### **IX. Asthma (Fig. 58-11)**



**FIGURE 58-11** Pathophysiology in asthma. Stems with asterisks are primary processes. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

## A. Description

1. Chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways that causes varying degrees of

obstruction in the airways

2. Marked by airway inflammation and hyperresponsiveness to a variety of stimuli or triggers ([Box 58-10](#)).

### **BOX 58-10**

### **Asthma Triggers**

#### **Environmental Factors**

- Animal dander
- Cockroaches
- Dust
- Exhaust fumes
- Fireplaces
- Molds
- Perfumes or other products with aerosol sprays
- Pollen
- Smoke, including cigarette or cigar smoke
- Sudden weather changes

#### **Physiological Factors**

- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Hormonal changes
- Sinusitis
- Stress
- Viral upper respiratory infection

## Medications

- Acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin)
- $\beta$ -Adrenergic blockers
- Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs

## Occupational Exposure Factors

- Metal salts
- Wood and vegetable dusts
- Industrial chemicals and plastics

## Food Additives

- Sulfites (bisulfites and metabisulfites)
- Beer, wine, dried fruit, shrimp, processed potatoes
- Monosodium glutamate

From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

3. Causes recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing associated with airflow obstruction that may resolve spontaneously; it is often reversible with treatment.
4. Severity is classified based on the clinical features before treatment ([Box 58-11](#)).

**Severe Persistent**

- Symptoms are continuous.
- Physical activity requires limitations.
- Frequent exacerbations occur.
- Nocturnal symptoms occur frequently.

**Moderate Persistent**

- Daily symptoms occur.
- Daily use of inhaled short-acting  $\beta$ -agonist is needed.
- Exacerbations affect activity.
- Exacerbations occur at least twice weekly and may last for days.
- Nocturnal symptoms occur more frequently than once weekly.

**Mild Persistent**

- Symptoms occur more frequently than twice weekly but less often than once daily.
- Exacerbations may affect activity.
- Nocturnal symptoms occur more frequently than twice a month.

**Mild Intermittent**

- Symptoms occur twice weekly or less.
- Client is asymptomatic between exacerbations.
- Exacerbations are brief (hours to days).
- Intensity of exacerbations varies.

- Nocturnal symptoms occur twice a month or less.

From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.

5. Status asthmaticus is a severe life-threatening **asthma** episode that is refractory to treatment and may result in pneumothorax, acute cor pulmonale, or respiratory arrest.
6. Refer to [Chapter 42](#) for additional information on asthma.

## B. Assessment

1. Restlessness
2. Wheezing or crackles
3. Absent or diminished lung sounds
4. Hyperresonance
5. Use of accessory muscles for breathing
6. Tachypnea with hyperventilation
7. Prolonged exhalation
8. Tachycardia
9. Pulsus paradoxus
10. Diaphoresis
11. Cyanosis
12. Decreased oxygen saturation
13. Pulmonary function test results that demonstrate decreased air flow rates

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor pulse oximetry.
3. Monitor peak flow.
4. During an acute asthma episode, provide interventions to assist with breathing (Box 58-12). ▲

### BOX 58-12

### Nursing Interventions during an Acute Asthma Episode

Position the client in a high Fowler's position or sitting to aid in breathing.

Administer oxygen as prescribed.

Stay with the client to decrease anxiety.

Administer bronchodilators as prescribed.

Record the color, amount, and consistency of sputum, if any.

Administer corticosteroids as prescribed.

Auscultate lung sounds before, during, and after treatments.

## D. Client education ▲

1. On the intermittent nature of symptoms and need for long-term management
2. To identify possible triggers and measures to prevent episodes
3. About the management of medication and proper administration
4. About the correct use of a peak flowmeter
5. About developing an asthma action plan with the primary HCP and what to do if

an asthma episode occurs

## X. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease ▲

### A. Description

1. Also known as chronic obstructive lung disease and chronic airflow limitation
2. **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease** is a disease state characterized by airflow obstruction caused by emphysema or chronic bronchitis.
3. Progressive airflow limitation occurs, associated with an abnormal inflammatory response of the lungs that is not completely reversible.
4. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease leads to pulmonary insufficiency, pulmonary hypertension, and cor pulmonale.

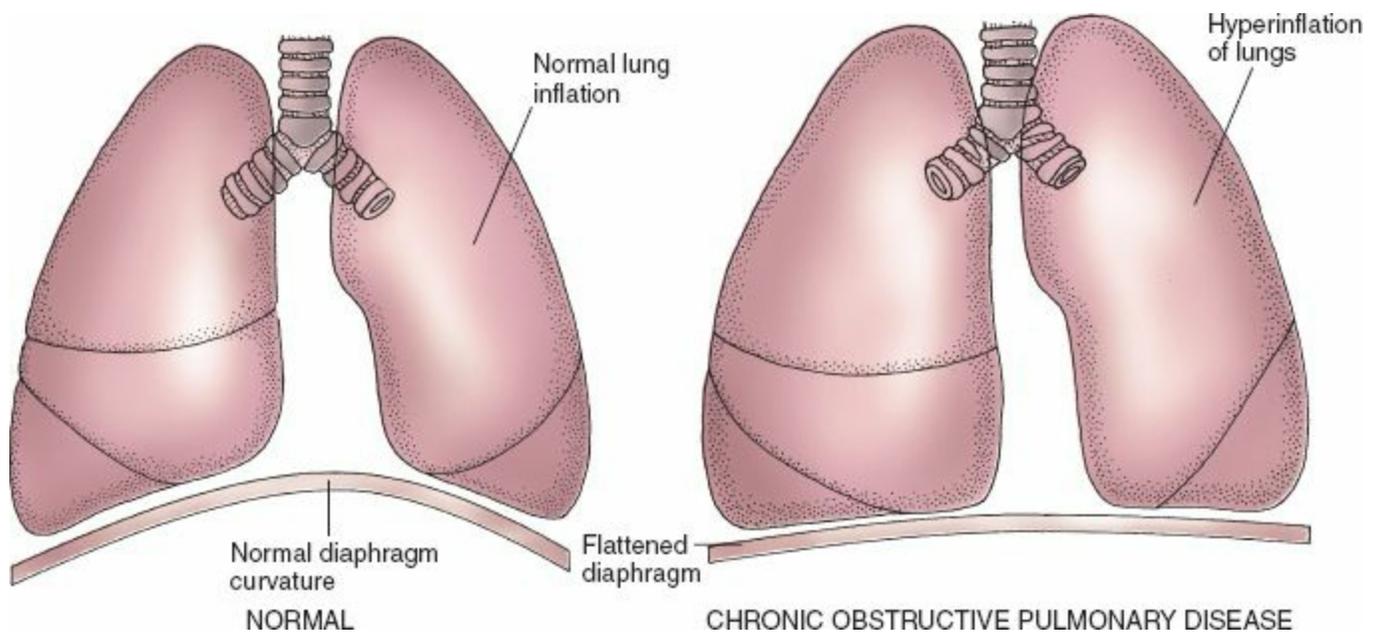
### B. Assessment

1. Cough
2. Exertional dyspnea
3. Wheezing and crackles
4. Sputum production
5. Weight loss
6. Barrel chest (emphysema) (Fig. 58-12) ▲



**FIGURE 58-12** Typical barrel chest in a client with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

7. Use of accessory muscles for breathing ▲
8. Prolonged expiration
9. Orthopnea
10. Cardiac dysrhythmias
11. Congestion and hyperinflation seen on chest x-ray (Fig. 58-13) ▲



**FIGURE 58-13** Diaphragm shape and lung inflation in the normal client and in the client with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)

12. ABG levels that indicate respiratory acidosis and hypoxemia ▲

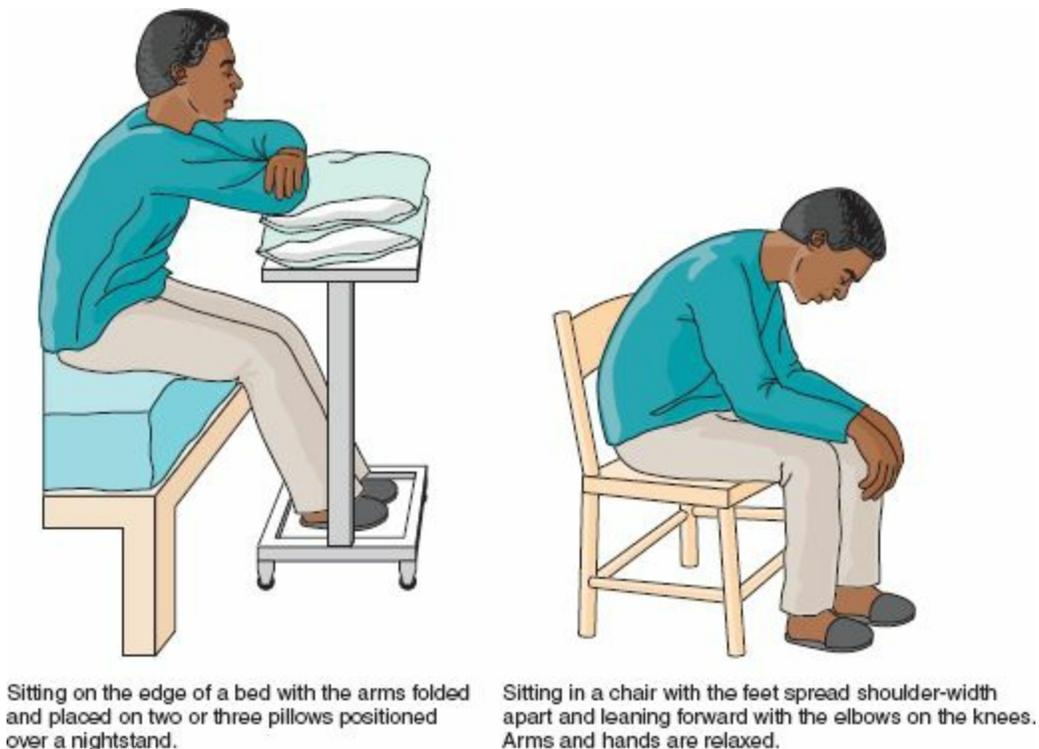
13. Pulmonary function tests that demonstrate decreased vital capacity

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Administer a low concentration of oxygen (1 to 2 L/minute) as prescribed; the stimulus to breathe is a low arterial  $P_{O_2}$  instead of an increased  $P_{CO_2}$ .
3. Monitor pulse oximetry.
4. Provide respiratory treatments and CPT.
5. Instruct the client in diaphragmatic or abdominal breathing techniques and pursed-lip breathing techniques, which increase airway pressure and keep air passages

open, promoting maximal carbon dioxide expiration.

6. Record the color, amount, and consistency of sputum.
7. Suction the client's lungs, if necessary, to clear the airway and prevent infection.
8. Monitor weight.
9. Encourage small, frequent meals to maintain nutrition and prevent dyspnea.
10. Provide a high-calorie, high-protein diet with supplements.
11. Encourage fluid intake up to 3000 mL/day to keep secretions thin, unless contraindicated.
12. Place the client in a Fowler's position and leaning forward to aid in breathing (Fig. 58-14).



**FIGURE 58-14** Orthopnea positions that clients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease can assume to ease the work of breathing. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis,

2013, Saunders.)

13. Allow activity as tolerated.
14. Administer bronchodilators as prescribed, and instruct the client in the use of oral and inhalant medications.
15. Administer corticosteroids as prescribed for exacerbations.
16. Administer mucolytics as prescribed to thin secretions.
17. Administer antibiotics for infection if prescribed.

**D. Client education (Box 58-13) ▲**

**BOX 58-13**

**Client Education: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease**

- Adhere to activity limitations, alternating rest periods with activity.
- Avoid eating gas-producing foods, spicy foods, and extremely hot or cold foods.
- Avoid exposure to individuals with infections and avoid crowds.
- Avoid extremes in temperature.
- Avoid fireplaces, pets, feather pillows, and other environmental allergens.
- Avoid powerful odors.
- Meet nutritional requirements.
- Receive immunizations as recommended.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of respiratory infection and hypoxia.
- Stop smoking.
- Use medications and inhalers as prescribed.

Use oxygen therapy as prescribed.

Use pursed-lip and diaphragmatic or abdominal breathing.

When dusting, use a wet cloth.

## **XI. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)**

- A. Respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus, called *SARS-associated coronavirus*
- B. The syndrome begins with a fever, an overall feeling of discomfort, body aches, and mild respiratory symptoms.
- C. After 2 to 7 days, the client may develop a dry cough and dyspnea.
- D. Infection is spread by close person-to-person contact by direct contact with infectious material (respiratory secretions from infected persons or contact with objects contaminated with infectious droplets).
- E. Prevention includes avoiding contact with those suspected of having SARS, avoiding travel to countries where an outbreak of SARS exists, avoiding close contact with crowds in areas where SARS exists, and frequent hand washing if in an area where SARS exists. ▲

## **XII. Pneumonia**

### **A. Description**

1. Infection of the pulmonary tissue, including the interstitial spaces, the alveoli, and the bronchioles.
2. The edema associated with inflammation stiffens the lung, decreases lung compliance and vital capacity, and causes hypoxemia.

3. Pneumonia can be community-acquired or hospital-acquired.
4. The chest x-ray film shows lobar or segmental consolidation, pulmonary infiltrates, or pleural effusions.
5. A sputum culture identifies the organism. ▲
6. The white blood cell count and the erythrocyte sedimentation rate are elevated.

## B. Assessment ▲

1. Chills
2. Elevated temperature
3. Pleuritic pain
4. Tachypnea
5. Rhonchi and wheezes
6. Use of accessory muscles for breathing
7. Mental status changes
8. Sputum production

## C. Interventions

1. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
2. Monitor respiratory status.
3. Monitor for labored respirations, cyanosis, and cold and clammy skin.
4. Encourage coughing and deep breathing and use of the incentive spirometer. ▲
5. Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position to facilitate breathing and lung expansion. ▲
6. Change the client's position frequently and ambulate as tolerated to mobilize

secretions.

7. Provide CPT.

8. Perform nasotracheal suctioning if the client is unable to clear secretions.

9. Monitor pulse oximetry.

10. Monitor and record color, consistency, and amount of sputum.

11. Provide a high-calorie, high-protein diet with small frequent meals.

12. Encourage fluids, up to 3 L/day, to thin secretions unless contraindicated. ▲

13. Provide a balance of rest and activity, increasing activity gradually.

14. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

15. Administer antipyretics, bronchodilators, cough suppressants, mucolytic agents, and expectorants as prescribed.

16. Prevent the spread of infection by hand washing and the proper disposal of secretions. ▲

**D. Client education** ▲

1. About the importance of rest, proper nutrition, and adequate fluid intake

2. To avoid chilling and exposure to individuals with respiratory infections or viruses

3. Regarding medications and the use of inhalants as prescribed

4. To notify the HCP if chills, fever, dyspnea, hemoptysis, or increased fatigue occurs

5. To receive a pneumococcal vaccine as recommended by the health care provider; refer to the following Web site for information about this vaccine:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/default.htm>.

 Teach clients that using proper hand washing techniques, disposing of respiratory secretions properly, and receiving vaccines will assist in preventing the spread of infection.

### **XIII. Influenza**

#### **A. Description**

1. Also known as the flu; highly contagious acute viral respiratory infection
2. May be caused by several viruses, usually known as types A, B, and C
3. Yearly vaccination is recommended to prevent the disease, especially for those older than 50 years of age, individuals with chronic illness or who are immunocompromised, those living in institutions, and health care personnel providing direct care to clients (the vaccination is contraindicated in the individual with egg allergies).
4. Additional prevention measures include avoiding those who have developed influenza, frequent and proper hand washing, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that have become contaminated with secretions.
5. Avian influenza A (H5N1)
  - a. Affects birds; does not usually affect humans; however, human cases have been reported in some countries.
  - b. An H5N1 vaccine has been developed for use if a pandemic virus were to emerge.
  - c. Reported symptoms are similar to those associated with influenza types A, B,

and C.

- d. Prevention measures include thorough cooking of poultry products, avoiding contact with wild animals, frequent and proper hand washing, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that have become contaminated with secretions.

## 6. Swine (H1N1) influenza

- a. A strain of flu that consists of genetic materials from swine, avian, and human influenza viruses
- b. Signs and symptoms are similar to those that present with seasonal flu; in addition, vomiting and diarrhea commonly occur.
- c. Prevention measures and treatment are the same as for the seasonal flu.
- d. Refer to [Chapter 48](#) for additional information on swine flu and [Chapter 59](#) for information on H1N1 vaccines.

## B. Assessment

1. Acute onset of fever and muscle aches
2. Headache
3. Fatigue, weakness, anorexia
4. Sore throat, cough, and rhinorrhea

## C. Interventions

1. Encourage rest.
2. Encourage fluids to prevent pulmonary complications (unless contraindicated).
3. Monitor lung sounds.
4. Provide supportive therapy such as antipyretics or antitussives as indicated.

5. Administer antiviral medications as prescribed for the current strain of influenza (see [Chapter 59](#)).

#### **XIV. Legionnaire's Disease**

##### **A. Description**

1. Acute bacterial infection caused by *Legionella pneumophila*
2. Sources of the organism include contaminated cooling tower water and warm stagnant water supplies, including water vaporizers, water sonicators, whirlpool spas, and showers. ▲
3. Person-to-person contact does not occur; the risk for infection is increased by the presence of other conditions.

**B. Assessment:** Influenza-like symptoms with a high fever, chills, muscle aches, and headache that may progress to dry cough, pleurisy, and sometimes diarrhea.

**C. Interventions:** Treatment is supportive and antibiotics may be prescribed.

#### **XV. Pleural Effusion**

##### **A. Description**

1. Pleural effusion is the collection of fluid in the pleural space.
2. Any condition that interferes with secretion or drainage of this fluid will lead to pleural effusion.

##### **B. Assessment**

1. Pleuritic pain that is sharp and increases with inspiration ▲
2. Progressive dyspnea with decreased movement of the chest wall on the affected

side

3. Dry, nonproductive cough caused by bronchial irritation or mediastinal shift
4. Tachycardia
5. Elevated temperature
6. Decreased breath sounds over affected area
7. Chest x-ray film that shows pleural effusion and a mediastinal shift away from the fluid if the effusion is more than 250 mL ▲

#### C. Interventions

1. Identify and treat the underlying cause. ▲
2. Monitor breath sounds.
3. Place the client in a Fowler's position.
4. Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
5. Prepare the client for thoracentesis.
6. If pleural effusion is recurrent, prepare the client for pleurectomy or pleurodesis as prescribed.

#### D. Pleurectomy

1. Consists of surgically stripping the parietal pleura away from the visceral pleura
2. This produces an intense inflammatory reaction that promotes adhesion formation between the two layers during healing.

#### E. Pleurodesis

1. Involves the instillation of a sclerosing substance into the pleural space via a thoracotomy tube

2. The substance creates an inflammatory response that scleroses tissue together.

## **XVI. Empyema**

### **A. Description**

1. Collection of pus within the pleural cavity
2. The fluid is thick, opaque, and foul-smelling.
3. The most common cause is pulmonary infection and lung abscess caused by thoracic surgery or chest trauma, in which bacteria are introduced directly into the pleural space. ▲
4. Treatment focuses on treating the infection, emptying the empyema cavity, reexpanding the lung, and controlling the infection.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Recent febrile illness or trauma
2. Chest pain
3. Cough
4. Dyspnea
5. Anorexia and weight loss
6. Malaise
7. Elevated temperature and chills
8. Night sweats
9. Pleural exudate on chest x-ray

### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor breath sounds.
2. Place the client in a semi-Fowler's or high Fowler's position. ▲
3. Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
4. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.
5. Instruct the client to splint the chest as necessary.
6. Assist with thoracentesis or chest tube insertion to promote drainage and lung expansion.
7. If marked pleural thickening occurs, prepare the client for decortication, if prescribed; this surgical procedure involves removal of the restrictive mass of fibrin and inflammatory cells.

## **XVII. Pleurisy**

### **A. Description**

1. Inflammation of the visceral and parietal membranes; may be caused by pulmonary infarction or pneumonia.
2. The visceral and parietal membranes rub together during respiration and cause pain.
3. Pleurisy usually occurs on one side of the chest, usually in the lower lateral portions in the chest wall.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Knifelike pain aggravated on deep breathing and coughing ▲
2. Dyspnea

3. Pleural friction rub heard on auscultation ▲

4. Apprehension

### C. Interventions

1. Identify and treat the cause.

2. Monitor lung sounds.

3. Administer analgesics as prescribed.

4. Apply hot or cold applications as prescribed.

5. Encourage coughing and deep breathing.

6. Instruct the client to lie on the affected side to splint chest. ▲

## XVIII. Pulmonary Embolism ▲

### A. Description

1. Occurs when a thrombus forms (most commonly in a deep vein), detaches, travels to the right side of the heart, and then lodges in a branch of the pulmonary artery

2. Clients prone to pulmonary embolism are those at risk for deep vein thrombosis, including those with prolonged immobilization, surgery, obesity, pregnancy, heart failure, advanced age, or a history of thromboembolism.

3. Fat emboli can occur as a complication following fracture of a long bone and can cause pulmonary emboli.

4. Treatment is aimed at prevention through risk factor recognition and elimination.

### B. Assessment (Box 58-14)

- Apprehension and restlessness
- Blood-tinged sputum
- Chest pain
- Cough
- Crackles and wheezes on auscultation
- Cyanosis
- Distended neck veins
- Dyspnea accompanied by anginal and pleuritic pain, exacerbated by inspiration
- Feeling of impending doom
- Hypotension
- Petechiae over the chest and axilla
- Shallow respirations
- Tachypnea and tachycardia

C. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## **PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS**

### **Actions to Take if a Pulmonary Embolism Is Suspected**

- 1.** Notify the Rapid Response Team.
- 2.** Reassure the client and elevate the head of the bed.
- 3.** Prepare to administer oxygen.

4. Obtain vital signs and check lung sounds.
5. Prepare to obtain an arterial blood gas.
6. Prepare for the administration of heparin therapy or other therapies.
7. Document the event, interventions taken, and the client's response to treatment.

Signs and symptoms of a pulmonary embolism include the sudden onset of dyspnea, apprehension and restlessness, a feeling of impending doom, cough, hemoptysis, tachypnea, crackles, petechiae over the chest and axillae, and a decreased arterial oxygen saturation. If suspected, the nurse immediately notifies the Rapid Response Team. The nurse stays with the client, reassures the client, and elevates the head of the bed. The nurse prepares to administer oxygen and obtains the vital signs and checks lung sounds. The nurse continues to monitor the client closely, prepares the client for tests prescribed to confirm the diagnosis, and prepares to obtain an arterial blood gas. When prescribed, the client is prepared for the administration of heparin therapy or other therapies such as embolectomy or placement of a vena cava filter if necessary. Finally, the nurse documents the event, interventions taken, and the client's response to treatment.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders, pp. 664-665.

## **XIX. Lung Cancer and Laryngeal Cancer (see Chapter 52)**

## **XX. Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (see Chapter 50)**

## **XXI. Histoplasmosis**

### **A. Description**

1. Pulmonary fungal infection caused by spores of *Histoplasma capsulatum*
2. Transmission occurs by the inhalation of spores, which commonly are found in contaminated soil. 🟩
3. Spores also are usually found in bird droppings.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Similar to pneumonia
2. Positive skin test for histoplasmosis 🟩
3. Positive agglutination test
4. Splenomegaly, hepatomegaly

### **C. Interventions**

1. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
2. Monitor breath sounds.
3. Administer antiemetics, antihistamines, antipyretics, and corticosteroids as prescribed.
4. Administer fungicidal medications as prescribed.
5. Encourage coughing and deep breathing.
6. Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position.

7. Monitor vital signs.
8. Monitor for nephrotoxicity from fungicidal medications. ▲
9. Instruct the client to spray the floor with water before sweeping barn and chicken coops.

## XXII. Sarcoidosis

### A. Description

1. Presence of epithelioid cell tubercles in the lung
2. The cause is unknown, but a high titer of Epstein-Barr virus may be noted.
3. Viral incidence is highest in African Americans and young adults.

### B. Assessment

1. Night sweats
2. Fever
3. Weight loss
4. Cough and dyspnea
5. Skin nodules
6. Polyarthrititis
7. Kveim test: Sarcoid node antigen is injected intradermally and causes a local nodular lesion in about 1 month. ▲

### C. Interventions

1. Administer corticosteroids to control symptoms.
2. Monitor temperature.
3. Increase fluid intake.

4. Provide frequent periods of rest.
5. Encourage small, frequent, nutritious meals.

### XXIII. Occupational Lung Disease

#### A. Description

1. Caused by exposure to environmental or occupational fumes, dust, vapors, gases, bacterial or fungal antigens, and allergens; can result in acute reversible effects or chronic lung disease
2. Common disease classifications include occupational asthma pneumoconiosis (silicosis or coal miner's [black lung] disease), diffuse interstitial fibrosis (asbestosis, talcosis, berylliosis), or extrinsic allergic alveolitis (farmer's lung, bird fancier's lung, or machine operator's lung).

**B. Assessment:** Manifestations depend on the type of disease and respiratory symptoms.

#### C. Interventions

1. Prevention through the use of respiratory protective devices ▲
2. Treatment is based on the symptoms experienced by the client.

### XXIV. Tuberculosis ▲

#### A. Description

1. Highly communicable disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*
2. *M. tuberculosis* is a nonmotile, nonsporulating, acid-fast rod that secretes niacin; when the bacillus reaches a susceptible site, it multiplies freely.
3. Because *M. tuberculosis* is an aerobic bacterium, it primarily affects the

pulmonary system, especially the upper lobes, where the oxygen content is highest, but also can affect other areas of the body, such as the brain, intestines, peritoneum, kidney, joints, and liver.

4. An exudative response causes a nonspecific pneumonitis and the development of granulomas in the lung tissue.
5. Tuberculosis has an insidious onset, and many clients are not aware of symptoms until the disease is well advanced.
6. Improper or noncompliant use of treatment programs may cause the development of mutations in the tubercle bacilli, resulting in a **multidrug-resistant strain of tuberculosis** (MDR-TB). ▲
7. The goal of treatment is to prevent transmission, control symptoms, and prevent progression of the disease.

#### B. Risk factors (Box 58-15) ▲

##### BOX 58-15

##### Risk Factors for Tuberculosis

- Child younger than 5 years of age
- Drinking unpasteurized milk if the cow is infected with bovine tuberculosis
- Homeless individuals or those from a lower socioeconomic group, minority group, or refugee group
- Individuals in constant, frequent contact with an untreated or undiagnosed individual
- Individuals living in crowded areas, such as long-term care facilities, prisons, and

mental health facilities

- Older client
- Individuals with malnutrition, infection, immune dysfunction, or human immunodeficiency virus infection; or immunosuppressed as a result of medication therapy
- Individuals who abuse alcohol or are intravenous drug users

### C. Transmission

1. Via the airborne route by droplet infection.
2. When an infected individual coughs, laughs, sneezes, or sings, droplet nuclei containing tuberculosis bacteria enter the air and may be inhaled by others.
3. Identification of those in close contact with the infected individual is important so that they can be tested and treated as necessary.
4. When contacts have been identified, these persons are assessed with a tuberculin skin test and chest x-rays to determine infection with tuberculosis.
5. After the infected individual has received tuberculosis medication for 2 to 3 weeks, the risk of transmission is reduced greatly.

### D. Disease progression

1. Droplets enter the lungs, and the bacteria form a tubercle lesion.
2. The defense systems of the body encapsulate the tubercle, leaving a scar.
3. If encapsulation does not occur, bacteria may enter the lymph system, travel to the lymph nodes, and cause an inflammatory response termed *granulomatous*

*inflammation.*

4. Primary lesions form; the primary lesions may become dormant but can be reactivated and become a secondary infection when reexposed to the bacterium.
5. In an active phase, tuberculosis can cause necrosis and cavitation in the lesions, leading to rupture, the spread of necrotic tissue, and damage to various parts of the body.

#### E. Client history ▲

1. Past exposure to tuberculosis
2. Client's country of origin and travel to foreign countries in which the incidence of tuberculosis is high
3. Recent history of influenza, pneumonia, febrile illness, cough, or foul-smelling sputum production
4. Previous tests for tuberculosis; results of the testing
5. Recent **bacille Calmette-Guérin vaccine** (a vaccine containing attenuated tubercle bacilli that may be given to persons in foreign countries or to persons traveling to foreign countries to produce increased resistance to tuberculosis).

**⚠ An individual who has received a bacille Calmette-Guérin vaccine will have a positive tuberculin skin test result and should be evaluated for tuberculosis with a chest x-ray.**

#### F. Clinical manifestations

1. May be asymptomatic in primary infection
2. Fatigue

3. Lethargy
4. Anorexia
5. Weight loss
6. Low-grade fever
7. Chills
8. Night sweats
9. Persistent cough and the production of mucoid and mucopurulent sputum, which is occasionally streaked with blood
10. Chest tightness and a dull, aching chest pain may accompany the cough.

#### **G. Chest assessment**

1. A physical examination of the chest does not provide conclusive evidence of tuberculosis.
2. A chest x-ray is not definitive, but the presence of multinodular infiltrates with calcification in the upper lobes suggests tuberculosis. ▲
3. If the disease is active, caseation and inflammation may be seen on the chest x-ray.
4. Advanced disease
  - a. Dullness with percussion over involved parenchymal areas, bronchial breath sounds, rhonchi, and crackles indicate advanced disease.
  - b. Partial obstruction of a bronchus caused by endobronchial disease or compression by lymph nodes may produce localized wheezing and dyspnea.

#### **H. QuantiFERON-TB Gold test**

1. A blood analysis test by an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay.

2. A sensitive and rapid test (results can be available in 24 hours) that assists in diagnosing the client.

### I. Sputum cultures

1. Sputum specimens are obtained for an acid-fast smear. ▲
2. A sputum culture identifying *M. tuberculosis* confirms the diagnosis.
3. After medications are started, sputum samples are obtained again to determine the effectiveness of therapy.
4. Most clients have negative cultures after 3 months of treatment.

### J. Tuberculin skin test (TST) (Table 58-3) ▲

**TABLE 58-3 Classification of the Tuberculin Skin Test Reaction**

Induration = 5 or > 5 mm Considered Positive in:	Induration = 10 or > 10 mm Considered Positive in:	Induration = 15 or > 15 mm Considered Positive in:
HIV-infected persons Recent contact of a person with TB disease Persons with fibrotic changes on chest x-ray consistent with prior TB Clients with organ transplants Persons immunosuppressed for other reasons	Recent immigrants from high-prevalence countries Injection drug users Residents and employees in high-risk congregate settings Mycobacteriology laboratory personnel Persons with clinical conditions that place them at high risk Children < 4 years of age Infants, children, and adolescents exposed to adults in high-risk categories	Any person, including persons with no known risk factors for TB

*HIV*, Human immunodeficiency virus; *TB*, tuberculosis.

From Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Tuberculosis (TB) fact sheets*.

Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/testing/skintesting.htm>.

1. A positive reaction does not mean that active disease is present but indicates

previous exposure to tuberculosis or the presence of inactive (dormant) disease.

2. Once the test result is positive, it will be positive in any future tests.
3. Skin test interpretation depends on two factors: Measurement in millimeters of the induration, and the person's risk of being infected with TB and progression to disease if infected.
4. Once an individual's skin test is positive, a chest x-ray is necessary to rule out active tuberculosis or to detect old healed lesions.

**K. The hospitalized client** ▲

1. The client with active tuberculosis is placed under airborne isolation precautions in a negative-pressure room; to maintain negative pressure, the door of the room must be tightly closed.
2. The room should have at least six exchanges of fresh air per hour and should be ventilated to the outside environment, if possible.
3. The nurse wears a particulate respirator (a special individually fitted mask) when caring for the client and a gown when the possibility of clothing contamination exists.
4. Thorough hand washing is required before and after caring for the client.
5. If the client needs to leave the room for a test or procedure, the client is required to wear a surgical mask.
6. Respiratory isolation is discontinued when the client is no longer considered infectious.
7. After the infected individual has received tuberculosis medication for 2 to 3

weeks, the risk of transmission is reduced greatly.

L. Client education (Box 58-16) ▲

**BOX 58-16**

**Client Education: Tuberculosis**

Provide the client and family with information about tuberculosis and allay concerns about the contagious aspect of the infection.

Instruct the client to follow the medication regimen exactly as prescribed and always to have a supply of the medication on hand.

Advise the client that the medication regimen is continued over 6 to 12 months depending on the situation.

Advise the client of the side/adverse effects of the medication and ways of minimizing them to ensure compliance.

Reassure the client that after 2 to 3 weeks of medication therapy, it is unlikely that the client will infect anyone.

Inform the client to resume activities gradually.

Instruct the client about the need for adequate nutrition and a well-balanced diet to promote healing and to prevent recurrence of the infection.

Instruct the client to increase intake of foods rich in iron, protein, and vitamin C.

Inform the client and family that respiratory isolation is not necessary because family members already have been exposed.

Instruct the client to cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and to put used tissues into plastic bags.

Instruct the client and family about thorough hand washing.

Inform the client that a sputum culture is needed every 2 to 4 weeks once medication therapy is initiated.

Inform the client that when the results of three sputum cultures are negative, the client is no longer considered infectious and usually can return to former employment.

Advise the client to avoid excessive exposure to silicone or dust because these substances can cause further lung damage.

Instruct the client regarding the importance of compliance with treatment, follow-up care, and sputum cultures, as prescribed.

#### M. Medications (see [Chapter 59](#))

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* A tension pneumothorax can occur when there is a build-up of intrathoracic pressure in the pleural space and air cannot escape. One cause is the covering of an open chest wound. Manifestations include cyanosis, air hunger, agitation, tracheal deviation away from the affected side, subcutaneous emphysema, neck vein distention, and hyperresonance to percussion. The nurse should immediately release the chest wound dressing and contact the health care provider. This is a medical emergency requiring possible needle decompression followed by chest tube insertion with a chest drainage system.

#### *Reference*

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 683-684.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

655. The emergency department nurse is assessing a client who has sustained a blunt injury to the chest wall. Which finding would indicate the presence of a pneumothorax in this client?

1. A low respiratory rate
2. Diminished breath sounds
3. The presence of a barrel chest
4. A sucking sound at the site of injury

656. The nurse is caring for a client hospitalized with acute exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Which finding would the nurse expect to note on assessment of this client? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Hypocapnia
2. A hyperinflated chest noted on the chest x-ray
3. Decreased oxygen saturation with mild exercise
4. A widened diaphragm noted on the chest x-ray
5. Pulmonary function tests that demonstrate increased vital capacity

657. The nurse instructs a client to use the pursed-lip method of breathing and the client asks the nurse about the purpose of this type of breathing. The nurse responds, knowing that the **primary** purpose of pursed-lip breathing is to promote which outcome?

1. Promote oxygen intake

2. Strengthen the diaphragm
3. Strengthen the intercostal muscles
4. Promote carbon dioxide elimination

658. The nurse is preparing a list of home care instructions for a client who has been hospitalized and treated for tuberculosis. Which instructions should the nurse include on the list? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Activities should be resumed gradually.
2. Avoid contact with other individuals, except family members, for at least 6 months.
3. A sputum culture is needed every 2 to 4 weeks once medication therapy is initiated.
4. Respiratory isolation is not necessary because family members already have been exposed.
5. Cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and put used tissues in plastic bags.
6. When one sputum culture is negative, the client is no longer considered infectious and usually can return to former employment.

659. The nurse is caring for a client after a bronchoscopy and biopsy. Which finding, if noted in the client, should be reported **immediately** to the health care provider?

1. Dry cough

2. Hematuria
3. Bronchospasm
4. Blood-streaked sputum

660. The nurse is preparing to suction a client via a tracheostomy tube. The nurse should plan to limit the suctioning time to a maximum of which time period?

1. 1 minute
2. 5 seconds
3. 10 seconds
4. 30 seconds

661. The nurse is suctioning a client via an endotracheal tube. During the suctioning procedure, the nurse notes on the monitor that the heart rate is decreasing. Which nursing intervention is **most appropriate**?

1. Continue to suction.
2. Notify the health care provider immediately.
3. Stop the procedure and reoxygenate the client.
4. Ensure that the suction is limited to 15 seconds.

662. The nurse is assessing the respiratory status of a client who has suffered a fractured rib. The nurse should expect to note which finding?

1. Slow deep respirations
2. Rapid deep respirations
3. Paradoxical respirations

4. Pain, especially with inspiration

663. A client with a chest injury has suffered flail chest. The nurse assesses the client for which **most** distinctive sign of flail chest?

1. Cyanosis

2. Hypotension

3. Paradoxical chest movement

4. Dyspnea, especially on exhalation

664. A client has been admitted with chest trauma after a motor vehicle crash and has undergone subsequent intubation. The nurse checks the client when the high-pressure alarm on the ventilator sounds, and notes that the client has absence of breath sounds in the right upper lobe of the lung. The nurse **immediately** assesses for other signs of which condition?

1. Right pneumothorax

2. Pulmonary embolism

3. Displaced endotracheal tube

4. Acute respiratory distress syndrome

665. The nurse is assessing a client with multiple trauma who is at risk for developing acute respiratory distress syndrome. The nurse should assess for which **earliest** sign of acute respiratory distress syndrome?

1. Bilateral wheezing

2. Inspiratory crackles

3. Intercostal retractions
4. Increased respiratory rate

**666.** The nurse is discussing the techniques of chest physiotherapy and postural drainage (respiratory treatments) to a client having expectoration problems because of chronic thick, tenacious mucus production in the lower airway. The nurse explains that after the client is positioned for postural drainage the nurse will perform which action to help loosen secretions?

1. Palpation and clubbing
2. Percussion and vibration
3. Hyperoxygenation and suctioning
4. Administer a bronchodilator and monitor peak flow

**667.** The nurse has conducted discharge teaching with a client diagnosed with tuberculosis, who has been receiving medication for 1 1/2 weeks. The nurse determines that the client has understood the information if the client makes which statement?

1. "I need to continue drug therapy for 2 months."
2. "I can't shop at the mall for the next 6 months."
3. "I can return to work if a sputum culture comes back negative."
4. "I should not be contagious after 2 to 3 weeks of medication therapy."

**668.** The nurse is preparing to give a bed bath to an immobilized client with tuberculosis. The nurse should wear which item when performing this care?

1. Surgical mask and gloves
2. Particulate respirator, gown, and gloves
3. Particulate respirator and protective eyewear
4. Surgical mask, gown, and protective eyewear

**669.** A client has experienced pulmonary embolism. The nurse should assess for which symptom, which is **most** commonly reported?

1. Hot, flushed feeling
2. Sudden chills and fever
3. Chest pain that occurs suddenly
4. Dyspnea when deep breaths are taken

**670.** A client who is human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)–positive has had a tuberculin skin test (TST). The nurse notes a 7-mm area of induration at the site of the skin test and interprets the result as which finding?

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Inconclusive
4. Need for repeat testing

**671.** A client with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) has histoplasmosis. The nurse should assess the client for which expected finding?

1. Dyspnea
2. Headache

3. Weight gain
4. Hypothermia

**672.** The nurse is giving discharge instructions to a client with pulmonary sarcoidosis.

The nurse concludes that the client understands the information if the client indicates to report which **early** sign of exacerbation?

1. Fever
2. Fatigue
3. Weight loss
4. Shortness of breath

**673.** The nurse is taking the history of a client with occupational lung disease

(silicosis). The nurse should assess whether the client wears which item during periods of exposure to silica particles?

1. Mask
2. Gown
3. Gloves
4. Eye protection

**674.** An oxygen delivery system is prescribed for a client with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to deliver a precise oxygen concentration. Which oxygen delivery system would the nurse anticipate to be prescribed?

1. Face tent
2. Venturi mask

3. Aerosol mask
4. Tracheostomy collar

675. The nurse is instructing a hospitalized client with a diagnosis of emphysema about measures that will enhance the effectiveness of breathing during dyspneic periods. Which position should the nurse instruct the client to assume?

1. Sitting up in bed
2. Side-lying in bed
3. Sitting in a recliner chair
4. Sitting on the side of the bed and leaning on an overbed table

676. The community health nurse is conducting an educational session with community members regarding the symptoms associated with tuberculosis. Which is one of the **first** manifestations associated with tuberculosis?

1. Dyspnea
2. Chest pain
3. A bloody, productive cough
4. A cough with the expectoration of mucoid sputum

677. The nurse performs an admission assessment on a client with a diagnosis of tuberculosis. The nurse should check the results of which diagnostic test that will confirm this diagnosis?

1. Chest x-ray
2. Bronchoscopy

3. Sputum culture
4. Tuberculin skin test

**678.** The low-pressure alarm sounds on a ventilator. The nurse assesses the client and then attempts to determine the cause of the alarm. If unsuccessful in determining the cause of the alarm, the nurse should take what **initial** action?

1. Administer oxygen
2. Check the client's vital signs
3. Ventilate the client manually
4. Start cardiopulmonary resuscitation

## ANSWERS

**655. 2**

**Rationale:** This client has sustained a blunt or closed-chest injury. Basic symptoms of a closed pneumothorax are shortness of breath and chest pain. A larger pneumothorax may cause tachypnea, cyanosis, diminished breath sounds, and subcutaneous emphysema. Hyperresonance also may occur on the affected side. A sucking sound at the site of injury would be noted with an open chest injury.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a blunt chest injury. Noting the word *blunt* will assist in eliminating option 4, a sucking chest wound injury. Knowing that in a respiratory injury increased respirations will occur will assist you in eliminating option 1. Option 3 can be eliminated because a barrel chest is a characteristic finding in a client with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

**Review:** The signs of **pneumothorax**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 683.

❖ 656. 2, 3

**Rationale:** Clinical manifestations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) include hypoxemia, hypercapnia, dyspnea on exertion and at rest, oxygen desaturation with exercise, and the use of accessory muscles of respiration. Chest x-rays reveal a hyperinflated chest and a flattened diaphragm if the disease is advanced.

Pulmonary function tests will demonstrate decreased vital capacity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestations of COPD. Option 1 is incorrect because in the client with COPD, hypercapnia would be noted. Option 2 is correct because on chest x-ray, the chest appears hyperinflated. Next, note that option 3 is correct because oxygen desaturation rather than saturation would occur. Option 4 is incorrect because on chest x-ray, the diaphragm appears flattened, not widened. Option 5 is incorrect because pulmonary function tests demonstrate decreased vital capacity.

**Review:** The manifestations associated with **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 627-628; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 616-617.

**657. 4**

**Rationale:** Pursed-lip breathing facilitates maximal expiration for clients with obstructive lung disease. This type of breathing allows better expiration by increasing airway pressure that keeps air passages open during exhalation.

Options 1, 2, and 3 are not the purposes of this type of breathing.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, *primary*, and the **subject**, pursed-lip breathing, and visualize the use of this procedure to assist you in answering correctly. Knowledge regarding the respiratory conditions in which this type of breathing is helpful also will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** The purpose of **pursed-lip breathing**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 607, 623; Potter et al (2013), p. 854.

❖ **658. 1, 3, 4, 5**

**Rationale:** The nurse should provide the client and family with information about tuberculosis and allay concerns about the contagious aspect of the infection. Instruct the client to follow the medication regimen exactly as prescribed and always to have a supply of the medication on hand. Advise the client of the side effects of the medication and ways of minimizing them to ensure compliance. Reassure the client that after 2 to 3 weeks of medication therapy, it is unlikely that the client will infect anyone. Inform the client that activities should be resumed

gradually and about the need for adequate nutrition and a well-balanced diet that is rich in iron, protein, and vitamin C to promote healing and prevent recurrence of infection. Inform the client and family that respiratory isolation is not necessary because family members already have been exposed. Instruct the client about thorough hand washing and to cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and to put used tissues into plastic bags. Inform the client that a sputum culture is needed every 2 to 4 weeks once medication therapy is initiated. When the results of three sputum cultures are negative, the client is no longer considered infectious and can usually return to former employment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, home care instructions for tuberculosis. Knowledge regarding the pathophysiology, transmission, and treatment of tuberculosis is needed to answer this question. Read each option carefully to answer correctly.

**Review:** Home care instructions for the client with **tuberculosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 657-658; Lewis et al (2011), p. 557.

**659. 3**

**Rationale:** If a biopsy was performed during a bronchoscopy, blood-streaked sputum is expected for several hours. Frank blood indicates hemorrhage. A dry cough may be expected. The client should be assessed for signs/symptoms of complications, which would include cyanosis, dyspnea, stridor, bronchospasm, hemoptysis, hypotension, tachycardia, and dysrhythmias. Hematuria is unrelated to this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediately*. Eliminate option 2 first because it is unrelated to the procedure. Next, eliminate option 1 because a dry cough may be expected. Noting that a biopsy has been performed will assist in eliminating option 4, because blood-streaked sputum would be expected. Note that the correct option relates to the airway.

**Review:** Postprocedure care following **bronchoscopy** with biopsy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 514.

### 660. 3

**Rationale:** Hypoxemia can be caused by prolonged suctioning, which stimulates the pacemaker cells in the heart. A vasovagal response may occur, causing bradycardia. The nurse must preoxygenate the client before suctioning and limit the suctioning pass to 10 seconds.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for suctioning. Recall that during suctioning, the client's airway is blocked; therefore you should be able to eliminate options 1 and 4 easily. From the remaining options, eliminate option 2 because of the short time frame. Five seconds does not seem reasonable to achieve removal of secretions.

**Review:** The procedure for **suctioning**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 574.

### 661. 3

**Rationale:** During suctioning, the nurse should monitor the client closely for side effects, including hypoxemia, cardiac irregularities such as a decrease in heart rate resulting from vagal stimulation, mucosal trauma, hypotension, and paroxysmal coughing. If adverse effects develop, especially cardiac irregularities, the procedure is stopped and the client is reoxygenated.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the **subject**, a decreased heart rate, and recall that suctioning can cause cardiac irregularities. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Complication and interventions associated with **suctioning** procedures

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 574; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1701.

### 662. 4

**Rationale:** Rib fractures are a common injury, especially in the older client, and result from a blunt injury or a fall.

Typical signs and symptoms include pain and tenderness localized at the fracture site that is exacerbated by inspiration and palpation, shallow respirations, splinting or guarding the chest protectively to minimize chest movement, and possible bruising at the fracture site. Paradoxical respirations are seen with flail chest.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, findings associated with a rib fracture. Focusing on the anatomical location of the injury will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The assessment findings in **rib fracture**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Pain

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 682.

### 663. 3

**Rationale:** Flail chest results from multiple rib fractures. This results in a “floating” section of ribs. Because this section is unattached to the rest of the bony rib cage, this segment results in paradoxical chest movement. This means that the force of inspiration pulls the fractured segment inward, while the rest of the chest expands. Similarly, during exhalation, the segment balloons outward while the rest of the chest moves inward. This is a characteristic sign of flail chest.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Cyanosis and hypotension occur with many different disorders, so eliminate options 1 and 2 first. From the remaining options, choose paradoxical chest movement over dyspnea on exhalation by remembering that a flail chest has broken rib segments that move independently of the rest of the rib cage.

**Review:** Assessment findings in **flail chest**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 683.

**664. 1**

**Rationale:** Pneumothorax is characterized by restlessness, tachycardia, dyspnea, pain with respiration, asymmetrical chest expansion, and diminished or absent breath sounds on the affected side. Pneumothorax can cause increased airway pressure because of resistance to lung inflation. Acute respiratory distress syndrome and pulmonary embolism are not characterized by absent breath sounds. An endotracheal tube that is inserted too far can cause absent breath sounds, but the lack of breath sounds most likely would be on the left side because of the degree of curvature of the right and left mainstem bronchi.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediately*. Focus on the symptoms presented in the question and note the relationship between *right* upper lobe and *right* pneumothorax in the correct option.

**Review:** Manifestations associated with **pneumothorax**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 680, 683-684.

**665. 4**

**Rationale:** The earliest detectable sign of acute respiratory distress syndrome is an increased respiratory rate, which can begin from 1 to 96 hours after the initial insult to the body. This is followed by increasing dyspnea, air hunger, retraction of accessory muscles, and cyanosis. Breath sounds may be clear or consist of fine inspiratory crackles or diffuse coarse crackles.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *earliest*. Eliminate option 3 first because intercostal retraction is a later sign of respiratory distress. Of the remaining options, recall that adventitious breath sounds (options 1 and 2) would occur later than an increased respiratory rate.

**Review:** The early signs of **acute respiratory distress syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 672.

**666. 2**

**Rationale:** Chest physiotherapy of percussion and vibration helps loosen secretions in the smaller lower airways. Postural drainage positions the client so that gravity can help mucus moving from smaller airways to larger ones to support expectoration of the mucus. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not actions that will loosen secretions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, loosening the secretions. Visualize the effects of each action in the options on loosening secretions. This will direct you to option 2. The actions in options 1, 3, and 4 will not loosen secretions.

**Review:** The techniques of **chest physiotherapy** and **postural drainage**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 842-844.

**667. 4**

**Rationale:** The client is continued on medication therapy for 6 to 12 months, depending on the situation. The client generally is considered noncontagious after 2 to 3 weeks of medication therapy. The client is instructed to wear a mask if there will be exposure to crowds until the medication is effective in preventing transmission. The client is allowed to return to work when the results of three sputum cultures are negative.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client understanding of medication therapy. Knowing that the medication therapy lasts for at least 6 months helps you eliminate option 1 first. Knowing that three sputum cultures must be negative helps you to eliminate option 3 next. From the remaining options, recalling that the client is not contagious after 2 to 3 weeks of therapy will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Tuberculosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 657-658.

**668. 2**

**Rationale:** The nurse who is in contact with a client with tuberculosis should wear an individually fitted particulate respirator. The nurse also would wear gloves as per standard precautions. The nurse wears a gown when the possibility exists that the clothing could become contaminated, such as when giving a bed bath.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, precautions when caring for the client with tuberculosis. Think about the nurse's task, a bed bath. Knowing that the nurse should wear a particulate respirator eliminates options 1 and 4. Knowledge of basic standard precautions directs you to the correct option.

**Review:** Precautions related to the care of a client with **tuberculosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 657; Potter et al (2013), p. 414.

**669. 3**

**Rationale:** The most common initial symptom in pulmonary embolism is chest pain that is sudden in onset. The next

most commonly reported symptom is dyspnea, which is accompanied by an increased respiratory rate. Other typical symptoms of pulmonary embolism include apprehension and restlessness, tachycardia, cough, and cyanosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Because pulmonary embolism does not result from an infectious process or an allergic reaction, eliminate options 1 and 2 first. To select between the correct option and option 4, look at them closely. Option 4 states dyspnea when deep breaths are taken. Although dyspnea commonly occurs with pulmonary embolism, dyspnea is not associated only with deep breathing. Therefore eliminate option 4.

**Review:** Signs of **pulmonary embolism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 664; Lewis et al (2011), p. 578.

**670. 1**

**Rationale:** The client with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection is considered to have positive results on tuberculin skin testing with an area of induration larger than 5 mm. The client without HIV is positive with an induration larger than 10 mm. The client with HIV is immunosuppressed, making a smaller area of induration positive for this type of client. It is possible for the client infected with HIV to have false-negative readings because of the immunosuppression factor. Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, recalling that the client with HIV is immunosuppressed will assist in determining the interpretation of the area of induration.

**Review:** Tuberculosis skin testing

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 655.

**671. 1**

**Rationale:** Histoplasmosis is an opportunistic fungal infection that can occur in the client with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). The infection begins as a respiratory infection and can progress to disseminated infection. Typical signs and symptoms include fever, dyspnea, cough, and weight loss. Enlargement of the client's lymph nodes, liver, and spleen may occur as well.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestations of histoplasmosis. Recalling that histoplasmosis is an infectious process will help you eliminate option 4. Because the client has AIDS and another infection, weight gain is an unlikely symptom and can be eliminated next. Knowing that histoplasmosis begins as a respiratory infection helps you choose dyspnea over headache as the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of **histoplasmosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 550.

**672. 4**

**Rationale:** Dry cough and dyspnea are typical early manifestations of pulmonary sarcoidosis. Later manifestations include night sweats, fever, weight loss, and skin nodules.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. Because sarcoidosis is a pulmonary problem, eliminate options 1 and 3 first. Select the correct option over option 2 because the shortness of breath (and impaired ventilation) appears first and would cause the fatigue as a secondary symptom.

**Review:** The early signs of exacerbation of **sarcoidosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 627-628.

**673. 1**

**Rationale:** Silicosis results from chronic, excessive inhalation of particles of free crystalline silica dust. The client should wear a mask to limit inhalation of this substance, which can cause restrictive lung disease after years of exposure. Options 2, 3, and 4 are not necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, prevention of silicosis. Recalling that exposure to silica dust causes the illness and that the dust is inhaled into the respiratory tract will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Protective measures associated with **silicosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 628-629; Lewis et al (2011), p. 560.

## 674. 2

**Rationale:** The Venturi mask delivers the most accurate oxygen concentration. It is the best oxygen delivery system for the client with chronic airflow limitation because it delivers a precise oxygen concentration. The face tent, aerosol mask, and tracheostomy collar are also high-flow oxygen delivery systems but most often are used to administer high humidity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, delivery of a precise oxygen concentration. Eliminate options 1, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** in that they are used to provide high humidity.

**Review:** Various types of **oxygen delivery systems**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 567-568.

**675. 4**

**Rationale:** Positions that will assist the client with emphysema with breathing include sitting up and leaning on an overbed table, sitting up and resting the elbows on the knees, and standing and leaning against the wall.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike**. Next, eliminate option 2 because this position will not enhance breathing.

**Review:** Positions that decrease the work of breathing with **emphysema**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 614.

**676. 4**

**Rationale:** One of the first pulmonary manifestations of tuberculosis is a slight cough with the expectoration of mucoid sputum. Options 1, 2, and 3 are late manifestations and signify cavitation and extensive lung involvement.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first* in the question. Next, focusing on the diagnosis should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Manifestations associated with **tuberculosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 654-655.

**677. 3**

**Rationale:** Tuberculosis is definitively diagnosed through culture and isolation of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. A presumptive diagnosis is made based on a tuberculin skin test, a sputum smear that is positive for acid-fast bacteria, a chest x-ray, and histological evidence of granulomatous disease on biopsy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, confirming the diagnosis of tuberculosis. Confirmation is made by identifying *M. tuberculosis*.

**Review:** Diagnostic procedures related to **tuberculosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Evidence; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 655.

**678. 3**

**Rationale:** If at any time an alarm is sounding and the nurse cannot quickly ascertain the problem, the client is disconnected from the ventilator and manual resuscitation is used to support respirations until the problem can be corrected. No reason is given to begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Checking vital signs is not the initial action. Although oxygen is helpful, it will not provide ventilation to the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, *initial*, and note that the **subject** relates to adequate ventilation of the client. Also note that the nurse is unsuccessful in determining the cause of the alarm. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Management of **ventilators** and alarms

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**References:** Baird, Bethel (2011), p. 114; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 679.



## CHAPTER 59

# Respiratory Medications

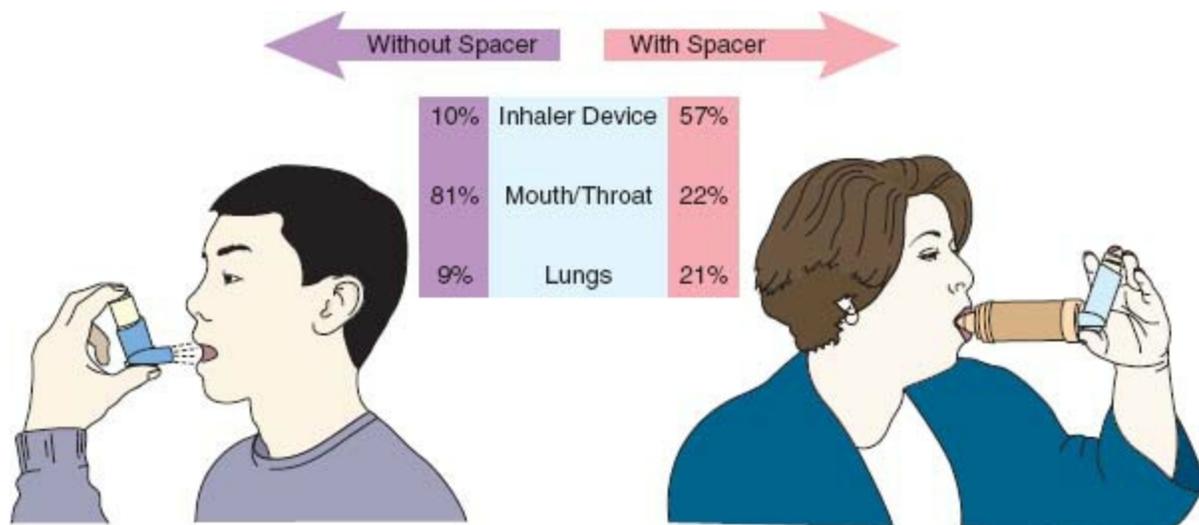
### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A client who has been taking isoniazid for the past 4 months to treat tuberculosis reports to the nurse that he has been experiencing a lack of appetite and nausea and that his urine is dark in color. What should the nurse do?

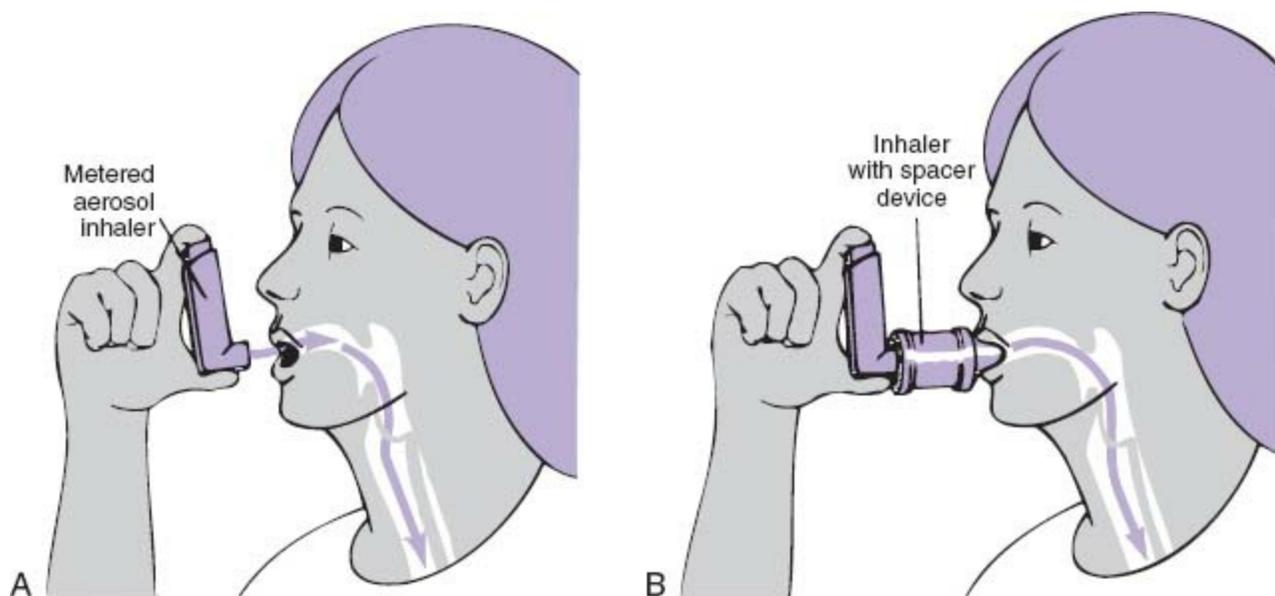
*Answer located on p. 767.*

### **I. Medication Inhalation Devices**

- A. Metered-dose inhaler (MDI): Uses a chemical propellant to push the medication out of the inhaler (Fig. 59-1 and Fig. 59-2)



**FIGURE 59-1** Distribution of medication with and without a spacer. (From Kee J, Marshall S: *Clinical calculations: With applications to general and specialty areas*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.)



**FIGURE 59-2** Inhaled drugs commonly used in asthma treatment include  $\beta$ -adrenergic bronchodilators, cromolyn sodium, and aerosol glucocorticoids. **A**, The metered-dose inhaler may be held about two fingerwidths (1 1/2 inches) in front of the mouth. **B**, Alternatively, an inhaler with a spacer device can be used. Clients should breathe deeply once before activating the inhaler and then continue breathing in for about 5 seconds. Clients then should hold their breath for 10 to 15 seconds before

breathing out slowly. If a second dose is needed, clients should wait 1 to 2 minutes before taking another dose. (From Clark J, Queener S, Karb V: *Pharmacologic basis of nursing practice*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2000, Mosby.)

- B.** Dry powder inhaler (DPI): Delivers medication without using chemical propellants, but it requires strong and fast inhalation.
- C.** Nebulizer: Delivers fine liquid mists of medication through a tube or a mask that fits over the nose and mouth, using air or oxygen under pressure.
- D.** If two different inhaled medications are prescribed and one of the medications contains a glucocorticoid (corticosteroid), administer the bronchodilator first and the corticosteroid second. ▲

⚠ If two different inhaled medications are prescribed, instruct the client to wait 5 minutes following administration of the first before inhaling the second. If a second dose of the same medication is needed, instruct the client to wait 1 to 2 minutes before taking the second dose.

## II. Bronchodilators (Box 59-1)

### BOX 59-1 Medications to Treat Restrictive Airway Disorders

#### Bronchodilators

#### *β<sub>2</sub>-Adrenergic Agonists*

#### *Inhaled*

- Albuterol (Proventil HFA, AccuNeb, ProAir HFA, Ventolin HFA)
- Arformoterol (Brovana)

- Formoterol (Foradil Aerolizer, Perforomist)
- Levalbuterol (Xopenex, Xopenex HFA)
- Pirbuterol (Maxair Autohaler)
- Salmeterol (Serevent Diskus)

### ***Oral***

- Albuterol (VoSpire, Proventil)
- Terbutaline

### ***Methylxanthines***

- Theophylline, oral (Theo-24, Theo-Dur, Uniphyl, Elixophyllin)

### ***Anticholinergics***

- Ipratropium, inhaled (Atrovent HFA; Combivent)
- Tiotropium, inhaled (Spiriva)

### **Glucocorticoids (Corticosteroids)**

#### ***Inhaled***

- Beclomethasone dipropionate (Qvar, Beclovent)
- Budesonide (Pulmicort Turbuhaler, Pulmicort Respules, Pulmicort Flexhaler)
- Ciclesonide (Alvesco)
- Flunisolide (AeroBid)
- Fluticasone propionate (Flovent HFA, Flovent Diskus)
- Mometasone furoate (Asmanex Twisthaler)
- Triamcinolone acetonide (Azmacort)

#### ***Oral***

- Prednisone
- Prednisolone

### **Leukotriene Modifiers**

- Montelukast, oral (Singulair)
- Zafirlukast, oral (Accolate)
- Zileuton, oral (Zyflo, Zyflo CR)

### **Inhaled Nonsteroidal Antiallergy Agent**

- Cromolyn sodium, inhaled

### **Monoclonal Antibody**

- Omalizumab (Xolair)

Modified from Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.

#### **A. Description**

1. Sympathomimetic bronchodilators relax the smooth muscle of the bronchi and dilate the airways of the respiratory tree, making air exchange and respiration easier for the client.
2. Methylxanthine bronchodilators stimulate the central nervous system and respiration, dilate coronary and pulmonary vessels, cause diuresis, and relax smooth muscle.
3. Used to treat allergic rhinitis and sinusitis, acute bronchospasm, acute and chronic

**asthma**, bronchitis, **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**, **emphysema**, and other restrictive airway diseases.

4. Contraindicated in individuals with hypersensitivity, peptic ulcer disease, severe cardiac disease and cardiac dysrhythmias, hyperthyroidism, or uncontrolled seizure disorders. ▲
5. Used with caution in clients with hypertension, diabetes mellitus, or narrow-angle glaucoma. ▲
6. Theophylline increases the risk of digoxin toxicity and decreases the effects of lithium and phenytoin (Dilantin).
7. If theophylline and a  $\beta_2$ -adrenergic agonist are administered together, cardiac dysrhythmias may result.
8.  $\beta$ -Blockers, cimetidine (Tagamet), and erythromycin (Ery-Tab) increase the effects of theophylline.
9. Barbiturates and carbamazepine (Tegretol) decrease the effects of theophylline.

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Palpitations and tachycardia ▲
2. Dysrhythmias ▲
3. Restlessness, nervousness, tremors
4. Anorexia, nausea, and vomiting
5. Headaches and dizziness
6. Hyperglycemia
7. Mouth dryness and throat irritation with inhalers

## 8. Tolerance and paradoxical bronchoconstriction with inhalers

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Assess vital signs and lung sounds.
2. Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias.
3. Assess for cough, wheezing, decreased breath sounds, and sputum production.
4. Monitor for restlessness and confusion.
5. Provide adequate hydration.
6. Administer the medication at regular intervals around the clock to maintain a sustained therapeutic level.
7. Administer oral medications with or after meals to decrease gastrointestinal irritation.
8. Monitor for a therapeutic serum theophylline level of 10 to 20 mcg/mL.
9. Intravenously administered theophylline preparations should be administered slowly and always via an infusion pump.
10. Client education ▲
  - a. Not to crush enteric-coated or sustained-release tablets or capsules
  - b. To avoid caffeine-containing products such as coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate, and over-the-counter medications
  - c. About the side/adverse effects of bronchodilators
  - d. How to monitor the pulse and to report any abnormalities to the HCP
  - e. How to use an inhaler, spacer, or nebulizer (see [Figs. 59-1](#) and [59-2](#)) and how to monitor the amount of medication remaining in an inhaler canister

- f. The importance of smoking cessation and information regarding support resources
- g. To monitor blood glucose levels if diabetes mellitus is a coexisting condition
- h. To wear a Medic-Alert bracelet, particularly if the client has asthma

**⚠** Theophylline toxicity is likely to occur when the serum level is higher than 20 mcg/mL. Early signs of toxicity include restlessness, nervousness, tremors, palpitations, and tachycardia.

### III. Anticholinergics (see Box 59-1)

- A. Inhaled medications that improve lung function by blocking muscarinic receptors in the bronchi, which results in bronchodilation
- B. Effective for treating chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, allergy-induced asthma, and exercise-induced bronchospasm
- C. Side effects include dry mouth and irritation of the pharynx; sucking on sugarless candy will help to relieve symptoms.
- D. Systemic anticholinergic effects rarely occur but can include increased intraocular pressure, blurred vision, tachycardia, cardiovascular events, urinary retention, and constipation.

**⚠** The client with a peanut allergy should not take ipratropium (Atrovent HFA and Combivent) because both products contain soya lecithin, which is in the same plant family as peanuts.

### IV. Glucocorticoids (Corticosteroids) (see Box 59-1)

- A. Glucocorticoids act as antiinflammatory agents and reduce edema of the airways;

they are used to treat asthma and other inflammatory respiratory conditions.

**B.** See [Chapter 55](#) for information on glucocorticoids.

## **V. Leukotriene Modifiers (see [Box 59-1](#))**

### **A. Description**

1. Used in the prophylaxis and treatment of chronic bronchial asthma (not used for acute asthma episodes)
2. Inhibit bronchoconstriction caused by specific antigens and reduce airway edema and smooth muscle constriction
3. Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity and in breast-feeding mothers
4. Should be used with caution in clients with impaired hepatic function
5. Coadministration of inhaled glucocorticoids increases the risk of upper respiratory infection.

### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Headache
2. Nausea and vomiting
3. Dyspepsia
4. Diarrhea
5. Generalized pain, myalgia
6. Fever
7. Dizziness

### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess lung sounds for rhonchi and wheezing.
3. Assess liver function laboratory values.
4. Monitor for cyanosis.

**D. Client education**

1. To take medication 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals
2. To increase fluid intake
3. Not to discontinue the medication and to take as prescribed, even during symptom-free periods

**VI. Inhaled Nonsteroidal Antiallergy Agent (see Box 59-1)**

**A. Description**

1. Antiasthmatic, antiallergic, and mast cell stabilizers inhibit mast cell release after exposure to antigens.
2. Used to treat allergic rhinitis, bronchial asthma, and exercise-induced bronchospasm.
3. It is contraindicated in clients with known hypersensitivity.
4. Orally administered cromolyn sodium is used with caution in clients with impaired hepatic or renal function.

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Cough, sneezing, nasal sting, or bronchospasm following inhalation ▲
2. Unpleasant taste in the mouth

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor respirations and assess lung sounds for rhonchi or wheezing.

## D. Client education

1. To administer oral capsules at least 30 minutes before meals.
2. Not to discontinue the medication abruptly because a rebound asthmatic attack can occur.

 Instruct the client taking inhaled medications to drink a few sips of water before and after inhalation to prevent a cough and an unpleasant taste in the mouth.

## VII. Monoclonal Antibody

### A. Description

1. Omalizumab (Xolair) is a recombinant DNA-derived humanized immunoglobulin G (IgG) murine monoclonal antibody that selectively binds to IgE to limit the release of mediators in the allergic response.
2. Used to treat allergy-related asthma; administered subcutaneously every 2 to 4 weeks
3. Dose is titrated on the basis of the serum IgE level and body weight.
4. Contraindicated in those with hypersensitivity to the medication

### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Injection site reactions
2. Viral infections

3. Upper respiratory infections

4. Sinusitis

5. Headache

6. Pharyngitis

7. Anaphylaxis

8. Malignancies

**C. Interventions**

1. Assess respiratory rate, rhythm, and depth and auscultate lung sounds.

2. Assess for allergies and/or allergic reaction symptoms such as rash or urticaria.

3. Have medications for the treatment of severe hypersensitivity reactions available during initial administration in case anaphylaxis occurs.

**D. Client education** ▲

1. That respiratory improvement will not be immediate

2. Not to stop taking or decrease the currently prescribed asthma medications unless instructed

3. To avoid receiving live virus vaccines for the duration of treatment

**VIII. Antihistamines (Box 59-2)**

**BOX 59-2** Antihistamines

■ Cetirizine (Zyrtec)

■ Chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton, Chlorphen, Aller-Chlor, others)

- Cyproheptadine
- Desloratadine (Clarinex)
- Dimenhydrinate (Dramamine)
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
- Fexofenadine (Allegra)
- Levocetirizine (Xyzal)
- Loratadine (Claritin, Alavert, others)
- Olopatadine (Patanase, Patanol)

## A. Description

1. Called *histamine antagonists* or *H<sub>1</sub> blockers*; these medications compete with histamine for receptor sites, thus preventing a histamine response.
2. When the H<sub>1</sub> receptor is stimulated, the extravascular smooth muscles, including those lining the nasal cavity, are constricted.
3. Decrease nasopharyngeal, gastrointestinal, and bronchial secretions by blocking the H<sub>1</sub> receptor
4. Used for the common cold, rhinitis, nausea and vomiting, motion sickness, urticaria, and as a sleep aid
5. Can cause central nervous system (CNS) depression if taken with alcohol, opioids, hypnotics, or barbiturates ▲
6. Should be used with caution in clients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease because of their drying effect ▲

7. Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) has an anticholinergic effect and should be avoided in clients with narrow-angle glaucoma. ▲

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Drowsiness and fatigue ▲
2. Dizziness
3. Urinary retention
4. Blurred vision
5. Wheezing
6. Constipation
7. Dry mouth
8. Gastrointestinal irritation
9. Hypotension
10. Hearing disturbances
11. Photosensitivity
12. Nervousness and irritability
13. Confusion
14. Nightmares

**C. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor for signs of urinary dysfunction.
3. Administer with food or milk.
4. Avoid subcutaneous injection, and administer by intramuscular injection in a large

muscle if the intramuscular route is prescribed.

#### D. Client education ▲

1. To avoid hazardous activities, alcohol, and other CNS depressants
2. If the medication is being taken for motion sickness, take it 30 minutes before the event and then before meals and at bedtime during the event as prescribed.
3. To suck on hard candy or ice chips for dry mouth

### IX. Nasal Decongestants (Box 59-3)

#### BOX 59-3 Nasal Decongestants

##### Nonglucocorticoids

- Naphazoline (Privine)
- Oxymetazoline (Afrin 12-Hour, others)
- Phenylephrine hydrochloride (Neo-Synephrine, others)
- Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride (Sudafed)
- Tetrahydrozoline (Tyzine)
- Xylometazoline (Natu-Vent, Otrivin)

##### Glucocorticoids

- Beclomethasone (Beconase AQ, QNASL)
- Budesonide (Rhinocort Aqua)
- Ciclesonide (Omnaris)
- Flunisolide (Nasarel, Nasalide)

- Fluticasone propionate (Flonase)
- Fluticasone furoate (Veramyst)
- Mometasone (Nasonex)
- Triamcinolone (Nasacort AQ)

## A. Description

1. Include adrenergic, anticholinergic, and corticosteroid medications
2. Shrink nasal mucosal membranes and reduce fluid secretion
3. Used for allergic rhinitis, hay fever, and acute coryza (profuse nasal discharge)
4. Contraindicated or used with extreme caution in clients with hypertension, cardiac disease, hyperthyroidism, or diabetes mellitus ▲

## B. Side/adverse effects

1. Nervousness
2. Restlessness, insomnia
3. Hypertension
4. Hyperglycemia

⚠️ Nasal decongestants can cause tolerance and rebound nasal congestion (vasodilation) caused by irritation of the nasal mucosa. Therefore, the client needs to be informed that these medications should not be used for longer than 48 hours.

## C. Interventions

1. Assess the client for existing medical disorders.

2. Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias. ▲

3. Monitor blood glucose levels.

**D. Client education** ▲

1. To avoid consuming caffeine in large amounts because it can increase restlessness and palpitations

2. About the importance of limiting the use of nasal sprays and drops to prevent rebound nasal congestion

**X. Expectorants and Mucolytic Agents (Box 59-4)**

**BOX 59-4** Expectorants and Mucolytic Agents

**Expectorant**

- Guaifenesin (Humibid, Mucinex, Robitussin)

**Mucolytic**

- Acetylcysteine

**A. Description**

1. Expectorants loosen bronchial secretions so that they can be eliminated with coughing; they are used for a dry unproductive cough and to stimulate bronchial secretions.

2. Mucolytic agents thin mucous secretions to help make the cough more productive.

3. Mucolytic agents with dextromethorphan should not be used by clients with

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease because they suppress the cough.

4. Acetylcysteine can increase airway resistance and should not be used in clients with asthma.

## B. Side/adverse effects

1. Gastrointestinal irritation
2. Rash
3. Oropharyngeal irritation

## C. Interventions

1. Acetylcysteine, administered by nebulization, should not be mixed with another medication.
2. If acetylcysteine is administered with a bronchodilator, the bronchodilator should be administered 5 minutes before the acetylcysteine.
3. Monitor for side effects of acetylcysteine such as nausea and vomiting, stomatitis, and runny nose.

## D. Client education ▲

1. To take the medication with a full glass of water to loosen mucus
2. To maintain adequate fluid intake
3. To periodically take some deep breaths and cough

## XI. Antitussives (Box 59-5)

### BOX 59-5 Antitussives

#### Opioids

- Codeine phosphate, codeine sulfate
- Hydrocodone

### Nonopioids

- Benzonatate (Tessalon)
- Dextromethorphan (Mucinex DM, Robitussin DM, others)
- Diphenhydramine hydrochloride (Benadryl)

**A. Description:** Act on the cough control center in the medulla to suppress the cough reflex; used for a cough that is nonproductive and irritating

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Dizziness, drowsiness, sedation
2. Gastrointestinal irritation, nausea
3. Dry mouth
4. Constipation
5. Respiratory depression

**C. Interventions**

1. Encourage the client to take adequate fluids with the medication.
2. Encourage the client to sleep with the head of the bed elevated.
3. Note that drug dependency can occur.
4. Avoid administration to the client with a head injury or a postoperative cranial surgery client. ▲
5. Avoid administration to the client using opioids, sedative-hypnotics, barbiturates,

or antidepressants because CNS depression can occur. ▲

#### **D. Client education** ▲

1. That if the cough lasts longer than 1 week and a fever or rash occurs to notify the HCP
2. To avoid hazardous activities
3. To avoid the use of alcohol

## **XII. Opioid Antagonists (Box 59-6)** ▲

### **BOX 59-6 Opioid Antagonists**

- Alvimopan (Entereg)
- Methylnaltrexone (Relistor)
- Naloxone
- Naltrexone (Vivitrol)

#### **A. Description**

1. Reverses respiratory depression in opioid overdose.
2. Avoid its use for nonopioid respiratory depression.
3. Re-occurrence of respiratory depression can occur if duration of opiate exceeds duration of opioid antagonist.

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Nausea, vomiting

2. Tremors
3. Sweating
4. Increased blood pressure
5. Tachycardia

#### C. Interventions

1. Assess vital signs, especially respirations.
2. For intravenous administration, the dose is titrated every 2 to 5 minutes as prescribed.
3. Have oxygen and resuscitative equipment available during administration.

### **XIII. Tuberculosis Medications** (Box 59-7)

#### **BOX 59-7** First-Line and Second-Line Medications for Tuberculosis

##### **First-Line Agents**

- Isoniazid
- Rifampin (Rifadin)
- Ethambutol (Myambutol)
- Pyrazinamide
- Rifabutin (Mycobutin)
- Rifapentine (Priftin)

##### **Second-Line Agents**

- Amikacin (Amikin)

- Capreomycin sulfate (Capastat Sulfate)
- Ciprofloxacin (Cipro)
- Cycloserine (Seromycin)
- Ethionamide (Trecator)
- Kanamycin (Kantrex)
- Levofloxacin (Levaquin)
- Moxifloxacin (Avelox)
- *p*-Aminosalicylic acid (Paser)
- Streptomycin

## A. Description

1. Offers the most effective method for treating the disease and preventing transmission
2. Treatment of identified lesions depends on whether the individual has active disease or has only been exposed to the disease.
3. Treatment is difficult because the bacterium has a waxy substance on the capsule that makes penetration and destruction difficult.
4. The use of a multidrug regimen destroys organisms as quickly as possible and minimizes the emergence of drug-resistant organisms. ▲
5. Active tuberculosis is treated with a combination of medications to which the organism is susceptible.
6. Individuals with active tuberculosis are treated for 6 to 9 months; however,

clients with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection are treated for a longer period of time. ▲

7. After the infected individual has received medication for 2 to 3 weeks, the risk of transmission is greatly reduced. ▲
8. Most clients have negative sputum cultures after 3 months of compliance with medication therapy. ▲
9. Individuals who have been exposed to active tuberculosis are treated with preventive isoniazid for 9 to 12 months. ▲

#### **B. First-line or second-line medications**

1. First-line medications provide the most effective antituberculosis activity.
2. Second-line medications are used in combination with first-line medications but are more toxic.
3. Current infecting organisms are proving resistant to standard first-line medications; the resistant organisms develop because individuals with the disease fail to complete the course of treatment, so surviving bacteria adapt to the medication and become resistant.
4. Multidrug therapies are instituted because of the resistant organisms.

#### **C. Multidrug-resistant strain of tuberculosis (MDR-TB) ▲**

1. Resistance occurs when a client receiving two medications (first-line and second-line medications) discontinues one of the medications.
2. The client briefly experiences some response from the single medication but then large numbers of resistant organisms begin to grow.

3. The client, infectious again, transmits the drug-resistant organism to other individuals.
4. As this event is repeated, an organism develops that is resistant to many of the first-line tuberculosis medications.

#### **XIV. First-Line Medications for Tuberculosis (see Box 59-7)**

##### **A. Isoniazid**

###### **1. Description**

- a. Bactericidal
- b. Inhibits the synthesis of mycolic acids and acts to kill actively growing organisms in the extracellular environment
- c. Inhibits the growth of dormant organisms in the macrophages and caseating granulomas
- d. Is active only during cell division and is used in combination with other antitubercular medications

###### **2. Contraindications and cautions** ▲

- a. Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity or with acute liver disease
- b. Use with caution in clients with chronic liver disease, alcoholism, or renal impairment.
- c. Use with caution in clients taking nicotinic acid (niacin).
- d. Use with caution in clients taking hepatotoxic medications because the risk for hepatotoxicity increases.

- e. Alcohol increases the risk of hepatotoxicity.
- f. May increase the risk of toxicity of carbamazepine (Tegretol) and phenytoin (Dilantin)
- g. May decrease ketoconazole concentrations

### 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Hypersensitivity reactions
- b. Peripheral neuritis ▲
- c. Neurotoxicity ▲
- d. Hepatotoxicity and hepatitis; increased liver function test levels ▲
- e. Pyridoxine (vitamin B<sub>6</sub>) deficiency ▲
- f. Irritation at injection site with intramuscular administration
- g. Nausea and vomiting
- h. Dry mouth
- i. Dizziness
- j. Hyperglycemia
- k. Vision changes ▲

### 4. Interventions ▲

- a. Assess for hypersensitivity.
- b. Assess for hepatic dysfunction.
- c. Assess for sensitivity to nicotinic acid.
- d. Monitor liver function test results.
- e. Monitor for signs of hepatitis, such as anorexia, nausea, vomiting, weakness,

fatigue, dark urine, or jaundice; if these symptoms occur, withhold the medication and notify the HCP.

- f.** Monitor for tingling, numbness, or burning of the extremities.
- g.** Assess mental status.
- h.** Monitor for visual changes, and notify the HCP if they occur.
- i.** Assess for dizziness and initiate safety precautions.
- j.** Monitor complete blood count (CBC) and blood glucose levels.
- k.** Administer isoniazid 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal because food may delay absorption.
- l.** Administer isoniazid at least 1 hour before antacids, especially those antacids that contain aluminum.
- m.** Administer pyridoxine as prescribed to reduce the risk of neurotoxicity.

 Many tuberculosis medications can cause toxic effects such as hepatotoxicity, nephrotoxicity, neurotoxicity, optic neuritis, or ototoxicity. Teach the client about the signs of toxicity and inform the client that the HCP needs to be notified if any signs arise.

## 5. Client education

- a.** Not to skip doses and to take the medication for the full length of the prescribed therapy
- b.** Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP
- c.** About the importance of follow-up HCP visits, vision testing, and laboratory tests

- d.** To avoid alcohol
- e.** To take medication on an empty stomach with 8 oz of water 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals and to avoid taking antacids with the medication
- f.** To avoid tyramine-containing foods because they may cause a reaction such as red and itching skin, a pounding heartbeat, lightheadedness, a hot or clammy feeling, or a headache; if this does occur, the client should notify the HCP.
- g.** To recognize the signs of neurotoxicity, hepatitis, and hepatotoxicity
- h.** To notify the HCP if signs of neurotoxicity, hepatitis and hepatotoxicity, or visual changes occur

## **B. Rifampin (Rifadin)**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Inhibits bacterial RNA synthesis
- b.** Binds to DNA-dependent RNA polymerase and blocks RNA transcription
- c.** Used with at least one other antitubercular medication

### **2. Contraindications and cautions** ▲

- a.** Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity
- b.** Used with caution in clients with hepatic dysfunction or alcoholism
- c.** Use of alcohol or hepatotoxic medications may increase the risk of hepatotoxicity.
- d.** Decreases the effects of several medications, including oral anticoagulants, oral hypoglycemics, chloramphenicol (Chloromycetin), digoxin (Lanoxin), disopyramide phosphate (Norpace), mexiletine (Mexitil), quinidine

polygalacturonate, fluconazole (Diflucan), methadone hydrochloride (Dolophine), phenytoin (Dilantin), and verapamil hydrochloride (Calan SR)

### 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Hypersensitivity reaction, including fever, chills, shivering, headache, muscle and bone pain, and dyspnea
- b. Heartburn, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- c. Red-orange-colored body secretions ▲
- d. Vision changes ▲
- e. Hepatotoxicity and hepatitis ▲
- f. Increased uric acid levels
- g. Blood dyscrasias
- h. Colitis

### 4. Interventions

- a. Assess for hypersensitivity.
- b. Evaluate CBC, uric acid, and liver function test results.
- c. Assess for signs of hepatitis; if they occur, withhold the medication and notify the HCP.
- d. Monitor stools for signs of colitis.
- e. Monitor mental status.
- f. Assess for visual changes.

### 5. Client education ▲

- a. Not to skip doses and to take medication for the full length of the prescribed

therapy

- b.** Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP
- c.** About the importance of follow-up HCP visits and laboratory tests
- d.** To avoid alcohol
- e.** To take medication on an empty stomach with 8 oz of water 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals and to avoid taking antacids with the medication
- f.** That urine, feces, sweat, and tears will be red-orange and that soft contact lens can become permanently discolored
- g.** To notify the HCP if jaundice (yellow eyes or skin) develops or if weakness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, sore throat, fever, or unusual bleeding occurs

### **C. Ethambutol (Myambutol)**

#### **1. Description**

- a.** Bacteriostatic
- b.** Interferes with cell metabolism and multiplication by inhibiting one or more metabolites in susceptible organisms
- c.** Inhibits bacterial RNA synthesis and is active only during cell division
- d.** Slow-acting and must be used with other bactericidal agents

#### **2. Contraindications and cautions** ▲

- a.** Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity or optic neuritis and in children younger than 13 years
- b.** Used with caution in clients with renal dysfunction, gout, ocular defects, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts, or ocular inflammatory conditions

- c. Used with caution in clients taking neurotoxic medications because the risk for neurotoxicity increases

### 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Hypersensitivity reactions
- b. Anorexia, nausea, vomiting
- c. Dizziness
- d. Malaise
- e. Mental confusion
- f. Joint pain
- g. Dermatitis
- h. Optic neuritis ▲
- i. Peripheral neuritis ▲
- j. Thrombocytopenia
- k. Increased uric acid levels
- l. Anaphylactoid reaction

### 4. Interventions

- a. Assess the client for hypersensitivity.
- b. Evaluate results of CBC, uric acid, and renal and liver function tests.
- c. Monitor for visual changes such as altered color perception and decreased visual acuity; if changes occur, withhold the medication and notify the HCP. ▲
- d. Administer once every 24 hours and administer with food to decrease gastrointestinal upset.

- e. Monitor uric acid concentration and assess for painful or swollen joints or signs of gout. ▲
- f. Monitor intake and output and for adequate renal function.
- g. Assess mental status.
- h. Monitor for dizziness and initiate safety precautions.
- i. Assess for peripheral neuritis (numbness, tingling, or burning of the extremities); if it occurs, notify the HCP. ▲

#### 5. Client education ▲

- a. That nausea, related to the medication, can be prevented by taking the daily dose at bedtime or by taking the prescribed anti-nausea medications
- b. Not to skip doses and to take the medication for the full length of the prescribed therapy
- c. Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP
- d. About the importance of follow-up HCP visits, vision testing, and laboratory tests
- e. To notify the HCP immediately if any visual problems occur or a rash, swelling and pain in the joints, or numbness, tingling, or burning in the hands or feet occurs

### D. Pyrazinamide

#### 1. Description

- a. The exact mechanism of action is unknown.
- b. May be bacteriostatic or bactericidal, depending on its concentration at the

infection site and on the susceptibility of infecting organism.

- c. Used with at least one other antitubercular medication if ineffectiveness of the primary medication(s) occurs.

## 2. Contraindications and cautions ▲

- a. Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity
- b. Used with caution in clients with diabetes mellitus, renal impairment, or gout, and in children
- c. May decrease the effects of allopurinol (Zyloprim), colchicine (Colcrys), and probenecid
- d. Cross-sensitivity is possible with isoniazid, ethionamide (Trecator), or nicotinic acid.

## 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Increases liver function tests and uric acid levels
- b. Arthralgia, myalgia
- c. Photosensitivity ▲
- d. Hepatotoxicity ▲
- e. Thrombocytopenia

## 4. Interventions

- a. Assess for hypersensitivity.
- b. Evaluate CBC, liver function test results, and uric acid levels.
- c. Observe for hepatotoxic effects; if they occur, withhold the medication and notify the HCP. ▲

- d. Assess for painful or swollen joints.
- e. Evaluate blood glucose level because diabetes mellitus may be difficult to control while client is taking the medication.

## 5. Client education ▲

- a. To take the medication with food to reduce gastrointestinal distress
- b. To avoid sunlight or ultraviolet light until photosensitivity is determined
- c. To notify the HCP if any side/adverse effects occur
- d. Not to skip doses and to take the medication for the full length of the prescribed therapy
- e. Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP
- f. About the importance of follow-up HCP visits and laboratory tests

## E. Rifabutin (Mycobutin)

### 1. Description

- a. Inhibits mycobacterial DNA-dependent RNA polymerase and suppresses protein synthesis
- b. Used to prevent disseminated *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) disease in clients with advanced HIV infection
- c. Used to treat active MAC disease and tuberculosis in clients with HIV infection

### 2. Cautions

- a. Can affect blood levels of some medications, including oral contraceptives and some medications used to treat HIV infection
- b. A nonhormonal method of birth control should be used instead of an oral

contraceptive.

### 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Rash
- b. Gastrointestinal disturbances
- c. Neutropenia
- d. Red-orange-colored body secretions
- e. Uveitis ▲
- f. Myositis
- g. Arthralgia ▲
- h. Hepatitis ▲
- i. Chest pain with dyspnea
- j. Flulike syndrome

### 4. Interventions ▲

- a. Assess medication history of the client.
- b. Observe for hepatotoxic effects; if they occur, withhold the medication and notify the HCP.
- c. Assess for painful or swollen joints.
- d. Assess for ocular pain or blurred vision.

### 5. Client education ▲

- a. That the medication can be taken without regard to food
- b. To notify the HCP if any side/adverse effects occur
- c. Not to skip doses and to take the medication for the full length of the prescribed

therapy

**d.** Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP

**e.** About the importance of follow-up HCP visits and laboratory tests

## **F.** Rifapentine (Priftin)

**1.** Description: Used only for pulmonary tuberculosis

**2.** Cautions: Can affect blood levels of some medications, including oral contraceptives and warfarin (Coumadin), and some medications used to treat HIV infection

**3.** Side/adverse effects ▲

**a.** Red-orange-colored body secretions

**b.** Hepatotoxicity

**4.** Interventions

**a.** Assess medication history of the client.

**b.** Obtain baseline liver function studies and assess throughout therapy.

**c.** Observe for hepatotoxic effects; if they occur, withhold the medication and notify the HCP. ▲

**5.** Client education

**a.** That the medication can be taken without regard to food

**b.** To avoid sunlight or ultraviolet light until photosensitivity is determined

**c.** That red-orange-colored body secretions may occur

**d.** Not to skip doses and to take the medication for the full length of the prescribed therapy

- e. Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP
- f. About the importance of follow-up HCP visits and laboratory tests

 Some tuberculosis medications can cause red-orange-colored body secretions. Inform the client that this is not a harmful effect but that the secretions can stain and permanently discolor items.

## **XV. Second-Line Medications for Tuberculosis (see Box 59-7)**

### **A. Capreomycin sulfate (Capastat Sulfate)**

#### **1. Description**

- a. Mechanism of action is unknown.
- b. Used to treat MDR-TB when significant resistance to other medications is expected
- c. Administered intramuscularly

#### **2. Contraindications and cautions**

- a. The risk of nephrotoxicity, ototoxicity, and neuromuscular blockade is increased with the use of aminoglycosides or loop diuretics.
- b. Used with caution in clients with renal insufficiency, acoustic nerve impairment, hepatic disorder, myasthenia gravis, or parkinsonism.
- c. Not administered to clients receiving streptomycin.

#### **3. Side/adverse effects**

- a. Nephrotoxicity
- b. Ototoxicity
- c. Neuromuscular blockade

#### 4. Interventions

- a. Perform baseline audiometric testing.
- b. Assess renal, hepatic, and electrolyte levels before administration. ▲
- c. Monitor intake and output.
- d. Reconstituted medication may be stored for 48 hours at room temperature.
- e. Administer intramuscularly, deep into a large muscle mass.
- f. Rotate injection sites.
- g. Observe injection site for redness, excessive bleeding, and inflammation.

#### 5. Client education ▲

- a. Not to perform tasks that require mental alertness
- b. To report any hearing loss, balance disturbances, respiratory difficulty, weakness, or signs of hypersensitivity reactions

### B. Antibiotics

#### 1. Description

- a. Aminoglycoside antibiotics (kanamycin, amikacin [Amikin]) or fluoroquinolones (levofloxacin [Levaquin], moxifloxacin [Avelox]) are given with at least one other antitubercular medication.
- b. Bactericidal because of receptor-binding action interfering with protein synthesis in susceptible microorganisms
- c. Gastrointestinal disturbances are the most common side effect.
- d. Fluoroquinolones are not recommended for use in children.

#### 2. Contraindications and cautions

- a. Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity, neuromuscular disorders, or eighth cranial nerve damage
- b. Used with caution in the older client, in neonates because of renal insufficiency and immaturity, and in young infants because it may cause CNS depression
- c. The risk of toxicity increases if taken with other aminoglycosides or nephrotoxicity- or ototoxicity-producing medications. ▲

### 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Hypersensitivity
- b. Pain and irritation at the injection site
- c. Nephrotoxicity is indicated by increased blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine levels. ▲
- d. Ototoxicity is indicated by tinnitus, dizziness, ringing or roaring in the ears, and reduced hearing. ▲
- e. Neurotoxicity is indicated by headache, dizziness, lethargy, tremors, and visual disturbances. ▲
- f. Superinfections

### 4. Interventions

- a. Assess for hypersensitivity.
- b. Monitor for ototoxic, neurotoxic, and nephrotoxic reactions. ▲
- c. Monitor liver and renal function test results. ▲
- d. Obtain baseline audiometric test and repeat every 1 to 2 months because the medication impairs the eighth cranial nerve.

- e. Assess acuteness of hearing.
- f. Monitor for visual changes.
- g. Assess hydration status and maintain adequate hydration during therapy.
- h. Monitor intake and output.
- i. Assess urinalysis.
- j. Monitor for superinfection.

**5. Client education** ▲

- a. Not to skip doses and to take the medication for the full length of the prescribed therapy
- b. Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP
- c. About the importance of follow-up HCP visits and laboratory tests
- d. To notify the HCP if hearing loss, changes in vision, or urinary problems occur

**C. Ethionamide (Trecator)**

**1. Description**

- a. Mechanism of action is unknown.
- b. Used to treat MDR-TB when significant resistance to other medications is expected

**2. Contraindications and cautions**

- a. Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity
- b. Used with caution in clients with diabetes mellitus or renal dysfunction ▲

**3. Side/adverse effects**

- a. Anorexia, nausea, vomiting

**b.** Metallic taste in the mouth ▲

**c.** Orthostatic hypotension

**d.** Jaundice ▲

**e.** Mental changes

**f.** Peripheral neuritis ▲

**g.** Rash

#### **4.** Interventions

**a.** Assess liver and renal function test results.

**b.** Monitor glucose levels in the client with diabetes mellitus. ▲

**c.** Administer pyridoxine as prescribed to reduce the risk of neurotoxicity. ▲

#### **5.** Client education

**a.** To take medication with food or meals to minimize gastrointestinal irritation

**b.** To change positions slowly

**c.** To report signs of a rash, which can progress to exfoliative dermatitis if the medication is not discontinued

**d.** To avoid alcohol

**e.** To report signs of jaundice and other side/adverse effects of the medication if they occur

### **D.** Aminosalicyclic acid (Paser)

#### **1.** Description

**a.** Inhibits folic acid metabolism in mycobacteria

**b.** Used to treat MDR-TB when significant resistance to other medications is

expected

## 2. Contraindications and cautions

- a. Contraindicated with hypersensitivity to aminosaliclates, salicylates, or compounds containing the *para*-aminophenol group ▲
- b. Aminobenzoates block the absorption of aminosaliclate sodium.

## 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Hypersensitivity
- b. Bitter taste in the mouth
- c. Gastrointestinal tract irritation
- d. Exfoliative dermatitis
- e. Blood dyscrasias
- f. Crystalluria
- g. Changes in thyroid function

## 4. Interventions ▲

- a. Assess for hypersensitivity.
- b. Offer clear water to rinse the mouth and chewing gum or hard candy to alleviate the bitter taste.
- c. Encourage fluid intake to prevent crystalluria.
- d. Monitor intake and output.

## 5. Client education ▲

- a. To discard the medication and obtain a new supply if a purplish-brown discoloration occurs

- b.** To take the medication with food
- c.** That urine may turn red on contact with hypochlorite bleach if bleach was used to clean a toilet
- d.** Not to take aspirin or over-the-counter medications without the HCP's approval
- e.** To report signs of a blood dyscrasia, such as sore throat or mouth, malaise, fatigue, bruising, or bleeding

## **E. Cycloserine (Seromycin)**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Interferes with cell wall biosynthesis
- b.** Used to treat MDR-TB when significant resistance to other medications is expected

### **2. Contraindications and cautions** ▲

- a.** Use of alcohol or ethionamide increases the risk of seizures
- b.** Used with caution in clients with a seizure disorder, depression, severe anxiety, psychosis, or renal insufficiency, or in clients who use alcohol

### **3. Side/adverse effects**

- a.** Hypersensitivity
- b.** CNS reactions
- c.** Neurotoxicity ▲
- d.** Seizures
- e.** Heart failure
- f.** Headache

- g.** Vertigo
- h.** Altered level of consciousness
- i.** Irritability, nervousness, anxiety
- j.** Confusion
- k.** Mood changes, depression, thoughts of suicide

#### **4. Interventions**

- a.** Monitor level of consciousness.
- b.** Monitor for changes in mental status and thought processes.
- c.** Monitor renal and hepatic function tests. ▲
- d.** Monitor serum drug level to avoid the risk of neurotoxicity; the peak concentration, measured 2 hours after dosing, should be 25 to 35 mcg/mL.

#### **5. Client education** ▲

- a.** To take the medication after meals to prevent gastrointestinal upset
- b.** To avoid alcohol
- c.** To report signs of a rash or signs of CNS toxicity
- d.** To avoid driving or performing tasks that require alertness until the reaction to the medication has been determined
- e.** About the need for monitoring serum drug levels weekly, as prescribed

### **F. Streptomycin**

#### **1. Description**

- a.** An aminoglycoside antibiotic used with at least one other antitubercular medication

**b.** Bactericidal because of receptor-binding action that interferes with protein synthesis in susceptible organisms

## 2. Contraindications and cautions

**a.** Contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity, myasthenia gravis, parkinsonism, or eighth cranial nerve damage

**b.** Used with caution in the older client, in neonates because of renal insufficiency and organ immaturity, and in young infants because the medication may cause CNS depression

**c.** The risk of toxicity increases when taken with other aminoglycosides or nephrotoxicity- or ototoxicity-producing medications. ▲

## 3. Side/adverse effects (Box 59-8)

### **BOX 59-8** Side and Adverse Effects of Streptomycin

#### **Nephrotoxicity**

- Changes in urine output
- Decreased appetite
- Increased thirst
- Nausea, vomiting

#### **Neurotoxicity**

- Muscle numbness
- Seizures
- Tingling

- Twitching

### Vestibular Toxicity

- Clumsiness
- Dizziness
- Unsteadiness

### Auditory Toxicity (Ototoxicity)

- A full feeling in the ears
- Ringing in the ears
- Loss of hearing

## 4. Interventions

- Assess for hypersensitivity.
- Monitor liver and renal function test results.
- Monitor for ototoxic, neurotoxic, and nephrotoxic reactions. ▲
- Perform baseline audiometric testing and repeat every 1 to 2 months because the medication impairs the eighth cranial nerve.
- Assess hearing acuity.
- Monitor for visual changes. ▲
- Assess hydration status and maintain adequate hydration during therapy.
- Monitor intake and output.
- Assess urinalysis results.

j. Monitor for signs of peripheral neuritis.

## 5. Client education

- a. Not to skip doses and to take medication for the full length of the prescribed therapy
- b. Not to take any other medication without consulting with the HCP
- c. About the importance of follow-up HCP visits and laboratory tests
- d. To notify the HCP if hearing loss, changes in vision, or urinary problems occur

## XVI. Influenza Medications

### A. Vaccines (Box 59-9)

#### **BOX 59-9** Influenza Vaccines

##### **Inactivated (Intramuscular Administration)**

- Afluria
- Fluarix
- FluLaval
- Fluvirin
- Fluzone

##### **Live, Attenuated (Nasal Administration)**

- FluMist

## 1. Description

- a. Because the strain of influenza virus is different every year, annual vaccination is recommended (usually in October or November).
- b. Vaccine is available as inactivated influenza vaccine administered intramuscularly or as a live attenuated influenza vaccine, which is administered nasally.

 The trivalent influenza vaccine includes vaccination against H1N1, so a separate H1N1 is not necessary if the trivalent vaccine is administered. The vaccine is recommended for all individuals unless a contraindication to receiving them exists.

## 2. Swine flu and the H1N1 vaccine

- a. Refer to [Chapter 48](#) for additional information on the swine flu and its vaccine.
- b. The nasal spray (live) vaccine is approved only for healthy people ages 2 through 49.
- c. The nasal spray vaccine is not approved for pregnant women.
- d. The flu shots (inactivated vaccine), depending on the manufacturer, are approved for children as young as 6 months of age and are safe for pregnant women.
- e. The nasal spray contains a live flu virus that has been weakened to the point that it can't cause the flu; its advantage is that it may elicit a stronger immune response than the shot in children who have never had the flu or a flu vaccine before.
- f. The disadvantage of the nasal spray is that it may not be quite as protective as

the flu shot for older people who have had the flu or flu vaccines before.

- g.** All individuals should receive an influenza vaccine; high-priority individuals include pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age; people ages 6 months to 24 years; health care workers and emergency medical personnel; and adults aged 25-64 with a chronic medical condition, such as asthma, or a weakened immune system, which increases risk of flu complications.

### **3. Contraindications and cautions** 🟩

- a.** Contraindications of the inactivated vaccine include hypersensitivity, chicken egg allergy, active infection, Guillain-Barré syndrome, active febrile illness, and children younger than 6 months.
- b.** Contraindications of the live attenuated vaccine include age younger than 2 years or adults 50 years or older, pregnant women, children or adolescents on long-term aspirin therapy, and those with severe nasal congestion or long-term conditions such as asthma, diabetes mellitus, anemia or blood disorders, or heart, kidney, or lung disease.

### **4. Side/adverse effects**

- a.** Of the inactivated vaccine: Localized pain and swelling at the injection site, general body aches and pains, malaise, fever
- b.** Of the attenuated vaccine: Runny nose or nasal congestion, cough, headache, and sore throat

### **5. Interventions**

- a. The intramuscular route is recommended for the inactivated vaccine; adults and older children should be vaccinated in the deltoid muscle.
- b. Monitor for side/adverse effects of the vaccine.
- c. Monitor for hypersensitivity reactions in clients receiving vaccination for the first time.

#### 6. Client education

- a. About the importance of an annual vaccination
- b. That the inactivated vaccine contains noninfectious killed viruses and cannot cause influenza
- c. That any respiratory disease unrelated to influenza can occur after the vaccination
- d. That if the attenuated vaccine is received, the virus may be shed in secretions up to 2 days after vaccination
- e. That development of antibodies in adults takes approximately 2 weeks

7. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for updates (at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)).

#### B. Antiviral medications (Box 59-10)

##### BOX 59-10

##### Antiviral Influenza Medications

- Amantadine (Symmetrel)
- Oseltamivir (Tamiflu)
- Rimantadine (Flumadine)

## ■ Zanamivir (Relenza)

### 1. Description

- a. Use during outbreaks of influenza depends on the current strain of influenza
- b. Diagnosis of influenza should include rapid diagnostic tests because symptoms of infection from other pathogens may cause symptoms similar to those of influenza infection.
- c. May also be administered as prophylaxis against infection but should not replace vaccination

### 2. Contraindicated in hypersensitive clients

### 3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Common side effects include headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, and vomiting.
- b. Some side/adverse effects depend on the medication ([Table 59-1](#)).

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**TABLE 59-1 Side Effects of Antiviral Influenza Medications**

Antiviral Medication	Side Effects
Amantadine (Symmetrel)	Drowsiness, anxiety, psychosis, depression, hallucinations, tremors, confusion, insomnia, orthostatic hypotension, heart failure, blurred vision, constipation, dry mouth, urinary frequency and retention, leukopenia, photosensitivity, dermatitis
Oseltamivir (Tamiflu)	Insomnia, diarrhea, abdominal pain, cough
Rimantadine (Flumadine)	Depression, hallucinations, tremors, seizures, insomnia, poor concentration, asthenia, gait abnormalities, anxiety, confusion, pallor, palpitations, hypotension, edema, tinnitus, eye pain, constipation, dry mouth, anorexia, abdominal pain, diarrhea, dyspepsia, rash
Zanamivir (Relenza)	Ear, nose, and throat infections; diarrhea; nasal symptoms; cough; sinusitis; bronchitis

#### 4. Interventions

- a. Administer within 2 days of onset of symptoms and continue for the entire prescription. ▲
- b. Monitor for side/adverse effects of specific medications.

#### 5. Client education ▲

- a. That the medication may not prevent the transmission of influenza to others
- b. About the need to adjust activities if dizziness or fatigue occur
- c. About management of side/adverse effects of various medications
- d. To take medication exactly as prescribed and for the duration of prescription

### **XVII. Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine**

- A. Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV, Prevnar) is used for the prevention of invasive pneumococcal disease in infants and children.
- B. Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (Pneumovax 23) is used for adults and high-risk children older than 2 years.
- C. Side effects may include erythema, swelling, pain, and tenderness at the injection site, fever, irritability, drowsiness, and reduced appetite.
- D. See [Chapter 48](#) for additional information about vaccines for pneumonia.

### **CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?**

*Answer:* A major side effect of isoniazid is nonviral hepatitis. Signs include anorexia, nausea, vomiting, weakness, fatigue, dark urine, or jaundice. If these

symptoms occur, the nurse should withhold the medication and notify the health care provider. The nurse should also check the client's liver function test results for elevations, such as alanine aminotransferase (ALT), the normal level being 10 to 40 units/L; aspartate aminotransferase (AST), the normal level being 10 to 30 units/L; and the total bilirubin level, which should be lower than 1.5 mg/dL. If these are elevated, the client could be experiencing nonviral hepatitis.

### ***References***

Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 636–637; Lewis et al (2011), p. 556.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**679.** A client has a prescription to take guaifenesin (Mucinex). The nurse determines that the client understands the proper administration of this medication if the client states that he or she will perform which action?

- 1.** Take an extra dose if fever develops
- 2.** Take the medication with meals only
- 3.** Take the tablet with a full glass of water
- 4.** Decrease the amount of daily fluid intake

**680.** The nurse is preparing to administer a dose of naloxone hydrochloride intravenously to a client with an intravenous opioid overdose. Which supportive medical equipment should the nurse plan to have at the client's bedside if needed?

1. Nasogastric tube
2. Paracentesis tray
3. Resuscitation equipment
4. Central line insertion tray

**681.** The nurse teaches a client about the effects of diphenhydramine (Benadryl), which has been prescribed as a cough suppressant. The nurse determines that the client **needs further instruction** if the client makes which statement?

1. "I will take the medication on an empty stomach."
2. "I won't drink alcohol while taking this medication."
3. "I will use sugarless gum, candy, or oral rinses to decrease dryness in my mouth."
4. "I won't do activities that require mental alertness while taking this medication."

**682.** A cromolyn sodium inhaler is prescribed for a client with allergic asthma. The nurse provides instructions regarding the side and adverse effects of this medication and should tell the client that which undesirable effect is associated with this medication?

1. Insomnia
2. Constipation
3. Hypotension
4. Bronchospasm

**683.** Terbutaline is prescribed for a client with bronchitis. The nurse understands that this medication should be used with caution if which medical condition is present in the client?

1. Osteoarthritis
2. Hypothyroidism
3. Diabetes mellitus
4. Polycystic disease

**684.** Zafirlukast (Accolate) is prescribed for a client with bronchial asthma. Which laboratory test does the nurse expect to be prescribed before the administration of this medication?

1. Platelet count
2. Neutrophil count
3. Liver function tests
4. Complete blood count

**685.** A client has been taking isoniazid for 1 1/2 months. The client complains to the nurse about numbness, paresthesias, and tingling in the extremities. The nurse interprets that the client is experiencing which problem?

1. Hypercalcemia
2. Peripheral neuritis
3. Small blood vessel spasm
4. Impaired peripheral circulation

**686.** A client is to begin a 6-month course of therapy with isoniazid. The nurse should plan to teach the client to take which action?

1. Use alcohol in small amounts only.
2. Report yellow eyes or skin immediately.
3. Increase intake of Swiss or aged cheeses.
4. Avoid vitamin supplements during therapy.

**687.** A client has been started on long-term therapy with rifampin (Rifadin). The nurse should provide which information to the client about the medication?

1. Should always be taken with food or antacids
2. Should be double-dosed if one dose is forgotten
3. Causes orange discoloration of sweat, tears, urine, and feces
4. May be discontinued independently if symptoms are gone in 3 months

**688.** The nurse has given a client taking ethambutol (Myambutol) information about the medication. The nurse determines that the client understands the instructions if the client states he or she will **immediately** report which finding?

1. Impaired sense of hearing
2. Gastrointestinal side effects
3. Orange-red discoloration of body secretions
4. Difficulty in discriminating the color red from green

**689.** A client with tuberculosis is being started on antituberculosis therapy with isoniazid. Before giving the client the first dose, the nurse should ensure that

which baseline study has been completed?

1. Electrolyte levels
2. Coagulation times
3. Liver enzyme levels
4. Serum creatinine level

**690.** The nurse has a prescription to give a client salmeterol (Serevent Diskus), two puffs, and beclomethasone dipropionate (Qvar), two puffs, by metered-dose inhaler. The nurse should administer the medication using which procedure?

1. Beclomethasone first and then the salmeterol
2. Salmeterol first and then the beclomethasone
3. Alternating a single puff of each, beginning with the salmeterol
4. Alternating a single puff of each, beginning with the beclomethasone

**691.** Rifabutin (Mycobutin) is prescribed for a client with active *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) disease and tuberculosis. For which side/adverse effects of the medication should the nurse monitor? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Signs of hepatitis
2. Flulike syndrome
3. Low neutrophil count
4. Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> deficiency
5. Ocular pain or blurred vision
6. Tingling and numbness of the fingers

**692.** A client has begun therapy with theophylline (Theo-24). The nurse should plan to teach the client to limit the intake of which items while taking this medication?

1. Coffee, cola, and chocolate
2. Oysters, lobster, and shrimp
3. Melons, oranges, and pineapple
4. Cottage cheese, cream cheese, and dairy creamers

**693.** The nurse has just administered the first dose of omalizumab (Xolair) to a client.

Which statement by the client would alert the nurse that the client may be experiencing a life-threatening effect?

1. "I have a severe headache."
2. "My feet are quite swollen."
3. "I am nauseated and may vomit."
4. "My lips and tongue are swollen."

**694.** The nurse is caring for a client with a diagnosis of influenza who first began to experience symptoms yesterday. Antiviral therapy is prescribed and the nurse provides instructions to the client about the therapy. Which statement by the client indicates an understanding of the instructions?

1. "I must take the medication exactly as prescribed."
2. "Once I start the medication, I will no longer be contagious."
3. "I will not get any colds or infections while taking this medication."
4. "This medication has minimal side effects and I can return to normal

activities.”

## ANSWERS

**679. 3**

**Rationale:** Guaifenesin (Mucinex) is an expectorant and should be taken with a full glass of water to decrease the viscosity of secretions. Extra doses should not be taken. The client should contact the health care provider if the cough lasts longer than 1 week or is accompanied by fever, rash, sore throat, or persistent headache. Fluids are needed to decrease the viscosity of secretions. The medication does not have to be taken with meals.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Begin to answer this question by eliminating option 1 first, recalling that *extra doses* of medication should not be taken. Next, eliminate option 2 because of the **closed-ended word** *only*. Next, knowing that increased fluid helps liquefy secretions for more effective coughing directs you to the correct option.

**Review: Guaifenesin (Mucinex)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 556-557; Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 596.

**680. 3**

**Rationale:** The nurse administering naloxone for suspected opioid overdose should have resuscitation equipment readily available to support naloxone therapy if it is needed. Other adjuncts that may be needed include oxygen,

mechanical ventilator, and vasopressors.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, supportive medical equipment. Note the words *intravenous opioid overdose*. Recalling the effects of these type of medications will direct you to the correct option. The correct option is also the **umbrella option**.

**Review:** **Naloxone hydrochloride**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), pp. 970-971.

**681. 1**

**Rationale:** Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) has several uses, including as an antihistamine, antitussive, antidyskinetic, and sedative-hypnotic. Instructions for use include taking with food or milk to decrease gastrointestinal upset and using oral rinses or sugarless gum or hard candy to minimize dry mouth. Because the medication causes drowsiness, the client should avoid use of alcohol or central nervous system depressants, operating a car, or engaging in other activities requiring mental awareness during use.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *needs further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Knowing that the medication has a sedative effect helps you eliminate options 2 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike**. Recalling that the medication causes a dry mouth helps you choose the correct option as the answer to the question, according to the way the question is stated.

**Review: Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 357-359; Lehne (2013), p. 887.

**682. 4**

**Rationale:** Cromolyn sodium is an inhaled nonsteroidal antiallergy agent and a mast cell stabilizer. Undesirable effects associated with inhalation therapy of cromolyn sodium are bronchospasm, cough, nasal congestion, throat irritation, and wheezing. Clients receiving this medication orally may experience pruritus, nausea, diarrhea, and myalgia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the words *undesirable effect*. This should assist in directing you to the correct option. In addition, use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to select the correct option. The correct option addresses the airway.

**Review: Cromolyn sodium (Intal)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 612.

**683. 3**

**Rationale:** Terbutaline is a bronchodilator and is contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity to sympathomimetics. It should be used with caution in clients with impaired cardiac function, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, hyperthyroidism, or a history of seizures. The medication may increase blood glucose levels.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, cautions for using terbutaline. Specific knowledge regarding the contraindications and cautions associated with the use of this medication is needed to answer this question.

Remember that terbutaline is used with caution in the client with diabetes mellitus.

**Review: Terbutaline**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 975.

**684. 3**

**Rationale:** Zafirlukast (Accolate) is a leukotriene receptor antagonist used in the prophylaxis and long-term treatment of bronchial asthma. Zafirlukast is used with caution in clients with impaired hepatic function. Liver function laboratory tests should be performed to obtain a baseline, and the levels should be monitored during administration of the medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike**, noting that a

complete blood count would include a neutrophil count. From the remaining options, you would need to know that this medication would affect hepatic function.

**Review:** Zafirlukast (Accolate)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 1241-1242.

**685. 2**

**Rationale:** Isoniazid is an antitubercular medication. A common side effect of isoniazid is peripheral neuritis, manifested by numbness, tingling, and paresthesias in the extremities. This can be minimized with pyridoxine (vitamin B<sub>6</sub>) intake. Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, numbness, paresthesias, and tingling in the extremities. Options 3 and 4 would not cause the symptoms presented in the question but instead would cause pallor and coolness. From the remaining options, you should know that peripheral neuritis is an adverse effect of isoniazid, and that these signs and symptoms do not correlate with hypercalcemia.

**Review:** Side and adverse effects associated with **isoniazid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 636-637; Lehne (2013), pp. 1122-1123, 1129.

**686. 2**

**Rationale:** Isoniazid is hepatotoxic, and therefore the client is taught to report signs and symptoms of hepatitis immediately, which include yellow skin and sclera. For the same reason, alcohol should be avoided during therapy. The client should avoid intake of Swiss cheese, fish such as tuna, and foods containing tyramine because they may cause a reaction characterized by redness and itching of the skin, flushing, sweating, tachycardia, headache, or lightheadedness. The client can avoid developing peripheral neuritis by increasing the intake of pyridoxine (vitamin B<sub>6</sub>) during the course of isoniazid therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client teaching for isoniazid. Because alcohol intake is prohibited with the use of many medications, eliminate option 1 first. Because the client receiving this medication typically is given supplements of vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, option 4 is incorrect and is eliminated next. Recalling that the medication is hepatotoxic will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Isoniazid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 1122, 1129.

**687. 3**

**Rationale:** Rifampin should be taken exactly as directed. Doses should not be doubled or skipped. The client should not stop therapy until directed to do so by a health care provider. The medication should be administered on an empty stomach unless it causes gastrointestinal upset, and then it may be taken with food. Antacids, if prescribed, should be taken at least 1 hour before the medication. Rifampin causes orange-red discoloration of body secretions and will stain soft contact lenses permanently.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 2 and 4 are **comparable or alike** and are inaccurate, based on general guidelines for medication administration; the client should not double-dose or discontinue medication independently. Eliminate option 1 next because of the **closed-ended word** *always*.

**Review:** Rifampin (Rifadin)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 1016-1018.

**688. 4**

**Rationale:** Ethambutol causes optic neuritis, which decreases visual acuity and the ability to discriminate between the colors red and green. This poses a potential safety hazard when a client is driving a motor vehicle. The client is taught to report this symptom immediately. The client also is taught to take the medication with food if gastrointestinal upset occurs. Impaired hearing results from antitubercular therapy with streptomycin. Orange-red discoloration of secretions occurs with rifampin (Rifadin).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediately*. Option 2 is the least likely symptom to report;

instead, it should be managed by taking the medication with food. To select among the other options, you must know that this medication causes optic neuritis, resulting in difficulty with red-green discrimination.

**Review:** Ethambutol (Myambutol)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 41-443; Lehne (2013), p. 1130.

**689. 3**

**Rationale:** Isoniazid therapy can cause an elevation of hepatic enzyme levels and hepatitis. Therefore, liver enzyme levels are monitored when therapy is initiated and during the first 3 months of therapy. They may be monitored longer in the client who is older than 50 or abuses alcohol. The laboratory tests in options 1, 2, and 4 are not necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the laboratory value to monitor. Recalling that this medication can be toxic to the liver will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Isoniazid

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 1129.

**690. 2**

**Rationale:** Salmeterol (Serevent Diskus) is an adrenergic type of bronchodilator and beclomethasone dipropionate is a glucocorticoid. Bronchodilators are always administered before glucocorticoids when both are to be given on the same time schedule. This allows for widening of the air passages by the bronchodilator, which then makes the glucocorticoid more effective.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for administering inhaled medications. To answer this question correctly, you must know two different things. First, you must know that a bronchodilator is always given before a glucocorticoid. This would allow you to eliminate options 3 and 4 because you would not alternate the medications. To select between the remaining option and the correct option, you must know that salmeterol is a bronchodilator, whereas beclomethasone is a glucocorticoid.

**Review: Beclomethasone dipropionate (Qvar)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 508; Lehne (2013), p. 975.

❖ **691. 1, 2, 3, 5**

**Rationale:** Rifabutin (Mycobutin) may be prescribed for a client with active *Mycobacterium avium* complex

(MAC) disease and tuberculosis. It inhibits mycobacterial DNA-dependent RNA polymerase and suppresses protein synthesis. Side/adverse effects include rash, gastrointestinal disturbances, neutropenia (low neutrophil count), red-orange-colored body secretions, uveitis (blurred vision and eye pain), myositis, arthralgia, hepatitis, chest pain with dyspnea, and flulike syndrome. Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> deficiency and numbness and tingling in the extremities are associated with the use of isoniazid. Ethambutol (Myambutol) causes peripheral neuritis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, side effects of rifabutin (Mycobutin). Specific knowledge is needed to answer correctly. Remember that hepatitis, flulike syndrome, neutropenia, and uveitis are side/adverse effects.

**Review: Rifabutin (Mycobutin)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 1129-1130; Lilley et al (2014), p. 678.

**692. 1**

**Rationale:** Theophylline (Theo-24) is a methylxanthine bronchodilator. The nurse teaches the client to limit the intake of xanthine-containing foods while taking this medication. These foods include coffee, cola, and chocolate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, food items that need to be limited. Recall that theophylline is a xanthine bronchodilator and that intake of excessive amounts of foods naturally high in xanthines needs to be limited. Also, recalling that these medications cause cardiac and central nervous system stimulation will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Theophylline (Theo-24)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 1132.

**693. 4**

**Rationale:** Omalizumab is an antiinflammatory used for long-term control of asthma. Anaphylactic reactions can occur with the administration of omalizumab. The nurse administering the medication should monitor for adverse reactions of the medication. Swelling of the lips and tongue are an indication of an adverse reaction. The client statements in options 1, 2, and 3 are not indicative of an adverse reaction.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a life-threatening effect. Recall that anaphylactic reactions can occur with the administration of omalizumab. Knowing the signs of a reaction will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Omalizumab (Xolair)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 964.

**694. 1**

**Rationale:** Antiviral medications for influenza must be taken exactly as prescribed. These medications do not prevent the spread of influenza and clients are usually contagious for up to 2 days after the initiation of antiviral medications. Secondary bacterial infections may occur despite antiviral treatment. Side effects occur with these medications and may necessitate change in activities, especially when driving or operating machinery if dizziness occurs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client instructions for antiviral therapy, and note the words *indicates an understanding*. Using general medication guidelines will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Antiviral therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Respiratory Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 445-446.

# UNIT XIII



## Cardiovascular Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**afterload** The force against which the heart has to pump (peripheral resistance) to eject blood from the left ventricle. Factors and conditions that would impede blood flow increase left ventricular afterload.

**arterial pressure** The pressure of the blood against the arterial walls. Pressure can be measured indirectly by sphygmomanometer or directly by arterial catheter. Readings are expressed as systolic over diastolic. Arterial pressure increases when the cardiac output, peripheral resistance, or blood volume increases.

**baroreceptors** Specialized nerve endings (also called *pressoreceptors*) located in the walls of the aortic arch and carotid sinuses. They are affected by changes in the arterial blood pressure (BP). Increases in arterial pressure stimulate baroreceptors

and the heart rate and arterial pressure decrease. Decreases in arterial pressure lead to a lessened stimulation of the baroreceptors, vasoconstriction occurs, and the heart rate increases.

**blood pressure (BP)** The force exerted by the blood against the walls of the blood vessels. If the blood pressure falls too low, blood flow to the tissues, heart, brain, and other organs becomes inadequate. If the blood pressure becomes too high, the risk of vessel rupture and damage increases.

**cardiac output** The total volume of blood pumped through the heart in 1 minute. The normal cardiac output is 4 to 7 L/minute. Cardiac output equals stroke volume multiplied by heart rate. Cardiac output can be calculated via the thermodilution method when the client has a pulmonary artery catheter (Swan-Ganz catheter).

**conductivity** The ability of the heart muscle fibers to propagate electrical impulses along and across cell membranes.

**contractility** The inherent ability of the myocardium to alter contractile force and velocity. Sympathetic stimulation increases myocardial contractility, so stroke volume increases. Conditions that decrease myocardial contractility reduce stroke volume.

**diastole** The phase of the cardiac cycle in which the heart relaxes between contractions. Diastole represents the period of time when the two ventricles are dilated by the blood flowing into them.

**diastolic pressure** The force of the blood exerted against the artery walls when the heart relaxes or fills.

**mean arterial pressure (MAP)** An approximation of the average pressure in the systemic circulation throughout the cardiac cycle; used in hemodynamic monitoring. Mean arterial pressure must be between 60 and 70 mm Hg for adequate organ perfusion.

**postural (orthostatic) hypotension** A blood pressure decrease of more than 10 to 15 mm Hg of the systolic pressure or a decrease of more than 10 mm Hg of the diastolic pressure and a 10% to 20% increase in heart rate. Postural hypotension occurs when the client's blood pressure is not maintained adequately when moving from a lying to a sitting or standing position.

**preload** The volume of blood stretching the left ventricle at the end of diastole. Preload is determined by the total circulating blood volume and is increased by an increase in venous return to the heart.

**pulmonary artery wedge pressure (PAWP)** The measurement obtained during momentary balloon inflation of a pulmonary artery catheter; it is reflective of left ventricular end-diastolic pressure. The PAWP normally ranges between 4 and 12 mm Hg. Decreased PAWP indicates hypovolemia, whereas increased PAWP indicates hypervolemia, left ventricular failure, or mitral regurgitation.

**pulse pressure** The difference between the systolic and diastolic pressure. Normal pulse pressure is 30 to 40 mm Hg.

**stretch receptors** Nerve endings located in the vena cava and the right atrium that respond to pressure changes affecting circulatory blood volume. When the blood pressure decreases because of hypovolemia, a sympathetic response occurs, causing

an increased heart rate and blood vessel constriction. When the blood pressure increases because of hypervolemia, an opposite effect occurs.

**stroke volume** The amount of blood ejected from the left ventricle with each contraction. The normal stroke volume is 70 to 130 mL/heartbeat. The stroke volume can be affected by preload, afterload, contractility, and the Frank-Starling law.

**systole** The phase of contraction of the heart, especially of the ventricles, during which blood is forced into the aorta and pulmonary artery.

**systolic pressure** The maximum pressure of blood exerted against the artery walls when the heart contracts.

**venous pressure** The force exerted by the blood against the vein walls. Normal venous pressures are highest in the extremities (5 to 14 cm H<sub>2</sub>O in the arm), and lowest closest to the heart (6 to 8 cm H<sub>2</sub>O in the inferior vena cava).

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points focus on assessment data related to cardiovascular risks, health screening and promotion, complications of the various cardiovascular disorders, emergency implementation measures, and client education. Focus on the assessment findings in angina, myocardial infarction, heart failure and pulmonary edema, pericarditis, aneurysms, hypertension, and arterial and venous disorders. You must be able to identify the most common dysrhythmias and determine the appropriate interventions for these dysrhythmias, including the use of a pacemaker. Focus also on the care of the client following diagnostic treatments and surgical procedures. Note appropriate and therapeutic client positions, particularly with arterial and venous disorders of the extremities. Focus on treatments and medications prescribed for the various cardiovascular disorders and client teaching related to prescribed treatment plans. Be familiar with the components related to cardiac rehabilitation.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Consulting with members of the health care team

Establishing priorities

Recognizing the need for consultations and referrals

Maintaining asepsis

Maintaining standard and other precautions

Verifying that informed consent related to treatments and procedures has been obtained

Upholding client rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing alterations in lifestyle

Implementing cardiovascular assessment techniques

Mobilizing appropriate community resources

Preventing cardiovascular disease

Promoting cardiac rehabilitation

Providing health screening and health promotion programs

Teaching related to diet therapy, exercise, and medications

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assisting the client to accept lifestyle changes

Considering religious, spiritual, and cultural influences on health

Discussing grief and loss and end-of-life issues

Discussing situational role changes

Discussing unexpected body image changes

Identifying coping mechanisms

Identifying fear, anxiety, and denial

Identifying support systems

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering intravenous medications

Assisting with basic care measures

Discussing activity limitations and promoting rest and sleep

Monitoring for complications related to cardiovascular disorders

Monitoring for therapeutic effects of medications

Monitoring hemodynamics

Monitoring of cardiac enzyme and troponin levels and other laboratory values related to the cardiovascular system

Providing interventions required in emergencies

Providing nonpharmacological and pharmacological comfort interventions

Responding to medical emergencies



## CHAPTER 60

# Cardiovascular System

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A hospitalized client with a diagnosis of abdominal aortic aneurysm suddenly complains of severe back pain and shortness of breath. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 812.*

### **I. Anatomy and Physiology**

#### **A. Heart and heart wall layers**

1. The heart is located in the left side of the mediastinum.
2. The heart consists of three layers.
  - a. The epicardium is the outermost layer of the heart.
  - b. The myocardium is the middle layer and is the actual contracting muscle of the heart.
  - c. The endocardium is the innermost layer and lines the inner chambers and heart valves.

## **B. Pericardial sac**

1. Encases and protects the heart from trauma and infection
2. Has two layers
  - a. The parietal pericardium is the tough, fibrous outer membrane that attaches anteriorly to the lower half of the sternum, posteriorly to the thoracic vertebrae, and inferiorly to the diaphragm.
  - b. The visceral pericardium is the thin, inner layer that closely adheres to the heart.
3. The pericardial space is between the parietal and visceral layers; it holds 5 to 20 mL of pericardial fluid, lubricates the pericardial surfaces, and cushions the heart.

## **C. There are four heart chambers**

1. The right atrium receives deoxygenated blood from the body via the superior and inferior vena cava.
2. The right ventricle receives blood from the right atrium and pumps it to the lungs via the pulmonary artery.
3. The left atrium receives oxygenated blood from the lungs via four pulmonary veins.
4. The left ventricle is the largest and most muscular chamber; it receives oxygenated blood from the lungs via the left atrium and pumps blood into the systemic circulation via the aorta.

## **D. There are four valves in the heart.**

1. There are two atrioventricular valves, the tricuspid and the mitral, which lie between the atria and ventricles.
  - a. The tricuspid valve is located on the right side of the heart.
  - b. The bicuspid (mitral) valve is located on the left side of the heart.
  - c. The atrioventricular valves close at the beginning of ventricular contraction and prevent blood from flowing back into the atria from the ventricles; these valves open when the ventricles relax.
2. There are two semilunar valves, the pulmonic and the aortic.
  - a. The pulmonic semilunar valve lies between the right ventricle and the pulmonary artery.
  - b. The aortic semilunar valve lies between the left ventricle and the aorta.
  - c. The semilunar valves prevent blood from flowing back into the ventricles during relaxation; they open during ventricular contraction and close when the ventricles begin to relax.

#### **E. Sinoatrial (SA) node**

1. The main pacemaker that initiates each heartbeat
2. It is located at the junction of the superior vena cava and the right atrium.
3. The sinoatrial node generates electrical impulses at 60 to 100 times per minute and is controlled by the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

#### **F. Atrioventricular (AV) node**

1. Located in the lower aspect of the atrial septum
2. Receives electrical impulses from the sinoatrial node

3. If the sinoatrial node fails, the atrioventricular node can initiate and sustain a heart rate of 40 to 60 beats/minute.

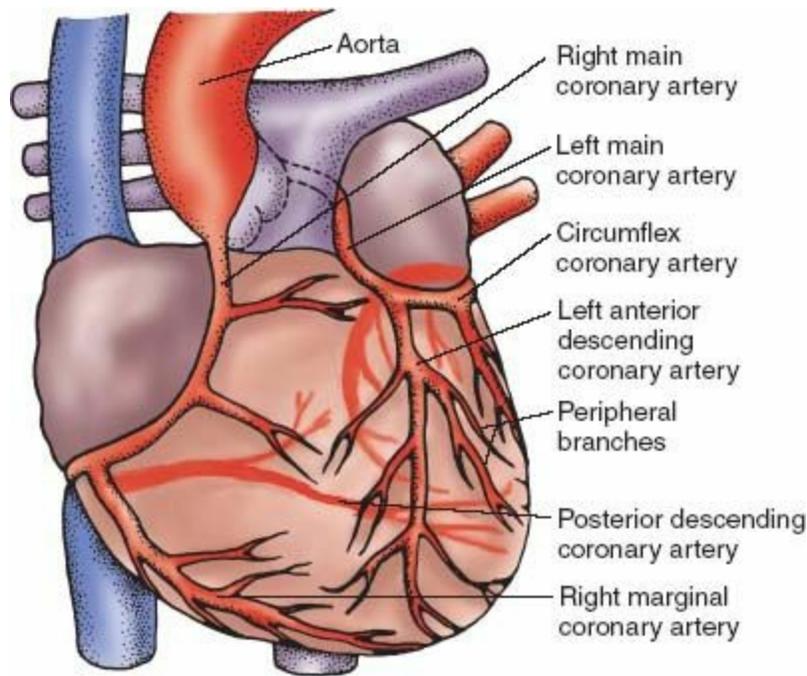
#### **G. The bundle of His**

1. A continuation of the AV node; located at the interventricular septum
2. It branches into the right bundle branch, which extends down the right side of the interventricular septum, and the left bundle branch, which extends into the left ventricle.
3. The right and left bundle branches terminate in the Purkinje fibers.

#### **H. Purkinje fibers**

1. Purkinje fibers are a diffuse network of conducting strands located beneath the ventricular endocardium.
2. These fibers spread the wave of depolarization through the ventricles.
3. Purkinje fibers can act as the pacemaker with a rate between 20 and 40 beats/minute when higher pacemakers (such as the sinoatrial and atrioventricular nodes) fail.

#### **I. Coronary arteries (Fig. 60-1)**



**FIGURE 60-1** Coronary arterial system. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

1. The right main coronary artery supplies the right atrium and ventricle, the inferior portion of the left ventricle, the posterior septal wall, and the sinoatrial and atrioventricular nodes.
2. The left main coronary artery consists of two major branches, the left anterior descending and the circumflex arteries.
3. The left anterior descending artery supplies blood to the anterior wall of the left ventricle, the anterior ventricular septum, and the apex of the left ventricle.
4. The circumflex artery supplies blood to the left atrium and the lateral and posterior surfaces of the left ventricle.

**⚠** The coronary arteries supply the capillaries of the myocardium with blood.

If blockage occurs in these arteries, the client is at risk for myocardial infarction.

## J. Heart sounds

1. The first heart sound ( $S_1$ ) is heard as the atrioventricular valves close and is heard loudest at the apex of the heart.
2. The second heart sound ( $S_2$ ) is heard when the semilunar valves close and is heard loudest at the base of the heart.
3. A third heart sound ( $S_3$ ) may be heard if ventricular wall compliance is decreased and structures in the ventricular wall vibrate; this can occur in conditions such as heart failure or valvular regurgitation. However, a third heart sound may be normal in individuals younger than 30 years.
4. A fourth heart sound ( $S_4$ ) may be heard on atrial **systole** if resistance to ventricular filling is present; this is an abnormal finding, and the causes include cardiac hypertrophy, disease, or injury to the ventricular wall.

## K. Heart rate ▲

1. The faster the heart rate, the less time the heart has for filling, and the **cardiac output** decreases.
2. An increase in heart rate increases oxygen consumption.
3. The normal sinus heart rate is 60 to 100 beats/minute.
4. Sinus tachycardia is a rate more than 100 beats/minute.
5. Sinus bradycardia is a rate less than 60 beats/minute.

## L. Autonomic nervous system

1. Stimulation of sympathetic nerve fibers releases the neurotransmitter norepinephrine, producing an increased heart rate, increased conduction speed through the atrioventricular node, increased atrial and ventricular **contractility**, and peripheral vasoconstriction. Stimulation occurs when a decrease in pressure is detected.
2. Stimulation of the parasympathetic nerve fibers releases the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which decreases the heart rate and lessens atrial and ventricular contractility and **conductivity**. Stimulation occurs when an increase in pressure is detected.

#### M. Blood pressure (BP) control

1. **Baroreceptors**, also called *pressoreceptors*, are located in the walls of the aortic arch and carotid sinuses.
2. Baroreceptors are specialized nerve endings affected by changes in the arterial BP.
3. Increases in **arterial pressure** stimulate baroreceptors, and the heart rate and arterial pressure decrease.
4. Decreases in arterial pressure reduce stimulation of the baroreceptors and vasoconstriction occurs, as does an increase in heart rate.
5. **Stretch receptors**, located in the vena cava and the right atrium, respond to pressure changes that affect circulatory blood volume.
6. When the BP decreases as a result of hypovolemia, a sympathetic response occurs, causing an increased heart rate and blood vessel constriction; when the

BP increases as a result of hypervolemia, an opposite effect occurs.

7. Antidiuretic hormone (vasopressin) influences BP indirectly by regulating vascular volume.
  8. Increases in blood volume result in decreased antidiuretic hormone release, increasing diuresis, decreasing blood volume, and thus decreasing BP.
  9. Decreases in blood volume result in increased antidiuretic hormone release; this promotes an increase in blood volume and therefore BP.
  10. Renin, a potent vasoconstrictor, causes the BP to increase.
  11. Renin converts angiotensinogen to angiotensin I; angiotensin I is then converted to angiotensin II in the lungs.
  12. Angiotensin II stimulates the release of aldosterone, which promotes water and sodium retention by the kidneys; this action increases blood volume and BP.
- N.** The vascular system ▲
1. Arteries are vessels through which the blood passes away from the heart to various parts of the body; they convey highly oxygenated blood from the left side of heart to the tissues.
  2. Arterioles control the blood flow into the capillaries.
  3. Capillaries allow the exchange of fluid and nutrients between the blood and the interstitial spaces.
  4. Venules receive blood from the capillary bed and move blood into the veins.
  5. Veins transport deoxygenated blood from the tissues back to the right heart and then to the lungs for oxygenation.

6. Valves help return blood to the heart against the force of gravity.
7. The lymphatics drain the tissues and return the tissue fluid to the blood.

## II. Diagnostic Tests and Procedures

### A. Cardiac markers (refer to [Chapter 11](#) for further information) ▲

1. CK-MB (creatine kinase, myocardial muscle)
  - a. An elevation in value indicates myocardial damage.
  - b. An elevation occurs within hours and peaks at 18 hours following an acute ischemic attack.
  - c. Normal value is 0% to 5% of total; total CK is 26 to 174 units/L.
2. Troponin
  - a. Troponin is composed of three proteins—troponin C, cardiac troponin I, and cardiac troponin T.
  - b. Troponin I especially has a high affinity for myocardial injury; it rises within 3 hours and persists for up to 7 to 10 days.
  - c. Normal values are low, with troponin I being lower than 0.6 ng/mL and troponin T lower than 0.1 ng/mL; thus, any rise can indicate myocardial cell damage.
3. Myoglobin
  - a. Myoglobin is an oxygen-binding protein found in cardiac and skeletal muscle.
  - b. The level rises within 2 hours after cell death, with a rapid decline in the level after 7 hours.

## **B. Complete blood count**

1. The red blood cell count decreases in rheumatic heart disease and infective endocarditis and increases in conditions characterized by inadequate tissue oxygenation.
2. The white blood cell count increases in infectious and inflammatory diseases of the heart and after myocardial infarction (MI) because large numbers of white blood cells are needed to dispose of the necrotic tissue resulting from the infarction. ▲
3. An elevated hematocrit level can result from vascular volume depletion.
4. Decreases in hemoglobin and hematocrit levels can indicate anemia.

**C. Blood coagulation factors:** An increase in coagulation factors can occur during and after MI, which places the client at greater risk for thrombophlebitis and extension of clots in the coronary arteries. ▲

## **D. Serum lipids**

1. The lipid profile measures serum cholesterol, triglyceride, and lipoprotein levels.
2. The lipid profile is used to assess the risk of developing coronary artery disease.
3. The desirable range for serum cholesterol is lower than 200 mg/dL, with low-density lipoprotein cholesterol lower than 130 mg/dL and high-density lipoprotein cholesterol at 30 to 70 mg/dL (based on health care provider [HCP] guidelines).
4. Lipoprotein-*a* or *Lp(a)*, a modified form of LDL, increases atherosclerotic plaques and increases clots; value should be less than 30 mg/dL.

- E. Homocysteine:** Elevated levels may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease; level should be less than 14 mmol/dL.
- F. Highly sensitive C-reactive protein (hsCRP):** Detects an inflammatory process such as that associated with the development of atherothrombosis; a level less than 1 mg/dL is considered low risk and a level over 3 mg/dL places the client at high risk for heart disease.
- G. Microalbuminuria:** A small amount of protein in the urine has been a marker for endothelial dysfunction in cardiovascular disease.

## **H. Electrolytes**

### **1. Potassium** ▲

- a.** Hypokalemia causes increased cardiac electrical instability, ventricular dysrhythmias, and increased risk of digoxin toxicity.
- b.** In hypokalemia, the electrocardiogram shows flattening and inversion of the T wave, the appearance of a U wave, and ST depression.
- c.** Hyperkalemia causes asystole and ventricular dysrhythmias.
- d.** In hyperkalemia, the electrocardiogram may show tall peaked T waves, widened QRS complexes, prolonged PR intervals, or flat P waves.

### **2. Sodium**

- a.** The serum sodium level decreases with the use of diuretics.
- b.** The serum sodium level decreases in heart failure, indicating water excess.

## **I. Calcium**

- 1.** Hypocalcemia can cause ventricular dysrhythmias, prolonged ST and QT

intervals, and cardiac arrest.

2. Hypercalcemia can cause a shortened ST segment and widened T wave, atrioventricular block, tachycardia or bradycardia, digitalis hypersensitivity, and cardiac arrest.

**J. Phosphorus level:** Phosphorus levels should be interpreted with calcium levels because the kidneys retain or excrete one electrolyte in an inverse relationship to the other.

### **K. Magnesium**

1. A low magnesium level can cause ventricular tachycardia and fibrillation.
2. Electrocardiographic changes that may be observed with hypomagnesemia include tall T waves and depressed ST segments.
3. A high magnesium level can cause muscle weakness, hypotension, and bradycardia.
4. Electrocardiographic changes that may be observed with hypermagnesemia include a prolonged PR interval and widened QRS complex.

**⚠️ Electrolyte and mineral imbalances can cause cardiac electrical instability that can result in life-threatening dysrhythmias.**

**L. Blood urea nitrogen:** The blood urea nitrogen level is elevated in heart disorders that adversely affect renal circulation, such as heart failure and cardiogenic shock.

**M. Blood glucose:** An acute cardiac episode can elevate the blood glucose level.

**N. B-type natriuretic peptide (BNP) ▲**

1. BNP is released in response to atrial and ventricular stretch; it serves as a marker

for heart failure.

2. BNP levels should be lower than 100 pg/mL; the higher the level, the more severe the heart failure.

## O. Chest x-ray

### 1. Description

- a. Radiography of the chest is done to determine the size, silhouette, and position of the heart.
- b. Specific pathological changes are difficult to determine on x-rays, but anatomical changes can be seen.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Prepare the client for radiography, explaining the purpose and procedure.
- b. Remove jewelry.
- c. Ensure that the client is not pregnant.

## P. Electrocardiography (Box 60-1)

### **BOX 60-1** Basics of Electrocardiography

An electrocardiogram (ECG) reflects the electrical activity of cardiac cells and records electrical activity at a speed of 25 mm/second.

An electrocardiographic strip consists of horizontal lines representing seconds and vertical lines representing voltage.

Each small square represents 0.04 second.

Each large square represents 0.20 second.

The P wave represents atrial depolarization.

The PR interval represents the time it takes an impulse to travel from the atria through the atrioventricular node, bundle of His, and bundle branches to the Purkinje fibers.

Normal PR interval duration ranges from 0.12 to 0.2 second.

The PR interval is measured from the beginning of the P wave to the end of the PR segment.

The QRS complex represents ventricular depolarization.

Normal QRS complex duration ranges from 0.04 to 0.1 second.

The Q wave appears as the first negative deflection in the QRS complex and reflects initial ventricular septal depolarization.

The R wave is the first positive deflection in the QRS complex.

The S wave appears as the second negative deflection in the QRS complex.

The J point marks the end of the QRS complex and the beginning of the ST segment.

The QRS duration is measured from the end of the PR segment to the J point.

The ST segment represents early ventricular repolarization.

The T wave represents ventricular repolarization and ventricular diastole.

The U wave may follow the T wave.

A prominent U wave may indicate an electrolyte abnormality, such as hypokalemia.

The QT interval represents ventricular refractory time or the total time required for ventricular depolarization and repolarization.

The QT interval is measured from the beginning of the QRS complex to the end of the

T wave.

The QT interval normally lasts 0.32 to 0.4 second but varies with the client's heart rate, age, and gender.

**1. Description:** This common noninvasive diagnostic test records the electrical activity of the heart and is useful for detecting cardiac dysrhythmias, location and extent of MI, and cardiac hypertrophy and for evaluation of the effectiveness of cardiac medications.

**2. Interventions**

- a.** Determine the client's ability to lie still; advise the client to lie still, breathe normally, and refrain from talking during the test.
- b.** Reassure the client that an electrical shock will not occur.
- c.** Document any cardiac medications the client is taking.

**Q. Holter monitoring**

**1. Description**

- a.** In this noninvasive test, the client wears a Holter monitor and an electrocardiographic tracing is recorded continuously over a period of 24 hours or more while the client performs his or her activities of daily living.
- b.** The Holter monitor identifies dysrhythmias if they occur and evaluates the effectiveness of antidysrhythmics or pacemaker therapy.

**2. Interventions**

- a.** Instruct the client to resume normal daily activities and to maintain a diary

documenting activities and any symptoms that may develop for correlation with the electrocardiographic tracing. ▲

- b.** Instruct the client to avoid tub baths or showers because they will interfere with the electrocardiographic recorder device.

## **R.** Echocardiography

### **1.** Description

- a.** This noninvasive procedure is based on the principles of ultrasound and evaluates structural and functional changes in the heart.
- b.** Heart chamber size is measured, ejection fraction is calculated, and flow gradient across the valves is determined.
- c.** Transesophageal echocardiography may be performed, in which the echocardiogram is done through the esophagus; this is an invasive exam and requires pre- and postprocedure preparation and care similar to endoscopy procedures.

- 2.** Interventions: Determine the client's ability to lie still, and advise the client to lie still, breathe normally, and refrain from talking during the test.

## **S.** Exercise electrocardiography testing (stress test)

### **1.** Description

- a.** This noninvasive test studies the heart during activity and detects and evaluates coronary artery disease.
- b.** Treadmill testing is the most commonly used mode of stress testing.
- c.** Stress testing may be used with myocardial radionuclide testing (perfusion

imaging), at which point the procedure becomes invasive because a radionuclide must be injected.

- d. If the client is unable to tolerate exercise, an intravenous (IV) infusion of dipyridamole (Persantine), dobutamine hydrochloride, or adenosine (Adenocard) is given to dilate the coronary arteries and simulate the effect of exercise.
- e. An informed consent is required if a radionuclide is to be injected.

## 2. Preprocedure interventions

- a. Obtain an informed consent if required.
- b. Provide adequate rest the night before the procedure.
- c. Instruct the client to eat a light meal 1 to 2 hours before the procedure.
- d. Instruct the client to avoid smoking, alcohol, and caffeine before the procedure.
- e. Instruct the client to ask the HCP about taking prescribed medication on the day of the procedure; theophylline products are usually withheld 12 hours before the test and calcium channel blockers and  $\beta$ -blockers are usually withheld on the day of the test to allow the heart rate to increase during the stress portion of the test.
- f. Instruct the client to wear nonconstrictive, comfortable clothing and supportive rubber-soled shoes for the exercise stress test. 🟩
- g. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if any chest pain, dizziness, or shortness of breath occurs during the procedure.

## 3. Postprocedure interventions: Instruct the client to avoid taking a hot bath or

shower for at least 1 to 2 hours.

## **T. Digital subtraction angiography**

### **1. Description**

- a.** This test combines x-ray techniques and a computerized subtraction technique with fluoroscopy for visualization of the cardiovascular system.
- b.** A contrast medium (dye) is injected.

### **2. Preprocedure interventions**

- a.** Assess for allergies to seafood, iodine, or radiopaque dyes. If allergic, the client may be premedicated with antihistamines and corticosteroids to prevent a reaction. 🟩
- b.** Obtain informed consent.

### **3. Postprocedure interventions**

- a.** Monitor vital signs.
- b.** Assess injection site for bleeding or discomfort.

## **U. Myocardial nuclear perfusion imaging (MNPI)**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Nuclear cardiology involves the use of radionuclide techniques and scanning for cardiovascular assessment.
- b.** The most common tests include technetium pyrophosphate scanning, thallium imaging, and multigated cardiac blood pool imaging; can evaluate cardiac motion and calculate the ejection fraction.

### **2. Preprocedure interventions**

- a. Obtain informed consent.
- b. Inform the client that a small amount of radioisotope will be injected and that the radiation exposure and risks are minimal. ▲

### 3. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Assess vital signs.
- b. Assess injection site for bleeding or discomfort.
- c. Inform the client that fatigue is possible.

## V. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

### 1. Description

- a. This is a noninvasive diagnostic test that produces an image of the heart or great vessels through the interaction of magnetic fields, radio waves, and atomic nuclei.
- b. It provides information on chamber size and thickness, valve and ventricular function, and blood flow through the great vessels and coronary arteries.

### 2. Preprocedure interventions

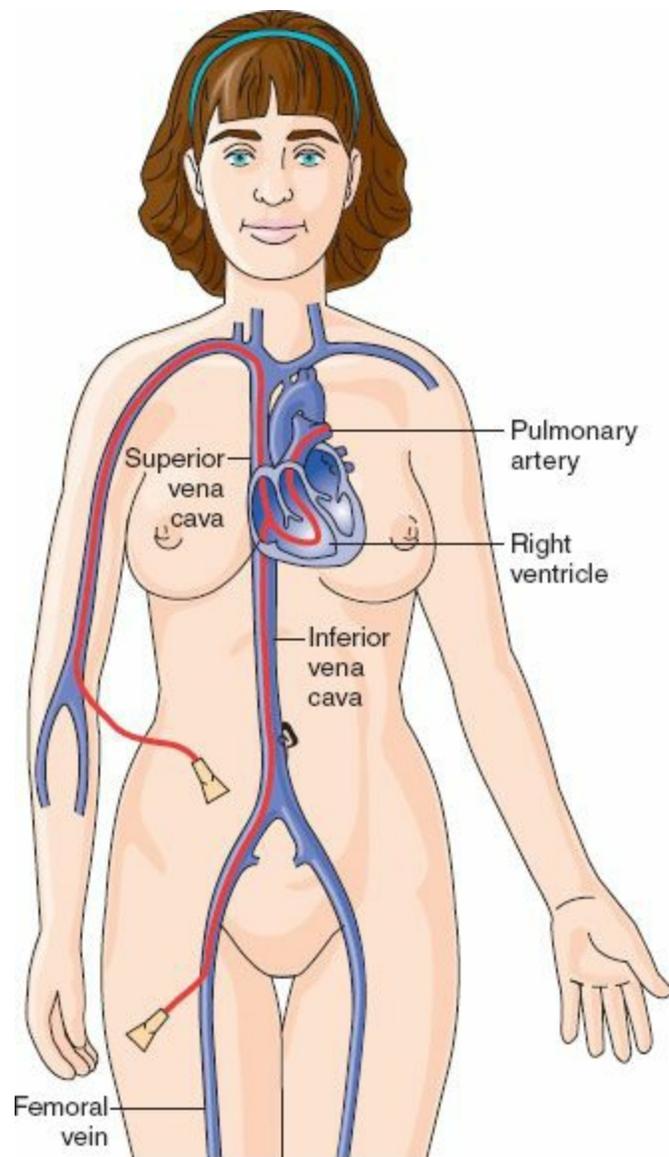
- a. Evaluate the client for the presence of a pacemaker or other implanted items that present a contraindication to the test.
- b. Ensure that the client has removed all metallic objects such as a watch, other jewelry, clothing with metal fasteners, and metal hair fasteners.
- c. Inform the client that she or he may experience claustrophobia while in the scanner.

## W. Electrophysiological studies: An invasive procedure in which a programmed

electrical stimulation of the heart is induced to cause dysrhythmias and conduction defects; assists in finding an accurate diagnosis and aids in determining treatment.

**X.** Electron-beam computed tomography scan (EBCT): Determines whether calcifications are present in the arteries; a coronary artery calcium (CAC) score is provided (a score higher than 400 requires intensive preventive treatment).

**Y.** Cardiac catheterization (Fig. 60-2)



**FIGURE 60-2** Right-sided heart catheterization. The catheter is inserted into the

femoral vein and advanced into the inferior vena cava (or, if into an antecubital or basilic vein, through the superior vena cava), right atrium, and right ventricle and into the pulmonary artery. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

## 1. Description

- a. An invasive test involving insertion of a catheter into the heart and surrounding vessels
- b. Obtains information about the structure and performance of the heart chambers and valves and the coronary circulation

## 2. Preprocedure interventions ▲

- a. Obtain informed consent.
- b. Assess for allergies to seafood, iodine, or radiopaque dyes; if allergic, the client may be premedicated with antihistamines and corticosteroids to prevent a reaction.
- c. Withhold solid food for 6 to 8 hours and liquids for 4 hours as prescribed to prevent vomiting and aspiration during the procedure.
- d. Document the client's height and weight because these data will be needed to determine the amount of dye to be administered.
- e. Document baseline vital signs and note the quality and presence of peripheral pulses for postprocedure comparison.
- f. Inform the client that a local anesthetic will be administered before catheter insertion.

- g.** Inform the client that he or she may feel fatigued because of the need to lie still and quiet on a hard table for up to 2 hours.
- h.** Inform the client that he or she may feel a fluttery feeling as the catheter passes through the heart, a flushed, warm feeling when the dye is injected, a desire to cough, and palpitations caused by heart irritability.
- i.** Prepare the insertion site by shaving and cleaning with an antiseptic solution if prescribed.
- j.** Administer preprocedure medications such as sedatives if prescribed.
- k.** Insert an IV line if prescribed.

**⚠** If a client taking metformin (Glucophage) is scheduled to undergo a procedure requiring the administration of iodine dye, the metformin is withheld 24 hours prior because of the risk of lactic acidosis. The medication is not resumed until directed to do so by the HCP (usually 48 hours after the procedure or after renal function studies are done and the results are evaluated).

### **3.** Postprocedure interventions

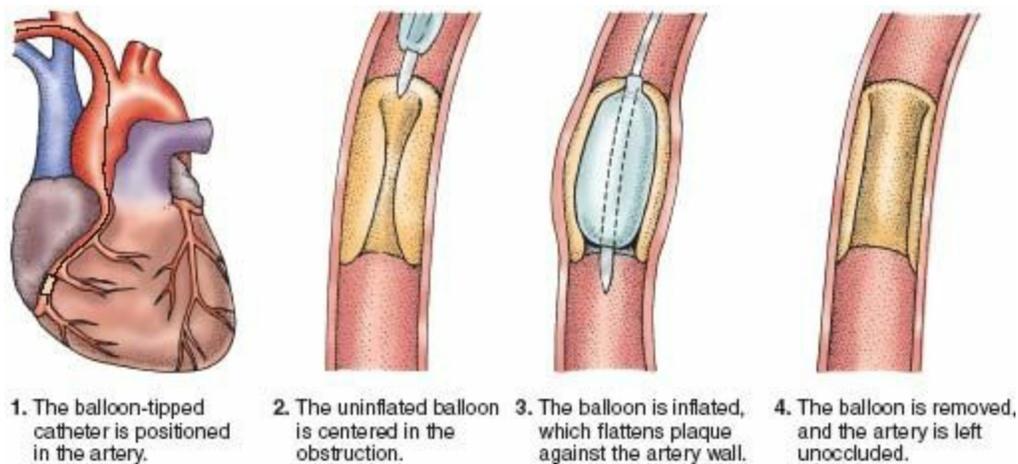
- a.** Monitor vital signs and cardiac rhythm for dysrhythmias at least every 30 minutes for 2 hours initially.
- b.** Assess for chest pain and, if dysrhythmias or chest pain occurs, notify the HCP.
- c.** Monitor peripheral pulses and the color, warmth, and sensation of the extremity distal to the insertion site at least every 30 minutes for 2 hours initially.
- d.** Notify the HCP if the client complains of numbness and tingling, if the extremity becomes cool, pale, or cyanotic, or if loss of the peripheral pulses occurs.

- e. Monitor the pressure dressing for bleeding or hematoma formation.
- f. Apply a sandbag or compression device (if prescribed) to the insertion site to provide additional pressure if required.
- g. Monitor for bleeding; if bleeding occurs, apply manual pressure immediately and notify the HCP.
- h. Monitor for hematoma; if a hematoma develops, notify the HCP.
- i. Keep extremity extended for 4 to 6 hours, as prescribed, keeping the leg straight to prevent arterial occlusion.
- j. Maintain strict bed rest for 6 to 12 hours, as prescribed; however, the client may turn from side to side. Do not elevate the head of the bed more than 15 degrees.
- k. If the antecubital vessel was used, immobilize the arm with an armboard.
- l. Encourage fluid intake, if not contraindicated, to promote renal excretion of the dye and to replace fluid loss caused by the osmotic diuretic effect of the dye.
- m. Monitor for nausea, vomiting, rash, or other signs of hypersensitivity to the dye.

### **III. Therapeutic Management**

#### **A. Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA)**

##### **1. Description (Fig. 60-3)**



**FIGURE 60-3** Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. An invasive, nonsurgical technique in which one or more arteries is (are) dilated with a balloon catheter to open the vessel lumen and improve arterial blood flow
- b. PTCA may be used for clients with an evolving myocardial infarction (MI), alone or in combination with medications to achieve reperfusion.
- c. The client can experience reocclusion after the procedure; thus, the procedure may need to be repeated.
- d. Complications can include arterial dissection or rupture, embolization of plaque fragments, spasm, and acute MI.
- e. Firm commitment is needed on the client's part to stop smoking, adhere to diet restrictions, lose weight, alter his or her exercise pattern, and stop any behaviors that lead to progression of artery occlusion. ▲

## 2. Preprocedure interventions ▲

- a. Maintain NPO status after midnight.
- b. Obtain informed consent, allergy assessment to iodine, and withhold metformin (as for cardiac catheterization).
- c. Prepare the groin area with antiseptic soap and shave per institutional procedure and as prescribed.
- d. Assess baseline vital signs and peripheral pulses.
- e. Instruct the client that chest pain may occur during balloon inflation and to report it if it does occur.

### 3. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs closely.
- b. Assess distal pulses in both extremities.
- c. Maintain bed rest as prescribed, keeping the limb straight for 6 to 8 hours.
- d. Administer anticoagulants such as intravenous heparin and antiplatelet agents as prescribed to prevent thrombus formation.
- e. Intravenous nitroglycerin may be prescribed to prevent coronary artery vasospasm.
- f. Encourage fluids, if not contraindicated, to enhance renal excretion of dye.
- g. Instruct the client in the administration of nitrates, calcium channel blockers, antiplatelet agents, and anticoagulants as prescribed.
- h. Instruct the client to take acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) daily permanently if prescribed.
- i. Assist the client with planning lifestyle modifications.

## **B. Laser-assisted angioplasty**

### **1. Description**

- a.** A laser probe is advanced through a cannula similar to that used for PTCA.
- b.** Laser-assisted angioplasty is used also for clients with small occlusions in the distal superficial femoral, proximal popliteal, and common iliac arteries, and in coronary arteries.
- c.** Heat from the laser vaporizes the plaque to open the occluded artery.

### **2. Preprocedure and postprocedure interventions**

- a.** Care is similar to that for PTCA.
- b.** Monitor for complications of coronary dissection, acute occlusion, perforation, embolism, and MI.

## **C. Coronary artery stents**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Coronary artery stents (bare metal or drug-eluting) are used in conjunction with PTCA to provide a supportive scaffold to eliminate the risk of acute coronary vessel closure and to improve long-term patency of the vessel. ▲
- b.** A balloon catheter bearing the stent is inserted into the coronary artery and positioned at the site of occlusion; balloon inflation deploys the stent.
- c.** When placed in the coronary artery, the stent reopens the blocked artery.

### **2. Preprocedure and postprocedure interventions**

- a.** Care is similar to that for PTCA.
- b.** Acute thrombosis is a major concern following the procedure; the client is

placed on antiplatelet therapy such as clopidogrel (Plavix) and acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) for several months following the procedure. Length of time of antiplatelet therapy is determined by the type of stent that has been deployed.



- c. Monitor for complications of the procedure such as stent migration or occlusion, coronary artery dissection, and bleeding resulting from anticoagulation.

## **D. Atherectomy**

### **1. Description**

- a. Atherectomy removes plaque from a coronary artery by the use of a cutting chamber on the inserted catheter or a rotating blade that pulverizes the plaque.
- b. Atherectomy is also used to improve blood flow to ischemic limbs in individuals with peripheral arterial disease.

### **2. Preprocedure and postprocedure interventions**

- a. Care is similar to that for PTCA.
- b. Monitor for complications of perforation, embolus, and reocclusion.

## **E. Transmyocardial revascularization**

1. May be used for clients with widespread atherosclerosis involving vessels that are too small and numerous for replacement or balloon catheterization; performed through a small chest incision
2. Transmyocardial revascularization uses a high-powered laser that creates 20 to 24 channels through the ventricular muscle of the left ventricle; blood enters these small channels, providing the affected region of the heart with oxygenated blood.
3. The opening on the surface of the heart heals; however, the main channels remain

and perfuse the myocardium.

## **F. Peripheral arterial revascularization**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Performed to increase arterial blood flow to the affected limb
- b.** Inflow procedures involve bypassing the arterial occlusion above the superficial femoral arteries
- c.** Outflow procedures involve bypassing the arterial occlusions at or below the superficial femoral arteries.
- d.** Graft material is sutured above and below the occlusion to facilitate blood flow around the occlusion.

### **2. Preoperative interventions**

- a.** Assess baseline vital signs and peripheral pulses.
- b.** Insert an IV line and urinary catheter as prescribed.
- c.** Maintain a central venous catheter and/or arterial line if inserted.

### **3. Postoperative interventions** ▲

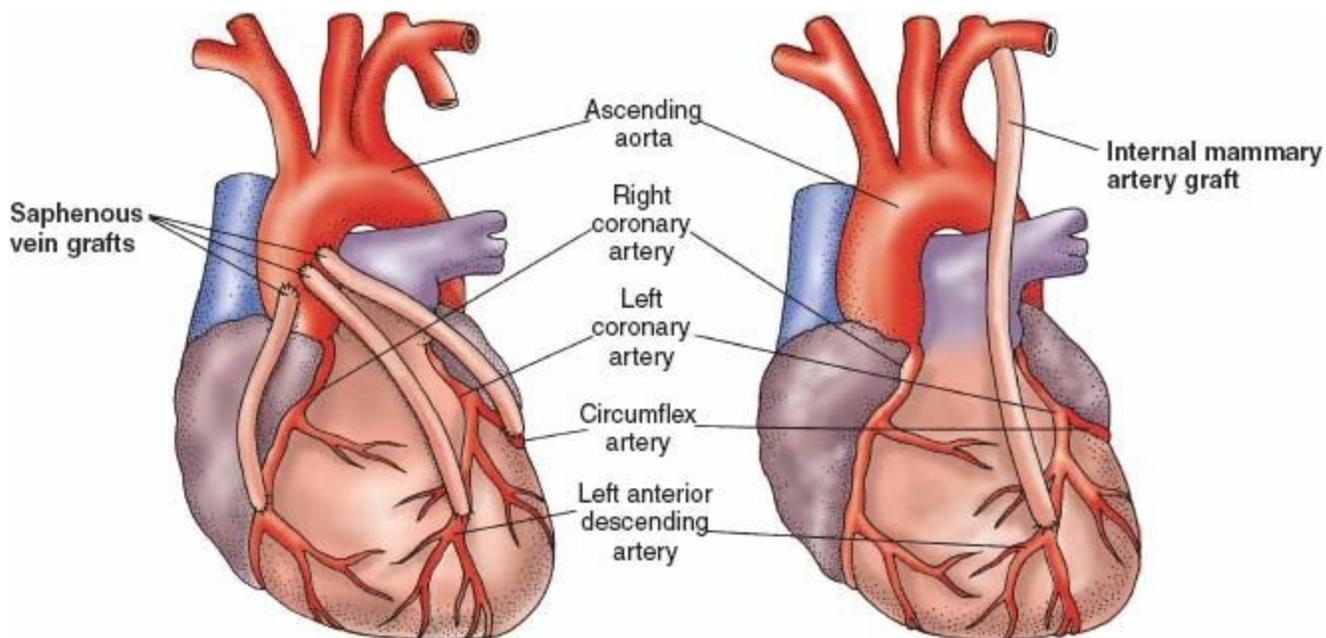
- a.** Assess vital signs.
- b.** Monitor the BP and notify the HCP if changes occur.
- c.** Monitor for hypotension, which may indicate hypovolemia.
- d.** Monitor for hypertension, which may place stress on the graft and cause clot formation.
- e.** Maintain bed rest for 24 hours as prescribed.
- f.** Instruct the client to keep the affected extremity straight, limit movement, and

avoid bending the knee and hip.

- g.** Monitor for warmth, redness, and edema, which often are expected outcomes because of increased blood flow.
- h.** Monitor for graft occlusion, which often occurs within the first 24 hours.
- i.** Assess peripheral pulses and for adverse changes in color and temperature of the extremity.
- j.** Encourage coughing, deep breathing, and the use of incentive spirometry.
- k.** Maintain NPO status, with progression to clear liquids as prescribed.
- l.** Use strict aseptic technique when in contact with the incision.
- m.** Assess the incision for drainage, warmth, or swelling.
- n.** Monitor for excessive bleeding (a small amount of bloody drainage is expected).
- o.** Monitor the area over the graft for hardness, tenderness, and warmth, which may indicate infection; if this occurs, notify the HCP immediately.
- p.** Instruct the client about proper foot care and measures to prevent ulcer formation.
- q.** Instruct the client to take medications as prescribed.
- r.** Instruct the client in how to care for the incision.
- s.** Assist the client in modifying lifestyle to prevent further plaque formation.

 **Following arterial revascularization, monitor for a sharp increase in pain because pain is frequently the first indicator of postoperative graft occlusion. If signs of graft occlusion occur, notify the HCP immediately.**

## G. Coronary artery bypass grafting (Fig. 60-4)



**FIGURE 60-4** Two methods of coronary artery bypass grafting. The procedure used depends on the nature of the coronary disease, the condition of the vessels available for grafting, and the client's health status. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

### 1. Description ▲

- a. The occluded coronary arteries are bypassed with the client's own venous or arterial blood vessels.
- b. The saphenous vein, internal mammary artery, or other arteries may be used to bypass lesions in the coronary arteries.
- c. Coronary artery bypass grafting is performed when the client does not respond to medical management of coronary artery disease or when vessels are

severely occluded.

## **2. Preoperative interventions**

- a.** Familiarize the client and family with the cardiac surgical critical care unit.
- b.** Inform the client to expect a sternal incision, possible arm or leg incision(s), one or two chest tubes, a Foley catheter, and several IV fluid catheters.
- c.** Inform the client that an endotracheal tube will be in place and that he or she will be unable to speak.
- d.** Advise the client that he or she will be on mechanical ventilation and to breathe with the ventilator and not fight it.
- e.** Instruct the client that postoperative pain is expected and that pain medication will be available.
- f.** Instruct the client in how to splint the chest incision, cough and deep-breathe, use the incentive spirometer, and perform arm and leg exercises.
- g.** Encourage the client and family to discuss anxieties and fears related to surgery.
- h.** Note that prescribed medications may be discontinued preoperatively (usually, diuretics 2 to 3 days before surgery, digoxin 12 hours before surgery, and aspirin and anticoagulants 1 week before surgery).
- i.** Administer medications as prescribed, which may include potassium chloride, antihypertensives, antidysrhythmics, and antibiotics.

## **3. Cardiac surgical unit postoperative interventions**

- a.** Mechanical ventilation is maintained for 6 to 24 hours as prescribed.
- b.** The heart rate and rhythm, pulmonary artery and arterial pressures, urinary

output, and neurological status are monitored closely.

- c. Mediastinal and pleural chest tubes to the water seal drainage system with prescribed suction are present; drainage exceeding 100 to 150 mL/hour is reported.
- d. Epicardial pacing wires are covered with sterile caps or connected to a temporary pacemaker generator; all equipment in use must be properly grounded to prevent microshock.
- e. Fluid and electrolyte balance is monitored closely; fluids are usually restricted to 1500 to 2000 mL because the client usually has edema.
- f. The **blood pressure** is monitored closely because hypotension can cause collapse of a vein graft; hypertension can cause increased pressure promoting leakage from the suture line, causing bleeding.
- g. Temperature is monitored and rewarming procedures are initiated using warm or thermal blankets if the temperature drops below 96.8° F; rewarm the client no faster than 1.8° F/hour to prevent shivering, and discontinue rewarming procedures when the temperature approaches 98.6° F.
- h. Potassium is administered intravenously as prescribed to maintain the potassium level between 4 and 5 mEq/L to prevent dysrhythmias.
- i. The client is monitored for signs of cardiac tamponade, which will include sudden cessation of previously heavy mediastinal drainage, jugular vein distention with clear lung sounds, equalization of right atrial pressure and pulmonary artery wedge pressure, and pulsus paradoxus.

**j.** Pain is monitored, differentiating sternotomy pain from anginal pain, which would indicate graft failure.

**4.** Alarm safety and alarm fatigue: Refer to [Chapter 58](#).

**5.** Transfer of the client from the cardiac surgical unit ▲

**a.** Monitor vital signs, level of consciousness, and peripheral perfusion.

**b.** Monitor for dysrhythmias.

**c.** Auscultate lungs and assess respiratory status.

**d.** Encourage the client to splint the incision, cough, deep-breathe, and use the incentive spirometer to raise secretions and prevent atelectasis.

**e.** Monitor temperature and white blood cell count, which, if elevated after 3 to 4 days, indicate infection.

**f.** Provide adequate fluids and hydration as prescribed to liquefy secretions.

**g.** Assess suture line and chest tube insertion sites for redness, purulent discharge, and signs of infection.

**h.** Assess sternal suture line for instability, which may indicate an infection.

**i.** Guide the client to gradually resume activity.

**j.** Assess the client for tachycardia, **postural (orthostatic) hypotension**, and fatigue before, during, and after activity.

**k.** Discontinue activities if the BP drops more than 10 to 20 mm Hg or if the pulse increases more than 10 beats/minute.

**l.** Monitor episodes of pain closely.

**m.** See [Box 60-2](#) for home care instructions.

- Progressive return to activities at home
- Limiting of pushing or pulling activities for 6 weeks following discharge
- Maintenance of incisional care and recording signs of redness, swelling, or drainage
- Sternotomy incision heals in about 6 to 8 weeks
- Avoidance of crossing legs; wearing elastic hose as prescribed until edema subsides, and elevating the surgical limb (if used to obtain the graft) when sitting in a chair
- Use of prescribed medications
- Dietary measures, including the avoidance of saturated fats and cholesterol and the use of salt
- Resumption of sexual intercourse on the advice of the HCP after exercise tolerance is assessed (usually, if client can walk one block or climb two flights of stairs without symptoms, he or she can resume sexual activity safely)

## **H. Heart transplantation**

1. A donor heart from an individual with a comparable body weight and ABO compatibility is transplanted into a recipient within less than 6 hours of procurement.
2. The surgeon removes the diseased heart, leaving the posterior portion of the atria

to serve as an anchor for the new heart.

3. Because a remnant of the client's atria remains, two unrelated P waves are noted on the electrocardiogram.
4. The transplanted heart is denervated and unresponsive to vagal stimulation; because the heart is denervated, clients do not experience angina.
5. Symptoms of heart rejection include hypotension, dysrhythmias, weakness, fatigue, and dizziness.
6. Endomyocardial biopsies are performed at regular scheduled intervals and whenever rejection is suspected.
7. The client requires lifetime immunosuppressive therapy.
8. Strict aseptic technique and vigilant hand washing must be maintained when caring for the posttransplantation client because of increased risk for infection from immunosuppression.
9. The heart rate approximates 100 beats/minute and responds slowly to exercise or stress with regard to increases in heart rate, **contractility**, and **cardiac output**.

#### **IV. Cardiac Dysrhythmias**

- A. Normal sinus rhythm (Fig. 60-5) ▲



**FIGURE 60-5** Normal sinus rhythm. Both atrial and ventricular rhythms are essentially regular (a slight variation in rhythm is normal). Atrial and ventricular rates are both 83 beats/minute. There is one P wave before each QRS complex, and all the P waves are of a consistent morphology, or shape. The PR interval measures 0.18 second and is constant; the QRS complex measures 0.06 second and is constant. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Rhythm originates from the sinoatrial node.
2. Description
  - a. Atrial and ventricular rhythms are regular.
  - b. Atrial and ventricular rates are 60 to 100 beats/minute (Fig. 60-6 and Box 60-3).



**FIGURE 60-6** Each segment between the dark lines (above the monitor strip)

represents 3 seconds when the monitor is set at a speed of 25 mm/second. To estimate the ventricular rate, count the QRS complexes in a 6-second strip and then multiply that number by 10 to estimate the heart rate for 1 minute. In this example, there are nine QRS complexes in 6 seconds. Therefore the heart rate can be estimated as 90 beats/minute. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

### **BOX 60-3**      **Determination of Heart Rate Using 6-Second Strip Method**

The method can be used to determine heart rate for regular and irregular rhythms.

To determine atrial rate, count the number of P waves in 6 seconds and multiply by 10 to obtain a full minute rate.

To determine ventricular rate, count the number of R waves or QRS complexes in 6 seconds and multiply by 10 to obtain a full minute rate.

For accuracy, timing should begin on the P wave or the QRS complex and end exactly at 30 large blocks later.

c. PR interval and QRS width are within normal limits.

## **B. Sinus bradycardia**

### **1. Description**

a. Atrial and ventricular rhythms are regular.

b. Atrial and ventricular rates are less than 60 beats/minute. ▲

c. PR interval and QRS width are within normal limits.

**d.** Treatment may be necessary if the client is symptomatic (signs of decreased cardiac output).

**e.** Note that a low heart rate may be normal for some individuals.

## 2. Interventions

**a.** Attempt to determine the cause of sinus bradycardia; if a medication is suspected of causing the bradycardia, withhold the medication and notify the HCP.

**b.** Administer oxygen as prescribed.

**c.** Administer atropine sulfate as prescribed to increase the heart rate to 60 beats/minute.

**d.** Be prepared to apply a noninvasive (transcutaneous) pacemaker initially as prescribed if the atropine sulfate does not increase the heart rate sufficiently.

**e.** Avoid additional doses of atropine sulfate because this will induce tachycardia.

**f.** Monitor for hypotension and administer fluids intravenously as prescribed.

**g.** Depending on the cause of the bradycardia, the client may need a permanent pacemaker.

## C. Sinus tachycardia

### 1. Description

**a.** Atrial and ventricular rates are 100 to 180 beats/minute. 

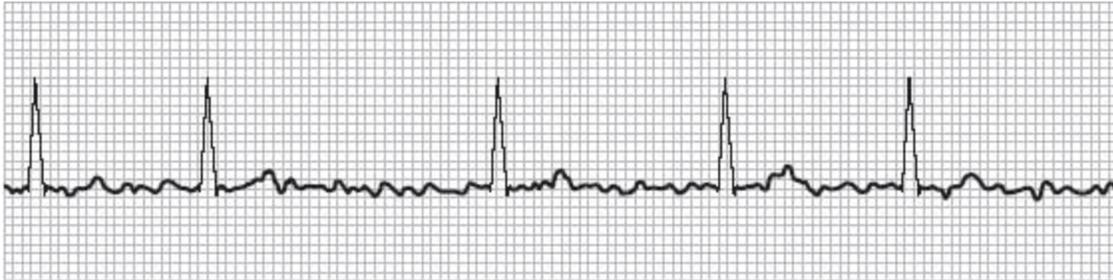
**b.** Atrial and ventricular rhythms are regular.

**c.** PR interval and QRS width are within normal limits.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Identify the cause of the tachycardia.
- b. Decrease the heart rate to normal by treating the underlying cause.

**D. Atrial fibrillation (Fig. 60-7)**



**FIGURE 60-7** Atrial dysrhythmias—atrial fibrillation. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

**1. Description** ▲

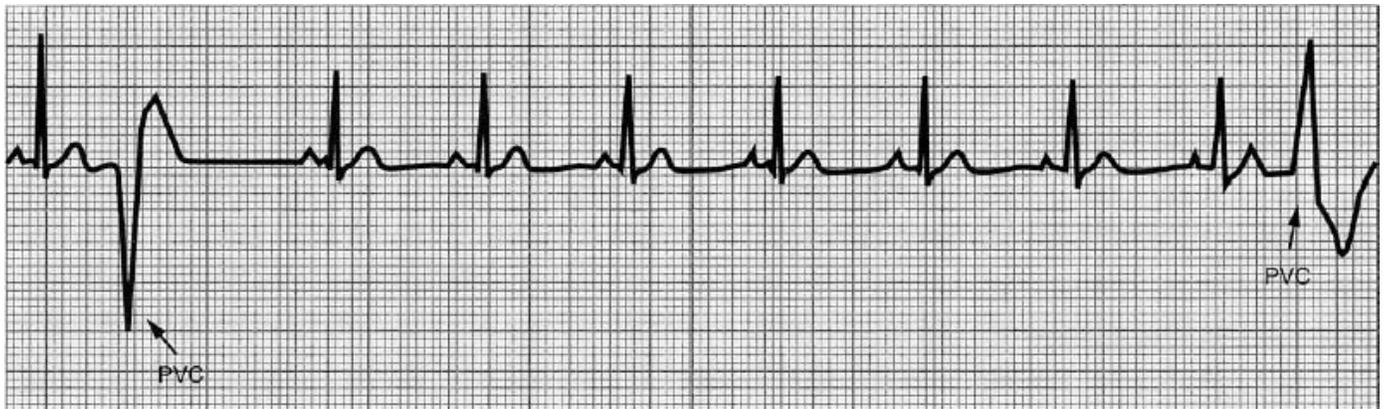
- a. Multiple rapid impulses from many foci depolarize in the atria in a totally disorganized manner at a rate of 350 to 600 times/minute.
- b. The atria quiver, which can lead to the formation of thrombi.
- c. Usually no definitive P wave can be observed, only fibrillatory waves before each QRS.

**2. Interventions** ▲

- a. Administer oxygen.
- b. Administer anticoagulants as prescribed because of the risk of emboli.
- c. Administer cardiac medications as prescribed to control the ventricular rhythm and assist in the maintenance of cardiac output.

- d. Prepare the client for cardioversion as prescribed.
- e. Instruct the client in the use of medications as prescribed to control the dysrhythmia.

E. Premature ventricular contractions (PVCs; Fig. 60-8 and Box 60-4)



**FIGURE 60-8** Ventricular dysrhythmias—normal sinus rhythm with multifocal premature ventricular complexes (PVCs; one negative and the other positive). (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

**BOX 60-4** Premature Ventricular Contractions

**Bigeminy:** Premature ventricular contraction (PVC) every other heartbeat

**Trigeminy:** PVC every third heartbeat

**Quadrigeminy:** PVC every fourth heartbeat

**Couplet or pair:** Two sequential PVCs

**Unifocal:** Uniform upward or downward deflection, arising from the same ectopic

focus

**Multifocal:** Different shapes, with the impulse generation from different sites

**R-on-T phenomenon:** PVC falls on the T wave of the preceding beat; may precipitate ventricular fibrillation

## 1. Description

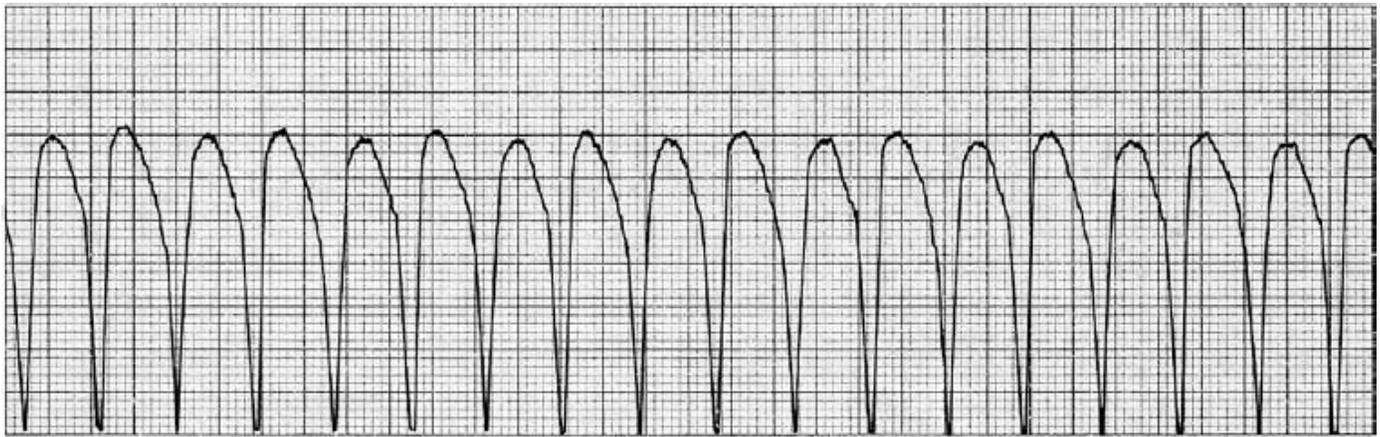
- a. Early ventricular complexes result from increased irritability of the ventricles.
- b. PVCs frequently occur in repetitive patterns such as bigeminy, trigeminy, and quadrigeminy.
- c. The QRS complexes may be unifocal or multifocal.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Identify the cause and treat on the basis of the cause.
- b. Evaluate oxygen saturation to assess for hypoxemia, which can cause PVCs.
- c. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
- d. Evaluate electrolytes, particularly the potassium level, because hypokalemia can cause PVCs.
- e. Oxygen and amiodarone (Cordarone) may be prescribed in the case of acute myocardial ischemia or myocardial infarction (MI).

 For the client experiencing PVCs, notify the HCP if the client complains of chest pain or if the PVCs increase in frequency, are multifocal, occur on the T wave (R on T), or occur in runs of ventricular tachycardia.

## F. Ventricular tachycardia (VT; Fig. 60-9)



**FIGURE 60-9** Ventricular dysrhythmias—sustained ventricular tachycardia at a rate of 166 beats/minute. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

### 1. Description ▲

- a. Ventricular tachycardia occurs because of a repetitive firing of an irritable ventricular ectopic focus at a rate of 140 to 250 beats/minute or more.
- b. Ventricular tachycardia may present as a paroxysm of three self-limiting beats or more or may be a sustained rhythm.
- c. Ventricular tachycardia can lead to cardiac arrest.

### 2. Stable client with sustained VT (with pulse and no signs or symptoms of decreased cardiac output) ▲

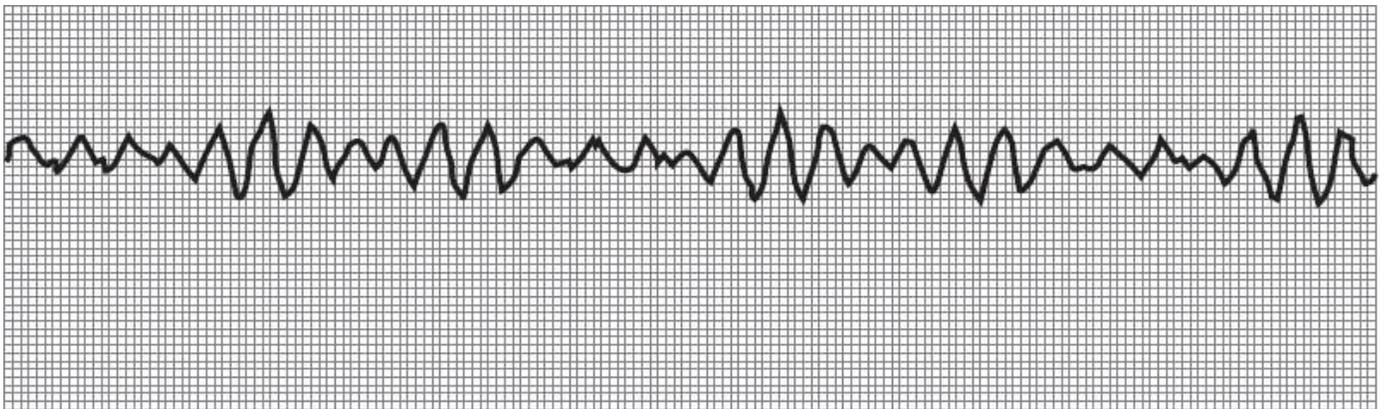
- a. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
- b. Administer antidysrhythmics as prescribed.

### 3. Unstable client with VT (with pulse and signs and symptoms of decreased cardiac output) ▲

- a. Administer oxygen and antidysrhythmic therapy as prescribed.
- b. Prepare for synchronized cardioversion if the client is unstable.
- c. The HCP may attempt cough cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by asking the client to cough hard every 1 to 3 seconds.

4. Pulseless client with ventricular tachycardia: defibrillation and CPR

G. Ventricular fibrillation (VF; Fig. 60-10)



**FIGURE 60-10** Ventricular dysrhythmias—coarse ventricular fibrillation. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Description ▲

- a. Impulses from many irritable foci in the ventricles fire in a totally disorganized manner.
- b. VF is a chaotic rapid rhythm in which the ventricles quiver and there is no cardiac output.
- c. VF is fatal if not successfully terminated within 3 to 5 minutes.
- d. Client lacks a pulse, BP, respirations, and heart sounds.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Initiate CPR until a defibrillator is available.
- b. The client is defibrillated immediately with 120 to 200 joules (biphasic defibrillator) or 360 joules (monophasic defibrillator).
- c. CPR is continued for 2 minutes and the cardiac rhythm is reassessed to determine need for further countershock.
- d. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
- e. Administer antidysrhythmic therapy as prescribed.

## V. Management of Dysrhythmias

### A. Vagal maneuvers

1. Description: Vagal maneuvers induce vagal stimulation of the cardiac conduction system and are used to terminate supraventricular tachydysrhythmias.
2. Carotid sinus massage
  - a. The HCP instructs the client to turn the head away from the side to be massaged.
  - b. The HCP massages over one carotid artery for a few seconds to determine whether a change in cardiac rhythm occurs.
  - c. The client should be on a cardiac monitor; an electrocardiographic rhythm strip before, during, and after the procedure should be documented on the chart.
  - d. Have a defibrillator and resuscitative equipment available.
  - e. Monitor vital signs, cardiac rhythm, and level of consciousness following the procedure.

### 3. Valsalva maneuver

- a. The HCP instructs the client to bear down or induces a gag reflex in the client to stimulate a vagal response
- b. Monitor the heart rate, rhythm, and BP.
- c. Observe the cardiac monitor for a change in rhythm.
- d. Record an electrocardiographic rhythm strip before, during, and after the procedure.
- e. Provide an emesis basin if the gag reflex is stimulated, and initiate precautions to prevent aspiration.
- f. Have a defibrillator and resuscitative equipment available.

## B. Cardioversion

### 1. Description

- a. Cardioversion is synchronized countershock to convert an undesirable rhythm to a stable rhythm.
- b. Cardioversion can be an elective procedure performed by the HCP for stable tachydysrhythmias resistant to medical therapies or an emergent procedure for hemodynamically unstable ventricular or supraventricular tachydysrhythmias.
- c. A lower amount of energy is used than with defibrillation.
- d. The defibrillator is synchronized to the client's R wave to avoid discharging the shock during the vulnerable period (T wave). ▲
- e. If the defibrillator is not synchronized, it could discharge on the T wave and cause VF. ▲

## 2. Preprocedure interventions

- a. Obtain an informed consent if an elective procedure.
- b. Administer sedation as prescribed.
- c. If an elective procedure, hold digoxin (Lanoxin) 48 hours preprocedure as prescribed to prevent postcardioversion ventricular irritability.
- d. If an elective procedure for atrial fibrillation or atrial flutter, the client should receive anticoagulant therapy for 4 to 6 weeks preprocedure and a transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) should be performed to rule out clots in the atria prior to the procedure. ▲

## 3. During the procedure ▲

- a. Ensure that the skin is clean and dry in the area where the electrode paddles/hands off pads will be placed.
- b. Stop the oxygen during the procedure to avoid the hazard of fire.
- c. Be sure that no one is touching the bed or the client when delivering the countershock.

## 4. Postprocedure interventions ▲

- a. Priority assessment includes ability of the client to maintain the airway and breathing.
- b. Resume oxygen administration as prescribed.
- c. Assess vital signs.
- d. Assess level of consciousness.
- e. Monitor cardiac rhythm.

- f. Monitor for indications of successful response, such as conversion to sinus rhythm, strong peripheral pulses, an adequate BP, and adequate urine output.
- g. Assess the skin on the chest for evidence of burns from the edges of the paddles/pads.

### C. Defibrillation

1. Defibrillation is an asynchronous countershock used to terminate pulseless ventricular tachycardia (VT) or VF.
2. The defibrillator is charged to 120 to 200 joules (biphasic) or 360 joules (monophasic) for one countershock from the defibrillator, and then CPR is immediately resumed and continued for 5 cycles or about 2 minutes.
3. Reassess the rhythm after 2 minutes, and if VF or pulseless VT continues, the defibrillator is charged to give a second shock at the same energy level previously used.
4. Resume CPR after the shock, and continue with the life support protocol.

 Before defibrillating a client be sure that the oxygen is shut off to avoid the hazard of fire and be sure that no one is touching the bed or the client.

### D. Use of paddle electrodes

1. Apply conductive pads.
2. One paddle is placed at the third intercostal space to the right of the sternum; the other is placed at the fifth intercostal space on the left mid-axillary line.
3. Apply firm pressure of at least 25 lb to each of the paddles.

4. Be sure that no one is touching the bed or the client when delivering the countershock.
5. Pads for hands-off biphasic defibrillation may be applied in an anterior-posterior position or apex-posterior position, and placement directly over breast tissue should be avoided.

#### E. Automatic external defibrillator ▲

1. An automatic external defibrillator is used by laypersons and emergency medical technicians for prehospital cardiac arrest.
2. Place the client on a firm dry surface.
3. Stop CPR.
4. Ensure that no one is touching the client to avoid motion artifact during rhythm analysis.
5. Place the electrode patches in the correct position on the client's chest.
6. Press the analyzer button to identify the rhythm, which may take 30 seconds; the machine will advise whether a shock is necessary.
7. Shocks are recommended for pulseless VT or VF only (usually 3 shocks are delivered).
8. If unsuccessful, CPR is continued for 1 minute and then another series of shocks is delivered.

#### F. Implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD)

##### 1. Description

- a. An ICD monitors cardiac rhythm and detects and terminates episodes of VT and

VF.

- b.** The ICD senses VT or VF and delivers 25 to 30 J up to four times, if necessary.
- c.** An ICD is used in clients with episodes of spontaneous sustained VT or VF unrelated to an MI or in clients whose medication therapy has been unsuccessful in controlling life-threatening dysrhythmias.
- d.** Transvenous electrode leads are placed in the right atrium and ventricle in contact with the endocardium; leads are used for sensing, pacing, and delivery of cardioversion or defibrillation.
- e.** The generator is most commonly implanted in the left pectoral region.

## 2. Client education ▲

- a.** Instruct the client in the basic functions of the ICD.
- b.** Know the rate cutoff of the ICD and the number of consecutive shocks that it will deliver.
- c.** Wear loose-fitting clothing over the ICD generator site.
- d.** Avoid contact sports to prevent trauma to the ICD generator and lead wires.
- e.** Report any fever, redness, swelling, or drainage from the insertion site.
- f.** Report symptoms of fainting, nausea, weakness, blackouts, and rapid pulse rates to the HCP.
- g.** During shock discharge, the client may feel faint or short of breath.
- h.** Instruct the client to sit or lie down if he or she feels a shock and to notify the HCP.
- i.** Advise the client to maintain a log of the date, time, and activity preceding the

shock, the symptoms preceding the shock, and postshock sensations.

- j.** Instruct the client and family in how to access the emergency medical system.
- k.** Encourage the family to learn CPR.
- l.** Instruct the client to avoid electromagnetic fields directly over the ICD because they can inactivate the device.
- m.** Instruct the client to move away from the magnetic field immediately if beeping tones are heard, and to notify the HCP.
- n.** Keep an ICD identification card in the wallet and obtain and wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.
- o.** Inform all health care providers that an ICD has been inserted; certain diagnostic tests, such as an MRI, and procedures using diathermy or electrocautery interfere with ICD function.
- p.** Advise the client of restrictions on activities such as driving and operating dangerous equipment.

## **VI. Pacemakers**

**A.** Description: Temporary or permanent device that provides electrical stimulation and maintains the heart rate when the client's intrinsic pacemaker fails to provide a perfusing rhythm

### **B.** Settings

- 1.** A synchronous (demand) pacemaker senses the client's rhythm and paces only if the client's intrinsic rate falls below the set pacemaker rate for stimulating depolarization.

2. An asynchronous (fixed rate) pacemaker paces at a preset rate regardless of the client's intrinsic rhythm and is used when the client is asystolic or profoundly bradycardic.
3. Overdrive pacing suppresses the underlying rhythm in tachydysrhythmias so that the sinus node will regain control of the heart.

### C. Spikes ▲

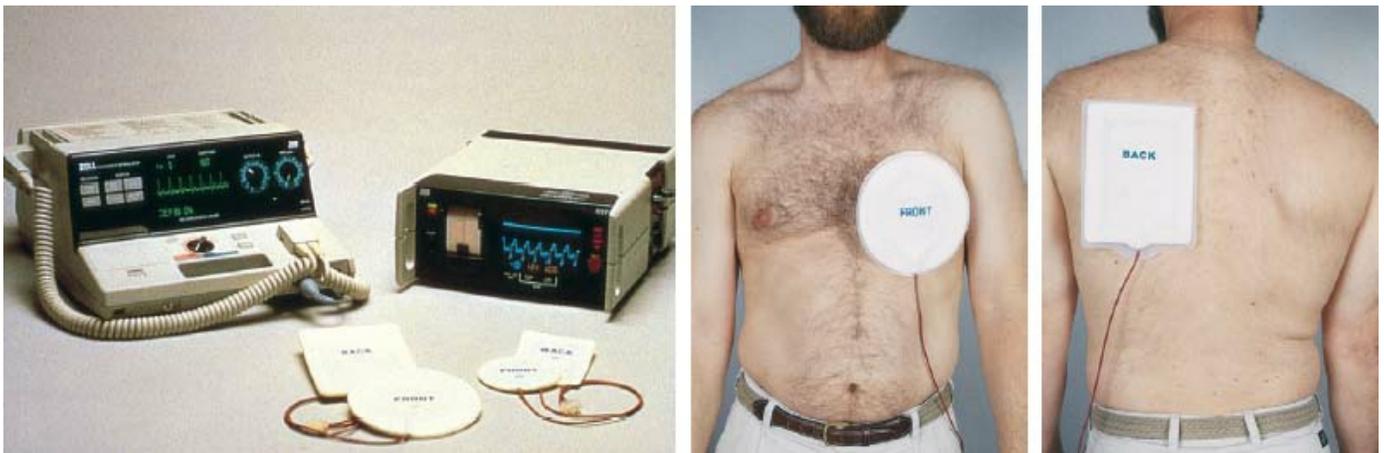
1. When a pacing stimulus is delivered to the heart, a spike (straight vertical line) is seen on the monitor or electrocardiogram strip.
2. Spikes precede the chamber being paced; a spike preceding a P wave indicates that the atrium is paced and a spike preceding the QRS indicates that the ventricle is being paced.
3. An atrial spike followed by a P wave indicates atrial depolarization and a ventricular spike followed by a QRS complex represents ventricular depolarization; this is referred to as *capture*.
4. If the electrode is in the atrium, the spike is before the P wave; if the electrode is in the ventricle, the spike is before the QRS complex.

### D. Temporary pacemakers

1. Noninvasive transcutaneous pacing
  - a. Noninvasive transcutaneous pacing is used as a temporary emergency measure in the profoundly bradycardic or asystolic client until invasive pacing can be initiated.
  - b. Large electrode pads are placed on the client's chest and back and connected to

an external pulse generator.

- c. Wash the skin with soap and water before applying electrodes.
- d. It is not necessary to shave the hair or apply alcohol or tinctures to the skin.
- e. Place the posterior electrode between the spine and left scapula behind the heart, avoiding placement over bone (Fig. 60-11).



**FIGURE 60-11** Equipment and electrode placement for transcutaneous external pacing. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders. Courtesy of ZOLL Medical Corporation, Chelmsford, MA.)

- f. Place the anterior electrode between V2 and V5 positions over the heart (see Fig. 60-11).
- g. Do not place the anterior electrode over female breast tissue; rather, displace breast tissue and place under the breast.
- h. Do not take the pulse or BP on the left side; the results will not be accurate because of the muscle twitching and electrical current.



- c. Ground all electrical equipment, using a three-pronged plug.
- d. Wear gloves when handling exposed wires.
- e. Keep dressings dry.

#### E. Permanent pacemakers

1. Pulse generator is internal and surgically implanted in a subcutaneous pocket below the clavicle.
2. The leads are passed transvenously via the cephalic or subclavian vein to the endocardium on the right side of the heart; postoperatively, limitation of arm movement on the operative side is required to prevent lead wire dislodgement.
3. Permanent pacemakers may be single-chambered, in which the lead wire is placed in the chamber to be paced, or dual-chambered, with lead wires placed in both the right atrium and ventricle.
4. Biventricular pacing of the ventricles allows for synchronized depolarization and is used for moderate to severe heart failure to improve cardiac output.
5. A permanent pacemaker is programmed when inserted and can be reprogrammed if necessary by noninvasive transmission from an external programmer to the implanted generator.
6. Pacemakers may be powered by a lithium battery with an average life span of 10 years, nuclear-powered with a life span of 20 years or longer, or designed to be recharged externally.
7. Pacemaker function can be checked in the HCP's office or clinic by a pacemaker interrogator or programmer or from home, using a special telephone transmitter

device.

8. The client may be provided with a device placed over the pacemaker battery generator with an attachment to the telephone; the heart rate then can be transmitted to the clinic.
9. Client teaching ([Box 60-5](#)).

### **BOX 60-5** Pacemakers: Client Education

Instruct the client about the pacemaker, including the programmed rate.

Instruct the client in the signs of battery failure and when to notify the health care provider (HCP).

Instruct the client to report any fever, redness, swelling, or drainage from the insertion site.

Report signs of dizziness, weakness or fatigue, swelling of the ankles or legs, chest pain, or shortness of breath.

Keep a pacemaker identification card in the wallet and obtain and wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

Instruct the client in how to take the pulse, to take the pulse daily, and to maintain a diary of pulse rates.

Wear loose-fitting clothing over the pulse generator site.

Avoid contact sports.

Inform all health care providers that a pacemaker has been inserted.

Instruct the client to inform airport security that he or she has a pacemaker because

the pacemaker may set off the security detector.

Instruct the client that most electrical appliances can be used without any interference with the functioning of the pacemaker; however, advise the client not to operate electrical appliances directly over the pacemaker site.

Avoid transmitter towers and antitheft devices in stores.

Instruct the client that if any unusual feelings occur when near any electrical devices to move 5 to 10 feet away and check the pulse.

Instruct the client about the methods of monitoring the function of the device.

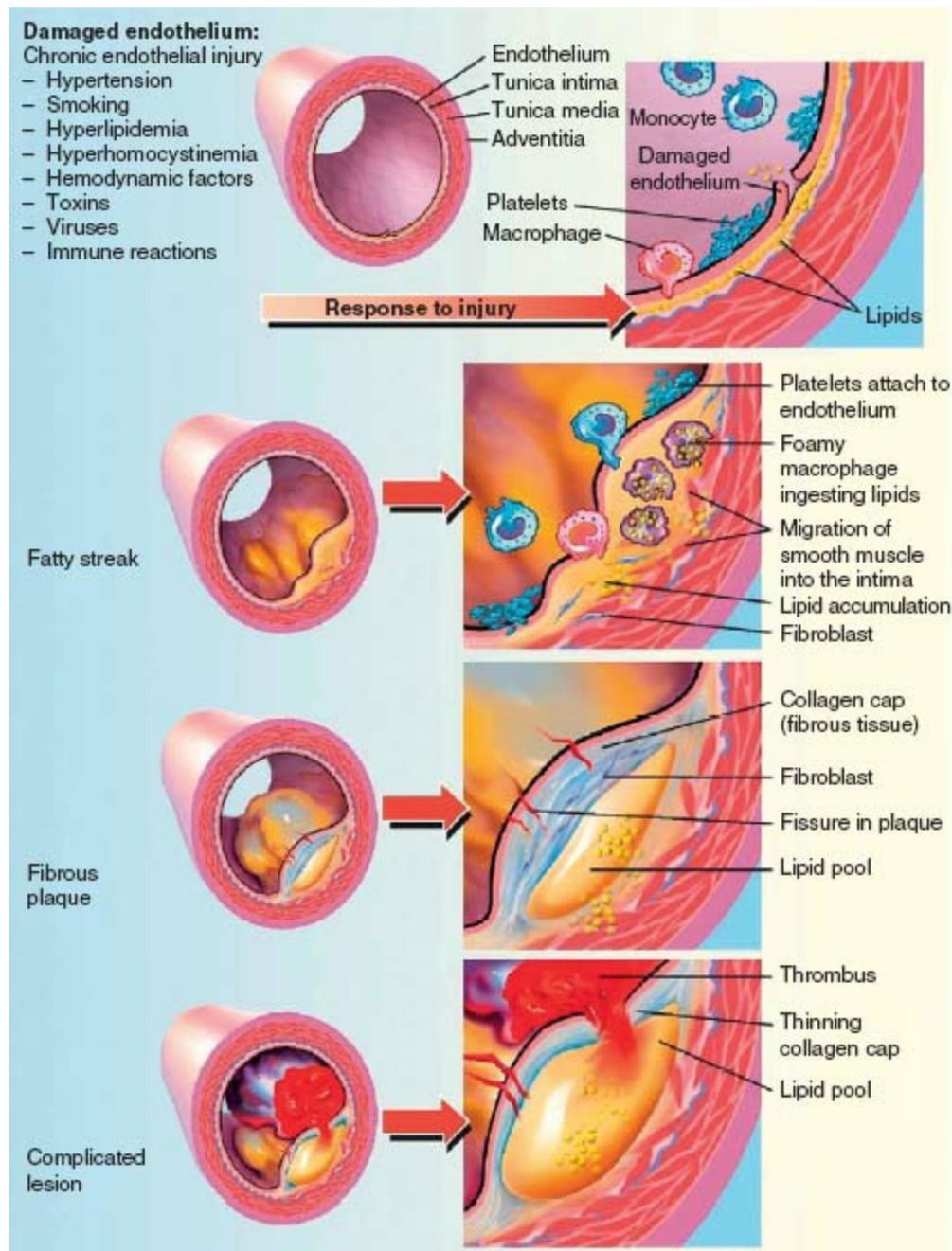
Emphasize the importance of follow-up with the HCP.

Use cell phones on the side opposite the pacemaker.

## VII. Coronary Artery Disease

### A. Description

1. Coronary artery disease is a narrowing or obstruction of one or more coronary arteries as a result of atherosclerosis, which is an accumulation of lipid-containing plaque in the arteries (Fig. 60-12).



**FIGURE 60-12** Cross section of an atherosclerotic coronary artery. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

2. The disease causes decreased perfusion of myocardial tissue and inadequate myocardial oxygen supply leading to hypertension, angina, dysrhythmias, MI, heart failure, and death.

3. Collateral circulation, more than one artery supplying a muscle with blood, is normally present in the coronary arteries, especially in older persons.
4. The development of collateral circulation takes time and develops when chronic ischemia occurs to meet the metabolic demands; therefore an occlusion of a coronary artery in a younger individual is more likely to be lethal than in an older individual.
5. Symptoms occur when the coronary artery is occluded to the point that inadequate blood supply to the muscle occurs, causing ischemia.
6. Coronary artery narrowing is significant if the lumen diameter of the left main artery is reduced at least 50%, or if any major branch is reduced at least 75%.
7. The goal of treatment is to alter the atherosclerotic progression.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Possibly normal findings during asymptomatic periods
2. Chest pain
3. Palpitations
4. Dyspnea
5. Syncope
6. Cough or hemoptysis
7. Excessive fatigue

## **C. Diagnostic studies**

1. Electrocardiography
  - a. When blood flow is reduced and ischemia occurs, ST-segment depression, T-

wave inversion, or both is noted; the ST segment returns to normal when the blood flow returns.

- b. With infarction, cell injury results in ST-segment elevation, followed by T-wave inversion and an abnormal Q wave.

## 2. Cardiac catheterization

- a. Cardiac catheterization provides the most definitive source for diagnosis.
- b. Cardiac catheterization shows the presence of atherosclerotic lesions.

## 3. Blood lipid levels

- a. Blood lipid levels may be elevated.
- b. Cholesterol-lowering medications may be prescribed to reduce the development of atherosclerotic plaques.

## D. Interventions

1. Instruct the client regarding the purpose of diagnostic medical and surgical procedures and preprocedure and postprocedure expectations.
2. Assist the client to identify risk factors that can be modified.
3. Assist the client to set goals to promote lifestyle changes to reduce the impact of risk factors.
4. Assist the client to identify barriers to compliance with the therapeutic plan and to identify methods to overcome barriers.
5. Instruct the client regarding a low-calorie, low-sodium, low-cholesterol, and low-fat diet, with an increase in dietary fiber.
6. Stress to the client that dietary changes are not temporary and must be maintained

for life; instruct the client regarding prescribed medications.

7. Provide community resources to the client regarding exercise, smoking cessation, and stress reduction as appropriate.

#### E. Surgical procedures ▲

1. PTCA to compress the plaque against the walls of the artery and dilate the vessel
2. Laser angioplasty to vaporize the plaque
3. Atherectomy to remove the plaque from the artery
4. Vascular stent (bare metal or drug-eluting) to prevent the artery from closing and to prevent restenosis
5. Coronary artery bypass grafting to improve blood flow to the myocardial tissue at risk for ischemia or infarction because of the occluded artery

#### F. Medications

1. Nitrates to dilate the coronary arteries and decrease **preload** and **afterload**
2. Calcium channel blockers to dilate coronary arteries and reduce vasospasm
3. Cholesterol-lowering medications to reduce the development of atherosclerotic plaques
4.  $\beta$ -Blockers to reduce the BP in individuals who are hypertensive

## VIII. Angina

### A. Description

1. Angina is chest pain resulting from myocardial ischemia caused by inadequate myocardial blood and oxygen supply.
2. Angina is caused by an imbalance between oxygen supply and demand.

3. Causes include obstruction of coronary blood flow resulting from atherosclerosis, coronary artery spasm, or conditions increasing myocardial oxygen consumption.

**⚠** The goal of treatment for angina is to provide relief from the acute attack, correct the imbalance between myocardial oxygen supply and demand, and prevent the progression of the disease and further attacks to reduce the risk of MI.

## B. Patterns of angina

### 1. Stable angina

- a. Also called *exertional angina*
- b. Occurs with activities that involve exertion or emotional stress; relieved with rest or nitroglycerin
- c. Usually has a stable pattern of onset, duration, severity, and relieving factors

### 2. Unstable angina

- a. Also called *preinfarction angina*
- b. Occurs with an unpredictable degree of exertion or emotion and increases in occurrence, duration, and severity over time
- c. Pain may not be relieved with nitroglycerin.

### 3. Variant angina

- a. Also called Prinzmetal's or vasospastic angina
- b. Results from coronary artery spasm
- c. May occur at rest
- d. Attacks may be associated with ST- segment elevation noted on the

electrocardiogram (ECG).

4. Intractable angina is a chronic, incapacitating angina unresponsive to interventions.

5. Preinfarction angina

a. Associated with acute coronary insufficiency

b. Lasts longer than 15 minutes

c. Symptom of worsening cardiac ischemia

d. Characterized by chest pain that occurs days to weeks before an MI

### C. Assessment

1. Pain

a. Pain can develop slowly or quickly.

b. Pain usually is described as mild or moderate.

c. Substernal, crushing, squeezing pain may occur.

d. Pain may radiate to the shoulders, arms, jaw, neck, or back.

e. Pain intensity is unaffected by inspiration and expiration.

f. Pain usually lasts less than 5 minutes; however, pain can last up to 15 to 20 minutes.

g. Pain is relieved by nitroglycerin or rest.

2. Dyspnea

3. Pallor

4. Sweating

5. Palpitations and tachycardia

6. Dizziness and syncope
7. Hypertension
8. Digestive disturbances

**D. Diagnostic studies** ▲

1. Electrocardiography: Readings are normal during rest, with ST depression, or T-wave inversion during an episode of pain.
2. Stress testing: Chest pain or changes in the electrocardiogram or vital signs during testing may indicate ischemia.
3. Cardiac enzyme and troponin levels: Findings are normal in angina.
4. Cardiac catheterization: Catheterization provides a definitive diagnosis by providing information about the patency of the coronary arteries.

**E. Interventions** ▲

1. Immediate management
  - a. Assess pain; institute pain relief measures.
  - b. Administer oxygen by nasal cannula as prescribed.
  - c. Assess vital signs and provide continuous cardiac monitoring and nitroglycerin as prescribed to dilate the coronary arteries, reduce the oxygen requirements of the myocardium, and relieve the chest pain.
  - d. Ensure bed rest is maintained, place the client in semi-Fowler's position, and stay with the client.
  - e. Obtain a 12-lead ECG.
  - f. Establish an IV access route.

## 2. Following the acute episode ▲

- a. Instruct the client regarding the purpose of diagnostic medical and surgical procedures and the preprocedure and postprocedure expectations.
- b. Assist the client to identify angina-precipitating events.
- c. Instruct the client to stop activity and rest if chest pain occurs and to take nitroglycerin as prescribed.
- d. Instruct the client to seek medical attention if pain persists.
- e. Instruct the client regarding prescribed medications.
- f. Provide diet instructions to the client, stressing that dietary changes are not temporary and must be maintained for life.
- g. Assist the client to identify risk factors that can be modified.
- h. Assist the client to set goals that will promote changes in lifestyle to reduce the impact of risk factors.
- i. Assist the client to identify barriers to compliance with the therapeutic plan and to identify methods to overcome barriers.
- j. Provide community resources to the client regarding exercise, smoking cessation, and stress reduction.

F. Surgical procedures: See [Section VII, Coronary Artery Disease](#).

## G. Medications

1. See [Section VII, Coronary Artery Disease](#).
2. Antiplatelet therapy may be prescribed; it inhibits platelet aggregation and reduces the risk of developing an acute MI.

## IX. Myocardial Infarction

### A. Description ▲

1. Myocardial infarction occurs when myocardial tissue is abruptly and severely deprived of oxygen.
2. Ischemia can lead to necrosis of myocardial tissue if blood flow is not restored.
3. Infarction does not occur instantly but evolves over several hours.
4. Obvious physical changes do not occur in the heart until 6 hours after the infarction, when the infarcted area appears blue and swollen.
5. After 48 hours, the infarct turns gray, with yellow streaks developing as neutrophils invade the tissue.
6. By 8 to 10 days after infarction, granulation tissue forms.
7. Over 2 to 3 months, the necrotic area develops into a scar; scar tissue permanently changes the size and shape of the entire left ventricle.
8. Not all clients experience the classic symptoms of an MI.
9. Women may experience atypical discomfort, shortness of breath, or fatigue and often present with NSTEMI (non–ST-elevation myocardial infarction) or T-wave inversion.
10. An older client may experience shortness of breath, pulmonary edema, dizziness, altered mental status, or a dysrhythmia.

### B. Location of MI (see [Fig. 60-1](#))

1. Obstruction of the left anterior descending artery results in anterior wall or septal MI, or both.

2. Obstruction of the circumflex artery results in posterior wall MI or lateral wall MI.

3. Obstruction of the right coronary artery results in inferior wall MI.

**C. Risk factors** ▲

1. Atherosclerosis

2. Coronary artery disease

3. Elevated cholesterol levels

4. Smoking

5. Hypertension

6. Obesity

7. Physical inactivity

8. Impaired glucose tolerance

9. Stress

**D. Diagnostic studies** ▲

1. Troponin level

a. Level rises within 3 hours.

b. Level remains elevated for up to 7 to 10 days.

2. Total creatine kinase level

a. Level rises within 6 hours after the onset of chest pain.

b. Level peaks within 18 hours after damage and death of cardiac tissue.

3. CK-MB isoenzyme

a. Peak elevation occurs 18 hours after the onset of chest pain.

- b.** Level returns to normal 48 to 72 hours later.
- 4.** Myoglobin: Level rises within 2 hours after cell death, with a rapid decline in the level after 7 hours.
- 5.** White blood cell count: An elevated white blood cell count up to 20,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> appears on the second day following the MI and lasts up to 1 week.
- 6.** Electrocardiogram
  - a.** Electrocardiogram shows either ST-elevation MI (STEMI), T-wave inversion, or non-ST-elevation MI (NSTEMI); an abnormal Q wave may also present.
  - b.** Hours to days after the MI, ST- and T-wave changes will return to normal but the Q-wave changes usually remain permanently.
- 7.** Diagnostic tests following the acute stage
  - a.** Exercise tolerance test or stress test may be prescribed to assess for electrocardiographic changes and ischemia and to evaluate for medical therapy or identify clients who may need invasive therapy.
  - b.** Thallium scans may be prescribed to assess for ischemia or necrotic muscle tissue.
  - c.** Multigated cardiac blood pool imaging scans may be used to evaluate left ventricular function.
  - d.** Cardiac catheterization is performed to determine the extent and location of obstructions of the coronary arteries.

## **E.** Assessment

### **1.** Pain

- a. Client may experience crushing substernal pain.
- b. Pain may radiate to the jaw, back, and left arm.
- c. Pain may occur without cause, primarily early in the morning.
- d. Pain is unrelieved by rest or nitroglycerin and is relieved only by opioids.
- e. Pain lasts 30 minutes or longer.

2. Nausea and vomiting

3. Diaphoresis

4. Dyspnea

5. Dysrhythmias

6. Feelings of fear and anxiety

7. Pallor, cyanosis, coolness of extremities

#### F. Complications of MI (Box 60-6)

##### **BOX 60-6**      **Complications of Myocardial Infarction**

- Dysrhythmias
- Heart failure
- Pulmonary edema
- Cardiogenic shock
- Thrombophlebitis
- Pericarditis
- Mitral valve insufficiency
- Postinfarction angina

- Ventricular rupture
- Dressler's syndrome (a combination of pericarditis, pericardial effusion, and pleural effusion, which can occur several weeks to months following a myocardial infarction)

#### G. Interventions, acute stage ▲

**▲ Pain relief increases oxygen supply to the myocardium; administer morphine as a priority in managing pain in the client having an MI.**

1. Obtain a description of the chest discomfort.
2. Administer oxygen by nasal cannula as prescribed and institute pain relief measures (morphine, nitroglycerin as prescribed).
3. Assess vital signs and cardiovascular status and maintain cardiac monitoring.
4. Ensure bed rest and place the client in a semi-Fowler's position to enhance comfort and tissue oxygenation; stay with the client.
5. Establish an IV access route.
6. Obtain a 12-lead ECG.

7. Administer antidysrhythmics as prescribed.
  8. Administer thrombolytic therapy, which may be prescribed within the first 6 hours of the coronary event.
  9. Monitor for signs of bleeding if the client is receiving thrombolytic therapy.
  10. Monitor laboratory values as prescribed.
  11. Administer  $\beta$ -blockers as prescribed to slow the heart rate and increase myocardial perfusion while reducing the force of myocardial contraction.
  12. Monitor for complications related to the MI.
  13. Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias because tachycardia and PVCs frequently occur in the first few hours after MI.
  14. Assess distal peripheral pulses and skin temperature because poor cardiac output may be identified by cool diaphoretic skin and diminished or absent pulses.
  15. Monitor intake and output.
  16. Assess respiratory rate and breath sounds for signs of heart failure, as indicated by the presence of crackles or wheezes or dependent edema.
  17. Monitor the BP closely after the administration of medications; if the **systolic pressure** is lower than 100 mm Hg or 25 mm Hg lower than the previous reading, lower the head of the bed and notify the HCP.
  18. Provide reassurance to the client and family.
- H. Interventions following the acute episode** ▲
1. Maintain bed rest for the first 24 to 36 hours as prescribed.
  2. Allow the client to stand to void or use a bedside commode if prescribed.

3. Provide range-of-motion exercises to prevent thrombus formation and maintain muscle strength.
  4. Progress to dangling legs at the side of the bed or out of bed to the chair for 30 minutes three times a day as prescribed.
  5. Progress to ambulation in the client's room and to the bathroom and then in the hallway three times a day.
  6. Monitor for complications.
  7. Encourage the client to verbalize feelings regarding the MI.
- I. Cardiac rehabilitation: Process of actively assisting the client with cardiac disease to achieve and maintain a vital and productive life within the limitations of the heart disease.

## **X. Heart Failure**

### **A. Description** ▲

1. Heart failure is the inability of the heart to maintain adequate cardiac output to meet the metabolic needs of the body because of impaired pumping ability.
2. Diminished cardiac output results in inadequate peripheral tissue perfusion.
3. Congestion of the lungs and periphery may occur; the client can develop acute pulmonary edema.

### **B. Classification**

1. Acute heart failure occurs suddenly.
2. Chronic heart failure develops over time; however, a client with chronic heart failure can develop an acute episode.

## C. Types of heart failure

### 1. Right ventricular failure, left ventricular failure

- a. Because the two ventricles of the heart represent two separate pumping systems, it is possible for one to fail alone for a short period.
- b. Most heart failure begins with left ventricular failure and progresses to failure of both ventricles.
- c. Acute pulmonary edema, a medical emergency, results from left ventricular failure.
- d. If pulmonary edema is not treated, death will occur from suffocation because the client literally drowns in his or her own fluids.

### 2. Forward failure, backward failure

- a. In forward failure, an inadequate output of the affected ventricle causes decreased perfusion to vital organs.
- b. In backward failure, blood backs up behind the affected ventricle, causing increased pressure in the atrium behind the affected ventricle.

### 3. Low output, high output

- a. In low-output failure, not enough cardiac output is available to meet the demands of the body.
- b. High-output failure occurs when a condition causes the heart to work harder to meet the demands of the body.

### 4. Systolic failure, diastolic failure

- a. Systolic failure leads to problems with contraction and ejection of blood.

b. Diastolic failure leads to problems with the heart relaxing and filling with blood.

**D. Compensatory mechanisms** ▲

1. Compensatory mechanisms act to restore cardiac output to near-normal levels.
2. Initially, these mechanisms increase cardiac output; however, they eventually have a damaging effect on pump action.
3. Compensatory mechanisms contribute to an increase in myocardial oxygen consumption; when this occurs, myocardial reserve is exhausted and clinical manifestations of heart failure develop.
4. Compensatory mechanisms include increased heart rate, improved **stroke volume**, arterial vasoconstriction, sodium and water retention, and myocardial hypertrophy.

**E. Assessment** (Table 60-1) ▲

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**TABLE 60-1 Clinical Manifestations of Right-Sided and Left-Sided Heart Failure**

Right-Sided Heart Failure	Left-Sided Heart Failure
Dependent edema (legs and sacrum)	Signs of pulmonary congestion
Jugular venous distention	Dyspnea
Abdominal distention	Tachypnea
Hepatomegaly	Crackles in the lungs
Splenomegaly	Dry, hacking cough
Anorexia and nausea	Paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea
Weight gain	Increased blood pressure (from fluid volume excess) or decreased BP (from pump failure)
Nocturnal diuresis	
Swelling of the fingers and hands	

*BP*, Blood pressure.

## 1. Right- and left-sided heart failure

**⚠** Signs of left ventricular failure are evident in the pulmonary system. Signs of right ventricular failure are evident in the systemic circulation.

## 2. Acute pulmonary edema

- a. Severe dyspnea and orthopnea
- b. Pallor
- c. Tachycardia
- d. Expectoration of large amounts of blood-tinged, frothy sputum
- e. Wheezing and crackles on auscultation
- f. Gurgling respirations
- g. Acute anxiety, apprehension, restlessness
- h. Profuse sweating
- i. Cold, clammy skin
- j. Cyanosis
- k. Nasal flaring
- l. Use of accessory breathing muscles
- m. Tachypnea
- n. Hypocapnia, evidenced by muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, and

paresthesias

F. Immediate management of acute episode (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ▲

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take if a Client Develops Pulmonary Edema

1. Place the client in a high Fowler's position.
2. Administer oxygen.
3. Assess the client quickly, including assessing lung sounds.
4. Ensure an intravenous access device is in place.
5. Prepare for the administration of a diuretic and morphine sulfate.
6. Insert a Foley catheter as prescribed.
7. Prepare for intubation and ventilator support, if required.
8. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

Pulmonary edema is a life-threatening event that can result from severe heart failure. In pulmonary edema, the left ventricle fails to eject sufficient blood, and pressure increases in the lungs because of the accumulated blood. The client is immediately placed in a high Fowler's position, with the legs in a dependent position, to reduce pulmonary congestion and relieve edema. Oxygen is always prescribed, usually in high concentrations by mask or cannula to improve gas exchange and pulmonary function; the goal is to keep the oxygen saturation above 90%. The client is then assessed quickly, including checking the lung sounds. Next it is important to ensure

that an intravenous (IV) access device is in place for the administration of a diuretic and morphine sulfate. Furosemide, a rapid-acting diuretic, will eliminate accumulated fluid. Morphine sulfate reduces venous return (preload), decreases anxiety, and also reduces the work of breathing. A Foley catheter is inserted to measure output accurately. The nurse then prepares for intubation and ventilator support, if required. The nurse stays with the client and provides reassurance. Vital signs are monitored and a cardiac monitor is used to monitor the heart rate and for dysrhythmias. The lung sounds are monitored for crackles, decreased breath sounds, and for a response to treatment. A weight measurement will also determine a response to treatment. Other interventions may include the administration of digoxin to increase ventricular contractility and improve cardiac output, bronchodilators for severe bronchospasm or bronchoconstriction, medications to facilitate myocardial contractility and enhance stroke volume, and vasodilators to reduce afterload, increase the capacity of the systemic venous bed, and decrease venous return to the heart. The nurse finally documents the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

### ***References***

Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, p. 665; Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper P, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby, p. 579.

## G. Following the acute episode ▲

1. Encourage the client to verbalize feelings about the lifestyle changes required as a result of the heart failure.
2. Assist the client to identify precipitating risk factors of heart failure and methods of eliminating these risk factors.
3. Instruct the client in the prescribed medication regimen, which may include digoxin, a diuretic, angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, low-dose  $\beta$ -blockers, and vasodilators.
4. Advise the client to notify the HCP if side effects occur from the medications.
5. Advise the client to avoid over-the-counter medications.
6. Instruct the client to contact the HCP if he or she is unable to take medications because of illness.
7. Instruct the client to avoid large amounts of caffeine, found in coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, and some carbonated beverages.
8. Instruct the client about the prescribed low-sodium, low-fat, and low-cholesterol diet.
9. Provide the client with a list of potassium-rich foods because diuretics can cause hypokalemia (except for potassium-retaining diuretics).
10. Instruct the client regarding fluid restriction, if prescribed, advising the client to spread the fluid out during the day and to suck on hard candy to reduce thirst.
11. Instruct the client to balance periods of activity and rest.
12. Advise the client to avoid isometric activities, which increase pressure in the

heart.

**13.** Instruct the client to monitor daily weight.

**14.** Instruct the client to report signs of fluid retention such as edema or weight gain.

## **XI. Cardiogenic Shock**

### **A. Description** ▲

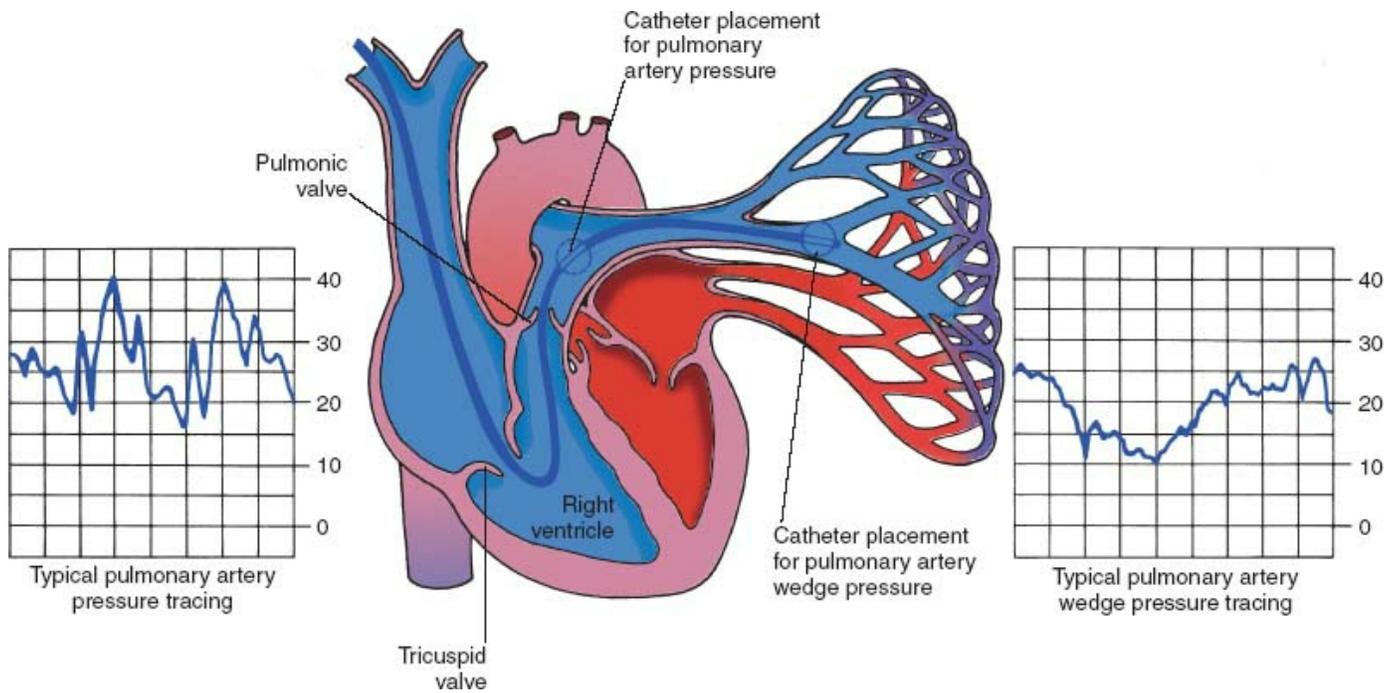
- 1.** Cardiogenic shock is failure of the heart to pump adequately, thereby reducing cardiac output and compromising tissue perfusion.
- 2.** Necrosis of more than 40% of the left ventricle occurs, usually as a result of occlusion of major coronary vessels.
- 3.** The goal of treatment is to maintain tissue oxygenation and perfusion and improve the pumping ability of the heart.

### **B. Assessment**

- 1.** Hypotension: BP lower than 90 mm Hg systolic or 30 mm Hg lower than the client's baseline
- 2.** Urine output lower than 30 mL/hour
- 3.** Cold, clammy skin
- 4.** Poor peripheral pulses
- 5.** Tachycardia
- 6.** Pulmonary congestion
- 7.** Tachypnea
- 8.** Disorientation, restlessness, and confusion
- 9.** Continuing chest discomfort

### C. Interventions

1. Administer morphine sulfate intravenously as prescribed to decrease pulmonary congestion and relieve pain.
2. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
3. Prepare for intubation and mechanical ventilation.
4. Administer diuretics and nitrates as prescribed while monitoring the BP constantly.
5. Administer vasopressors and positive inotropes as prescribed to maintain organ perfusion.
6. Prepare the client for insertion of an intraaortic balloon pump, if prescribed, to improve coronary artery perfusion and improve cardiac output.
7. Prepare the client for immediate reperfusion procedures such as PTCA or coronary artery bypass graft.
8. Monitor arterial blood gas levels and prepare to treat imbalances.
9. Monitor urinary output.
10. Assist with the insertion of a pulmonary artery (Swan-Ganz) catheter to assess degree of heart failure; readings obtained from the catheter correlating to cardiogenic shock include an increased pulmonary capillary wedge pressure (PCWP) and a decreased cardiac output (Fig. 60-13).



**FIGURE 60-13** Cardiac pressure waveforms can be visualized on the monitor.

(From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

**11.** Monitor distal pulses and maintain the transducer at the level of the right atrium if the client has a pulmonary artery (Swan-Ganz) catheter.

**D.** Hemodynamic monitoring (see Fig. 60-13)

**1.** Central **venous pressure** (CVP)

- a.** The CVP is the pressure within the superior vena cava; it reflects the pressure under which blood is returned to the superior vena cava and right atrium.
- b.** The CVP is measured with a central venous line in the superior vena cava.
- c.** Normal CVP pressure is about 3 to 8 mm Hg.
- d.** An elevated CVP indicates an increase in blood volume as a result of sodium and water retention, excessive IV fluids, alterations in fluid balance, or kidney

failure.

- e. A decreased CVP indicates a decrease in circulating blood volume and may be a result of fluid imbalances, hemorrhage, or severe vasodilation, with pooling of blood in the extremities that limits venous return.

## 2. Measuring CVP ▲

- a. The right atrium is located at the mid-axillary line at the fourth intercostal space; the zero point on the transducer needs to be at the level of the right atrium.
- b. The client needs to be supine, with the head of the bed at 45 degrees.
- c. The client needs to be relaxed; note that activity that increases intrathoracic pressure, such as coughing or straining, will cause false increases in the readings.
- d. If the client is on a ventilator, the reading should be taken at the point of end-expiration.
- e. To maintain patency of the line, a constant small amount of fluid is delivered under pressure.

## 3. Pulmonary artery pressures

- a. A pulmonary artery catheter is used to measure right heart and indirect left heart pressures.
- b. **Pulmonary artery wedge pressure (PAWP)** is also known as pulmonary artery occlusive pressure (PAOP) and as pulmonary capillary wedge pressure (PCWP).

- c. The measurement is obtained during momentary balloon inflation of the pulmonary artery catheter and is reflective of left ventricular end-diastolic pressure.
- d. Pulmonary artery wedge pressure (PAWP) normally ranges between 4 and 12 mm Hg; elevations may indicate left ventricular failure, hypervolemia, mitral regurgitation, or intracardiac shunt whereas decreases may indicate hypovolemia or afterload reduction.
- e. Normal right atrial (RA) pressure ranges from 1 to 8 mm Hg; increases occur with right ventricular failure, whereas decreases may indicate hypovolemia.
- f. Normal pulmonary artery pressure (PAP) ranges from 15 to 26 mm Hg systolic/5 to 15 mm Hg diastolic.

#### 4. Mean arterial pressure (MAP)

- a. An approximation of the average pressure in the systemic circulation throughout the cardiac cycle; used in hemodynamic monitoring.
- b. MAP must be between 60 and 70 mm Hg for adequate organ perfusion.

## XII. Inflammatory Diseases of the Heart

### A. Pericarditis ▲

#### 1. Description

- a. Pericarditis is an acute or chronic inflammation of the pericardium.
- b. Chronic pericarditis, a chronic inflammatory thickening of the pericardium, constricts the heart, causing compression.

- c. The pericardial sac becomes inflamed.
- d. Pericarditis can result in loss of pericardial elasticity or an accumulation of fluid within the sac.
- e. Heart failure or cardiac tamponade may result.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Precordial pain in the anterior chest that radiates to the left side of the neck, shoulder, or back
- b. Pain is grating and is aggravated by breathing (particularly inspiration), coughing, and swallowing ▲
- c. Pain is worse when in the supine position and may be relieved by leaning forward. ▲
- d. Pericardial friction rub (scratchy, high-pitched sound) is heard on auscultation and is produced by the rubbing of the inflamed pericardial layers.
- e. Fever and chills
- f. Fatigue and malaise
- g. Elevated white blood cell count
- h. Electrocardiographic changes with acute pericarditis; ST-segment elevation with the onset of inflammation; atrial fibrillation is common.
- i. Signs of right ventricular failure in clients with chronic constrictive pericarditis

## 3. Interventions

- a. Assess the nature of the pain.
- b. Position the client in a high Fowler's position, or upright and leaning forward.

-  c. Administer analgesics, nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs, or corticosteroids for pain as prescribed.
- d. Auscultate for a pericardial friction rub.
- e. Check results of blood culture to identify causative organism.
- f. Administer antibiotics for bacterial infection as prescribed.
- g. Administer diuretics and digoxin as prescribed to the client with chronic constrictive pericarditis; surgical incision of the pericardium (pericardiectomy) may be necessary.
- h. Monitor for signs of cardiac tamponade, including pulsus paradoxus, jugular vein distention with clear lung sounds, muffled heart sounds, narrowed **pulse pressure**, tachycardia, and decreased cardiac output. 
- i. Notify the HCP if signs of cardiac tamponade occur.

## **B. Myocarditis**

1. Description: Acute or chronic inflammation of the myocardium as a result of pericarditis, systemic infection, or allergic response
2. Assessment
  - a. Fever
  - b. Pericardial friction rub
  - c. Gallop rhythm
  - d. Murmur that sounds like fluid passing an obstruction
  - e. Pulsus alternans
  - f. Signs of heart failure

- g.** Fatigue
- h.** Dyspnea
- i.** Tachycardia
- j.** Chest pain

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Assist the client to a position of comfort, such as sitting up and leaning forward.
- b.** Administer analgesics, salicylates, and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs as prescribed to reduce fever and pain.
- c.** Administer oxygen as prescribed.
- d.** Provide adequate rest periods.
- e.** Limit activities to avoid overexertion and decrease the workload of the heart.
- f.** Administer digoxin as prescribed, and monitor for signs of digoxin toxicity.
- g.** Administer antidysrhythmics as prescribed.
- h.** Administer antibiotics as prescribed to treat the causative organism.
- i.** Monitor for complications, which can include thrombus, heart failure, and cardiomyopathy.

## **C. Endocarditis** ▲

### **1. Description**

- a.** Endocarditis is an inflammation of the inner lining of the heart and valves.
- b.** Occurs primarily in clients who are IV drug abusers, have had valve replacements or repair of valves with prosthetic materials, or other structural cardiac defects

- c. Ports of entry for the infecting organism include the oral cavity (especially if the client has had a dental procedure in the previous 3 to 6 months), infections (cutaneous, genitourinary, gastrointestinal, and systemic) and surgery or invasive procedures, including IV line placement.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Fever
- b. Anorexia
- c. Weight loss
- d. Fatigue
- e. Cardiac murmurs
- f. Heart failure
- g. Embolic complications from vegetation fragments traveling through the circulation
- h. Petechiae
- i. Splinter hemorrhages in the nail beds
- j. Osler's nodes (reddish tender lesions) on the pads of the fingers, hands, and toes
- k. Janeway lesions (nontender hemorrhagic lesions) on the fingers, toes, nose, or earlobes
- l. Splenomegaly
- m. Clubbing of the fingers

## 3. Interventions

- a. Provide adequate rest balanced with activity to prevent thrombus formation.

- b.** Maintain antiembolism stockings.
- c.** Monitor cardiovascular status.
- d.** Monitor for signs of heart failure.
- e.** Monitor for signs of emboli.
- f.** Monitor for splenic emboli, as evidenced by sudden abdominal pain radiating to the left shoulder and the presence of rebound abdominal tenderness on palpation.
- g.** Monitor for renal emboli, as evidenced by flank pain radiating to the groin, hematuria, and pyuria.
- h.** Monitor for confusion, aphasia, or dysphasia, which may indicate central nervous system emboli.
- i.** Monitor for pulmonary emboli as evidenced by pleuritic chest pain, dyspnea, and cough.
- j.** Assess skin, mucous membranes, and conjunctiva for petechiae.
- k.** Assess nail beds for splinter hemorrhages.
- l.** Assess for Osler's nodes on the pads of the fingers, hands, and toes.
- m.** Assess for Janeway lesions on the fingers, toes, nose, or earlobes.
- n.** Assess for clubbing of the fingers.
- o.** Evaluate blood culture results.
- p.** Administer antibiotics intravenously as prescribed.
- q.** Plan and arrange for discharge, providing resources required for the continued administration of IV antibiotics.

#### 4. Client education (Box 60-7) ▲

### **BOX 60-7** Home Care Instructions for the Client with Infective Endocarditis

Teach the client to maintain aseptic technique during setup and administration of intravenous antibiotics.

Instruct the client to administer intravenous antibiotics at scheduled times to maintain the blood level.

Instruct the client to monitor intravenous catheter sites for signs of infection and report this immediately to the health care provider (HCP).

Instruct the client to record the temperature daily for up to 6 weeks and report fever.

Encourage oral hygiene at least twice a day with a soft toothbrush and rinse well with water after brushing.

Client should avoid use of oral irrigation devices and flossing to avoid bacteremia.

Teach the client to cleanse any skin lacerations thoroughly and apply an antibiotic ointment as prescribed.

Client should inform all HCPs of history of endocarditis and ask about the use of prophylactic antibiotics prior to invasive respiratory procedures and dentistry.

Teach the client to observe for signs and symptoms of embolic conditions and heart failure.

## **XIII. Cardiac Tamponade**

### **A. Description** ▲

1. A pericardial effusion occurs when the space between the parietal and visceral layers of the pericardium fills with fluid.
2. Pericardial effusion places the client at risk for cardiac tamponade, an accumulation of fluid in the pericardial cavity.
3. Tamponade restricts ventricular filling, and cardiac output drops.

 **Acute cardiac tamponade can occur when small volumes (20 to 50 mL) of fluid accumulate rapidly in the pericardium.**

## **B. Assessment**

1. Pulsus paradoxus
2. Increased CVP
3. Jugular venous distention with clear lungs
4. Distant, muffled heart sounds
5. Decreased cardiac output
6. Narrowing pulse pressure

## **C. Interventions**

1. The client needs to be placed in a critical care unit for hemodynamic monitoring.
2. Administer fluids intravenously as prescribed to manage decreased cardiac output.
3. Prepare the client for chest x-ray or echocardiography.
4. Prepare the client for pericardiocentesis to withdraw pericardial fluid if prescribed.

5. Monitor for recurrence of tamponade following pericardiocentesis.
6. If the client experiences recurrent tamponade or recurrent effusions or develops adhesions from chronic pericarditis, a portion (pericardial window) or all of the pericardium (pericardiectomy) may be removed to allow adequate ventricular filling and contraction.

## XIV. Valvular Heart Disease

### A. Description

1. Valvular heart disease occurs when the heart valves cannot fully open (stenosis) or close completely (insufficiency or regurgitation).
2. Valvular heart disease prevents efficient blood flow through the heart.

### B. Types

1. Mitral stenosis: Valvular tissue thickens and narrows the valve opening, preventing blood from flowing from the left atrium to the left ventricle.
2. Mitral insufficiency, regurgitation: Valve is incompetent, preventing complete valve closure during systole.
3. Mitral valve prolapse: Valve leaflets protrude into the left atrium during **systole**.
4. Aortic stenosis: Valvular tissue thickens and narrows the valve opening, preventing blood from flowing from the left ventricle into the aorta.
5. Aortic insufficiency: Valve is incompetent, preventing complete valve closure during **diastole**.
6. For aortic disorders, see [Table 60-2](#).

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**TABLE 60-2 Aortic Valve Disorders**

Aortic Stenosis	Aortic Insufficiency
<b>Symptoms</b>	
Dyspnea on exertion Angina Syncope on exertion Fatigue Orthopnea Paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea Harsh systolic crescendo-decrescendo murmur	Dyspnea Angina Tachycardia Fatigue Orthopnea Paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea Blowing decrescendo diastolic murmur
<b>Interventions</b>	
Refer to the section on repair procedures. Prepare the client for valve replacement as indicated.	

7. For tricuspid disorders, see [Table 60-3](#).

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**TABLE 60-3 Tricuspid Valve Disorders**

Tricuspid Stenosis	Tricuspid Insufficiency
<b>Symptoms</b>	
Easily fatigued Effort intolerance Complaints of fluttering sensations in the neck (obstructed venous flow) Cyanosis Signs of right ventricular failure including ascites, hepatomegaly, peripheral edema, jugular vein distention with clear lung fields Symptoms of decreased cardiac output Rumbling diastolic murmur	Asymptomatic in mild situations Signs of right ventricular failure including ascites, hepatomegaly, peripheral edema Pleural effusion Systolic murmur heard at the left sternal border, fourth intercostal space
<b>Interventions</b>	
Refer to the section on repair procedures. Prepare the client for valve replacement as indicated.	

8. For pulmonary valve disorders, see [Table 60-4](#).

**TABLE 60-4 Pulmonary Valve Disorders**

<b>Pulmonary Stenosis</b>	<b>Pulmonary Insufficiency</b>
<b>Symptoms</b> Asymptomatic in a mild condition Dyspnea Fatigue Syncope Signs of right ventricular failure including ascites, hepatomegaly, peripheral edema Systolic thrill heard at left sternal border	Asymptomatic in mild condition Dyspnea Fatigue Syncope Signs of right ventricular failure including ascites, hepatomegaly, peripheral edema Systolic thrill heard at left sternal border
<b>Interventions</b> Refer to the section on repair procedures. Prepare the client for pulmonary valve commissurotomy as indicated.	Refer to the section on repair procedures. Prepare the client for pulmonary valve replacement as indicated.

**C. Repair procedures**

**1. Balloon valvuloplasty**

- a. Balloon valvuloplasty is an invasive nonsurgical procedure.
- b. A balloon catheter is passed from the femoral vein through the atrial septum to the mitral valve or through the femoral artery to the aortic valve.
- c. The balloon is inflated to enlarge the orifice.
- d. Institute precautions for arterial puncture if appropriate.
- e. Monitor for bleeding from the catheter insertion site.
- f. Monitor for signs of systemic emboli.
- g. Monitor for signs of a regurgitant valve by monitoring cardiac rhythm, heart sounds, and cardiac output.

**2. Mitral annuloplasty: Tightening and suturing the malfunctioning valve annulus to eliminate or greatly reduce regurgitation**

**3. Commissurotomy, valvotomy**

- a. The procedure is accomplished with cardiopulmonary bypass during open heart surgery.
- b. The valve is visualized, thrombi are removed from the atria, fused leaflets are incised, and calcium is debrided from the leaflets, thus widening the orifice.

#### D. Valve replacement procedures

1. Mechanical prosthetic valves: These prosthetic valves are durable.

 **Thromboembolism is a problem following valve replacement with a mechanical prosthetic valve, and lifetime anticoagulant therapy is required.**

2. Bioprosthetic valves

- a. Biological grafts are xenografts (valves from other species)—porcine valves (pig), bovine valves (cow), or homografts (human cadavers).
- b. The risk of clot formation is small; therefore long-term anticoagulation may not be indicated.

3. Preoperative interventions: Consult with the HCP regarding discontinuing anticoagulants 72 hours before surgery.

4. Postoperative interventions 

- a. Monitor closely for signs of bleeding.
- b. Monitor cardiac output and for signs of heart failure.
- c. Administer digoxin as prescribed to maintain cardiac output and prevent atrial fibrillation.
- d. Client education ([Box 60-8](#)). 

Adequate rest is important, and fatigue is usual.

Anticoagulant therapy is necessary if a mechanical prosthetic valve has been inserted.

Instruct the client concerning hazards related to anticoagulant therapy and to notify the health care provider (HCP) if bleeding or excessive bruising occurs.

Instruct the client concerning the importance of good oral hygiene to reduce the risk of infective endocarditis.

Brush teeth twice daily with a soft toothbrush, followed by oral rinses.

Avoid irrigation devices, electric toothbrushes, and flossing because these activities can cause the gums to bleed, allowing bacteria to enter the mucous membranes and bloodstream.

Monitor incision and report any drainage or redness.

Avoid any dental procedures for 6 months.

Heavy lifting (more than 10 lb) is to be avoided, and exercise caution when in an automobile to prevent injury to the sternal incision.

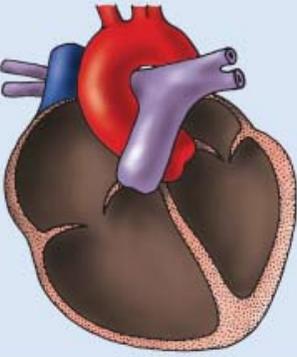
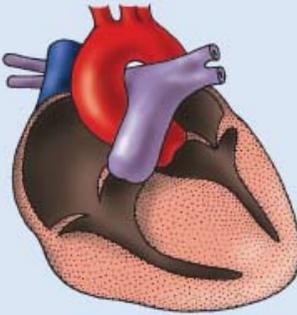
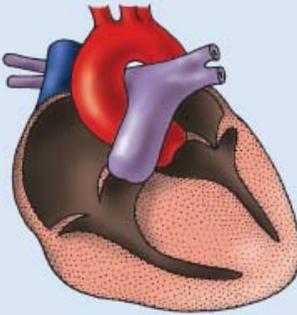
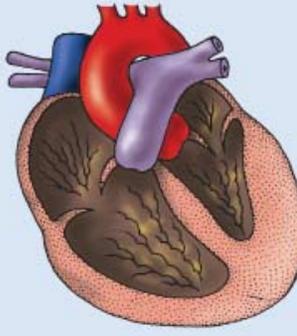
If a prosthetic valve was inserted, a soft, audible, clicking sound may be heard.

Instruct the client concerning the importance of prophylactic antibiotics before any invasive procedure and the importance of informing all HCPs of history of valve replacement or repair.

Obtain and wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## XV. Cardiomyopathy (Table 60-5)

**TABLE 60-5 Pathophysiology, Signs, Symptoms, and Treatment of Cardiomyopathies**

Dilated Cardiomyopathy	HYPERTROPHIC CARDIOMYOPATHY		Restrictive Cardiomyopathy
	Nonobstructed	Obstructed	
<p><b>Pathophysiology</b> Fibrosis of myocardium and endocardium Dilated chambers Mural wall thrombi prevalent</p> 	<p>Hypertrophy of the walls Hypertrophied septum Relatively small chamber size</p> 	<p>Same as for nonobstructed except for obstruction of left ventricular outflow tract associated with the hypertrophied septum and mitral valve incompetence</p> 	<p>Mimics constrictive pericarditis Fibrosed walls cannot expand or contract Chambers narrowed; emboli common</p> 
<p><b>Signs and Symptoms</b> Fatigue and weakness Heart failure (left side) Dysrhythmias or heart block Systemic or pulmonary emboli S<sub>3</sub> and S<sub>4</sub> gallops Moderate to severe cardiomegaly</p>	<p>Dyspnea Angina Fatigue, syncope, palpitations Mild cardiomegaly S<sub>4</sub> gallop Ventricular dysrhythmias Sudden death common Heart failure</p>	<p>Same as for nonobstructed except with mitral regurgitation murmur Atrial fibrillation</p>	<p>Dyspnea and fatigue Heart failure (right side) Mild to moderate cardiomegaly S<sub>3</sub> and S<sub>4</sub> gallops Heart block Emboli</p>
<p><b>Treatment</b> Symptomatic treatment of heart failure Vasodilators Control of dysrhythmias Surgery: Heart transplant</p>	<p>For both: Symptomatic treatment β-Blockers Conversion of atrial fibrillation Surgery: Ventriculomyotomy or muscle resection with mitral valve replacement Digoxin, nitrates, and other vasodilators contraindicated with the obstructed form</p>		<p>Supportive treatment of symptoms Treatment of hypertension Conversion from dysrhythmias Exercise restrictions Emergency treatment of acute pulmonary edema</p>

Adapted from Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

## A. Description

1. Cardiomyopathy is a subacute or chronic disorder of the heart muscle.
2. Treatment is palliative, not curative, and the client needs to deal with numerous lifestyle changes and a shortened life span.

## B. Types, signs and symptoms, and treatment (see [Table 60-5](#))

## XVI. Vascular Disorders

### A. Venous thrombosis

#### 1. Description

- a. Thrombus can be associated with an inflammatory process.
- b. When a thrombus develops, inflammation occurs, thickening the vein wall and leading to embolization.

#### 2. Types

- a. Thrombophlebitis: Thrombus associated with inflammation
- b. Phlebothrombosis: Thrombus without inflammation
- c. Phlebitis: Vein inflammation associated with invasive procedures, such as IV lines
- d. Deep vein thrombophlebitis: More serious than a superficial thrombophlebitis because of the risk for pulmonary embolism

#### 3. Risk factors for thrombus formation

- a. Venous stasis from varicose veins, heart failure, immobility

- b.** Hypercoagulability disorders
- c.** Injury to the venous wall from IV injections; administration of vessel irritants  
(chemotherapy, hypertonic solutions)
- d.** Following surgery, particularly orthopedic and abdominal surgery
- e.** Pregnancy
- f.** Ulcerative colitis
- g.** Use of oral contraceptives
- h.** Certain malignancies
- i.** Fractures or other injuries of the pelvis or lower extremities

## **B.** Phlebitis ▲

### **1.** Assessment

- a.** Red, warm area radiating up the vein and extremity
- b.** Pain and soreness
- c.** Swelling

### **2.** Interventions

- a.** Apply warm, moist soaks as prescribed to dilate the vein and promote circulation (assess temperature of soak before applying).
- b.** Assess for signs of complications such as tissue necrosis, infection, or pulmonary embolus.

## **C.** Deep vein thrombophlebitis ▲

### **1.** Assessment

- a.** Calf or groin tenderness or pain with or without swelling

**b.** Positive Homans' sign may be noted; however, false-positive results are common, so this is not a reliable assessment measure.

**c.** Warm skin that is tender to touch

## **2.** Interventions

**a.** Provide bed rest as prescribed.

**b.** Elevate the affected extremity above the level of the heart as prescribed.

**c.** Avoid using the knee gatch or a pillow under the knees.

**d.** Do not massage the extremity.

**e.** Provide thigh-high or knee-high antiembolism stockings as prescribed to reduce venous stasis and assist in the venous return of blood to the heart; teach how to apply and remove stockings.

**f.** Administer intermittent or continuous warm, moist compresses as prescribed.

**g.** Palpate the site gently, monitoring for warmth and edema.

**h.** Measure and record the circumferences of the thighs and calves.

**i.** Monitor for shortness of breath and chest pain, which can indicate pulmonary emboli.

**j.** Administer thrombolytic therapy (tissue plasminogen activator) if prescribed, which must be initiated within 5 days after the onset of symptoms.

**k.** Administer heparin therapy as prescribed to prevent enlargement of the existing clot and prevent the formation of new clots.

**l.** Monitor activated partial thromboplastin time during heparin therapy.

**m.** Administer warfarin (Coumadin) as prescribed following heparin therapy

when the symptoms of deep vein thrombophlebitis have resolved.

- n. Monitor prothrombin time and international normalized ratio during warfarin (Coumadin) therapy.
- o. Monitor for the hazards and side effects associated with anticoagulant therapy.
- p. Administer analgesics as prescribed to reduce pain.
- q. Administer diuretics as prescribed to reduce lower extremity edema.
- r. Client education (Box 60-9). ▲

### **BOX 60-9**

### **Instructions for the Client with Deep Vein Thrombophlebitis**

Instruct the client concerning the hazards of anticoagulation therapy.

Recognize the signs and symptoms of bleeding.

Avoid prolonged sitting or standing, constrictive clothing, or crossing legs when seated.

Elevate the legs for 10 to 20 minutes every few hours each day.

Plan a progressive walking program.

Inspect the legs for edema, and measure the circumference of the legs.

Wear antiembolism stockings as prescribed.

Avoid smoking.

Avoid any medications unless prescribed by the health care provider (HCP).

Instruct the client concerning the importance of follow-up HCP visits and laboratory studies.

Obtain and wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## D. Venous insufficiency

### 1. Description

- a. Venous insufficiency results from prolonged venous hypertension, which stretches the veins and damages the valves.
- b. The resultant edema and venous stasis cause venous stasis ulcers, swelling, and cellulitis.
- c. Treatment focuses on decreasing edema and promoting venous return from the affected extremity.
- d. Treatment for venous stasis ulcers focuses on healing the ulcer and preventing stasis and ulcer recurrence.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Stasis dermatitis or brown discoloration along the ankles, extending up to the calf
- b. Edema
- c. Ulcer formation: Edges are uneven, ulcer bed is pink, and granulation is present.

### 3. Interventions

 For venous insufficiency, leg elevation is usually prescribed to assist with the return of blood to the heart.

- a. Instruct the client to wear elastic or compression stockings during the day and evening as prescribed (instruct the client to put on elastic stockings on awakening, before getting out of bed).

- b.** Advise the client to put on a clean pair of elastic stockings each day; it may be necessary to wear the stockings for the remainder of life.
- c.** Instruct the client to avoid prolonged sitting or standing, constrictive clothing, or crossing legs when seated.
- d.** Instruct the client to elevate the legs for 10 to 20 minutes every few hours each day.
- e.** Instruct the client to elevate the legs above the level of the heart when in bed.
- f.** Instruct the client in the use of an intermittent sequential pneumatic compression system, if prescribed; instruct the client to apply the compression system twice daily for 1 hour in the morning and evening.
- g.** Advise the client with an open ulcer that the compression system is applied over a dressing.

#### **4. Wound care**

- a.** Provide care to the wound as prescribed by the HCP.
- b.** Assess the client's ability to care for the wound, and initiate home care resources as necessary.
- c.** If an Unna boot (dressing constructed of gauze moistened with zinc oxide) is prescribed, the HCP will change it weekly.
- d.** The wound is cleansed with normal saline before application of the Unna boot; povidone-iodine (Betadine) and hydrogen peroxide are not used because they destroy granulation tissue.
- e.** The Unna boot is covered with an elastic wrap that hardens to promote venous

return and prevent stasis.

**f.** Monitor for signs of arterial occlusion from an Unna boot that may be too tight.

**g.** Keep tape off the client's skin.

**h.** Occlusive dressings such as polyethylene film or a hydrocolloid dressing may be used to cover the ulcer.

## **5. Medications**

**a.** Apply topical agents to wound as prescribed to debride the ulcer, eliminate necrotic tissue, and promote healing.

**b.** When applying topical agents, apply an oil-based agent such as petroleum jelly (Vaseline) on surrounding skin, because debriding agents can injure healthy tissue.

**c.** Administer antibiotics as prescribed if infection or cellulitis occurs.

## **E. Varicose veins**

### **1. Description**

**a.** Distended, protruding veins that appear darkened and tortuous are evident.

**b.** Vein walls weaken and dilate, and valves become incompetent.

### **2. Assessment** ▲

**a.** Pain in the legs with dull aching after standing

**b.** A feeling of fullness in the legs

**c.** Ankle edema

### **3. Trendelenburg's test** ▲

**a.** Place the client in a supine position with the legs elevated.

- b.** When the client sits up, if varicosities are present, veins fill from the proximal end; veins normally fill from the distal end.

#### **4. Interventions**

- a.** Assist with Trendelenburg's test.
- b.** Emphasize the importance of antiembolism stockings as prescribed.
- c.** Instruct the client to elevate the legs as much as possible.
- d.** Instruct the client to avoid constrictive clothing and pressure on the legs.
- e.** Prepare the client for sclerotherapy or vein stripping as prescribed.

#### **5. Sclerotherapy**

- a.** A solution is injected into the vein, followed by the application of a pressure dressing.
- b.** Incision and drainage of the trapped blood in the sclerosed vein is performed 14 to 21 days after the injection, followed by the application of a pressure dressing for 12 to 18 hours.

- 6.** Laser therapy: A laser fiber is used to heat and close the main vessel contributing to the varicosity.

#### **7. Vein stripping**

- a.** Varicose veins may be removed if they are larger than 4 mm in diameter or if they are in clusters; other treatments are usually tried before vein stripping
- b.** Preoperatively assist the HCP with vein marking.
- c.** Evaluate pulses as a baseline for comparison postoperatively.
- d.** Maintain elastic (Ace) bandages on the client's legs postoperatively.

- e. Monitor the groin and leg for bleeding through the elastic bandages.
- f. Monitor the extremity for edema, warmth, color, and pulses.
- g. Assess for paresthesias, which could include saphenous nerve damage.
- h. Elevate the legs above the level of the heart postoperatively.
- i. Encourage range-of-motion exercises of the legs.
- j. Instruct the client to avoid leg dangling or chair sitting.
- k. Instruct the client to elevate the legs when sitting.
- l. Emphasize the importance of wearing elastic stockings after bandage removal.

## **XVII. Arterial Disorders**

### **A. Peripheral arterial disease ▲**

#### **1. Description**

- a. Chronic disorder in which partial or total arterial occlusion deprives the lower extremities of oxygen and nutrients
- b. Tissue damage occurs below the level of the arterial occlusion.
- c. Atherosclerosis is the most common cause of peripheral arterial disease.

#### **2. Assessment ▲**

- a. Intermittent claudication (pain in the muscles resulting from an inadequate blood supply)
- b. Rest pain, characterized by numbness, burning, or aching in the distal portion of the lower extremities, which awakens the client at night and is relieved by placing the extremity in a dependent position
- c. Lower back or buttock discomfort

- d.** Loss of hair and dry scaly skin on the lower extremities
- e.** Thickened toenails
- f.** Cold and gray-blue color of skin in the lower extremities
- g.** Elevational pallor and dependent rubor in the lower extremities
- h.** Decreased or absent peripheral pulses
- i.** Signs of arterial ulcer formation occurring on or between the toes or on the upper aspect of the foot that are characterized as painful
- j.** BP measurements at the thigh, calf, and ankle are lower than the brachial pressure (normally, BP readings in the thigh and calf are higher than those in the upper extremities).

### 3. Interventions

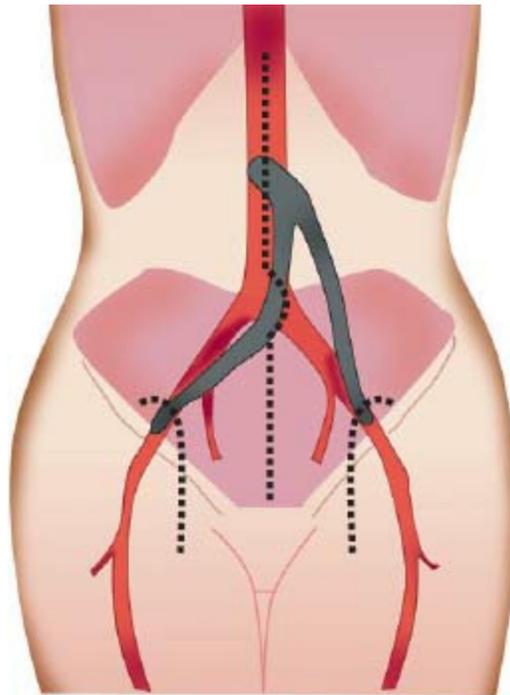
 Because swelling in the extremities prevents arterial blood flow, the client with peripheral arterial disease is instructed to elevate the feet at rest but to refrain from elevating them above the level of the heart because extreme elevation slows arterial blood flow to the feet. In severe cases of peripheral arterial disease, clients with edema may sleep with the affected limb hanging from the bed or they may sit upright (without leg elevation) in a chair for comfort.

- a.** Assess pain.
- b.** Monitor the extremities for color, motion and sensation, and pulses.
- c.** Obtain BP measurements.
- d.** Assess for signs of ulcer formation or signs of gangrene.
- e.** Assist in developing an individualized exercise program, which is initiated

gradually and slowly increased.

- f.** Encourage prescribed exercise, which will improve arterial flow through the development of collateral circulation.
  - g.** Instruct the client to walk to the point of claudication, stop and rest, and then walk a little farther.
  - h.** Instruct the client with peripheral arterial disease to avoid crossing the legs, which interferes with blood flow.
  - i.** Instruct the client to avoid exposure to cold (causes vasoconstriction) to the extremities and to wear socks or insulated shoes for warmth at all times.
  - j.** Instruct the client never to apply direct heat to the limb, such as with a heating pad or hot water, because the decreased sensitivity in the limb will cause burning.
  - k.** Instruct the client to inspect the skin on the extremities daily and to report any signs of skin breakdown.
  - l.** Instruct the client to avoid tobacco and caffeine because of their vasoconstrictive effects.
  - m.** Instruct the client in the use of hemorheological and antiplatelet medications as prescribed.
  - n.** Inform the client of the importance of taking all medications prescribed by the HCP.
- 4.** Procedures to improve arterial blood flow
- a.** Percutaneous transluminal angioplasty, with or without intravascular stent

- b. Laser-assisted angioplasty
- c. Atherectomy
- d. Bypass surgery: Inflow procedures bypass the occlusion above the superficial femoral arteries and include aortoiliac, aortofemoral, and axillofemoral bypasses; outflow procedures bypass the occlusion at or below the superficial femoral arteries and include femoropopliteal and femorotibial bypass (Fig. 60-14).



**FIGURE 60-14** In aortoiliac and aortofemoral bypass surgery, a midline incision into the abdominal cavity is required, with an additional incision in each groin. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

## B. Raynaud's disease ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Raynaud's disease is vasospasm of the arterioles and arteries of the upper and lower extremities.
- b. Vasospasm causes constriction of the cutaneous vessels.
- c. Attacks are intermittent and occur with exposure to cold or stress.
- d. Affects primarily fingers, toes, ears, and cheeks

## 2. Assessment

- a. Blanching of the extremity, followed by cyanosis during vasoconstriction
- b. Reddened tissue when the vasospasm is relieved
- c. Numbness, tingling, swelling, and a cold temperature at the affected body part

## 3. Interventions

- a. Monitor pulses.
- b. Administer vasodilators as prescribed.
- c. Instruct the client regarding medication therapy.
- d. Assist the client to identify and avoid precipitating factors such as cold and stress.
- e. Instruct the client to avoid smoking.
- f. Instruct the client to wear warm clothing, socks, and gloves in cold weather.
- g. Advise the client to avoid injuries to fingers and hands.

## C. Buerger's disease (thromboangiitis obliterans) ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Buerger's disease is an occlusive disease of the median and small arteries and veins.

b. The distal upper and lower limbs are affected most commonly.

## 2. Assessment

a. Intermittent claudication

b. Ischemic pain occurring in the digits while at rest

c. Aching pain that is more severe at night

d. Cool, numb, or tingling sensation

e. Diminished pulses in the distal extremities

f. Extremities that are cool and red in the dependent position

g. Development of ulcerations in the extremities

## 3. Interventions

a. Instruct the client to stop smoking.

b. Monitor pulses.

c. Instruct the client to avoid injury to the upper and lower extremities.

d. Administer vasodilators as prescribed.

e. Instruct the client regarding medication therapy.

## **XVIII. Aortic Aneurysms**

### A. Description

1. An aortic aneurysm is an abnormal dilation of the arterial wall caused by localized weakness and stretching in the medial layer or wall of the aorta.

2. The aneurysm can be located anywhere along the abdominal aorta.

3. The goal of treatment is to limit the progression of the disease by modifying risk

factors, controlling the BP to prevent strain on the aneurysm, recognizing symptoms early, and preventing rupture.

## **B. Types of aortic aneurysm**

1. Fusiform: Diffuse dilation that involves the entire circumference of the arterial segment
2. Saccular: Distinct localized outpouching of the artery wall
3. Dissecting: Created when blood separates the layers of the artery wall, forming a cavity between them
4. False (pseudoaneurysm)
  - a. Pseudoaneurysm occurs when the clot and connective tissue are outside the arterial wall.
  - b. Pseudoaneurysm occurs as a result of vessel injury or trauma to all three layers of the arterial wall.

## **C. Assessment**

1. Thoracic aneurysm
  - a. Pain extending to neck, shoulders, lower back, or abdomen
  - b. Syncope
  - c. Dyspnea
  - d. Increased pulse
  - e. Cyanosis
  - f. Weakness
  - g. Hoarseness, difficulty swallowing because of pressure from the aneurysm

## 2. Abdominal aneurysm

- a. Prominent, pulsating mass in abdomen, at or above the umbilicus
- b. Systolic bruit over the aorta
- c. Tenderness on deep palpation
- d. Abdominal or lower back pain

## 3. Rupturing aneurysm ▲

- a. Severe abdominal or back pain
- b. Lumbar pain radiating to the flank and groin
- c. Hypotension
- d. Increased pulse rate
- e. Signs of shock
- f. Hematoma at flank area

## 4. Diagnostic tests

- a. Diagnostic tests are done to confirm the presence, size, and location of the aneurysm.
- b. Tests include abdominal ultrasound, computed tomography scan, and arteriography.

## 5. Interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Assess risk factors for the arterial disease process.
- c. Obtain information regarding back or abdominal pain.
- d. Question the client regarding the sensation of pulsation in the abdomen.

- e. Inspect the skin for the presence of vascular disease or breakdown.
- f. Check peripheral circulation, including pulses, temperature, and color.
- g. Observe for signs of rupture.
- h. Note any tenderness over the abdomen.
- i. Monitor for abdominal distention.

#### 6. Nonsurgical interventions

- a. Modify risk factors.
- b. Instruct the client regarding the procedure for monitoring BP.
- c. Instruct the client on the importance of regular HCP visits to follow the size of the aneurysm.
- d. Instruct the client that if severe back or abdominal pain or fullness, soreness over the umbilicus, sudden development of discoloration in the extremities, or a persistent elevation of BP occurs to notify the HCP immediately.

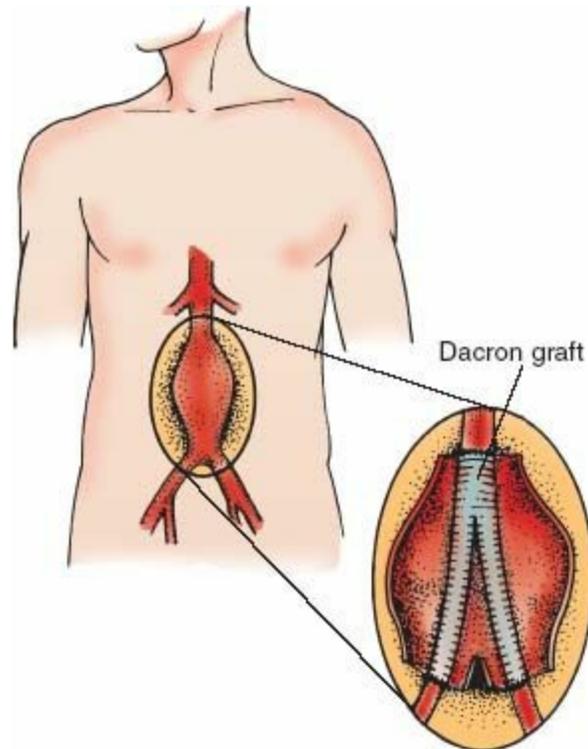
 **Instruct the client with an aortic aneurysm to report immediately the occurrence of chest or back pain, shortness of breath, difficulty swallowing, or hoarseness.**

#### D. Pharmacological interventions

1. Administer antihypertensives to maintain the BP within normal limits and to prevent strain on the aneurysm.
2. Instruct the client about the purpose of the medications.
3. Instruct the client about the side effects and schedule of the medication.

#### E. Abdominal aortic aneurysm resection

1. Description: Surgical resection or excision of the aneurysm; the excised section is replaced with a graft that is sewn end to end (Fig. 60-15).



**FIGURE 60-15** Surgical repair of an abdominal aortic aneurysm with a woven Dacron graft. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Critical thinking for collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

## 2. Preoperative interventions

- a. Assess all peripheral pulses as a baseline for postoperative comparison.
- b. Instruct the client in coughing and deep-breathing exercises.
- c. Administer bowel preparation as prescribed.

## 3. Postoperative interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor peripheral pulses distal to the graft site.

- c.** Monitor for signs of graft occlusion, including changes in pulses, cool to cold extremities below the graft, white or blue extremities or flanks, severe pain, or abdominal distention.
- d.** Limit elevation of the head of the bed to 45 degrees to prevent flexion of the graft.
- e.** Monitor for hypovolemia and kidney failure resulting from significant blood loss during surgery.
- f.** Monitor urine output hourly, and notify the HCP if it is lower than 30 to 50 mL/hour.
- g.** Monitor serum creatinine and blood urea nitrogen levels daily.
- h.** Monitor respiratory status and auscultate breath sounds to identify respiratory complications.
- i.** Encourage turning, coughing and deep breathing, and splinting the incision.
- j.** Ambulate as prescribed.
- k.** Maintain nasogastric tube to low suction until bowel sounds return.
- l.** Assess for bowel sounds and report their return to the HCP.
- m.** Monitor for pain and administer medication as prescribed.
- n.** Assess incision site for bleeding or signs of infection.
- o.** Prepare the client for discharge by providing instructions regarding pain management, wound care, and activity restrictions.
- p.** Instruct the client not to lift objects heavier than 15 to 20 lb for 6 to 12 weeks.
- q.** Advise the client to avoid activities requiring pushing, pulling, or straining.

r. Instruct the client not to drive a vehicle until approved by the HCP.

## **F. Thoracic aneurysm repair**

### **1. Description**

- a. A thoracotomy or median sternotomy approach is used to enter the thoracic cavity.
- b. The aneurysm is exposed and excised, and a graft or prosthesis is sewn onto the aorta.
- c. Total cardiopulmonary bypass is necessary for excision of aneurysms in the ascending aorta.
- d. Partial cardiopulmonary bypass is used for clients with an aneurysm in the descending aorta.

### **2. Postoperative interventions**

- a. Monitor vital signs and neurological and renal status.
- b. Monitor for signs of hemorrhage, such as a drop in BP and increased pulse rate and respirations, and report to the HCP immediately.
- c. Monitor chest tubes for an increase in chest drainage, which may indicate bleeding or separation at the graft site.
- d. Assess sensation and motion of all extremities and notify the HCP if deficits are noted, which can occur because of a lack of blood supply to the spinal cord during surgery.
- e. Monitor respiratory status and auscultate breath sounds to identify respiratory complications.

- f.** Encourage turning, coughing, and deep breathing while splinting the incision.
- g.** Monitor cardiac status for dysrhythmias.
- h.** Monitor for pain and administer medication as prescribed.
- i.** Assess the incision site for bleeding or signs of infection.
- j.** Prepare the client for discharge by providing instructions regarding pain management, wound care, and activity restrictions.
- k.** Instruct the client not to lift objects heavier than 15 to 20 lb for 6 to 12 weeks.
- l.** Advise the client to avoid activities requiring pushing, pulling, or straining.
- m.** Instruct the client not to drive a vehicle until approved by the HCP.

## **XIX. Embolectomy**

### **A. Description**

1. Embolectomy is removal of an embolus from an artery, using a catheter.
2. A patch graft may be required to close the artery.

### **B. Preoperative interventions**

1. Obtain a baseline vascular assessment.
2. Administer anticoagulants as prescribed.
3. Administer thrombolytics as prescribed.
4. Place a bed cradle on the bed.
5. Avoid bumping or jarring the bed.
6. Maintain the extremity in a slightly dependent position.

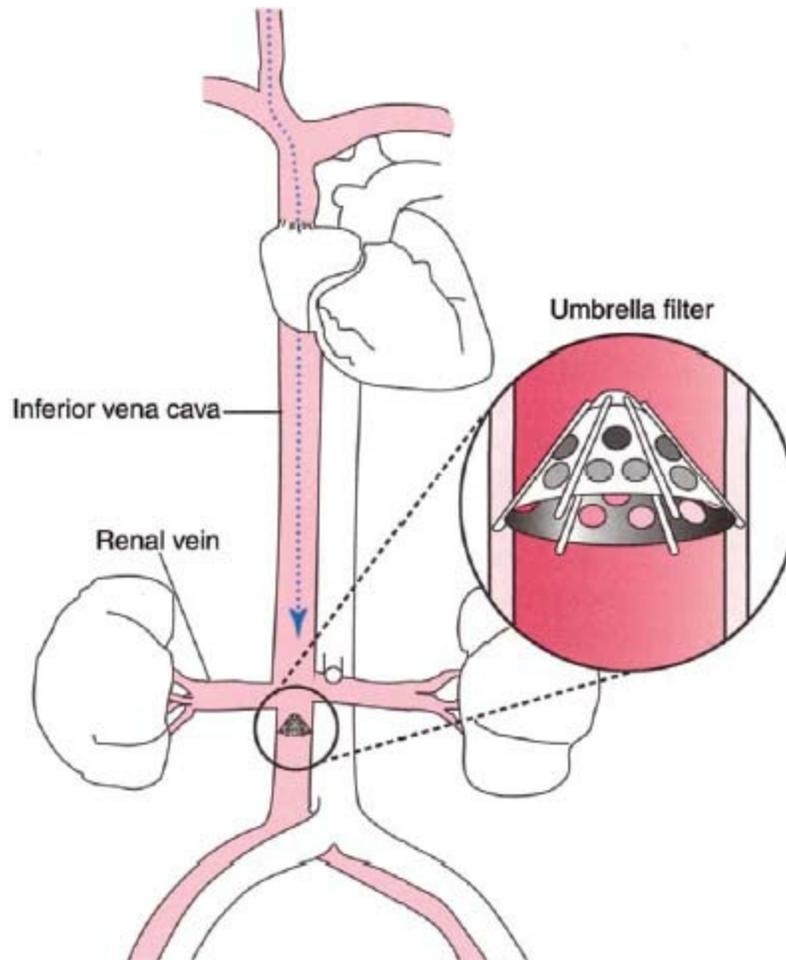
### **C. Postoperative interventions**

1. Assess cardiac, respiratory, and neurological status.
2. Monitor affected extremity for color, temperature, and pulse.
3. Assess sensory and motor function of the affected extremity.
4. Monitor for signs and symptoms of new thrombi or emboli.
5. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
6. Monitor pulse oximetry.
7. Monitor for complications caused by reperfusion of the artery, such as spasms and swelling of the skeletal muscles.
8. Monitor for signs of swollen skeletal muscles such as edema, pain on passive movement, poor capillary refill, numbness, and muscle tenseness.
9. Maintain bed rest initially, with the client in a semi-Fowler's position.
10. Place a bed cradle on the bed.
11. Check the incision site for bleeding or hematoma.
12. Administer anticoagulants as prescribed.
13. Monitor laboratory values related to anticoagulant therapy.
14. Instruct the client to recognize the signs and symptoms of infection and edema.
15. Instruct the client to avoid prolonged sitting or crossing the legs when sitting.
16. Instruct the client to elevate the legs when sitting.
17. Instruct the client to wear antiembolism stockings as prescribed and how to remove and reapply the stockings.
18. Instruct the client to ambulate daily.
19. Instruct the client about anticoagulant therapy and the hazards associated with

anticoagulants. ▲

## XX. Vena Caval Filter and Ligation of Inferior Vena Cava

- A. Vena caval filter: Insertion of an intracaval filter (umbrella) that partially occludes the inferior vena cava and traps emboli to prevent pulmonary emboli (Fig. 60-16)



**FIGURE 60-16** An inferior vena caval filter. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Critical thinking for collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- B. Ligation: Suturing or placing clips on the inferior vena cava to prevent pulmonary emboli; done via abdominal laparotomy

**C. Preoperative interventions:** If the client has been taking an anticoagulant, consult with the HCP regarding discontinuation of the medication to prevent hemorrhage.

**D. Postoperative interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess cardiac, respiratory, neurological, and renal status.
3. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
4. Monitor pulse oximetry.
5. Maintain a semi-Fowler's position.
6. Avoid hip flexion.
7. Provide activity as prescribed.
8. Check the insertion site for bleeding or hematoma and signs or symptoms of infection.
9. Assess for peripheral edema.
10. Maintain antiembolism stockings as prescribed.
11. Monitor laboratory values related to anticoagulant therapy.
12. Instruct the client to recognize the signs and symptoms of infection and edema.
13. Instruct the client to avoid prolonged sitting or crossing the legs when sitting.
14. Instruct the client to elevate the legs when sitting.
15. Instruct the client to wear antiembolism stockings as prescribed and how to remove and reapply the stockings.
16. Instruct the client to ambulate daily.
17. Instruct the client about anticoagulant therapy and the hazards associated with

anticoagulants.

## XXI. Hypertension ▲

### A. Description

1. For an adult (ages 18 and older), a normal BP is a systolic BP below 120 mm Hg and a diastolic below 80 mm Hg.
2. An individual classified with prehypertension has a systolic BP between 120 and 139 mm Hg or a **diastolic pressure** between 80 and 89 mm Hg.
3. Stage 1 hypertension can be classified as a systolic BP between 140 and 159 mm Hg or a diastolic pressure between 90 and 99 mm Hg.
4. Stage 2 hypertension can be classified as a systolic BP equal to or greater than 160 mm Hg or a diastolic pressure equal to or greater than 100 mm Hg.
5. Hypertension is a major risk factor for coronary, cerebral, renal, and peripheral vascular disease.
6. The disease is initially asymptomatic.
7. The goals of treatment include reduction of the BP and preventing or lessening the extent of organ damage.
8. Nonpharmacological approaches, such as lifestyle changes, may be prescribed initially; if the BP cannot be decreased after a reasonable time period (1 to 3 months), the client may require pharmacological treatment.

### B. Primary or essential hypertension

1. No known cause
2. Risk factors ▲

- a. Aging
- b. Family history
- c. African-American race
- d. Obesity
- e. Smoking
- f. Stress
- g. Excessive alcohol
- h. Hyperlipidemia
- i. Increased intake of salt or caffeine

#### C. Secondary hypertension

1. Treatment depends on the cause and the organs involved.
2. Secondary hypertension occurs as a result of other disorders or conditions.
3. Precipitating disorders or conditions
  - a. Cardiovascular disorders
  - b. Renal disorders
  - c. Endocrine system disorders
  - d. Pregnancy
  - e. Medications (e.g., estrogens, glucocorticoids, mineralocorticoids)

#### D. Assessment

1. May be asymptomatic
2. Headache
3. Visual disturbances

4. Dizziness
5. Chest pain
6. Tinnitus
7. Flushed face
8. Epistaxis

## **E. Interventions**

### **1. Goals**

- a. One treatment goal is to reduce the BP.
- b. Another treatment goal is to prevent or lessen the extent of organ damage.

2. Question the client regarding the signs and symptoms indicative of hypertension.
3. Obtain the BP two or more times on both arms, with the client supine and standing.
4. Compare the BP with prior documentation.
5. Determine family history of hypertension.
6. Identify current medication therapy.
7. Obtain weight.
8. Evaluate dietary patterns and sodium intake.
9. Assess for visual changes or retinal damage.
10. Assess for cardiovascular changes such as distended neck veins, increased heart rate, and dysrhythmias.
11. Evaluate chest x-ray for heart enlargement.
12. Assess the neurological system.

**13.** Evaluate renal function.

**14.** Evaluate results of diagnostic and laboratory studies.

**F.** Nonpharmacological interventions

**1.** Weight reduction, if necessary, or maintenance of ideal weight

**2.** Dietary sodium restriction to 2 g daily as prescribed

**3.** Moderate intake of alcohol and caffeine-containing products

**4.** Initiation of a regular exercise program

**5.** Avoidance of smoking

**6.** Relaxation techniques and biofeedback therapy

**7.** Elimination of unnecessary medications that may contribute to the hypertension

**G.** Pharmacological interventions

**1.** Medication therapy is individualized for each client and the selection of the medication is based on such factors as the client's age, culture, presence of coexisting conditions, severity of the hypertension, and client's preferences.

**2.** See [Chapter 61](#) for medications to treat hypertension.

**H.** See [Box 60-10](#) for client education.

**BOX 60-10**

**Education for the Client with Hypertension**

Describe the importance of compliance with the treatment plan.

Describe the disease process, explaining that symptoms usually do not develop until organs have suffered damage.

Initiate and assist the client in planning a regular exercise program, avoiding heavy

weight-lifting and isometric exercises.

Emphasize the importance of beginning the exercise program gradually.

Encourage the client to express feelings about daily stress.

Assist the client to identify ways to reduce stress.

Teach relaxation techniques.

Instruct the client in how to incorporate relaxation techniques into the daily living pattern.

Instruct the client and family in the technique for monitoring blood pressure.

Instruct the client to maintain a diary of blood pressure readings.

Emphasize the importance of lifelong medication and the need for follow-up treatment.

Instruct the client and family about dietary restrictions, which may include sodium, fat, calories, and cholesterol.

Instruct the client in how to shop for and prepare low-sodium meals.

Provide a list of products that contain sodium.

Instruct the client to read labels of products to determine sodium content, focusing on substances listed as sodium, NaCl, or MSG (monosodium glutamate).

Instruct the client to bake, roast, or boil foods, avoid salt in preparation of foods, and avoid using salt at the table.

Instruct the client that fresh foods are best to consume and to avoid canned foods.

Instruct the client about the actions, side effects, and scheduling of medications.

Advise the client that if uncomfortable side effects occur to contact the health care

provider and not to stop the medication.

Instruct the client to avoid over-the-counter medications.

Stress the importance of follow-up care.

## **XXII. Hypertensive Crisis** ▲

### **A. Description**

1. A hypertensive crisis is any clinical condition requiring immediate reduction in BP.
2. A hypertensive crisis is an acute and life-threatening condition.
3. The accelerated hypertension requires emergency treatment because target organ damage (brain, heart, kidneys, retina of the eye) can occur quickly.
4. Death can be caused by stroke, kidney failure, or cardiac disease.

### **B. Assessment**

1. An extremely high BP; usually the diastolic pressure is higher than 120 mm Hg
2. Headache
3. Drowsiness and confusion
4. Blurred vision
5. Changes in neurological status
6. Tachycardia and tachypnea
7. Dyspnea
8. Cyanosis
9. Seizures

## C. Interventions

1. Maintain a patent airway.
2. Administer antihypertensive medications intravenously as prescribed.
3. Monitor vital signs, assessing the BP every 5 minutes.
4. Maintain bed rest, with the head of the bed elevated at 45 degrees.
5. Assess for hypotension during the administration of antihypertensives; place the client in a supine position if hypotension occurs.
6. Have emergency medications and resuscitation equipment readily available.
7. Monitor IV therapy, assessing for fluid overload.
8. Monitor intake and output.
9. Insert a Foley catheter as prescribed.
10. Monitor urinary output; if oliguria or anuria occurs, notify the HCP.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* If the client with an abdominal aortic aneurysm suddenly complains of severe back pain and shortness of breath, the nurse should suspect rupture (a surgical emergency) and should immediately contact the health care provider (HCP). The nurse should also obtain information about the back pain, stay with the client while waiting for the arrival of the HCP, monitor vital signs and neurological status, and provide support to the client. Other signs of rupture include severe abdominal pain or fullness, soreness over the umbilicus, and sudden development of discoloration in the

extremities.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 793-794.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**695.** A client is admitted to an emergency department with chest pain that is consistent with myocardial infarction based on elevated troponin levels. Heart sounds are normal and vital signs are noted on the client's chart. The nurse should alert the health care provider because these changes are **most** consistent with which complication? **Refer to chart.** ❖

Client's Chart				
Time:	11:00 AM	11:15 AM	11:30 AM	11:45 AM
Pulse:	92 beats/min	96 beats/min	104 beats/min	118 beats/min
Respiratory rate:	24 breaths/min	26 breaths/min	28 breaths/min	32 breaths/min
Blood Pressure:	140/88 mm Hg	128/82 mm Hg	104/68 mm Hg	88/58 mm Hg

1. Cardiogenic shock
2. Cardiac tamponade
3. Pulmonary embolism
4. Dissecting thoracic aortic aneurysm

**696.** A client admitted to the hospital with chest pain and a history of type 2 diabetes mellitus is scheduled for cardiac catheterization. Which medication would need to be withheld for 24 hours before the procedure and for 48 hours after the procedure?

1. Regular insulin

2. Glipizide (Glucotrol)
3. Repaglinide (Prandin)
4. Metformin (Glucophage)

697. A client in sinus bradycardia, with a heart rate of 45 beats/minute, complains of dizziness and has a blood pressure of 82/60 mm Hg. Which prescription should the nurse anticipate will be prescribed?

1. Defibrillate the client.
2. Administer digoxin (Lanoxin).
3. Continue to monitor the client.
4. Prepare for transcutaneous pacing.

698. The nurse in a medical unit is caring for a client with heart failure. The client suddenly develops extreme dyspnea, tachycardia, and lung crackles and the nurse suspects pulmonary edema. The nurse immediately asks another nurse to contact the health care provider and prepares to implement which **priority** interventions?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Administering oxygen
2. Inserting a Foley catheter
3. Administering furosemide (Lasix)
4. Administering morphine sulfate intravenously
5. Transporting the client to the coronary care unit
6. Placing the client in a low Fowler's side-lying position

**699.** A client with myocardial infarction suddenly becomes tachycardic, shows signs of air hunger, and begins coughing frothy, pink-tinged sputum. Which finding would the nurse anticipate when auscultating the client's breath sounds?

1. Stridor
2. Crackles
3. Scattered rhonchi
4. Diminished breath sounds

**700.** A client with myocardial infarction is developing cardiogenic shock. Because of the risk of myocardial ischemia, what condition should the nurse carefully assess the client for?

1. Bradycardia
2. Ventricular dysrhythmias
3. Rising diastolic blood pressure
4. Falling central venous pressure

**701.** A client who had cardiac surgery 24 hours ago has had a urine output averaging 20 mL/hour for 2 hours. The client received a single bolus of 500 mL of intravenous fluid. Urine output for the subsequent hour was 25 mL. Daily laboratory results indicate that the blood urea nitrogen level is 45 mg/dL and the serum creatinine level is 2.2 mg/dL. On the basis of these findings, the nurse would anticipate that the client is at risk for which problem?

1. Hypovolemia

2. Acute kidney injury
3. Glomerulonephritis
4. Urinary tract infection

**702.** The nurse is reviewing an electrocardiogram rhythm strip. The P waves and QRS complexes are regular. The PR interval is 0.16 second, and QRS complexes measure 0.06 second. The overall heart rate is 64 beats/minute. Which would be a correct interpretation based on these characteristics?

1. Sinus bradycardia
2. Sick sinus syndrome
3. Normal sinus rhythm
4. First-degree heart block

**703.** A client is wearing a continuous cardiac monitor, which begins to sound its alarm. A nurse sees no electrocardiographic complexes on the screen. Which is the **priority** action of the nurse?

1. Call a code.
2. Call the health care provider.
3. Check the client's status and lead placement.
4. Press the recorder button on the electrocardiogram console.

**704.** The nurse is watching the cardiac monitor and notices that the rhythm suddenly changes. There are no P waves, the QRS complexes are wide, and the ventricular rate is regular but more than 140 beats/minute. The nurse determines that the

client is experiencing which dysrhythmia?

1. Sinus tachycardia
2. Ventricular fibrillation
3. Ventricular tachycardia
4. Premature ventricular contractions

**705.** A client has frequent bursts of ventricular tachycardia on the cardiac monitor.

What should the nurse be **most** concerned about with this dysrhythmia?

1. It can develop into ventricular fibrillation at any time.
2. It is almost impossible to convert to a normal rhythm.
3. It is uncomfortable for the client, giving a sense of impending doom.
4. It produces a high cardiac output that quickly leads to cerebral and myocardial ischemia.

**706.** A client is having frequent premature ventricular contractions. The nurse should place **priority** on assessment of which item?

1. Sensation of palpitations
2. Causative factors, such as caffeine
3. Precipitating factors, such as infection
4. Blood pressure and oxygen saturation

**707.** A client has developed atrial fibrillation, with a ventricular rate of 150 beats/minute. The nurse should assess the client for which associated signs/symptoms?

1. Flat neck veins
2. Nausea and vomiting
3. Hypotension and dizziness
4. Hypertension and headache

**708.** The nurse is watching the cardiac monitor, and a client's rhythm suddenly changes. There are no P waves; instead, there are fibrillatory waves before each QRS complex. How should the nurse correctly interpret the client's heart rhythm?

1. Atrial fibrillation
2. Sinus tachycardia
3. Ventricular fibrillation
4. Ventricular tachycardia

**709.** The nurse is assisting to defibrillate a client in ventricular fibrillation. After placing the paddles on the client's chest and before discharging them, which intervention should be done?

1. Ensure that the client has been intubated.
2. Set the defibrillator to the "synchronize" mode.
3. Administer an amiodarone bolus intravenously.
4. Confirm that the rhythm is actually ventricular fibrillation.

**710.** A client in ventricular fibrillation is about to be defibrillated. A nurse knows that to convert this rhythm effectively, the monophasic defibrillator machine should be set at which energy level (in joules, J) for the first delivery?

1. 50 J
2. 120 J
3. 200 J
4. 360 J

711. The nurse would evaluate that defibrillation of a client was **most** successful if which observation was made?

1. Arousable, sinus rhythm, BP 116/72 mm Hg
2. Nonarousable, sinus rhythm, BP 88/60 mm Hg
3. Arousable, marked bradycardia, BP 86/54 mm Hg
4. Nonarousable, supraventricular tachycardia, BP 122/60 mm Hg

712. The nurse is evaluating a client's response to cardioversion. Which observation would be of **highest priority** to the nurse?

1. Blood pressure
2. Status of airway
3. Oxygen flow rate
4. Level of consciousness

713. The nurse is caring for a client who has just had implantation of an automatic internal cardioverter-defibrillator. The nurse **immediately** would assess which item based on **priority**?

1. Anxiety level of the client and family
2. Presence of a Medic-Alert card for the client to carry

3. Knowledge of restrictions of postdischarge physical activity
4. Activation status of the device, heart rate cutoff, and number of shocks it is programmed to deliver

**714.** A client's electrocardiogram strip shows atrial and ventricular rates of 110 beats/minute. The PR interval is 0.14 second, the QRS complex measures 0.08 second, and the PP and RR intervals are regular. How should the nurse correctly interpret this rhythm?

1. Sinus dysrhythmia
2. Sinus tachycardia
3. Sinus bradycardia
4. Normal sinus rhythm

**715.** The nurse is assessing the neurovascular status of a client who returned to the surgical nursing unit 4 hours ago after undergoing aortoiliac bypass graft. The affected leg is warm, and the nurse notes redness and edema. The pedal pulse is palpable and unchanged from admission. How should the nurse correctly interpret the client's neurovascular status?

1. The neurovascular status is normal because of increased blood flow through the leg.
2. The neurovascular status is moderately impaired, and the surgeon should be called.
3. The neurovascular status is slightly deteriorating and should be monitored for

another hour.

4. The neurovascular status is adequate from an arterial approach, but venous complications are arising.

**716.** The nurse is evaluating the condition of a client after pericardiocentesis performed to treat cardiac tamponade. Which observation would indicate that the procedure was unsuccessful?

1. Rising blood pressure
2. Clearly audible heart sounds
3. Client expressions of relief
4. Rising central venous pressure

**717.** The nurse is caring for a client who had a resection of an abdominal aortic aneurysm yesterday. The client has an intravenous infusion at a rate of 150 mL/hour, unchanged for the last 10 hours. The client's urine output for the last 3 hours has been 90, 50, and 28 mL (28 mL most recent). The client's blood urea nitrogen level is 35 mg/dL and the serum creatinine level is 1.8 mg/dL, measured this morning. Which nursing action is the **priority**?

1. Check the urine specific gravity.
2. Call the health care provider (HCP).
3. Check to see if the client had a sample for a serum albumin level drawn.
4. Put the intravenous (IV) line on a pump so that the infusion rate is sure to stay stable.

**718.** A client with angina complains that the anginal pain is prolonged and severe and occurs at the same time each day, most often at rest in the absence of precipitating factors. How would the nurse **best** describe this type of anginal pain?

1. Stable angina
2. Variant angina
3. Unstable angina
4. Nonanginal pain

**719.** The nurse notes that a client with sinus rhythm has a premature ventricular contraction that falls on the T wave of the preceding beat. The client's rhythm suddenly changes to one with no P waves, no definable QRS complexes, and coarse wavy lines of varying amplitude. How should the nurse correctly interpret this rhythm?

1. Asystole
2. Atrial fibrillation
3. Ventricular fibrillation
4. Ventricular tachycardia

## ANSWERS

❖ 695. 1

**Rationale:** Cardiogenic shock occurs with severe damage (more than 40%) to the left ventricle. Classic signs

include hypotension, a rapid pulse that becomes weaker, decreased urine output, and cool, clammy skin. Respiratory rate increases as the body develops metabolic acidosis from shock. Cardiac tamponade is accompanied by distant, muffled heart sounds and prominent neck vessels. Pulmonary embolism presents suddenly with severe dyspnea accompanying the chest pain. Dissecting aortic aneurysms usually are accompanied by back pain.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Recalling that the early serious complications of myocardial infarction include dysrhythmias, cardiogenic shock, and sudden death will direct you to the correct option. No information in the question is associated with the remaining options.

**Review:** Complications of **myocardial infarction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 812-813, 841; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1721.

**696. 4**

**Rationale:** Metformin (Glucophage) needs to be withheld 24 hours before and for 48 hours after cardiac catheterization because of the injection of contrast medium during the procedure. If the contrast medium affects kidney function, with metformin in the system, the client would be at increased risk for lactic acidosis. The medications in the remaining options do not need to be withheld 24 hours before and 48 hours after cardiac catheterization.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate glipizide and repaglinide first because they are **comparable or alike**. Although these medications may be withheld on the morning of the procedure because of the client's NPO status, there is no

indication for withholding the medication the day prior to and postprocedure. Regular insulin may be administered if elevated blood glucose levels from infused intravenous solutions occur on the day of the procedure.

**Review:** Preprocedure and postprocedure interventions for **cardiac catheterization**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1423-1424, 1428; Pagana, Pagana (2013), pp. 219-221.

#### 697. 4

**Rationale:** Hypotension and dizziness are signs of decreased cardiac output. Transcutaneous pacing provides a temporary measure to increase the heart rate and thus perfusion in the symptomatic client. Defibrillation is used for treatment of pulseless ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation. Digoxin will further decrease the client's heart rate. Continuing to monitor the client delays necessary intervention.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interventions for sinus bradycardia. Eliminate the option indicating to continue to monitor the client because the client is symptomatic and requires intervention. Digoxin is eliminated because it will further decrease the client's heart rate. Defibrillation is used for treatment of pulseless ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation, so that option can be eliminated.

**Review:** Indications for **transcutaneous pacing**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 720-721.

❖ 698. 1, 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** Pulmonary edema is a life-threatening event that can result from severe heart failure. In pulmonary edema, the left ventricle fails to eject sufficient blood, and pressure increases in the lungs because of the accumulated blood. Oxygen is always prescribed, and the client is placed in a high Fowler's position to ease the work of breathing. Furosemide, a rapid-acting diuretic, will eliminate accumulated fluid. A Foley catheter is inserted to measure output accurately. Intravenously administered morphine sulfate reduces venous return (preload), decreases anxiety, and also reduces the work of breathing. Transporting the client to the coronary care unit is not a priority intervention. In fact, this may not be necessary at all if the client's response to treatment is successful.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority* and focus on the client's diagnosis. Recall the pathophysiology associated with pulmonary edema and use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to help determine priority interventions.

**Review:** Priority interventions for the client with **pulmonary edema**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 755; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 801-802.

**699. 2**

**Rationale:** Pulmonary edema is characterized by extreme breathlessness, dyspnea, air hunger, and the production of frothy, pink-tinged sputum. Auscultation of the lungs reveals crackles. Rhonchi and diminished breath sounds are not associated with pulmonary edema. Stridor is a crowing sound associated with laryngospasm or edema of the upper airway.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, breath sounds characteristic of pulmonary edema. Recalling that fluid produces sounds that are called *crackles* will assist you in eliminating the incorrect options.

**Review:** Manifestations of **pulmonary edema**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 755.

**700. 2**

**Rationale:** Classic signs of cardiogenic shock as they relate to myocardial ischemia include low blood pressure and tachycardia. The central venous pressure would rise as the backward effects of the severe left ventricular failure became apparent. Dysrhythmias commonly occur as a result of decreased oxygenation and severe damage to greater than 40% of the myocardium.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, cardiogenic shock, and note the words *myocardial ischemia*. Recall

that ischemia makes the myocardium irritable, producing dysrhythmias. Also, knowledge of the classic signs of shock helps eliminate the incorrect options.

**Review:** Manifestations associated with **cardiogenic shock**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 810, 816-817.

## 701. 2

**Rationale:** The client who undergoes cardiac surgery is at risk for renal injury from poor perfusion, hemolysis, low cardiac output, or vasopressor medication therapy. Renal injury is signaled by decreased urine output and increased blood urea nitrogen and creatinine levels. The client may need medications to increase renal perfusion and possibly could need peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis. No data in the question indicate the presence of hypovolemia, glomerulonephritis, or urinary tract infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate glomerulonephritis and urinary tract infection first because they are **comparable or alike** in that there are no data indicating infection or inflammation. Noting that the creatinine level is elevated will assist you in eliminating hypovolemia.

**Review:** Complications associated with **cardiac surgery**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 847-848.

**702. 3**

**Rationale:** Normal sinus rhythm is defined as a regular rhythm, with an overall rate of 60 to 100 beats/minute. The PR and QRS measurements are normal, measuring 0.12 to 0.20 second and 0.04 to 0.10 second, respectively.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, electrocardiogram rhythm strip measurements. A baseline knowledge of normal electrocardiographic measurements is needed to answer this question. Focusing on the data in the question and recalling the characteristics of normal sinus rhythm will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Electrocardiogram rhythm strip** measurements

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 718-719.

**703. 3**

**Rationale:** Sudden loss of electrocardiographic complexes indicates ventricular asystole or possibly electrode displacement. Accurate assessment of the client and equipment is necessary to determine the cause and identify the appropriate intervention. The remaining options are secondary to client assessment.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use the **steps of the nursing process**. Always assess

the client directly before taking any action. The correct option is the only one that addresses assessment.

**Review:** Care of the client on a **cardiac monitor**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 288; Lewis et al (2011), p. 821.

### 704. 3

**Rationale:** Ventricular tachycardia is characterized by the absence of P waves, wide QRS complexes (longer than 0.12 second), and typically a rate between 140 and 180 impulses/minute. The rhythm is regular.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of an electrocardiogram pattern, and note the data in the question. Eliminate sinus tachycardia first because there are no P waves. Premature ventricular contractions (PVCs) are isolated ectopic beats superimposed on an underlying rhythm, so that option is eliminated next. Recalling that there are no true QRS complexes with ventricular fibrillation will direct you to the correct option from those remaining.

**Review:** The characteristics of **ventricular tachycardia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 728-729.

**705. 1**

**Rationale:** Ventricular tachycardia is a life-threatening dysrhythmia that results from an irritable ectopic focus that takes over as the pacemaker for the heart. The low cardiac output that results can lead quickly to cerebral and myocardial ischemia. Clients frequently experience a feeling of impending doom. Ventricular tachycardia is treated with antidysrhythmic medications, cardioversion (if client is awake), or defibrillation (loss of consciousness).

Ventricular tachycardia can deteriorate into ventricular fibrillation at any time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. The option indicating it is impossible to convert is incorrect and is eliminated first. From the remaining options, focusing on the **strategic word** will direct you to the correct option because this option identifies the life-threatening condition.

**Review:** **Ventricular tachycardia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 728-729.

**706. 4**

**Rationale:** Premature ventricular contractions can cause hemodynamic compromise. Therefore, the priority is to monitor the blood pressure and oxygen saturation. The shortened ventricular filling time can lead to decreased cardiac output. The client may be asymptomatic or may feel palpitations. Premature ventricular contractions can be

caused by cardiac disorders, states of hypoxemia, or by any number of physiological stressors, such as infection, illness, surgery, or trauma, and by intake of caffeine, nicotine, or alcohol.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Premature ventricular contractions (PVCs)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 728-729.

### 707. 3

**Rationale:** The client with uncontrolled atrial fibrillation with a ventricular rate more than 100 beats/minute is at risk for low cardiac output because of loss of atrial kick. The nurse assesses the client for palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, hypotension, pulse deficit, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, syncope, shortness of breath, and distended neck veins.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs and symptoms associated with atrial fibrillation. Flat neck veins are normal or indicate hypovolemia, so this option can be eliminated. Nausea and vomiting are associated with vagus nerve activity and do not correlate with a tachycardic state. From the remaining options, think of the consequences of a falling cardiac output to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The effects of **atrial fibrillation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 722.

**708. 1**

**Rationale:** Atrial fibrillation is characterized by a loss of P waves and fibrillatory waves before each QRS complex.

The atria quiver, which can lead to thrombus formation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interpreting a heart rhythm. Note the data in the question. Noting the words *there are no P waves* should direct you to the correct option. Loss of P waves is characteristic of this dysrhythmia.

**Review:** **Atrial fibrillation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 722, 727-728.

**709. 4**

**Rationale:** Until the defibrillator is attached and charged, the client is resuscitated by using cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Once the defibrillator has been attached, the electrocardiogram is checked to verify that the rhythm is

ventricular fibrillation or pulseless ventricular tachycardia. Leads also are checked for any loose connections. A nitroglycerin patch, if present, is removed. The client does not have to be intubated to be defibrillated. The machine is not set to the synchronous mode because there is no underlying rhythm with which to synchronize. Amiodarone may be given subsequently but is not required before defibrillation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, ventricular fibrillation. Note that the correct option directly addresses this subject and also addresses assessment of the client.

**Review: Defibrillation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 737-738.

#### 710. 4

**Rationale:** The energy level used for all defibrillation attempts with a monophasic defibrillator is 360 joules.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, monophasic defibrillation. As a general rule, though, remember that lower levels of energy are used for cardioversion and biphasic defibrillation. Higher levels are used in monophasic defibrillation.

**Review: Defibrillation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 737.

**711. 1**

**Rationale:** After defibrillation, the client requires continuous monitoring of electrocardiographic rhythm, hemodynamic status, and neurological status. Respiratory and metabolic acidosis develop during ventricular fibrillation because of lack of respiration and cardiac output. These can cause cerebral and cardiopulmonary complications. Arousable status, adequate blood pressure, and a sinus rhythm indicate successful response to defibrillation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Eliminate the two options that contain the word *nonarousable*. From the remaining options, select the correct option because a sinus rhythm is a more successful response compared with marked bradycardia.

**Review:** The expected effects of **defibrillation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 737-738.

**712. 2**

**Rationale:** Nursing responsibilities after cardioversion include maintenance first of a patent airway, and then oxygen administration, assessment of vital signs and level of consciousness, and dysrhythmia detection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *highest priority*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client following **cardioversion**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 737.

#### 713. 4

**Rationale:** The nurse who is caring for the client after insertion of an automatic internal cardioverter-defibrillator needs to assess device settings, similar to after insertion of a permanent pacemaker. Specifically, the nurse needs to know whether the device is activated, the heart rate cutoff above which it will fire, and the number of shocks it is programmed to deliver. The remaining options are also nursing interventions but are not the priority.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *immediately* and *priority*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory**. The correct option is the one that identifies the physiological need.

**Review:** Care to the client following insertion of an **automatic internal cardioverter-defibrillator**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 741-742.

## 714. 2

**Rationale:** Sinus tachycardia has the characteristics of normal sinus rhythm, including a regular PP interval and normal-width PR and QRS intervals; however, the rate is the differentiating factor. In sinus tachycardia, the atrial and ventricular rates are greater than 100 beats/minute.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interpreting a cardiac rhythm. Eliminate sinus bradycardia and normal sinus rhythm first because the ventricular rate is 110 beats/minute. Next eliminate sinus dysrhythmia because this is an irregular rhythm, with changing PP and RR intervals.

**Review:** The characteristics of **sinus tachycardia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 720-721.

## 715. 1

**Rationale:** An expected outcome of aortoiliac bypass graft surgery is warmth, redness, and edema in the surgical extremity because of increased blood flow. The remaining options are incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, expected outcomes following aortoiliac bypass graft surgery. Venous complications from immobilization resulting from surgery would not be apparent within 4 hours, so eliminate option 4. From the remaining options, note that the pedal pulse is unchanged from admission and think about the effects of sudden reperfusion in an ischemic limb. There would be redness from new blood flow and edema from the sudden change in pressure in the blood vessels.

**Review:** **Aortoiliac bypass graft**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 790.

#### 716. 4

**Rationale:** Following pericardiocentesis, a rise in blood pressure and a fall in central venous pressure are expected. The client usually expresses immediate relief. Heart sounds are no longer muffled or distant.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, expected outcome following pericardiocentesis and note the word *unsuccessful*. Successful therapy is measured by the disappearance of the original signs and symptoms of cardiac tamponade. Therefore look for the option that identifies a sign consistent with continued tamponade.

**Review:** Signs of **cardiac tamponade** and the expected effects of **pericardiocentesis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 765-766.

717. 2

**Rationale:** Following abdominal aortic aneurysm resection or repair, the nurse monitors the client for signs of acute kidney injury. Acute kidney injury can occur because often much blood is lost during the surgery and, depending on the aneurysm location, the renal arteries may be hypoperfused for a short period during surgery. Options 1 and 3 are not associated with the data in the question. The IV should have already been on a pump. Urine output lower than 30 mL/hour is reported to the HCP.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Focus on the information in the question and the abnormal assessment data. This question indicates elevations in blood urea nitrogen and creatinine levels and a significant drop in hourly urine output. These assessment findings should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Resection of an **abdominal aortic aneurysm**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 794-795.

718. 2

**Rationale:** Variant angina, or Prinzmetal's angina, is prolonged and severe and occurs at the same time each day, most often at rest. Stable angina is induced by exercise and relieved by rest or nitroglycerin tablets. Unstable angina occurs at lower levels of activity or at rest, is less predictable, and is often a precursor of myocardial infarction.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*, and focus on the data in the question. Noting the words *at rest* will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Various types of **angina**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Cardiovascular

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 729, 836.

**719. 3**

**Rationale:** Ventricular fibrillation is characterized by irregular chaotic undulations of varying amplitudes.

Ventricular fibrillation has no measurable rate and no visible P waves or QRS complexes and results from electrical chaos in the ventricles.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of ventricular fibrillation. The lack of visible QRS complexes eliminates atrial fibrillation and ventricular tachycardia. Recalling that asystole is lack of any electrical activity of the heart will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The characteristics of **ventricular fibrillation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

***Reference:*** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 729-730.



## CHAPTER 61

# Cardiovascular Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse notes that a client taking warfarin sodium (Coumadin) has an international normalized ratio (INR) of 2.8. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 832.*

### I. Anticoagulants (Box 61-1)

#### BOX 61-1 Anticoagulants

##### Oral

- Warfarin sodium (Coumadin)
- Dabigatran etexilate mesylate (Pradaxa)
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)

##### Parenteral

- Argatroban
- Bivalirudin (Angiomax)
- Dalteparin (Fragmin)
- Desirudin (Iprivask)
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox)
- Fondaparinux (Arixtra)
- Heparin sodium
- Lepirudin (Refludan)
- Tinzaparin (Innohep)

#### A. Description (Box 61-2)

### **BOX 61-2** Substances to Avoid with Anticoagulants

- Allopurinol (Zyloprim)
- Cimetidine (Tagamet)
- Corticosteroids
- Green, leafy vegetables and other foods high in vitamin K
- Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs
- Oral hypoglycemic agents
- Phenytoin (Dilantin)
- Salicylates
- Sulfonamides

## ■ Ginkgo and ginseng (herbs)

1. Anticoagulants prevent the extension and formation of clots by inhibiting factors in the clotting cascade and decreasing blood coagulability.
2. Anticoagulants are administered when there is evidence of or likelihood of clot formation—myocardial infarction, unstable angina, atrial fibrillation, deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, and the presence of mechanical heart valves. ▲
3. Anticoagulants are contraindicated with active bleeding (except for disseminated intravascular coagulation), bleeding disorders or blood dyscrasias, ulcers, liver and kidney disease, and hemorrhagic brain injuries. ▲

### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Hemorrhage ▲
2. Hematuria
3. Epistaxis
4. Ecchymosis
5. Bleeding gums
6. Thrombocytopenia
7. Hypotension

### **C. Heparin sodium**

1. Description
  - a. Heparin prevents thrombin from converting fibrinogen to fibrin.
  - b. Heparin prevents thromboembolism.

c. The therapeutic dose does not dissolve clots but prevents new thrombus formation. ▲

## 2. Blood levels

a. The normal activated partial thromboplastin time (aPTT) is 20 to 36 seconds in most laboratories but may be as high as 40 seconds.

b. To maintain a therapeutic level of anticoagulation when the client is receiving a continuous infusion of heparin, the aPTT should be 1.5 to 2.5 times the normal value. ▲

c. Activated partial thromboplastin time therapy should be measured every 4 to 6 hours during initial continuous infusion therapy and then daily.

d. If the aPTT is too long, longer than 80 seconds, the dosage should be lowered. ▲

e. If the aPTT is too short, less than 60 seconds, the dosage should be increased. ▲

## 3. Interventions

a. Monitor aPTT.

b. Monitor platelet count.

c. Observe for bleeding gums, bruises, nosebleeds, hematuria, hematemesis, occult blood in the stool, and petechiae.

d. When administering heparin subcutaneously, inject into the abdomen with a 5/8-inch needle (25 to 28 gauge) at a 90-degree angle and do not aspirate or rub the injection site.

e. Continuous infusions must be run on an infusion pump to ensure a precise rate of

delivery. ▲

f. Instruct the client regarding measures to prevent bleeding.

g. The antidote to heparin is protamine sulfate. ▲

#### **D. Enoxaparin (Lovenox)—low-molecular-weight heparin**

1. Description: Enoxaparin has the same mechanism of action and use as heparin but is not interchangeable; it has a longer half-life than heparin.

##### **2. Interventions**

a. Administer only to the recumbent client by subcutaneous injection into the anterolateral or posterolateral abdominal wall; do not expel the air bubble from the prefilled syringe or aspirate during injection. ▲

b. Monitor the same laboratory values as for heparin and observe for bleeding.

c. The antidote to enoxaparin is protamine sulfate. ▲

#### **E. Warfarin sodium (Coumadin, Jantoven)**

##### **1. Description**

a. Warfarin suppresses coagulation by acting as an antagonist of vitamin K by inhibiting four dependent clotting factors (X, IX, VII, and II).

b. Warfarin prolongs clotting time and is monitored by the prothrombin time (PT) and the international normalized ratio (INR).

c. It is used for long-term anticoagulation and is used mainly to prevent thromboembolic conditions such as thrombophlebitis, pulmonary embolism, and embolism formation caused by atrial fibrillation, thrombosis, myocardial infarction, or heart valve damage.

## 2. Blood levels

- a. The normal PT is 9.6 to 11.8 seconds.
- b. Warfarin sodium prolongs the PT; the therapeutic range is 1.5 to 2 times the control value. ▲

## 3. International normalized ratio (INR)

- a. The normal INR is 1.3 to 2.0.
- b. The INR is determined by multiplying the observed PT ratio (the ratio of the client's PT to a control PT) by a correction factor specific to a particular thromboplastin preparation used in the testing.
- c. The treatment goal of warfarin sodium is to raise the INR to an appropriate value.
- d. An INR of 2 to 3 is appropriate for most clients, although for some clients the target INR is 3 to 4.5.
- e. If the INR is below the recommended range, warfarin sodium should be increased. ▲
- f. If the INR is above the recommended range, warfarin sodium should be reduced. ▲

## 4. Interventions

- a. Monitor PT and INR.
- b. Observe for bleeding gums, bruises, nosebleeds, hematuria, hematemesis, occult blood in the stool, and petechiae.
- c. Instruct the client regarding diet and measures to prevent bleeding.
- d. The antidote for warfarin is vitamin K (phytonadione) ▲

## F. Dabigatran etexilate (Pradaxa)

### 1. Description

- a. Dabigatran etexilate works through direct inhibition of thrombin, preventing the conversion of fibrinogen into fibrin and activation of factor XIII.
- b. Current approved use is for clot prevention associated with nonvalvular atrial fibrillation.
- c. It is administered in a fixed dose twice daily.

### 2. Blood levels: No blood testing is required.

### 3. Interventions

- a. Observe for bleeding gums, bruises, nosebleeds, hematuria, hematemesis, occult blood in the stool, and petechiae. ▲
- b. No antidote is available.

## G. Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)

### 1. Description

- a. Rivaroxaban works through inhibition of factor Xa.
- b. Approved uses include for clot prevention associated with nonvalvular atrial fibrillation and after knee and hip replacement.

### 2. Blood levels: No blood testing is required.

### 3. Interventions

- a. Observe for bleeding gums, bruises, nosebleeds, hematuria, hematemesis, occult blood in the stool, and petechiae. ▲
- b. No antidote is available.

## II. Thrombolytic Medications (Box 61-3)

### BOX 61-3 Thrombolytic Medications

- Alteplase (Activase)
- Reteplase (Retavase)
- Tenecteplase (TNKase)

#### A. Description

1. Thrombolytic medications activate plasminogen; plasminogen generates plasmin (the enzyme that dissolves clots).
2. Thrombolytic medications are used early in the course of myocardial infarction (within 4 to 6 hours of the onset of the infarct) to restore blood flow, limit myocardial damage, preserve left ventricular function, and prevent death.
3. Thrombolytics are also used in arterial thrombosis, deep vein thrombosis, occluded shunts or catheters, and pulmonary emboli.

#### B. Contraindications

1. Active internal bleeding
2. History of hemorrhagic brain attack (stroke)
3. Intracranial problems, including trauma
4. Intracranial or intraspinal surgery within the previous 2 months
5. History of thoracic, pelvic, or abdominal surgery in the previous 10 days

6. History of hepatic or renal disease
7. Uncontrolled hypertension
8. Recently required, prolonged cardiopulmonary resuscitation
9. Known allergy to the specific product or any of its preservatives

**C. Side/adverse effects**

1. Bleeding
2. Dysrhythmias
3. Allergic reactions

**D. Interventions**

1. Determine aPTT, PT, fibrinogen level, hematocrit, and platelet count.
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Assess pulses.
4. Monitor for bleeding.
5. Monitor all excretions for occult blood.
6. Monitor for neurological changes such as slurred speech, lethargy, confusion, and hemiparesis. 🟡
7. Monitor for hypotension and tachycardia.
8. Avoid injections if possible.
9. Apply direct pressure over a puncture site for 20 to 30 minutes.
10. Handle the client as little as possible when moving.
11. Instruct the client to use an electric razor for shaving and to brush teeth gently.
12. Withhold the medication if bleeding develops, and notify the health care provider

(HCP). ▲

### 13. Antidote ▲

- a. Aminocaproic acid (Amicar) is the antidote.
- b. Used only in acute, life-threatening conditions

⚠️ Bleeding is the primary concern for a client taking an anticoagulant, thrombolytic, or antiplatelet medication.

## III. Antiplatelet Medications (Box 61-4)

### BOX 61-4 Antiplatelet Medications

#### Oral

- Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA)
- Cilostazol (Pletal)
- Clopidogrel (Plavix)
- Dipyridamole (Persantine)
- Dipyridamole; aspirin (Aggrenox)
- Ticlopidine (Ticlid)

#### Parenteral

- Abciximab (ReoPro)
- Eptifibatide (Integrilin)
- Tirofiban (Aggrastat)

## A. Description

1. Antiplatelet medications inhibit the aggregation of platelets in the clotting process, thereby prolonging the bleeding time.
2. Antiplatelet medications may be used with anticoagulants.
3. Used in the prophylaxis of long-term complications following myocardial infarction, coronary revascularization, stents, and brain attacks (stroke).
4. These medications are contraindicated in those with bleeding disorders and known sensitivity.

## B. Side/adverse effects ▲

1. Gastrointestinal bleeding
2. Bruising
3. Hematuria
4. Tarry stools

## C. Interventions

1. Determine sensitivity before administration.
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Instruct the client to take medication with food if gastrointestinal upset occurs.
4. Monitor bleeding time.
5. Monitor for side/adverse effects related to bleeding.
6. Instruct the client in the use of the medication.
7. Instruct the client to monitor for side/adverse effects related to bleeding and in the measures to prevent bleeding. ▲

## IV. Positive Inotropic and Cardiotonic Medications (Box 61-5)

### BOX 61-5

### Positive Inotropic/Cardiotonic Medications

#### Dopamine

- Used as a short-term rescue measure for clients with severe, acute heart failure
- Increases myocardial contractility, thereby improving cardiac performance
- Dilates renal blood vessels and increases renal blood flow and urine output

#### Dobutamine

- Used for short-term management of heart failure
- Increases myocardial contractility, thereby improving cardiac performance

#### Inamrinone Lactate (Inacor)

- Used for short-term management of heart failure in those who have not responded adequately to cardiac glycosides, diuretics, and vasodilators

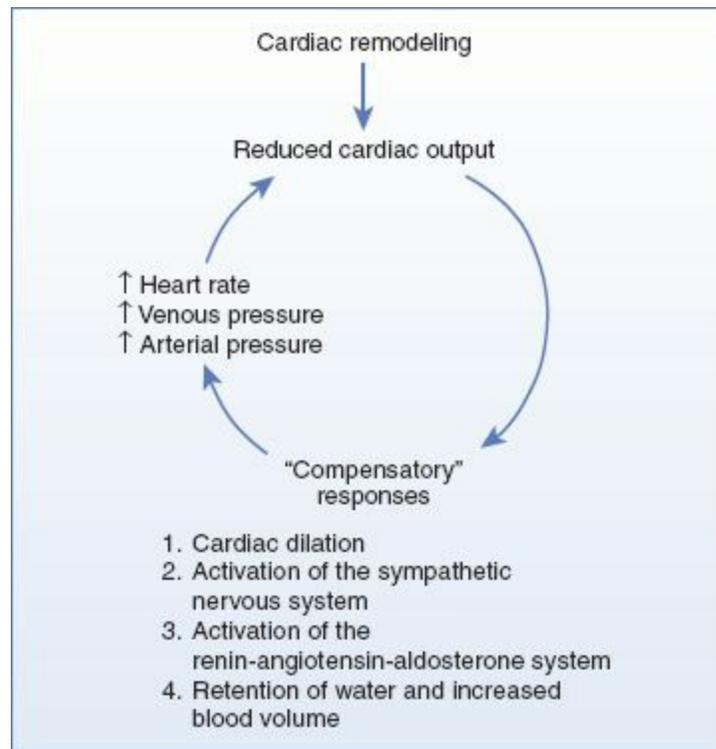
#### Milrinone Lactate

- Used for short-term management of heart failure; may be given before heart transplantation

### A. Description

1. These medications stimulate myocardial **contractility** and produce a positive inotropic effect.
2. These are used for short-term management of advanced heart failure; the increase

in myocardial contractility improves cardiac, peripheral, and kidney function by increasing **cardiac output**, decreasing **preload**, improving blood flow to the periphery and kidneys, decreasing edema, and increasing fluid excretion. As a result, fluid retention in the lungs and extremities is decreased (Fig. 61-1).



**FIGURE 61-1** The vicious cycle of maladaptive compensatory responses to a failing heart. (From Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

## B. Side/adverse effects

1. Dysrhythmias
2. Hypotension
3. Thrombocytopenia

## C. Adverse effects and toxicity

1. Hepatotoxicity manifested by elevated liver enzyme levels
2. Hypersensitivity manifested by wheezing, shortness of breath, pruritus, urticaria, clammy skin, and flushing

#### D. Interventions

1. Positive inotropic and cardiotoxic medications are used for intravenous (IV) administration.
  - a. For continuous IV infusion, administer with an infusion pump.
  - b. Stop the infusion if the client's **blood pressure (BP)** drops or dysrhythmias occur.
  - c. Inamrinone should not be mixed with glucose-containing solutions.
2. Monitor the apical pulse and BP.
3. Monitor for hypersensitivity.
4. Assess lung sounds for wheezing and crackles.
5. Monitor for edema.
6. Monitor for relief of heart failure as noted by reduction in edema, lessening of dyspnea, orthopnea, and fatigue.
7. Monitor electrolyte and liver enzyme levels, platelet count, and renal function studies; the medications may decrease potassium and increase liver enzyme levels; continuous electrocardiographic monitoring is done during administration.

## V. Cardiac Glycosides

### A. Digoxin (Lanoxin)

### B. Description

1. Cardiac glycosides inhibit the sodium-potassium pump, thus increasing intracellular calcium, which causes the heart muscle fibers to contract more efficiently.
2. Cardiac glycosides produce a positive inotropic action, which increases the force of myocardial contractions.
3. Cardiac glycosides produce a negative chronotropic action, which slows the heart rate.
4. Cardiac glycosides produce a negative dromotropic action that slows conduction velocity through the atrioventricular (AV) node.
5. The increase in myocardial contractility increases cardiac, peripheral, and kidney function by increasing cardiac output, decreasing preload, improving blood flow to the periphery and kidneys, decreasing edema, and increasing fluid excretion; as a result, fluid retention in the lungs and extremities is decreased.
6. Cardiac glycosides are used for heart failure and cardiogenic shock, atrial tachycardia, atrial fibrillation, and atrial flutter; used less frequently for rate control in atrial dysrhythmias ( $\beta$ -blockers and calcium channel blockers are used more often).
7. These medications are contraindicated in those with ventricular dysrhythmias and second- or third-degree heart block and should be used with caution in clients with renal disease, hypothyroidism, and hypokalemia.

#### C. Side/adverse effects and toxicity

1. Anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

2. Headache
3. Visual disturbances: Diplopia, blurred vision, yellow-green halos, photophobia
4. Drowsiness
5. Bradycardia
6. Fatigue, weakness

 Early signs of digoxin toxicity present as gastrointestinal manifestations (anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea); then, heart rate abnormalities and visual disturbances appear.

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor for toxicity as evidenced by anorexia, nausea, vomiting, visual disturbances, confusion, bradycardia, heart block, premature ventricular contractions, and tachydysrhythmias.
2. Monitor serum digoxin level, electrolyte levels, and renal function test results.
3. Therapeutic digoxin range is 0.5 to 2 ng/mL; levels above 2 ng/mL are toxic.
4. An increased risk of toxicity exists in clients with hypercalcemia, hypokalemia, hypomagnesemia, or hypothyroidism.
5. Monitor the potassium level; if hypokalemia occurs (potassium lower than 3.5 mEq/L), notify the HCP.
6. Instruct the client to avoid over-the-counter medications.
7. Monitor the client taking a potassium-losing diuretic or corticosteroids closely for hypokalemia because the hypokalemia can cause digoxin toxicity.
8. Note that older clients are more sensitive to digoxin toxicity.

9. Advise the client to eat foods high in potassium, such as fresh and dried fruits, fruit juices, vegetables, and potatoes.
10. Monitor the apical pulse for one full minute.
11. If the apical pulse rate is lower than 60 beats/minute, the medication should be withheld and the HCP notified.
12. Teach the client how to measure the pulse.
13. Teach the client to notify the HCP if the pulse rate is lower than 60 or more than 100 beats/minute.
14. Teach the client the signs and symptoms of toxicity.
15. Antidote: Digoxin immune Fab (Digibind) is used in extreme toxicity.

## VI. Antihypertensive Medications: Diuretics (Box 61-6)

### BOX 61-6 Classifications of Diuretics

- Loop diuretics
- Osmotic diuretics
- Potassium-retaining diuretics
- Thiazide diuretics

#### A. Thiazide diuretics (Box 61-7)

### BOX 61-7 Thiazide and Thiazide-Like Diuretics

- Chlorothiazide (Diuril)

- Chlorthalidone (Thalitone)
- Hydrochlorothiazide
- Indapamide
- Methyclothiazide
- Metolazone (Zaroxolyn)
- Polythiazide (Renese)

## 1. Description

- a. Thiazide diuretics increase sodium and water excretion by inhibiting sodium reabsorption in the distal tubule of the kidney.
- b. Used for hypertension and peripheral edema
- c. Not effective for immediate diuresis
- d. Used in clients with normal renal function (contraindicated in clients with renal failure)
- e. Thiazide diuretics should be used with caution in the client taking lithium because lithium toxicity can occur and in the client taking digoxin, corticosteroids, or hypoglycemic medications.

## 2. Side/adverse effects ▲

- a. Hypercalcemia, hyperglycemia, hyperuricemia
- b. Hypokalemia, hyponatremia
- c. Hypovolemia
- d. Hypotension

- e. Headaches
- f. Nausea, vomiting
- g. Constipation
- h. Rashes
- i. Photosensitivity
- j. Blood dyscrasias

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor weight.
- c. Monitor urine output.
- d. Monitor electrolytes, glucose, calcium, blood urea nitrogen (BUN), creatinine, and uric acid levels.
- e. Check peripheral extremities for edema.
- f. Instruct the client to take the medication in the morning to avoid nocturia and sleep interruption.
- g. Instruct the client in how to record the BP.
- h. Instruct the client to eat foods high in potassium.
- i. Instruct the client in how to take potassium supplements if prescribed.
- j. Instruct the client to take medication with food to avoid gastrointestinal upset.
- k. Instruct the client to change positions slowly to prevent **orthostatic hypotension**.
- l. Instruct the client to use sunscreen when in direct sunlight because of increased

photosensitivity.

**m.** Instruct the client with diabetes mellitus to have the blood glucose level checked periodically.

**B.** Loop diuretics (Box 61-8) ▲

**BOX 61-8** Loop Diuretics

- Bumetanide
- Ethacrynic acid (Edecrin)
- Furosemide (Lasix)
- Torsemide (Demadex)

**1.** Description

- a.** Loop diuretics inhibit sodium and chloride reabsorption from the loop of Henle and the distal tubule.
- b.** Loop diuretics have little effect on the blood glucose level; however, they cause depletion of water and electrolytes, increased uric acid levels, and the excretion of calcium.
- c.** Loop diuretics are more potent than thiazide diuretics, causing rapid diuresis, and thus decreasing vascular fluid volume, cardiac output, and BP.
- d.** Used for hypertension, pulmonary edema, edema associated with heart failure, hypercalcemia, and renal disease
- e.** Use loop diuretics with caution in the client taking digoxin or lithium and in the

client taking aminoglycosides, anticoagulants, corticosteroids, or amphotericin

B.

**2. Side/adverse effects** ▲

- a.** Hypokalemia, hyponatremia, hypocalcemia, hypomagnesemia
- b.** Thrombocytopenia
- c.** Hyperuricemia
- d.** Orthostatic hypotension
- e.** Skin disturbances
- f.** Ototoxicity and deafness
- g.** Thiamine deficiency
- h.** Dehydration

**3. Interventions** ▲

- a.** Monitor vital signs.
- b.** Monitor weight.
- c.** Monitor urine output.
- d.** Monitor electrolytes, calcium, magnesium, BUN, creatinine, and uric acid levels.
- e.** Check the peripheral extremities for edema.
- f.** Monitor for signs of digoxin or lithium toxicity if the client is taking these medications.
- g.** Instruct the client to take the medication in the morning to avoid nocturia and sleep interruption.

- h.** Instruct the client in how to record the BP.
- i.** Instruct the client to eat foods high in potassium.
- j.** Instruct the client in how to take potassium supplements if prescribed.
- k.** Instruct the client to take medication with food to avoid gastrointestinal upset.
- l.** Instruct the client to change positions slowly to prevent orthostatic hypotension.
- m.** Administer IV furosemide (Lasix) slowly because hearing loss can occur if injected rapidly.

**C.** Osmotic diuretics: See [Chapter 67](#).

**D.** Potassium-retaining diuretics ([Box 61-9](#)) 

### **BOX 61-9** Potassium-Retaining Diuretics

- Amiloride hydrochloride; hydrochlorothiazide
- Eplerenone (Inspra)
- Spironolactone (Aldactone)
- Spironolactone; hydrochlorothiazide (Aldactazide)
- Triamterene (Dyrenium)

#### **1.** Description

- a.** Potassium-retaining diuretics act on the distal tubule to promote sodium and water excretion and potassium retention.
- b.** Used for edema and hypertension, to increase urine output, and to treat fluid retention and overload associated with heart failure, ascites resulting from

cirrhosis or nephrotic syndrome, and diuretic-induced hypokalemia.

- c. Potassium-retaining diuretics are contraindicated in severe kidney or hepatic disease and in severe hyperkalemia.
- d. Potassium-retaining diuretics should be used with caution in the client with diabetes mellitus, taking antihypertensives or lithium, or taking angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors or potassium supplements because hyperkalemia can result.

 The primary concern with administering potassium-retaining diuretics is hyperkalemia.

## 2. Side/adverse effects

- a. Hyperkalemia
- b. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- c. Rash
- d. Dizziness, weakness
- e. Headache
- f. Dry mouth
- g. Photosensitivity
- h. Anemia
- i. Thrombocytopenia

## 3. Interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor urine output.

- c. Monitor for signs and symptoms of hyperkalemia such as nausea, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, tachycardia followed by bradycardia, tall peaked T waves on the electrocardiogram, and oliguria.
- d. Monitor for a potassium level greater than 5.0 mEq/L, which indicates hyperkalemia.
- e. Instruct the client to avoid foods high in potassium.
- f. Instruct the client to avoid exposure to direct sunlight.
- g. Instruct the client to monitor for signs of hyperkalemia.
- h. Instruct the client to avoid salt substitutes because they contain potassium.
- i. Instruct the client to take the medication with or after meals to decrease gastrointestinal irritation.

## VII. Peripherally Acting $\alpha$ -Adrenergic Blockers (Box 61-10)

### BOX 61-10

### Peripherally Acting $\alpha$ -Adrenergic Blockers

- Doxazosin (Cardura)
- Prazosin (Minipress)
- Terazosin (Hytrin)

#### A. Description

1. These medications decrease sympathetic vasoconstriction by reducing the effects of norepinephrine at peripheral nerve endings, resulting in vasodilation and

decreased BP.

2. These medications are used to maintain renal blood flow.
3. These medications are used to treat hypertension.

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Orthostatic hypotension
2. Reflex tachycardia
3. Sodium and water retention
4. Gastrointestinal disturbances
5. Nausea
6. Drowsiness
7. Nasal congestion
8. Edema
9. Weight gain

#### **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor for fluid retention and edema.
3. Instruct the client to change positions slowly to prevent orthostatic hypotension.
4. Instruct the client in how to monitor the BP.
5. Instruct the client to monitor for edema.
6. Instruct the client to decrease salt intake.
7. Instruct the client to avoid over-the-counter medications.

## **VIII. Centrally Acting Sympatholytics (Adrenergic Blockers) (Box 61-**

11)

**BOX 61-11**

**Centrally Acting Sympatholytics (Adrenergic Blockers)**

- Clonidine (Catapres)
- Guanabenz
- Guanfacine (Tenex)
- Methyldopa

**A. Description**

1. Centrally acting sympatholytics stimulate  $\alpha$ -receptors in the central nervous system to inhibit vasoconstriction, thus reducing peripheral resistance.
2. Used to treat hypertension
3. Contraindicated in impaired liver function

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Sodium and water retention
2. Drowsiness, dizziness
3. Dry mouth
4. Bradycardia
5. Edema
6. Impotence
7. Hypotension
8. Depression

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Instruct the client not to discontinue medication because abrupt withdrawal can cause severe rebound hypertension.
3. Monitor liver function tests.

## IX. Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors and Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs) (Box 61-12)

### BOX 61-12

### Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitors and Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers

#### Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitors

- Benazepril (Lotensin)
- Captopril (Capoten)
- Enalapril (Vasotec)
- Lisinopril (Prinivil, Zestril)
- Moexipril (Univasc)
- Quinapril (Accupril)
- Ramipril (Altace)
- Trandolapril (Mavik)

#### Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers

- Candesartan (Atacand)
- Eprosartan (Teveten)

- Irbesartan (Avapro)
- Losartan (Cozaar)
- Olmesartan (Benicar)
- Telmisartan (Micardis)
- Valsartan (Diovan)

## A. Description

1. ACE inhibitors prevent peripheral vasoconstriction by blocking conversion of angiotensin I to angiotensin II (AII).
2. ARBs prevent peripheral vasoconstriction and secretion of aldosterone and block the binding of AII to type 1 AII receptors.
3. These medications are used to treat hypertension and heart failure; also, ACE inhibitors are administered for their cardioprotective effect after myocardial infarction.
4. Avoid use with potassium supplements and potassium-retaining diuretics.

## B. Side/adverse effects ▲

1. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
2. Persistent dry cough (ACE inhibitors only)
3. Hypotension
4. Hyperkalemia
5. Tachycardia
6. Headache

7. Dizziness, fatigue
8. Insomnia
9. Hypoglycemic reaction in the client with diabetes mellitus
10. Bruising, petechiae, bleeding
11. Diminished taste (ACE inhibitors)

 A persistent dry cough is a common complaint for those taking an ACE inhibitor. Instruct the client to contact the HCP if this side effect occurs and persists.

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor white blood cells, and protein, albumin, BUN, creatinine, and potassium levels.
3. Monitor for hypoglycemic reactions in the client with diabetes mellitus.
4. Instruct the client to take captopril (Capoten) 20 to 60 minutes before a meal.
5. Monitor for bruising, petechiae, or bleeding with captopril.
6. Instruct the client not to discontinue medications because rebound hypertension can occur.
7. Instruct the client not to take over-the-counter medications.
8. Instruct the client in how to take the BP.
9. Instruct the client that if dizziness or any other side/adverse effects occur and persist to notify the HCP.
10. Inform the client that the taste of food may be diminished during the first month of

therapy.

11. Instruct the client to report the side effect of angioedema (dermal, subcutaneous, or submucosal swelling) immediately to the health care provider.

## X. Antianginal Medications (Box 61-13) ▲

### BOX 61-13

### Antianginal Medications (Organic Nitrates)

- Amyl nitrite inhalant
- Isosorbide dinitrate (Isordil, Dilatrate-SR)
- Isosorbide mononitrate (Imdur, Monoket)
- Nitroglycerin, sublingual (Nitrostat)
- Nitroglycerin, translingual (Nitrolingual pumpspray)
- Nitroglycerin, transdermal patches (Minitran, Nitro-Dur)
- Nitroglycerin ointment
- Intravenous nitroglycerin

#### A. Nitrates (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take if a Hospitalized Client with Cardiac Disease Complains of Chest Pain

1. Quickly assess the client, specifically characteristics of pain, heart rate and

rhythm, and blood pressure (BP).

2. Administer a nitroglycerin tablet.
3. Stay with the client.
4. Reassess in 5 minutes.
5. Administer another nitroglycerin tablet if pain is not relieved and the BP is stable.
6. Reassess in 5 minutes.
7. Administer a third nitroglycerin tablet if pain is not relieved and the BP is stable.
8. Reassess in 5 minutes; contact the health care provider (HCP) if the third nitroglycerin tablet does not relieve the pain.
9. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response to treatment.

The usual guidelines for administering nitroglycerin tablets for chest pain to a hospitalized client include administering 1 tablet every 5 minutes PRN for chest pain, for a total dose of 3 tablets. If the client does not obtain relief after taking a third dose of nitroglycerin, the HCP is notified. Before administering the first dose of nitroglycerin, the nurse quickly assesses the client, specifically the characteristics of the pain, the heart rate and rhythm, and BP. The nurse always stays with the client during the event to provide reassurance and to relieve anxiety. In addition, the nurse needs to be present if a life-threatening situation develops. The nurse assesses the client before administering each subsequent dose of nitroglycerin and pays particular attention to the BP, because nitroglycerin causes hypotension. The nurse needs to lower the head of the bed and contact the HCP before administering another nitroglycerin if hypotension occurs. Agency protocols for this type of event should

also be followed. The nurse documents the event, actions taken, and the client's response to treatment.

### ***References***

Ignatavicius DD, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, pp. 836-837; Lehne: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 8, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, pp. 629-630.

#### **1. Description**

- a.** Nitrates produce vasodilation.
- b.** Nitrates decrease preload and **afterload** and reduce myocardial oxygen consumption.
- c.** Contraindicated in the client with significant hypotension, increased intracranial pressure, severe anemia, and those taking medication to treat erectile dysfunction.
- d.** Should be used with caution with severe renal or hepatic disease
- e.** Avoid abrupt withdrawal of long-acting preparations to prevent the rebound effect of severe pain from myocardial ischemia.

#### **2. Side/adverse effects** ▲

- a.** Headache
- b.** Orthostatic hypotension
- c.** Dizziness, weakness

- d.** Faintness
- e.** Nausea, vomiting
- f.** Flushing or pallor
- g.** Confusion
- h.** Rash
- i.** Dry mouth
- j.** Reflex tachycardia

### **3.** Sublingual medications ▲

- a.** Monitor vital signs.
- b.** Offer sips of water before giving because dryness may inhibit medication absorption.
- c.** Instruct the client to place under the tongue and leave until fully dissolved.
- d.** Instruct the client not to swallow the medication.
- e.** Instruct the client to take 1 tablet for pain and to immediately contact emergency medical services if pain is not relieved; in the hospitalized client, 1 tablet is administered every 5 minutes for a total of 3 doses and the health care provider is notified immediately if pain is not relieved following the three doses (the blood pressure is checked before each administration).
- f.** Inform the client that a stinging or burning sensation may indicate that the tablet is fresh.
- g.** Instruct the client to store medication in a dark, tightly closed bottle.
- h.** Instruct the client to take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for a headache.

#### **4. Translingual medications (spray)**

- a.** Instruct the client to direct the spray against the oral mucosa.
- b.** Instruct the client to avoid inhaling the spray.

#### **5. Sustained-released medications: Instruct the client to swallow and not to chew or crush the medication.**

#### **6. Transdermal patch**

- a.** Instruct the client to apply the patch to a hairless area, using a new patch and different site each day.
- b.** As prescribed, instruct the client to remove the patch after 12 to 14 hours, allowing 10 to 12 “patch-free” hours each day to prevent tolerance. ▲

#### **7. Topical ointments**

- a.** Instruct the client to remove the ointment on the skin from the previous dose.
- b.** Instruct the client to squeeze a ribbon of ointment of the prescribed length onto the applicator or dose measuring paper.
- c.** Instruct the client to spread the ointment over a 2.5- by 3.5-inch area and cover with plastic wrap, using either the chest, back, abdomen, upper arm, or anterior thigh (avoid hairy areas).
- d.** Instruct the client to rotate sites and to avoid touching the ointment when applying. ▲

#### **8. Patches and ointments**

- a.** Wear gloves when applying.
- b.** Do not apply on the chest in the area of defibrillator-cardioverter pad/paddle

placement because skin burns can result if the pads/paddles need to be used.

**⚠** Instruct the client using nitroglycerin tablets to check the expiration date on the medication bottle because expiration may occur within 6 months of obtaining the medication. The tablets will not relieve chest pain if they have expired.

## XI. $\beta$ -Adrenergic Blockers (Box 61-14)

### BOX 61-14

### $\beta$ -Adrenergic Blockers

#### Nonselective (Block $\beta_1$ and $\beta_2$ )

- Carvedilol (Coreg)
- Labetalol (Trandate)
- Nadolol (Corgard)
- Nebivolol (Bystolic)
- Penbutolol (Levatol)
- Pindolol
- Propranolol (Inderal)
- Sotalol (Betapace)

#### Cardioselective (Block $\beta_1$ )

- Acebutolol (Sectral)
- Atenolol (Tenormin)
- Betaxolol
- Bisoprolol (Zebeta, Ziac)
- Metoprolol (Lopressor, Toprol-XL)

## A. Description

1.  $\beta$ -Adrenergic blockers inhibit response to  $\beta$ -adrenergic stimulation, thus decreasing cardiac output.
2.  $\beta$ -Adrenergic blockers block the release of catecholamines, epinephrine, and norepinephrine, thus decreasing the heart rate and BP.
3.  $\beta$ -Adrenergic blockers decrease the workload of the heart and decrease oxygen demands.
4. Used for angina, dysrhythmias, hypertension, migraine headaches, prevention of myocardial infarction, and glaucoma
5.  $\beta$ -Adrenergic blockers are contraindicated in the client with asthma, bradycardia, heart failure (with exceptions), severe renal or hepatic disease, hyperthyroidism, or brain attack (stroke); carvedilol, metoprolol, and bisoprolol have been approved for use in heart failure once the client has been stabilized by ACE inhibitor and diuretic therapy.
6.  $\beta$ -Adrenergic blockers should be used with caution in the client with diabetes mellitus because the medication may mask symptoms of hypoglycemia.
7.  $\beta$ -Adrenergic blockers should be used with caution in the client taking antihypertensive medications.

## B. Side/adverse effects

1. Bradycardia
2. Bronchospasm

3. Hypotension
4. Weakness, fatigue
5. Nausea, vomiting
6. Dizziness
7. Hyperglycemia
8. Agranulocytosis
9. Behavioral or psychotic response
10. Depression
11. Nightmares

#### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Withhold the medication if the pulse or BP is not within the prescribed parameters.
3. Monitor for signs of heart failure or worsening heart failure.
4. Assess for respiratory distress and for signs of wheezing and dyspnea.
5. Instruct the client to report dizziness, light-headedness, or nasal congestion.
6. Instruct the client not to stop the medication because rebound hypertension, rebound tachycardia, or an anginal attack can occur.
7. Advise the client taking insulin that the  $\beta$ -adrenergic blocker can mask early signs of hypoglycemia, such as tachycardia and nervousness.
8. Instruct the client taking insulin to monitor the blood glucose level.
9. Instruct the client in how to take pulse and BP.

10. Instruct the client to change positions slowly to prevent orthostatic hypotension.
11. Instruct the client to avoid over-the-counter medications, especially cold medications and nasal decongestants.

## XII. Calcium Channel Blockers (Box 61-15)

### BOX 61-15

### Calcium Channel Blockers

- Amlodipine (Norvasc)
- Clevidipine (Cleviprex)
- Diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor XR, others)
- Felodipine (Plendil)
- Isradipine
- Nicardipine (Cardene)
- Nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia)
- Nimodipine
- Nisoldipine (Sular)
- Verapamil (Calan, Covera-HS, Verelan)

#### A. Description

1. Calcium channel blockers decrease cardiac contractility (negative inotropic effect by relaxing smooth muscle) and the workload of the heart, thus decreasing the need for oxygen.
2. Calcium channel blockers promote vasodilation of the coronary and peripheral

vessels.

3. Used for angina, dysrhythmias, or hypertension
4. Should be used with caution in the client with heart failure, bradycardia, or atrioventricular block

**B. Side/adverse effects** ▲

1. Bradycardia
2. Hypotension
3. Reflex tachycardia as a result of hypotension
4. Headache
5. Dizziness, light headedness
6. Fatigue
7. Peripheral edema
8. Constipation
9. Flushing of the skin
10. Changes in liver and kidney function

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor for signs of heart failure.
3. Monitor liver enzyme levels.
4. Monitor kidney function tests.
5. Instruct the client not to discontinue the medication.
6. Instruct the client in how to take the pulse.

7. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if dizziness or fainting occurs.
8. Instruct the client not to crush or chew sustained-release tablets.

### **XIII. Peripheral Vasodilators (Box 61-16)**

#### **BOX 61-16**

#### **Peripheral Vasodilators**

##### **$\alpha$ -Adrenergic Blockers**

- Doxazosin (Cardura)
- Prazosin (Minipress)
- Terazosin (Hytrin)

##### **Calcium Channel Blockers**

- Diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor XR, others)
- Nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia)
- Nimodipine
- Verapamil (Calan, Covera-HS, Verelan)

##### **Hemorheological**

- Pentoxifylline (Trental, Pentoxil; increases microcirculation and tissue perfusion)

#### **A. Description**

1. Peripheral vasodilators decrease peripheral resistance by exerting a direct action on the arteries or on the arteries and the veins.
2. Peripheral vasodilators increase blood flow to the extremities and are used in

peripheral vascular disorders of venous and arterial vessels.

3. Peripheral vasodilators are most effective for disorders resulting from vasospasm (Raynaud's disease).
4. These medications may decrease some symptoms of cerebral vascular insufficiency.

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Light headedness, dizziness
2. Orthostatic hypotension
3. Tachycardia
4. Palpitations
5. Flushing
6. Gastrointestinal distress

#### **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs, especially the BP and the heart rate.
2. Monitor for orthostatic hypotension and tachycardia.
3. Monitor for signs of inadequate blood flow to the extremities, such as pallor, feeling cold, and pain.
4. Instruct the client that it may take up to 3 months for a desired therapeutic response.
5. Advise the client not to smoke because smoking increases vasospasm.
6. Instruct the client to avoid aspirin or aspirin-like compounds unless approved by the HCP.

7. Instruct the client to take the medication with meals if gastrointestinal disturbances occur.
8. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol because it may cause a hypotensive reaction.
9. Encourage the client to change positions slowly to avoid orthostatic hypotension.

## XIV. Direct-Acting Arteriolar Vasodilators (Box 61-17)

### BOX 61-17

### Direct-Acting Arteriolar Vasodilators

- Diazoxide (Proglycem)
- Fenoldopam (Corlopam)
- Hydralazine (Apresoline)
- Minoxidil
- Nitroglycerin (Nitrostat, NitroQuick)
- Sodium nitroprusside (Nitropress)

#### A. Description

1. Direct-acting vasodilators relax the smooth muscles of the blood vessels, mainly the arteries, causing vasodilation.
2. Direct-acting vasodilators promote an increase in blood flow to the brain and kidneys.
3. With vasodilation, the BP drops and sodium and water are retained, resulting in peripheral edema.
4. Diuretics may be given to decrease the edema.

5. Direct-acting vasodilators are used in the client with moderate to severe hypertension.

6. Direct-acting vasodilators are used during acute hypertensive emergencies.

**B. Side/adverse effects** ▲

1. Hypotension

2. Reflex tachycardia caused by vasodilation and the drop in BP

3. Palpitations

4. Edema

5. Dizziness

6. Headaches

7. Nasal congestion

8. Gastrointestinal bleeding

9. Neurological symptoms

10. Confusion

11. Excess hair growth with minoxidil

12. With sodium nitroprusside, cyanide toxicity and thiocyanate toxicity can occur.

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs, especially BP.

2. Sodium nitroprusside

a. Monitor cyanide and thiocyanate levels.

b. Protect from light because the medication decomposes.

c. When administering, solution must be covered by a dark bag provided by the

manufacturer and is stable for 24 hours.

d. Discard if the medication is red, green, or blue.

**⚠** Vasodilators cause orthostatic hypotension. Instruct the client about safety measures when taking these medications, such as the need to rise from a lying to a sitting or standing position slowly.

## **XV. Miscellaneous Vasodilator**

### **A. Description**

#### **1. Nesiritide (Natrecor)**

- a. Recombinant version of human B-type natriuretic peptide that vasodilates arteries and veins
- b. Used for the treatment of decompensated heart failure

#### **2. Side/adverse effects**

- a. Hypotension
- b. Confusion
- c. Dizziness
- d. Dysrhythmias

#### **3. Interventions**

- a. Administer by continuous intravenous infusion via pump
- b. Monitor BP, cardiac rhythm, urine output, and body weight.
- c. Monitor for signs of resolving heart failure.

## **XVI. Antidysrhythmic Medications**

- A.** Description: Antidysrhythmic medications suppress dysrhythmias by inhibiting abnormal pathways of electrical conduction through the heart.
- B.** Class I antidysrhythmics are sodium channel blockers, class II are  $\beta$ -blockers, class III are potassium channel blockers (medications that delay repolarization), and class IV are calcium channel blockers.
- C.** Class IA antidysrhythmics
1. Disopyramide (Norpace)
  2. Procainamide
  3. Quinidine sulfate
- D.** Class IB antidysrhythmics
1. Lidocaine (Xylocaine)
  2. Mexiletine hydrochloride
  3. Phenytoin (Dilantin)
- E.** Class IC antidysrhythmics
1. Flecainide acetate (Tambocor)
  2. Propafenone hydrochloride (Rythmol)
  3. Side/adverse effects: Class I antidysrhythmics 
    - a. Hypotension
    - b. Heart failure
    - c. Worsened or new dysrhythmias
    - d. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- F.** Class II antidysrhythmics

1. Acebutolol (Sectral)
2. Esmolol (Brevibloc)
3. Propranolol (Inderal)
4. Metoprolol (Lopressor)
5. Atenolol (Tenormin)
6. Side/adverse effects: Class II antidysrhythmics ▲
  - a. Dizziness
  - b. Fatigue
  - c. Hypotension
  - d. Bradycardia
  - e. Heart failure
  - f. Dysrhythmias
  - g. Heart block
  - h. Bronchospasms
  - i. Gastrointestinal distress

**G. Class III antidysrhythmics**

1. Amiodarone (Cordarone, Pacerone)
2. Dofetilide (Tikosyn)
3. Ibutilide (Corvert)
4. Sotalol (Betapace, Sorine)
5. Side/adverse effects: Class III antidysrhythmics ▲
  - a. Hypotension

- b.** Bradycardia
- c.** Nausea, vomiting
- d.** Amiodarone hydrochloride may cause pulmonary fibrosis, photosensitivity, bluish skin discoloration, corneal deposits, peripheral neuropathy, tremor, poor coordination, abnormal gait, and hypothyroidism.
- e.** Bretylium may cause vertigo, syncope, and dizziness.
- f.** The electrocardiogram should be monitored for clients receiving amiodarone or dofetilide because they may prolong the QT interval, potentially leading to torsades de pointes.

#### **H.** Class IV antidysrhythmics

1. Verapamil (Calan, Verelan)
2. Diltiazem (Cardizem)
3. Amlodipine (Norvasc)
4. Nifedipine (Procardia)
5. Side/adverse effects: Class IV antidysrhythmics ▲
  - a.** Dizziness
  - b.** Hypotension
  - c.** Bradycardia
  - d.** Edema
  - e.** Constipation

#### **I.** Other antidysrhythmics

1. Adenosine (Adenocard, Adenoscan)

## 2. Digoxin (Lanoxin)

### J. Interventions for antidysrhythmics ▲

1. Monitor heart rate, respiratory rate, and BP.
2. Monitor electrocardiogram.
3. Provide continuous cardiac monitoring.
4. Maintain therapeutic serum medication levels.
5. Before administering lidocaine, always check the vial label to prevent administering a form that contains epinephrine or preservatives because these solutions are used for local anesthesia only.
6. Do not administer antidysrhythmics with food because food may affect absorption.
7. Mexiletine may be administered with food or antacids to reduce gastrointestinal distress.
8. Always administer IV antidysrhythmics via an infusion pump.
9. Monitor for signs of fluid retention such as weight gain, peripheral edema, or shortness of breath.
10. Advise the client to limit fluid and salt intake to minimize fluid retention.
11. Monitor respiratory, thyroid, and neurological functions.
12. After administering bretylium, keep the client supine and monitor for hypotension.
13. Instruct the client to change positions slowly to minimize orthostatic hypotension.
14. Instruct the client taking amiodarone to use sunscreen and protective clothing to prevent photosensitivity reactions.
15. Encourage the client to increase fiber intake to prevent constipation.

## XVII. Adrenergic Agonists (Box 61-18)

### BOX 61-18

### Adrenergic Agonists

- Dobutamine
- Dopamine
- Epinephrine
- Isoproterenol (Isuprel)
- Norepinephrine (Levophed)

#### A. Dobutamine

1. Increases myocardial force and cardiac output through stimulation of  $\beta$ -receptors
2. Used in clients with heart failure and for clients undergoing cardiopulmonary bypass surgery

#### B. Dopamine

1. Increases BP and cardiac output through positive inotropic action and increases renal blood flow through its action on  $\alpha$ - and  $\beta$ -receptors
2. Used to treat mild kidney failure caused by low cardiac output

#### C. Epinephrine

1. Used for cardiac stimulation in cardiac arrest
2. Used for bronchodilation in asthma or allergic reactions
3. Produces mydriasis
4. Produces local vasoconstriction when combined with local anesthetics and

prolongs anesthetic action by decreasing blood flow to the site

**D. Isoproterenol (Isuprel)**

1. Stimulates  $\beta$ -receptors
2. Used for cardiac stimulation and bronchodilation

**E. Norepinephrine (Levophed)**

1. Stimulates the heart in cardiac arrest
2. Vasoconstricts and increases the BP in hypotension and shock

**F. Side/adverse effects ▲**

1. Dysrhythmias
2. Tachycardia
3. Angina
4. Restlessness
5. Urgency or urinary incontinence

**G. Interventions ▲**

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor lung sounds.
3. Monitor urinary output.
4. Monitor electrocardiogram.
5. Administer the medication through a large vein.

**XVIII. Antilipemic Medications ▲**

**A. Description**

1. Antilipemic medications reduce serum levels of cholesterol, triglycerides, or

low-density lipoprotein.

2. When cholesterol, triglyceride, and low-density lipoprotein levels are elevated, the client is at increased risk for coronary artery disease.
3. In many cases, diet alone will not lower blood lipid levels; therefore antilipemic medications will be prescribed.

## **B. Bile sequestrants (see [Chapter 57, Box 57-3](#))**

### **1. Description**

- a. Bind with acids in the intestines, which prevents reabsorption of cholesterol
- b. Should not be used as the only therapy in clients with elevated triglyceride levels because they may raise triglyceride levels.

### **2. Side/adverse effects ▲**

- a. Constipation
- b. Gastrointestinal disturbances: Heartburn, nausea, belching, bloating

### **3. Interventions ▲**

- a. Cholestyramine (Questran) comes in a gritty powder that must be mixed thoroughly in juice or water before administration.
- b. Monitor the client for early signs of peptic ulcer such as nausea and abdominal discomfort followed by abdominal pain and distention.
- c. Instruct the client that the medication must be taken with and followed by sufficient fluids.

## **C. HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors ([Box 61-19](#))**



- Atorvastatin (Lipitor)
- Fluvastatin (Lescol)
- Lovastatin (Mevacor)
- Pitavastatin (Livalo)
- Pravastatin (Pravachol)
- Rosuvastatin (Crestor)
- Simvastatin (Zocor)

## 1. Description

- a. Lovastatin (Mevacor) is highly protein-bound and should not be administered with anticoagulants.
- b. Lovastatin should not be administered with gemfibrozil (Lopid).
- c. Administer lovastatin with caution to the client taking immunosuppressive medications.

## 2. Side/adverse effects ▲

- a. Nausea
- b. Diarrhea or constipation
- c. Abdominal pain or cramps
- d. Flatulence
- e. Dizziness
- f. Headache

- g. Blurred vision
- h. Rash
- i. Pruritus
- j. Elevated liver enzyme levels
- k. Muscle cramps and fatigue

### 3. Interventions

- a. Monitor serum liver enzyme levels.
- b. Instruct the client to receive an annual eye examination because the medications can cause cataract formation.
- c. If lovastatin is not effective in lowering the lipid level after 3 months, it should be discontinued.

 Instruct the client who is taking an antilipemic medication to report any unexplained muscular pain to the health care provider immediately.

## D. Other antilipemic medications (Box 61-20)

### BOX 61-20

### Other Antilipemic Medications

- Ezetimibe (Zetia)
- Ezetimibe; simvastatin (Vytorin)
- Fenofibrate (Tricor)
- Gemfibrozil (Lopid)
- Nicotinic acid (niacin)

## ■ Sitagliptin; simvastatin (Juvissync)

### 1. Description

- a. Gemfibrozil should not be taken with anticoagulants because they compete for protein sites; if the client is taking an anticoagulant, the anticoagulant dose should be reduced during antilipemic therapy and the INR should be monitored closely.
- b. Do not administer gemfibrozil with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors because it increases the risk for myositis, myalgias, and rhabdomyolysis.
- c. Fish oil supplements have been associated with a decreased risk for cardiovascular heart disease; plant stanol and sterol esters and cholestin have been associated with reducing cholesterol levels.

### 2. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor liver enzyme levels.
- c. Monitor serum cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- d. Instruct the client to restrict intake of fats, cholesterol, carbohydrates, and alcohol.
- e. Instruct the client to follow an exercise program.
- f. Instruct the client that it will take several weeks before the lipid level declines.
- g. Instruct the client to have an annual eye examination and to report any changes in vision.

- h.** Instruct the client with diabetes mellitus who is taking gemfibrozil to monitor blood glucose levels regularly.
- i.** Instruct the client to increase fluid intake.
- j.** Note that nicotinic acid has numerous side/adverse effects, including gastrointestinal disturbances, flushing of the skin, elevated liver enzyme levels, hyperglycemia, and hyperuricemia.
- k.** Instruct the client that aspirin or nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs taken 30 minutes before may assist in reducing the side effect of cutaneous flushing from nicotinic acid.
- l.** Instruct the client to take nicotinic acid with meals to reduce gastrointestinal discomfort.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The normal INR is 1.3 to 2.0. The treatment goal of warfarin sodium is to raise the INR to an appropriate value. An INR of 2 to 3 is appropriate for most clients, although for some clients the target INR is 3 to 4.5. If the INR is below the recommended range, warfarin sodium should be increased. If the INR is above the recommended range, warfarin sodium should be reduced. If the INR is 2.8, the nurse should plan to administer the same dosage as prescribed.

### **Reference**

Lehne (2013), p. 615.



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**720.** A client with atrial fibrillation is receiving a continuous heparin infusion at 1000 units/hour. The nurse determines that the client is receiving the therapeutic effect based on which results?

1. Prothrombin time of 12.5 seconds
2. Activated partial thromboplastin time of 60 seconds
3. Activated partial thromboplastin time of 28 seconds
4. Activated partial thromboplastin time longer than 120 seconds

**721.** The nurse provides discharge instructions to a client who is taking warfarin sodium (Coumadin). Which statement, by the client, reflects the **need for further teaching**?

1. "I will avoid alcohol consumption."
2. "I will take my pills every day at the same time."
3. "I have already called my family to pick up a Medic-Alert bracelet."
4. "I will take Ecotrin (enteric-coated aspirin) for my headaches because it is coated."

**722.** A client who is receiving digoxin (Lanoxin) daily has a serum potassium level of 3 mEq/L and is complaining of anorexia. The health care provider prescribes determination of the serum digoxin level to rule out digoxin toxicity. The nurse checks the results, knowing that which value is the therapeutic serum level (range) for digoxin?

1. 0.5 to 2 ng/mL
2. 1.2 to 2.8 ng/mL
3. 3.0 to 5.0 ng/mL
4. 3.5 to 5.5 ng/mL

**723.** A client is being treated with procainamide for a cardiac dysrhythmia. Following intravenous administration of the medication, the client complains of dizziness.

What intervention should the nurse take **first**?

1. Measure the heart rate on the rhythm strip.
2. Administer prescribed nitroglycerin tablets.
3. Obtain a 12-lead electrocardiogram immediately.
4. Auscultate the client's apical pulse and obtain a blood pressure.

**724.** The nurse is monitoring a client who is taking propranolol (Inderal LA). Which assessment data indicates a potential serious complication associated with this medication?

1. The development of complaints of insomnia
2. The development of audible expiratory wheezes
3. A baseline blood pressure of 150/80 mm Hg followed by a blood pressure of 138/72 mm Hg after two doses of the medication
4. A baseline resting heart rate of 88 beats/minute followed by a resting heart rate of 72 beats/minute after two doses of the medication

**725.** A client with atrial fibrillation secondary to mitral stenosis is receiving a heparin

sodium infusion at 1000 units/hour and warfarin sodium (Coumadin) 7.5 mg at 5:00 PM daily. The morning laboratory results are as follows: activated partial thromboplastin time (aPTT) = 32 seconds; internationalized normalized ratio (INR) = 1.3. The nurse should plan to take which action based on the client's laboratory results?

1. Collaborate with the health care provider (HCP) to discontinue the heparin infusion and administer the warfarin sodium as prescribed.
2. Collaborate with the HCP to obtain a prescription to increase the heparin infusion and administer the warfarin sodium as prescribed.
3. Collaborate with the HCP to withhold the warfarin sodium since the client is receiving a heparin infusion and the aPTT is within the therapeutic range.
4. Collaborate with the HCP to continue the heparin infusion at the same rate and to discuss use of dabigatran etexilate (Pradaxa) in place of warfarin sodium.

**726.** A client is diagnosed with an ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) and is receiving tissue plasminogen activator, alteplase (Activase, tPA). Which action is a **priority** nursing intervention?

1. Monitor for kidney failure.
2. Monitor psychosocial status.
3. Monitor for signs of bleeding.
4. Have heparin sodium available.

**727.** The nurse is planning to administer hydrochlorothiazide to a client. The nurse

understands that which is a concern related to the administration of this medication?

1. Hypouricemia, hyperkalemia
2. Increased risk of osteoporosis
3. Hypokalemia, hyperglycemia, sulfa allergy
4. Hyperkalemia, hypoglycemia, penicillin allergy

**728.** The home health care nurse is visiting a client with elevated triglyceride levels and a serum cholesterol level of 398 mg/dL. The client is taking cholestyramine (Questran). Which statement, by the client, indicates the **need for further education**?

1. "Constipation and bloating might be a problem."
2. "I'll continue to watch my diet and reduce my fats."
3. "Walking a mile each day will help the whole process."
4. "I'll continue my nicotinic acid from the health food store."

**729.** The nurse is monitoring a client who is taking digoxin (Lanoxin) for adverse effects. Which findings are characteristic of digoxin toxicity? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Tremors
2. Diarrhea
3. Irritability
4. Blurred vision

**5. Nausea and vomiting**

**730.** Prior to administering a client's daily dose of digoxin, the nurse reviews the client's laboratory data and notes the following results: serum calcium, 9.8 mg/dL; serum magnesium, 1.2 mg/dL; serum potassium, 4.1 mEq/L; serum creatinine, 0.9 mg/dL. Which result should alert the nurse that the client is at risk for digoxin toxicity?

1. Serum calcium level
2. Serum potassium level
3. Serum creatinine level
4. Serum magnesium level

**731.** A client being treated for heart failure is administered intravenous bumetanide. Which outcome indicates the medication has achieved the expected effect?

1. Cough becomes productive of frothy pink sputum
2. The serum potassium level changes from 3.8 to 3.1 mEq/L
3. B-natriuretic peptide (BNP) factor increases from 200 to 262 pg/mL
4. Urine output increases from 10 mL/hour to greater than 50 mL hourly

**732.** Intravenous heparin therapy is prescribed for a client. While implementing this prescription, the nurse ensures that which medication is available on the nursing unit?

1. Vitamin K
2. Protamine sulfate

3. Potassium chloride
4. Aminocaproic acid (Amicar)

**733.** A client receiving thrombolytic therapy with a continuous infusion of alteplase (Activase) suddenly becomes extremely anxious and complains of itching. The nurse hears stridor and notes generalized urticaria and hypotension. Which nursing action is the **priority**?

1. Administer oxygen and protamine sulfate.
2. Cut the infusion rate in half and sit the client up in bed.
3. Stop the infusion and call the health care provider (HCP).
4. Administer diphenhydramine (Benadryl) and continue the infusion.

**734.** The nurse should report which assessment finding to the health care provider (HCP) before initiating thrombolytic therapy in a client with pulmonary embolism?

1. Adventitious breath sounds
2. Temperature of 99.4 ° F orally
3. Blood pressure of 198/110 mm Hg
4. Respiratory rate of 28 breaths/minute

**735.** A client is prescribed nicotinic acid (niacin) for hyperlipidemia and the nurse provides instructions to the client about the medication. Which statement by the client indicates an understanding of the instructions?

1. "It is not necessary to avoid the use of alcohol."

2. “The medication should be taken with meals to decrease flushing.”
3. “Clay-colored stools are a common side effect and should not be of concern.”
4. “Ibuprofen (Motrin) taken 30 minutes before the nicotinic acid should decrease the flushing.”

## ANSWERS

720. 2

**Rationale:** Common laboratory ranges for activated partial thromboplastin time are 20 to 36 seconds. Because the activated partial thromboplastin time should be 1.5 to 2.5 times the normal value, the client’s activated partial thromboplastin time would be considered therapeutic if it was 60 seconds.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the therapeutic effect of heparin. Prothrombin time is eliminated because it assesses response to warfarin (Coumadin) therapy. The activated partial thromboplastin time of 28 seconds is eliminated because this result indicates that the client is receiving no therapeutic effect from the continuous heparin infusion. Finally the activated partial thromboplastin time greater than 120 seconds can be eliminated because this value is beyond the therapeutic range and the client is at risk for bleeding.

**Review:** Laboratory tests to monitor the effectiveness of **heparin therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**References:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 700; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 249.

#### 721. 4

**Rationale:** Ecotrin is an aspirin-containing product and should be avoided. Alcohol consumption should be avoided by a client taking warfarin sodium. Taking prescribed medication at the same time each day increases client compliance. The Medic-Alert bracelet provides health care personnel emergency information.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Recalling that warfarin (Coumadin) is an anticoagulant and that Ecotrin is an aspirin-containing product will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Warfarin sodium (Coumadin)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 84, 1240.

#### 722. 1

**Rationale:** Therapeutic levels for digoxin range from 0.5 to 2 ng/mL. The ranges in the remaining options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, therapeutic serum digoxin level. It is necessary to remember that the therapeutic range is 0.5 to 2 ng/mL to answer correctly.

**Review:** **Therapeutic digoxin level**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 620.

**723. 4**

**Rationale:** Signs of toxicity from procainamide include confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, decreased urination, nausea, vomiting, and tachydysrhythmias. If the client complains of dizziness, the nurse should assess the vital signs first. Although measuring the heart rate on the rhythm strip and obtaining a 12-lead EKG may be interventions, these would be done after the vital signs are taken. Nitroglycerin is a vasodilator and will lower the blood pressure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Also use the **steps of the nursing process** to answer correctly. Remember to always assess the client first, not the monitoring devices. Therefore auscultating the apical rate and taking the blood pressure are the first actions.

**Review:** **Procainamide** and related nursing interventions

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 1146.

724. 2

**Rationale:** Audible expiratory wheezes may indicate a serious adverse reaction, bronchospasm.  $\beta$ -Blockers may induce this reaction, particularly in clients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma. Normal decreases in blood pressure and heart rate are expected. Insomnia is a frequent mild side effect and should be monitored.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a potential serious complication. Eliminate options indicating a decrease in blood pressure and a decrease in heart rate first because these are expected effects from the medication. Next, focusing on the **subject** will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **propranolol (Inderal LA)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Perfusion

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 979-980.

725. 2

**Rationale:** When a client is receiving warfarin (Coumadin) for clot prevention due to atrial fibrillation, an INR of 2 to 3 is appropriate for most clients. Until the INR has achieved a therapeutic range the client should be maintained on a continuous heparin infusion with the aPTT ranging between 60 and 80 seconds. Therefore, the nurse should collaborate with the health care provider to obtain a prescription to increase the heparin infusion and to administer the warfarin as prescribed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, laboratory result analysis related to these medications. First eliminate

the option that indicates to discuss use of Pradaxa, recalling that it is contraindicated for use in atrial fibrillation associated with valvular heart disease. Next, recall that if the warfarin sodium has achieved the therapeutic range for the INR for clot prevention in atrial fibrillation, the heparin infusion is no longer necessary. This will help you to eliminate the option that indicates to withhold the warfarin sodium because the INR is not therapeutic. Last, keep in mind that if both the aPTT and INR are not within therapeutic range the client is left unprotected from clot formation.

**Review:** Heparin sodium and warfarin sodium (Coumadin) therapy and related laboratory values

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 638, 641-642.

### 726. 3

**Rationale:** Tissue plasminogen activator is a thrombolytic. Hemorrhage is a complication of any type of thrombolytic medication. The client is monitored for bleeding. Monitoring for renal failure and monitoring the client's psychosocial status are important but are not the most critical interventions. Heparin may be administered after thrombolytic therapy, but the question is not asking about follow-up medications.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Remember, bleeding is a priority for thrombolytic medications.

**Review:** Care of the client receiving **tissue plasminogen activator (TPA)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 654-656.

### 727. 3

**Rationale:** Thiazide diuretics such as hydrochlorothiazide are sulfa-based medications, and a client with a sulfa allergy is at risk for an allergic reaction. Also, clients are at risk for hypokalemia, hyperglycemia, hypercalcemia, hyperlipidemia, and hyperuricemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a concern related to administration of hydrochlorothiazide. Recalling that thiazide diuretics carry a sulfa ring will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Hydrochlorothiazide**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 567-568; Lehne (2013), pp. 481-482, 487.

### 728. 4

**Rationale:** Nicotinic acid, even an over-the-counter form, should be avoided because it may lead to liver abnormalities. All lipid-lowering medications also can cause liver abnormalities, so a combination of nicotinic acid

and cholestyramine resin needs to be avoided. Constipation and bloating are the two most common side effects.

Walking and the reduction of fats in the diet are therapeutic measures to reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further education*. These words indicate **a negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Remembering that over-the-counter medications should be avoided when a client is taking a prescription medication will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Cholestyramine (Questran)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 607-608, 615.

❖ 729. 2, 4, 5

**Rationale:** Digoxin (Lanoxin) is a cardiac glycoside. The risk of toxicity can occur with the use of this medication.

Toxicity can lead to life-threatening events and the nurse needs to monitor the client closely for signs of toxicity.

Early signs of toxicity include gastrointestinal manifestations such as anorexia, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Subsequent manifestations include headache; visual disturbances such as diplopia, blurred vision, yellow-green halos, and photophobia; drowsiness; fatigue; and weakness. Cardiac rhythm abnormalities can also occur. The nurse also monitors the digoxin level. Therapeutic levels for digoxin range from 0.5 to 2 ng/mL.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, digoxin toxicity. Specific knowledge regarding the characteristics of digoxin toxicity is needed to answer this question. Recall that the early signs are gastrointestinal manifestations.

Next, recall that visual disturbances can occur.

**Review:** Digoxin toxicity

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 566-567.

**730. 4**

**Rationale:** An increased risk of toxicity exists in clients with hypercalcemia, hypokalemia, hypomagnesemia, hypothyroidism, and impaired renal function. The calcium, creatinine, and potassium levels are all within normal limits. The normal range for magnesium is 1.6 to 2.6 mg/dL and the results in the correct option are reflective of hypomagnesemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the laboratory result that places the client at risk for digoxin toxicity. Recalling the normal laboratory values for each electrolyte identified in the options will assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** Laboratory values related to **digoxin toxicity**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 348; Lehne (2013), pp. 491, 566-567.

**731. 4**

**Rationale:** Bumetanide is a diuretic and expected outcomes include increased urine output, decreased crackles, and decreased weight. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessment findings indicative of the expected effect of bumetanide. Keep in mind when answering this question that an expected effect of a medication refers to a positive outcome versus a side/adverse effect. This will help you to eliminate the option that refers to the potassium loss. Frothy pink sputum indicates progression to pulmonary edema. A BNP greater than 100 pg/mL is indicative of heart failure; thus a rise from a previous level indicates worsening of the condition.

**Review: Bumetanide**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), pp. 221-222; Lehne (2013), pp. 485-486.

**732. 2**

**Rationale:** The antidote to heparin is protamine sulfate; it should be readily available for use if excessive bleeding or hemorrhage should occur. Vitamin K is an antidote for warfarin sodium. Potassium chloride is administered for a potassium deficit. Aminocaproic acid is the antidote for thrombolytic therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the antidote for heparin. Knowledge regarding the various antidotes is needed to answer this question. Remember that the antidote to heparin is protamine sulfate.

**Review: Protamine sulfate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clotting; Safety

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 702.

733. 3

**Rationale:** The client is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction. Therefore, the priority action is to stop the infusion and notify the HCP. The client may be treated with epinephrine, antihistamines, and corticosteroids as prescribed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Recall that an allergic reaction and possible anaphylaxis are risks associated with alteplase therapy. Also, focusing on the signs and symptoms in the question will assist in answering correctly. When a severe allergic reaction occurs, the offending substance should be stopped, and lifesaving treatment should begin.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **alteplase (Activase)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 390.

734. 3

**Rationale:** Thrombolytic therapy is contraindicated in a number of preexisting conditions in which there is a risk of uncontrolled bleeding, similar to the case in anticoagulant therapy. Thrombolytic therapy also is contraindicated in severe uncontrolled hypertension because of the risk of cerebral hemorrhage. Therefore the nurse would report the results of the blood pressure to the HCP before initiating therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a contraindication for the use of thrombolytic therapy. Adventitious breath sounds, temperature of 99.4 ° F, and respiratory rate of 28 breaths/minute may be present in the client with pulmonary embolism but are not necessarily signs that warrant reporting before thrombolytic therapy is initiated.

**Review:** Contraindications for **thrombolytic therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clotting; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 840.

**735. 4**

**Rationale:** Flushing is a side effect of this medication. Aspirin or a nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drug can be taken 30 minutes prior to taking the medication to decrease flushing. Alcohol consumption needs to be avoided because it will enhance this side effect. The medication should be taken with meals to decrease gastrointestinal upset; however, taking the medication with meals has no effect on the flushing. Clay-colored stools are a sign of hepatic dysfunction and should be immediately reported to the health care provider (HCP).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client understanding of the medication. Alcohol must be abstained from, so this option can be eliminated. Taking the medication with meals helps decrease the gastrointestinal

symptoms rather than flushing. Clay-colored stools are a sign of hepatic dysfunction and should be immediately reported to the HCP.

**Review:** Nicotinic acid (niacin)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Cardiovascular Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Perfusion

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 615-616.

# UNIT XIV



## Renal and Urinary Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**acute kidney injury (AKI)** The sudden loss of kidney function caused by renal cell damage from ischemia or toxic substances. It occurs abruptly and can be reversible. Acute kidney injury leads to hypoperfusion, cell death, and decompensation in renal function. The prognosis depends on the cause and condition of the client. Near-normal or normal kidney function may resume gradually.

**anuria** Urine output of less than 100 mL/day.

**arterial steal syndrome** A syndrome that can develop following the insertion of an arteriovenous fistula when too much blood is diverted to the vein and arterial perfusion to the hand is compromised.

**arteriovenous fistula** Surgical creation by anastomosis of an opening, or fistula,

between a large artery and a large vein. The flow of arterial blood into the venous system causes the vein to become engorged (maturity). Maturity is necessary so that the engorged vein can be punctured using a large-bore needle. This also allows the blood to be returned quickly for effective dialysis.

**azotemia** The retention of nitrogenous waste products in the blood.

**chronic kidney disease (CKD)** The progressive loss and ongoing deterioration in kidney function. It is characterized by a glomerular filtration rate of less than 60 mL/minute for a period of 3 months or longer. It is irreversible and results in uremia or end-stage kidney disease. Chronic kidney disease requires dialysis or kidney transplantation to maintain life.

**dialysis** A blood filtering procedure that is indicated when kidney function deteriorates and the accumulation of water and waste products interferes with life functions. Dialysis is performed via the blood stream (hemodialysis) or through the peritoneal cavity (peritoneal dialysis).

**disequilibrium syndrome** A rapid change in the composition of the extracellular fluid that occurs during hemodialysis. Solutes are removed from the blood faster than from the cerebrospinal fluid and brain. Fluid is pulled into the brain, causing cerebral edema.

**nephrolithiasis** The formation of kidney stones. Kidney stones are formed in the renal parenchyma.

**oliguria** Urine output of less than 400 mL/day.

**urolithiasis** The formation of urinary stones or calculi. Urinary calculi are formed in the

ureter.

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points focus on acute kidney injury and chronic kidney disease, dialysis procedures such as hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis, urinary diversions, and postoperative care following urinary or renal surgery. Focus on the major problems associated with kidney failure and the rationale for the prescribed treatment modalities. Be familiar with the complications associated with hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis, the specific assessment data related to complications, and the expected treatment. Focus on the care of a peritoneal catheter and hemodialysis access devices, the complications associated with these access devices, and the appropriate nursing interventions if a complication is suspected. Review preoperative and postoperative care related to kidney transplantation and the assessment data indicating rejection. Be familiar with urinary diversions, care for the client following prostatectomy, and treatment measures for the client with urinary or renal calculi.



## Client Needs

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Consulting with members of the health care team

Establishing priorities

Identifying the guidelines related to kidney organ donation

Maintaining asepsis related to wound care and dialysis access devices

Maintaining confidentiality related to the renal disorder

Maintaining standard and other precautions related to care for the client

Verifying that informed consent related to diagnostic and surgical procedures has been obtained

Preventing injury related to complications of the disorder

Upholding client rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing expected body image changes

Performing urinary and renal physical assessment techniques

Providing client instructions regarding care of a urinary diversion, dialysis access device, and dialysis procedures

Providing client instructions regarding prescribed treatments related to the urinary or renal disorder

Providing client instructions regarding the prevention of the recurrence of a urinary or renal disorder

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assisting the client to use appropriate coping mechanisms

Discussing body image disturbances

Discussing the loss of renal function

Identifying grief and loss and end-of-life issues

Identifying religious and spiritual influences on health

Identifying support systems and appropriate community resources

## **Physiological Integrity**

Ensuring elimination measures

Informing the client about diagnostic tests and laboratory results

Monitoring for fluid and electrolyte imbalances and acid-base disorders

Obtaining assessment data indicating rejection of kidney transplant

Preventing complications arising as a result of dialysis

Providing adequate rest and sleep

Providing care related to dialysis access devices

Providing care related to hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis

Providing care to the client following prostatectomy

Providing comfort interventions

Providing pharmacological therapy

Providing preoperative and postoperative care related to kidney transplantation

Providing treatment measures for the client with urinary or renal calculi or the client

with a urinary diversion

Teaching the client about the prescribed nutrition and fluid measures



## CHAPTER 62

# Renal System

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

On assessment, the nurse notes that a client with glomerulonephritis has developed fine crackles in the lung bases bilaterally. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 868.*

### **I. Anatomy and Physiology**

#### **A. Kidney anatomy**

1. Each person has two kidneys; one is attached to the left abdominal wall at the level of the last thoracic and first three lumbar vertebrae and the other is on the right.
2. The kidneys are enclosed in the renal capsule.
3. The renal cortex is the outer layer of the renal capsule, which contains blood-filtering mechanisms (glomeruli).
4. The renal medulla is the inner region, which contains the renal pyramids and renal

tubules.

5. Together the renal cortex, pyramids, and medulla constitute the parenchyma.

6. Nephrons

a. Functional unit of the kidney

b. Located within the parenchyma

c. Composed of glomerulus and tubules

d. Selectively secretes and reabsorbs ions and filtrates, including fluid, wastes, electrolytes, acids, and bases

 The nephrons are the functional units of the kidney.

7. Glomerulus

a. Each nephron contains tufts of capillaries, which filter large plasma proteins and blood cells.

b. Blood flows into the glomerular capillaries from the afferent arteriole and flows out of the glomerular capillaries into the efferent arteriole.

8. Bowman's capsule

a. Thin double-walled capsule that surrounds the glomerulus

b. Fluid and particles from the blood such as electrolytes, glucose, amino acids, and metabolic waste (glomerular filtrate) are filtered through the glomerular membrane into a fluid-filled space in Bowman's capsule (Bowman's space) and then enters the proximal convoluted tubule (PCT).

9. Tubules

- a. The tubules include the PCT, Henle's loop, and the distal convoluted tubule (DCT).
- b. The PCT receives filtrate from the glomerular capsule and reabsorbs water and electrolytes through active and passive transport.
- c. The descending loop of Henle passively reabsorbs water from the filtrate.
- d. The ascending loop of Henle passively reabsorbs sodium and chloride from the filtrate and helps maintain osmolality.
- e. The DCT actively and passively removes sodium and water.
- f. The filtered fluid is converted to urine in the tubules, and then the urine moves to the pelvis of the kidney.
- g. The urine flows from the pelvis of the kidneys through the ureters and empties into the bladder.

## **B. Functions of kidneys**

1. Maintain acid-base balance
2. Excrete end products of body metabolism
3. Control fluid and electrolyte balance
4. Excrete bacterial toxins, water-soluble drugs, and drug metabolites
5. Secrete renin to regulate the blood pressure and erythropoietin to stimulate the bone marrow to produce red blood cells. ▲
6. Synthesize vitamin D for calcium absorption and regulation of the parathyroid hormones.

## **C. Urine production**

1. As fluid flows through the tubules, water, electrolytes, and solutes are reabsorbed and other solutes such as creatinine, hydrogen ions, and potassium are secreted.
2. Water and solutes that are not reabsorbed become urine.
3. The process of selective reabsorption determines the amount of water and solutes to be secreted.

#### **D. Homeostasis of water** ▲

1. Antidiuretic hormone (ADH) is primarily responsible for the reabsorption of water by the kidneys.
2. ADH is produced by the hypothalamus and secreted from the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland.
3. Secretion of ADH is stimulated by dehydration or high sodium intake and by a decrease in blood volume.
4. ADH makes the distal convoluted tubules and collecting duct permeable to water.
5. Water is drawn out of the tubules by osmosis and returns to the blood; concentrated urine remains in the tubule to be excreted.
6. When ADH is lacking, the client develops diabetes insipidus (DI).
7. Clients with DI produce large amounts of dilute urine; treatment is necessary because the client cannot drink sufficient water to survive.

#### **E. Homeostasis of sodium** ▲

1. When the amount of sodium increases, extra water is retained to preserve osmotic pressure.
2. An increase in sodium and water produces an increase in blood volume and blood

pressure (BP).

3. When the BP increases, glomerular filtration increases, and extra water and sodium are lost; blood volume is reduced, returning the BP to normal.
4. Reabsorption of sodium in the distal convoluted tubules is controlled by the renin-angiotensin system.
5. Renin, an enzyme, is released from the nephron when the BP or fluid concentration in the distal convoluted tubule is low.
6. Renin catalyzes the splitting of angiotensin I from angiotensinogen; angiotensin I converts to angiotensin II as blood flows through the lung.
7. Angiotensin II, a potent vasoconstrictor, stimulates the secretion of aldosterone.
8. Aldosterone stimulates the distal convoluted tubules to reabsorb sodium and secrete potassium.
9. The additional sodium increases water reabsorption and increases blood volume and BP, returning the BP to normal; the stimulus for the secretion of renin then is removed.

#### F. Homeostasis of potassium

1. Increases in the serum potassium level stimulate the secretion of aldosterone.
2. Aldosterone stimulates the distal convoluted tubules to secrete potassium; this action returns the serum potassium concentration to normal.

#### G. Homeostasis of acidity (pH)

1. Blood pH is controlled by maintaining the concentration of buffer systems.
2. Carbonic acid and sodium bicarbonate form the most important buffers for

neutralizing acids in the plasma.

3. The concentration of carbonic acid is controlled by the respiratory system.
  4. The concentration of sodium bicarbonate is controlled by the kidneys.
  5. Normal arterial pH is 7.35 to 7.45, maintained by keeping the ratio of concentrations of sodium bicarbonate to carbon dioxide constant at 20:1.
  6. Strong acids are neutralized by sodium bicarbonate to produce carbonic acid and the sodium salts of the strong acid; this process quickly restores the ratio and thus blood pH.
  7. The carbonic acid dissociates into carbon dioxide and water; because the concentration of carbon dioxide is maintained at a constant level by the respiratory system, the excess carbonic acid is rapidly excreted.
  8. Sodium combined with the strong acid is actively reabsorbed in the distal convoluted tubules in exchange for hydrogen or potassium ions. The strong acid is neutralized by ammonia and is excreted as ammonia or potassium salts.
- H.** Adrenal glands (see [Chapter 54](#) for information about the adrenal glands)
1. One adrenal gland is on top of each kidney.
  2. The adrenal glands influence blood pressure and sodium and water retention.
- I.** Bladder
1. The bladder detrusor muscle, composed of smooth muscle, distends during bladder filling and contracts during bladder emptying.
  2. The ureterovesical sphincter prevents reflux of urine from the bladder to the ureter.

3. The total bladder capacity is 1 L; normal adult urine output is 1500 mL/day.

#### J. Prostate gland

1. The prostate gland surrounds the male urethra.
2. The prostate gland contains a duct that opens into the prostatic portion of the urethra and secretes the alkaline portion of seminal fluid, which protects sperm.

#### K. Risk factors associated with renal disorders (Box 62-1).

##### **BOX 62-1** Risk Factors Associated with Renal Disorders

- Chemical or environmental toxin exposure
- Contact sports
- Diabetes mellitus
- Family history of renal disease
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Heart failure
- High-sodium diet
- Hypertension
- Medications
- Trauma
- Urolithiasis or nephrolithiasis

## II. Diagnostic Tests

A. See [Chapter 11](#) and [Box 62-2](#) for information regarding normal values for renal

function studies.

### **BOX 62-2** Normal Renal Function Values

- Blood urea nitrogen level, 8 to 25 mg/dL
- Serum creatinine level, 0.6 to 1.3 mg/dL
- Serum uric acid level, 2.5 to 8.0 mg/dL

#### **B. Determination of serum creatinine level**

1. Description: A test that measures the amount of creatinine in the serum. Creatinine is an end product of protein and muscle metabolism.
2. Analysis
  - a. Creatinine level reflects glomerular filtration rate.
  - b. Kidney disease is the only pathological condition that increases the serum creatinine level.
  - c. Serum creatinine level increases only when at least 50% of renal function is lost.

#### **C. Determination of blood urea nitrogen (BUN) level**

1. Description: A serum test that measures the amount of nitrogenous urea, a by-product of protein metabolism in the liver.
2. Analysis
  - a. BUN levels indicate the extent of renal clearance of urea nitrogenous waste products.
  - b. An elevation does not always mean that renal disease is present.

- c. Some factors that can elevate the BUN level include dehydration, poor renal perfusion, intake of a high-protein diet, infection, stress, corticosteroid use, gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding, and factors that cause muscle breakdown.
- d. When the BUN and serum creatinine levels increase at the same rate, the ratio of the BUN to creatinine remains constant; elevated serum creatinine and BUN levels suggest renal dysfunction.

#### **D. Urinalysis**

1. Description: A urine test for evaluation of the renal system and renal disease
2. Interventions
  - a. Wash perineal area and use a clean container for collection.
  - b. Obtain 10 to 15 mL of the first morning voiding if possible.
  - c. Refrigerating samples may alter the specific gravity.
  - d. If the client is menstruating, note this on the laboratory requisition form.

#### **E. A 24-hour urine collection**

1. Check with the laboratory about specific instructions for the client to follow, such as dietary or medication restrictions.
2. Instruct the client about the urine collection.
3. At the start time, instruct the client to void and discard that sample.
4. Collect all urine for the prescribed time.
5. Keep the urine specimen on ice or refrigerated and check with the laboratory regarding adding a preservative to the specimen during collection.
6. At the end of the prescribed time, instruct the client to empty the bladder and add

that urine to the collection container.

## **F. Specific gravity determination**

- 1. Description:** A urine test that measures the ability of the kidneys to concentrate urine
- 2. Interventions**
  - a.** Specific gravity can be measured by a multiple-test dipstick method (most common method), refractometer (an instrument used in the laboratory setting), or urinometer (least accurate method).
  - b.** Factors that interfere with an accurate reading include radiopaque contrast agents, glucose, and proteins.
  - c.** Cold specimens may produce a false high reading.
  - d.** Normal value is 1.016 to 1.022 (may vary depending on the laboratory).
  - e.** An increase in specific gravity (more concentrated urine) occurs with insufficient fluid intake, decreased renal perfusion, or increased ADH.
  - f.** A decrease in specific gravity (less concentrated urine) occurs with increased fluid intake or diabetes insipidus; it may also indicate renal disease or the kidneys' inability to concentrate urine.

## **G. Urine culture and sensitivity testing**

- 1. Description:** A urine test that identifies the presence of microorganisms (culture) and determines the specific antibiotics to treat the existing microorganism (sensitivity) appropriately
- 2. Interventions**

- a. Clean the perineal area and urinary meatus with a bacteriostatic solution.
- b. Collect the midstream sample in a sterile container. ▲
- c. Send the collected specimen to the laboratory immediately.
- d. Identify any sources of potential contaminants during the collection of the specimen, such as the hands, skin, clothing, hair, or vaginal or rectal secretions.
- e. Urine from the client who drank a very large amount of fluids may be too dilute to provide a positive culture.

## H. Creatinine clearance test

### 1. Description

- a. The creatinine clearance test evaluates how well the kidneys remove creatinine from the blood.
- b. The test includes obtaining a blood sample and timed urine specimens.
- c. Blood is drawn when the urine specimen collection is complete.
- d. The urine specimen for the creatinine clearance is usually collected for 24 hours, but shorter periods such as 8 or 12 hours could be prescribed.

**⚠** The creatinine clearance test provides the best estimate of the glomerular filtration rate (GFR); the normal GFR is 125 mL/minute.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Encourage fluids before and during the test.
- b. Instruct the client to avoid caffeinated beverages during testing.
- c. Check with the health care provider (HCP) regarding the administration of any

prescribed medications during testing.

- d.** Instruct the client about the urine collection.
- e.** At the start time, ask the client to void (or empty the tubing and drainage bag if the client has a Foley catheter) and discard the first sample.
- f.** Collect all urine for the prescribed time.
- g.** Keep the urine specimen on ice or refrigerated and check with the laboratory regarding adding a preservative to the specimen during collection.
- h.** At the end of the prescribed time, ask the client to empty the bladder (or empty the tubing and drainage bag if the client has a Foley catheter) and add that final urine to the collection container.
- i.** Send the labeled urine specimen to the laboratory in a biohazard bag along with the requisition.
- j.** Document specimen collection, time started and completed, and pertinent assessments.

## **I.** Uric acid test

- 1.** Description: A 24-hour urine collection sample is tested to diagnose gout and kidney disease.
- 2.** Interventions
  - a.** Encourage fluid intake and a regular diet during testing.
  - b.** Follow the same procedure for urine collection as with the creatinine clearance test.

## **J.** Vanillylmandelic acid (VMA) test

## 1. Description

- a. The test is a 24-hour urine collection to diagnose pheochromocytoma, a tumor of the adrenal gland.
- b. The test determines catecholamine levels in the urine.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Check with the laboratory regarding medication restrictions.
- b. Instruct the client to avoid foods such as caffeine, cocoa, vanilla, cheese, gelatin, licorice, and fruits for at least 2 days before and during urine collection and to check with the HCP regarding the administration of any prescribed medications before or during testing.
- c. Instruct the client to avoid stress; encourage adequate food and fluid intake during the test.
- d. Follow the same procedure for urine collection as for the creatinine clearance test.

## **K.** KUB (kidneys, ureters, and bladder) radiography

- 1. Description: An x-ray of the urinary system and adjacent structures to detect urinary calculi.
- 2. Interventions: No specific preparation is necessary.

## **L.** Bladder ultrasonography (bladder scanning)

- 1. Bladder ultrasonography is a noninvasive method for measuring the volume of urine in the bladder.
- 2. Bladder ultrasonography may be performed to evaluate urinary frequency,

inability to urinate, or amount of residual urine (the amount of urine remaining in the bladder after voiding).

#### **M. Computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)**

1. Description: These imaging methods provide cross-sectional views of the kidney and urinary tract.
2. Interventions: See [Chapter 66](#).

#### **N. Intravenous urography**

1. Description: An x-ray procedure in which an intravenous injection of a radiopaque dye is used to visualize and identify abnormalities in the renal system.
2. Preprocedure interventions
  - a. Obtain an informed consent.
  - b. Assess the client for allergies to iodine, seafood, and radiopaque dyes. ▲
  - c. Withhold food and fluids after midnight on the night before the test.
  - d. Administer laxatives if prescribed.
  - e. Inform the client about possible throat irritation, flushing of the face, warmth, or a salty or metallic taste during the test.
3. Postprocedure interventions
  - a. Monitor vital signs.
  - b. Instruct the client to drink at least 1 L of fluid unless contraindicated. ▲
  - c. Assess the venipuncture site for bleeding.
  - d. Monitor urinary output.
  - e. Monitor for signs of a possible allergic reaction to the dye used during the test

and instruct the client to notify the HCP if any signs of an allergic reaction occur.

- f. Contrast dye is potentially damaging to kidneys; the risk is greater in older clients and those experiencing dehydration. ▲

▲ The dye used in intravenous urography may be nephrotoxic; therefore encourage increased fluids unless contraindicated and monitor urinary output.

## O. Renography (kidney scan)

1. Description: An intravenous (IV) injection of a radioisotope for visual imaging of renal blood flow, glomerular filtration, tubular function, and excretion
2. Preprocedure interventions
  - a. Obtain an informed consent.
  - b. Assess for allergies. ▲
  - c. Inform the client that the test requires no dietary or activity restrictions.
  - d. Assist with administering the radioisotope as necessary.
  - e. Instruct the client to remain motionless during the test.
  - f. Instruct the client that imaging may be repeated at various intervals before the test is complete.
3. Postprocedure interventions
  - a. Encourage fluid intake unless contraindicated.
  - b. Assess the client for signs of delayed allergic reaction such as itching and hives.
  - c. The radioisotope is eliminated in 24 hours; wear gloves for excretion

precautions.

- d.** Follow standard precautions when caring for incontinent clients and double-bag client linens per agency policy.
- e.** If captopril (Capoten) was administered during the procedure, the client's BP should be checked frequently.

**P. Cystoscopy and biopsy of the bladder** ▲

**1. Description:** The bladder mucosa is examined for inflammation, calculi, or tumors by means of a cystoscope; a sample for biopsy may be obtained.

**2. Preprocedure interventions**

- a.** Obtain an informed consent.
- b.** If a biopsy is planned, withhold food and fluids after midnight the night before the test.
- c.** If a cystoscopy alone is planned, no special preparation is necessary, and the procedure may be performed in the HCP's office; postprocedure interventions include increasing fluid intake.

**3. Postprocedure interventions following biopsy** ▲

- a.** Monitor vital signs.
- b.** Increase fluid intake as prescribed.
- c.** Monitor intake and output.
- d.** Encourage deep-breathing exercises to relieve bladder spasms.
- e.** Administer analgesics as prescribed.
- f.** Administer sitz or tub baths for back and abdominal pain.

- g.** Note that leg cramps are common because of the lithotomy position maintained during the procedure.
- h.** Assess the urine for color and consistency.
- i.** Inform the client that burning on urination, pink-tinged or tea-colored urine, and urinary frequency are common after cystoscopy and resolve in a few days.
- j.** Monitor for bright red urine or clots, and notify the HCP if a fever (with or without chills) occurs; an increase in white blood cell (WBC) count suggests infection.

## **Q. Renal biopsy**

- 1. Description:** Insertion of a needle into the kidney to obtain a sample of tissue for examination; usually done percutaneously
- 2. Preprocedure interventions**
  - a.** Assess vital signs.
  - b.** Assess baseline coagulation studies; notify the HCP if abnormal results are noted. ▲
  - c.** Obtain an informed consent.
  - d.** Withhold food and fluids 4 to 6 hours before the procedure.
- 3. Interventions during the procedure:** Position the client prone with a pillow under the abdomen and shoulders.
- 4. Postprocedure interventions**
  - a.** Monitor vital signs, especially for hypotension and tachycardia, which could indicate bleeding.

- b. Provide pressure to the biopsy site for 30 minutes. ▲
- c. Monitor the hemoglobin and hematocrit levels for decreases, which could indicate bleeding.
- d. Place the client on strict bed rest in the supine position with a back roll for additional support for 2 to 6 hours after the biopsy. ▲
- e. Check the biopsy site and under the client for bleeding. ▲
- f. Encourage fluid intake of 1500 to 2000 mL as prescribed. ▲
- g. Observe the urine for gross and microscopic bleeding.
- h. Instruct the client to avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity for 1 to 2 weeks.
- i. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if either a temperature greater than 100° F or hematuria occurs after the first 24 hours postprocedure.

### III. Acute Kidney Injury

#### A. Description ▲

1. **Acute kidney injury (AKI)** is the rapid loss of kidney function from renal cell damage.
2. Occurs abruptly and can be reversible
3. AKI leads to cell hypoperfusion, cell death, and decompensation of renal function.
4. The prognosis depends on the cause and the condition of the client.
5. Near-normal or normal kidney function may resume gradually.

#### B. Causes

1. Prerenal: Outside the kidney; caused by intravascular volume depletion, dehydration, decreased cardiac output, decreased peripheral vascular resistance,

decreased renovascular blood flow, and prerenal infection or obstruction.

2. Intrarenal: Within the parenchyma of the kidney; caused by tubular necrosis, prolonged prerenal ischemia, intrarenal infection or obstruction, and nephrotoxicity (Box 62-3).

## **BOX 62-3** Potentially Nephrotoxic Substances

### **Medications**

#### ***Antibiotics: Antiinfectives***

- Amphotericin B
- Methicillin
- Polymyxin B
- Rifampin
- Sulfonamides
- Tetracycline hydrochloride
- Vancomycin

#### ***Aminoglycoside Antibiotics***

- Gentamicin
- Kanamycin
- Neomycin
- Tobramycin

#### ***Antineoplastics***

- Cisplatin
- Cyclophosphamide
- Methotrexate

### ***Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)***

- Celecoxib
- Flurbiprofen
- Ibuprofen
- Indomethacin
- Ketorolac
- Meclofenamate
- Meloxicam
- Nabumetone
- Naproxen
- Oxaprozin
- Rofecoxib
- Tolmetin

### **Other Medications**

- Acetaminophen
- Captopril
- Cyclosporine
- Fluorinate anesthetics

- D-Penicillamine
- Phenazopyridine hydrochloride
- Quinine

### **Other Substances**

- Organic solvents
- Carbon tetrachloride
- Ethylene glycol

### **Nonpharmacological Chemical Agents**

- Radiographic contrast dye
- Pesticides
- Fungicides
- Myoglobin (from breakdown of skeletal muscle)

### **Heavy Metals and Ions**

- Arsenic
- Bismuth
- Copper sulfate
- Gold salts
- Lead
- Mercuric chloride

Adapted from Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-*

*centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

3. Postrenal: Between the kidney and urethral meatus, such as bladder neck obstruction, bladder cancer, calculi, and postrenal infection.

### C. Phases of AKI and interventions ([Box 62-4](#))

#### **BOX 62-4**

#### **Acute Kidney Injury: Phases and Laboratory Findings**

##### **Onset**

- Begins with precipitating event

##### **Oliguric Phase**

- Elevated blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine levels
- Decreased urine specific gravity (prerenal causes) or normal (intrarenal causes)
- Decreased glomerular filtration rate and creatinine clearance
- Hyperkalemia
- Normal or decreased serum sodium level
- Hypervolemia
- Hypocalcemia
- Hyperphosphatemia

##### **Diuretic Phase**

- Gradual decline in blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine levels, but still elevated
- Continued low creatinine clearance with improving glomerular filtration rate

- Hypokalemia
- Hyponatremia
- Hypovolemia

### Recovery Phase (Convalescent)

- Increased glomerular filtration rate
- Stabilization or continual decline in blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine levels toward normal
- Complete recovery (may take 1 to 2 years)

1. Onset: Begins with precipitating event

2. Oliguric phase

- For some clients, **oliguria** does not occur and the urine output is normal; otherwise the duration of oliguria is 8 to 15 days; the longer the duration, the less chance of recovery.
- Sudden decrease in urine output; urine output is less than 400 mL/day. ▲
- Signs of excess fluid volume: Hypertension, edema, pleural and pericardial effusions, dysrhythmias, heart failure (HF), and pulmonary edema ▲
- Signs of uremia: Anorexia, nausea, vomiting, and pruritus
- Signs of metabolic acidosis: Kussmaul's respirations
- Signs of neurological changes: Tingling of extremities, drowsiness progressing to disorientation, and then coma
- Signs of pericarditis: Friction rub, chest pain with inspiration, and low-grade

fever ▲

- h.** Laboratory analysis (see [Box 62-4](#))
- i.** Restrict fluid intake; if hypertension is present, daily fluid allowances may be 400 mL to 1000 mL plus the measured urinary output. ▲
- j.** Administer medications as prescribed, such as diuretics (furosemide [Lasix]), to increase renal blood flow and diuresis.

### 3. Diuretic phase

- a.** Urine output rises slowly, followed by diuresis (4 to 5 L/day). ▲
- b.** Excessive urine output indicates that damaged nephrons are recovering their ability to excrete wastes.
- c.** Dehydration, hypovolemia, hypotension, and tachycardia can occur.
- d.** Level of consciousness improves.
- e.** Laboratory analysis (see [Box 62-4](#))
- f.** Administer IV fluids as prescribed, which may contain electrolytes to replace losses.

### 4. Recovery phase (convalescent)

- a.** Recovery is a slow process; complete recovery may take 1 to 2 years.
- b.** Urine volume returns to normal.
- c.** Memory improves.
- d.** Strength increases.
- e.** The older adult is less likely than a younger adult to regain full kidney function.
- f.** Laboratory analysis (see [Box 62-4](#))

g. AKI can progress to **chronic kidney disease (CKD)**.

 The signs and symptoms of acute kidney injury are primarily caused by the retention of nitrogenous wastes, the retention of fluids, and the inability of the kidneys to regulate electrolytes.

D. Assessment: Assess objective and subjective data noted in the phases of AKI (see [Box 62-4](#)). 

E. Other interventions

1. Monitor vital signs, especially for signs of hypertension, tachycardia, tachypnea, and an irregular heart rate.
2. Monitor urine and intake and output (hourly in AKI) and urine color and characteristics. 
3. Monitor daily weight (same scale, same clothes, same time of day), noting that an increase of 1/2 to 1 lb/day indicates fluid retention. 
4. Monitor for changes in the BUN, serum creatinine, and serum electrolyte levels.
5. Monitor for acidosis (may be treated with sodium bicarbonate).
6. Monitor urinalysis for protein level, hematuria, casts, and specific gravity.
7. Monitor for altered level of consciousness caused by uremia.
8. Monitor for signs of infection because the client may not exhibit an elevated temperature or an increased white blood cell count. 
9. Monitor the lungs for wheezes and rhonchi and monitor for edema, which can indicate fluid overload. 
10. Administer a prescribed diet, which is usually a low- to moderate-protein (to

decrease the workload on the kidneys) and high-carbohydrate diet.

11. Restrict potassium and sodium intake as prescribed based on the electrolyte level.
12. Administer medications as prescribed; be alert to the mechanism for metabolism and excretion of all prescribed medications. ▲
13. Be alert to nephrotoxic medications, which may be prescribed (see [Box 62-3](#)).
14. Be alert to the health care provider's adjustment of medication dosages for kidney injury.
15. Prepare the client for **dialysis** if prescribed; continuous renal replacement therapy may be used in AKI to treat fluid volume overload or rapidly developing **azotemia** and metabolic acidosis. ▲
16. Provide emotional support by allowing opportunities for the client to express concerns and fears and by encouraging family interactions.
17. Promote consistency in caregivers.
18. Also refer to Section IV,E in this chapter (Special Problems in Kidney Disease and Interventions).

#### IV. Chronic Kidney Disease ▲

##### A. Description

1. CKD is a slow, progressive, irreversible loss in kidney function, with a GFR less than or equal to 60 mL/minute for 3 months or longer.
2. It occurs in stages and results in uremia or end-stage kidney disease ([Table 62-1](#)).

**TABLE 62-1 Progression of Chronic Kidney Disease**

Stage of CKD	Estimated GFR
At risk; normal kidney function (early kidney disease may or may not be present)	> 90 mL/min
Mild CKD	60-89 mL/min
Moderate CKD	30-59 mL/min
Severe CKD	15-29 mL/min
ESKD	< 15 mL/min

*CKD*, Chronic kidney disease; *ESKD*, end-stage kidney disease; *GFR*, glomerular filtration rate.

Data from Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

3. Hypervolemia can occur because of the kidneys' inability to excrete sodium and water; hypovolemia can occur because of the kidneys' inability to conserve sodium and water.

 **Chronic kidney disease affects all major body systems and requires dialysis or kidney transplantation to maintain life.**

## **B. Primary causes**

1. May follow AKI
2. Diabetes mellitus and other metabolic disorders
3. Hypertension
4. Chronic urinary obstruction
5. Recurrent infections
6. Renal artery occlusion
7. Autoimmune disorders

## C. Assessment

1. Assess body systems for the manifestations of CKD ([Box 62-5](#)).

### **BOX 62-5** Key Features of Chronic Kidney Disease

#### **Neurological Manifestations**

- Asterixis
- Ataxia (alteration in gait)
- Coma
- Inability to concentrate or decreased attention span
- Lethargy and daytime drowsiness
- Myoclonus
- Paresthesias
- Seizures
- Slurred speech
- Tremors, twitching, or jerky movements

#### **Cardiovascular Manifestations**

- Cardiac tamponade
- Cardiomyopathy
- Heart failure
- Hypertension
- Pericardial effusion
- Pericardial friction rub

- Peripheral edema
- Uremic pericarditis

### **Respiratory Manifestations**

- Crackles
- Deep sighing, yawning
- Depressed cough reflex
- Kussmaul's respirations
- Pleural effusion
- Pulmonary edema
- Shortness of breath
- Tachypnea
- Uremic halitosis
- Uremic pneumonia

### **Hematological Manifestations**

- Abnormal bleeding and bruising
- Anemia

### **Gastrointestinal Manifestations**

- Anorexia
- Changes in taste acuity and sensation
- Constipation
- Diarrhea

- Metallic taste in the mouth
- Nausea
- Stomatitis
- Uremic colitis (diarrhea)
- Uremic fetor
- Uremic gastritis (possible gastrointestinal bleeding)
- Vomiting

### Urinary Manifestations

- Diluted, straw-colored appearance
- Hematuria
- Oliguria, anuria (later)
- Polyuria, nocturia (early)
- Proteinuria

### Integumentary Manifestations

- Decreased skin turgor
- Dry skin
- Ecchymosis
- Pruritus
- Purpura
- Soft tissue calcifications
- Uremic frost (late, premonitory)

- Yellow-gray pallor

### **Musculoskeletal Manifestations**

- Bone pain
- Muscle weakness and cramping
- Pathological fractures
- Renal osteodystrophy

### **Reproductive Manifestations**

- Decreased fertility
- Decreased libido
- Impotence
- Infrequent or absent menses

From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.

2. Assess psychological changes, which could include emotional lability, withdrawal, depression, anxiety, suicidal behavior, denial, dependence-independence conflict, and changes in body image.

#### **D. Interventions**

1. Same as the interventions for AKD.
2. Administer a prescribed diet, which is usually a moderate-protein (to decrease the workload on the kidneys) and high-carbohydrate, low-potassium, and low-

phosphorus diet.

3. Provide oral care to prevent stomatitis and reduce discomfort from mouth sores.
4. Provide skin care to prevent pruritus.
5. Teach the client about fluid and dietary restrictions and the importance of daily weights.
6. Provide support to promote acceptance of the chronic illness and prepare the client for long-term dialysis and transplantation, or explain to the client about his or her choice to decline dialysis or transplantation.

**E. Special problems in kidney disease and interventions (Box 62-6)**

**BOX 62-6 Special Problems in Kidney Failure**

- Activity intolerance and insomnia
- Anemia
- Gastrointestinal bleeding
- Hyperkalemia
- Hypermagnesemia
- Hyperphosphatemia
- Hypertension
- Hypervolemia
- Hypocalcemia
- Hypovolemia
- Infection
- Metabolic acidosis

- Muscle cramps
- Neurological changes
- Ocular irritation
- Potential for injury
- Pruritus
- Psychosocial problems

## 1. Activity intolerance and insomnia

- a. Fatigue results from anemia and the buildup of wastes from the diseased kidneys.
- b. Provide adequate rest periods.
- c. Teach the client to plan activities to avoid fatigue.
- d. Administer mild central nervous system depressants as prescribed to promote rest.

## 2. Anemia

- a. Anemia results from the decreased secretion of erythropoietin by damaged nephrons, resulting in decreased production of red blood cells.
- b. Monitor for decreased hemoglobin and hematocrit levels.
- c. Administer epoetin alfa (Epogen, Procrit) or darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp), hematopoietics, as prescribed to promote maturity of the red blood cells. ▲
- d. Administer folic acid (vitamin B<sub>9</sub>) as prescribed.
- e. Administer iron orally as prescribed, but not at the same time as phosphate

binders.

- f.** Administer stool softeners as prescribed because of the constipating effects of iron.
- g.** Note that oral iron is not well absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract in CKD and causes nausea and vomiting; parenteral iron (iron sucrose [Venofer] or sodium ferric gluconate complex [Ferrlecit]) may be used if iron deficiencies persist despite folic acid or oral iron administration.
- h.** Administer blood transfusions if prescribed; blood transfusions are prescribed only when necessary (acute blood loss, symptomatic anemia) because they decrease the stimulus to produce red blood cells; note that certain clients (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses) may refuse blood and blood products because of their religious beliefs. ▲
- i.** Blood transfusions also cause the development of antibodies against human tissues, which can make matching for organ transplantation difficult. ▲

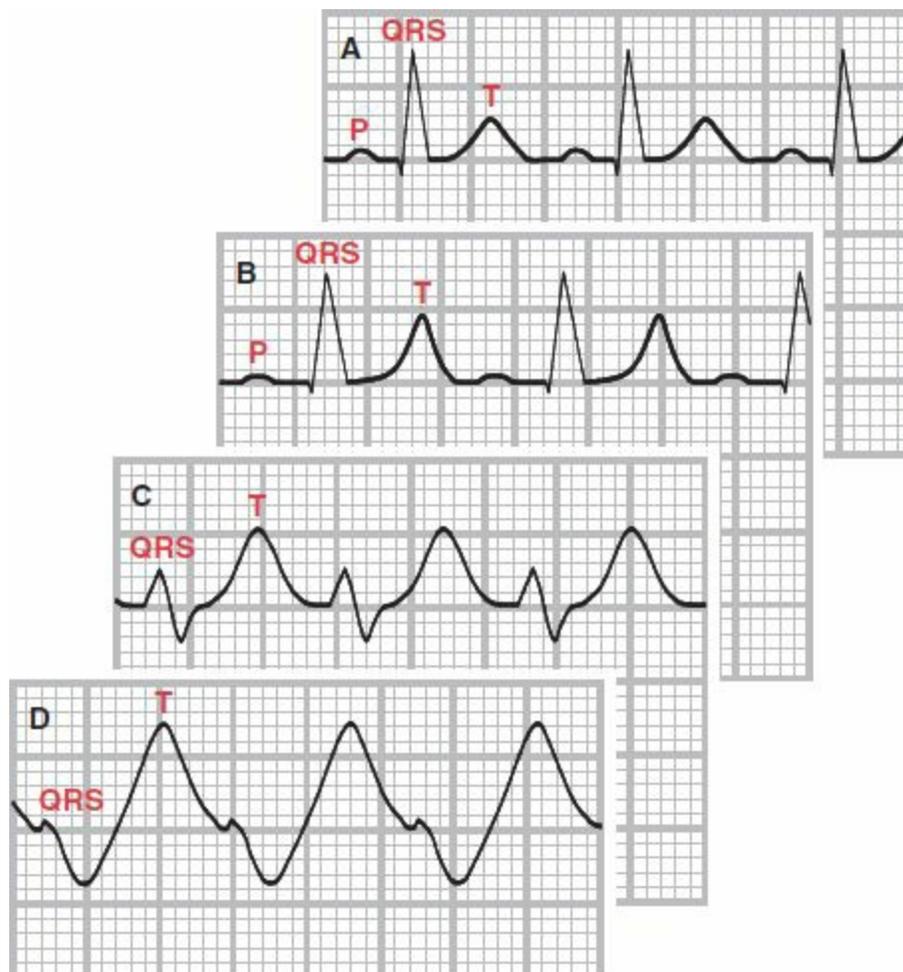
### **3. Gastrointestinal bleeding**

- a.** Urea is broken down by the intestinal bacteria to ammonia; ammonia irritates the gastrointestinal mucosa, causing ulceration and bleeding.
- b.** Monitor for decreasing hemoglobin and hematocrit levels.
- c.** Monitor stools for occult blood.
- d.** Instruct the client to use a soft toothbrush.
- e.** Avoid the administration of acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) because it is excreted by the kidneys; if administered, aspirin toxicity can occur and prolong the

bleeding time. ▲

#### 4. Hyperkalemia

- a. Monitor vital signs for hypertension or hypotension and the apical heart rate; an irregular heart rate could indicate dysrhythmias.
- b. Monitor the serum potassium level; an elevated serum potassium level can cause tall, peaked T waves, flat P waves, a widened QRS complex, and a prolonged PR interval; decreased cardiac output; heart blocks; fibrillation; or asystole (Fig. 62-1). ▲



Serum Potassium Levels

- A. Normal (3.5-5.0 mEq/L)
- B. About 7.0 mEq/L
- C. 8.0-9.0 mEq/L
- D. >10.0 mEq/L

**FIGURE 62-1** Cardiac rhythm changes with hyperkalemia. (From Huszar R: *Basic dysrhythmias: Interpretation and management*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2002, Mosby.)

- c. Provide a low-potassium diet, avoiding foods high in potassium (see [Chapter 9](#) for a listing of foods that are high in potassium). ▲
- d. Administer electrolyte-binding and electrolyte-excreting medications such as oral or rectal sodium polystyrene sulfonate (Kayexalate) as prescribed to lower the serum potassium level.

- e. Administer prescribed medications: 50% dextrose and insulin may be prescribed to shift potassium into the cell; calcium gluconate IV may be prescribed to reduce myocardial irritability from hyperkalemia; and sodium bicarbonate IV may be prescribed to correct acidosis.
- f. Administer prescribed loop diuretics to excrete potassium.
- g. Avoid potassium-retaining medications such as spironolactone (Aldactone) and triamterene (Dyrenium) because these medications will increase the potassium level. ▲
- h. Prepare the client for peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis as prescribed.

**▲ Place the client with kidney disease on continuous cardiac monitoring. The client can develop hyperkalemia resulting in the risk for dysrhythmias.**

## 5. Hypermagnesemia

- a. Results from decreased renal excretion of magnesium.
- b. Monitor for cardiac manifestations such as bradycardia, peripheral vasodilation, and hypotension.
- c. Monitor central nervous system (CNS) manifestations of decreased nerve impulse transmission, such as drowsiness or lethargy.
- d. Monitor neuromuscular manifestations, such as reduced or absent deep tendon reflexes or weak or absent voluntary skeletal muscle contractions.
- e. Administer loop diuretics as prescribed, such as furosemide (Lasix).
- f. Administer calcium as prescribed for resulting cardiac problems.

- g.** Avoid medications that contain magnesium, such as antacids, laxatives, or enemas.
- h.** During severe elevations, avoid foods that increase magnesium levels (see [Chapter 9](#) for a listing of foods that are high in magnesium).

## 6. Hyperphosphatemia

- a.** As the phosphorus level rises, the calcium level drops; this leads to the stimulation of parathyroid hormone, causing bone demineralization.
- b.** Treatment is aimed at lowering the serum phosphorus level.
- c.** Administer phosphate binders as prescribed with meals to lower serum phosphate levels. ▲
- d.** Avoid the use of aluminum hydroxide preparations to bind phosphates because they are associated with dementia and osteomalacia. ▲
- e.** Administer stool softeners and laxatives as prescribed because phosphate binders are constipating. ▲
- f.** Teach the client about the need to limit the intake of foods high in phosphorus (see [Chapter 9](#) for a listing of foods that are high in phosphorus).

## 7. Hypertension

- a.** Caused by failure of the kidneys to maintain BP homeostasis.
- b.** Monitor vital signs for elevated blood pressure.
- c.** Maintain fluid and sodium restrictions as prescribed.
- d.** Administer diuretics and antihypertensives as prescribed.
- e.** Administer propranolol (Inderal), a  $\beta$ -blocker, as prescribed; propranolol

decreases renin release (renin causes vasoconstriction and subsequent hypertension).

## 8. Hypervolemia

- a. Monitor vital signs for an elevated blood pressure.
- b. Monitor intake and output and daily weight for indications of fluid retention. ▲
- c. Monitor for periorbital, sacral, and peripheral edema.
- d. Monitor the serum electrolyte levels.
- e. Monitor for hypertension and notify the health care provider for sustained elevations.
- f. Monitor for signs of HF and pulmonary edema, such as restlessness, heightened anxiety, tachycardia, dyspnea, basilar lung crackles, and blood-tinged sputum; notify the HCP immediately if signs occur. ▲
- g. Maintain fluid restriction.
- h. Avoid the administration of large amounts of IV fluids.
- i. Administer diuretics such as furosemide (Lasix) as prescribed.
- j. Teach the client to maintain a low-sodium diet.
- k. Teach the client to avoid antacids, cold remedies, or other products containing sodium bicarbonate.

## 9. Hypocalcemia

- a. Results from a high phosphorus level and the inability of the diseased kidney to activate vitamin D
- b. The absence of vitamin D causes poor calcium absorption from the intestinal

tract.

- c. Monitor the serum calcium level.
- d. Administer calcium supplements as prescribed.
- e. Administer activated vitamin D as prescribed.
- f. See [Chapter 9](#) for a listing of foods that are high in calcium.

## 10. Hypovolemia

- a. Monitor the vital signs for hypotension and tachycardia. ▲
- b. Monitor for decreasing intake and output and a reduction in the daily weight.
- c. Monitor for dehydration.
- d. Monitor electrolyte levels. ▲
- e. Provide replacement therapy based on the serum electrolyte level values.
- f. Provide sodium supplements as prescribed, based on the serum electrolyte level.

## 11. Infection

- a. The client is at risk for infection caused by a suppressed immune system, dialysis access site, and possible malnutrition.
- b. Monitor for signs of infection.
- c. Avoid urinary catheters when possible; if used, provide catheter care. ▲
- d. Provide strict asepsis during urinary catheter insertion and other invasive procedures.
- e. Instruct the client to avoid fatigue, which decreases body resistance.
- f. Instruct the client to avoid persons with infections.

**g.** Administer antibiotics as prescribed, monitoring for nephrotoxic effects.

## **12. Metabolic acidosis**

- a.** The kidneys are unable to excrete hydrogen ions or manufacture bicarbonate, resulting in acidosis.
- b.** Administer alkalizers such as sodium bicarbonate as prescribed.
- c.** Note that clients with CKD adjust to low bicarbonate levels and as a result do not become acutely ill.

## **13. Muscle cramps**

- a.** Occur from electrolyte imbalances and the effects of uremia on peripheral nerves
- b.** Monitor serum electrolyte levels.
- c.** Administer electrolyte replacements and medications to control muscle cramps as prescribed.
- d.** Administer heat and massage as prescribed.

## **14. Neurological changes**

- a.** The buildup of active particles and fluids causes changes in the brain cells and leads to confusion and impairment in decision-making ability.
- b.** Peripheral neuropathy results from the effects of uremia on peripheral nerves.
-  **c.** Monitor the level of consciousness and for confusion.
- d.** Monitor for restless leg syndrome, which is also common during dialysis treatments.
- e.** Teach the client to examine areas of decreased sensation for signs of injury.

## 15. Ocular irritation

- a. Calcium deposits in the conjunctivae cause burning and watering of the eyes.
- b. Administer medications to control the calcium and phosphate levels as prescribed.
- c. Administer lubricating eye drops.
- d. Protect the client from injury. 🟩
- e. Provide a safe and hazard-free environment.
- f. Use side rails as needed (per agency policy).

## 16. Potential for injury

- a. The client is at risk for fractures caused by alterations in the absorption of calcium, excretion of phosphate, and vitamin D metabolism.
- b. Provide for a safe environment.
- c. Avoid injury; tissue breakdown causes increased serum potassium levels.

## 17. Pruritus

- a. To rid the body of excess wastes, urate crystals are excreted through the skin, causing pruritus.
- b. The deposit of urate crystals (uremic frost) occurs in advanced stages of kidney disease.
- c. Monitor for skin breakdown, rash, and uremic frost.
- d. Provide meticulous skin care and oral hygiene.
- e. Avoid the use of soaps.
- f. Administer antihistamines and antipruritics as prescribed to relieve itching.

g. Teach the client to keep the nails trimmed to prevent local infection from scratching.

## 18. Psychosocial problems ▲

a. Listen to the client's concerns to determine how the client is handling the situation.

b. Allow the client time to mourn the loss of kidney function.

c. With client permission, include the family members in discussions of the client's concerns.

d. Provide education about treatment options and support their decision.

e. Offer information about support groups.

f. Provide end-of-life care for the client with end-stage kidney disease. ▲

## V. Uremic Syndrome

### A. Description

1. Accumulation of nitrogenous waste products in the blood caused by the kidneys' inability to filter out these waste products.

2. Uremic syndrome may occur as a result of AKI or CKD.

### B. Assessment

1. Oliguria

2. Presence of protein, red blood cells, and casts in the urine

3. Elevated levels of urea, uric acid, potassium, and magnesium in the urine

4. Hypotension or hypertension

5. Alterations in the level of consciousness

6. Electrolyte imbalances

7. Stomatitis

8. Nausea or vomiting

9. Diarrhea or constipation

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs for hypertension, tachycardia, and an irregular heart rate.

2. Monitor serum electrolyte levels.

3. Monitor intake and output and for oliguria.

4. Provide a limited but high-quality protein diet as prescribed.

5. Provide a limited sodium, nitrogen, potassium, and phosphate diet as prescribed.

6. Assist the client to cope with body image disturbances caused by uremic syndrome. ▲

## VI. Hemodialysis

### A. Description ▲

1. Hemodialysis is the process of cleansing the client's blood.

2. It involves the diffusion of dissolved particles from one fluid compartment into another across a semipermeable membrane; the client's blood flows through one fluid compartment of a dialysis filter, and the dialysate is in another fluid compartment.

### B. Functions of hemodialysis

1. Cleanses the blood of accumulated waste products
2. Removes the by-products of protein metabolism such as urea, creatinine, and uric acid from the blood
3. Removes excess body fluids
4. Maintains or restores the buffer system of the body
5. Corrects electrolyte levels in the body

### C. Principles of hemodialysis

1. The semipermeable membrane is made of a thin, porous cellophane.
2. The pore size of the membrane allows small particles to pass through, such as urea, creatinine, uric acid, and water molecules.
3. Proteins, bacteria, and some blood cells are too large to pass through the membrane. 🟩
4. The client's blood flows into the dialyzer; the movement of substances occurs from the blood to the dialysate by the principles of osmosis, diffusion, and ultrafiltration.
5. Diffusion is the movement of particles from an area of higher concentration to one of lower concentration.
6. Osmosis is the movement of fluids across a semipermeable membrane from an area of lower concentration of particles to an area of higher concentration of particles.
7. Ultrafiltration is the movement of fluid across a semipermeable membrane as a result of an artificially created pressure gradient.

## D. Dialysate bath

1. A dialysate bath is composed of water and major electrolytes.
2. The dialysate need not be sterile because bacteria and viruses are too large to pass through the pores of the semipermeable membrane; however, the dialysate must meet specific standards, and water is treated to ensure a safe water supply.



## E. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs before, during, and after dialysis; the client's temperature may elevate because of slight warming of the blood from the dialysis machine (notify the HCP about excessive temperature elevations because this could indicate sepsis; obtain samples for blood culture as prescribed for excessive temperature elevations).
2. Monitor laboratory values before, during, and after dialysis.
3. Assess the client for fluid overload before dialysis and fluid volume deficit following dialysis.
4. Weigh the client before and after dialysis to determine fluid loss.
5. Assess the patency of the blood access device before, during, and after dialysis.
6. Monitor for bleeding; heparin is added to the dialysis bath to prevent clots from forming in the dialyzer or the blood tubing.
7. Monitor for hypovolemia and shock during dialysis, which can occur from blood loss or excess fluid and electrolyte removal.
8. Provide adequate nutrition; the client may eat before or during dialysis.
9. Identify the client's reactions to the treatment and support coping mechanisms;

encourage independence and involvement in care.

**⚠** Withhold antihypertensives and other medications that can affect the blood pressure or result in hypotension until after hemodialysis treatment. Also withhold medications that could be removed by dialysis, such as water-soluble vitamins, certain antibiotics, and digoxin (Lanoxin).

## **VII. Access for Hemodialysis**

### **A. Subclavian and femoral catheter**

#### **1. Description**

- a.** A subclavian (subclavian vein) or femoral (femoral vein) catheter may be inserted for short-term or temporary use in AKI.
- b.** The catheter is used until a fistula or graft matures or develops, which is typically 6 weeks, or may be required when the client's fistula or graft access has failed because of infection or clotting.

#### **2. Interventions**

- a.** Assess insertion site for hematoma, bleeding, catheter dislodgement, and infection.
- b.** These catheters should only be used for dialysis treatments. 
- c.** Maintain an occlusive dressing over the catheter insertion site.

#### **3. Subclavian vein catheter**

- a.** The catheter is usually filled with heparin and capped to maintain patency between dialysis treatments.
- b.** The catheter should not be uncapped except for dialysis treatments.

c. The catheter may be left in place for up to 6 weeks if no complications occur.

#### 4. Femoral vein catheter

a. Assess the extremity for circulation, temperature, and pulses. ▲

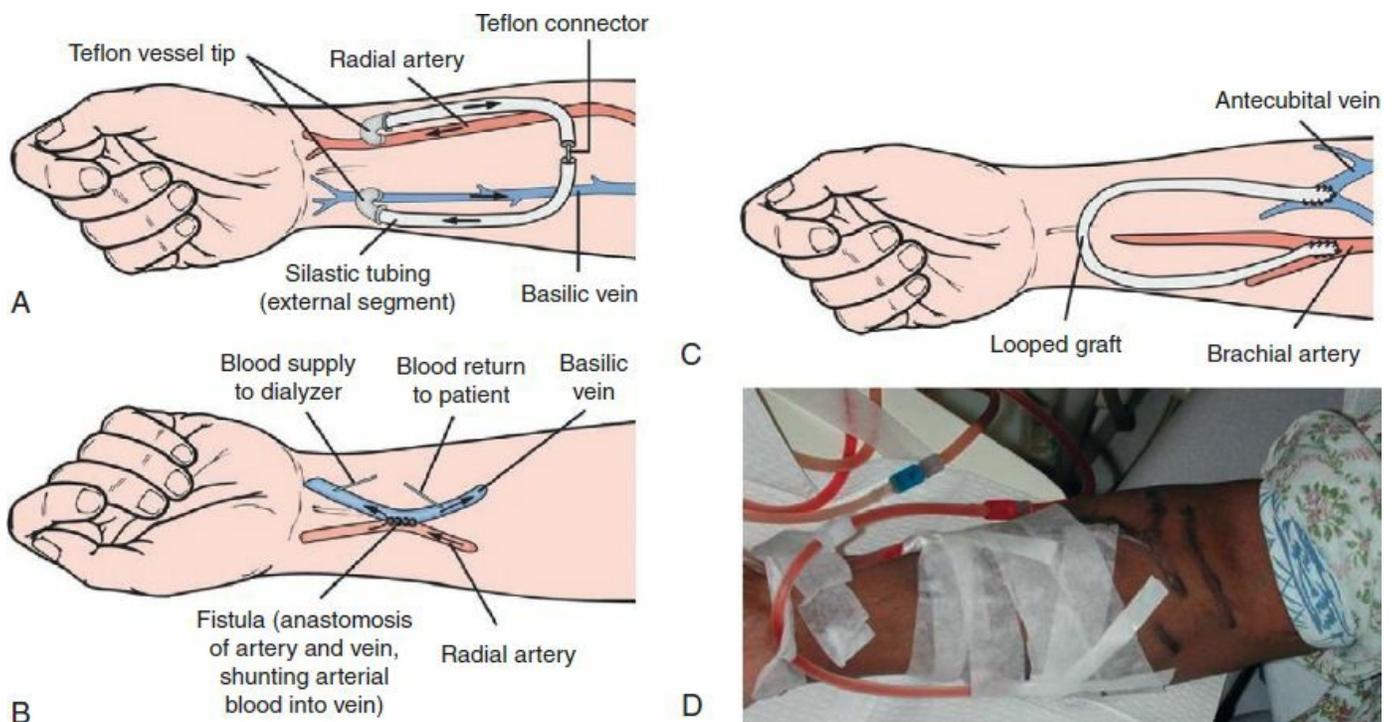
b. Prevent pulling or disconnecting of the catheter when giving care. ▲

c. Because the groin is not a clean site, meticulous perineal care is required.

d. Use an IV infusion pump or controller with microdrip tubing if a heparin infusion through the catheter to maintain patency is prescribed.

⚠ The client with a femoral vein catheter should not sit up more than 45 degrees or lean forward, because the catheter may kink and occlude.

#### B. External arteriovenous shunt (Fig. 62-2)



**FIGURE 62-2** Vascular access for hemodialysis. **A**, External shunt. **B**, Internal arteriovenous fistula. **C**, Internal arteriovenous graft. **D**, A hemodialysis graft while

connected to a hemodialysis machine. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

### 1. Description

- a. Two Silastic cannulas are surgically inserted into an artery and vein in the forearm or leg to form an external blood path.
- b. The cannulas are connected to form a U shape; blood flows from the client's artery through the shunt into the vein.
- c. A tube leading to the membrane compartment of the dialyzer is connected to the arterial cannula.
- d. Blood fills the membrane compartment, passes through the dialyzer, and is returned back to the client through a tube connected to the venous cannula.
- e. When dialysis is complete, the cannulas are clamped and reattached, reforming the U shape.

### 2. Advantages

- a. The external arteriovenous shunt can be used immediately following its creation.
- b. No venipuncture is necessary for dialysis.

### 3. Disadvantages

- a. Disconnection or dislodgment of the external shunt
- b. Risk of hemorrhage, infection, or clotting
- c. Potential for skin erosion around the catheter site

#### 4. Interventions ▲

- a. Avoid getting the shunt wet.
- b. Wrap a dressing completely around the shunt and keep it dry and intact.
- c. Keep cannula clamps at the client's bedside or attached to the arteriovenous dressing for use in case of accidental disconnection.
- d. Teach the client that the shunt extremity should not be used for monitoring BP, drawing blood, placing IV lines, or administering injections.
- e. Fold back the dressing to expose the shunt tubing and assess for signs of hemorrhage, infection, or clotting.
- f. Monitor skin integrity around the insertion site.
- g. Auscultate for a bruit and palpate for a thrill, although a bruit may not be heard with the shunt.
- h. Notify the HCP immediately if signs of clotting, hemorrhage, or infection occur.

#### 5. Signs of clotting ▲

- a. Fibrin: White flecks in the tubing
- b. Separation of serum and cells
- c. Absence of a previously heard bruit; thrill absent on palpation
- d. Coolness of the tubing or extremity
- e. Tingling sensation at site or in extremity

### C. Internal **arteriovenous fistula** (see [Fig. 62-2](#))

#### 1. Description

- a. A permanent access of choice for the client with CKD requiring dialysis.

- b.** The fistula is created surgically by anastomosis of a large artery and large vein in the arm.
- c.** The flow of arterial blood into the venous system causes the vein to become engorged (matured or developed).
- d.** Maturity takes about 4 to 6 weeks, depending on the client's ability to do hand-flexing exercises such as ball squeezing, which help the fistula mature.
- e.** The fistula is required to be mature before it can be used because the engorged vein is punctured with a large-bore needle for the dialysis procedure.
- f.** Subclavian or femoral catheters, peritoneal dialysis, or an external arteriovenous shunt can be used for dialysis while the fistula is maturing or developing.

## **2. Advantages**

- a.** Because the fistula is internal, the risk of clotting and bleeding is low.
- b.** The fistula can be used indefinitely.
- c.** The fistula has a decreased incidence of infection because it is internal and is not exposed.
- d.** Once healing has occurred, no external dressing is required.
- e.** The fistula allows freedom of movement.

## **3. Disadvantages**

- a.** The fistula cannot be used immediately after insertion, so planning ahead for an alternative access for dialysis is important.
- b.** Needle insertions through the skin and tissues to the fistula are required for

dialysis.

- c. Infiltration of the needles during dialysis can occur and cause hematomas.
- d. An aneurysm can form in the fistula.
- e. Heart failure can occur from the increased blood flow in the venous system.

 **Arterial steal syndrome can develop in a client with an internal arteriovenous fistula. In this complication, too much blood is diverted to the vein, and arterial perfusion to the hand is compromised.**

#### **D. Internal arteriovenous graft (see [Fig. 62-2](#))**

##### **1. Description**

- a. The internal graft may be used for chronic dialysis clients who do not have adequate blood vessels for the creation of a fistula.
- b. An artificial graft made of Gore-Tex or a bovine (cow) carotid artery is used to create an artificial vein for blood flow.
- c. The procedure involves the anastomosis of an artery to a vein, using an artificial graft.
- d. The graft can be used 2 weeks after insertion.
- e. Complications of the graft include clotting, aneurysms, and infection.

##### **2. Advantages**

- a. Because the graft is internal, the risk of clotting and bleeding is low.

- b. The graft can be used indefinitely.
- c. The graft has a decreased incidence of infection.
- d. Once healing has occurred, no external dressing is required.
- e. The graft allows freedom of movement.

### 3. Disadvantages

- a. The graft cannot be used immediately after insertion.
- b. Needle insertions through the skin and tissues to the graft are required for dialysis.
- c. Infiltration of the needles during dialysis can occur and cause hematomas.
- d. An aneurysm can form in the graft; in addition, grafts clot more frequently than arteriovenous fistulas.
- e. **Arterial steal syndrome** can develop (too much blood is diverted to the vein, and arterial perfusion to the hand is compromised). ▲
- f. Heart failure can occur from the increased blood flow in the venous system.

### E. Interventions for an arteriovenous fistula and arteriovenous graft ▲

1. Teach the client that the extremity should not be used for monitoring blood pressure, drawing blood, placing IV lines, or administering injections.
2. Teach the client with an arteriovenous fistula to perform hand-flexing exercises such as ball squeezing (if prescribed) to promote graft maturity.
3. Note the temperature and capillary refill of the extremity.
4. Palpate pulses below the fistula or graft, and monitor for hand swelling as an indication of ischemia.

5. Monitor for clotting.
  - a. Complaints of tingling or discomfort in the extremity
  - b. Inability to palpate a thrill or auscultate a bruit over the fistula or graft
6. Monitor for arterial steal syndrome.
7. Monitor for infection.
8. Monitor lung and heart sounds for signs of heart failure.
9. Notify the HCP immediately if signs of clotting, infection, or arterial steal syndrome occur.

 To ensure patency, palpate for a thrill or auscultate for a bruit over the fistula or graft. Notify the HCP if a thrill or bruit is absent.

## VIII. Complications of Hemodialysis (Box 62-7)

### **BOX 62-7**      Complications of Hemodialysis

- Air embolus
- Disequilibrium syndrome
- Electrolyte alterations
- Encephalopathy
- Hemorrhage
- Hepatitis
- Hypotension
- Sepsis
- Shock

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## A. Air embolus

### 1. Description

- a. Introduction of air into the circulatory system
- b. Results in cardiopulmonary complications

### 2. Assessment

- a. Dyspnea and tachypnea
- b. Chest pain
- c. Hypotension
- d. Reduced oxygen saturation
- e. Cyanosis
- f. Anxiety
- g. Changes in sensorium

### 3. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take if a Client Receiving Hemodialysis Develops an Air Embolism

1. Stop the hemodialysis.
2. Turn the client on the left side, with the head down (Trendelenburg's).
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Administer oxygen.

5. Assess vital signs and pulse oximetry.
6. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

Air embolism occurs when air enters the catheter system and is a complication of hemodialysis. The signs of air embolism include dyspnea, tachypnea, chest pain, hypotension, reduced oxygen saturation, cyanosis, anxiety, and changes in sensorium. Air embolism is a critical situation and if it is suspected, hemodialysis is stopped immediately and the client should be placed in a left side-lying position with the head lower than the feet. This position is used to try to prevent the air from traveling as a bolus to the lungs by trapping it in the right side of the heart. The HCP is notified immediately and oxygen is administered. Vital signs are assessed including pulse oximetry, and other prescribed interventions are done. The event, actions taken, and the client's response are documented.

### ***References***

Baird M, Bethel S: *Manual of critical care nursing: Nursing interventions and collaborative management*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby, p. 95; Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, p. 231.

## **B. Disequilibrium syndrome**

### **1. Description**

- a. A rapid change in the composition of the extracellular fluid occurs during hemodialysis.
- b. Solutes are removed from the blood faster than from the cerebrospinal fluid and brain; fluid is pulled into the brain, causing cerebral edema.
- c. Occurs more frequently in a new client during the initial onset of hemodialysis.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Nausea and vomiting
- b. Headache
- c. Hypertension
- d. Restlessness and agitation
- e. Muscle cramps
- f. Confusion
- g. Seizures

## 3. Interventions

- a. Slow or stop the dialysis.
- b. Notify the HCP if signs of disequilibrium syndrome occur. 
- c. Reduce environmental stimuli.
- d. Prepare to administer intravenous hypertonic saline solution, albumin, or mannitol if prescribed.
- e. Prepare to dialyze the client for a shorter period of time at reduced flow rates to prevent its occurrence.

## C. Dialysis encephalopathy

1. Description: An aluminum toxicity from dialysate water sources containing aluminum; also can occur from ingestion of aluminum-containing antacids (phosphate binders). This is not a common occurrence.

2. Assessment

a. Progressive neurological impairment

b. Mental cloudiness

c. Speech disturbances

d. Dementia

e. Muscle incoordination

f. Bone pain

g. Seizures

3. Interventions

a. Monitor for the signs of dialysis encephalopathy.

b. Notify the HCP if signs of dialysis encephalopathy occur. ▲

c. Administer aluminum-chelating agents as prescribed so that the aluminum is released and dialyzed from the body.

## IX. Peritoneal Dialysis

### A. Description

1. The peritoneum acts as the dialyzing membrane (semipermeable membrane) to achieve dialysis.

2. Peritoneal dialysis (PD) works on the principles of osmosis, diffusion, and ultrafiltration; PD occurs via the transfer of fluid and solute from the bloodstream

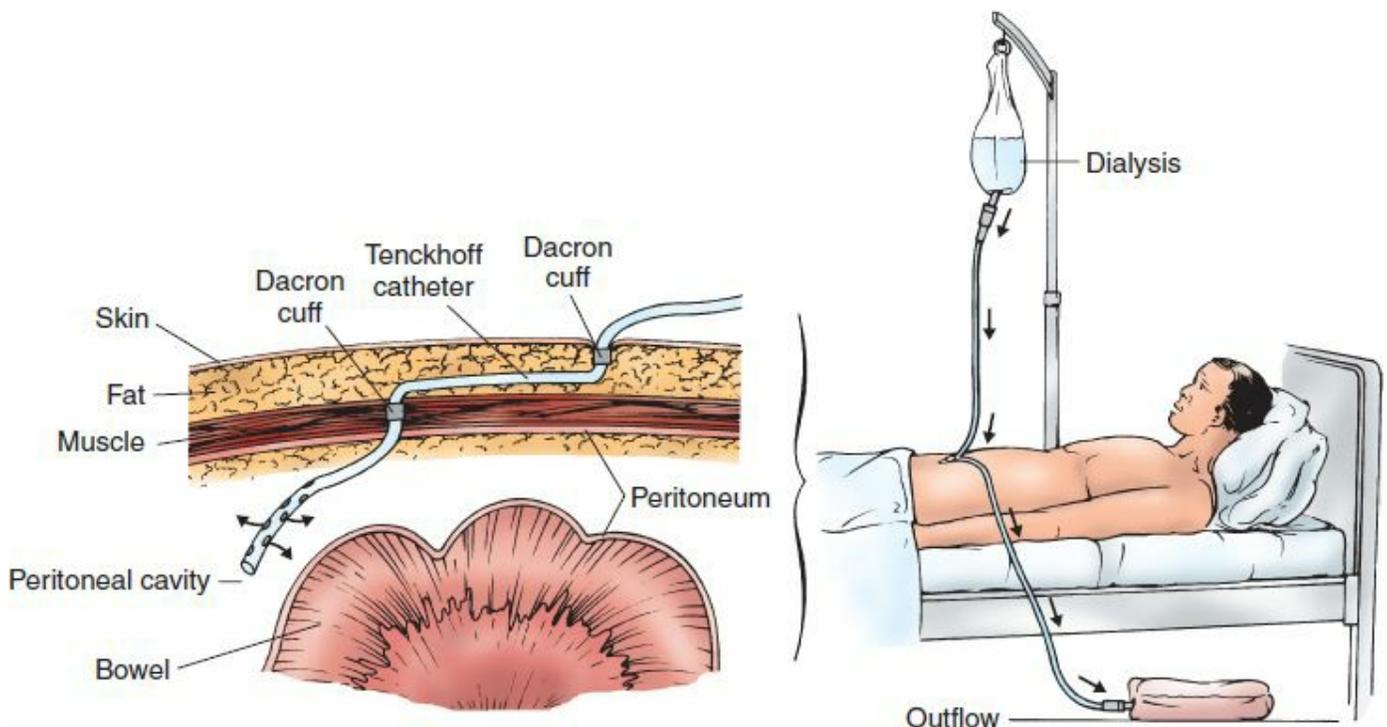
through the peritoneum into the dialysate solution.

3. The peritoneal membrane is large and porous, allowing solutes and fluid to move via osmosis from an area of higher concentration in the body to an area of lower concentration in the dialyzing fluid.
4. The peritoneal cavity is rich in capillaries; therefore it provides a ready access to the blood supply.

## B. Contraindications to peritoneal dialysis

1. Peritonitis
2. Recent abdominal surgery
3. Abdominal adhesions
4. Other gastrointestinal problems such as diverticulosis

## C. Access for peritoneal dialysis (Fig. 62-3)



**FIGURE 62-3** Manual peritoneal dialysis via an implanted abdominal catheter (Tenckhoff catheter). (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

1. A siliconized rubber catheter such as a Tenckhoff catheter is surgically inserted into the client's peritoneal cavity to allow infusion of dialysis fluid.
2. The preferred insertion site is 3 to 5 cm below the umbilicus; this area is relatively avascular and has less fascial resistance.
3. The catheter is tunneled under the skin, through the fat and muscle tissue to the peritoneum; it is stabilized with inflatable Dacron cuffs in the muscle and under the skin.
4. Over a period of 1 to 2 weeks following insertion, fibroblasts and blood vessels grow around the cuffs, fixing the catheter in place and providing an extra barrier against dialysate leakage and bacterial invasion.
5. If the client is scheduled for transplant surgery, the peritoneal dialysis catheter may either be removed or left in place if the need for dialysis is suspected posttransplantation.

#### **D. Dialysate solution**

1. The solution is sterile.
2. All dialysis solutions are prescribed by the HCP; the solution contains electrolytes and minerals and has a specific osmolarity, specific glucose concentration, and other medication additives as prescribed. ▲
3. The higher the glucose concentration, the greater the hypertonicity and the amount

of fluid removed during a peritoneal dialysis exchange. ▲

4. Increasing the glucose concentration increases the concentration of active particles that cause osmosis, increases the rate of ultrafiltration, and increases the amount of fluid removed.
5. If hyperkalemia is not a problem, potassium may be added to each bag of dialysate solution.
6. Heparin is added to the dialysate solution to prevent clotting of the catheter.
7. Prophylactic antibiotics may be added to the dialysate solution to prevent peritonitis.
8. Insulin may be added to the dialysate solution for the client with diabetes mellitus.

#### E. Peritoneal dialysis infusion ▲

##### 1. Description

- a. One infusion (fill), dwell, and drain is considered one exchange.
- b. Fill: 1 to 2 L of dialysate as prescribed is infused by gravity into the peritoneal space, which usually takes 10 to 20 minutes.
- c. Dwell time: The amount of time that the dialysate solution remains in the peritoneal cavity is prescribed by the HCP and can last 20 to 30 minutes to 8 or more hours, depending on the type of dialysis used.
- d. Drain (outflow): Fluid drains out of body by gravity into the drainage bag.

##### 2. Interventions before treatment ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Obtain weight.

- c. Have the client void, if possible.
- d. Assess electrolyte and glucose levels.

### 3. Interventions during treatment ▲

- a. Monitor vital signs.
- b. Monitor for respiratory distress, pain, or discomfort.
- c. Monitor for signs of pulmonary edema.
- d. Monitor for hypotension and hypertension.
- e. Monitor for malaise, nausea, vomiting.
- f. Assess the catheter site dressing for wetness or bleeding.
- g. Monitor dwell time as prescribed by the HCP.
- h. Do not allow dwell time to extend beyond the HCP's prescription because this increases the risk for hyperglycemia. ▲
- i. Initiate outflow; turn the client from side to side if the outflow is slow to start.
- j. Monitor outflow, which should be a continuous stream after the clamp is opened.
- k. Monitor outflow for color and clarity.
- l. Monitor intake and output accurately; if outflow is less than inflow, the difference is equal to the amount absorbed or retained by the client during dialysis and should be counted as intake.
- m. An outflow greater than inflow should be reported to the HCP as well as the appearance of frank blood or cloudiness in the outflow.

## F. Types of peritoneal dialysis

1. Continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) ▲
  - a. Closely resembles renal function because it is a continuous process
  - b. Does not require a machine for the procedure
  - c. Promotes client independence
  - d. The client performs self-dialysis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - e. Four dialysis cycles are usually administered in a 24-hour period, including an overnight 8-hour dwell time.
  - f. Dialysate, 1 1/2 to 2 L, is instilled into the abdomen four times daily and allowed to dwell as prescribed.
  - g. After dwell, the bag is placed lower than the insertion site so that fluid drains by gravity flow.
  - h. After fluid is drained, the bag is changed, new dialysate is instilled into the abdomen, and the process continues.
  - i. Between exchanges, the catheter is clamped.
2. Automated peritoneal dialysis (Box 62-8)

### **BOX 62-8**      Types of Automated Peritoneal Dialysis

#### **Continuous Cycling Peritoneal Dialysis**

Dialysis requires a peritoneal cycling machine.

Dialysis usually consists of three cycles done at night and one cycle with an 8-hour dwell done in the morning.

The sterile catheter system is opened only for the on-and-off procedures, which

reduces the risk of infection.

The client does not need to do exchanges during the day.

### **Intermittent Peritoneal Dialysis**

Dialysis requires a peritoneal cycling machine.

Dialysis is not a continuous procedure.

Dialysis is performed for 10 to 14 hours, three or four times a week.

### **Nightly Peritoneal Dialysis**

Dialysis requires a cycling machine.

Dialysis is performed 8 to 12 hours each night, with no daytime exchanges or dwells.

- a. Automated dialysis requires a peritoneal cycling machine.
- b. Automated dialysis can be done as intermittent peritoneal dialysis, continuous cycling peritoneal dialysis, or nightly peritoneal dialysis.
- c. The exchanges are automated instead of manual.

## **X. Complications of Peritoneal Dialysis (Box 62-9)**

### **BOX 62-9      Complications of Peritoneal Dialysis**

- Abdominal pain
- Bladder or bowel perforation
- Insufficient outflow
- Leakage around the catheter site

## ■ Peritonitis

 Infection is a concern with peritoneal dialysis; sites of infection are either the catheter insertion site or the peritoneum, causing peritonitis.

### A. Peritonitis

1. Monitor for signs/symptoms of peritonitis: Fever, cloudy outflow, rebound abdominal tenderness, abdominal pain, general malaise, nausea, and vomiting.
2. Cloudy or opaque outflow is an early sign of peritonitis.
3. If peritonitis is suspected, obtain a sample for culture and sensitivity of the outflow to determine the infective organism.
4. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.
5. Avoid infections by maintaining meticulous sterile technique when connecting and disconnecting PD solution bags and when caring for the catheter insertion site.
6. Prevent the catheter insertion site dressing from becoming wet during care of the client or the dialysis procedure; change the dressing if wet or soiled.
7. Follow institutional procedure for connecting and disconnecting PD solution bags, which may include scrubbing the connection sites with an antiseptic solution.

### B. Abdominal pain

1. Peritoneal irritation during inflow commonly causes pain during the first few exchanges; the pain usually disappears after 1 to 2 weeks of dialysis treatments.
2. Warm the dialysate before administration, using a special dialysate warmer pad,

because the cold temperature of the dialysate can cause discomfort. ▲

**C. Abnormal outflow characteristics indicative of complications** ▲

1. Bloody outflow after the first few exchanges indicates vascular complications (the outflow should be clear after the initial exchanges).
2. Brown outflow indicates bowel perforation.
3. Urine-colored outflow indicates bladder perforation.
4. Cloudy outflow indicates peritonitis.

**D. Insufficient outflow**

1. The main cause of insufficient outflow is a full colon; encourage a high-fiber diet, because constipation can cause inflow and outflow problems. Administer stool softeners as prescribed.
2. Insufficient outflow may also be caused by catheter migration out of the peritoneal area; if this occurs, an x-ray will be prescribed to evaluate catheter position.
3. Maintain the drainage bag below the client's abdomen.
4. Check for kinks in the tubing.
5. Check for fibrin clots in the tubing and milk the tubing to dislodge the clot as prescribed.
6. Change the client's outflow position by turning the client to a side-lying position or ambulating the client. ▲

**E. Leakage around the catheter site**

1. Clear fluid that leaks from the catheter exit site will be noted.
2. It takes 1 to 2 weeks following insertion of the catheter before fibroblasts and

blood vessels grow into the catheter cuffs, which fix it in place and provide an extra barrier against dialysate leakage and bacterial invasion.

3. Smaller amounts of dialysate need to be used; it may take up to 2 weeks for the client to tolerate a full 2-L exchange without leaking around the catheter site. ▲

## **XI. Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy**

- A.** Continuous renal replacement therapy (CRRT) provides continuous ultrafiltration of extracellular fluid and clearance of urinary toxins over a period of 8 to 24 hours; used primarily for clients in acute kidney injury (AKI) or critically ill clients with CKD who cannot tolerate hemodialysis.
- B.** Water, electrolytes, and other solutes are removed as the client's blood passes through a hemofilter.
- C.** Because rapid shifts in fluids and electrolytes typically do not occur, hemofiltration is usually better tolerated by critically ill clients.
- D.** There are five variations of CRRT (**Box 62-10**), some requiring a hemodialysis machine and others that rely on the client's blood pressure to power the system.

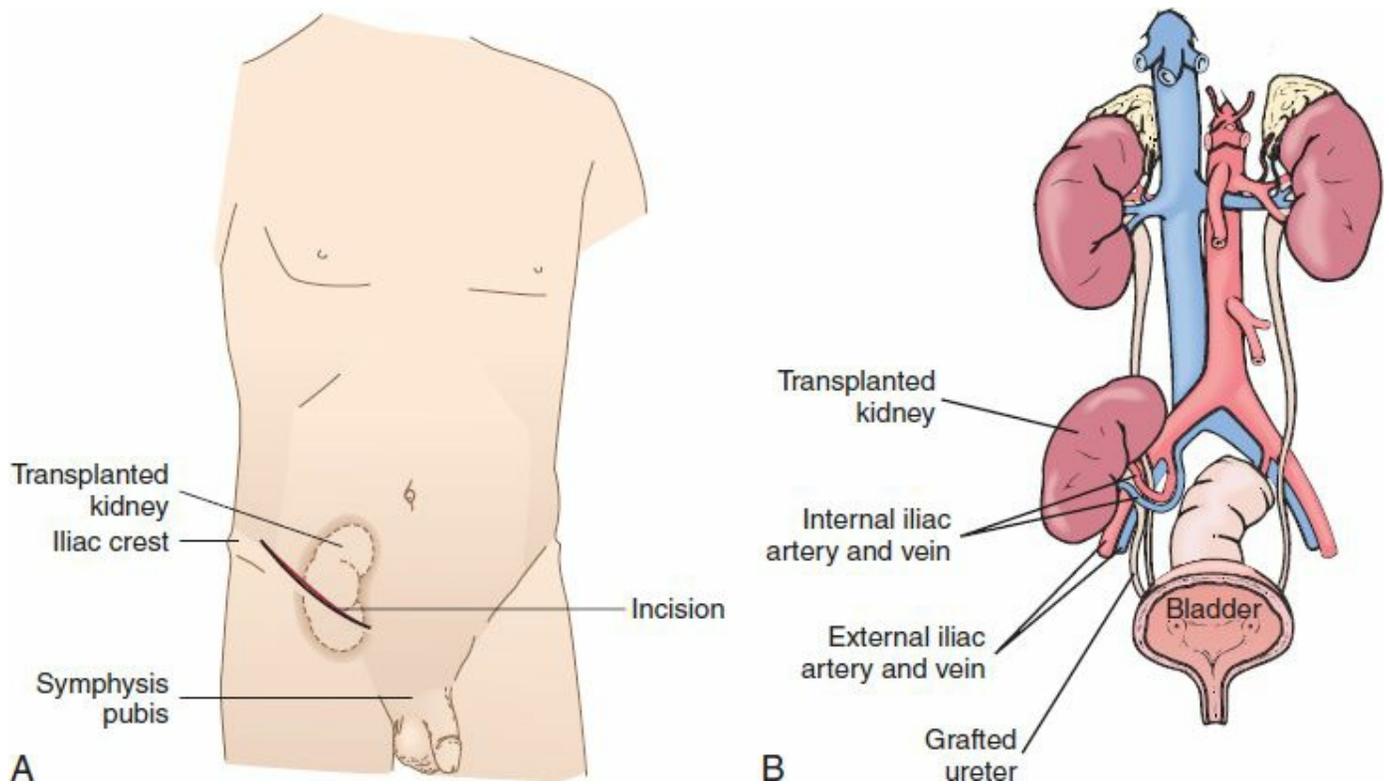
### **BOX 62-10**

#### **Types of Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy**

- Continuous venovenous hemofiltration (CVVH)
- Continuous arteriovenous hemofiltration (CAVH)
- Continuous venovenous hemodialysis (CVVHD)
- Continuous arteriovenous hemodialysis (CAVHD)
- Slow continuous ultrafiltration (SCUF)

E. If CRRT does not require a hemodialysis machine, the client's mean arterial blood pressure needs to be maintained above 60 mm Hg and arterial and venous access sites are necessary.

## XII. Kidney Transplantation (Fig. 62-4)



**FIGURE 62-4** **A**, Surgical incision for renal transplantation. **B**, Surgical placement of transplanted kidney. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

### A. Description

1. A human kidney from a compatible donor is implanted into a recipient.

2. Kidney transplantation is performed for irreversible kidney failure; specific criteria are established for eligibility for a transplant.
3. The recipient must take immunosuppressive medications for life. ▲

#### **B. Living related donors**

1. The most desirable source of kidneys for transplantation is living related donors who closely match the client.
2. Donors are screened for ABO blood group, tissue-specific antigen, human leukocyte antigen suitability, and mixed lymphocyte culture index (histocompatibility); donors are also screened for the presence of any communicable diseases and undergo a complete medical evaluation as well as a nephrology consultation.
3. The donor must be in excellent health, with two properly functioning kidneys.
4. The emotional well-being of the donor is determined.
5. Complete understanding of the donation process and outcome by the donor is necessary.

#### **C. Cadaver donors**

1. Cadaver donors must meet the institution's criteria of brain death.
2. Cadaver donors usually need to be younger than 70 years.
3. Cadaver donors must have normal renal function, although "marginal" donor organs have been used with the consent of the recipient.
4. No malignant disease outside the central nervous system can be present.
5. No generalized infection or communicable disease can be present.

6. No renal trauma can be present.
7. The potential donor must be negative for communicable diseases at the time of donation.
8. Once cerebral death has been established for a potential donor, restoration of intravascular volume, weaning from vasopressors, and establishing diuresis are crucial; management of the donor is determined by organ bank personnel.
9. Continuous ventilation, and normal blood pressure and heart rate, are maintained until the kidneys and other organs are surgically removed.

#### **D. Preoperative interventions**

1. Verify histocompatibility tests of donor, which will be done by organ bank personnel.
2. Administer immunosuppressive medications to the recipient for 2 days before the transplantation, as prescribed. ▲
3. Maintain strict aseptic technique for the recipient. ▲
4. Verify that hemodialysis of the recipient was completed 24 hours before transplantation.
5. Ensure that the recipient is free of any infections.
6. Assess renal function studies.
7. Encourage discussion of feelings of the donor and the recipient.
8. Provide psychological support to the live donor or cadaver donor family and the recipient.

#### **E. Postoperative interventions for the recipient** ▲

- 1.** Urine output usually begins immediately if the donor was a living donor; it may be delayed for a few days or more with a cadaver kidney.
- 2.** Hemodialysis may be performed until adequate kidney function is established.
- 3.** Monitor vital signs, central venous pressure (CVP), and pulse oximetry for signs of complications.
- 4.** Monitor urine output hourly; immediately report a urine output less than 100 mL/hour.
- 5.** Monitor IV fluids closely; for the first 12 to 24 hours, IV fluid replacement is based on hourly urine output.
- 6.** Administer prescribed diuretics and osmotic agents.
- 7.** Monitor daily weight to evaluate fluid status.
- 8.** Monitor daily laboratory results to evaluate renal function, including hematocrit, BUN, and serum creatinine levels, and monitor urine for blood and specific gravity.
- 9.** Position the client in a semi-Fowler's position to promote gas exchange, turning from the back to the nonoperative side.
- 10.** Monitor Foley catheter patency; the Foley catheter remains in the bladder for 3 to 5 days to allow for anastomosis healing.
- 11.** Note that urine is pink and bloody initially but gradually returns to normal within several days to weeks.
- 12.** Notify the HCP if gross hematuria and clots are noted in the urine.
- 13.** Monitor the three-way bladder irrigation, if present, for clots; irrigate only if a

HCP's prescription is present.

14. Remove the Foley catheter as soon as possible to prevent infection.
15. Maintain aseptic technique and monitor for infection; infection is the primary cause of death in the first year posttransplantation.
16. Maintain strict aseptic technique with wound care.
17. Monitor for bowel sounds and for the passage of flatus; initiate a specific diet and oral fluids as prescribed when flatus and bowel sounds return (usually, fluids, sodium, and potassium are restricted if the client is oliguric).
18. Maintain good oral hygiene, monitoring for stomatitis and bacterial and fungal infections.
19. Encourage coughing and deep-breathing exercises.
20. Administer medications as prescribed, which may include antifungal medications, antibiotics, immunosuppressive agents, and corticosteroids.
21. The client is usually ambulated after 24 hours.
22. Assess for organ rejection by monitoring of laboratory values closely.
23. Promote live donor and recipient relationship.
24. Monitor both the donor and recipient for depression.
25. Provide the recipient with instructions following the kidney transplantation ([Box 62-11](#)).

#### **BOX 62-11**

#### **Client Instructions Following Kidney Transplantation**

Avoid prolonged periods of sitting.

Monitor intake and output.

Recognize the signs and symptoms of infection and rejection.

Use medications as prescribed, and maintain immunosuppressive therapy for life.

Avoid contact sports.

Avoid exposure to persons with infections.

Know the signs and symptoms that require the need to contact the health care provider.

Ensure follow-up care.

**26.** Assist the recipient to cope with the body image disturbances that occur from long-term use of immunosuppressants.

**27.** Advise the recipient of available support groups.

## F. Graft rejection

### 1. Assessment ([Box 62-12](#))

#### **BOX 62-12** Clinical Signs of Renal Transplant (Graft) Rejection

- Temperature higher than 100 ° F (37.7 ° C)
- Pain or tenderness over the grafted kidney
- 2- to 3-lb weight gain in 24 hours
- Edema
- Hypertension
- Malaise

- Elevated blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine levels
- Decreased creatinine clearance
- Elevated white blood cell count
- Rejection indicated by ultrasound or biopsy

## 2. Hyperacute rejection

- a. Hyperacute rejection occurs at the time of anastomosis of the organ.
- b. Interventions: Removal of rejected kidney

## 3. Acute rejection

- a. Most common type; occurs most frequently within 6 weeks postoperatively, but can occur any time posttransplantation.
- b. Interventions: Potentially reversible with increased immunosuppression and if treated early; high doses of corticosteroids, or monoclonal antibodies may be prescribed if corticosteroids are ineffective.

## 4. Chronic rejection

- a. Occurs slowly months to years after transplant and mimics CKD.
- b. Interventions: Immunosuppressive medications and retransplantation if necessary.

 Except for identical twin donors and recipients, the major postoperative complication following renal transplant is graft rejection.

## XIII. Cystitis (Urinary Tract Infection)

## A. Description

1. Cystitis (urinary tract infection, UTI) is an inflammation of the bladder from an infection, obstruction of the urethra, or other irritants (Box 62-13).

### BOX 62-13

#### Causes of Cystitis

- Allergens or irritants, such as soaps, sprays, bubble bath, perfumed sanitary napkins
- Bladder distention
- Calculus
- Hormonal changes, influencing alterations in vaginal flora
- Indwelling urinary catheters
- Invasive urinary tract procedures
- Loss of bactericidal properties of prostatic secretions in the male
- Microorganisms
- Poor-fitting vaginal diaphragms
- Sexual intercourse
- Synthetic underwear and pantyhose
- Urinary stasis
- Use of spermicides
- Wet bathing suits

2. The most common causative organisms are *Escherichia coli* and *Enterobacter*,

*Pseudomonas*, and *Serratia* species.

3. Cystitis is more common in women because women have a shorter urethra than men and the urethra in the woman is located close to the rectum.
4. Sexually active and pregnant women are most vulnerable to cystitis.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Frequency and urgency
2. Burning on urination
3. Voiding in small amounts
4. Inability to void
5. Incomplete emptying of the bladder
6. Lower abdominal discomfort or back discomfort
7. Cloudy, dark, foul-smelling urine
8. Hematuria
9. Bladder spasms
10. Malaise, chills, fever
11. Nausea and vomiting
12. WBC count greater than 100,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> on urinalysis
13. An elevated specific gravity and pH may be noted on urinalysis.

 Altered mentation is a sign of a urinary tract infection in older adults; frequency and urgency may not be specific symptoms of UTI because of urinary elimination changes that occur with aging.

## **C. Interventions**

1. Before administering prescribed antibiotics, obtain a urine specimen for culture and sensitivity, if prescribed, to identify bacterial growth.
2. Encourage the client to increase fluids up to 3000 mL/day, especially if the client is taking a sulfonamide; sulfonamides can form crystals in concentrated urine.
3. Administer prescribed medications, which may include analgesics, antiseptics, antispasmodics, antibiotics, and antimicrobials.
4. Maintain an acid urine pH (5.5); instruct the client about foods to consume to maintain acidic urine.
5. Provide heat to the abdomen or sitz baths for complaints of discomfort.
6. Note that if the client is prescribed an aminoglycoside, sulfonamide, or nitrofurantoin (Macrochantin), the actions of these medications are decreased by acidic urine.
7. Use sterile technique when inserting a urinary catheter.
8. Maintain closed urinary drainage systems for the client with an indwelling catheter and avoid elevating the urinary drainage bag above the level of the bladder.
9. Provide meticulous perineal care for the client with an indwelling catheter.
10. Discourage caffeine products such as coffee, tea, and cola.
11. Client education 
  - a. Avoid alcohol.
  - b. Take medications as prescribed.
  - c. Take antibiotics on schedule and complete the entire course of medications as

prescribed, which may be 10 to 14 days.

- d. Repeat the urine culture following treatment.
- e. Prevent recurrence of cystitis (Box 62-14).

### BOX 62-14

### Client Instructions for Prevention of Cystitis

Use good perineal care, wiping front to back.

Avoid bubble baths, tub baths, and vaginal deodorants or sprays.

Void every 2 to 3 hours.

Wear cotton pants and avoid wearing tight clothes or pantyhose with slacks.

Avoid sitting in a wet bathing suit for prolonged periods of time.

If pregnant, void every 2 hours.

If menopausal, use estrogen vaginal creams to restore pH.

Use water-soluble lubricants for intercourse, especially after menopause.

Void and drink a glass of water after intercourse.

## XIV. Urosepsis

### A. Description

1. Urosepsis is a gram-negative bacteremia originating in the urinary tract.
2. The most common causative organism is *Escherichia coli*.
3. In a client who is immunocompromised, the most common cause is infection from an indwelling urinary catheter or an untreated UTI. ▲
4. The major problem is the ability of this bacterium to develop resistant strains.
5. Urosepsis can lead to septic shock if not treated aggressively.

**B. Assessment:** Fever is the most common and earliest manifestation.

**C. Interventions**

1. Obtain a urine specimen for urine culture and sensitivity before administering antibiotics.
2. Administer antibiotics intravenously as prescribed, usually until the client has been afebrile for 3 to 5 days.
3. Administer oral antibiotics as prescribed after the 3- to 5-day afebrile period.

## **XV. Urethritis**

**A. Description**

1. Inflammation of the urethra commonly associated with a sexually transmitted infection; may occur with cystitis.
2. In men, urethritis most often is caused by gonorrhea or chlamydial infection.
3. In women, urethritis most often is caused by feminine hygiene sprays, perfumed toilet paper or sanitary napkins, spermicidal jelly, UTI, or changes in the vaginal mucosal lining.

**B. Assessment**

1. Pain or burning on urination
2. Frequency and urgency
3. Nocturia
4. Difficulty voiding
5. Males may have clear to mucopurulent discharge from the penis.

**6.** Females may have lower abdominal discomfort.

### **C. Interventions**

**1.** Encourage fluid intake.

**2.** Prepare the client for testing to determine whether a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is present.

**3.** Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

**4.** Instruct the client in the administration of sitz or tub baths.

**5.** If stricture occurs, prepare the client for dilation of the urethra and instillation of an antiseptic solution.

**6.** Instruct the female client to avoid the use of perfumed toilet paper or sanitary napkins and feminine hygiene sprays.

**7.** Instruct the client to avoid intercourse until the symptoms subside or treatment of the STI is complete.

**8.** Instruct the client about STIs if this is the cause.

**a.** Prevent STIs by the use of latex condoms or abstinence.

**b.** All sexual partners during the 30 days before diagnosis with chlamydial infection should be notified, examined, and treated if indicated.

**c.** Chlamydial infection often coexists with gonorrhea; diagnostic testing is done for both STIs.

**d.** Treatment for STIs includes antibiotics as prescribed to treat the causative organism.

**e.** The most serious complication of chlamydial infection is sterility.

f. Follow-up culture may be requested in 4 to 7 days to evaluate the effectiveness of medications.

## **XVI. Ureteritis**

**A. Description:** An inflammation of the ureter commonly associated with bacterial or viral infections and pyelonephritis

### **B. Assessment**

1. Dysuria
2. Frequent urination
3. Clear to mucopurulent penile discharge in males

### **C. Interventions**

1. Treatment includes identifying and treating the underlying cause and providing symptomatic relief.
2. Metronidazole (Flagyl) or clotrimazole (Mycelex) may be prescribed for treating *Trichomonas* infection.
3. Nystatin (Mycostatin) or fluconazole (Diflucan) may be prescribed for treating yeast infections.
4. Doxycycline (Vibramycin) or azithromycin (Zithromax) may be prescribed for treating chlamydial infections.

## **XVII. Pyelonephritis**

### **A. Description**

1. An inflammation of the renal pelvis and the parenchyma, commonly caused by

bacterial invasion

2. Acute pyelonephritis often occurs after bacterial contamination of the urethra or following an invasive procedure of the urinary tract.
3. Chronic pyelonephritis most commonly occurs following chronic urinary flow obstruction with reflux.
4. *Escherichia coli* is the most common causative bacterial organism.

## **B. Acute pyelonephritis**

1. Acute pyelonephritis occurs as a new infection or recurs as a relapse of a previous infection.
2. It can progress to bacteremia or chronic pyelonephritis.
3. Assessment
  - a. Fever and chills
  - b. Tachycardia and tachypnea
  - c. Nausea
  - d. Flank pain on the affected side
  - e. Costovertebral angle tenderness
  - f. Headache
  - g. Dysuria
  - h. Frequency and urgency
  - i. Cloudy, bloody, or foul-smelling urine
  - j. Increased white blood cells in the urine

## **C. Chronic pyelonephritis**

1. A slow, progressive disease usually associated with recurrent acute attacks
2. Causes contraction of the kidney and dysfunctioning of the nephrons, which are replaced by scar tissue
3. Causes the ureter to become fibrotic and narrowed by strictures
4. Can lead to acute kidney injury or chronic kidney disease
5. Assessment
  - a. Frequently diagnosed incidentally when a client is being evaluated for hypertension
  - b. Inability to conserve sodium
  - c. Poor urine-concentrating ability
  - d. Pyuria
  - e. Azotemia
  - f. Proteinuria

#### **D. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs, especially for elevated temperature.
2. Encourage fluid intake up to 3000 mL/day to reduce fever and prevent dehydration.
3. Monitor intake and output (ensure that output is a minimum of 1500 mL/24 hour).
4. Monitor weight.
5. Encourage adequate rest.
6. Instruct the client in a high-calorie, low-protein diet.
7. Provide warm, moist compresses to the flank area to help relieve pain.

8. Encourage the client to take warm baths for pain relief.
9. Administer analgesics, antipyretics, antibiotics, urinary antiseptics, and antiemetics as prescribed.
10. Monitor for signs of acute kidney injury or chronic kidney disease
11. Encourage follow-up urine culture.

### **XVIII. Glomerulonephritis** (refer to Chapter 44) ▲

### **XIX. Nephrotic Syndrome** (refer to Chapter 44)

### **XX. Polycystic Kidney Disease**

#### **A. Description**

1. Cyst formation and hypertrophy of the kidneys, which leads to cystic rupture, infection, formation of scar tissue, and damaged nephrons
2. There is no specific treatment to arrest the progress of the destructive cysts.
3. The ultimate result of this disease is chronic kidney disease. ▲

#### **B. Types**

1. Infantile polycystic disease: An inherited autosomal recessive trait that results in the death of the infant within a few months after birth
2. Adult polycystic disease: An autosomal dominant trait that manifests between 30 and 40 years of age and results in end-stage kidney disease

#### **C. Assessment**

1. Often asymptomatic until the age of 30 to 40 years
2. Flank, lumbar, or abdominal pain that worsens with activity and is relieved when

lying down

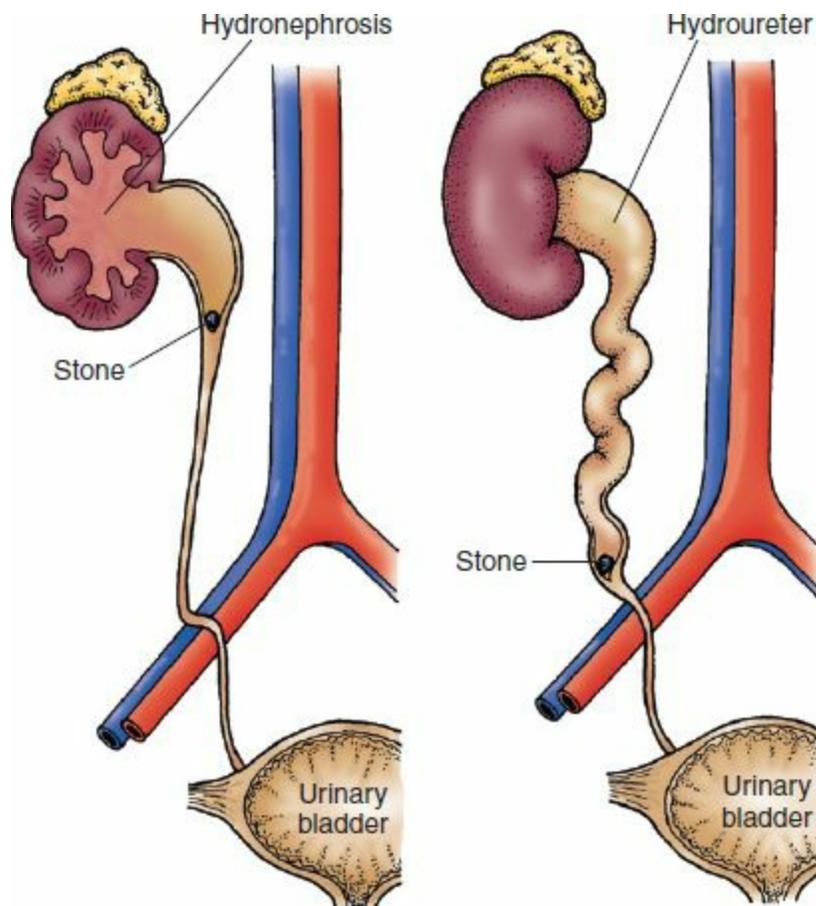
3. Fever and chills
4. Recurrent urinary tract infections
5. Hematuria, proteinuria, pyuria
6. Calculi
7. Hypertension
8. Palpable abdominal masses and enlarged kidneys
9. Increased abdominal girth

**D. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor for gross hematuria, which indicates cyst rupture.
2. Increase sodium and water intake because sodium loss rather than retention occurs.
3. Provide bed rest if ruptured cysts and bleeding occur.
4. Prepare the client for percutaneous cyst puncture for relief of obstruction or for draining an abscess.
5. Administer antihypertensives as prescribed.
6. Prevent and/or treat urinary tract infections.
7. Prepare the client for dialysis or renal transplantation.
8. Encourage the client to seek genetic counseling.
9. Provide psychological support to the client and family.
10. Provide psychosocial support and genetic counseling for family members who may want to donate a kidney.

## XXI. Hydronephrosis

### A. Description (Fig. 62-5)



**FIGURE 62-5** Hydronephrosis and hydroureter. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Distention of the renal pelvis and calices caused by an obstruction of normal urine flow
2. The urine becomes trapped proximal to the obstruction.
3. The causes include calculus, tumors, scar tissue, ureter obstructions, and hypertrophy of the prostate.

## B. Assessment

1. Hypertension
2. Headache
3. Colicky or dull flank pain that radiates to the groin ▲

## C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs frequently.
2. Monitor for fluid and electrolyte imbalances, including dehydration after the obstruction is relieved. ▲
3. Monitor for diuresis, which can lead to fluid depletion.
4. Monitor weight daily.
5. Monitor urine for specific gravity and albumin and glucose levels.
6. Administer fluid replacement as prescribed.
7. Prepare the client for insertion of a nephrostomy tube or a surgical procedure to relieve the obstruction if prescribed.

## XXII. Renal Calculi

### A. Description

1. Calculi are stones that can form anywhere in the urinary tract; however, the most frequent site is the kidneys.
2. Problems resulting from calculi are pain, obstruction, tissue trauma, secondary hemorrhage, and infection.
3. The stone can be located through radiography of the kidneys, ureters, and bladder; intravenous pyelography; CT scanning; and renal ultrasonography.

4. A stone analysis will be done after passage to determine the type of stone and assist in determining treatment.
5. **Urolithiasis** refers to the formation of urinary calculi; these form in the ureters.
6. **Nephrolithiasis** refers to the formation of kidney calculi; these form in the renal parenchyma.
7. When a calculus occludes the ureter and blocks the flow of urine, the ureter dilates, producing hydroureter (see [Fig. 62-5](#)).
8. If the obstruction is not removed, urinary stasis results in infection, impairment of renal function on the side of the blockage, hydronephrosis (see [Fig. 62-5](#)), and irreversible kidney damage.

## **B. Causes**

1. Family history of stone formation
2. Diet high in calcium, vitamin D, protein, oxalate, purines, or alkali
3. Obstruction and urinary stasis
4. Dehydration
5. Use of diuretics, which can cause volume depletion
6. Urinary tract infections and prolonged urinary catheterization
7. Immobilization 
8. Hypercalcemia and hyperparathyroidism
9. Elevated uric acid level, such as in gout

## **C. Assessment**

1. Renal colic, which originates in the lumbar region and radiates around the side

and down to the testicles in men and to the bladder in women ▲

2. Ureteral colic, which radiates toward the genitalia and thighs ▲
3. Sharp, severe pain of sudden onset
4. Dull, aching pain in the kidney
5. Nausea and vomiting, pallor, and diaphoresis during acute pain
6. Urinary frequency, with alternating retention
7. Signs of a urinary tract infection
8. Low-grade fever
9. High numbers of red blood cells, white blood cells, and bacteria noted in the urinalysis report
10. Gross hematuria

#### **D. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs, especially the temperature, for signs of infection.
2. Monitor intake and output.
3. Assess for fever, chills, and infection.
4. Monitor for nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
5. Encourage fluid intake up to 3000 mL/day, unless contraindicated, to facilitate the passage of the stone and prevent infection; monitor for obstruction.
6. Administer fluids intravenously as prescribed if unable to take fluids orally or in adequate amounts to increase the flow of urine and facilitate passage of the stone.
7. Provide warm baths and heat to the flank area (massage therapy should be avoided).

8. Administer analgesics at regularly scheduled intervals as prescribed to relieve pain.
9. Assess the client's response to pain medication.
10. Assist the client in performing relaxation techniques to assist in relieving pain.
11. Encourage client ambulation, if stable, to promote the passage of the stone.
12. Turn and reposition the immobilized client to promote passage of the stone.
13. Instruct the client in the diet restrictions specific to the stone composition if prescribed (Box 62-15).

#### BOX 62-15

#### Nutritional Therapy for Calculi

*Note:* Depending on the type of calculi, the diet is modified to decrease foods that are high in the substance that is the cause of the calculi.

##### Purine\*

- *High:* Sardines, herring, mussels, liver, kidney, goose, venison, meat soups, sweetbreads
- *Moderate:* Chicken, salmon, crab, veal, mutton, bacon, pork, beef, ham

##### Calcium

- *High:* Milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt, sauces containing milk; all beans (except green beans), lentils; fish with fine bones (e.g., sardines, kippers, herring, salmon); dried fruits, nuts; Ovaltine, chocolate, cocoa

##### Oxalate

- **High:** Dark roughage, spinach, rhubarb, asparagus, cabbage, tomatoes, beets, nuts, celery, parsley, runner beans; chocolate, cocoa, instant coffee, Ovaltine, tea; Worcestershire sauce

\*Uric acid is a waste product from purine in food.

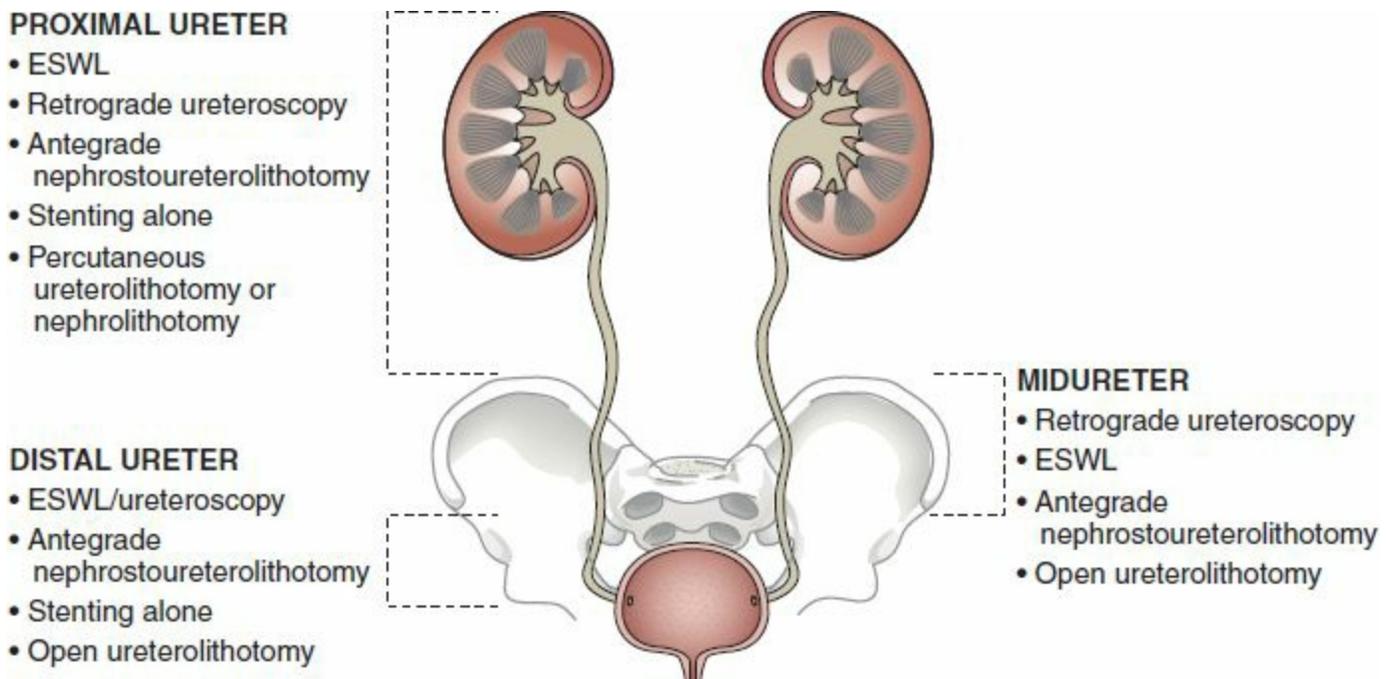
Adapted from Lewis SL, Dirksen SR, Heitkemper MM, Bucher L, Camera IA:

*Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.

14. Prepare the client for surgical procedures if prescribed.

**⚠** For the client with renal calculi, strain all urine for the presence of stones and send the stones to the laboratory for analysis.

### XXIII. Treatment Options for Renal Calculi (Fig. 62-6)



**FIGURE 62-6** Treatment options for ureteral stones. *ESWL*, Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

#### **A. Cystoscopy**

1. Cystoscopy may be done for stones in the bladder or lower ureter.
2. No incision is made.
3. One or two ureteral catheters are inserted past the stone; the stone may be manipulated and dislodged by the procedure and the catheters may guide the stones mechanically downward as they are removed.
4. The catheters are left in place for 24 hours to drain the urine trapped proximal to the stone and to dilate the ureter.
5. A continuous chemical irrigation may be prescribed to dissolve the stone.

#### **B. Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL)**

1. A noninvasive mechanical procedure for breaking up stones located in the kidney or upper ureter so that they can pass spontaneously or be removed by other methods
2. No incision is made and no drains are placed; a stent may be placed to facilitate passing stone fragments.
3. Fluoroscopy is used to visualize the stone and ultrasonic waves are delivered to the area of the stone to disintegrate it.
4. The stones are passed in the urine within a few days.
5. Preprocedure: Maintain the client on NPO status for 8 hours before the procedure.

## 6. Postprocedure

- a. Monitor vital signs, especially for hypotension and tachycardia, which could indicate bleeding or hematoma formation.
- b. Monitor intake and output.
- c. Monitor for bleeding.
- d. Monitor for pain and signs of urinary obstruction.
- e. Instruct the client that if a ureteral stent is placed to help the stone pass, it is usually removed in 1 to 2 weeks.
- f. Instruct the client to increase fluid intake to flush out the stone fragments. ▲
- g. Inform the client that ambulation is important. ▲

## C. Percutaneous lithotripsy

1. Performed for stones in the bladder, ureter, or kidney
2. An invasive procedure in which a guide is inserted under fluoroscopy near the area of the stone; an ultrasonic wave is aimed at the stone to break it into fragments.
3. Percutaneous lithotripsy may be performed via cystoscopy or nephroscopy.
4. No incision is required for cystoscopy; a small flank incision is needed for nephroscopy.
5. The client might have an indwelling bladder catheter.
6. A nephrostomy tube may be placed to administer chemical irrigations to break up the stone; the nephrostomy tube may remain in place for 1 to 5 days.
7. Encourage the client to drink 3000 to 4000 mL of fluid/day as prescribed

following the procedure. ▲

8. Monitor for and instruct the client to monitor for complications of infection, hemorrhage, and extravasation of fluid into the retroperitoneal cavity. ▲

#### **D. Ureterolithotomy**

1. An open surgical procedure performed if lithotripsy is not effective for removal of a stone in the ureter
2. An incision is made through the lower abdomen or flank and then into the ureter to remove the stone.
3. The client may have a Penrose drain, ureteral stent catheter, and/or indwelling bladder catheter.

#### **E. Pyelolithotomy and nephrolithotomy**

1. Pyelolithotomy is an incision into the renal pelvis to remove a stone; a large flank incision is required and the client may have a Penrose drain and indwelling bladder catheter.
2. Nephrolithotomy is an incision into the kidney made to remove a stone; a large flank incision is required, and the client may have a nephrostomy tube and an indwelling bladder catheter.

#### **F. Partial or total nephrectomy**

1. Performed for extensive kidney damage, renal infection, severe obstruction from stones or tumors, and prevention of stone recurrence
2. Postoperative interventions
  - a. The plan of care depends on the incision location and the type of drainage tubes

present.

- b.** Monitor the incision, particularly if a Penrose drain is in place, because it will drain large amounts of urine. ▲
- c.** Protect the skin from urinary drainage, changing dressings frequently if necessary. ▲
- d.** Place an ostomy pouch over the Penrose drain to protect the skin if urinary drainage is excessive.
- e.** Monitor the nephrostomy tube, which may be attached to a drainage bag, for a continuous flow of urine.
- f.** Do not irrigate the nephrostomy or bladder catheters unless specifically prescribed. ▲
- g.** Monitor the indwelling bladder catheter for drainage.
- h.** Encourage fluid intake to ensure a urine output of 2500 to 3000 mL/day or more. ▲
- i.** Measure intake and output accurately.
- j.** If a stone was removed, determine its composition from laboratory analysis.

## **XXIV. Kidney Tumors**

### **A. Description**

- 1.** Kidney tumors may be benign or malignant, bilateral or unilateral.
- 2.** Common sites of metastasis of malignant tumors include bone, lungs, liver, spleen, and the other kidney.
- 3.** The exact cause of renal carcinoma is unknown.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Dull flank pain
2. Palpable renal mass
3. Painless gross hematuria

## **C. Radical nephrectomy**

### **1. Description**

- a. Surgical removal of the entire kidney, adjacent adrenal gland, and renal artery and vein
- b. Radiation therapy and possibly chemotherapy may follow radical nephrectomy.
- c. Before surgery, radiation may be used to embolize (occlude) the arteries supplying the kidney to reduce bleeding during nephrectomy.

### **2. Postoperative interventions**

- a. Monitor vital signs for signs of bleeding (hypotension and tachycardia).
- b. Monitor for abdominal distention, decreases in urinary output, and alterations in level of consciousness as signs of bleeding; check the bed linens under the client for bleeding. ▲
- c. Monitor for signs of adrenal insufficiency, which include a large urinary output followed by hypotension and subsequent oliguria. ▲
- d. Administer fluids and packed red blood cells intravenously as prescribed.
- e. Monitor intake and output and daily weight.
- f. Monitor for a urinary output of 30 to 50 mL/hour to ensure adequate renal function. ▲

- g.** Monitor urine specific gravity.
- h.** Maintain the client in a semi-Fowler's position. ▲
- i.** Monitor for signs of respiratory complications related to surgery; encourage coughing and deep-breathing exercises.
- j.** Monitor for passing of flatus and bowel sounds (lack of flatus and bowel sounds can be indicative of paralytic ileus).
- k.** Apply antiembolism stockings as prescribed.
- l.** If a nephrostomy tube is in place, do not irrigate (unless specifically prescribed) or manipulate the tube. ▲
- m.** Administer pain medications as prescribed.

## **XXV. Epididymitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Acute or chronic inflammation of the epididymis that occurs as a result of a UTI, STI, prostatitis, or long-term use of a bladder catheter
2. The infective organism travels upward through the urethra and ejaculatory duct and along the vas deferens to the epididymis.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Scrotal pain
2. Groin pain
3. Swelling in the scrotum and groin
4. Pus and bacteria in the urine
5. Fever and chills

## 6. Abscess development

### C. Interventions

1. Encourage fluid intake.
2. Encourage bed rest with the scrotum elevated to prevent traction on the spermatic cord, facilitate drainage, and relieve pain.
3. Instruct the client in the intermittent application of cold compresses to the scrotum.
4. Instruct the client in the use of tub or sitz baths.
5. Instruct the client in the administration of antibiotics for self and sexual partner if the cause is chlamydial or gonorrheal infection.
6. Instruct the client to avoid lifting, straining, and sexual contact until the infection subsides.
7. Instruct the client to limit the force of the stream because organisms can be forced into the vas deferens and epididymis from strain or pressure during voiding.
8. Teach the client that condom use can help prevent urethritis and epididymitis.
9. Teach the client measures to prevent UTI or STI recurrence.

## XXVI. Prostatitis

### A. Description

1. Inflammation of the prostate gland commonly caused by an infectious agent; may be acute or chronic.
2. The bacterial type occurs as a result of the organism reaching the prostate via the urethra, bladder, bloodstream, or lymphatic channels.

3. The abacterial type usually occurs following a viral illness or a decrease in sexual activity.

## **B. Assessment**

### **1. Bacterial prostatitis**

- a. Client becomes acutely ill.
- b. Fever and chills
- c. Frequency and urgency of urination; dysuria
- d. Perineal and low back pain
- e. Urethral discharge
- f. Prostate is tender, indurated, and warm to the touch.
- g. Urethral discharge on palpation of prostate
- h. White blood cells are found in prostatic secretions.
- i. Urine culture is usually positive for gram-negative bacteria, especially after prostate massage.

### **2. Abacterial prostatitis (most common form of chronic prostatitis)**

- a. Backache
- b. Dysuria
- c. Perineal pain
- d. Frequency
- e. Hematuria
- f. Irregularly enlarged, firm, and tender prostate

## **C. Interventions**

1. Encourage adequate fluid intake.
2. Instruct the client in the use of tub or sitz baths to promote comfort.
3. Administer antibiotics, analgesics, antispasmodics, and stool softeners as prescribed.
4. Inform the client of activities to drain the prostate, such as intercourse, masturbation, and prostatic massage.
5. Instruct the client to avoid spicy foods, coffee, alcohol, prolonged automobile rides, and sexual intercourse during an acute inflammation.

## **XXVII. Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (Hyperplasia) ▲**

### **A. Description**

1. Benign prostatic hypertrophy (benign prostatic hyperplasia; BPH) is a slow enlargement of the prostate gland, with hypertrophy and hyperplasia of normal tissue.
2. Enlargement compresses the urethra, resulting in partial or complete obstruction.
3. Usually occurs in men older than 50 years

### **B. Assessment**

1. Diminished size and force of urinary stream (early sign of BPH)
2. Urinary urgency and frequency
3. Nocturia
4. Inability to start (hesitancy) or continue a urinary stream
5. Feelings of incomplete bladder emptying
6. Postvoid dribbling from overflow incontinence (later sign)

7. Urinary retention and bladder distention
8. Hematuria
9. Urinary stasis
10. Dysuria and bladder pain
11. UTIs

### C. Interventions

1. Encourage fluid intake of up to 2000 to 3000 mL/day unless contraindicated.
2. Prepare for urinary catheterization to drain the bladder and prevent distention.
3. Avoid administering medications that cause urinary retention, such as anticholinergics, antihistamines, decongestants, and antidepressants. ▲
4. Administer medications as prescribed to shrink the prostate gland and improve urine flow.
5. Administer medications as prescribed to relax prostatic smooth muscle and improve urine flow.
6. Instruct the client to decrease intake of caffeine and artificial sweeteners and limit spicy or acidic foods.
7. Instruct the client to follow a timed voiding schedule.
8. Prepare the client for surgery or invasive procedures as prescribed ([Box 62-16](#); [Figs. 62-7 and 62-8](#)).

#### **BOX 62-16**

#### **Surgical and Invasive Procedures for Prostatic Hyperplasia**

***Laser Prostatectomy:*** Ablation of the enlarged prostate, using laser instead of

radiofrequency waves

***Perineal Prostatectomy:*** Removal of prostatic tissue (may be performed for prostatic cancer) low in the pelvic region through an incision between the scrotum and rectum; impotence and incontinence usually result.

***Retropubic Prostatectomy:*** Removal of hypertrophied prostatic tissue high in the pelvic region through a low abdominal incision; the bladder is not incised.

***Suprapubic Prostatectomy:*** Removal of prostatic tissue mass through a low midline incision; an incision is made into the bladder and urethral mucosa to the anterior aspect of the prostate.

***Transurethral Electrovaporization of the Prostate:*** Placement of a special metal instrument that emits a high-frequency electrical current that cuts and vaporizes excess tissue and seals the remaining tissue to prevent bleeding; this is especially useful for men on anticoagulants and those at risk for complications.

***Transurethral Incision of the Prostate (TUIP):*** Removal of prostatic tissue through an incision made in the bladder neck

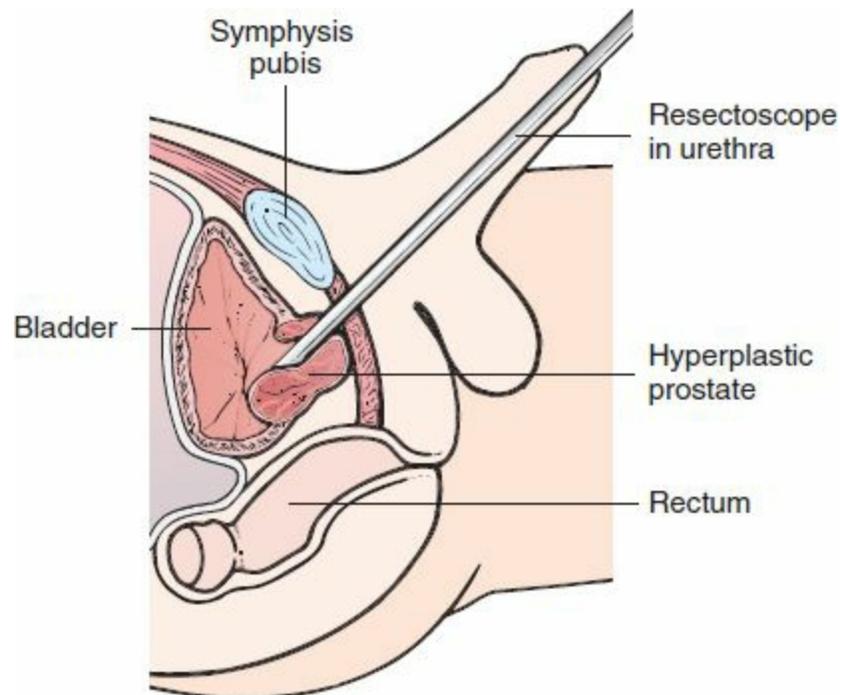
***Transurethral Microwave Thermotherapy:*** Application of heat to destroy the hypertrophied tissue

***Transurethral Needle Ablation of the Prostate (TUNA):*** Placement of interstitial radiofrequency needles through the urethra and into the lateral lobes of the prostate, causing heat-induced coagulation necrosis of the prostate for treating benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH)

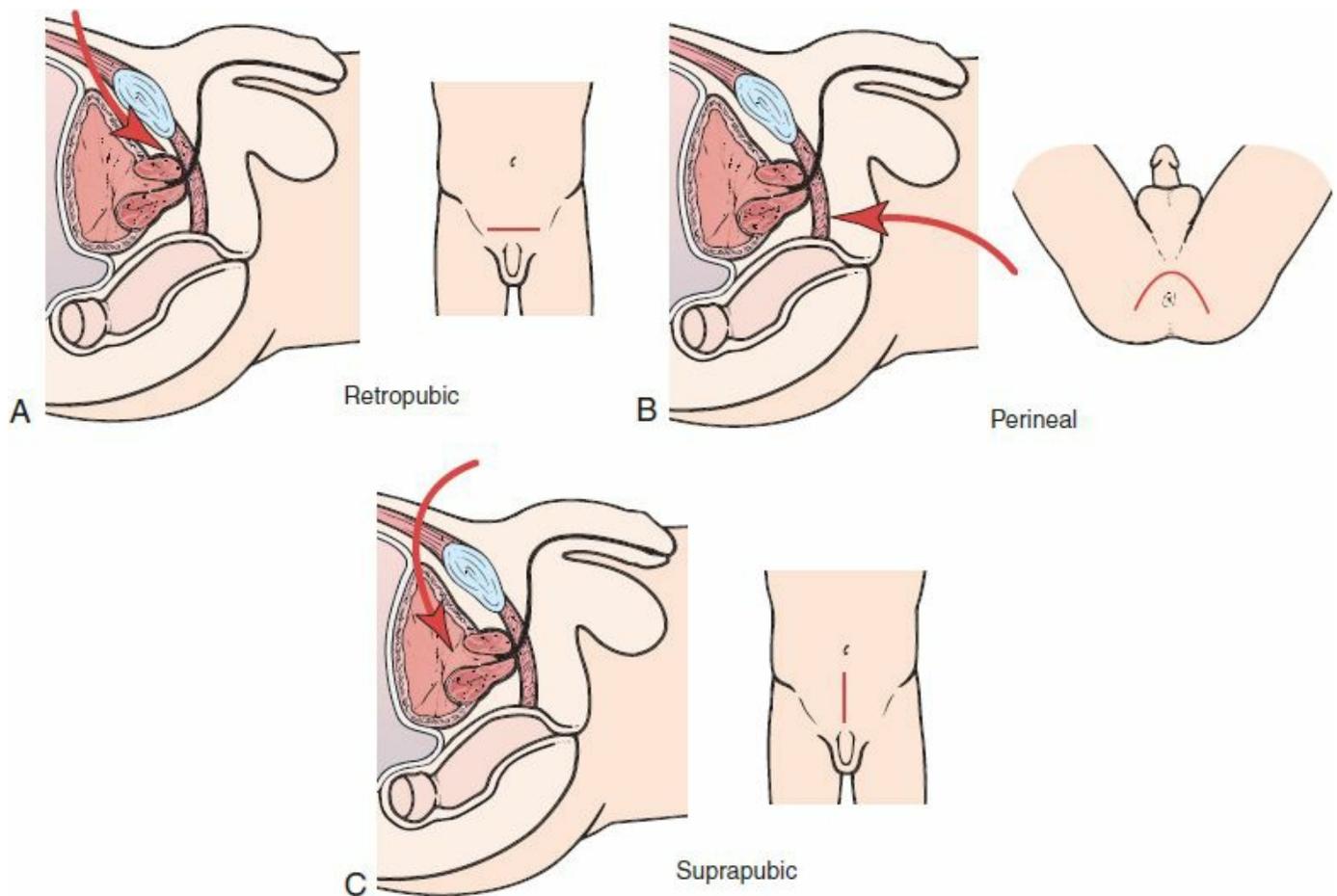
***Transurethral Resection of the Prostate (TURP):*** Removal of benign prostatic

tissue surrounding the urethra with use of a resectoscope introduced through the urethra; there is little risk of impotence and it is most commonly used for BPH

**Urethral Stents:** Application of stents or coils in the urethra where it is narrowed by the prostate



**FIGURE 62-7** Transurethral resection of the prostate. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 62-8** Surgical approaches for prostatectomy. **A**, Retropubic approach involves a low abdominal incision. **B**, Perineal approach involves an incision between the scrotum and anus. **C**, Suprapubic approach involves a midline abdominal incision. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper M, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

**D.** Surgical interventions and postoperative care (see [Chapter 52](#))

**XXVIII. Bladder Cancer** (see [Chapter 52](#))

**XXIX. Bladder Trauma**

**A.** Description

1. Occurs following a blunt or penetrating injury to the lower abdomen
2. Blunt trauma causes compression of the abdominal wall and bladder.
3. Penetrating wounds occur as a result of a stabbing, gunshot wound, or other objects piercing the abdominal wall.
4. A fractured pelvis that causes bone fragments to puncture the bladder is a common cause of bladder trauma.

## **B. Assessment**

1. **Anuria**
2. Hematuria
3. Pain below the level of the umbilicus; can radiate to the shoulders
4. Nausea and vomiting

## **C. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs.
  2. Monitor for hematuria, bleeding, and signs of shock. 🟩
  3. Promote bed rest.
  4. Monitor pain level.
  5. If blood is seen at the meatus, avoid urinary catheterization until a retrograde ureterogram can be obtained.
  6. Prepare the client for insertion of a suprapubic catheter to aid in urinary drainage if prescribed.
  7. Prepare the client for surgical repair of the laceration if indicated.
- 

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Glomerulonephritis results in proliferative and inflammatory changes within the glomerular structure. Destruction, inflammation, and sclerosis of the glomeruli of both kidneys occur. Loss of kidney function occurs. With this disorder, the nurse should monitor for complications such as fluid overload, ascites, pulmonary edema, and heart failure. If fine crackles in the lung bases develop bilaterally, the nurse should notify the health care provider (HCP) because this could be a sign of one of these complications.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1527-1529.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 736.** A client with acute kidney injury has a serum potassium level of 6.0 mEq/L. The nurse should plan which action as a **priority**?
1. Check the sodium level.
  2. Place the client on a cardiac monitor.
  3. Encourage increased vegetables in the diet.
  4. Allow an extra 500 mL of fluid intake to dilute the electrolyte concentration.
- 737.** A client being hemodialyzed suddenly becomes short of breath and complains of chest pain. The client is tachycardic, pale, and anxious and the nurse suspects air embolism. What is the **priority** nursing action?
1. Monitor vital signs every 15 minutes for the next hour.
  2. Discontinue dialysis and notify the health care provider (HCP).
  3. Continue dialysis at a slower rate after checking the lines for air.
  4. Bolus the client with 500 mL of normal saline to break up the air embolus.
- 738.** A client arrives at the emergency department with complaints of low abdominal pain and hematuria. The client is afebrile. The nurse **next** assesses the client to determine a history of which condition?
1. Pyelonephritis
  2. Glomerulonephritis
  3. Trauma to the bladder or abdomen
  4. Renal cancer in the client's family

**739.** A client is admitted to the emergency department following a motor vehicle accident. The client was wearing a lap seat belt when the accident occurred and now the client has hematuria and lower abdominal pain. To assess further whether the pain is caused by bladder trauma, the nurse should ask the client if the pain is referred to which area?

1. Hip
2. Shoulder
3. Umbilicus
4. Costovertebral angle

**740.** A client is admitted to the emergency department following a fall from a horse and the health care provider (HCP) prescribes insertion of a Foley catheter. While preparing for the procedure, the nurse notes blood at the urinary meatus. The nurse should take which action?

1. Notify the HCP.
2. Use a small-sized catheter.
3. Administer pain medication before inserting the catheter.
4. Use extra povidone-iodine solution in cleansing the meatus.

**741.** The nurse is assessing the patency of a client's left arm arteriovenous fistula prior to initiating hemodialysis. Which finding indicates that the fistula is patent?

1. Palpation of a thrill over the fistula
2. Presence of a radial pulse in the left wrist

3. Absence of a bruit on auscultation of the fistula
4. Capillary refill less than 3 seconds in the nail beds of the fingers on the left hand

742. A male client has a tentative diagnosis of urethritis. The nurse should assess the client for which manifestation of the disorder?

1. Hematuria and pyuria
2. Dysuria and proteinuria
3. Hematuria and urgency
4. Dysuria and penile discharge

743. The nurse is assessing a client with epididymitis. The nurse anticipates which findings on physical examination?

1. Fever, diarrhea, groin pain, and ecchymosis
2. Nausea, vomiting, scrotal edema, and ecchymosis
3. Fever, nausea, vomiting, and painful scrotal edema
4. Diarrhea, groin pain, testicular torsion, and scrotal edema

744. A client complains of fever, perineal pain, and urinary urgency, frequency, and dysuria. To assess whether the client's problem is related to bacterial prostatitis, the nurse reviews the results of the prostate examination for which characteristic of this disorder?

1. Soft and swollen prostate gland
2. Reddened, swollen, and boggy prostate gland

3. Tender and edematous prostate gland with ecchymosis
4. Tender, indurated prostate gland that is warm to the touch

745. The nurse is collecting data from a client who has a history of benign prostatic hyperplasia. To determine whether the client currently is experiencing this condition, the nurse should ask the client about the presence of which **early** symptom?

1. Nocturia
2. Urinary retention
3. Urge incontinence
4. Decreased force in the stream of urine

746. The nurse monitoring a client receiving peritoneal dialysis notes that the client's outflow is less than the inflow. Which actions should the nurse take? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Check the level of the drainage bag.
2. Reposition the client to his or her side.
3. Contact the health care provider (HCP).
4. Place the client in good body alignment.
5. Check the peritoneal dialysis system for kinks.
6. Increase the flow rate of the peritoneal dialysis solution.

747. A hemodialysis client with a left arm fistula is at risk for arterial steal syndrome. The nurse should assess the client for which manifestations of this complication?

1. Warmth, redness, and pain in the left hand
2. Aching pain, pallor, and edema of the left arm
3. Edema and reddish discoloration of the left arm
4. Pallor, diminished pulse, and pain in the left hand

748. The nurse is reviewing a client's record and notes that the health care provider has documented that the client has a renal function disorder. On review of the laboratory results, the nurse **most likely** would expect to note which finding?

1. Elevated creatinine level
2. Decreased hemoglobin level
3. Decreased red blood cell count
4. Decreased white blood cell count

749. A client with chronic kidney disease returns to the nursing unit following a hemodialysis treatment. On assessment, the nurse notes that the client's temperature is 100.2° F. Which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Encourage fluids.
2. Notify the health care provider.
3. Continue to monitor vital signs.
4. Monitor the site of the shunt for infection.

750. The nurse is performing an assessment on a client who has returned from the dialysis unit following hemodialysis. The client is complaining of headache and nausea and is extremely restless. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

1. Monitor the client.
2. Elevate the head of the bed.
3. Medicate the client for nausea.
4. Notify the health care provider (HCP).

**751.** A client newly diagnosed with chronic kidney disease has just been started on peritoneal dialysis. During the infusion of the dialysate, the client complains of abdominal pain. Which action by the nurse is **most appropriate**?

1. Stop the dialysis.
2. Slow the infusion.
3. Decrease the amount to be infused.
4. Explain that the pain will subside after the first few exchanges.

**752.** The nurse is instructing a client with diabetes mellitus about peritoneal dialysis. The nurse tells the client that it is important to maintain the prescribed dwell time for the dialysis because of the risk of which complication?

1. Infection
2. Hyperglycemia
3. Hypophosphatemia
4. Disequilibrium syndrome

**753.** A week after kidney transplantation, a client develops a temperature of 101° F, the blood pressure is elevated, and the kidney is tender. The x-ray indicates that the transplanted kidney is enlarged. Based on these assessment findings, the nurse

suspects which complication?

1. Acute rejection
2. Kidney infection
3. Chronic rejection
4. Kidney obstruction

**754.** A client is admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of benign prostatic hyperplasia, and a transurethral resection of the prostate is performed. Four hours after surgery, the nurse takes the client's vital signs and empties the urinary drainage bag. Which assessment finding indicates the need to notify the health care provider (HCP)?

1. Red bloody urine
2. Pain related to bladder spasms
3. Urinary output of 200 mL higher than intake
4. Blood pressure, 100/50 mm Hg; pulse, 130 beats/minute

**755.** The client newly diagnosed with chronic kidney disease recently has begun hemodialysis. Knowing that the client is at risk for disequilibrium syndrome, the nurse should assess the client during dialysis for which associated manifestations?

1. Hypertension, tachycardia, and fever
2. Hypotension, bradycardia, and hypothermia
3. Restlessness, irritability, and generalized weakness

#### 4. Headache, deteriorating level of consciousness, and twitching

## ANSWERS

736. 2

**Rationale:** The client with hyperkalemia is at risk of developing cardiac dysrhythmias and cardiac arrest. Because of this, the client should be placed on a cardiac monitor. Fluid intake is not increased because it contributes to fluid overload and would not affect the serum potassium level significantly. Vegetables are a natural source of potassium in the diet, and their use would not be increased. The nurse also may assess the sodium level because sodium is another electrolyte commonly measured with the potassium level. However, this is not a priority action of the nurse.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. First, note that the potassium level is elevated. Next, use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with **hyperkalemia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Fluid and Electrolyte Balance

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 187, 1548.

737. 2

**Rationale:** If the client experiences air embolus during hemodialysis, the nurse should terminate dialysis immediately, notify the HCP, and administer oxygen as needed. Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Recalling that air embolism is an emergency situation that affects the cardiopulmonary system suddenly and profoundly will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Emergency care of a client who develops **air embolism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care-Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**References:** Baird, Bethel (2011), p. 95; Swearingen (2012), p. 210.

### 738. 3

**Rationale:** Bladder trauma or injury should be considered or suspected in the client with low abdominal pain and hematuria. Glomerulonephritis and pyelonephritis would be accompanied by fever and are thus not applicable to the client described in this question. Renal cancer would not cause pain that is felt in the low abdomen; rather, the pain would be in the flank area.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *next*. Eliminate options 1 and 2 because they are **comparable or alike**, knowing that any inflammatory disease or infection is accompanied by fever. Because this client is afebrile, these are not possible options. Use knowledge of anatomy and pain assessment to select the correct option. Pain from renal cancer is a later finding and is localized in the flank area.

**Review:** **Renal assessment** techniques

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Pain

***References:*** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1516; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1141.

**739. 2**

***Rationale:*** Bladder trauma or injury is characterized by lower abdominal pain that may radiate to one of the shoulders due to phrenic nerve irritation. Bladder injury pain does not radiate to the umbilicus, costovertebral angle, or hip.

***Test-Taking Strategy:*** Focus on the **subject**, characteristics of bladder trauma. Recalling the concepts related to dermatomes of the body and pain characteristics of bladder trauma will direct you to the correct option.

***Review:*** Characteristics of **bladder trauma**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Analyzing

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Pain

***References:*** Baird, Bethel (2011), p. 318; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1516.

**740. 1**

***Rationale:*** The presence of blood at the urinary meatus may indicate urethral trauma or disruption. The nurse notifies the HCP, knowing that the client should not be catheterized until the cause of the bleeding is determined by diagnostic testing. Therefore options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the complications associated with a traumatic fall. Noting the words *blood at the urinary meatus* will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Assessment findings related to **bladder trauma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1516; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1141.

**741. 1**

**Rationale:** The nurse assesses the patency of the fistula by palpating for the presence of a thrill or auscultating for a bruit. The presence of a thrill and bruit indicate patency of the fistula. Although the presence of a radial pulse in the left wrist and capillary refill shorter than 3 seconds in the nail beds of the fingers on the left hand are normal findings, they do not assess fistula patency.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and assess for adequate circulation in the distal portion of the extremity (not the fistula). From the remaining options, focusing on the **subject** (patency) and noting the word *absence* in option 3 will assist you in eliminating this option.

**Review:** Expected findings related to **arteriovenous fistula**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1561; Swearingen (2012), p. 210.

**742. 4**

**Rationale:** Urethritis in the male client often results from chlamydial infection and is characterized by dysuria, which is accompanied by a clear to mucopurulent discharge. Because this disorder often coexists with gonorrhea, diagnostic tests are done for both and include culture and rapid assays.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestations of urethritis. Recalling that urethritis generally is accompanied by dysuria in the male client will assist you in eliminating options 1 and 3. Knowing that the problem originates in the urethra, not the kidneys, will assist you in eliminating option 2, because proteinuria indicates a problem with kidney function.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations of **urethritis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Sexuality

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1496-1497.

**743. 3**

**Rationale:** Typical signs and symptoms of epididymitis include scrotal pain and edema, which often are accompanied by fever, nausea and vomiting, and chills. Epididymitis most often is caused by infection, although

sometimes it can be caused by trauma. Epididymitis needs to be distinguished correctly from testicular torsion.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Any disorder that ends in *-itis* results from inflammation or infection. Therefore an expected finding would be elevated temperature. With this in mind, eliminate options 2 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and do not contain fever as part of the option. Knowing that ecchymosis results from bleeding, which is not part of this clinical picture, directs you to the correct option.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations of **epididymitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Inflammation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1395.

744. 4

**Rationale:** The client with bacterial prostatitis has a swollen and tender prostate gland that is also warm to the touch, firm, and indurated. Systemic symptoms include fever with chills, perineal and low back pain, and signs of urinary tract infection, which often accompany the disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestations of bacterial prostatitis. Begin to answer this question by reasoning that inflammation of the prostate gland would cause the area to be tender. This would allow you to eliminate options 1 and 2. Recalling that inflammation is accompanied by local warmth will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of **prostatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Inflammation

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1649; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1392-1393.

745. 4

**Rationale:** Decreased force in the stream of urine is an early symptom of benign prostatic hyperplasia. The stream later becomes weak and dribbling. The client then may develop hematuria, frequency, urgency, urge incontinence, and nocturia. If untreated, complete obstruction and urinary retention can occur.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. If you know that benign prostatic hyperplasia can lead to urinary obstruction, look for the option that identifies the least severe symptom.

**Review:** Early signs/symptoms of **benign prostatic hypertrophy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1378.

❖ 746. 1, 2, 4, 5

**Rationale:** If outflow drainage is inadequate, the nurse attempts to stimulate outflow by changing the client's position. Turning the client to the side or making sure that the client is in good body alignment may assist with

outflow drainage. The drainage bag needs to be lower than the client's abdomen to enhance gravity drainage. The connecting tubing and peritoneal dialysis system are also checked for kinks or twisting and the clamps on the system are checked to ensure that they are open. There is no reason to contact the HCP. Increasing the flow rate is an inappropriate action and is not associated with the amount of outflow solution.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, outflow is less than inflow, and use the principles related to gravity flow and preventing obstruction to flow to answer this question. This will assist in determining the correct interventions.

**Review:** Nursing interventions related to insufficient flow of **dialysate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1567.

747. 4

**Rationale:** Steal syndrome results from vascular insufficiency after creation of a fistula. The client exhibits pallor and a diminished pulse distal to the fistula. The client also complains of pain distal to the fistula, caused by tissue ischemia. Warmth and redness probably would characterize a problem with infection. The manifestations described in options 2 and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, arterial steal syndrome. You must understand steal syndrome and know the signs and symptoms to answer this question. Recalling that steal syndrome results from vascular insufficiency after creation of a fistula will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Arterial steal syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1562; Swearingen (2012), p. 210.

**748. 1**

**Rationale:** Measuring the creatinine level is a frequently used laboratory test to determine renal function. The creatinine level increases when at least 50% of renal function is lost. A decreased hemoglobin level and red blood cell count may be noted if bleeding from the urinary tract occurs or if erythropoietic function by the kidney is impaired. An increased white blood cell count is most likely to be noted in renal disease.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Recalling the relationship between the creatinine level and renal function will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Renal function studies**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1477, 1547-1548.

**749. 3**

**Rationale:** The client may have an elevated temperature following dialysis because the dialysis machine warms the blood slightly. Therefore it is not necessary to notify the health care provider. If the temperature is elevated excessively and remains elevated, sepsis would be suspected and a blood sample would be obtained as prescribed for culture and sensitivity determinations. Encouraging fluids is an unsafe action for a client with chronic kidney disease. Since an elevated temperature is expected following dialysis, monitoring the site for infection is unnecessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the data in the question. Recalling that an elevation in temperature is expected following dialysis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal expected findings following **dialysis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1563.

**750. 4**

**Rationale:** Disequilibrium syndrome may be caused by the rapid decreases in the blood urea nitrogen level during hemodialysis. These changes can cause cerebral edema that leads to increased intracranial pressure. The client is exhibiting early signs/symptoms of disequilibrium syndrome and appropriate treatments with anticonvulsive medications and barbiturates may be necessary to prevent a life-threatening situation. The HCP must be notified.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and focus on the client's signs and symptoms.

Recalling the complications associated with hemodialysis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs and symptoms of **disequilibrium syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1563.

**751. 4**

**Rationale:** Pain during the inflow of dialysate is common during the first few exchanges because of peritoneal irritation; however, the pain usually disappears after 1 to 2 weeks of treatment. The infusion amount should not be decreased, and the infusion should not be slowed or stopped.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are **comparable or alike** actions.

**Review:** Complications associated with **peritoneal dialysis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1567.

**752. 2**

**Rationale:** An extended dwell time increases the risk of hyperglycemia in the client with diabetes mellitus as a result of absorption of glucose from the dialysate and electrolyte changes. Diabetic clients may require extra insulin when receiving peritoneal dialysis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a complication associated with an extended dwell time. Noting the client's diagnosis and recalling that the dialysate solution contains glucose will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Complications associated with **peritoneal dialysis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1564, 1567.

**753. 1**

**Rationale:** Acute rejection most often occurs in the first 2 weeks after transplantation. Clinical manifestations include fever, malaise, elevated white blood cell count, acute hypertension, graft tenderness, and manifestations of deteriorating renal function. Chronic rejection occurs gradually over a period of months to years. Although kidney infection or obstruction can occur, the symptoms presented in the question do not relate specifically to these disorders.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of acute rejection. Note the words *a week after kidney*

*transplantation*. These words should direct you easily to the correct option, *acute* rejection.

**Review:** Signs of **acute rejection**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Immunity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1570-1571; Swearingen (2012), pp. 216, 218.

**754. 4**

**Rationale:** Frank bleeding (arterial or venous) may occur during the first day after surgery. Some hematuria is usual for several days after surgery. A urinary output of 200 mL more than intake is adequate. Bladder spasms are expected to occur following surgery. A rapid pulse with a low blood pressure is a potential sign of excessive blood loss. The HCP should be notified.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, need to notify the HCP. Think about the expected findings following this procedure and note that the vital signs presented in the correct option indicate excessive blood loss.

**Review:** Expected findings following **transurethral resection of the prostate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1385-1386.

755. 4

**Rationale:** Disequilibrium syndrome is characterized by headache, mental confusion, decreasing level of consciousness, nausea, vomiting, twitching, and possible seizure activity. Disequilibrium syndrome is caused by rapid removal of solutes from the body during hemodialysis. At the same time, the blood-brain barrier interferes with the efficient removal of wastes from brain tissue. As a result, water goes into cerebral cells because of the osmotic gradient, causing increased intracranial pressure and onset of symptoms. The syndrome most often occurs in clients who are new to dialysis and is prevented by dialyzing for shorter times or at reduced blood flow rates.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, disequilibrium syndrome. Think about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder to assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review: Disequilibrium syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Renal and Urinary

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1563.



## CHAPTER 63

# Renal Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A client who is taking levofloxacin (Levaquin) complains of dizziness and blurred vision and sensitivity to light. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 880.*

### I. Urinary Tract Antiseptics

#### A. Description

1. Urinary tract antiseptics inhibit the growth of bacteria in the urine ([Box 63-1](#)). ▲

#### BOX 63-1 Urinary Tract Antiseptics

- Amoxicillin (Amoxil)
- Cefixime (Suprax)
- Fosfomycin (Monurol)
- Methenamine (Hiprex, Urex)

## ■ Nitrofurantoin (Furadantin, Macrochantin, Macrobid)

2. Act as disinfectants within the urinary tract
3. Used to treat acute cystitis or urinary tract infections (UTIs)
4. Urinary tract antiseptics do not achieve effective antibacterial concentrations in blood or tissues and therefore cannot be used for infections outside the urinary tract.

### B. Side/adverse effects and nursing considerations

#### 1. Fosfomycin (Monurol)

- a. The medication is available as granules that must be dissolved; instruct the client to mix the contents of a package in about 1/2 cup of cold water, stir well, and drink all the liquid.
- b. Medications that increase gastrointestinal motility reduce the absorption of fosfomycin.

#### 2. Methenamine (Hiprex, Urex)

- a. Used to treat chronic UTIs, but not recommended for acute infections
- b. Administer after meals and at bedtime to minimize gastric distress.
- c. Chronic high-dose therapy can cause bladder irritation.
- d. Methenamine can cause crystalluria and should not be used in clients with renal impairment.
- e. Decomposition of the medication generates ammonia; therefore, it should not be used for clients with liver dysfunction.

- f. Methenamine requires acidic urine with a pH of 5.5 or lower. ▲
- g. Increasing fluid intake reduces antibacterial effects by diluting the medication and raising urine pH. ▲
- h. Methenamine should not be combined with sulfonamides because of the risk of crystalluria and urinary tract injury. ▲
- i. Clients taking this medication should avoid alkalinizing agents, including over-the-counter antacids containing sodium bicarbonate or sodium carbonate. ▲

### 3. Nitrofurantoin (Furadantin, Macrochantin, Macrobid)

- a. Gastrointestinal effects include anorexia, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea; administration with milk or meals minimizes gastrointestinal distress.
- b. Pulmonary reactions include dyspnea, chest pain, chills, fever, cough, and alveolar infiltrates; these resolve in 2 to 4 days following cessation of treatment. ▲
- c. Hematological effects include agranulocytosis, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, and megaloblastic anemia.
- d. Peripheral neuropathy side effects include muscle weakness, tingling sensations, and numbness.
- e. Neurological effects include headache, vertigo, drowsiness, and nystagmus.
- f. Allergic reactions include anaphylaxis, hives, rash, and tingling sensations around the mouth.
- g. Nitrofurantoin may impart a harmless brown color to the urine. ▲
- h. Nitrofurantoin is contraindicated in clients with renal impairment. ▲

- i. Instruct the client in expected side effects, signs warranting notification of the health care provider (HCP), and not to take nitrofurantoin with antacids.

## II. Fluoroquinolones (Box 63-2)

### BOX 63-2 Fluoroquinolones

- Ciprofloxacin (Cipro)
- Gemifloxacin (Factive)
- Levofloxacin (Levaquin)
- Moxifloxacin (Avelox)
- Norfloxacin (Noroxin)
- Ofloxacin (Floxin)
- Gatifloxacin (Zymaxid)

- A. Description: Suppress bacterial growth by inhibiting an enzyme necessary for DNA synthesis; active against a broad spectrum of microbes
- B. Side/adverse effects and nursing considerations
  1. Side effects include dizziness, drowsiness, gastric distress, diarrhea, vaginitis, nausea, and vomiting. ▲
  2. Adverse effects include psychoses, hallucinations, confusion, tremors, hypersensitivity, and interstitial nephritis.
  3. Fluoroquinolones should be used with caution in clients with hepatic, renal, or CNS disorders. ▲

4. Monitor client for side effects or signs of adverse reactions.
5. Norfloxacin (Noroxin) should be taken on an empty stomach.
6. Ciprofloxacin (Cipro), lomefloxacin (Maxaquin), and ofloxacin (Floxin) may be taken with or without food.
7. Intravenously administered ciprofloxacin and ofloxacin are infused slowly over 60 minutes to minimize discomfort and vein irritation.
8. Advise the client to report dizziness, lightheadedness, visual disturbances, increased light sensitivity, and feelings of depression, because these signs could indicate CNS toxicity. ▲
9. Inform the client of signs of hepatic and renal toxicity and the importance of reporting these signs to the HCP. ▲

**▲ Administer fluoroquinolones with a full glass of water and ensure that the client maintains a urine output of at least 1200 to 1500 mL daily to minimize the development of crystalluria.**

### III. Sulfonamides (Box 63-3)

#### **BOX 63-3** Sulfonamides

- Sulfadiazine
- Sulfamethoxazole
- Trimethoprim (Trimpex)
- Trimethoprim (TMP)-sulfamethoxazole (SMZ) (Bactrim, Septra)

**A. Description:** Suppress bacterial growth by inhibiting the synthesis of folic acid; active against a broad spectrum of microbes; used primarily to treat acute urinary tract infections

**B. Side/adverse effects and nursing considerations** ▲

1. Hypersensitivity reactions include rash, fever, and photosensitivity.
2. Stevens-Johnson syndrome, the most severe hypersensitivity response, produces symptoms that include widespread lesions of the skin and mucous membranes, fever, malaise, and toxemia.
3. Sulfonamides can cause hemolytic anemia, agranulocytosis, leukopenia, and thrombocytopenia; instruct the client to notify the HCP if sore throat or fever occurs.
4. Administer sulfonamides with caution in clients with renal impairment.
5. Sulfonamides are contraindicated if a hypersensitivity exists to sulfonamides, sulfonyleureas, or thiazide or loop diuretics.
6. Sulfonamides are contraindicated in infants younger than 2 months and in pregnant women or mothers who are breast-feeding.
7. Sulfonamides can potentiate the effects of warfarin sodium (Coumadin), phenytoin (Dilantin), and orally administered hypoglycemics such as tolbutamide (Orinase); when combined with sulfonamides, these medications may require a reduction in dosage.
8. Instruct the client to take the medication on an empty stomach with a full glass of water.

9. Instruct the client to complete the entire course of the prescribed medication.
10. Instruct the client to avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight, wear protective clothing, and apply a sunscreen to exposed skin.
11. Adults should maintain a daily urine output of 1200 mL by consuming 8 to 10 glasses of water each day to minimize the risk of renal damage from the medication.
12. Inform the client that some combination medications of sulfonamides can cause the urine to turn dark brown or red.
13. The sulfonamide combination of trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMZ; Bactrim, Septra) is more effective than either medication alone because it inhibits the sequential steps in bacterial folic acid synthesis.
14. TMP-SMZ is used cautiously with clients experiencing impaired kidney function, folate deficiency, severe allergy, or bronchial asthma.
15. An intravenous dose of TMP-SMZ is administered over 60 to 90 minutes and is not mixed with other medications.

 Sulfonamides should be withheld if a rash is noted. Inform the client to contact the HCP if a rash appears.

#### IV. Urinary Tract Analgesics (Box 63-4)

##### **BOX 63-4** Urinary Tract Analgesics

- Pentosan polysulfate sodium (Elmiron)
- Phenazopyridine (Pyridium, Azo-Standard, Pyridiate)

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**A. Description:** A urinary tract analgesic is administered with an antibiotic because the analgesic only treats pain, not the infection. ▲

**B. Side effects**

1. Nausea
2. Headache
3. Vertigo

**C. Nursing considerations**

1. Instruct the client that the urine will turn red or orange and stain clothing. ▲
2. A urinary tract analgesic is contraindicated in clients with renal or hepatic disease.
3. The medication interferes with accurate urine testing for glucose and ketones.

## **V. Anticholinergics/Antispasmodics (Box 63-5)**

### **BOX 63-5 Anticholinergics/Antispasmodics**

- Darifenacin (Enablex)
- Dicyclomine (Barmine, Bentyl)
- Oxybutynin chloride (Ditropan, Ditropan XL)
- Propantheline (Pro-Banthine, Propanthel)
- Solifenacin (VESIcare)
- Tolterodine (Detrol, Detrol LA)
- Trospium (Sanctura, Sanctura XR)

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**A. Description:** Used for overactive bladder (urge incontinence)

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Anorexia, nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth ▲
2. Blurred vision
3. Confusion in older clients
4. Constipation
5. Decreased sweating
6. Dizziness
7. Drowsiness
8. Dry eyes
9. Gastric distress
10. Headache
11. Tachycardia
12. Urinary retention

**C. Nursing considerations**

1. Extended-release capsules should not be split, chewed, or crushed.
2. Detrol should be used cautiously in clients with narrow-angle glaucoma.
3. Do not administer oxybutynin to clients with known hypersensitivity, gastrointestinal or genitourinary obstruction, glaucoma, severe colitis, or myasthenia gravis. ▲
4. Do not administer propantheline to clients with narrow-angle glaucoma,

obstructive uropathy, gastrointestinal disease, or ulcerative colitis. ▲

5. Instruct the client to avoid hazardous activities because of the side effects of dizziness and drowsiness.
6. Monitor intake and output.
7. Provide gum or hard candy for dry mouth.
8. Monitor for signs of toxicity (CNS stimulation) such as hypotension or hypertension, confusion, tachycardia, flushed or red face, signs of respiratory depression, nervousness, restlessness, hallucinations, and irritability. ▲

## VI. Cholinergic

**A. Description:** Bethanechol chloride (Urecholine) is a cholinergic used to increase bladder tone and function and to treat nonobstructive urinary retention and neurogenic bladder.

### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Headache
2. Hypotension
3. Flushing and sweating
4. Increased salivation
5. Abdominal cramps
6. Nausea and vomiting
7. Diarrhea
8. Urinary urgency
9. Bronchoconstriction

## 10. Transient complete heart block

### C. Nursing considerations ▲

1. Administer on an empty stomach, 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals to lessen nausea and vomiting.
2. Never administer by the intramuscular or intravenous (IV) route.
3. Monitor intake and output.
4. Monitor for increased bladder tone and function.
5. Monitor for cholinergic overdose (excessive salivation, sweating, involuntary urination and defecation, bradycardia, and severe hypotension).
6. Have atropine sulfate (antidote) readily available for IV or subcutaneous administration.

**⚠** A cholinergic such as bethanechol chloride (Urecholine) is not given to a client who has a urinary stricture or obstruction.

## VII. Medications for Preventing Organ Rejection (Box 63-6)

### **BOX 63-6** Medications for Preventing Organ Rejection

#### Immunosuppressants

- Cyclosporine (Sandimmune, Gengraf, Neoral)
- Sirolimus (Rapamune)
- Tacrolimus (Prograf)

#### Glucocorticoid

- Prednisone

### Cytotoxic Medications

- Azathioprine (Imuran)
- Mycophenolate mofetil (CellCept)

### Antibodies

- Anti-thymocyte globulin, equine (Atgam)
- Basiliximab (Simulect)
- Daclizumab (Zenapax)

- A.** Medications include immunosuppressants, corticosteroids, cytotoxic medications, and antibodies.
- B.** Some medications may be used in combination with one another to produce different actions on the immune system; combination therapy also allows for administration of the medications in lower doses, reducing the possibility of side/adverse effects.
- C.** Cyclosporine (Sandimmune, Gengraf, Neoral) ▲
1. Cyclosporine inhibits calcineurin and acts on T lymphocytes to suppress the production of interleukin-2, interferon- $\gamma$ , and other cytokines.
  2. Cyclosporine may be used to prevent rejection of allogeneic kidney, liver, and heart transplants.
  3. Prednisone may be administered concurrently.
  4. Oral administration of cyclosporine is preferred; intravenous administration is

reserved for clients who cannot take the medication orally.

5. Blood levels of the medication should be measured regularly because of its nephrotoxic effects.
6. The most common adverse effects are nephrotoxicity, infection, hypertension, tremor, and hirsutism. ▲
7. Assure the client that hirsutism is reversible; instruct on the use of a depilatory.
8. Other adverse effects include neurotoxicity, gastrointestinal effects, hyperkalemia, and hyperglycemia.
9. The risk of infection and lymphomas is increased with the use of cyclosporine.
10. Cyclosporine is contraindicated in the presence of hypersensitivity, pregnancy and breast-feeding, recent inoculation with live virus vaccines, and recent contact with an active infection such as chickenpox or herpes zoster.
11. Cyclosporine is embryotoxic, and women of childbearing age should use a mechanical form of contraception and avoid oral contraceptives.
12. The client should be informed about the possibility of renal damage and liver damage and the need for periodic liver function tests and determination of coagulation factors and blood urea nitrogen, serum creatinine, serum potassium, and blood glucose levels.
13. The client should be instructed to monitor for early signs of infection and to report these signs immediately. ▲
14. Available in a pill form; if the client is unable to swallow the pill, instruct the client to dispense the oral liquid medication into a glass container by using a

specially calibrated pipette, mix well, and drink immediately; rinse the glass container with diluent and drink it to ensure ingestion of the complete dose; dry the outside of the pipette and return to its cover for storage. ▲

15. To promote palatability, instruct the client to mix the liquid medication with milk, chocolate milk, or orange juice just before administration.
16. Consuming grapefruit juice is prohibited because it raises cyclosporine levels and increases the risk of toxicity. ▲
17. Ketoconazole (Nizoral), erythromycin, and amphotericin B can elevate cyclosporine levels.
18. Phenytoin (Dilantin), phenobarbital, rifampin (Rifadin), and TMP-SMX can decrease cyclosporine levels.
19. Renal damage can be intensified by the concurrent use of other nephrotoxic medications.

#### **D. Sirolimus (Rapamune)**

1. Sirolimus is used for the prevention of renal transplant rejection by inhibiting the response of helper T lymphocytes and B lymphocytes to cytokinesis.
2. It may be used with cyclosporine or tacrolimus (Prograf) and corticosteroids.
3. Increases the risk of infection, increases the risk of renal injury, increases the risk of lymphocele (a complication of renal transplant surgery), and raises cholesterol and triglyceride levels ▲
4. Side/adverse effects include rash, acne, anemia, thrombocytopenia, joint pain, diarrhea, and hypokalemia.

## E. Tacrolimus (Prograf)

1. Tacrolimus inhibits calcineurin and thereby prevents T cells from producing interleukin-2, interferon- $\gamma$ , and other cytokines.
2. Tacrolimus is more effective than cyclosporine, but is more toxic.
3. Adverse effects are similar to those of cyclosporine and include nephrotoxicity, infection, hypertension, tremor, hirsutism, neurotoxicity, gastrointestinal effects, hyperkalemia, and hyperglycemia. ▲
4. Tacrolimus should be used cautiously in immunosuppressed clients and those with renal, hepatic, or pancreatic impairment.
5. Tacrolimus is contraindicated for clients hypersensitive to cyclosporine.
6. Monitor blood glucose levels and administer prescribed insulin or oral hypoglycemics.

## F. Prednisone

1. Prednisone is a glucocorticoid that inhibits accumulation of inflammatory cells at inflammation sites.
2. Hyperglycemia and hypokalemia can occur with prednisone use; monitor glucose and serum potassium levels. ▲
3. See [Chapter 55](#) for additional information about prednisone.

## G. Azathioprine (Imuran)

1. Azathioprine suppresses cell-mediated and humoral immune responses by inhibiting the proliferation of B and T lymphocytes.
2. Not used routinely since the advent of newer medications that prevent transplant

rejection.

3. Can cause neutropenia and thrombocytopenia from bone marrow suppression ▲
4. Contraindicated in pregnancy; associated with an increased incidence of neoplasms
5. Monitor hematocrit, white blood cell count, platelet count, liver enzyme levels, and coagulation factors.

#### **H. Mycophenolate mofetil (CellCept)**

1. Mycophenolate mofetil causes selective inhibition of B- and T-lymphocyte proliferation.
2. May be used with cyclosporine or tacrolimus and glucocorticoids for prophylaxis against organ rejection
3. Adverse effects include diarrhea, severe neutropenia, vomiting, and sepsis. ▲
4. Mycophenolate mofetil is associated with an increased risk of infection and malignancies.
5. Absorption is decreased by the use of magnesium and aluminum antacids and by cholestyramine (Questran, Prevalite).
6. It is contraindicated in pregnancy and during breast-feeding.
7. Instruct the client to take the medication on an empty stomach and not to open or crush capsules.
8. Instruct the client to contact the HCP for unusual bleeding or bruising, sore throat, mouth sores, abdominal pain, or fever.

#### **I. Basiliximab (Simulect) and daclizumab (Zenapax)**

1. Daclizumab and basiliximab bind to interleukin-2 receptors on lymphocytes, resulting in diminished cell-mediated immune reactions.
2. Used primarily as an induction agent at the time of transplantation; may be used with other immunosuppressants to prevent acute rejection of transplanted kidneys
3. Administered by the intravenous route
4. Basiliximab (Simulect)
  - a. Initial dose is administered within 2 hours before transplantation.
  - b. Side/adverse effects are similar to those for daclizumab; in addition, headache, insomnia, dizziness, and tremors can occur.
5. Daclizumab (Zenapax)
  - a. Initial dose is administered within 24 hours before transplantation.
  - b. Side/adverse effects include chest pain, gastrointestinal distress, edema, shortness of breath, pain in the joints, and slow wound healing.

**J. Anti-thymocyte globulin, equine (Atgam)**

1. Anti-thymocyte globulin, equine, causes a decrease in the number and activity of thymus-derived lymphocytes and is used to suppress organ rejection following renal, liver, bone marrow, and heart transplantation.
2. It is used primarily to treat acute rejection episodes.
3. Before the first infusion, the client should undergo intradermal skin testing to determine hypersensitivity. ▲
4. Because this product is made using equine and human blood components, it may carry a risk of transmitting infectious agents, such as viruses.

5. Monitor the platelet count and report it if below 100,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>.
6. Arrange for outpatient referral for repeated infusions after discharge.

## VIII. Hematopoietic Growth Factors (Box 63-7)

### BOX 63-7 Hematopoietic Growth Factors

#### Erythropoietic Growth Factors

- Epoetin alfa (Epogen, Procrit)
- Darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp)
- Peginesatide (Omontys)

#### Leukopoietic Growth Factors

- Filgrastim (Neupogen)
- Pegfilgrastim (Neulasta)
- Sargramostim (Leukine)

#### Thrombopoietic Growth Factor

- Oprelvekin (Neumega)

#### A. Erythropoietic growth factors

1. Stimulate the production of red blood cells
2. Used to treat anemia of **chronic kidney disease**, chemotherapy-induced anemia, anemia caused by zidovudine (AZT), and anemia in clients requiring surgery
3. Initial effects can be seen within 1 to 2 weeks, and the hematocrit reaches normal

levels (30% to 33%) in 2 to 3 months.

4. Side effect: Major side effect is hypertension. ▲
5. Adverse effects can include heart failure, thrombotic effects such as stroke or myocardial infarction, and cardiac arrest.

## B. Leukopoietic growth factors

1. Stimulate the production of white blood cells (leukocytes)
2. Used for clients undergoing myelosuppressive chemotherapy or bone marrow transplantation and those with severe chronic neutropenia
3. Can cause bone pain, leukocytosis, and elevation of plasma uric acid, lactate dehydrogenase, and alkaline phosphatase levels; long-term therapy has caused splenomegaly ▲

## C. Thrombopoietic growth factor

1. Stimulates the production of platelets
2. Used for clients undergoing myelosuppressive chemotherapy to minimize thrombocytopenia and to decrease the need for platelet transfusions
3. Adverse effects include fluid retention, cardiac dysrhythmias, conjunctival infection, visual blurring, and papilledema. ▲

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Levofloxacin is a fluoroquinolone that is used to treat urinary tract infections by suppressing bacterial growth. Complaints of dizziness, lightheadedness, visual disturbances, increased light sensitivity, and feelings of depression are signs

of central nervous system (CNS) toxicity. Therefore the nurse should withhold the medication and notify the health care provider (HCP).

### ***Reference***

Lehne (2013), p. 1053.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**756.** A client who has a cold is seen in the emergency department with an inability to void. Because the client has a history of benign prostatic hyperplasia, the nurse determines that the client should be questioned about the use of which medication?

1. Diuretics
2. Antibiotics
3. Antitussives
4. Decongestants

**757.** Nitrofurantoin (Macrochantin) is prescribed for a client with a urinary tract infection. The client contacts the nurse and reports a cough, chills, fever, and difficulty breathing. The nurse should make which interpretation about the client's complaints?

1. The client may have contracted the flu.
2. The client is experiencing anaphylaxis.
3. The client is experiencing expected effects of the medication.
4. The client is experiencing a pulmonary reaction requiring cessation of the medication.

**758.** The nurse is providing discharge instructions to a client receiving sulfamethoxazole. Which instruction should be included in the list?

1. Restrict fluid intake.

2. Maintain a high fluid intake.
3. If the urine turns dark brown, call the health care provider (HCP) immediately.
4. Decrease the dosage when symptoms are improving to prevent an allergic response.

**759.** Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMZ; Bactrim) is prescribed for a client.

The nurse should instruct the client to report which symptom if it develops during the course of this medication therapy?

1. Nausea
2. Diarrhea
3. Headache
4. Sore throat

**760.** Phenazopyridine (Pyridium) is prescribed for a client for symptomatic relief of pain resulting from a lower urinary tract infection. The nurse should provide the client with which information regarding this medication?

1. Take the medication at bedtime.
2. Take the medication before meals.
3. Discontinue the medication if a headache occurs.
4. A reddish orange discoloration of the urine may occur.

**761.** Bethanechol chloride (Urecholine) is prescribed for a client with urinary retention. Which disorder would be a contraindication to the administration of this medication?

1. Gastric atony
2. Urinary strictures
3. Neurogenic atony
4. Gastroesophageal reflux

**762.** The nurse, who is administering bethanechol chloride (Urecholine), is monitoring for cholinergic overdose associated with the medication. The nurse should check the client for which sign of overdose?

1. Dry skin
2. Dry mouth
3. Bradycardia
4. Signs of dehydration

**763.** Oxybutynin chloride (Ditropan XL) is prescribed for a client with neurogenic bladder. Which sign would indicate a possible toxic effect related to this medication?

1. Pallor
2. Drowsiness
3. Bradycardia
4. Restlessness

**764.** Following kidney transplantation, cyclosporine (Sandimmune) is prescribed for a client. Which laboratory result would indicate an adverse effect from the use of this medication?

1. Normal hemoglobin level
2. Decreased creatinine level
3. Decreased white blood cell count
4. Elevated blood urea nitrogen level

**765.** The nurse is providing dietary instructions to a client who has been prescribed cyclosporine (Sandimmune). Which food item should the nurse instruct the client to exclude from the diet?

1. Red meats
2. Orange juice
3. Grapefruit juice
4. Green leafy vegetables

**766.** Tacrolimus (Prograf) is prescribed for a client. Which disorder, if noted in the client's record, would indicate that the medication needs to be administered with caution?

1. Pancreatitis
2. Ulcerative colitis
3. Diabetes insipidus
4. Coronary artery disease

**767.** The nurse is reviewing the laboratory results for a client receiving tacrolimus (Prograf). Which laboratory result would indicate to the nurse that the client is experiencing an adverse effect of the medication?

1. Blood glucose of 200 mg/dL
2. Potassium level of 3.8 mEq/L
3. Platelet count of 300,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>
4. White blood cell count of 6000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

**768.** The nurse receives a call from a client concerned about eliminating brown-colored urine after taking nitrofurantoin (Furadantin) for a urinary tract infection. The nurse should make which appropriate response?

1. “Discontinue taking the medication and make an appointment for a urine culture.”
2. “Decrease your medication to half the dose because your urine is too concentrated.”
3. “Continue taking the medication because the urine is discolored from the medication.”
4. “Take magnesium hydroxide (Maalox) with your medication to lighten the urine color.”

**769.** A client with chronic kidney disease is receiving epoetin alfa (Epogen). Which laboratory result would indicate a therapeutic effect of the medication?

1. Hematocrit of 32%
2. Platelet count of 400,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>
3. Blood urea nitrogen level of 15 mg/dL
4. White blood cell count of 6000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

**770.** A client with a urinary tract infection is receiving ciprofloxacin (Cipro) by the intravenous (IV) route. The nurse appropriately administers the medication by performing which action?

1. Infusing slowly over 60 minutes.
2. Infusing in a light-protective bag.
3. Infusing only through a central line.
4. Infusing rapidly as a direct intravenous push medication.

## ANSWERS

**756. 4**

**Rationale:** In the client with benign prostatic hyperplasia, episodes of urinary retention can be triggered by certain medications, such as decongestants, anticholinergics, and antidepressants. The client should be questioned about the use of these medications if the client has urinary retention. Retention also can be precipitated by other factors, such as alcoholic beverages, infection, bed rest, and becoming chilled.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, medications that could exacerbate or contribute to urinary retention in the client with benign prostatic hyperplasia. Diuretics should help voiding; therefore, eliminate option 1. Antibiotics should have no effect at all, and thus eliminate option 2. From the remaining options, recalling that medications that contain anticholinergics may cause urinary retention will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Factors that can precipitate **urinary retention** in the client with **benign prostatic hypertrophy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1380.

757. 4

**Rationale:** Nitrofurantoin can induce two kinds of pulmonary reactions: acute and subacute. Acute reactions, which are most common, manifest with dyspnea, chest pain, chills, fever, cough, and alveolar infiltrates. These symptoms resolve 2 to 4 days after discontinuing the medication. Acute pulmonary responses are thought to be hypersensitivity reactions. Subacute reactions are rare and occur during prolonged treatment. Symptoms (e.g., dyspnea, cough, malaise) usually regress over weeks to months following nitrofurantoin withdrawal. However, in some clients, permanent lung damage may occur. The remaining options are incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interpreting the client's complaints. Note the relationship of the information in the question and the words *pulmonary reaction* in the correct option.

**Review:** The side and adverse effects of **nitrofurantoin (Macrochantin)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 1035.

758. 2

**Rationale:** Each dose of sulfamethoxazole should be administered with a full glass of water, and the client should maintain a high fluid intake. The medication is more soluble in alkaline urine. The client should not be instructed to taper or discontinue the dose. Some forms of sulfamethoxazole cause urine to turn dark brown or red. This does not indicate the need to notify the HCP.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client instructions for sulfamethoxazole. Recalling that this medication is used to treat urinary tract infections will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Sulfamethoxazole**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Teaching; Infection

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 1108-1109.

#### 759. 4

**Rationale:** Clients taking trimethoprim (TMP)-sulfamethoxazole (SMZ) should be informed about early signs/symptoms of blood disorders that can occur from this medication. These include sore throat, fever, and pallor, and the client should be instructed to notify the health care provider (HCP) if these occur. The other options do not require HCP notification.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the symptoms to report. Knowledge that this medication can cause blood dyscrasias will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Trimethoprim (TMP)-sulfamethoxazole (SMZ)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 1191; Lehne (2013), pp. 1106-1107, 1109.

**760. 4**

**Rationale:** The nurse should instruct the client that a reddish-orange discoloration of urine may occur. The nurse also should instruct the client that this discoloration can stain fabric. The medication should be taken after meals to reduce the possibility of gastrointestinal upset. A headache is an occasional side effect of the medication and does not warrant discontinuation of the medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike** in that they address time schedules for the administration of the medication. From the remaining options, eliminate option 3 because the nurse would not advise the client to discontinue this medication.

**Review:** Client instructions regarding **phenazopyridine hydrochloride (Pyridium)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Elimination

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 921.

## 761. 2

**Rationale:** Bethanechol chloride (Urecholine) can be hazardous to clients with urinary tract obstruction or weakness of the bladder wall. The medication has the ability to contract the bladder and thereby increase pressure within the urinary tract. Elevation of pressure within the urinary tract could rupture the bladder in clients with these conditions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a contraindication for the use of the medication. Noting that the medication is used for urinary retention may assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Contraindications associated with **bethanechol chloride (Urecholine)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 125-126; Lehne (2013), pp. 133-134.

## 762. 3

**Rationale:** Cholinergic overdose of bethanechol chloride produces manifestations of excessive muscarinic stimulation such as salivation, sweating, involuntary urination and defecation, bradycardia, and severe hypotension. Treatment includes supportive measures and the administration of atropine sulfate subcutaneously or intravenously.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of cholinergic overdose. Noting that options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** will assist in eliminating these options.

**Review:** Signs of overdose of **bethanechol chloride**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Safety

**References:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 125-126; Lehne (2013), pp. 133-134.

**763. 4**

**Rationale:** Toxicity (overdosage) of oxybutynin produces central nervous system excitation, such as nervousness, restlessness, hallucinations, and irritability. Other signs of toxicity include hypotension or hypertension, confusion, tachycardia, flushed or red face, and signs of respiratory depression. Drowsiness is a frequent side effect of the medication but does not indicate overdosage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of toxicity (overdosage) of oxybutynin. Remember that restlessness is a sign of toxicity.

**Review:** Signs of toxicity of **oxybutynin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 879.

**764. 4**

**Rationale:** Nephrotoxicity can occur from the use of cyclosporine (Sandimmune). Nephrotoxicity is evaluated by monitoring for elevated blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine levels. Cyclosporine does not depress the bone marrow.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike** and are unrelated to renal function. Next, eliminate option 2 because the creatinine level would be elevated, not decreased. The correct option is the only one that indicates an increased level of a renal function test.

**Review:** Adverse effects related to **cyclosporine (Sandimmune)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Immunity; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 880.

**765. 3**

**Rationale:** A compound present in grapefruit juice inhibits metabolism of cyclosporine. As a result, consumption of grapefruit juice can raise cyclosporine levels by 50% to 100%, thereby greatly increasing the risk of toxicity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the item to exclude from the diet. Use of general pharmacology guidelines will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Cyclosporine (Sandimmune)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 880.

**766. 1**

**Rationale:** Tacrolimus (Prograf) is used with caution in immunosuppressed clients and in clients with renal, hepatic, or pancreatic function impairment. Tacrolimus is contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity to this medication or hypersensitivity to cyclosporine.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the condition that requires administration of the medication with caution. Many medications affect renal, hepatic, and pancreatic function. If you had to select an option and were unsure, select the option that addresses these body systems.

**Review: Tacrolimus (Prograf)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Immunity; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 876.

**767. 1**

**Rationale:** A blood glucose level of 200 mg/dL is significantly elevated above the normal range of 70 to 110 mg/dL and suggests an adverse effect. Other adverse effects include neurotoxicity evidenced by headache, tremor, and

insomnia; gastrointestinal effects such as diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting; hypertension; and hyperkalemia.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an adverse effect. Note that options 2, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and represent normal values. The correct option has the only abnormal value, reflecting an elevation.

**Review:** Adverse effects related to **tacrolimus (Prograf)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1437; Lilley et al (2014), p. 793.

**768. 3**

**Rationale:** Nitrofurantoin (Furadantin) imparts a harmless brown color to the urine and the medication should not be discontinued until the prescribed dose is completed. Magnesium hydroxide (Maalox) will not affect urine color. In addition, antacids should be avoided because they interfere with medication effectiveness.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, brown-colored urine. Option 1 can be eliminated because the client should not need a urine culture at this time. These are done before treatment is initiated, if treatment is ineffective, and during follow-up appointments. Option 2 can be eliminated, because the nurse cannot change a medication dosage without a health care provider's prescription. In addition, there is no data in the question to indicate that the urine is concentrated. Option 4 can be eliminated because antacids should be avoided as a result of their interference with the effectiveness of nitrofurantoin. In addition, magnesium hydroxide will not have an effect on urine color.

**Review:** **Nitrofurantoin (Furadantin)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 838.

**769. 1**

**Rationale:** Epoetin alfa is used to reverse anemia associated with chronic kidney disease. Therapeutic effect is seen when the hematocrit is between 30% and 33%. Options 2, 3, and 4 are not associated with the action of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a therapeutic effect. Relate the name of the medication, epoetin alfa, to the potential action or effect. The only laboratory test that would reflect the effect of this medication is a hematocrit of 32%, found in the correct option.

**Review: Epoetin alfa (Epogen, Procrit)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Evidence

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 419.

**770. 1**

**Rationale:** Ciprofloxacin (Cipro) is prescribed for treatment of mild, moderate, severe, and complicated infections of the urinary tract, lower respiratory tract, and skin and skin structure. A single dose is administered slowly over 60 minutes to minimize discomfort and vein irritation. Other solutions infusing at the same site need to be temporarily discontinued while the ciprofloxacin is infusing.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the appropriate way to administer an intravenous medication.

Eliminate option 3 because of the **closed-ended word**, *only*. The vast majority of IV medications need to be diluted and given over a prescribed time frame. Rapid and direct intravenous medications are generally reserved for emergency situations such as reversing a life-threatening dysrhythmia. The presence of light does not affect the integrity of this medication.

**Review:** The procedure for administering IV **ciprofloxacin (Cipro)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Renal and Urinary Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Gahart, Nazareno (2012), p. 327.

# UNIT XV



## Eye and Ear Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**accommodation** Process whereby a clear visual image is maintained as the gaze is shifted from a distant to a near point.

**astigmatism** Visual distortion that results from an uneven curvature of the cornea or lens, in which light rays focus on two different points on the retina.

**cataract** An opacity of the lens that distorts the image projected onto the retina and that can progress to blindness.

**conductive hearing loss** A mechanical dysfunction or blockage of sound waves to the inner ear fibers because of external ear or middle ear disorders. The blockage can be caused by impacted cerumen, foreign bodies, pus, or serum in the middle ear.

Disorders often can be corrected with no damage to hearing or minimal permanent

hearing loss.

**cycloplegia** Paralysis of the ciliary muscles by medications that block muscarinic receptors. Cycloplegia causes blurred vision because the shape of the lens can no longer be adjusted for near-vision.

**glaucoma** Increased intraocular pressure as a result of inadequate drainage of aqueous humor from the canal of Schlemm or from overproduction of aqueous humor. The condition damages the optic nerve and can result in blindness.

**hyperopia** Farsightedness; objects converge to a point behind the retina. Vision beyond 20 feet is normal, but near-vision is poor. The condition is corrected by a convex lens.

**legally blind** The best visual acuity with corrective lenses in the better eye of 20/200 or less, or the visual field is no greater than 20 degrees in its widest diameter in the better eye.

**macular degeneration** Blurred central vision caused by progressive degeneration of the center of the retina. The condition may be atrophic or age-related, or dry or exudative (wet).

**miosis** Constriction of the pupil, which occurs primarily by stimulation of the muscarinic receptors of the sphincter muscles. It is seen with the use of pilocarpine drops when treating glaucoma, when using opioids, or when there is brain damage of the pons.

**miotic** Constricting the pupil; a medication that causes constriction of the pupil.

**mydriasis** A dilated pupil that occurs because of blockage of the muscarinic receptors

of the sphincter muscles or by stimulation of the  $\alpha$ -receptors of the dilator muscles.

Enlarged pupils occur with stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, use of dilating drops, acute glaucoma, or past or recent trauma.

**mydriatic** Dilating the pupil; a medication that dilates the pupil.

**myopia** Nearsightedness; rays coming from an object are focused in front of the retina.

Near-vision is normal, but distant vision is defective. A biconcave lens is used for correction.

**presbycusis** Gradual nerve degeneration associated with aging; a common cause of sensorineural hearing loss.

**sensorineural hearing loss** A pathological process of the inner ear or of the sensory fibers that lead to the cerebral cortex. Such hearing loss often is permanent, and measures must be taken to reduce further damage or to attempt to amplify sound as a means of improving hearing to some degree.

## Pyramid to Success

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Pyramid Points focus on safety and nursing interventions for clients with impairment of sight or hearing and on the nursing care related to disorders such as cataracts, glaucoma, and retinal detachment. Communicating with clients who are visually or hearing impaired is also a priority. Emergency interventions for eye and ear disorders and injuries are a priority point. Pyramid Points also focus on client instructions related to medication administration, sensory perceptual alterations and safety issues, and available support systems.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Caring for the recipient of a tissue (corneal) donation

Establishing priorities

Maintaining asepsis with procedures and treatments

Maintaining standard and other precautions

Verifying that informed consent for invasive procedures is obtained

Preventing accidents that can occur as a result of sensory impairments

Upholding client rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing changes that occur with the aging process

Discussing expected body image changes and self-care deficits

Implementing measures for the prevention and early detection of health problems and diseases related to the eye and the ear

Performing physical assessments of eye and ear disorders

Providing home care instructions following procedures related to the eye and ear

Providing instructions regarding activity limitations or postoperative activities

Providing instructions regarding the administration of eye and ear medications

Teaching regarding the importance of compliance with the prescribed therapy

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing the client's ability to cope with feelings of isolation, fear or anxiety  
regarding a possible change in vision and/or hearing status, and loss of independence

Discussing role changes

Identifying family support systems

Informing the client about available community resources

Monitoring for sensory perceptual alterations

Using appropriate communication techniques for impaired vision and hearing

## **Physiological Integrity**

Monitoring for complications related to procedures

Monitoring for expected responses to therapy

Providing care for assistive devices such as eyeglasses, contact lenses, and hearing  
aids

Taking action in medical emergencies



## CHAPTER 64

# The Eye and the Ear

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A client enters the emergency department and tells the triage nurse that he suddenly felt something hit his eye and has severe eye pain. The nurse notes an entrance wound in the client's affected eye. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 902.*

### **I Anatomy and Physiology of the Eye**

#### **A. The eye**

1. The eye is 1 inch in diameter and is located in the anterior portion of the orbit.
2. The orbit is the bony structure of the skull that surrounds the eye and offers protection to the eye.

#### **B. Layers of the eye**

1. External layer
  - a. The fibrous coat that supports the eye

b. Contains the cornea, the dense transparent outer layer

c. Contains the sclera, the fibrous “white of the eye”

## 2. Middle layer

a. Called the *uveal tract*

b. Consists of the choroid, ciliary body, and iris

c. The choroid is the dark brown membrane located between the sclera and the retina that has dark pigmentation to prevent light from reflecting internally.

d. The choroid lines most of the sclera and is attached to the retina but can detach easily from the sclera.

e. The choroid contains many blood vessels and supplies nutrients to the retina.

f. The ciliary body connects the choroid with the iris and secretes aqueous humor that helps give the eye its shape; the muscles of the ciliary body control the thickness of the lens.

g. The iris is the colored portion of the eye, located in front of the lens, and it has a central circular opening called the *pupil*. The pupil controls the amount of light admitted into the retina (darkness produces dilation and light produces constriction).

## 3. Internal layer ▲

a. Consists of the retina, a thin, delicate structure in which the fibers of the optic nerve are distributed.

b. The retina is bordered externally by the choroid and sclera and internally by the vitreous.

- c. The retina is the visual receptive layer of the eye in which light waves are changed into nerve impulses; it contains blood vessels and photoreceptors called *rods* and *cones*.

#### C. Vitreous body

1. Contains a gelatinous substance that occupies the vitreous chamber, the space between the lens and the retina
2. The vitreous body transmits light and gives shape to the posterior eye.

#### D. Vitreous

1. Gell-like substance that maintains the shape of the eye
2. Provides additional physical support to the retina

#### E. Rods and cones

1. Rods are responsible for peripheral vision and function at reduced levels of illumination.
2. Cones function at bright levels of illumination and are responsible for color vision and central vision.

#### F. Optic disc

1. The optic disc is a creamy pink to white depressed area in the retina.
2. The optic nerve enters and exits the eyeball at this area.
3. This area is called the *blind spot* because it contains only nerve fibers, lacks photoreceptor cells, and is insensitive to light. ▲

#### G. Macula lutea

1. Small, oval, yellowish-pink area located laterally and temporally to the optic disc

2. The central depressed part of the macula is the fovea centralis, the area of sharpest and keenest vision, where most acute vision occurs. ▲

#### **H. Aqueous humor**

1. The aqueous humor is a clear watery fluid that fills the anterior and posterior chambers of the eye.
2. The aqueous humor is produced by the ciliary processes, and the fluid drains into the canal of Schlemm.
3. The anterior chamber lies between the cornea and the iris.
4. The posterior chamber lies between the iris and the lens.

**I. Canal of Schlemm:** Passageway that extends completely around the eye; it permits fluid to drain out of the eye into the systemic circulation so that a constant intraocular pressure is maintained.

#### **J. Lens**

1. Transparent convex structure behind the iris and in front of the vitreous body
2. The lens bends rays of light so that the light falls on the retina.
3. The curve of the lens changes to focus on near or distant objects.

**K. Conjunctivae:** Thin transparent mucous membranes of the eye that line the posterior surface of each eyelid, located over the sclera ▲

#### **L. Lacrimal gland**

1. The lacrimal gland produces tears.
2. Tears are drained through the punctum into the lacrimal duct and sac.

#### **M. Eye muscles**

1. Muscles do not work independently; each muscle works with the muscle that produces the opposite movement.
2. Rectus muscles exert their pull when the eye turns temporally.
3. Oblique muscles exert their pull when the eye turns nasally.

#### N. Nerves

1. Cranial nerve II: Optic nerve (nerve of sight)
2. Cranial nerve III: Oculomotor
3. Cranial nerve IV: Trochlear
4. Cranial nerve VI: Abducens

#### O. Blood vessels

1. The ophthalmic artery is the major artery supplying the structures in the eye.
2. The ophthalmic veins drain the blood from the eye.

## II. Assessment of Vision (see Chapter 25)

### III. Diagnostic Tests for the Eye

#### A. Fluorescein angiography

##### 1. Description

- a. A detailed imaging and recording of ocular circulation by a series of photographs taken after the administration of a dye
- b. This test is useful for assessing problems with retinal circulation, such as those that occur in diabetic retinopathy, retinal bleeding, and **macular degeneration**, or to rule out intraocular tumors.

## 2. Preprocedure interventions

- a. Assess the client for allergies and previous reactions to dyes.
- b. Obtain informed consent.
- c. A **mydriatic** medication, which causes pupil dilation, is instilled into the eye 1 hour before the test.
- d. The dye is injected into a vein of the client's arm.
- e. Inform the client that the dye may cause the skin to appear yellow for several hours after the test and is eliminated gradually through the urine. Urine may be bright green or orange for up to 2 days following the procedure. 🟢
- f. The client may experience nausea, vomiting, sneezing, paresthesia of the tongue, or pain at the injection site.
- g. If hives appear, antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) are administered as prescribed.

## 3. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Encourage rest.
- b. Encourage fluid intake to assist in eliminating the dye from the client's system.
- c. Remind the client that the yellow skin appearance will disappear.
- d. Inform the client that the urine will appear bright green or orange until the dye is excreted.
- e. Advise the client to avoid direct sunlight for a few hours after the test and to wear sunglasses if staying inside is not possible.
- f. Inform the client that the photophobia will continue until pupil size returns to

normal.

## **B. Computed tomography (CT)**

### **1. Description**

- a.** The test is performed to examine the eye, bony structures around the eye, and extraocular muscles.
- b.** A beam of x-rays scans the skull and orbits of the eye.
- c.** A cross-sectional image is formed by the use of a computer.
- d.** Contrast material may be used unless eye trauma is suspected.

### **2. Interventions**

- a.** No special client preparation or follow-up care is required.
- b.** Instruct the client that he or she will be positioned in a confined space and will need to keep the head still during the procedure.

## **C. Slit lamp**

### **1. Description**

- a.** A slit lamp allows examination of the anterior ocular structures under microscopic magnification.
- b.** The client leans on a chin rest to stabilize the head while a narrowed beam of light is aimed so that it illuminates only a narrow segment of the eye.

### **2. Interventions**

- a.** Explain the procedure to the client.
- b.** Advise the client about the brightness of the light and the need to look forward at a point over the examiner's ear. 📌

## D. Corneal staining

### 1. Description

- a. A topical dye is instilled into the conjunctival sac to outline irregularities of the corneal surface that are not easily visible.
- b. The eye is viewed through a blue filter, and a bright green color indicates areas of a nonintact corneal epithelium. ▲

### 2. Interventions

- a. If the client wears contact lenses, the lenses must be removed.
- b. The client is instructed to blink after the dye has been applied to distribute the dye evenly across the cornea.

## E. Tonometry ▲

1. Description: The test is used primarily to assess for an increase in intraocular pressure and potential **glaucoma**.

### 2. Noncontact tonometry

- a. No direct contact with the client's cornea is needed and no topical eye anesthetic is needed.
- b. A puff of air is directed at the cornea to indent the cornea, which can be unpleasant and may startle the client.
- c. It is a less accurate method of measurement as compared with contact tonometry.

### 3. Contact tonometry

- a. Requires a topical anesthetic

- b. A flattened cone is brought into contact with the cornea and the amount of pressure needed to flatten the cornea is measured.
- c. The client must be instructed to avoid rubbing the eye following the examination if the eye has been anesthetized because of the potential for scratching the cornea.

 Normal intraocular pressure is 10 to 21 mm Hg; intraocular pressure varies throughout the day and is normally higher in the morning (always document the time of intraocular pressure measurement).

- F. Ultrasound: Procedure is similar to an ultrasound procedure done in other parts of the body and is done to detect lesions or tumors in the eye.
- G. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI): Similar to an MRI done in other parts of the body; refer to [Chapter 66](#) for additional information on MRI.

#### IV. Disorders of the Eye

- A. Risk factors related to eye disorders ([Box 64-1](#)) 

##### **BOX 64-1** Risk Factors for Eye Disorders

- Aging process
- Congenital
- Diabetes mellitus
- Hereditary
- Medications
- Trauma

## B. Refractive errors

### 1. Description

- a. Refraction is the bending of light rays; any problem associated with eye length or refraction can lead to refractive errors.
- b. **Myopia** (nearsightedness): Refractive ability of the eye is too strong for the eye length; images are bent and fall in front of, not on, the retina.
- c. **Hyperopia** (farsightedness): Refractive ability of the eye is too weak; images are focused behind the retina.
- d. Presbyopia: Loss of lens elasticity because of aging; less able to focus the eye for close work and images fall behind the retina.
- e. **Astigmatism**: Occurs because of the irregular curvature of the cornea; image focuses at two different points on the retina.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Refractive errors are diagnosed through a process called *refraction*.
- b. The client views an eye chart while various lenses of different strengths are systematically placed in front of the eye, and is asked whether the lenses sharpen or worsen the vision.

### 3. Nonsurgical interventions: Eyeglasses or contact lenses

### 4. Surgical interventions

- a. Radial keratotomy: Incisions are made through the peripheral cornea to flatten the cornea, which allows the image to be focused closer to the retina; used to

treat myopia.

- b.** Photorefractive keratotomy: A laser beam is used to remove small portions of the corneal surface to reshape the cornea to focus an image properly on the retina; used to treat myopia and astigmatism.
- c.** Laser-assisted in-situ keratomileusis (LASIK): The superficial layers of the cornea are lifted as a flap, a laser reshapes the deeper corneal layers, and then the corneal flap is replaced; used to treat hyperopia, myopia, and astigmatism.
- d.** Corneal ring: The shape of the cornea is changed by placing a flexible ring in the outer edges of the cornea; used to treat myopia.

### **C. Legal blindness**

- 1.** Description: The best visual acuity with corrective lenses in the better eye is 20/200 or less, or the visual field is no greater than 20 degrees in its widest diameter in the better eye
- 2.** Interventions ▲
  - a.** When speaking to the client who has limited sight or is blind, the nurse should use a normal tone of voice.
  - b.** Alert the client when approaching.
  - c.** Orient the client to the environment.
  - d.** Use a focal point and provide further orientation to the environment from that focal point.
  - e.** Allow the client to touch objects in the room.
  - f.** Use the clock placement of foods on the meal tray to orient the client.

- g. Promote independence as much as is possible.
- h. Provide radios, televisions, and clocks that give the time orally, or provide a Braille watch.
- i. When ambulating, allow the client to grasp the nurse's arm at the elbow; the nurse keeps his or her arm close to the body so that the client can detect the direction of movement.
- j. Instruct the client to remain one step behind the nurse when ambulating.
- k. Instruct the client in the use of the cane for the blind, which is differentiated from other canes by its straight shape and white color with red tip.
- l. Instruct the client that the cane is held in the dominant hand several inches off the floor.
- m. Instruct the client that the cane sweeps the ground where the client's foot will be placed next to determine the presence of obstacles.

**D. Cataracts** (Fig. 64-1)



**FIGURE 64-1** The cloudy appearance of a lens affected by cataract. (From Patton KT, Thibodeau GA: *Anatomy and physiology*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.)

**1. Description**

- a. A cataract is an opacity of the lens that distorts the image projected onto the

retina and that can progress to blindness.

- b.** Causes include the aging process (senile cataracts), heredity (congenital cataracts), and injury (traumatic cataracts); cataracts also can result from another eye disease (secondary cataracts).
- c.** Causes of secondary cataracts include diabetes mellitus, maternal rubella, severe myopia, ultraviolet light exposure, and medications such as corticosteroids.
- d.** Intervention is indicated when visual acuity has been reduced to a level that the client finds unacceptable or that adversely affects his or her lifestyle.

## 2. Assessment

- a.** Blurred vision and decreased color perception are early signs.
- b.** Diplopia, reduced visual acuity, absence of the red reflex, and the presence of a white pupil are late signs. Pain or eye redness is associated with age-related cataract formation.
- c.** Loss of vision is gradual.

## 3. Interventions

- a.** Surgical removal of the lens, one eye at a time, is performed.
- b.** With extracapsular extraction, the lens is lifted out without removing the lens capsule; the procedure may be performed by phacoemulsification, in which the lens is broken up by ultrasonic vibrations and extracted.
- c.** With intracapsular extraction, the lens and capsule are removed completely.
- d.** A partial iridectomy may be performed with the lens extraction to prevent acute

secondary glaucoma.

e. A lens implantation may be performed at the time of the surgical procedure.

#### 4. Preoperative interventions ▲

a. Instruct the client regarding the postoperative measures to prevent or decrease intraocular pressure, such as bending over, coughing, straining, and rubbing the eye.

b. Stress to the client that care after surgery requires instillation of various types of eye drops several times a day for 2 to 4 weeks.

c. Administer eye medications preoperatively, including mydriatics and cycloplegics as prescribed.

#### 5. Postoperative interventions ▲

a. Elevate the head of the bed 30 to 45 degrees.

b. Turn the client to the back or nonoperative side.

c. Maintain an eye patch as prescribed; orient the client to the environment.

d. Position the client's personal belongings to the nonoperative side.

e. Use side rails for safety (per agency guidelines).

f. Assist with ambulation.

#### 6. Client education (Box 64-2)

### **BOX 64-2** Client Education Following Cataract Surgery

Avoid eye straining.

Eye itching and mild discomfort are normal for a few days after the procedure.

Avoid rubbing or placing pressure on the eyes.

Avoid rapid movements, straining, sneezing, coughing, bending, vomiting, or lifting objects heavier than 5 lb.

Take measures to prevent constipation.

Follow instructions for dressing changes and prescribed eye drops and medications.

Wipe excess drainage or tearing with a sterile wet cotton ball from the inner to the outer canthus.

Use an eye shield at bedtime.

If lens implantation is not performed, accommodation is affected and glasses must be worn at all times.

Cataract glasses act as magnifying glasses and replace central vision only.

Because cataract glasses magnify, objects will appear closer; therefore, the client needs to accommodate, judge distance, and climb stairs carefully.

Contact lenses provide sharp visual acuity but dexterity is needed to insert them.

Contact the health care provider about any decrease in vision, severe eye pain, increase in redness, or increase in eye discharge.

## E. Glaucoma ▲

### 1. Description

- a. A group of ocular diseases resulting in increased intraocular pressure
- b. Intraocular pressure is the fluid (aqueous humor) pressure within the eye (normal intraocular pressure is 10 to 21 mm Hg).

- c. Increased intraocular pressure results from inadequate drainage of aqueous humor from the canal of Schlemm or overproduction of aqueous humor.
- d. The condition damages the optic nerve and can result in blindness.
- e. The gradual loss of visual fields may go unnoticed because central vision is unaffected.

## 2. Types

- a. Primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG) results from obstruction to outflow of aqueous humor and is the most common type.
- b. Primary angle-closure glaucoma (PACG) results from blocking the outflow of aqueous humor into the trabecular meshwork; causes include lens or pupil dilation from medications or sympathetic stimulation.

## 3. Assessment

- a. Early signs include diminished **accommodation** and increased intraocular pressure.
- b. Primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG): Painless, and vision changes are slow; results in “tunnel” vision.
- c. Primary angle-closure glaucoma (PACG): Blurred vision, halos around lights, and ocular erythema.

## 4. Interventions for acute angle-closure glaucoma

 **Acute angle-closure glaucoma is a medical emergency that causes sudden eye pain and possible nausea and vomiting.**

- a. Treat acute angle-closure glaucoma as a medical emergency.

- b. Administer medications as prescribed to lower intraocular pressure.
- c. Prepare the client for peripheral iridectomy, which allows aqueous humor to flow from the posterior to the anterior chamber.

## 5. Interventions for the client with glaucoma ▲

- a. Instruct the client on the importance of medications to constrict the pupils (**miotics**), to decrease the production of aqueous humor (carbonic anhydrase inhibitors), and to decrease the production of aqueous humor and intraocular pressure ( $\beta$ -blockers).
- b. Instruct the client of the need for lifelong medication use.
- c. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.
- d. Instruct the client to avoid anticholinergic medications.
- e. Instruct the client to report eye pain, halos around the eyes, and changes in vision to the health care provider (HCP).
- f. Instruct the client that when maximal medical therapy has failed to halt the progression of visual field loss and optic nerve damage, surgery will be recommended.
- g. Instruct the client to contact the HCP before taking medications, including over-the-counter medications.
- h. Prepare the client for trabeculectomy as prescribed, which allows drainage of aqueous humor into the conjunctival spaces by the creation of an opening.

## F. Retinal detachment

### 1. Description

- a. Detachment or separation of the retina from the epithelium
- b. Retinal detachment occurs when the layers of the retina separate because of the accumulation of fluid between them, or when both retinal layers elevate away from the choroid as a result of a tumor.
- c. Partial detachment becomes complete if untreated.
- d. When detachment becomes complete, blindness occurs.

## 2. Assessment

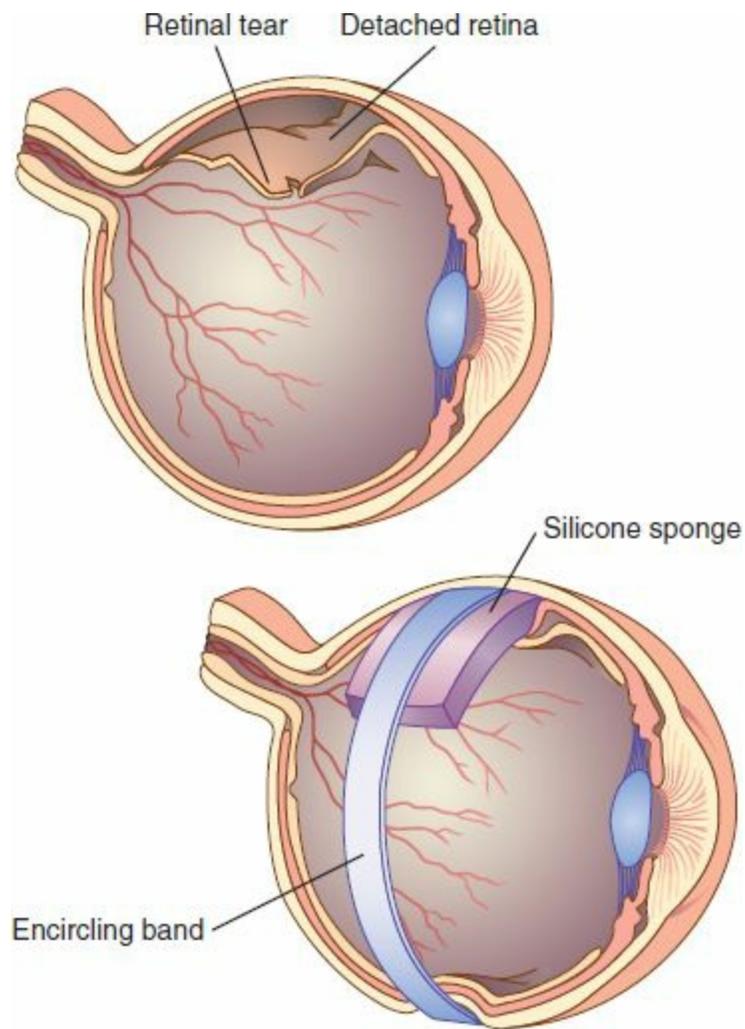
- a. Flashes of light
- b. Floaters or black spots (signs of bleeding)
- c. Increase in blurred vision
- d. Sense of a curtain being drawn over the eye
- e. Loss of a portion of the visual field; painless loss of central or peripheral vision

## 3. Immediate interventions

- a. Provide bed rest.
- b. Cover both eyes with patches as prescribed to prevent further detachment.
- c. Speak to the client before approaching.
- d. Position the client's head as prescribed.
- e. Protect the client from injury.
- f. Avoid jerky head movements.
- g. Minimize eye stress.
- h. Prepare the client for a surgical procedure as prescribed.

#### 4. Surgical procedures

- a. Draining fluid from the subretinal space so that the retina can return to the normal position
- b. Sealing retinal breaks by cryosurgery, a cold probe applied to the sclera, to stimulate an inflammatory response leading to adhesions
- c. Diathermy, the use of an electrode needle and heat through the sclera, to stimulate an inflammatory response
- d. Laser therapy, to stimulate an inflammatory response and seal small retinal tears before the detachment occurs
- e. Scleral buckling, to hold the choroid and retina together with a splint until scar tissue forms, closing the tear (Fig. 64-2)



**FIGURE 64-2** The scleral buckling procedure for repair of retinal detachment.

(From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 6, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

f. Insertion of gas or silicone oil to promote reattachment; these agents float against the retina to hold it in place until healing occurs.

#### 5. Postoperative interventions

a. Maintain eye patches as prescribed.

b. Monitor for hemorrhage.

c. Prevent nausea and vomiting and monitor for restlessness, which can cause

hemorrhage.

- d.** Monitor for sudden, sharp eye pain (notify the HCP).
- e.** Encourage deep breathing but avoid coughing.
- f.** Provide bed rest for 1 to 2 days as prescribed.
- g.** Position the client as prescribed (positioning depends on the location of the detachment).
- h.** Administer eye medications as prescribed.
- i.** Assist the client with activities of daily living.
- j.** Avoid sudden head movements or anything that increases intraocular pressure.
- k.** Instruct the client to limit reading for 3 to 5 weeks.
- l.** Instruct the client to avoid squinting, straining and constipation, lifting heavy objects, and bending from the waist.
- m.** Instruct the client to wear dark glasses during the day and an eye patch at night.
- n.** Encourage follow-up care because of the danger of recurrence or occurrence in the other eye.

## **G.** Macular degeneration ▲

- 1.** A deterioration of the macula, the area of central vision
- 2.** Can be atrophic (age-related or dry) or exudative (wet)
- 3.** Age-related: Caused by gradual blocking of retinal capillaries leading to an ischemic and necrotic macula; rod and cone photoreceptors die.
- 4.** Exudative: Serous detachment of pigment epithelium in the macula occurs; fluid and blood collect under the macula, resulting in scar formation and visual

distortion.

**5.** Interventions are aimed at maximizing the remaining vision.

**6.** Assessment

**a.** A decline in central vision

**b.** Blurred vision and distortion

**7.** Interventions

**a.** Initiate strategies to assist in maximizing remaining vision and maintaining independence.

**b.** Provide referrals to community organizations.

**c.** Laser therapy, photodynamic therapy, or other therapies may be prescribed to seal the leaking blood vessels in or near the macula.

## **H.** Ocular melanoma

**1.** Most common malignant eye tumor in adults

**2.** Tumor usually found in the uveal tract and can spread easily because of the rich blood supply

**3.** Assessment

**a.** Tumor can be discovered during routine examination.

**b.** If macular area is invaded, blurring of vision occurs.

**c.** Increased intraocular pressure (IOP) is present if the canal of Schlemm is invaded.

**d.** Change of iris color is noted if the tumor invades the iris.

**e.** Ultrasonography may be performed to determine tumor size and location.

#### **4. Interventions**

- a. Surgery: Enucleation**
- b. Radiation is given via a radioactive plaque that is sutured to the sclera; the radioactive plaque remains in place until the prescribed radiation dose is delivered.**

#### **I. Enucleation and exenteration**

##### **1. Description**

- a. Enucleation is the removal of the entire eyeball.**
- b. Exenteration is the removal of the eyeball and surrounding tissues and bone.**
- c. The procedures are performed for the removal of ocular tumors.**
- d. After the eye is removed, a ball implant is inserted to provide a firm base for a socket prosthesis and to facilitate the best cosmetic result.**
- e. A prosthesis is fitted about 1 month after surgery.**

##### **2. Preoperative interventions**

- a. Provide emotional support to the client.**
- b. Encourage the client to verbalize feelings related to loss.**

##### **3. Postoperative interventions**

- a. Monitor vital signs.**
- b. Assess a pressure patch or dressing as prescribed.**
- c. Report changes in vital signs or the presence of bright red drainage on the pressure patch or dressing. 🟩**

#### **J. Hyphema**

## 1. Description

- a. Presence of blood in the anterior chamber that occurs as a result of an injury
- b. The condition usually resolves in 5 to 7 days.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Encourage rest with the client in a semi-Fowler's position. ▲
- b. Avoid sudden eye movements for 3 to 5 days to decrease the likelihood of bleeding.
- c. Administer cycloplegic eye drops as prescribed to relax the eye muscles and place the eye at rest.
- d. Instruct the client in the use of eye shields or eye patches as prescribed.
- e. Instruct the client to restrict reading and limit watching television.

## K. Contusions

### 1. Description

- a. Bleeding into the soft tissue as a result of an injury.
- b. A contusion causes a black eye; the discoloration disappears in about 10 days.
- c. Pain, photophobia, edema, and diplopia may occur.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Place ice on the eye immediately. ▲
- b. Instruct the client to receive a thorough eye examination.

## L. Foreign bodies

1. Description: An object such as dust or dirt that enters the eye and causes irritation

### 2. Interventions ▲

- a. Have the client look upward, expose the lower lid, wet a cotton-tipped applicator with sterile normal saline, gently twist the swab over the particle, and remove it.
- b. If the particle cannot be seen, have the client look downward, place a cotton applicator horizontally on the outer surface of the upper eye lid, grasp the lashes, and pull the upper lid outward and over the cotton applicator; if the particle is seen, gently twist a swab over it to remove.

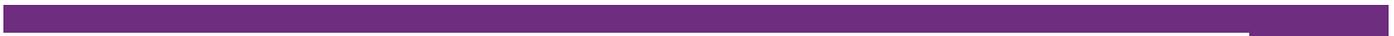
#### **M. Penetrating objects**

1. Description: An eye injury in which an object penetrates the eye

2. Interventions ▲

- a. Never remove the object because it may be holding ocular structures in place; the object must be removed by the HCP.
- b. Cover the eye with a cup (paper or plastic) and tape in place.
- c. Do not allow the client to bend over or lie flat; these positions may move the object.
- d. Do not place pressure on the eye.
- e. Client is to be seen by an HCP immediately.
- f. X-rays and CT scans of the orbit are usually obtained.
- g. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is contraindicated because of the possibility of metal-containing projectile movement during the procedure.

#### **N. Chemical burns (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))**



# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take if a Client Sustains a Chemical Eye Injury

1. Irrigate the eye.
2. Check the pH of the eye.
3. Assess visual acuity.
4. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

Emergency care following a chemical burn to the eye includes irrigating the eye immediately with sterile normal saline or ocular irrigating solution. If the injury occurred outside the hospital, the eye is irrigated immediately with tap water and then the client is brought to the emergency department. In the emergency department, the irrigation should be maintained for at least 10 minutes (and at least 1 L should be used to irrigate). After irrigation, the pH of the eye is checked and, if a pH of 6 to 7 has not returned, the irrigation should be continued. Some health care providers prefer the use of lactated Ringer's solution for irrigation because its pH is 6 to 7.5, which is closer to the pH of tears (7.1) than that of normal saline, which may range from 4.5 to 7.

Following this emergency treatment, visual acuity is assessed. It is also important for the nurse to find out what chemical splashed into the eye.

Finally, the event is documented, as well as the actions taken and the client's response.

## References

Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, p. 1072; Perry A, Potter P, Elkin M: *Nursing interventions & clinical skills*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2012, Mosby, pp. 244-245.

1. Description: An eye injury in which a caustic substance enters the eye

2. Interventions

 If a chemical splash to the eye occurs, treatment should begin immediately; immediately flush the eyes at the scene of the injury with water for at least 15 to 20 minutes.

a. At the scene of the injury, obtain a sample of the chemical involved. 

b. At the emergency department, the eye is irrigated with normal saline solution or an ophthalmic irrigation solution for at least 10 minutes or longer as prescribed; the pH is then checked. 

c. The solution is directed across the cornea and toward the lateral canthus.

d. Prepare for visual acuity assessment.

e. Apply an antibiotic ointment as prescribed.

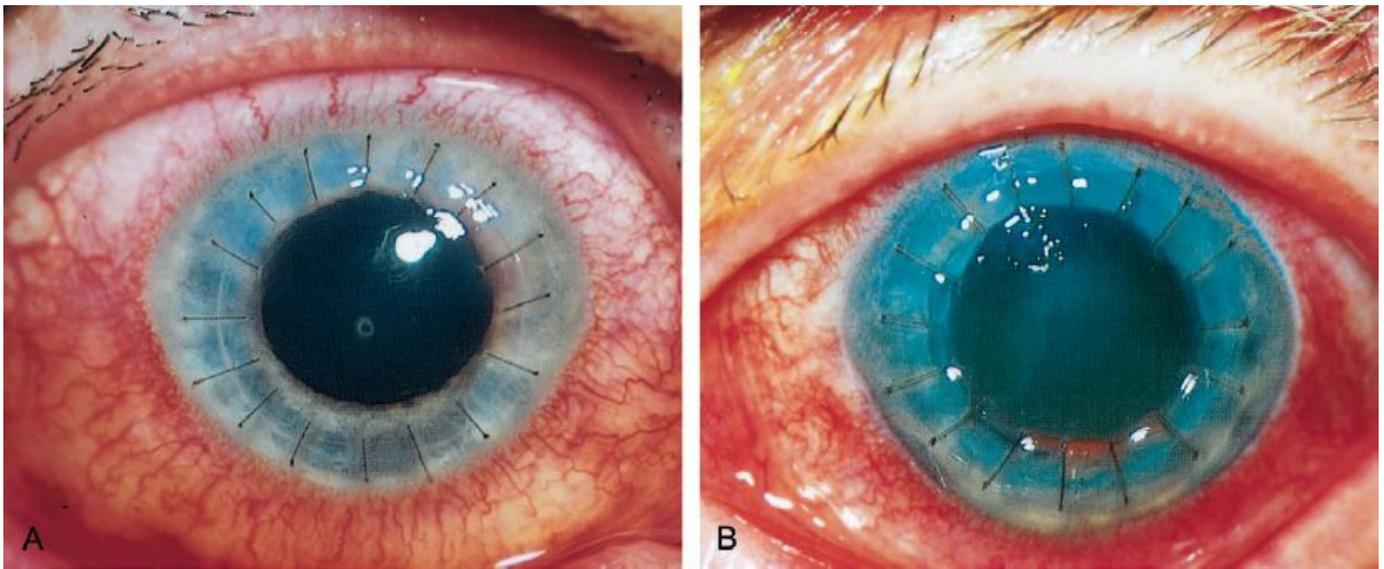
f. Cover the eye with a patch as prescribed.

O. Eye (tissue) donation 

1. Donor eyes

- a. Donor eyes are obtained from cadavers.
  - b. Donor eyes must be enucleated soon after death because of rapid endothelial cell death.
  - c. Donor eyes must be stored in a preserving solution.
  - d. Storage, handling, and coordination of donor tissue with surgeons is provided by a network of state and national eye bank associations.
2. Care to the deceased client as a potential eye donor ▲
- a. Discuss the option of eye donation with the HCP and family.
  - b. Raise the head of the bed 30 degrees.
  - c. Instill antibiotic eye drops as prescribed.
  - d. Close the eyes and apply a small ice pack as prescribed to the closed eyes.
3. Preoperative care to the recipient of the cornea ▲
- a. Recipient may be told of the tissue (cornea) availability only several hours to 1 day before the surgery.
  - b. Assist in alleviating client anxiety.
  - c. Assess the recipient's eye for signs of infection.
  - d. Report the presence of any redness, watery or purulent drainage, or edema around the recipient's eye to the HCP.
  - e. Instill antibiotic drops into the recipient's eye as prescribed to reduce the number of microorganisms present.
  - f. Administer fluids and medications intravenously as prescribed.
4. Postoperative care to the recipient ▲

- a.** Eye is covered with a pressure patch and protective shield that is left in place for 1 day.
  - b.** Do not remove or change the dressing without an HCP's prescription.
  - c.** Monitor vital signs.
  - d.** Monitor level of consciousness.
  - e.** Assess the eye dressing.
  - f.** Position the client with the head elevated and on the nonoperative side to reduce intraocular pressure.
  - g.** Orient the client frequently.
  - h.** Monitor for complications of bleeding, wound leakage, infection, and tissue rejection.
  - i.** Instruct the client how to apply a patch and eye shield.
  - j.** Instruct the client to wear the eye shield at night for 1 month and whenever around small children or pets.
  - k.** Advise the client not to rub the eye.
- 5.** Graft rejection (Fig. 64-3) 



**FIGURE 64-3** Graft rejection. **A**, Clinical appearance of the eye after keratoplasty. **B**, Acute graft rejection. (From Black J, Hawks J: *Medical-surgical nursing: Clinical management for positive outcomes*, ed 8, Philadelphia, 2009, Saunders. Courtesy of Ophthalmic Photography at the University of Michigan, W.K. Kellogg Eye Center, Ann Arbor, MI.)

- a. Rejection can occur at any time.
- b. Inform the client of the signs of rejection.
- c. Signs include *redness*, *swelling*, *decreased vision*, and *pain* (RSVP).
- d. The eye is treated with topical corticosteroids.

## V. Anatomy and Physiology of the Ear

### A. Functions

1. Hearing
2. Maintenance of balance

### B. External ear (pinna)

1. The external ear is embedded in the temporal bone bilaterally at the level of the eyes.
2. The external ear extends from the auricle through the external canal to the tympanic membrane or eardrum.
3. The external ear includes the mastoid process, the bony ridge located over the temporal bone.

#### **C. Middle ear**

1. The middle ear consists of the medial side of the tympanic membrane.
2. The middle ear contains three bony ossicles.
  - a. Malleus
  - b. Incus
  - c. Stapes
3. Functions of the middle ear
  - a. Conduct sound vibrations from the outer ear to the central hearing apparatus in the inner ear
  - b. Protect the inner ear by reducing the amplitude of loud sounds
  - c. The auditory canal (eustachian tube) allows equalization of air pressure on each side of the tympanic membrane so that the membrane does not rupture.

#### **D. Inner ear**

1. The inner ear contains the semicircular canals, cochlea, and distal end of the eighth cranial nerve.
2. The semicircular canals contain fluid and hair cells connected to sensory nerve

fibers of the vestibular portion of the eighth cranial nerve.

3. The inner ear maintains the sense of balance or equilibrium.
4. The cochlea is the spiral-shaped organ of hearing.
5. The organ of Corti (within the cochlea) is the receptor and organ of hearing.
6. Eighth cranial nerve ▲

- a. The cochlear branch of the nerve transmits neuroimpulses from the cochlea to the brain, where they are interpreted as sound.
- b. The vestibular branch maintains balance and equilibrium.

#### E. Hearing and equilibrium ▲

1. The external ear conducts sound waves to the middle ear.
2. The middle ear, also called the *tympanic cavity*, conducts sound waves to the inner ear.
3. The middle ear is filled with air, which is kept at atmospheric pressure by the opening of the auditory canal.
4. The inner ear contains sensory receptors for sound and for equilibrium.
5. The receptors in the inner ear transmit sound waves and changes in body position as nerve impulses.

### VI. Assessment of the Ear (see Chapter 25)

### VII. Diagnostic Tests for the Ear

#### A. Tomography

1. Description

- a. Tomography may be performed with or without contrast medium.
- b. Tomography assesses the mastoid, middle ear, and inner ear structures.
- c. Multiple radiographs of the head are obtained.
- d. Tomography is especially helpful in the diagnosis of acoustic tumors.

## 2. Interventions

- a. All jewelry is removed.
- b. Lead eye shields are used to cover the cornea to diminish the radiation dose to the eyes.
- c. The client must remain still in a supine position.
- d. No follow-up care is required.

## B. Audiometry

### 1. Description

- a. Audiometry measures hearing acuity.
- b. Audiometry uses two types, pure tone audiometry and speech audiometry.
- c. Pure tone audiometry is used to identify problems with hearing, speech, music, and other sounds in the environment.
- d. In speech audiometry, the client's ability to hear spoken words is measured.
- e. After testing, audiographic patterns are depicted on a graph to determine the type and level of the hearing loss.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Inform the client regarding the procedure.
- b. Instruct the client to identify the sounds as they are heard.

## C. Electronystagmography (ENG) ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Electronystagmography is a vestibular test that evaluates spontaneous and induced eye movements known as *nystagmus*.
- b. ENG is used to distinguish between normal nystagmus and medication-induced nystagmus, or nystagmus caused by a lesion in the central or peripheral vestibular pathway.
- c. ENG records changing electrical fields with the movement of the eye, as monitored by electrodes placed on the skin around the eye.

### 2. Interventions

- a. The client is instructed to remain NPO for 3 hours before testing, avoiding caffeine-containing beverages for 24 to 48 hours before the test.
- b. Unnecessary medications are withheld for 24 hours before testing.
- c. Instruct the client that this is a long and tiring procedure.
- d. The client should bring prescription eyeglasses to the examination.
- e. The client sits and is instructed to gaze at lights, focus on a moving pattern, focus on a moving point, and then close the eyes.
- f. While sitting in a chair, the client may be rotated to obtain information about vestibular function.
- g. In addition, the client's ears are irrigated with cool and warm water, which may cause nausea and vomiting.
- h. Following the procedure, the client begins taking clear fluids slowly and

cautiously because nausea and vomiting may occur.

i. Assistance with ambulation may also be necessary following the procedure.

D. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI): Refer to [Chapter 66](#) for information on MRI.

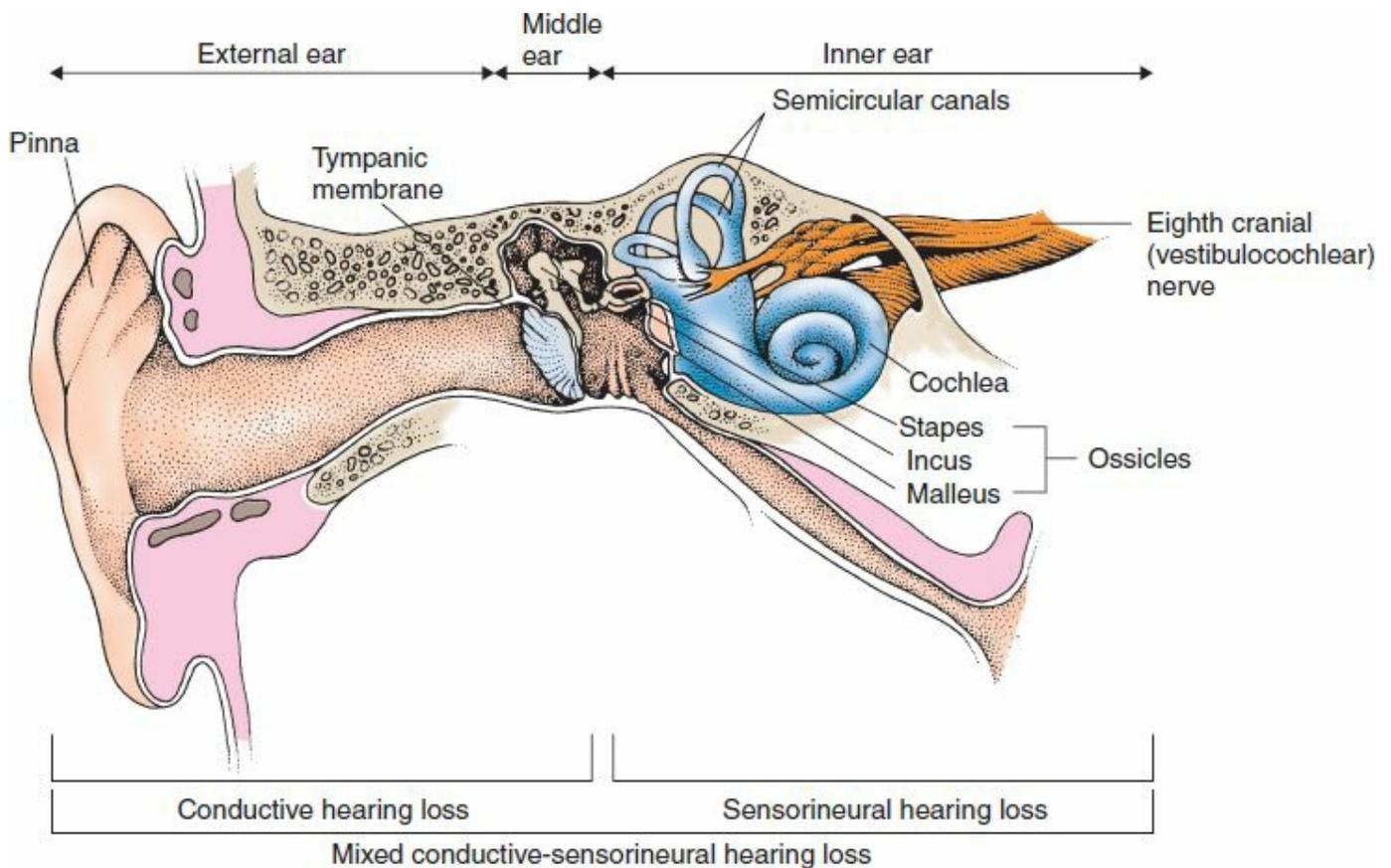
## VIII. Disorders of the Ear

A. Risk factors related to ear disorders ([Box 64-3](#)) ▲

### **BOX 64-3** Risk Factors for Ear Disorders

- Aging process
- Infection
- Medications
- Ototoxicity
- Trauma
- Tumors

B. **Conductive hearing loss** ([Fig. 64-4](#))



**FIGURE 64-4** Anatomy of hearing loss. Hearing loss can be divided into three types: (1) conductive (difficulty in the external or the middle ear); (2) sensorineural (difficulty in the inner ear or acoustic nerve); and (3) mixed conductive-sensorineural (a combination of the two). (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

## 1. Description

- a. Conductive hearing loss occurs when sound waves are blocked to the inner ear fibers because of external or middle ear disorders.
- b. Disorders often can be corrected with no damage to hearing or minimal permanent hearing loss.

## 2. Causes

- a. Any inflammatory process or obstruction of the external or middle ear
- b. Tumors
- c. Otosclerosis
- d. A buildup of scar tissue on the ossicles from previous middle ear surgery

**C. Sensorineural hearing loss** (see [Fig. 64-4](#))

**1. Description**

- a. Sensorineural hearing loss is a pathological process of the inner ear or of the sensory fibers that lead to the cerebral cortex.
- b. Sensorineural hearing loss is often permanent, and measures must be taken to reduce further damage.

**2. Causes**

- a. Damage to the inner ear structures
- b. Damage to the eighth cranial nerve or brain itself
- c. Prolonged exposure to loud noise
- d. Medications
- e. Trauma
- f. Inherited disorders
- g. Metabolic and circulatory disorders
- h. Infections
- i. Surgery
- j. Meniere's syndrome
- k. Diabetes mellitus

## I. Myxedema

### D. Mixed hearing loss (see Fig. 64-4)

1. Mixed hearing loss also is known as conductive-sensorineural hearing loss.
2. Client has both sensorineural and conductive hearing loss.

E. Central hearing loss: Involves the inability to interpret sound, including speech, due to a problem in the brain.

### F. Signs of hearing loss and facilitating communication (Boxes 64-4 and 64-5)

#### **BOX 64-4** Signs of Hearing Loss

- Frequently asking others to repeat statements
- Straining to hear
- Turning head or leaning forward to favor one ear
- Shouting in conversation
- Ringing in the ears
- Failing to respond when not looking in the direction of the sound
- Answering questions incorrectly
- Raising the volume of the television or radio
- Avoiding large groups
- Better understanding of speech when in small groups
- Withdrawing from social interactions

#### **BOX 64-5** Facilitating Communication

- Using written words if the client is able to see, read, and write
- Providing plenty of light in the room
- Getting the attention of the client before beginning to speak
- Facing the client when speaking
- Talking in a room without distracting noises
- Moving close to the client and speaking slowly and clearly
- Keeping hands and other objects away from the mouth when talking to the client
- Talking in normal volume and at a lower pitch because shouting is not helpful and higher frequencies are less easily heard
- Rephrasing sentences and repeating information
- Validating with the client the understanding of statements made by asking the client to repeat what was said
- Reading lips
- Encouraging the client to wear glasses when talking to someone to improve vision for lip reading
- Using sign language, which combines speech with hand movements that signify letters, words, or phrases
- Using telephone amplifiers
- Using flashing lights that are activated by ringing of the telephone or doorbell
- Using specially trained dogs to help the client be aware of sound and alert the client to potential danger

## G. Cochlear implantation

1. Cochlear implants are used for sensorineural hearing loss.
2. A small computer converts sound waves into electrical impulses.
3. Electrodes are placed by the internal ear with a computer device attached to the external ear.
4. Electronic impulses directly stimulate nerve fibers.

## H. Hearing aids

1. Hearing aids are used for the client with conductive hearing loss.
2. Hearing aids have limited value for the client with sensorineural hearing loss, because they only make sounds louder, not clearer.
3. A difficulty that exists in the use of hearing aids is the amplification of background noise and voices.
4. Hearing aids are costly and often not covered by insurance. Some clients can obtain hearing aids through a rehabilitation facility or through other resources.
5. Client education ([Box 64-6](#))

### **BOX 64-6** Client Education Regarding a Hearing Aid

Begin using the hearing aid slowly to adjust to the device.

Adjust the volume to the minimal hearing level to prevent feedback squealing.

Concentrate on the sounds that are to be heard and to filter out background noise.

Clean the ear mold with mild soap and water.

Avoid excessive wetting of the hearing aid and try to keep the hearing aid dry.

Clean the ear cannula of the hearing aid with a toothpick or pipe cleaner.

Turn the hearing aid off before removing from the ear to prevent squealing feedback;  
remove the battery when not in use.

Keep extra batteries on hand.

Keep the hearing aid in a safe place.

Prevent hair sprays, oils, or other hair and face products from coming into contact  
with the receiver of the hearing aid.

## I. Presbycusis

### 1. Description

- a. **Presbycusis** is a sensorineural hearing loss associated with aging.
- b. Presbycusis leads to degeneration or atrophy of the ganglion cells in the cochlea and a loss of elasticity of the basilar membranes.
- c. Presbycusis leads to compromise of the vascular supply to the inner ear, with changes in several areas of the ear structure.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Hearing loss is gradual and bilateral.
- b. Client states that he or she has no problem with hearing but cannot understand what the words are.
- c. Client thinks that the speaker is mumbling.

## J. External otitis

### 1. Description

- a. External otitis is an infective inflammatory or allergic response involving the structure of the external auditory canal or auricles.
- b. An irritating or infective agent comes into contact with the epithelial layer of the external ear.
- c. Contact leads to an allergic response or signs and symptoms of an infection.
- d. The skin becomes red, swollen, and tender to touch on movement.
- e. The extensive swelling of the canal can lead to conductive hearing loss because of obstruction.
- f. External otitis is more common in children; it is termed *swimmer's ear* and occurs more often in hot, humid environments.
- g. Prevention includes the elimination of irritating or infecting agents.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Pain
- b. Itching
- c. Plugged feeling in the ear
- d. Redness and edema
- e. Exudate
- f. Hearing loss

## 3. Interventions

- a. Apply heat locally for 20 minutes three times a day.
- b. Encourage rest to assist in reducing pain.
- c. Administer antibiotics or corticosteroids as prescribed.

- d. Administer analgesics such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) for the pain as prescribed.
- e. Instruct the client that the ears should be kept clean and dry.
- f. Instruct the client to use earplugs for swimming.
- g. Instruct the client that cotton-tipped applicators should not be used because their use can lead to trauma to the canal.
- h. Instruct the client that irritating agents such as hair products or headphones should be discontinued.

**K.** Otitis media: See [Chapter 41](#).

1. Myringotomy: See [Chapter 41](#).

2. Client education ([Box 64-7](#))

#### **BOX 64-7** Client Education Following Myringotomy

Avoid strenuous activities.

Avoid rapid head movements, bouncing, or bending.

Avoid straining on bowel movement.

Avoid drinking through a straw.

Avoid traveling by air.

Avoid forceful coughing.

Avoid contact with persons with colds.

Avoid washing hair, showering, or getting the head wet for 1 week as prescribed.

Instruct the client that if he or she needs to blow the nose, to blow one side at a time

with the mouth open.

Instruct the client to keep ears dry by keeping a ball of cotton coated with petroleum jelly in the ear and to change the cotton ball daily.

Instruct the client to report excessive ear drainage to the health care provider.

## L. Chronic otitis media

### 1. Description

- a. Chronic otitis media is a chronic infective, inflammatory, or allergic response involving the structure of the middle ear.
- b. Frequent removal of debris from the canal may be required.
- c. Myringoplasty can reconstruct the tympanic membrane and ossicles and improve conductive hearing loss.
- d. Mastoidectomy may be performed if the infection has spread to involve the mastoid bone.

 Monitor the client with otitis media closely for response to treatment. Otic and systemic antibiotics may be used to treat the infection, but often the organism is resistant.

### 2. Preoperative interventions

- a. Administer antibiotic drops as prescribed.
- b. Clean the ear of debris as prescribed; irrigate the ear with a solution of equal parts of vinegar and sterile water as prescribed to restore the normal pH of the ear.

- c. Instruct the client to avoid persons with upper respiratory infections.
- d. Instruct the client to obtain adequate rest, eat a balanced diet, and drink adequate fluids.
- e. Instruct the client in deep breathing and coughing; forceful coughing, which increases pressure in the middle ear, is to be avoided postoperatively.

### 3. Postoperative interventions ▲

- a. Inform the client that initial hearing after surgery is diminished because of the packing in the ear canal; hearing improvement will occur after the ear canal packing is removed.
- b. Keep the dressing clean and dry.
- c. Keep the client flat as prescribed, with the operative ear up for at least 12 hours.
- d. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

## M. Mastoiditis

### 1. Description

- a. Mastoiditis may be acute or chronic and results from untreated or inadequately treated chronic or acute otitis media.
- b. The pain is not relieved by myringotomy.

### 2. Assessment ▲

- a. Swelling behind the ear and pain with minimal movement of the head
- b. Cellulitis on the skin or external scalp over the mastoid process
- c. A reddened, dull, thick, immobile tympanic membrane, with or without

perforation

**d.** Tender and enlarged postauricular lymph nodes

**e.** Low-grade fever

**f.** Malaise

**g.** Anorexia

### **3.** Interventions

**a.** Prepare the client for surgical removal of infected material.

**b.** Monitor for complications.

**c.** Simple or modified radical mastoidectomy with tympanoplasty is the most common treatment.

**d.** Once infected tissue is removed, the tympanoplasty is performed to reconstruct the ossicles and tympanic membrane in an attempt to restore normal hearing.

### **4.** Complications

**a.** Damage to the abducens and facial cranial nerves

**b.** Damage is exhibited by inability to look laterally (cranial nerve VI, abducens) and a drooping of the mouth on the affected side (cranial nerve VII, facial).

**c.** Meningitis

**d.** Brain abscess

**e.** Chronic purulent otitis media

**f.** Wound infections

**g.** Vertigo, if the infection spreads into the labyrinth

### **5.** Postoperative interventions

- a.** Monitor for dizziness.
- b.** Monitor for signs of meningitis, as evidenced by a stiff neck and vomiting.
- c.** Prepare for a wound dressing change 24 hours postoperatively.
- d.** Monitor the surgical incision for edema, drainage, and redness.
- e.** Position the client flat with the operative side up as prescribed.
- f.** Restrict the client to bed with bedside commode privileges for 24 hours as prescribed.
- g.** Assist the client with getting out of bed to prevent falling or injuries from dizziness.
- h.** With reconstruction of the ossicles via a graft, take precautions to prevent dislodging of the graft.

## **N.** Otosclerosis

### **1.** Description

- a.** Otosclerosis is a genetic disorder of the labyrinthine capsule of the middle ear that results in a bony overgrowth of the tissue surrounding the ossicles.
- b.** Otosclerosis causes the development of irregular areas of new bone formation and causes the fixation of the bones.
- c.** Stapes fixation leads to a conductive hearing loss.
- d.** If the disease involves the inner ear, sensorineural hearing loss is present.
- e.** Bilateral involvement is common, although hearing loss may be worse in one ear.
- f.** It is thought to be a hereditary autosomal dominant disorder and is most

commonly seen in young women.

- g.** Nonsurgical intervention promotes the improvement of hearing through amplification.
- h.** Surgical intervention involves removal of the bony growth causing the hearing loss.
- i.** A partial stapedectomy or complete stapedectomy with prosthesis (fenestration) may be performed surgically.

## 2. Assessment

- a.** Slowly progressing conductive hearing loss
- b.** Bilateral hearing loss
- c.** A ringing or roaring type of constant tinnitus
- d.** Loud sounds heard in the ear when chewing
- e.** Pinkish discoloration (Schwartz's sign) of the tympanic membrane, which indicates vascular changes within the ear.
- f.** Negative Rinne test
- g.** Weber's test shows lateralization of sound to the ear with the greatest degree of conductive hearing loss.

## O. Fenestration

### 1. Description

- a.** Fenestration is removal of the stapes, with a small hole drilled in the footplate; a prosthesis is connected between the incus and footplate.
- b.** Sounds cause the prosthesis to vibrate in the same manner as the stapes.

c. Complications include complete hearing loss, prolonged vertigo, infection, and facial nerve damage.

## 2. Preoperative interventions

a. Instruct the client in measures to prevent middle ear or external ear infections.

b. Instruct the client to avoid excessive nose blowing.

c. Instruct the client not to clean the ear canal with cotton-tipped applicators and to avoid trauma or injury to the ear canal.

## 3. Postoperative interventions ▲

a. Inform the client that hearing is initially worse after the surgical procedure because of swelling and that no noticeable improvement in hearing may occur for as long as 6 weeks.

b. Inform the client that the Gelfoam ear packing (if used) interferes with hearing but is used to decrease bleeding.

c. Assist with ambulating during the first 1 to 2 days after surgery.

d. Raise side rails per agency guidelines. when in bed.

e. Administer antibiotic, antivertiginous, and pain medications as prescribed.

f. Assess for facial nerve damage, weakness, changes in tactile sensation and taste sensation, vertigo, nausea, and vomiting.

g. Instruct the client to move the head slowly when changing positions to prevent vertigo.

h. Instruct the client to avoid persons with upper respiratory tract infections.

i. Instruct the client to avoid showering and getting the head and wound wet.

- j.** Instruct the client to avoid using small objects (cotton-tipped applicators) to clean the external ear canal.
- k.** Instruct the client to avoid rapid extreme changes in pressure caused by quick head movements, sneezing, nose blowing, straining, and changes in altitude.
- l.** Instruct the client to avoid changes in middle ear pressure because they could dislodge the graft or prosthesis.

## **P. Labyrinthitis**

- 1.** Description: Infection of the labyrinth that occurs as a complication of acute or chronic otitis media
- 2.** May result from growth of a cholesteatoma, a benign overgrowth of squamous cell epithelium in the middle ear
- 3.** Assessment
  - a.** Hearing loss that may be permanent on the affected side
  - b.** Tinnitus
  - c.** Spontaneous nystagmus to the affected side
  - d.** Vertigo
  - e.** Nausea and vomiting
- 4.** Interventions
  - a.** Monitor for signs of meningitis, the most common complication, as evidenced by headache, stiff neck, and lethargy.
  - b.** Administer systemic antibiotics as prescribed.
  - c.** Advise the client to rest in bed in a darkened room.

- d. Administer antiemetics and antivertiginous medications as prescribed.
- e. Instruct the client that the vertigo subsides as the inflammation resolves.
- f. Instruct the client that balance problems that persist may require gait training through physical therapy.

## Q. Ménière's syndrome

### 1. Description

- a. Ménière's syndrome is also called endolymphatic hydrops; it refers to dilation of the endolymphatic system by overproduction or decreased reabsorption of endolymphatic fluid.
- b. The syndrome is characterized by tinnitus, unilateral sensorineural hearing loss, and vertigo.
- c. Symptoms occur in attacks and last for several days, and the client becomes totally incapacitated during the attacks.
- d. Initial hearing loss is reversible but as the frequency of attacks continues, hearing loss becomes permanent.

 A priority nursing intervention in the care of a client with Ménière's syndrome is instituting safety measures.

### 2. Causes

- a. Any factor that increases endolymphatic secretion in the labyrinth
- b. Viral and bacterial infections
- c. Allergic reactions

- d.** Biochemical disturbances
- e.** Vascular disturbance, producing changes in the microcirculation in the labyrinth
- f.** Long-term stress may be a contributing factor.

### **3. Assessment**

- a.** Feelings of fullness in the ear
- b.** Tinnitus, as a continuous low-pitched roar or humming sound, that is present much of the time but worsens just before and during severe attacks
- c.** Hearing loss that is worse during an attack
- d.** Vertigo, that is, a sensation of whirling, that might cause the client to fall to the ground
- e.** Vertigo that is so intense that even while lying down, the client holds the bed or ground in an attempt to prevent the whirling
- f.** Nausea and vomiting
- g.** Nystagmus
- h.** Severe headaches

### **4. Nonsurgical interventions**

- a.** Prevent injury during vertigo attacks.
- b.** Provide bed rest in a quiet environment.
- c.** Provide assistance with walking.
- d.** Instruct the client to move the head slowly to prevent worsening of the vertigo.
- e.** Initiate sodium and fluid restrictions as prescribed.
- f.** Instruct the client to stop smoking.

- g.** Instruct the client to avoid watching television because the flickering of lights may exacerbate symptoms.
- h.** Administer nicotinic acid (niacin) as prescribed for its vasodilatory effect.
- i.** Administer antihistamines as prescribed to reduce the production of histamine and the inflammation.
- j.** Administer antiemetics as prescribed.
- k.** Administer tranquilizers and sedatives as prescribed to calm the client, allow the client to rest, and control vertigo, nausea, and vomiting.
- l.** Mild diuretics may be prescribed to decrease endolymph volume.
- m.** Inform the client about vestibular rehabilitation as prescribed.

## **5. Surgical interventions**

- a.** Surgery is performed when medical therapy is ineffective and the functional level of the client has decreased significantly.
- b.** Endolymphatic drainage and insertion of a shunt may be performed early in the course of the disease to assist with the drainage of excess fluids.
- c.** A resection of the vestibular nerve or total removal of the labyrinth (i.e., a labyrinthectomy) may be performed.

## **6. Postoperative interventions**

- a.** Assess packing and dressing on the ear.
- b.** Speak to the client on the side of the unaffected ear.
- c.** Perform neurological assessments.
- d.** Maintain safety.

- e. Assist with ambulating.
- f. Encourage the client to use a bedside commode rather than ambulating to the bathroom.
- g. Administer antivertiginous and antiemetic medications as prescribed.

## **R. Acoustic neuroma**

### **1. Description**

- a. An acoustic neuroma is a benign tumor of the vestibular or acoustic nerve.
- b. The tumor may cause damage to hearing and to facial movements and sensations.
- c. Treatment includes surgical removal of the tumor via craniotomy.
- d. Care is taken to preserve the function of the facial nerve.
- e. The tumor rarely recurs after surgical removal.
- f. Postoperative nursing care is similar to postoperative craniotomy care.

### **2. Assessment ▲**

- a. Symptoms usually begin with tinnitus and progress to gradual sensorineural hearing loss.
- b. As the tumor enlarges, damage to adjacent cranial nerves occurs.

## **S. Trauma ▲**

### **1. Description**

- a. The tympanic membrane has limited stretching ability and gives way under high pressure.
- b. Foreign objects placed in the external canal may exert pressure on the tympanic

membrane and cause perforation.

- c. If the object continues through the canal, the bony structure of the stapes, incus, and malleus may be damaged.
- d. A blunt injury to the basal skull and ear can damage the middle ear structures through fractures extending to the middle ear.
- e. Excessive nose blowing and rapid changes of pressure that occur with nonpressurized air flights can increase pressure in the middle ear.
- f. Depending on the damage to the ossicles, hearing loss may or may not be reversible.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Tympanic membrane perforations usually heal within 24 hours.
- b. Surgical reconstruction of the ossicles and tympanic membrane through tympanoplasty or myringoplasty may be performed to improve hearing.

## T. Cerumen and foreign bodies

### 1. Description

- a. Cerumen, or wax, is the most common cause of impacted canals.
- b. Foreign bodies can include vegetables, beads, pencil erasers, insects, and other objects.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Sensation of fullness in the ear with or without hearing loss
- b. Pain, itching, or bleeding

### 3. Cerumen

- a. Removal of wax by irrigation is a slow process.
- b. Irrigation is contraindicated in clients with a history of tympanic membrane perforation or otitis media.
- c. If prescribed to soften cerumen, glycerin or mineral oil is placed in the ear at bedtime; hydrogen peroxide may also be prescribed.
- d. After several days, the ear is irrigated.
- e. The maximum amount of solution that should be used for irrigation is 50 to 70 mL. ▲

**⚠ Inform the client that ear candles should never be used to remove cerumen. Their use can cause burns and a vacuum effect, causing a perforation in the tympanic membrane.**

#### 4. Foreign bodies ▲

- a. With a foreign object of vegetable matter, irrigation is used with care because this material expands with hydration.
- b. Insects are killed before removal, unless they can be coaxed out by flashlight or a humming noise; lidocaine may be placed in the ear to relieve pain.
- c. Mineral oil or diluted alcohol is instilled to suffocate the insect, which then is removed using ear forceps.
- d. Use a small ear forceps to remove the object; avoid pushing the object farther into the canal and damaging the tympanic membrane.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** This situation is an emergency. The nurse should immediately accompany the client to a room and notify the health care provider to assess the client. A penetrating eye wound is a serious injury that can cause loss of sight or require loss of the eye (surgical removal). The object is removed only by an ophthalmologist, because it may be holding eye structures in place. X-rays and computed tomography (CT) scans of the orbit are usually obtained to ensure that the orbit of the eye is intact and to look for fractures that might entrap orbital muscles. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is contraindicated because of the possibility of metal-containing projectile movement during the procedure. Surgery is usually needed to remove the foreign object.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1071-1072.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

771. During the early postoperative period, a client who has undergone a cataract extraction complains of nausea and severe eye pain over the operative site. What should be the **initial** nursing action?

1. Call the health care provider (HCP).
2. Reassure the client that this is normal.
3. Turn the client onto his or her operative side.
4. Administer the prescribed pain medication and antiemetic.

772. The nurse is developing a teaching plan for a client with glaucoma. Which instruction should the nurse include in the plan of care?

1. Avoid overuse of the eyes.
2. Decrease the amount of salt in the diet.
3. Eye medications will need to be administered for life.
4. Decrease fluid intake to control the intraocular pressure.

773. The nurse is performing an admission assessment on a client with a diagnosis of detached retina. Which sign/symptom is associated with this eye disorder?

1. Total loss of vision
2. Pain in the affected eye
3. A yellow discoloration of the sclera
4. A sense of a curtain falling across the field of vision

774. The nurse is performing an otoscopic examination on a client with mastoiditis.

On examination of the tympanic membrane, which finding should the nurse expect to observe?

1. A pink-colored tympanic membrane
2. A pearly colored tympanic membrane
3. A transparent and clear tympanic membrane
4. A red, dull, thick, and immobile tympanic membrane

775. A client is diagnosed with a disorder involving the inner ear. Which is the **most** common client complaint associated with a disorder involving this part of the ear?

1. Pruritus
2. Tinnitus
3. Hearing loss
4. Burning in the ear

776. The nurse is performing an assessment on a client with a suspected diagnosis of cataract. What is the chief clinical manifestation that the nurse expects to note in the **early** stages of cataract formation?

1. Diplopia
2. Eye pain
3. Floating spots
4. Blurred vision

777. A client arrives in the emergency department following an automobile crash. The client's forehead hit the steering wheel and a hyphema is diagnosed. The nurse should place the client in which position?

1. Flat in bed
2. A semi-Fowler's position
3. Lateral on the affected side
4. Lateral on the unaffected side

778. The client sustains a contusion of the eyeball following a traumatic injury with a blunt object. Which intervention should be initiated **immediately**?

1. Apply ice to the affected eye.
2. Irrigate the eye with cool water.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Accompany the client to the emergency department.

779. A client arrives in the emergency department with a penetrating eye injury from wood chips that occurred while cutting wood. The nurse assesses the eye and notes a piece of wood protruding from the eye. What is the **initial** nursing action?

1. Apply an eye patch.
2. Perform visual acuity tests.
3. Irrigate the eye with sterile saline.
4. Remove the piece of wood using a sterile eye clamp.

780. The nurse is caring for a client following enucleation and notes the presence of

bright red drainage on the dressing. Which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Document the finding.
2. Continue to monitor the drainage.
3. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Mark the drainage on the dressing and monitor for any increase in bleeding.

**781.** A woman was working in her garden. She accidentally sprayed insecticide into her right eye. She calls the emergency department, frantic and screaming for help. The nurse should instruct the woman to take which **immediate** action?

1. Irrigate the eyes with water.
2. Come to the emergency department.
3. Call the health care provider (HCP).
4. Irrigate the eyes with diluted hydrogen peroxide.

**782.** The nurse is preparing a teaching plan for a client who is undergoing cataract extraction with intraocular implantation. Which home care measures should the nurse include in the plan? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Avoid activities that require bending over.
2. Contact the surgeon if eye scratchiness occurs.
3. Place an eye shield on the surgical eye at bedtime.
4. Episodes of sudden severe pain in the eye are expected.
5. Contact the surgeon if a decrease in visual acuity occurs.
6. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for minor eye discomfort.

**783.** Tonometry is performed on a client with a suspected diagnosis of glaucoma. The nurse looks at the test results documented in the client's chart, knowing that which is the range for normal intraocular pressure?

1. 2 to 7 mm Hg
2. 10 to 21 mm Hg
3. 22 to 30 mm Hg
4. 31 to 35 mm Hg

**784.** The nurse is caring for a client following craniotomy for removal of an acoustic neuroma. Assessment of which cranial nerve would identify a complication specifically associated with this surgery?

1. Cranial nerve I, olfactory
2. Cranial nerve IV, trochlear
3. Cranial nerve III, oculomotor
4. Cranial nerve VII, facial nerve

**785.** The nurse notes that the health care provider has documented a diagnosis of presbycusis on a client's chart. The nurse understands that which describes this condition?

1. Tinnitus that occurs with aging
2. Nystagmus that occurs with aging
3. A conductive hearing loss that occurs with aging
4. A sensorineural hearing loss that occurs with aging

**786.** A client with Ménière's disease is experiencing severe vertigo. Which instruction should the nurse give to the client to assist in controlling the vertigo?

1. Increase sodium in the diet.
2. Avoid sudden head movements.
3. Lie still and watch the television.
4. Increase fluid intake to 3000 mL a day.

**787.** The clinic nurse is preparing to test the visual acuity of a client, using a Snellen chart. Which identifies the accurate procedure for this visual acuity test?

1. The right eye is tested, followed by the left eye, and then both eyes are tested.
2. Both eyes are assessed together, followed by an assessment of the right eye and then the left eye.
3. The client is asked to stand at a distance of 40 feet from the chart and is asked to read the largest line on the chart.
4. The client is asked to stand at a distance of 40 feet from the chart and to read the line that can be read 200 feet away by an individual with unimpaired vision.

**788.** A client's vision is tested with a Snellen chart. The results of the tests are documented as 20/60. How should the nurse interpret this finding?

1. The client is legally blind.
2. The client's vision is normal.
3. The client can read at a distance of 60 feet what a client with normal vision

can read at 20 feet.

4. The client can read only at a distance of 20 feet what a client with normal vision can read at 60 feet.

**789.** The nurse is caring for a hearing-impaired client. Which approach will facilitate communication?

1. Speak loudly.
2. Speak frequently.
3. Speak at a normal volume.
4. Speak directly into the impaired ear.

## ANSWERS

**771. 1**

**Rationale:** Severe pain or pain accompanied by nausea following a cataract extraction is an indicator of increased intraocular pressure and should be reported to the HCP immediately. Options 2, 3, and 4 are inappropriate actions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* and the word *severe*. Eliminate option 2 because this is not a normal condition. The client should not be turned to the operative side; therefore, eliminate option 3. From the remaining options, focusing on the **strategic word** will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Postoperative complications of **cataract surgery**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Pain

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 414-415.

772. 3

**Rationale:** The administration of eye drops is a critical component of the treatment plan for the client with glaucoma. The client needs to be instructed that medications will need to be taken for the rest of his or her life. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not accurate instructions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client teaching for glaucoma. Recalling that medications are an integral component of the treatment plan will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Teaching plan for the client with **glaucoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Sensory Perception

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1065; Lewis et al (2011), p. 422.

773. 4

**Rationale:** A characteristic manifestation of retinal detachment described by the client is the feeling that a shadow or curtain is falling across the field of vision. No pain is associated with detachment of the retina. Options 1 and 3 are not characteristics of this disorder. A retinal detachment is an ophthalmic emergency and even more so if visual acuity is still normal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestations of retinal detachment. Thinking about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Retinal detachment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1069.

774. 4

**Rationale:** Ooscopic examination in a client with mastoiditis reveals a red, dull, thick, and immobile tympanic membrane, with or without perforation. Postauricular lymph nodes are tender and enlarged. Clients also have a low-grade fever, malaise, anorexia, swelling behind the ear, and pain with minimal movement of the head.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the assessment findings in mastoiditis. Think about the pathophysiology associated with mastoiditis and remember that mastoiditis reveals a red, dull, thick, and immobile tympanic membrane.

**Review: Mastoiditis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1094.

775. 2

**Rationale:** Tinnitus is the most common complaint of clients with otological disorders, especially disorders involving the inner ear. Symptoms of tinnitus range from mild ringing in the ear, which can go unnoticed during the day, to a loud roaring in the ear, which can interfere with the client's thinking process and attention span. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not associated specifically with disorders of the inner ear.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Recalling the anatomy and the function of the inner ear will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Inner ear disorders

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1095.

776. 4

**Rationale:** A gradual, painless blurring of central vision is the chief clinical manifestation of a cataract. Early symptoms include slightly blurred vision and a decrease in color perception. Options 1, 2, and 3 are not characteristics of a cataract.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. Remember the pathophysiology related to cataract

development. As a cataract develops, the lens of the eye becomes opaque. This description will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Cataracts** and cataract development

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 412.

777. 2

**Rationale:** A hyphema is the presence of blood in the anterior chamber. Hyphema is produced when a force is sufficient to break the integrity of the blood vessels in the eye and can be caused by direct injury, such as a penetrating injury from a BB or pellet, or indirectly, such as from striking the forehead on a steering wheel during an accident. The client is treated by bed rest in a semi-Fowler's position to assist gravity in keeping the hyphema away from the optical center of the cornea.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the client who has sustained a hyphema. Remember that placing the client flat will produce an increase in pressure at the injured site. Also, note that the correct option is the one that identifies a position different from the other options.

**Review:** **Hyphema**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1071.

778. 1

**Rationale:** Treatment for a contusion begins at the time of injury. Ice is applied immediately. The client then should be seen by an HCP and receive a thorough eye examination to rule out the presence of other eye injuries.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic word** *immediately*. Recalling the principles related to initial treatment of injuries and noting the type of injury sustained will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Emergency treatment of **eye injuries**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1071.

779. 2

**Rationale:** If the eye injury is the result of a penetrating object, the object may be noted protruding from the eye. This object must never be removed except by the ophthalmologist because it may be holding ocular structures in place. Application of an eye patch or irrigation of the eye may disrupt the foreign body and cause further tearing of the cornea.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* and note the word *penetrating*. This should indicate that a

laceration has occurred and that interventions are directed at preventing further disruption of the integrity of the eye. The only option that will prevent further disruption is to assess visual acuity.

**Review:** Emergency **eye care**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1071-1072.

**780. 3**

**Rationale:** If the nurse notes the presence of bright red drainage on the dressing, it must be reported to the HCP, because this indicates hemorrhage. Options 1, 2, and 4 are inappropriate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and the words *bright red*. Remember that bright red drainage indicates active bleeding.

**Review:** Postoperative complications associated with **enucleation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 423.

**781. 1**

**Rationale:** In this type of accident, the client is instructed to irrigate the eyes immediately with running water for at least 20 minutes, or until the emergency medical service personnel arrive. In the emergency department, the cleansing agent of choice is usually normal saline. Calling the HCP and going to the emergency department delays necessary intervention. Hydrogen peroxide is never placed in the eyes.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediate*. Focus on the type of injury and eliminate options 2 and 3 because they delay necessary intervention. Next, eliminate option 4 because hydrogen peroxide is never placed in the eyes.

**Review:** Immediate interventions for a **chemical eye injury**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity.

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Tissue Integrity

**References:** Emergency Nurses Association (2010), p. 609; Lewis et al (2011), p. 408.

❖ **782. 1, 3, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** Following eye surgery, some scratchiness and mild eye discomfort may occur in the operative eye and usually is relieved by mild analgesics. If the eye pain becomes severe, the client should notify the surgeon because this may indicate hemorrhage, infection, or increased intraocular pressure. The nurse also would instruct the client to notify the surgeon of increased purulent drainage, increased redness, or any decrease in visual acuity. The client is instructed to place an eye shield over the operative eye at bedtime to protect the eye from injury during sleep and to avoid activities that increase intraocular pressure, such as bending over.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, postoperative care following eye surgery. Recalling that the eye needs to be protected and that increased intraocular pressure is a concern will assist in determining the home care measures to be included in the plan.

**Review:** **Cataract extraction** with intraocular implant

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1062; Lewis et al (2011), p. 415.

**783. 2**

**Rationale:** Tonometry is a method of measuring intraocular fluid pressure, using a calibrated instrument that indents or flattens the corneal apex. Pressures between 10 and 21 mm Hg are considered within the normal range.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, normal intraocular pressure. Remember that normal intraocular pressure is between 10 and 21 mm Hg.

**Review:** Normal **intraocular pressure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013) p. 1049.

784. 4

**Rationale:** An acoustic neuroma (or vestibular schwannoma) is a unilateral benign tumor that occurs where the vestibulocochlear or acoustic nerve (cranial nerve VIII) enters the internal auditory canal. It is important that an early diagnosis be made because the tumor can compress the trigeminal and facial nerves and arteries within the internal auditory canal. Treatment for acoustic neuroma is surgical removal via a craniotomy. Assessment of the trigeminal and facial nerves is important. Extreme care is taken to preserve remaining hearing and preserve the function of the facial nerve. Acoustic neuromas rarely recur following surgical removal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a complication following surgery. Think about the anatomical location of an acoustic neuroma and the nerves that the neuroma can compress to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Surgical treatment for **acoustic neuroma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1031; Lewis et al (2011), p. 428.

785. 4

**Rationale:** Presbycusis is a type of hearing loss that occurs with aging. Presbycusis is a gradual sensorineural loss caused by nerve degeneration in the inner ear or auditory nerve. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focusing on the **subject**, the description of presbycusis. Remember that presbycusis is a

gradual sensorineural loss.

**Review:** Presbycusis

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1098.

## 786. 2

**Rationale:** The nurse instructs the client to make slow head movements to prevent worsening of the vertigo.

Dietary changes such as salt and fluid restrictions that reduce the amount of endolymphatic fluid are sometimes prescribed. Lying still and watching television will not control vertigo.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, preventing vertigo. Note the relationship between vertigo and avoiding sudden head movements in the correct option.

**Review:** Measures that reduce vertigo in the client with **Ménière's disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1096.

**Rationale:** Visual acuity is assessed in one eye at a time, and then in both eyes together, with the client comfortably standing or sitting. The right eye is tested with the left eye covered; then the left eye is tested with the right eye covered. Both eyes are then tested together. Visual acuity is measured with or without corrective lenses and the client stands at a distance of 20 feet from the chart.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Remember that normal visual acuity as measured by a Snellen chart is 20/20 vision. This should assist in eliminating options 3 and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** in that they indicate standing at a distance of 40 feet. From the remaining options, remember that it is best to test each eye separately and then test both eyes together. This method assesses visual acuity most accurately.

**Review:** Visual acuity testing with use of a **Snellen chart**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1046-1047; Jarvis (2012), pp. 287-288.

**788. 4**

**Rationale:** Vision that is 20/20 is normal—that is, the client is able to read from 20 feet what a person with normal vision can read from 20 feet. A client with a visual acuity of 20/60 can only read at a distance of 20 feet what a person with normal vision can read at 60 feet.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interpreting a Snellen chart result. Note the test result, 20/60, to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Interpretation of **visual acuity** test results

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), p. 288.

### 789. 3

**Rationale:** Speaking in a normal tone to the client with impaired hearing and not shouting are important. The nurse should talk directly to the client while facing the client and speak clearly. If the client does not seem to understand what is said, the nurse should express it differently. Moving closer to the client and toward the better ear may facilitate communication, but the nurse should avoid talking directly into the impaired ear.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an effective communication technique for the hearing impaired.

Remember that it is important to speak in a normal tone.

**Review:** Effective communication techniques for the **hearing impaired**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1103.





## CHAPTER 65

# Ophthalmic and Otic Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A client who requires the instillation of eyedrops three times daily tells the clinic nurse that he lives alone. He verbalizes concern about the ability to administer the drops because his hands are shaky. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 915.*

### I. Ophthalmic Medication Administration

#### A. Guidelines for the use of eye medications ▲

1. Eye medications are usually in the form of drops or ointments.
2. To prevent overflow of medication into the nasal and pharyngeal passages, thus reducing systemic absorption, instruct the client to apply pressure over the inner canthus next to the nose for 30 to 60 seconds following administration of the medication; instruct the client to close the eye gently to help distribute the medication (Fig. 65-1).



**FIGURE 65-1** Applying punctal occlusion to prevent systemic absorption of eyedrops. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

3. If both an eyedrop and eye ointment are scheduled to be administered at the same time, administer the eyedrop first.
4. Wash hands and don gloves before administering eye medications to avoid contaminating the eye or medication dropper or applicator.
5. Use a separate bottle or tube of medication for each client to avoid accidental cross-contamination.
6. Place the prescribed dose of eye medication in the lower conjunctival sac, never directly onto the cornea.
7. Avoid touching any part of the eye with the dropper or applicator.
8. Administer glucocorticoid preparations before other medications.
9. Monitor the pulse and blood pressure if receiving an ophthalmic  $\beta$ -blocker, and

instruct the client to do the same; the nurse should obtain pulse parameters from the health care provider (HCP).

10. Instruct the client how to instill medication correctly and supervise instillation until the client can do it safely; adaptive devices that position the bottle of eyedrops directly over the eye can also be purchased if instillation is difficult for the client.
11. Instruct the client to read the medication labels carefully to ensure administration of the correct medication and correct strength.
12. Remind the client to keep these medications out of the reach of children.
13. Instruct the client to avoid driving or operating hazardous equipment if vision is blurred.
14. Inform the client that he or she may be unable to drive home after eye examinations when a medication to dilate the pupil (**mydriatic**) or to paralyze the ciliary muscle (cycloplegic) is used.
15. If photophobia occurs, instruct the client to wear sunglasses and avoid bright lights.
16. Instruct the client to administer a missed dose of the eye medication as soon as it is remembered, unless the next dose is scheduled to be administered in 1 to 2 hours.
17. Inform the client with **glaucoma** that the disorder cannot be cured, only controlled.
18. Reinforce the importance of using medications to treat glaucoma as prescribed and not to discontinue these medications without consulting the HCP.

19. Inform the client that medications used to treat glaucoma may cause pain and blurred vision, especially when therapy is begun.
20. Instruct the client to report the development of any eye irritation.
21. Inform the client using eye gel to store the gel at room temperature or in the refrigerator, but not to freeze it.
22. Instruct the client to discard unused eye gel kept at room temperature as recommended by the HCP and/or the pharmacist.
23. Inform the client that soft contact lenses may absorb certain eye medications and that preservatives in eye medications may discolor the contact lenses.
24. Advise the client wearing contact lenses to question the HCP carefully about special precautions to observe with eye medications.
25. Inform the parents of infants that atropine sulfate eyedrops may contribute to abdominal distention.
26. Instruct the parents to keep a record of the infant's bowel movements if atropine sulfate eyedrops are being administered.
27. Auscultate bowel sounds of the infant or child receiving atropine sulfate eyedrops.

 Because the timing of medication administration is critical, administer eye medications at frequent, precise intervals; separate the instillation by 3 to 5 minutes if two medications must be administered at the same time.

## **B. Instillation of eye medications**

### **1. Drops**

- a. Wash hands.

- b.** Put gloves on.
- c.** Check the name, strength, and expiration date of the medication.
- d.** Instruct the client to tilt the head backward, open the eyes, and look up.
- e.** Pull the lower lid down against the cheekbone.
- f.** Hold the bottle like a pencil, with the tip downward.
- g.** Holding the bottle, gently rest the wrist of the hand on the client's cheek.
- h.** Squeeze the bottle gently to allow the drop to fall into the conjunctival sac.
- i.** Instruct the client to close the eyes gently and not to squeeze the eyes shut.
- j.** Wait 3 to 5 minutes before instilling another drop, if more than one drop is prescribed, to promote maximal absorption of the medication.
- k.** Do not allow the medication bottle, dropper, or applicator to come into contact with the eyelid or conjunctival sac.
- l.** To prevent systemic absorption of the medication, apply gentle pressure with a clean tissue to the client's nasolacrimal duct for 30 to 60 seconds (see [Fig. 65-1](#)).

## **2. Ointments**

- a.** Instruct the client to lie down or tilt head backward and look up.
- b.** Hold the ointment tube near, but not touching, the eye or eyelashes.
- c.** Squeeze a thin ribbon of ointment along the lining of the lower conjunctival sac, from the inner to the outer canthus.
- d.** Instruct the client to close the eyes gently, rolling the eyeball in all directions (increases contact area of medication to eye).

- e. Instruct the client that vision may be blurred by the ointment.
- f. If possible, apply ointment just before bedtime.

## II. Mydriatic, Cycloplegic, and Anticholinergic Medications (Box 65-1)

### BOX 65-1 Mydriatic, Cycloplegic, and Anticholinergic Medications

- Atropine (Isopto Atropine)
- Cyclopentolate (AK-Pentolate, Cyclogyl)
- Homatropine (Isopto Homatropine)
- Phenylephrine (AK-Dilate, Mydfrin)
- Scopolamine (Isopto Hyoscine)
- Tropicamide (Mydriacyl, Tropicacyl)

#### A. Description

1. Mydriatics and cycloplegics dilate the pupils (**mydriasis**) and relax the ciliary muscles (**cycloplegia**).
2. Anticholinergics block responses of the sphincter muscle in the ciliary body, producing mydriasis and cycloplegia.
3. These medications are used preoperatively or for eye examinations to produce mydriasis.
4. Mydriatics are contraindicated in cardiac dysrhythmias and cerebral atherosclerosis and should be used with caution in the older client and in clients with prostatic hypertrophy, diabetes mellitus, or parkinsonism.

## **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Tachycardia
2. Photophobia
3. Conjunctivitis
4. Dermatitis
5. Elevated blood pressure

## **C. Atropine toxicity**

1. Dry mouth
2. Blurred vision
3. Photophobia
4. Tachycardia
5. Fever
6. Urinary retention
7. Constipation
8. Headache, brow pain
9. Worsening of **glaucoma**
10. Confusion
11. Hallucinations, delirium
12. Coma

## **D. Systemic reactions to anticholinergics**

1. Dry mouth and skin
2. Fever

3. Thirst
4. Hyperactivity
5. Confusion

#### E. Interventions

1. Monitor for allergic response.
2. Assess for risk of injury.
3. Assess for constipation and urinary retention.
4. Instruct the client that a burning sensation may occur on instillation.
5. Instruct the client not to drive or perform hazardous activities for 24 hours after instillation of the medication unless otherwise directed by the HCP.
6. Instruct the client to wear sunglasses until the effects of the medication wear off.
7. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if blurring of vision, loss of sight, difficulty breathing, sweating, or flushing occurs.
8. Instruct the client to report eye pain to the HCP.

 Mydriatics are contraindicated in clients with glaucoma because of the risk of increased intraocular pressure.

### III. Antiinfective Eye Medications (Box 65-2)

#### **BOX 65-2** Antiinfective Eye Medications

##### Antibacterial

- Chloramphenicol

- Erythromycin (Ilotycin, Romycin)

### Aminoglycosides

- Gentamicin sulfate (Garamycin, Genoptic)
- Tobramycin (Tobrex)

### Antifungal

- Natamycin (Natacyn)

### Antiviral

- Ganciclovir (Zirgan)
- Trifluridine (Viroptic)

### Sulfonamide

- Sulfacetamide (Bleph-10)

- A.** Description: Antiinfective medications kill or inhibit the growth of bacteria, fungi, and viruses.
- B.** Side/adverse effects
1. Superinfection
  2. Global irritation
- C.** Interventions
1. Assess for risk of injury. ▲
  2. Instruct the client how to apply the eye medication; remind the client to clean exudates from the eyes before administering the medication.

3. Reinforce the importance of completing the prescribed medication regimen.
4. Instruct the client to wash the hands thoroughly and frequently.
5. Advise the client that if improvement does not occur to notify the HCP.

#### IV. Antiinflammatory Eye Medications (Box 65-3)

##### **BOX 65-3** Antiinflammatory Eye Medications

###### Corticosteroids

- Dexamethasone (Maxidex, others)
- Fluorometholone; sulfacetamide (FML-S eyedrop suspension)
- Loteprednol etabonate (Alrex, Lotemax)
- Prednisolone, gentamicin (PRED FORTE, PRED-G, others)
- Rimexolone (Vexol)

###### Ophthalmic Immunosuppressant and Antiinflammatory Agent

- Cyclosporine (Restasis)

###### Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Agents

- Diclofenac (Voltaren)
- Flurbiprofen sodium (Ocufen)
- Ketorolac tromethamine

###### Mast Cell Stabilizers

- Azelastine hydrochloride (Optivar)

- Cromolyn sodium (Crolom)
- Epinastine (Elestat)
- Ketotifen fumarate (Zaditor, Alaway)
- Lodoxamide (Alomide)
- Nedocromil sodium (Alocril)
- Olopatadine hydrochloride (Patanol)
- Pemirolast potassium (Alamast)

### **H<sub>1</sub> Receptor Blocker**

- Emedastine difumarate (Emadine)

#### **A. Description**

1. Antiinflammatory medications control inflammation, thereby reducing vision loss and scarring.
2. Antiinflammatory medications are used for uveitis, allergic conditions, and inflammation of the conjunctiva, cornea, and lids.

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. **Cataracts**
2. Increased intraocular pressure
3. Impaired healing
4. Masking signs and symptoms of infection

#### **C. Interventions**

1. Interventions are the same as for antiinfective medications.

2. Note that dexamethasone (Maxidex) should not be used for eye abrasions and wounds. ▲

## V. Topical Eye Anesthetics

### A. Description

1. Topical anesthetics produce corneal anesthesia.
2. Topical anesthetics are used for anesthesia for eye examinations and surgery or to remove foreign bodies from the eye.
3. Do not use the solution if it is discolored, and store the bottle tightly closed.
4. Medications: Proparacaine hydrochloride (Ophthetic); tetracaine (Altacaine, TetraVisc)

### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Temporary stinging or burning of the eye
2. Temporary loss of corneal reflex

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Assess for risk of injury.
2. Note that the medications should not be given to the client for home use and are not to be self-administered by the client.
3. Instruct the client not to rub or touch the eye while it is anesthetized.
4. Note that the blink reflex is lost temporarily and that the corneal epithelium needs to be protected.
5. Provide an eye patch to protect the eye from injury until the corneal reflex returns.

## VI. Eye Lubricants (Box 65-4)

### BOX 65-4 Eye Lubricants

- Carboxymethylcellulose (Refresh, Theratears)
- Hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (Lacril, Isopto Plain)
- Petroleum-based ointment (Artificial Tears)
- Polyvinyl alcohol (Liquifilm Tears)

## VII. Medications to Treat Glaucoma (Box 65-5) ▲

### BOX 65-5 Medications to Treat Glaucoma

#### Miotics

- Echothiophate
- Pilocarpine hydrochloride (Isopto Carpine)

#### $\beta$ -Adrenergic Blocking Eye Medications

- Betaxolol hydrochloride (Betoptic)
- Carteolol hydrochloride (Ocupress)
- Levobunolol hydrochloride (Betagan Liquifilm)
- Metipranolol (OptiPranolol)
- Timolol maleate (Timoptic)

#### $\alpha$ -Adrenergic Agonists

- Apraclonidine (Iopidine)

- Brimonidine (Alphagan P)

### Prostaglandin Analogues

- Latanoprost (Xalatan)
- Tafluprost (Zioptan)
- Travoprost (Travatan)
- Bimatoprost (Lumigan)

### Cholinergic Agonists

- Pilocarpine hydrochloride (Isopto Carpine, others)
- Echothiophate iodide (Phospholine Iodide)

### Carbonic Anhydrase Inhibitors

- Dorzolamide (Trusopt)
- Brinzolamide (Azopt)

### Nonselective Adrenergic Agonist

- Dipivefrin (Propine)

## A. Description

1. Eye lubricants replace tears or add moisture to the eyes.
2. Eye lubricants moisten contact lenses or an artificial eye and protect the eyes during surgery or diagnostic procedures.
3. Eye lubricants are used for keratitis, during anesthesia, or for a disorder that results in unconsciousness or decreased blinking.

## B. Side/adverse effects ▲

1. Burning on instillation
2. Discomfort or pain on instillation
3. Allergic reaction

## C. Interventions

1. Inform the client that burning may occur on instillation.
2. Be alert to allergic responses to the preservatives in the lubricants.

## A. Description

1. These medications reduce intraocular pressure by constricting the pupil and contracting the ciliary muscle, thereby increasing the blood flow to the retina and decreasing retinal damage and loss of vision.
2. These medications open the anterior chamber angle and increase the outflow of aqueous humor.
3. Some may be used to achieve **miosis** during eye surgery.
4. Contraindicated in clients with retinal detachment, adhesions between the iris and lens, or inflammatory diseases.
5. Use with caution in clients with asthma, hypertension, corneal abrasion, hyperthyroidism, coronary vascular disease, urinary tract obstruction, gastrointestinal obstruction, ulcer disease, parkinsonism, and bradycardia.

## B. Side effects

1. **Myopia**
2. Headache

3. Eye pain
4. Decreased vision in poor light
5. Local irritation

**C. Adverse/systemic effects**

1. Flushing
2. Diaphoresis
3. Gastrointestinal upset and diarrhea
4. Frequent urination
5. Increased salivation
6. Muscle weakness
7. Respiratory difficulty

**D. Toxicity**

1. Vertigo and syncope
2. Bradycardia or other dysrhythmias
3. Hypotension
4. Tremors
5. Seizures

**E. Interventions**

1. Assess vital signs.
2. Assess for risk of injury.
3. Assess the client for the degree of diminished vision.
4. Monitor for side effects and toxic effects.

5. Monitor for postural hypotension, and instruct the client to change positions slowly.
6. Assess breath sounds for wheezes and rhonchi because some medications can cause bronchospasms and increased bronchial secretions.
7. Maintain oral hygiene because of the increase in salivation.
8. Have atropine sulfate available as an antidote for pilocarpine.
9. Instruct the client or family regarding the correct administration of eye medications.
10. Instruct the client not to stop the medication suddenly.
11. Instruct the client to avoid activities such as driving while vision is impaired.

 Instruct the client with glaucoma to read labels on over-the-counter medications and to avoid atropine-like medications because atropine will increase intraocular pressure.

## VIII. $\beta$ -Adrenergic Blocker Eye Medications (see Box 65-5)

### A. Description

1. These medications reduce intraocular pressure by decreasing sympathetic impulses and decreasing aqueous humor production without affecting **accommodation** or pupil size.
2. These medications are used to treat glaucoma.
3. These medications are contraindicated in the client with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease because systemic absorption can cause increased airway resistance.

4. Use these medications with caution in the client receiving oral  $\beta$ -blockers.

**B. Side/adverse effects** ▲

1. Ocular irritation
2. Visual disturbances
3. Bradycardia
4. Hypotension
5. Bronchospasm

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs, especially blood pressure and pulse, before administering medication.
2. Usually if the pulse is 60 beats/minute or less or if the systolic blood pressure is less than 90 mm Hg, the medication is withheld and the HCP is contacted. The nurse should obtain pulse parameters from the HCP for clients receiving ophthalmic  $\beta$ -blockers.
3. Monitor for shortness of breath.
4. Assess for risk of injury.
5. Monitor intake and output.
6. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if shortness of breath occurs.
7. Instruct the client not to discontinue the medication abruptly.
8. Instruct the client to change positions slowly because of the potential for orthostatic hypotension.
9. Instruct the client to avoid hazardous activities.

10. Instruct the client to avoid over-the-counter medications without the HCP's approval.
11. Instruct clients with diabetes mellitus using  $\beta$ -adrenergic blockers to monitor blood glucose levels frequently.

## **IX. Carbonic Anhydrase Inhibitors (see Box 65-5)**

### **A. Description**

1. Carbonic anhydrase inhibitors interfere with the production of carbonic acid, which leads to decreased aqueous humor formation and decreased intraocular pressure.
2. These medications are used for the long-term treatment of glaucoma.
3. These medications are contraindicated in the client allergic to sulfonamides.
4. Use with caution for clients with severe renal or liver disease.

### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Appetite loss
2. Gastrointestinal upset
3. Paresthesias in the fingers, toes, and face
4. Polyuria
5. Hypokalemia
6. Renal calculi
7. Photosensitivity
8. Lethargy and drowsiness

## 9. Depression

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess visual acuity.
3. Assess for risk of injury.
4. Monitor intake and output.
5. Monitor weight.
6. Maintain oral hygiene.
7. Monitor for side effects such as lethargy, anorexia, drowsiness, polyuria, nausea, and vomiting.
8. Monitor electrolyte levels for hypokalemia.
9. Increase fluid intake unless contraindicated.
10. Advise the client to avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight.
11. Encourage the use of artificial tears for dry eyes.
12. Instruct the client not to discontinue the medication abruptly.
13. Instruct the client to avoid hazardous activities while vision is impaired.
14. Teach the client not to wear contact lenses during or within 15 minutes of instilling these medications.

## X. Ocusert System

### A. Description

1. A thin eye wafer (disk) is impregnated with a time-release dose of pilocarpine

(Ocuser Pilo-20, Ocuser Pilo-40).

2. The Ocuser system was devised to overcome the need for frequent instillation of pilocarpine.
3. It is placed in the upper or lower cul-de-sac of the eye.
4. The pilocarpine is released over 1 week.
5. The disk is replaced every 7 days.
6. Drawbacks of its use include sudden leakage of pilocarpine, migration of the system over the cornea, and unnoticed loss of the system.

#### **B. Interventions** ▲

1. Assess the client's ability to insert the medication disk.
2. Store the medication in the refrigerator.
3. Instruct the client to discard damaged or contaminated disks.
4. Inform the client that temporary stinging is expected but to notify the HCP if blurred vision or brow pain occurs.
5. Instruct the client to check for the presence of the disk in the conjunctival sac daily at bedtime and on arising.
6. Because vision may change in the first few hours after the eye system is inserted, instruct the client to replace the disk at bedtime.

## **XI. Osmotic Medications**

### **A. Mannitol (Osmitol)**

#### **B. Description**

1. Osmotic medications lower intraocular pressure.

2. Osmotic medications are used in emergency treatment of glaucoma.
3. Osmotic medications are used preoperatively and postoperatively to decrease vitreous humor volume.

#### C. Side/adverse effects

1. Headache
2. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration
3. Disorientation
4. Electrolyte imbalances

#### D. Interventions

1. Assess vital signs.
2. Assess visual acuity.
3. Assess for risk of injury.
4. Monitor intake and output.
5. Monitor weight.
6. Monitor for electrolyte imbalances.
7. Increase fluid intake unless contraindicated.
8. Monitor for changes in level of orientation.

## **XII. Medications to Treat Macular Degeneration**

A. Pegaptanib (Macugen), ranizumab (Lucentis), bevacizumab (Avastin), aflibercept (EYLEA)

B. Description

1. Age-related **macular** degeneration (ARMD) can be dry ARMD (atrophic ARMD) or wet ARMD (neovascular)
2. Dry is more common; macular photoreceptors undergo gradual breakdown, leading to gradual blurring of central vision.
3. Wet progresses faster and macular degeneration is caused by the growth of new subretinal blood vessels, which leads to fluid leakage that lifts the macula and causes permanent injury.
4. Characterized by the presence of drusen (yellow deposits under the retina).

#### C. Side/adverse effects

1. Endophthalmitis (eye inflammation caused by bacterial, viral, or fungal infection)
2. Blurred vision
3. Cataracts
4. Corneal edema
5. Eye discomfort and discharge
6. Conjunctival hemorrhage
7. Increased intraocular pressure
8. Reduced visual acuity

#### D. Interventions

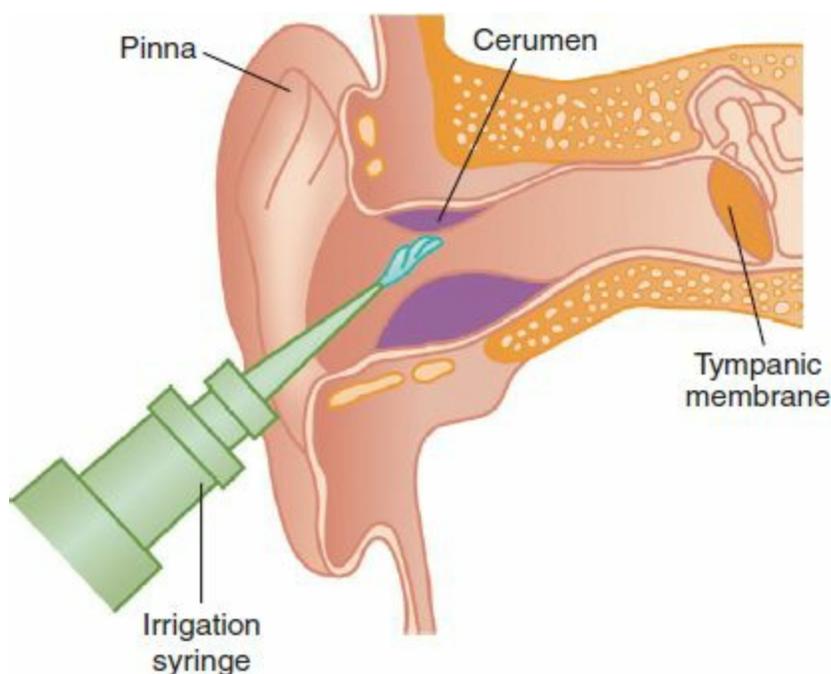
1. Teach the client about administration of the medications.
2. Teach the client about the side effects and the need to notify the HCP.

### **XIII. Otic Medication Administration**

## A. Instillation of eardrops ▲

1. In an adult, pull the pinna up and back to straighten the external canal to instill eardrops.
2. Tilt the client's head in the opposite direction of the affected ear and apply the drops into the ear.
3. With the head tilted, gently move the head back and forth five times.
4. Pull the pinna down and back for infants and children younger than 3 years, up and back for older children.

## B. Irrigation of the ear (Fig. 65-2) ▲



**FIGURE 65-2** Irrigation of the external canal. Cerumen and debris can be removed from the ear by irrigation with warm water. The stream of water is aimed above or below the impaction to allow back-pressure to push it out rather than further down the canal. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

1. Irrigation of the ear needs to be prescribed by the HCP.
2. Ensure direct visualization of the tympanic membrane.
3. Warm the irrigating solution to 98.6° F because a solution temperature that is not close to the client's body temperature will cause ear injury, nausea, and vertigo.
4. Irrigation must be done gently to avoid damage to the eardrum.
5. When irrigating, to prevent injury, do not direct irrigation solution directly toward the eardrum but rather toward the wall of the ear canal. In addition, to remove cerumen, the solution is directed above or below the impaction toward the wall of the canal to allow back-pressure to push the impaction out.

C. Systemic medications that affect hearing ([Box 65-6](#))

### **BOX 65-6** Medications That Affect Hearing

#### **Antibiotics**

- Amikacin (Amikin)
- Chloramphenicol
- Erythromycin (ERYC, Ery-Tab, PCE Dispertab, Ilotycin)
- Gentamicin (Garamycin, Gentak)
- Streptomycin sulfate
- Tobramycin sulfate (Nebcin)
- Vancomycin (Vancocin)

#### **Diuretics**

- Ethacrynic acid (Edecrin)
- Furosemide (Lasix)

### Others

- Cisplatin (Platinol)
- Nitrogen mustard (Mustargen)
- Quinine (Qualaquin)
- Quinidine

 If a perforation of the eardrum is suspected, do not perform an ear irrigation.

## XIV. Antiinfective Ear Medications (Box 65-7)

### BOX 65-7 Antiinfective Ear Medications

- Acetic acid; aluminum acetate (Domeboro Otic)
- Amoxicillin (Amoxil)
- Ampicillin
- Cefaclor (Ceclor)
- Chloramphenicol
- Clarithromycin (Biaxin)
- Clindamycin hydrochloride (Cleocin)
- Erythromycin (Ilotycin)
- Gentamicin sulfate otic solution (Garamycin)

- Penicillin V potassium (Veetids)
- Trimethoprim; sulfamethoxazole (Bactrim)

#### A. Description

1. Antiinfective medications kill or inhibit the growth of bacteria and are used for otitis media or otitis externa.
2. Antiinfective medications are contraindicated if a prior hypersensitivity exists.

#### B. Side/adverse effects: Overgrowth of nonsusceptible organisms

#### C. Interventions ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess for allergies.
3. Assess for pain.
4. Monitor for signs of secondary infection.
5. Instruct the client to report dizziness, fatigue, fever, or sore throat, which may indicate a superimposed infection.
6. Instruct the client to complete the entire course of the medication.
7. Instruct the client to keep ear canals dry.

### **XV. Antihistamines and Decongestants (Box 65-8)**

#### **BOX 65-8** Antihistamines/Decongestants

- Loratadine (Claritin)
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)

- Fexofenadine (Allegra)
- Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed)

#### A. Description

1. These medications produce vasoconstriction.
2. These medications stimulate the receptors of the respiratory mucosa.
3. These medications reduce respiratory tissue hyperemia and edema to open obstructed eustachian tubes.
4. These medications are used for acute otitis media.

#### B. Side effects

1. Drowsiness
2. Blurred vision
3. Dry mucous membranes

#### C. Interventions

1. Inform the client that drowsiness, blurred vision, and a dry mouth may occur. ▲
2. Instruct the client to increase fluid intake unless contraindicated and to suck on hard candy to alleviate the dry mouth.
3. Instruct the client to avoid hazardous activities if drowsiness occurs.

## XVI. Local Anesthetics

#### A. Description

1. Local anesthetics block nerve conduction at or near the application site to control

pain.

2. Local anesthetics are used for pain associated with ear infections.

**B. Medication: Benzocaine-antipyrine-phenylephrine (Otogesic)**

**C. Side/adverse effects**

1. Allergic reaction

2. Irritation

**D. Interventions**

1. Monitor for effectiveness if used for pain relief.

2. Assess for irritation or allergic reaction.

## **XVII. Ceruminolytic Medication**

**A. Carbamide peroxide (Debrox)**

**B. Description**

1. Emulsifies and loosens cerumen deposits.

2. Used to loosen and remove impacted wax from the ear canal.

**C. Side effects**

1. Irritation

2. Redness or swelling of the ear canal

**D. Interventions** ▲

1. Instruct the client not to use drops more often than prescribed.

2. Moisten a cotton plug with medication and insert the cotton plug after instilling the ear drops.

3. Keep the container tightly closed and away from moisture.

4. Avoid touching the ear with the dropper.
5. Thirty minutes after instillation, gently irrigate the ear as prescribed with warm water, using a soft rubber bulb ear syringe.
6. Irrigation may be done with hydrogen peroxide solution as prescribed to flush cerumen deposits out of the ear canal.
7. For a chronic cerumen impaction, one or two drops of mineral oil (if prescribed) will soften the wax.
8. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if redness, pain, or swelling persists.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* If the client lives alone and has a physical condition that may affect instilling the eyedrops, the clinic nurse should arrange for a home care nurse to assess the client and the home situation. If the client is unable to instill eyedrops independently, a friend, neighbor, or family member can be taught the technique if possible. In addition, adaptive equipment that positions the bottle of eyedrops directly over the eye can be purchased and used by the client who has difficulty instilling eyedrops.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1061-1062.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**790.** Betaxolol hydrochloride eyedrops have been prescribed for a client with glaucoma. Which nursing action is **most appropriate** related to monitoring for side/adverse effects of this medication?

1. Monitoring temperature
2. Monitoring blood pressure
3. Assessing peripheral pulses
4. Assessing blood glucose level

**791.** The nurse is preparing to administer eyedrops. Which interventions should the nurse take to administer the drops? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Wash hands.
2. Put gloves on.
3. Place the drop in the conjunctival sac.
4. Pull the lower lid down against the cheek bone.
5. Instruct the client to squeeze the eyes shut after instilling the eyedrop.
6. Instruct the client to tilt the head forward, open the eyes, and look down.

**792.** The nurse prepares a client for an ear irrigation as prescribed by the health care provider. Which action should the nurse take when performing the procedure?

1. Warm the irrigating solution to 98.6° F.
2. Position the client with the affected side up following the irrigation.
3. Direct a slow steady stream of irrigation solution toward the eardrum.

4. Assist the client to turn his or her head so that the ear to be irrigated is facing upward.

**793.** The nurse is providing instructions to a client who will be self-administering eyedrops. To minimize systemic absorption of the eyedrops, the nurse should instruct the client to take which action?

1. Eat before instilling the drops.
2. Swallow several times after instilling the drops.
3. Blink vigorously to encourage tearing after instilling the drops.
4. Occlude the nasolacrimal duct with a finger after instilling the drops.

**794.** A client is prescribed an eyedrop and an eye ointment for the right eye. How should the nurse **best** administer the medications?

1. Administer the eyedrop first, followed by the eye ointment.
2. Administer the eye ointment first, followed by the eyedrop.
3. Administer the eyedrop, wait 15 minutes, and administer the eye ointment.
4. Administer the eye ointment, wait 15 minutes, and administer the eyedrop.

**795.** Which medication, if prescribed for the client with glaucoma, should the nurse question?

1. Betaxolol (Betoptic)
2. Atropine sulfate (Isopto Atropine)
3. Pilocarpine hydrochloride (Isopto Carpine)
4. Pilocarpine (Ocusert Pilo-20, Ocusert Pilo-40)

**796.** A miotic medication has been prescribed for the client with glaucoma and the client asks the nurse about the purpose of the medication. Which response should the nurse provide to the client?

1. “The medication will help dilate the eye to prevent pressure from occurring.”
2. “The medication will relax the muscles of the eyes and prevent blurred vision.”
3. “The medication causes the pupil to constrict and will lower the pressure in the eye.”
4. “The medication will help block the responses that are sent to the muscles in the eye.”

**797.** A client was just admitted to the hospital to rule out a gastrointestinal (GI) bleed. The client has brought several bottles of medications prescribed by different specialists. During the admission assessment, the client states, “Lately, I have been hearing some roaring sounds in my ears, especially when I am alone.” Which medication would the nurse identify as the cause of the client’s complaint?

1. Doxycycline (Vibramycin)
2. Acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin)
3. Atropine sulfate (Isopto Atropine)
4. Diltiazem hydrochloride (Cardizem)

**798.** In preparation for cataract surgery, the nurse is to administer cyclopentolate (Cyclogyl) eyedrops. The nurse understands that which characterizes the

medication action?

1. Produces miosis of the operative eye
2. Dilates the pupil of the operative eye
3. Constricts the pupil of the operative eye
4. Provides lubrication to the operative eye

## ANSWERS

790. 2

**Rationale:** Hypotension, dizziness, nausea, diaphoresis, headache, fatigue, constipation, and diarrhea are side/adverse effects of the medication. Nursing interventions include monitoring the blood pressure for hypotension and assessing the pulse for strength, weakness, irregular rate, and bradycardia. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not specifically associated with this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to direct you to the correct option. Although peripheral pulses, an incorrect option, also are related to circulation monitoring, the blood pressure is the **umbrella** option.

**Review:** **Betaxolol hydrochloride**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Sensory Perception

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1066; Lehne (2013), pp. 175-176.

❖ 791. 1, 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** To administer eye medications, the nurse should wash hands and put gloves on. The client is instructed to tilt the head backward, open the eyes, and look up. The nurse pulls the lower lid down against the cheekbone and holds the bottle like a pencil with the tip downward. Holding the bottle, the nurse gently rests the wrist of the hand on the client's cheek and squeezes the bottle gently to allow the drop to fall into the conjunctival sac. The client is instructed to close the eyes gently and not to squeeze the eyes shut to prevent the loss of medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for administering eyedrops. Use guidelines related to standard precautions and visualize this procedure. This will assist in determining the correct interventions.

**Review:** Procedure for administering **eye medications**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 616-619.

792. 1

**Rationale:** Before ear irrigation, the nurse should inspect the tympanic membrane to ensure that it is intact. The irrigating solution should be warmed to 98.6 ° F because a solution temperature that is not close to the client's body temperature will cause ear injury, nausea, and vertigo. The affected side should be down following the irrigation to assist in drainage of the fluid. When irrigating, a direct and slow steady stream of irrigation solution is directed

toward the wall of the canal, not toward the eardrum. The client is positioned sitting, facing forward with the head in a natural position; if the ear is faced upward, the nurse would not be able to visualize the canal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for performing an ear irrigation. Think about the purpose of this procedure and keep safety in mind. Visualizing each step and the information in the options will assist in eliminating the incorrect ones.

**Review:** The procedure for **ear irrigation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Sensory Perception

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1091; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 250-252.

**793. 4**

**Rationale:** Applying pressure on the nasolacrimal duct prevents systemic absorption of the medication. Options 1, 2, and 3 will not prevent systemic absorption.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, systemic effects. Eating and swallowing are **comparable or alike** options and are not related to the systemic absorption of eyedrops. Blinking vigorously to produce tearing may result in the loss of the administered medication.

**Review:** The procedure for administering **eyedrops**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Lilley et al (2014), p. 128

**794. 1**

**Rationale:** When an eyedrop and an eye ointment are scheduled to be administered at the same time, the eyedrop is administered first. The instillation of two medications is separated by 3 to 5 minutes.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, *best*. Focus on the **subject**, the guidelines for administering eye medications. Eliminate options 3 and 4 first because of the words *15 minutes*. Next, thinking about the consistency and absorption of a drop versus ointment will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Guidelines for administering **eyedrops** and **eye ointment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 37-38, 738.

**795. 2**

**Rationale:** Options 1, 3, and 4 are miotic agents used to treat glaucoma. The correct option is a mydriatic and cycloplegic (also anticholinergic) medication, and its use is contraindicated in clients with glaucoma. Mydriatic medications dilate the pupil and can cause an increase in intraocular pressure in the eye.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the medication that the nurse should question. Eliminate options 3 and

4 because they are **comparable or alike**. Recalling the classifications of the medications identified in the remaining options will assist in answering the question. Remember that mydriatics dilate the pupil and that these medications are contraindicated in glaucoma.

**Review:** **Miotic agents** used to treat glaucoma

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 420-421.

**796. 3**

**Rationale:** Miotics cause pupillary constriction and are used to treat glaucoma. They lower the intraocular pressure, thereby increasing blood flow to the retina and decreasing retinal damage and loss of vision. Miotics cause a contraction of the ciliary muscle and a widening of the trabecular meshwork. Options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note that the client has glaucoma. Recall that prevention of increased intraocular pressure is the goal in the client with glaucoma. Options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and describe actions related to mydriatic medications, which primarily dilate the pupils and relax the ciliary muscles.

**Review:** The action of a **miotic agent**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 420-421.

797. 2

**Rationale:** Aspirin is contraindicated for gastrointestinal bleeding and is potentially ototoxic. The client should be advised to notify the prescribing health care provider so the medication can be discontinued and/or a substitute that is less toxic to the ear can be taken instead. Options 1, 3, and 4 do not have effects that are potentially associated with hearing difficulties.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the medication that may be causing the client's complaint. Review the classifications and/or therapeutic effects as well as the side and adverse effects of each medication in the options. Of the medications identified, only aspirin can cause ototoxicity. In addition, it is contraindicated for GI bleed as well.

**Review:** Medications that can cause **ototoxicity**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 86.

798. 2

**Rationale:** Cyclopentolate is a rapidly acting mydriatic and cycloplegic medication. Cyclopentolate is effective in 25 to 75 minutes, and accommodation returns in 6 to 24 hours. Cyclopentolate is used for preoperative mydriasis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Options 1 and 3 are **comparable or alike** and are eliminated first (miosis refers to a constricted pupil). Note that the question identifies a client being prepared for eye surgery. The pupil would need to be dilated for the surgical procedure.

**Review:** The action and purpose of **cyclopentolate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Eye and Ear Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 1322-1333.

# UNIT XVI



## Neurological Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**autonomic dysreflexia** Syndrome characterized by paroxysmal hypertension, bradycardia, excessive sweating, facial flushing, nasal congestion, pilomotor responses, and headache. The syndrome occurs with spinal lesions above T6 after the period of spinal shock is complete. Triggers include visceral stimulation from a distended bladder or impacted rectum. The syndrome is a neurological emergency and must be treated immediately to prevent a hypertensive stroke. It is also known as *autonomic hyperreflexia*.

**Babinski reflex** Dorsiflexion of the big toe with extension; elicited by firmly stroking the lateral aspect of the sole of the foot.

**Brudzinski's sign** Involuntary flexion of the hip and knee when the neck is passively

flexed; indicates meningeal irritation.

**decerebrate (extensor) posturing** Stiff extension of one or both arms and possibly the legs; indicates a brainstem lesion.

**decorticate (flexor) posturing** Flexure of one or both arms on the chest and possibly stiff extension of the legs; indicates damaged cortex.

**edrophonium test** Test used to diagnose myasthenia gravis and to differentiate between myasthenic crisis and cholinergic crisis; may also be called the *Tensilon test*.

**flaccid posturing** No motor response display in any extremity.

**hemianopsia** Blindness in half the visual field.

**homonymous hemianopsia** Loss of half of the field of view on the same side in both eyes.

**increased intracranial pressure** Increased pressure within the skull caused by trauma, hemorrhage, growths or tumors, hydrocephalus, edema, or inflammation. Increased pressure can impede circulation to the brain and absorption of cerebrospinal fluid and can affect nerve cell functioning, leading to brainstem compression and death.

**Kernig's sign** Loss of the ability of a supine client to straighten the leg completely when it is fully flexed at the knee and hip; indicates meningeal irritation.

**neurogenic shock** Occurs most commonly in clients with injuries above T6 and usually is experienced soon after the injury. Massive vasodilation occurs, leading to pooling of blood in the blood vessels, tissue hypoperfusion, and impaired cellular metabolism.

**nuchal rigidity** Stiff neck; flexion of the neck onto the chest causes intense pain.

**spinal shock** Also known as *spinal shock syndrome*. It is a complete but temporary loss of motor, sensory, reflex, and autonomic function that occurs immediately after injury as the cord's response to the injury. It usually lasts less than 48 hours but can continue for several weeks.

**unconscious client** A state of depressed cerebral functioning with unresponsiveness to sensory and motor function. Causes include head trauma, cerebral toxins, shock, hemorrhage, tumor, or infections.

**unilateral neglect** An inability to recognize a physical impairment on one side of the body. It occurs most commonly in clients who have had a right cerebral stroke; also known as *neglect syndrome*.

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points related to neurological disorders focus on nursing care and monitoring for increased intracranial pressure, assessing level of consciousness, positioning clients, head injuries, spinal cord injuries, spinal shock, autonomic dysreflexia, interventions during a seizure, the client with a stroke, Parkinson's disease, myasthenia gravis, and the edrophonium test. Focus on the points related to the psychosocial effects as a result of the neurological disorder, such as anxiety, unexpected body image changes, and the appropriate and available support services needed for the client.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Acting as a client advocate

Collaborating with members of the health care team

Ensuring that advance directives are in the client's medical record

Establishing priorities

Initiating referrals to appropriate services

Maintaining asepsis with procedures and treatments

Maintaining confidentiality

Maintaining standard, transmission-based, and other precautions

Obtaining informed consent for invasive procedures

Preventing accidents that can occur as a result of neurological deficits

Upholding client rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing expected and unexpected body image changes resulting from neurological deficits

Performing neurological assessment using various techniques

Preventing and detecting health problems associated with neurological deficits

Providing home care instructions regarding care related to the neurological disorder

Teaching about the importance of prescribed therapy

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Addressing grief and loss issues

Assessing the ability to cope with feelings of isolation and loss of independence

Considering the cultural, religious, and spiritual influences of the client when planning care

Identifying sensory and perceptual alterations

Identifying support systems and encouraging the use of community resources

Mobilizing coping mechanisms

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering pharmacological therapy

Maintaining nutrition

Monitoring for alterations in body systems

Monitoring for complications related to procedures

Monitoring for fluid and electrolyte imbalances

Providing assistive devices for mobility

Providing emergency care

Providing measures to promote comfort

Promoting normal elimination patterns

Promoting self-care measures



## CHAPTER 66

# Neurological System

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse notes that a client who experienced a stroke is sitting in a chair and is leaning to the left with the arm caught in the side of the chair seat. The nurse suspects unilateral body neglect syndrome. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 944.*

### **I. Anatomy and Physiology of the Brain and Spinal Cord**

#### **A. Cerebrum**

1. The cerebrum consists of the right and left hemispheres.
2. Each hemisphere receives sensory information from the opposite side of the body and controls the skeletal muscles of the opposite side.
3. The cerebrum governs sensory and motor activity and thought and learning.

#### **B. Cerebral cortex (Box 66-1)**

**Frontal Lobe**

- Broca's area for speech
- Morals, emotions, reasoning and judgment, concentration, and abstraction

**Parietal Lobe**

- Interpretation of taste, pain, touch, temperature, and pressure
- Spatial perception

**Temporal Lobe**

- Auditory center
- Wernicke's area for sensory and speech

**Occipital Lobe**

- Visual area

**Limbic System**

- Emotional and visceral patterns for survival
- Learning and memory

1. The cerebral cortex is the outer gray layer; it is divided into five lobes.

2. It is responsible for the conscious activities of the cerebrum.

C. Basal ganglia: Cell bodies in white matter that help the cerebral cortex produce smooth voluntary movements

D. Diencephalon

## 1. Thalamus

- a. Relays sensory impulses to the cortex
- b. Provides a pain gate
- c. Part of the reticular activating system

## 2. Hypothalamus ▲

- a. Regulates autonomic responses of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems
- b. Regulates the stress response, sleep, appetite, body temperature, fluid balance, and emotions
- c. Responsible for the production of hormones secreted by the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus

## E. Brainstem

### 1. Midbrain

- a. Responsible for motor coordination
- b. Contains the visual reflex and auditory relay centers

### 2. Pons: Contains the respiratory centers and regulates breathing ▲

### 3. Medulla oblongata

- a. Contains all afferent and efferent tracts and cardiac, respiratory, vomiting, and vasomotor centers
- b. Controls heart rate, respiration, blood vessel diameter, sneezing, swallowing, vomiting, and coughing

## F. Cerebellum: Coordinates smooth muscle movement, posture, equilibrium, and muscle

tone

## **G. Spinal cord**

1. Provides neuron and synapse networks to produce involuntary responses to sensory stimulation
2. Controls body movement and regulates visceral function
3. Carries sensory information to and motor information from the brain
4. Extends from the first cervical to the second lumbar vertebra
5. Protected by the meninges; cerebrospinal fluid, and adipose tissue
6. Horns
  - a. Inner column of gray matter; contains two anterior and two posterior horns
  - b. Posterior horns connect with afferent (sensory) nerve fibers.
  - c. Anterior horns contain efferent (motor) nerve fibers.
7. Nerve tracts
  - a. White matter contains the nerve tracts.
  - b. Ascending tracts (sensory pathway)
  - c. Descending tracts (motor pathway)

## **H. Meninges**

1. The dura mater is a tough and fibrous membrane.
2. The arachnoid membrane is a delicate membrane and contains cerebrospinal fluid.
3. The pia mater is a vascular membrane.
4. The subarachnoid space is formed by the arachnoid membrane and the pia mater.

## **I. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) ▲**

1. Secreted in the ventricles; circulates in the subarachnoid space and through the ventricles to the subarachnoid space of the meninges, where it is reabsorbed
2. Acts as a protective cushion; aids in the exchange of nutrients and wastes
3. Normal pressure is 50 to 175 mm H<sub>2</sub>O.
4. Normal volume is 125 to 150 mL.

#### **J. Ventricles**

1. Four ventricles
2. The ventricles communicate between the subarachnoid spaces and produce and circulate cerebrospinal fluid.

#### **K. Blood supply**

1. Right and left internal carotid arteries
2. Right and left vertebral arteries
3. These arteries supply the brain via an anastomosis at the base of the brain called the *circle of Willis*.

#### **L. Neurotransmitters**

1. Acetylcholine
2. Norepinephrine
3. Dopamine
4. Serotonin
5. Amino acids
6. Polypeptides

#### **M. Neurons**

1. The neuron consists of the cell body, axon, and dendrites.
2. The cell body contains the nucleus.
3. Neurons carrying impulses to the central nervous system (CNS) are called *sensory neurons*.
4. Neurons carrying impulses away from the CNS are called *motor neurons*.
5. Synapse is the chemical transmission of impulses from one neuron to another.

#### N. Axons and dendrites

1. The axon conducts impulses from the cell body.
2. The dendrites receive stimuli from the body and transmit them to the axon.
3. The neurons are protected and insulated by Schwann cells.
4. The Schwann cell sheath is called the *neurolemma*.
5. Neurons do not reproduce after the neonatal period.
6. If an axon or dendrite is damaged, it will die and be replaced slowly only if the neurolemma is intact and the cell body has not died.

#### O. Spinal nerves

1. There are 31 pairs of spinal nerves.
2. Mixed nerve fibers are formed by the joining of the anterior motor and posterior sensory roots.
3. Posterior roots contain afferent (sensory) nerve fibers.
4. Anterior roots contain efferent (motor) nerve fibers.

#### P. Autonomic nervous system

1. Sympathetic (adrenergic) fibers dilate pupils, increase heart rate and rhythm,

contract blood vessels, and relax smooth muscles of the bronchi.

2. Parasympathetic (cholinergic) fibers produce the opposite effect.

## II. Diagnostic Tests

### A. Skull and spinal radiography

#### 1. Description

a. Radiographs of the skull reveal the size and shape of the skull bones, suture separation in infants, fractures or bony defects, erosion, and calcification.

b. Spinal radiographs identify fractures, dislocation, compression, curvature, erosion, narrowed spinal cord, and degenerative processes.

#### 2. Preprocedure interventions

a. Provide nursing support for the confused, combative, or ventilator-dependent client.

b. Maintain immobilization of the neck if a spinal fracture is suspected. ▲

c. Remove metal items from the client.

d. If the client has thick and heavy hair, this should be documented, because it could affect interpretation of the x-ray film.

3. Postprocedure intervention: Maintain immobilization until results are known. ▲

**▲** Always check with the client about the possibility of pregnancy before any radiographic procedures are done.

### B. Computed tomography (CT)

#### 1. Description

- a. Computed tomography is a type of brain scanning that may or may not require injection of a dye.
- b. It is used to detect intracranial bleeding, space-occupying lesions, cerebral edema, infarctions, hydrocephalus, cerebral atrophy, and shifts of brain structures.

## 2. Preprocedure interventions

- a. Obtain informed consent if a dye is used.
- b. Assess for allergies to iodine, contrast dyes, or shellfish if a dye is used.
- c. Instruct the client of the need to lie still and flat during the test.
- d. Instruct the client to hold his or her breath when requested.
- e. Initiate an intravenous line if prescribed.
- f. Remove objects from the head, such as wigs, barrettes, earrings, and hairpins.
- g. Assess for claustrophobia.
- h. Inform the client of possible mechanical noises as the scanning occurs.
- i. Inform the client that there may be a hot flushed sensation and a metallic taste in the mouth when the dye is injected.
- j. Note that some clients may be given the dye even if they report an allergy; they are treated with an antihistamine and corticosteroids before the injection to reduce the severity of a reaction.

 Assess the need to withhold metformin (Glucophage) if iodinated contrast dye is used for a diagnostic procedure because of the risk for metformin-induced lactic acidosis.

### 3. Postprocedure interventions ▲

- a. Provide replacement fluids because diuresis from the dye is expected.
- b. Monitor for an allergic reaction to the dye.
- c. Assess dye injection site for bleeding or hematoma, and monitor the extremity for color, warmth, and the presence of distal pulses.

## C. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) ▲

### 1. Description

- a. Magnetic resonance imaging is a noninvasive procedure that identifies tissues, tumors, and vascular abnormalities.
- b. It is similar to CT scanning but provides more detailed pictures.

### 2. Preprocedure interventions ▲

- a. Remove all metal objects from the client.
- b. Determine whether the client has a pacemaker, implanted defibrillator, or other metal implants such as a hip prosthesis or vascular clips because these clients cannot have this test performed.
- c. Insert an intermittent infusion device (saline lock) to all intravenous accesses prior to the procedure (intravenous fluid pumps are not allowed in the MRI room).
- d. Provide precautions for the client who is attached to a pulse oximeter because it can cause a burn during testing if coiled around the body or a body part.
- e. Provide an assessment of the client with claustrophobia (may not be necessary if an open MRI machine is used).

- f. Administer medication as prescribed for the client with claustrophobia.
- g. Determine whether a contrast agent is to be used and follow the prescription related to the administration of food, fluids, and medications.
- h. Instruct the client that he or she will need to remain still during the procedure.

 An MRI is contraindicated in a pregnant woman because the increase in amniotic fluid temperature that occurs during the procedure may be harmful to the fetus.

### 3. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Client may resume normal activities.
- b. Expect diuresis if a contrast agent is used.

## D. Lumbar puncture

### 1. Description

- a. Insertion of a spinal needle through the L3-L4 interspace into the lumbar subarachnoid space to obtain cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), measure CSF fluid or pressure, or instill air, dye, or medications
- b. The test is contraindicated in clients with **increased intracranial pressure** because the procedure will cause a rapid decrease in pressure in the CSF around the spinal cord, leading to brain herniation. 

### 2. Preprocedure interventions

- a. Obtain informed consent.
- b. Have the client empty the bladder.

### 3. Interventions during the procedure

- a. Position the client in a lateral recumbent position and have the client draw the knees up to the abdomen and the chin onto the chest; the prone position may be required for radiologically guided punctures.
- b. Assist with the collection of specimens (label the specimens in sequence).
- c. Maintain strict asepsis.

#### 4. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Monitor vital signs and neurological signs to check for the presence of leakage of CSF and also monitor for headache.
- b. Position the client flat as prescribed.
- c. Encourage fluids to replace CSF obtained from the specimen collection or from leakage. ▲
- d. Monitor intake and output.

### E. Cerebral angiography

- 1. Description: Injection of a contrast material usually through the femoral artery (or another artery) into the carotid arteries to visualize the cerebral arteries and assess for lesions
- 2. Preprocedure interventions
  - a. Obtain informed consent.
  - b. Assess the client for allergies to iodine and shellfish. ▲
  - c. Assess for a medication history of anticoagulation therapy; withhold the anticoagulant medication prior to the procedure as prescribed.
  - d. Encourage hydration for 2 days before the test.

- e. Maintain the client on NPO status 4 to 6 hours before the test as prescribed.
- f. Perform a neurological assessment, which will serve as a baseline for postprocedure assessments.
- g. Mark the peripheral pulses.
- h. Remove metal items from the hair.
- i. Administer premedication as prescribed.

### 3. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Monitor neurological status, vital signs, and neurovascular status of the affected extremity frequently until stable.
- b. Monitor for swelling in the neck and for difficulty swallowing; notify a health care provider (HCP) if these symptoms occur. ▲
- c. Maintain bed rest for 12 hours as prescribed.
- d. Elevate the head of the bed 15 to 30 degrees only if prescribed. ▲
- e. Keep the bed flat, as prescribed, if the femoral artery is used. ▲
- f. Assess peripheral pulses.
- g. Apply sandbags or another device to immobilize the limb and a pressure dressing to the injection site to decrease bleeding as prescribed.
- h. Place ice on the puncture site as prescribed.
- i. Encourage fluid intake.

## F. Electroencephalography

- 1. Description: Graphic recording of the electrical activity of the superficial layers of the cerebral cortex

## 2. Preprocedure interventions ▲

- a. Wash the client's hair.
- b. Inform the client that electrodes are attached to the head and that electricity does not enter the head.
- c. Withhold stimulants such as coffee, tea, and caffeine beverages, antidepressants, tranquilizers, and possibly anticonvulsants for 24 to 48 hours before the test as prescribed.
- d. Allow the client to have breakfast if prescribed.
- e. Premedicate for sedation as prescribed.

## 3. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Wash the client's hair.
- b. Maintain side rails and safety precautions, if the client was sedated. ▲

## G. Caloric testing (oculovestibular reflex)

1. Description: Caloric testing provides information about the function of the vestibular portion of the eighth cranial nerve and aids in the diagnosis of cerebellar and brainstem lesions.

## 2. Procedure

- a. Patency of the external auditory canal is confirmed.
- b. The client is positioned supine with the head of the bed elevated 30 degrees.
- c. Water that is warmer or cooler than body temperature is infused into the ear.
- d. A normal response is the onset of vertigo and nystagmus (involuntary eye movements) within 20 to 30 seconds

e. Absent or disconjugate eye movements indicate brainstem damage.

### III. Neurological Assessment (see [Chapter 25](#) for additional information on neurological assessment)

#### A. Assessment of risk factors

1. Trauma
2. Hemorrhage
3. Tumors
4. Infection
5. Toxicity
6. Metabolic disorders
7. Hypoxic conditions
8. Hypertension
9. Cigarette smoking
10. Stress
11. Aging process
12. Chemicals, either ingestion or environmental exposure

#### B. Assessment of cranial nerves (see [Chapter 25](#))

#### C. Assessment of level of consciousness (LOC) (see [Chapter 25](#))

 Level of consciousness is the most sensitive indicator of neurological status.

#### D. Assessment of vital signs: Monitor for blood pressure or pulse changes, which may indicate increased intracranial pressure (ICP).

## E. Assessment of respirations (Box 66-2) ▲

### **BOX 66-2** Assessment of Respirations

#### **Cheyne-Stokes**

- Rhythmic, with periods of apnea
- Can indicate a metabolic dysfunction or dysfunction in the cerebral hemisphere or basal ganglia

#### **Neurogenic Hyperventilation**

- Regular rapid and deep sustained respirations
- Indicates a dysfunction in the low midbrain and middle pons

#### **Apneustic**

- Irregular respirations, with pauses at the end of inspiration and expiration
- Indicates a dysfunction in the middle or caudal pons

#### **Ataxic**

- Totally irregular in rhythm and depth
- Indicates a dysfunction in the medulla

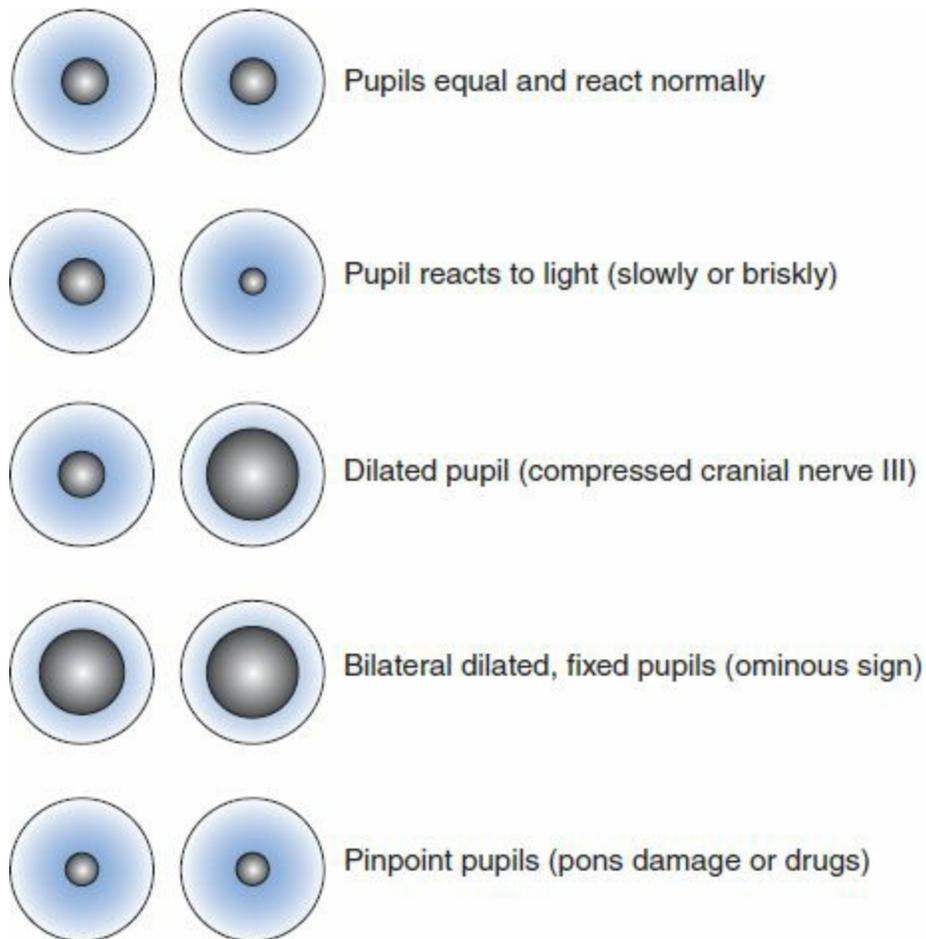
#### **Cluster**

- Clusters of breaths with irregularly spaced pauses
- Indicates a dysfunction in the medulla and pons

## F. Assessment of temperature ▲

1. An elevated temperature increases the metabolic rate of the brain.
2. An elevation in temperature may indicate a dysfunction of the hypothalamus or brainstem.
3. A slow rise in temperature may indicate infection.

**G. Assessment of pupils (Fig. 66-1) ▲**



**FIGURE 66-1** Pupillary check for size and response. (From Lewis S, Heitkemper M, Dirksen S, O'Brien P, Bucher L: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

1. Unilateral pupil dilation indicates compression of the third cranial nerve.

2. Midposition fixed pupils indicates midbrain injury.
3. Pinpoint fixed pupils indicates pontine damage.

H. Assessment for posturing (see [Chapter 45, Fig. 45-3](#)) ▲

1. Posturing indicates a deterioration of the condition.
2. Flexor (**decorticate posturing**)
  - a. Client flexes one or both arms on the chest and may extend the legs stiffly.
  - b. Flexor posturing indicates a nonfunctioning cortex.
3. Extensor (**decerebrate posturing**)
  - a. Client stiffly extends one or both arms and possibly the legs.
  - b. Extensor posturing indicates a brainstem lesion.
4. **Flaccid posturing**: Client displays no motor response in any extremity.

I. Assessment of reflexes ([Box 66-3](#)) ▲

**BOX 66-3**      Assessment of Reflexes

**Babinski Reflex**

- Dorsiflexion of the big toe, and fanning of the other toes; elicited by firmly stroking the lateral aspect of the sole of the foot
- Is a pathological or abnormal reflex in anyone older than 2 years and represents the presence of central nervous system (CNS) disease

**Corneal (Blink) Reflex**

- Involuntary closure of the eyelids in response to stimulation of the cornea
- Loss of the blink reflex indicates a dysfunction of cranial nerve V

## Gag Reflex

- Contraction of pharyngeal muscle, elicited by touching the back of the throat
- Loss of the gag reflex indicates a dysfunction of cranial nerves IX and X

## J. Assessment of meningeal irritation (Box 66-4) ▲

### **BOX 66-4** Assessment of Meningeal Irritation

#### General Findings

- Irritability
- Nuchal rigidity
- Severe, unrelenting headaches
- Generalized muscle aches and pains
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever and chills
- Tachycardia
- Photophobia
- Nystagmus
- Abnormal pupil reaction and eye movement

#### Brudzinski's Sign

- Involuntary flexion of the hip and knee when the neck is passively flexed; indicates meningeal irritation

## **Kernig's Sign**

- Loss of the ability of a supine client to straighten the leg completely when it is fully flexed at the knee and hip; indicates meningeal irritation

## **Motor Response**

- Hemiparesis, hemiplegia, and decreased muscle tone
- Cranial nerve dysfunction, especially cranial nerves III, IV, VI, VII, and VIII

## **Memory Changes**

- Short attention span
- Personality and behavioral changes
- Bewilderment

## **K. Assessment of the autonomic system**

### **1. Sympathetic functions, adrenergic responses**

- a.** Increased pulse and blood pressure
- b.** Dilated pupils
- c.** Decreased peristalsis
- d.** Increased perspiration

### **2. Parasympathetic function, cholinergic responses**

- a.** Decreased pulse and blood pressure
- b.** Constricted pupils
- c.** Increased salivation

d. Increased peristalsis

e. Dilated blood vessels

f. Bladder contraction

L. Assessment of sensory function: Touch, pressure, pain

M. Glasgow Coma Scale (Box 66-5) ▲

## BOX 66-5 Glasgow Coma Scale

### Score

- The lowest possible score is 3 points (deep coma or death).
- The highest possible score is 15 points (fully awake).

### Motor Response Points

- Obeys a simple response = 6
- Localizes painful stimuli = 5
- Normal flexion (withdrawal) = 4
- Abnormal flexion (decorticate posturing) = 3
- Extensor response (decerebrate posturing) = 2
- No motor response to pain = 1

### Verbal Response Points

- Oriented = 5
- Confused conversation = 4
- Inappropriate words = 3

- Responds with incomprehensible sounds = 2
- No verbal response = 1

### Eye-Opening Points

- Spontaneous = 4
- In response to sound = 3
- In response to pain = 2
- No response, even to painful stimuli = 1

Adapted from Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders.

1. The scale is a method of assessing a client's neurological condition.
2. The scoring system is based on a scale of 1 to 15 points.
3. A score lower than 8 indicates that coma is present.

## IV. The Unconscious Client

### A. Description

1. The unconscious client is in a state of depressed cerebral functioning with unresponsiveness to stimulation of sensory and motor function.
2. Some causes include head trauma, cerebral toxins, shock, hemorrhage, tumor, and infection.

### B. Assessment

1. Unarousable

2. Primitive or no response to painful stimuli
3. Altered respirations
4. Decreased cranial nerve and reflex activity

C. Interventions (Box 66-6) ▲

**BOX 66-6** Care of the Unconscious Client

Assess patency of the airway and keep an airway and emergency equipment at the bedside.

Monitor blood pressure, pulse, and heart sounds.

Assess respiratory and circulatory status.

Do not leave the client unattended if unstable.

Maintain a patent airway and ventilation because a high CO<sub>2</sub> level increases intracranial pressure.

Assess lung sounds for the accumulation of secretions.

Suction fluids from the airway as needed.

Assess neurological status, including level of consciousness, pupillary reactions, and motor and sensory function, using a coma scale.

Place the client in a semi-Fowler's position.

Change position of the client every 2 hours, avoiding injury when turning.

Avoid Trendelenburg's position.

Use side rails unless contraindicated or according to agency protocol.

Assess for edema.

Monitor for dehydration.

Monitor intake and output and daily weight.

Maintain NPO status until consciousness returns.

Maintain nutrition as prescribed, and monitor fluid and electrolyte balance.

Check the gag and swallow reflex before resuming a diet, and begin the diet with ice chips and fluids when the client becomes alert.

Provide intravenous or enteral feedings as prescribed.

Assess bowel sounds.

Monitor elimination patterns.

Monitor for constipation, impaction, and paralytic ileus.

Maintain urinary output to prevent stasis, infection, and calculus formation.

Monitor the status of skin integrity.

Initiate measures to prevent skin breakdown.

Provide frequent mouth care.

Remove dentures and contact lenses.

Assess the eyes for the presence of a corneal reflex and irritation, and instill artificial tears or cover the eyes with eye patches.

Monitor drainage from the ears or nose for the presence of cerebrospinal fluid.

Assume that the unconscious client can hear.

Avoid restraints.

Initiate seizure precautions if necessary.

Provide range-of-motion exercises to prevent contractures.

Use a footboard or high-topped sneakers to prevent footdrop.

Use splints to prevent wrist deformities.

Initiate physical therapy as appropriate.

## V. Increased Intracranial Pressure (ICP)

### A. Description

1. Increased ICP may be caused by trauma, hemorrhage, growths or tumors, hydrocephalus, edema, or inflammation.
2. Increased ICP can impede circulation to the brain, impede the absorption of CSF, affect the functioning of nerve cells, and lead to brainstem compression and death.

### B. Assessment ▲

1. Altered level of consciousness, which is the most sensitive and earliest indication of increasing ICP
2. Headache
3. Abnormal respirations (see [Box 66-2](#))
4. Rise in blood pressure with widening pulse pressure
5. Slowing of pulse
6. Elevated temperature
7. Vomiting
8. Pupil changes
9. Late signs of increased ICP include increased systolic blood pressure, widened pulse pressure, and slowed heart rate. ▲

10. Other late signs include changes in motor function from weakness to hemiplegia, a positive **Babinski reflex**, decorticate or decerebrate posturing, and seizures.

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor respiratory status and prevent hypoxia.
2. Avoid the administration of morphine sulfate to prevent the occurrence of hypoxia.
3. Maintain mechanical ventilation as prescribed; maintaining the PaCO<sub>2</sub> at 30 to 35 mm Hg will result in vasoconstriction of the cerebral blood vessels, decreased blood flow, and therefore decreased ICP.
4. Maintain body temperature.
5. Prevent shivering, which can increase ICP.
6. Decrease environmental stimuli.
7. Monitor electrolyte levels and acid-base balance.
8. Monitor intake and output.
9. Limit fluid intake to 1200 mL/day.
10. Instruct the client to avoid straining activities, such as coughing and sneezing.
11. Instruct the client to avoid Valsalva's maneuver.

 For the client with increased intracranial pressure, elevate the head of the bed 30 to 40 degrees, avoid the Trendelenburg position, and prevent flexion of the neck and hips.

### D. Medications (Box 66-7)

## **Anticonvulsants**

Seizures increase metabolic requirements and cerebral blood flow and volume, thus increasing intracranial pressure.

Anticonvulsants may be given prophylactically to prevent seizures.

## **Antipyretics and Muscle Relaxants**

Temperature reduction decreases metabolism, cerebral blood flow, and thus intracranial pressure.

Antipyretics prevent temperature elevations.

Muscle relaxants prevent shivering.

## **Blood Pressure Medication**

Blood pressure medication may be required to maintain cerebral perfusion at a normal level.

Notify the HCP if the blood pressure range is lower than 100 or higher than 150 mm Hg systolic.

## **Corticosteroids**

Corticosteroids stabilize the cell membrane and reduce leakiness of the blood-brain barrier.

Corticosteroids decrease cerebral edema.

A histamine blocker may be administered to counteract the excess gastric secretion that occurs with the corticosteroid.

Clients must be withdrawn slowly from corticosteroid therapy to reduce the risk of

adrenal crisis.

### **Intravenous Fluids**

Fluids are administered intravenously via an infusion pump to control the amount administered.

Hypertonic intravenous solutions are avoided because of the risk of promoting additional cerebral edema.

### **Hyperosmotic Agent**

A hyperosmotic agent increases intravascular pressure by drawing fluid from the interstitial spaces and from the brain cells.

Monitor renal function.

Diuresis is expected.

E. Surgical intervention: Also see [Chapter 45](#) for additional information on ventriculoperitoneal shunts ([Box 66-8](#))

## **BOX 66-8      Surgical Intervention for Chronic Increased Intracranial Pressure: Ventriculoperitoneal Shunt**

### **Description**

A ventriculoperitoneal shunt diverts cerebrospinal fluid from the ventricles into the peritoneum.

### **Postprocedure Interventions**

Position the client supine and turn from the back to the nonoperative side.

Monitor for signs of increasing intracranial pressure resulting from shunt failure.

Monitor for signs of infection.

## VI. Hyperthermia

### A. Description

1. Temperature higher than 105° F, which increases the cerebral metabolism and increases the risk of hypoxia
2. Causes include infection, heat stroke, exposure to high environmental temperatures, and dysfunction of the thermoregulatory center

### B. Assessment

1. Temperature higher than 105° F
2. Shivering
3. Nausea and vomiting

### C. Interventions

1. Maintain a patent airway.
2. Initiate seizure precautions.
3. Monitor intake and output and assess the skin and mucous membranes for signs of dehydration.
4. Monitor lung sounds.
5. Monitor for dysrhythmias.
6. Assess peripheral pulses for systemic blood flow.
7. Induce normothermia with fluids, cool baths, fans, or a hypothermia blanket.

## **D. Inducement of normothermia**

1. Prevent shivering, which will increase intracranial pressure and oxygen consumption.
2. Administer medications as prescribed to prevent shivering and to lower body temperature.
3. Monitor neurological status.
4. Monitor for infection and respiratory complications because hyperthermia may mask the signs of infection.
5. Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias.
6. Monitor intake and output and fluid balance.
7. Prevent trauma to the skin and tissues.
8. Apply lotion to the skin frequently.
9. Inspect for frostbite if a hypothermia blanket is used.

## **VII. Traumatic Head Injury** ▲

### **A. Description**

1. Head injury is trauma to the skull, resulting in mild to extensive damage to the brain.
2. Immediate complications include cerebral bleeding, hematomas, uncontrolled increased ICP, infections, and seizures.
3. Changes in personality or behavior, cranial nerve deficits, and any other residual deficits depend on the area of the brain damage and the extent of the damage.

## B. Types of head injuries (Box 66-9)

### **BOX 66-9**      **Types of Head Injuries**

#### **Concussion**

- Concussion is a jarring of the brain within the skull, with no loss of consciousness.

#### **Contusion**

- Contusion is a bruising type of injury to the brain tissue.
- Contusion may occur along with other neurological injuries, such as with subdural or extradural collections of blood.

#### **Skull Fractures**

- Linear
- Depressed
- Compound
- Comminuted

#### **Epidural Hematoma**

- The most serious type of hematoma, epidural hematoma forms rapidly and results from arterial bleeding.
- Epidural hematoma forms between the dura and skull from a tear in the meningeal artery.
- It is often associated with temporary loss of consciousness, followed by a lucid period, that rapidly progresses to coma.

- Epidural hematoma is a surgical emergency.

### **Subdural Hematoma**

- Subdural hematoma forms slowly and results from a venous bleed.
- Subdural hematoma occurs under the dura as a result of tears in the veins crossing the subdural space.

### **Intracerebral Hemorrhage**

- Intracerebral hemorrhage occurs when a blood vessel within the brain ruptures allowing blood to leak inside the brain.

### **Subarachnoid Hemorrhage**

- A subarachnoid hemorrhage is bleeding into the subarachnoid space. It may occur as a result of head trauma or spontaneously, such as from a ruptured cerebral aneurysm.

#### **1. Open**

- a. Scalp lacerations
- b. Fractures in the skull
- c. Interruption of the dura mater

#### **2. Closed**

- a. Concussions
- b. Contusions
- c. Fractures

## C. Hematoma

1. Description: Hematoma is a collection of blood in the tissues and can occur as a result of a subarachnoid hemorrhage or an intracerebral hemorrhage.

### 2. Assessment ▲

- a. Assessment findings depend on the injury.
- b. Clinical manifestations usually result from increased ICP.
- c. Changing neurological signs in the client
- d. Changes in level of consciousness
- e. Airway and breathing pattern changes
- f. Vital signs change, reflecting increased ICP.
- g. Headache, nausea, and vomiting
- h. Visual disturbances, pupillary changes, and papilledema
- i. **Nuchal rigidity** (not tested until spinal cord injury is ruled out)
- j. CSF drainage from the ears or nose
- k. Weakness and paralysis
- l. Posturing
- m. Decreased sensation or absence of feeling
- n. Reflex activity changes
- o. Seizure activity

⚠ CSF can be distinguished from other fluids by the presence of concentric rings (bloody fluid surrounded by yellowish stain, Halo sign) when the fluid is placed on a white sterile background, such as a gauze pad. CSF also tests

positive for glucose when tested using a strip test.

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor respiratory status and maintain a patent airway because increased CO<sub>2</sub> levels increase cerebral edema.
- b. Monitor neurological status and vital signs, including temperature.
- c. Monitor for increased ICP.
- d. Maintain head elevation to reduce venous pressure.
- e. Prevent neck flexion.
- f. Initiate normothermia measures for increased temperature.
- g. Assess cranial nerve function, reflexes, and motor and sensory function.
- h. Initiate seizure precautions.
- i. Monitor for pain and restlessness.
- j. Morphine sulfate may be prescribed to decrease agitation and control restlessness caused by pain for the head-injured client on a ventilator; administer with caution because it is a respiratory depressant and may increase ICP.
- k. Monitor for drainage from the nose or ears because this fluid may be CSF.
- l. Do not attempt to clean the nose, suction, or allow the client to blow his or her nose if drainage occurs. ▲
- m. Do not clean the ear if drainage is noted, but apply a loose, dry sterile dressing. ▲
- n. Check drainage for the presence of CSF. ▲

- o.** Notify the HCP if drainage from the ears or nose is noted and if the drainage tests positive for CSF. ▲
- p.** Instruct the client to avoid coughing because this increases ICP.
- q.** Monitor for signs of infection.
- r.** Prevent complications of immobility.
- s.** Inform the client and family about the possible behavior changes that may occur, including those that are expected and those that need to be reported.

## **D. Craniotomy**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Surgical procedure that involves an incision through the cranium to remove accumulated blood or a tumor
- b.** Complications of the procedure include increased ICP from cerebral edema, hemorrhage, or obstruction of the normal flow of CSF.
- c.** Additional complications include hematomas, hypovolemic shock, hydrocephalus, respiratory and neurogenic complications, pulmonary edema, and wound infections.
- d.** Complications related to fluid and electrolyte imbalances include diabetes insipidus and inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone. ▲
- e.** Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) may be an alternative to traditional surgery and is usually used to treat tumors and arteriovenous malformations.

### **2. Preoperative interventions** ▲

- a.** Explain the procedure to the client and family.

- b. Ensure that informed consent has been obtained.
- c. Prepare to shave the client's head as prescribed (usually done in the operating room) and cover the head with an appropriate covering.
- d. Stabilize the client before surgery.

### 3. Postoperative interventions (Box 66-10)

#### **BOX 66-10**

#### **Nursing Care Following Craniotomy**

Monitor vital signs and neurological status every 30 to 60 minutes.

Monitor for increased intracranial pressure.

Monitor for decreased level of consciousness, motor weakness or paralysis, aphasia, visual changes, and personality changes.

Maintain mechanical ventilation and slight hyperventilation for the first 24 to 48 hours as prescribed to prevent increased intracranial pressure.

Assess a health care provider's (HCP's) prescription regarding client positioning.

Avoid extreme hip or neck flexion, and maintain the head in a midline neutral position.

Provide a quiet environment.

Monitor the head dressing frequently for signs of drainage.

Mark any area of drainage at least once each nursing shift for baseline comparison.

Monitor the Hemovac or Jackson-Pratt drain, which may be in place for 24 hours.

Maintain suction on the Hemovac or Jackson-Pratt drain.

Measure drainage from the Hemovac or Jackson-Pratt drain every 8 hours, and

record the amount and color.

Notify the HCP if drainage is more than the normal amount of 30 to 50 mL per shift.

Notify the HCP immediately of excessive amounts of drainage or a saturated head dressing.

Record strict measurement of hourly intake and output.

Maintain fluid restriction at 1500 mL/day as prescribed.

Monitor electrolyte levels.

Monitor for dysrhythmias, which may occur as a result of fluid or electrolyte imbalance.

Apply ice packs or cool compresses as prescribed; expect periorbital edema and ecchymosis of one or both eyes, which is not an unusual occurrence.

Provide range-of-motion exercises every 8 hours.

Place antiembolism stockings on the client as prescribed.

Administer anticonvulsants, antacids, corticosteroids, and antibiotics as prescribed.

Administer analgesics such as codeine sulfate or acetaminophen (Tylenol) as prescribed for pain.

#### 4. Postoperative positioning (Box 66-11)

##### **BOX 66-11**

##### **Client Positioning Following Craniotomy**

Positions prescribed following a craniotomy vary with the type of surgery and the specific postoperative health care provider's (HCP's) prescription.

Always check the HCP's prescription regarding client positioning.

Incorrect positioning may cause serious and possibly fatal complications.

### **Removal of a Bone Flap for Decompression**

To facilitate brain expansion, the client should be turned from the back to the nonoperative side, but not to the side where the operation was performed.

### **Posterior Fossa Surgery**

To protect the operative site from pressure and minimize tension on the suture line, position the client on the side, with a pillow under the head for support, and not on the back.

### **Infratentorial Surgery**

Infratentorial surgery involves surgery below the tentorium of the brain.

The HCP may prescribe a flat position without head elevation or may prescribe that the head of the bed be elevated at 30 to 45 degrees.

Do not elevate the head of the bed in the acute phase of care following surgery without a HCP's prescription.

### **Supratentorial Surgery**

Supratentorial surgery involves surgery above the tentorium of the brain.

The HCP may prescribe that the head of the bed be elevated at 30 degrees to promote venous outflow through the jugular veins.

Do not lower the head of the bed in the acute phase of care following surgery without a HCP's prescription.

## VIII. Spinal Cord Injury

### A. Description ▲

1. Trauma to the spinal cord causes partial or complete disruption of the nerve tracts and neurons.
2. The injury can involve contusion, laceration, or compression of the cord.
3. Spinal cord edema develops; necrosis of the spinal cord can develop as a result of compromised capillary circulation and venous return.
4. Loss of motor function, sensation, reflex activity, and bowel and bladder control may result.
5. The most common causes include motor vehicle accidents, falls, sporting and industrial accidents, and gunshot or stab wounds.
6. Complications related to the injury include respiratory failure, **autonomic dysreflexia**, spinal shock, further cord damage, and death.

### B. Most frequently involved vertebrae

1. Cervical—C5, C6, and C7
2. Thoracic—T12
3. Lumbar—L1

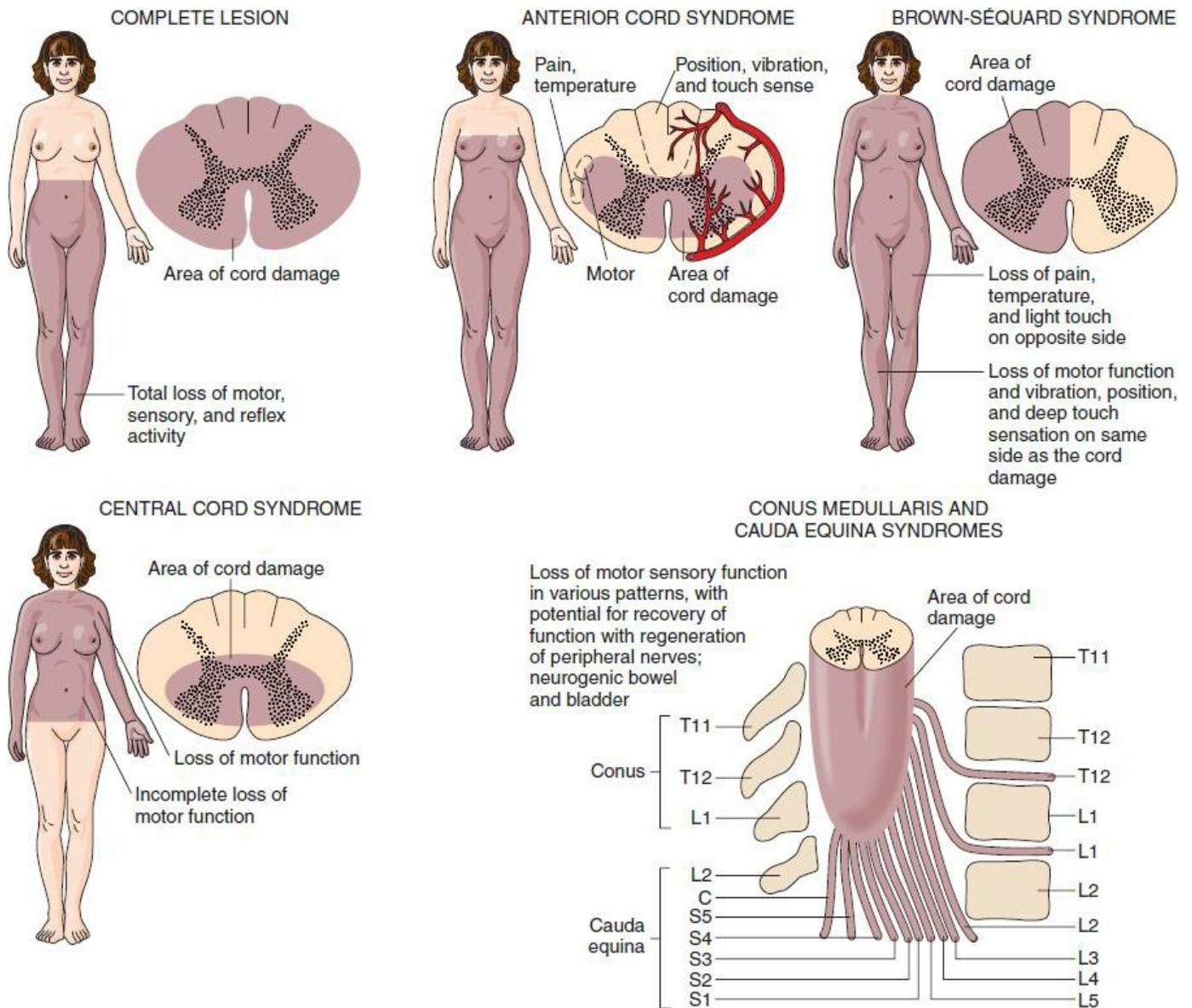
### C. Transection of the cord

1. Complete transection of the cord: The spinal cord is severed completely, with total loss of sensation, movement, and reflex activity below the level of injury.
2. Partial transection of the cord
  - a. The spinal cord is damaged or severed partially.

b. The symptoms depend on the extent and location of the damage.

c. If the cord has not suffered irreparable damage, early treatment is needed to prevent partial damage from developing into total and permanent damage.

**D. Spinal cord syndromes in incomplete injury (Fig. 66-2)**



**FIGURE 66-2** Common spinal cord syndromes. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 6, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

## 1. Central cord syndrome

- a. Central cord syndrome occurs from a lesion in the central portion of the spinal cord.
- b. Loss of motor function is more pronounced in the upper extremities, and varying degrees and patterns of sensation remain intact.

## 2. Anterior cord syndrome

- a. Anterior cord syndrome is caused by damage to the anterior portion of the gray and white matter of the spinal cord.
- b. Motor function, pain, and temperature sensation are lost below the level of injury; however, the sensations of position, vibration, and touch remain intact.

## 3. Posterior cord syndrome

- a. Posterior cord syndrome is caused by damage to the posterior portion of the gray and white matter of the spinal cord.
- b. Motor function remains intact, but the client experiences a loss of vibratory sense, crude touch, and position sensation.

## 4. Brown-Séquard syndrome

- a. Brown-Séquard syndrome results from penetrating injuries that cause hemisection of the spinal cord or injuries that affect half the cord.
- b. Motor function, vibration, proprioception, and deep touch sensations are lost on the same side of the body (ipsilateral) as the lesion or cord damage.
- c. On the opposite side of the body (contralateral) from the lesion or cord damage, the sensations of pain, temperature, and light touch are affected.

## 5. Conus medullaris syndrome

- a. Conus medullaris syndrome follows damage to the lumbar nerve roots and conus medullaris in the spinal cord.
- b. Client experiences bowel and bladder areflexia and flaccid lower extremities.
- c. If damage is limited to the upper sacral segments of the spinal cord, bulbospongiosus penile (erection) and micturition reflexes will remain.

## 6. Cauda equina syndrome

- a. Cauda equina syndrome occurs from injury to the lumbosacral nerve roots below the conus medullaris.
- b. The client experiences areflexia of the bowel, bladder, and lower reflexes.

## E. Assessment of spinal cord injuries (Box 66-12) ▲

### BOX 66-12

### Effects of Spinal Cord Injury

#### Tetraplegia (Quadriplegia)

- Injury occurring between C1 and C<sub>8</sub>
- Paralysis involving all four extremities

#### Paraplegia

- Injury occurring between T1 and L4
- Paralysis involving only the lower extremities

1. Dependent on the level of the cord injury

2. Level of spinal cord injury: Lowest spinal cord segment with intact motor and

sensory function

3. Respiratory status changes ▲
4. Motor and sensory changes below the level of injury
5. Total sensory loss and motor paralysis below the level of injury
6. Loss of reflexes below the level of injury
7. Loss of bladder and bowel control
8. Urinary retention and bladder distention
9. Presence of sweat, which does not occur on paralyzed areas

#### F. Cervical injuries ▲

1. Injury at C2 to C3 is usually fatal.
2. C4 is the major innervation to the diaphragm by the phrenic nerve.
3. Involvement above C4 causes respiratory difficulty and paralysis of all four extremities.
4. Client may have movement in the shoulder if the injury is at C5 through C8, and may also have decreased respiratory reserve.

#### G. Thoracic level injuries

1. Loss of movement of the chest, trunk, bowel, bladder, and legs may occur, depending on the level of injury.
2. Leg paralysis (paraplegia) may occur.
3. Autonomic dysreflexia with lesions or injuries above T6 and in cervical lesions may occur.
4. Visceral distention from a noxious stimuli such as a distended bladder or

impacted rectum may cause reactions such as sweating, bradycardia, hypertension, nasal stuffiness, and goose flesh.

## H. Lumbar and sacral level injuries

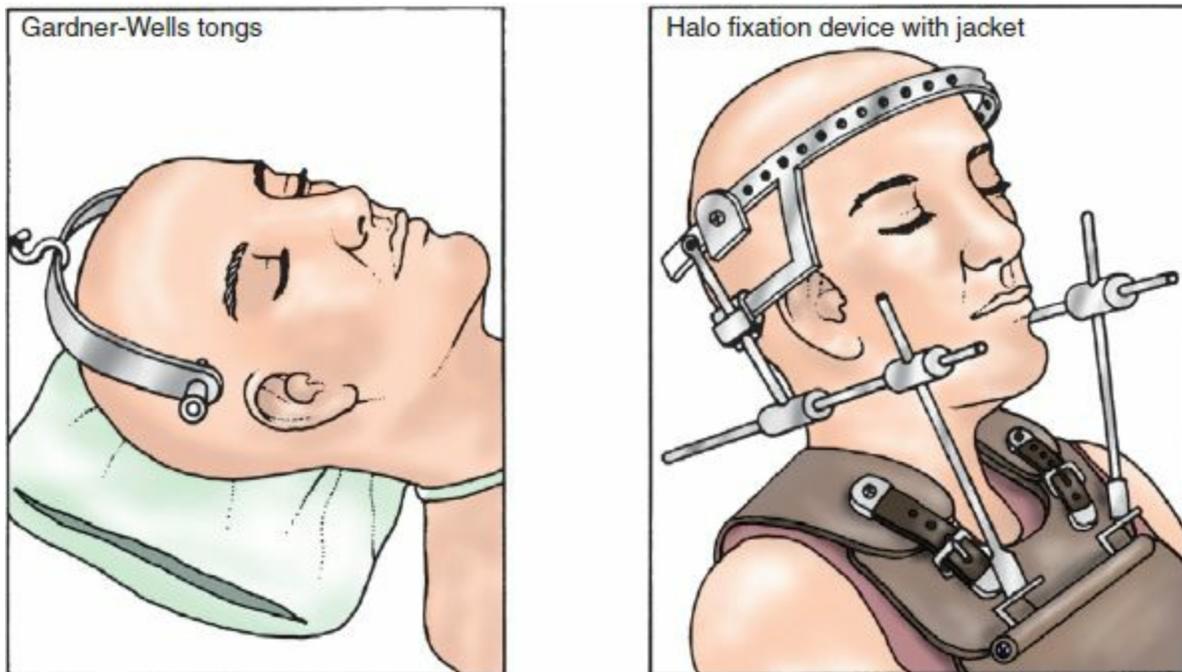
1. Loss of movement and sensation of the lower extremities may occur.
2. S2 and S3 center on micturition; therefore, below this level, the bladder will contract but not empty (neurogenic bladder).
3. Injury above S2 in males allows them to have an erection, but they are unable to ejaculate because of sympathetic nerve damage.
4. Injury between S2 and S4 damages the sympathetic and parasympathetic response, preventing erection or ejaculation.

## I. Emergency interventions

 Always suspect spinal cord injury when trauma occurs until this injury is ruled out. Immobilize the client on a spinal backboard with the head in a neutral position to prevent an incomplete injury from becoming complete.

1. Emergency management is critical because improper movement can cause further damage and loss of neurological function.
2. Assess the respiratory pattern and maintain a patent airway.
3. Prevent head flexion, rotation, or extension. 
4. During immobilization, maintain traction and alignment on the head by placing hands on both sides of the head by the ears.
5. Maintain an extended position.
6. Logroll the client.

7. No part of the body should be twisted or turned, and the client is not allowed to assume a sitting position.
8. In the emergency department, a client who has sustained a cervical fracture should be placed immediately in skeletal traction via skull tongs or halo traction to immobilize the cervical spine and reduce the fracture and dislocation (Fig. 66-3).



**FIGURE 66-3** Types of cervical spine traction. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 6, Philadelphia, 2010, Saunders.)

## J. Interventions during hospitalization ▲

### 1. Respiratory system

- a. Assess respiratory status because paralysis of the intercostal and abdominal muscles occurs with C4 injuries.
- b. Monitor arterial blood gas levels and maintain mechanical ventilation if

prescribed to prevent respiratory arrest, especially with cervical injuries.

- c. Encourage deep breathing and the use of an incentive spirometer.
- d. Monitor for signs of infection, particularly pneumonia.

## 2. Cardiovascular system

- a. Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias.
- b. Assess for signs of hemorrhage or bleeding around the fracture site.
- c. Assess for signs of shock, such as hypotension, tachycardia, and a weak and thready pulse.
- d. Assess the lower extremities for deep vein thrombosis.
- e. Measure circumferences of the calf and thigh to identify increases in size.
- f. Apply thigh-high antiembolism stockings as prescribed.
- g. Remove antiembolism stockings daily to assess the skin.
- h. Monitor for orthostatic hypotension when repositioning the client.

## 3. Neuromuscular system

- a. Assess neurological status.
- b. Assess motor and sensory status to determine the level of injury.
- c. Assess motor ability by testing the client's ability to squeeze hands, spread the fingers, move the toes, and turn the feet.
- d. Assess absence of sensation, hyposensation, or hypersensation by pinching the skin or pricking it with a pin, starting at the shoulders and working down the extremities.
- e. Monitor for signs of autonomic dysreflexia and spinal shock.

- f.** Immobilize the client to promote healing and prevent further injury.
- g.** Assess pain.
- h.** Initiate measures to reduce pain.
- i.** Administer analgesics as prescribed.
- j.** Monitor for complications of immobility.
- k.** Prepare the client for decompression laminectomy, spinal fusion, or insertion of instrumentation or rods if prescribed.
- l.** Collaborate with the physical therapist and occupational therapist to determine appropriate exercise techniques, assess the need for hand and wrist splints, and develop an appropriate plan to prevent footdrop.

#### **4. Gastrointestinal system**

- a.** Assess abdomen for distention and hemorrhage.
- b.** Monitor bowel sounds and assess for paralytic ileus.
- c.** Prevent bowel retention.
- d.** Initiate a bowel control program as appropriate.
- e.** Maintain adequate nutrition and a high-fiber diet.

#### **5. Renal system**

- a.** Prevent urinary retention.
- b.** Initiate a bladder control program as appropriate.
- c.** Maintain fluid and electrolyte balance.
- d.** Maintain adequate fluid intake of 2000 mL/day.
- e.** Monitor for urinary tract infection and calculi.

## 6. Integumentary system

- a. Assess skin integrity.
- b. Turn the client every 2 hours.

## 7. Psychosocial integrity

- a. Assess psychosocial status.
- b. Encourage the client to express feelings of anger and depression.
- c. Discuss the sexual concerns of the client.
- d. Promote rehabilitation with self-care measures, setting realistic goals based on the client's potential functional level.
- e. Encourage contact with appropriate community resources.

## K. Spinal and neurogenic shock

### 1. Description ▲

- a. **Spinal shock**: A complete but temporary loss of motor, sensory, reflex, and autonomic function that occurs immediately after injury as the cord's response to the injury. It usually lasts less than 48 hours but can continue for several weeks
- b. **Neurogenic shock**: Occurs most commonly in clients with injuries above T6 and usually is experienced soon after the injury. Massive vasodilation occurs, leading to pooling of the blood in blood vessels, tissue hypoperfusion, and impaired cellular metabolism.

### 2. Assessment (Box 66-13) ▲



### **Neurogenic Shock**

- Hypotension
- Bradycardia

### **Spinal Shock**

- Flaccid paralysis
- Loss of reflex activity below the level of the injury
- Bradycardia
- Hypotension
- Paralytic ileus

### **Autonomic Dysreflexia**

- Sudden onset, severe throbbing headache
- Severe hypertension and bradycardia
- Flushing above the level of the injury
- Pale extremities below the level of the injury
- Nasal stuffiness
- Nausea
- Dilated pupils or blurred vision
- Sweating
- Piloerection (goose bumps)
- Restlessness and a feeling of apprehension

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Monitor for signs of spinal shock following a spinal cord injury.
- b. Monitor for hypotension and bradycardia.
- c. Monitor for reflex activity.
- d. Assess bowel sounds.
- e. Monitor for bowel and urinary retention.
- f. Provide supportive measures as prescribed, based on the presence of symptoms.
- g. Monitor for the return of reflexes.

## L. Autonomic dysreflexia

### 1. Description ▲

- a. Autonomic dysreflexia is also known as *autonomic hyperreflexia*.
- b. Autonomic dysreflexia generally occurs after the period of spinal shock is resolved and occurs with lesions or injuries above T6 and in cervical lesions.
- c. It is commonly caused by visceral distention from a distended bladder or impacted rectum.
- d. It is a neurological emergency and must be treated immediately to prevent a hypertensive stroke.

### 2. Assessment (see [Box 66-13](#)) ▲

### 3. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)) ▲

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take for a Spinal Cord Injury Client Who Develops Autonomic Dysreflexia

1. Raise the head of the bed.
2. Loosen tight clothing on the client.
3. Check for bladder distention or other noxious stimulus.
4. Administer an antihypertensive medication.
5. Document the occurrence, treatment, and response.

Autonomic dysreflexia is characterized by severe hypertension, bradycardia, severe headache, nasal stuffiness, and flushing. The cause is a noxious stimulus, most often a distended bladder or constipation. Autonomic dysreflexia is a neurological emergency and must be treated promptly to prevent a hypertensive stroke. Immediate nursing actions are to contact a health care provider (HCP) and sit the client up in bed in a high Fowler's position and remove the noxious stimulus. The nurse would loosen any tight clothing and then check for bladder distention. If the client has a Foley catheter, the nurse would check for kinks in the tubing. The nurse also would check for a fecal impaction and disimpact the client, if necessary. The nurse assesses the environment to ensure that it is not too cool or too drafty and also monitors vital signs, particularly the blood pressure, every 15 minutes. Antihypertensive medication may be prescribed by the HCP to minimize cerebral hypertension. Finally, the nurse documents the occurrence, treatment, and client response.

## ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman M: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, pp. 973-974.

### **M. Cervical spine traction for cervical injuries (see [Fig. 66-3](#))**

#### **1. Description**

- a.** Skeletal traction is used to stabilize fractures or dislocations of the cervical or upper thoracic spine.
- b.** Two types of equipment used for cervical traction are skull (cervical) tongs and halo traction (halo fixation device).

#### **2. Skull tongs**

- a.** Skull tongs are inserted into the outer aspect of the client's skull, and traction is applied.
- b.** Weights are attached to the tongs, and the client is used as countertraction. The nurse should not add or remove weights. 
- c.** Monitor the neurological status of the client.
- d.** Determine the amount of weight prescribed to be added to the traction.
- e.** Ensure that weights hang securely and freely at all times.
- f.** Ensure that the ropes for the traction remain within the pulley.
- g.** Maintain body alignment and maintain care of the client on a special bed (such as a RotoRest bed or Stryker or Foster frame) as prescribed.

- h.** Turn the client every 2 hours.
- i.** Assess insertion site of the tongs for infection.
- j.** Provide sterile pin site care as prescribed.

### 3. Halo traction

- a.** Halo traction is a static traction device that consists of a headpiece with four pins, two anterior and two posterior, inserted into the client's skull.
- b.** The metal halo ring may be attached to a vest (jacket) or cast when the spine is stable, allowing increased client mobility.
- c.** Monitor the client's neurological status for changes in movement or decreased strength.
- d.** Never move or turn the client by holding or pulling on the halo traction device.
- e.** Assess for tightness of the jacket by ensuring that one finger can be placed under the jacket.
- f.** Assess skin integrity to ensure that the jacket or cast is not causing pressure.
- g.** Provide sterile pin site care as prescribed.

### 4. Client education for halo traction device (Box 66-14) ▲

#### **BOX 66-14**

#### **Client Education for a Halo Fixation Device**

Notify a health care provider (HCP) if the halo vest (jacket) or ring bolts loosen.

Use fleece or foam inserts to relieve pressure points.

Keep the vest lining dry.

Clean the pin site daily.

Notify the HCP if redness, swelling, drainage, open areas, pain, tenderness, or a clicking sound occurs from the pin site.

A sponge bath or tub bath is allowed; showers are prohibited.

Assess the skin under the vest daily for breakdown, using a flashlight.

Do not use any products other than shampoo on the hair.

When shampooing the hair, cover the vest with plastic.

When getting out of bed, roll onto the side and push on the mattress with the arms.

Never use the metal frame for turning or lifting.

Use a rolled towel or pillowcase between the back of the neck and bed or next to the cheek when lying on the side, and raise the head of the bed to increase sleep comfort.

Adapt clothing to fit over the halo device.

Eat foods high in protein and calcium to promote bone healing.

Have the correct-sized wrench available at all times for an emergency (tape the wrench to the vest).

If cardiopulmonary resuscitation is required, the anterior portion of the vest will be loosened and the posterior portion will remain in place to provide stability.

**5.** Initiate interventions in support of the client's self image.

**6.** Teach the client and family pin care, care of the vest, and signs and symptoms of infection to report to his or her health care provider.

**N.** Interventions for thoracic, lumbar, and sacral injuries

1. Bed rest
  2. Immobilization with a body cast if prescribed
  3. Assess for respiratory impairment and paralytic ileus, possible complications of the body cast. ▲
  4. Use of a brace or corset when the client is out of bed
- O.** Surgical interventions for thoracic, lumbar, and sacral injuries
1. Decompressive laminectomy
    - a. Removal of one or more laminae
    - b. Allows for cord expansion from edema; performed if conventional methods fail to prevent neurological deterioration
  2. Spinal fusion
    - a. Spinal fusion is used for thoracic spinal injuries.
    - b. Bone is grafted between the vertebrae for support and to strengthen the back.
  3. Postoperative interventions ▲
    - a. Monitor for respiratory impairment.
    - b. Monitor vital signs, motor function, sensation, and circulatory status in the lower extremities.
    - c. Encourage breathing exercises.
    - d. Assess for signs of fluid and electrolyte imbalances.
    - e. Observe for complications of immobility.
    - f. Keep the client in a flat position as prescribed.
    - g. Provide cast care if the client is in a full body cast.

- h.** Turn and reposition frequently by logrolling side to back to side, using turning sheets and pillows between the legs to maintain alignment. ▲
- i.** Administer pain medication as prescribed.
- j.** Maintain on NPO status until the client is passing flatus.
- k.** Monitor bowel sounds.
- l.** Provide the use of a fracture bedpan.
- m.** Monitor intake and output.
- n.** Maintain nutritional status.

## **P. Medications**

- 1. Dexamethasone (Decadron)**
  - a.** Used for its antiinflammatory and edema-reducing effects
  - b.** May interfere with healing
- 2. Dextran:** Plasma expander used to increase capillary blood flow within the spinal cord and to prevent or treat hypotension
- 3. Dantrolene (Dantrium), baclofen (Lioresal):** These medications are used for clients with upper motor neuron injuries to control muscle spasticity.

## **IX. Cerebral Aneurysm**

### **A. Description**

- 1.** Dilation of the walls of a weakened cerebral artery
- 2.** Aneurysm can lead to rupture.

### **B. Assessment**

- 1.** Headache and pain

2. Irritability
3. Diplopia
4. Blurred vision
5. Tinnitus
6. Hemiparesis
7. Nuchal rigidity
8. Seizures

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Maintain a patent airway (suction only with an HCP's prescription).
2. Administer oxygen as prescribed.
3. Monitor vital signs and for hypertension or dysrhythmias.
4. Avoid taking temperatures via the rectum.
5. Initiate aneurysm precautions ([Box 66-15](#))

#### **BOX 66-15**

#### **Aneurysm Precautions**

Maintain the client on bed rest in a semi-Fowler's or a side-lying position.

Maintain a darkened room (subdued lighting and avoid direct, bright, artificial lights) without stimulation (a private room is optimal).

Provide a quiet environment (avoid activities or startling noises); a telephone in the room is not usually allowed.

Reading, watching television, and listening to music are permitted, provided that they do not overstimulate the client.

Limit visitors.

Maintain fluid restrictions.

Provide diet as prescribed; avoid stimulants in the diet.

Prevent any activities that initiate the Valsalva maneuver (straining at stool, coughing); provide stool softeners to prevent straining.

Administer care gently (such as the bath, back rub, range of motion).

Limit invasive procedures.

Maintain normothermia.

Prevent hypertension.

Provide sedation.

Provide pain control.

Administer prophylactic anticonvulsant medications.

Provide deep vein thrombosis (DVT) prophylaxis as prescribed.

## X. Seizures ▲

### A. Description

1. Seizures are an abnormal, sudden, excessive discharge of electrical activity within the brain.
2. Epilepsy is a disorder characterized by chronic seizure activity and indicates brain or CNS irritation.
3. Causes include genetic factors, trauma, tumors, circulatory or metabolic disorders, toxicity, and infections.

4. Status epilepticus involves a rapid succession of epileptic spasms without intervals of consciousness; it is a potential complication that can occur with any type of seizure, and brain damage may result.

**B. Types of seizures (Box 66-16)**

**BOX 66-16**

**Types of Seizures**

**Generalized Seizures**

***Tonic-Clonic***

Tonic-clonic seizures may begin with an aura.

The tonic phase involves the stiffening or rigidity of the muscles of the arms and legs and usually lasts 10 to 20 seconds, followed by loss of consciousness.

The clonic phase consists of hyperventilation and jerking of the extremities and usually lasts about 30 seconds.

Full recovery from the seizure may take several hours.

***Absence***

A brief seizure that lasts seconds, and the individual may or may not lose consciousness.

No loss or change in muscle tone occurs.

Seizures may occur several times during a day.

The victim appears to be daydreaming.

This type of seizure is more common in children.

## ***Myoclonic***

Myoclonic seizures present as a brief generalized jerking or stiffening of extremities.

The victim may fall to the ground from the seizure.

## ***Atonic or Akinetic (Drop Attacks)***

An atonic seizure is a sudden momentary loss of muscle tone.

The victim may fall to the ground as a result of the seizure.

## **Partial Seizures**

### ***Simple Partial***

The simple partial seizure produces sensory symptoms accompanied by motor symptoms that are localized or confined to a specific area.

The client remains conscious and may report an aura.

### ***Complex Partial***

The complex partial seizure is a psychomotor seizure.

The area of the brain most usually involved is the temporal lobe.

The seizure is characterized by periods of altered behavior of which the client is not aware.

The client loses consciousness for a few seconds.

1. Generalized seizures

2. Partial seizures

C. Assessment 

1. Seizure history
2. Type of seizure
3. Occurrences before, during, and after the seizure
4. Prodromal signs, such as mood changes, irritability, and insomnia
5. Aura: Sensation that warns the client of the impending seizure
6. Loss of motor activity or bowel and bladder function or loss of consciousness during the seizure
7. Occurrences during the postictal state, such as headache, loss of consciousness, sleepiness, and impaired speech or thinking

#### D. Interventions

 **If the client is having a seizure, maintain a patent airway. Do not force the jaws open or place anything in the client's mouth.**

1. Note the time and duration of the seizure.
2. Assess behavior at the onset of the seizure: If the client has experienced an aura, if a change in facial expression occurred, or if a sound or cry occurred from the client
3. If the client is standing or sitting, place the client on the floor and protect the head and body.
4. Support the ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation.
5. Administer oxygen.
6. Prepare to suction secretions.
7. Turn the client to the side to allow secretions to drain while maintaining the

airway.

8. Prevent injury during the seizure.
9. Remain with the client.
10. Do not restrain the client.
11. Loosen restrictive clothing.
12. Note the type, character, and progression of the movements during the seizure.
13. Monitor for incontinence.
14. Administer intravenous medications as prescribed to stop the seizure.
15. Document the characteristics of the seizure.
16. Provide privacy, if possible.
17. Monitor behavior following the seizure, such as the state of consciousness, motor ability, and speech ability.
18. Instruct the client about the importance of lifelong medication and the need for follow-up determination of medication blood levels.
19. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol, excessive stress, fatigue, and strobe lights.
20. Encourage the client to contact available community resources, such as the Epilepsy Foundation of America.
21. Encourage the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

## **XI. Stroke (Brain Attack) ▲**

### **A. Description**

1. A stroke or brain attack is a sudden focal neurological deficit caused by

cerebrovascular disease.

2. A stroke is a syndrome in which the cerebral circulation is interrupted, causing neurological deficits.
3. Cerebral anoxia lasting longer than 10 minutes causes cerebral infarction with irreversible change.
4. Cerebral edema and congestion cause further dysfunction.
5. Diagnosis is determined by a CT scan, electroencephalography, cerebral arteriography, and MRI.
6. Transient ischemic attack may be a warning sign of an impending stroke.
7. The permanent disability cannot be determined until the cerebral edema subsides.
8. The order in which function may return is facial, swallowing, lower limbs, speech, and arms.
9. Carotid endarterectomy is a surgical intervention used in stroke management; it is targeted at stroke prevention, especially in clients with symptomatic carotid stenosis.
10. The National Institutes of Health through the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) developed the *Know Stroke. Know the Signs. Act in Time* campaign to help educate the public about the symptoms of stroke and the importance of getting to the hospital quickly (<http://stroke.nih.gov>).

## B. Causes

1. Thrombosis
2. Embolism

3. Hemorrhage from rupture of a vessel

**C. Risk factors** ▲

1. Atherosclerosis

2. Hypertension

3. Anticoagulation therapy

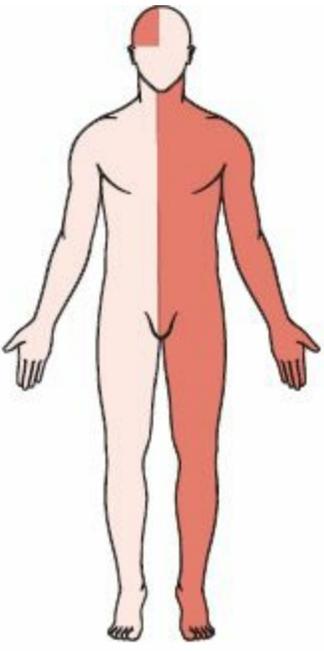
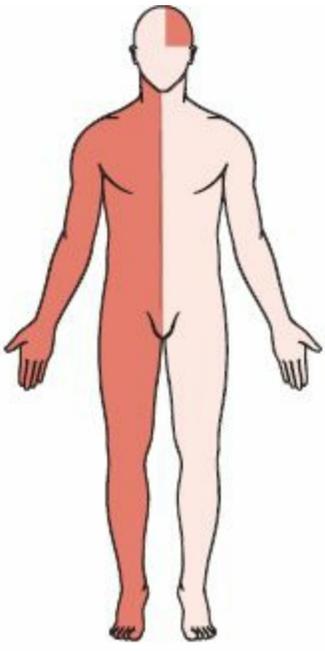
4. Diabetes mellitus

5. Stress

6. Obesity

7. Oral contraceptives

**D. Assessment** (Fig. 66-4; Boxes 66-17 and 66-18) ▲

	
<p><b>Right-brain damage</b> (stroke on right side of the brain)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paralyzed left side: hemiplegia</li> <li>• Left-sided neglect</li> <li>• Spatial-perceptual deficits</li> <li>• Tends to deny or minimize problems</li> <li>• Rapid performance, short attention span</li> <li>• Impulsive, safety problems</li> <li>• Impaired judgment</li> <li>• Impaired time concepts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Left-brain damage</b> (stroke on left side of the brain)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paralyzed right side: hemiplegia</li> <li>• Impaired speech/language aphasias</li> <li>• Impaired right/left discrimination</li> <li>• Slow performance, cautious</li> <li>• Aware of deficits: depression, anxiety</li> <li>• Impaired comprehension related to language, math</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 66-4** Manifestations of right brain and left brain stroke. (From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper P, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

### BOX 66-17

### Neurological Assessment in Stroke

- Changes in level of consciousness
- Signs of increasing intracranial pressure

- Assessment of cranial nerves V, VII, IX, X, and XII
  - Cranial nerve V: Difficulty with chewing
  - Cranial nerve VII: Facial paralysis or paresis
  - Cranial nerves IX and X: Dysphagia
  - Cranial nerve IX: Absent gag reflex
  - Cranial nerve XII: Impaired tongue movement

## **BOX 66-18**

## **Assessment Findings in a Stroke**

### **Agnosia**

- The inability to recognize familiar objects or persons

### **Apraxia**

- Called *dyspraxia* if the condition is mild
- Characterized by loss of ability to execute or carry out skilled movements or gestures, despite having the desire and physical ability to perform them

### **Hemianopsia**

- Blindness in half the visual field

### **Homonymous Hemianopsia**

- Loss of half of the field of view on the same side in both eyes.

### **Neglect Syndrome (Unilateral Neglect)**

- Client unaware of the existence of his or her paralyzed side

## Proprioception Alterations

- Altered position sense that places the client at increased risk of injury
- *Pyramid Point*: With visual problems, the client must turn the head to scan the complete range of vision.

## References

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institute of Health. NIH Publication # 10-4872. June 2013. Know Stroke. Know the Signs. Act in Time. National Institutes of Health. <http://stroke.nih.gov>.

 A critical factor in the early intervention and treatment of stroke is the accurate identification of stroke manifestations and establishing the onset of the manifestations. Stroke screening scales may be used to quickly identify stroke manifestations.

1. Assessment findings depend on the area of the brain affected; stroke scales may be used by the health care facility for assessment.
2. Lesions in the cerebral hemisphere result in manifestations on the contralateral side, which is the side of the body opposite the stroke.
3. Airway patency is always a priority.
4. Pulse (may be slow and bounding)
5. Respirations (Cheyne-Stokes)
6. Blood pressure (hypertension)
7. Headache, nausea, and vomiting

- 8. Facial drooping**
- 9. Nuchal rigidity**
- 10. Visual changes**
- 11. Ataxia**
- 12. Dysarthria**
- 13. Dysphagia**
- 14. Speech changes**
- 15. Decreased sensation to pressure, heat, and cold**
- 16. Bowel and bladder dysfunctions**
- 17. Paralysis**

## **E. Aphasia**

### **1. Expressive**

- a. Damage occurs in Broca's area of the frontal brain.**
- b. The client understands what is said but is unable to communicate verbally.**

### **2. Receptive**

- a. Injury involves Wernicke's area in the temporoparietal area.**
- b. The client is unable to understand the spoken and often the written word.**

### **3. Global or mixed: Language dysfunction occurs in expression and reception.**

### **4. Interventions for aphasia 🟩**

- a. Provide repetitive directions.**
- b. Break tasks down to one step at a time.**
- c. Repeat names of objects frequently used.**

**d.** Allow time for the client to communicate.

**e.** Use a picture board, communication board, or computer technology.

**F.** Interventions during the acute phase of stroke ▲

- 1.** Maintain a patent airway and administer oxygen as prescribed.
- 2.** Monitor vital signs.
- 3.** Usually a blood pressure of 150/100 mm Hg is maintained to ensure cerebral perfusion.
- 4.** Suction secretions as prescribed, but never suction nasally or for longer than 10 seconds to prevent increased ICP.
- 5.** Monitor for increased ICP because the client is most at risk during the first 72 hours following the stroke.
- 6.** Position the client on the side, with the head of the bed elevated 15 to 30 degrees as prescribed.
- 7.** Monitor level of consciousness, pupillary response, motor and sensory response, cranial nerve function, and reflexes.
- 8.** Maintain a quiet environment.
- 9.** Insert a Foley catheter as prescribed.
- 10.** Administer intravenous fluids as prescribed.
- 11.** Maintain fluid and electrolyte balance.
- 12.** Prepare to administer anticoagulants, antiplatelets, diuretics, antihypertensives, and anticonvulsants as prescribed.
- 13.** Establish a form of communication.

## **G. Interventions in the postacute phase of a stroke**

1. Continue with interventions from the acute phase.
2. Position the client 2 hours on the unaffected side and 20 minutes on the affected side.
3. Position the client in the prone position if prescribed, for 30 minutes three times daily.
4. Provide skin, mouth, and eye care.
5. Perform passive range-of-motion exercises to prevent contractures.
6. Place antiembolism stockings on the client; remove daily to check skin.
7. Measure thighs and calves daily for an increase in size.
8. Monitor the gag reflex and ability to swallow.
9. Provide sips of fluids and slowly advance diet to foods that are easy to chew and swallow.
10. Provide soft and semisoft foods and flavored, cool or warm, thickened fluids rather than thin liquids because the stroke client can tolerate these types of food better; speech therapists may do swallow studies to recommend consistency of food and fluids.
11. When the client is eating, position the client sitting in a chair or sitting up in bed, with the head and neck positioned slightly forward and flexed.
12. Place food in the back of the mouth on the unaffected side to prevent trapping of food in the affected cheek.

## **H. Interventions in the chronic phase of stroke**

1. Neglect syndrome ▲

- a. Client is unaware of the existence of his or her paralyzed side (**unilateral neglect**), which places the client at risk for injury.
- b. Teach the client to touch and use both sides of the body.

2. **Hemianopsia** ▲

- a. Client has blindness in half the visual field.
- b. **Homonymous hemianopsia** is blindness in the same visual field of both eyes.
- c. Encourage the client to turn the head to scan the complete range of vision; otherwise, he or she does not see half of the visual field.

3. Approach the client from the unaffected side.

4. Place the client's personal objects within the visual field.

5. Provide eye care for visual deficits.

6. Place a patch over the affected eye if the client has diplopia.

7. Increase mobility as tolerated.

8. Encourage fluid intake and a high-fiber diet.

9. Administer stool softeners as prescribed.

10. Encourage the client to express her or his feelings.

11. Encourage independence in activities of daily living.

12. Assess the need for assistive devices such as a cane, walker, splint, or braces.

13. Teach transfer technique from bed to chair and from chair to bed.

14. Provide gait training.

15. Initiate physical and occupational therapy for assessment and the need for

adaptive equipment or other supports for self-care and mobility.

16. Refer client to a speech and language pathologist as prescribed.

17. Encourage the client and family to contact available community resources.

## **XII. Multiple Sclerosis**

### **A. Description**

1. Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, progressive, noncontagious, degenerative disease of the CNS characterized by demyelination of the neurons. 🟢
2. It usually occurs between the ages of 20 and 40 years and consists of periods of remissions and exacerbations.
3. The causes are unknown, but the disease is thought to be the result of an autoimmune response or viral infection.
4. Precipitating factors include pregnancy, fatigue, stress, infection, and trauma.
5. Electroencephalographic findings are abnormal.
6. Assessment of a lumbar puncture indicates an increased gamma globulin level, but the serum globulin level is normal.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Fatigue and weakness
2. Ataxia and vertigo
3. Tremors and spasticity of the lower extremities
4. Paresthesias
5. Blurred vision, diplopia, and transient blindness
6. Nystagmus

7. Dysphasia
8. Decreased perception to pain, touch, and temperature
9. Bladder and bowel disturbances, including urgency, frequency, retention, and incontinence
10. Abnormal reflexes, including hyperreflexia, absent reflexes, and a positive Babinski reflex
11. Emotional changes such as apathy, euphoria, irritability, and depression
12. Memory changes and confusion

### C. Interventions

1. Provide energy conservation measures during exacerbation.
2. Protect the client from injury by providing safety measures.
3. Place an eye patch on the eye for diplopia.
4. Monitor for potential complications such as urinary tract infections, calculi, pressure ulcers, respiratory tract infections, and contractures.
5. Promote regular elimination by bladder and bowel training.
6. Encourage independence.
7. Assist the client to establish a regular exercise and rest program.
8. Instruct the client to balance moderate activity with rest periods.
9. Assess the need for and provide assistive devices.
10. Initiate physical and speech therapy.
11. Instruct the client to avoid fatigue, stress, infection, overheating, and chilling.
12. Instruct the client to increase fluid intake and eat a balanced diet, including low-

fat, high-fiber foods and foods high in potassium.

13. Instruct the client in safety measures related to sensory loss, such as regulating the temperature of bath water and avoiding heating pads.
14. Instruct the client in safety measures related to motor loss, such as avoiding the use of scatter rugs and using assistive devices.
15. Instruct the client in the self-administration of prescribed medications.
16. Provide information about the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

### **XIII. Myasthenia Gravis**

#### **A. Description**

1. Myasthenia gravis is a neuromuscular disease characterized by considerable weakness and abnormal fatigue of the voluntary muscles.
2. A defect in the transmission of nerve impulses at the myoneural junction occurs.
3. Causes include insufficient secretion of acetylcholine, excessive secretion of cholinesterase, and unresponsiveness of the muscle fibers to acetylcholine. ▲

#### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Weakness and fatigue
2. Difficulty chewing and swallowing
3. Dysphagia
4. Ptosis
5. Diplopia
6. Weak, hoarse voice

7. Difficulty breathing
8. Diminished breath sounds
9. Respiratory paralysis and failure

**C. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor respiratory status and ability to cough and deep-breathe adequately.
  2. Monitor for respiratory failure.
  3. Maintain suctioning and emergency equipment at the bedside.
  4. Monitor vital signs.
  5. Monitor speech and swallowing abilities to prevent aspiration.
  6. Encourage the client to sit up when eating.
  7. Assess muscle status.
  8. Instruct the client to conserve strength.
  9. Plan short activities that coincide with times of maximal muscle strength.
  10. Monitor for myasthenic and cholinergic crises.
  11. Administer anticholinesterase medications as prescribed.
  12. Instruct the client to avoid stress, infection, fatigue, and over-the-counter medications.
  13. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.
  14. Inform the client about services from the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation.
- D. Anticholinesterase medications:** Increase levels of acetylcholine at the myoneural junction (see [Chapter 67](#))
- E. Myasthenic crisis** ▲

## 1. Description

- a. Myasthenic crisis is an acute exacerbation of the disease.
- b. The crisis is caused by a rapid, unrecognized progression of the disease, inadequate amount of medication, infection, fatigue, or stress.

## 2. Assessment

- a. Increased pulse, respirations, and blood pressure
- b. Dyspnea, anoxia, and cyanosis
- c. Bowel and bladder incontinence
- d. Decreased urine output
- e. Absent cough and swallow reflex

## 3. Interventions

- a. Assess for signs of myasthenic crisis.
- b. Increase anticholinesterase medication, as prescribed.

## F. Cholinergic crisis

### 1. Description

- a. Cholinergic crisis results in depolarization of the motor end plates.
- b. The crisis is caused by overmedication with anticholinesterase.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Abdominal cramps
- b. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- c. Blurred vision
- d. Pallor

e. Facial muscle twitching

f. Hypotension

g. Pupillary miosis

**3. Interventions**

a. Withhold anticholinesterase medication.

b. Prepare to administer the antidote, atropine sulfate, if prescribed.

**G. Edrophonium test ▲**

**⚠ Have atropine sulfate available when performing the Tensilon test.**

**1. Description**

a. May also be known as the Tensilon test; this test is performed by the neurologist to diagnose myasthenia gravis and to differentiate between myasthenic crisis and cholinergic crisis.

b. The test places the client at risk for ventricular fibrillation and cardiac arrest; the nurse must be prepared for this possibility.

**2. To diagnose myasthenia gravis**

a. Edrophonium injection is administered to the client.

b. Positive for myasthenia gravis: Client shows improvement in muscle strength after the administration of edrophonium.

c. Negative for myasthenia gravis: Client shows no improvement in muscle strength, and strength may even deteriorate after injection of edrophonium.

**3. To differentiate crisis**

- a. Myasthenic crisis: Edrophonium is administered and, if strength improves, the client needs more medication.
- b. Cholinergic crisis: Edrophonium is administered and, if weakness is more severe, the client is overmedicated; prepare to administer atropine sulfate, the antidote, as prescribed.

## **XIV. Parkinson's Disease**

### **A. Description**

1. Parkinson's disease is a degenerative disease caused by the depletion of dopamine, which interferes with the inhibition of excitatory impulses, resulting in a dysfunction of the extrapyramidal system.
2. It is a slow, progressive disease that results in a crippling disability.
3. The debilitation can result in falls, self-care deficits, failure of body systems, and depression.
4. Mental deterioration occurs late in the disease.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Bradykinesia, abnormal slowness of movement, and sluggishness of physical and mental responses
2. Akinesia
3. Monotonous speech
4. Handwriting that becomes progressively smaller
5. Tremors in hands and fingers at rest (pill rolling)

6. Tremors increasing when fatigued and decreasing with purposeful activity or sleep
7. Rigidity with jerky movements
8. Restlessness and pacing
9. Blank facial expression; masklike faces
10. Drooling
11. Difficulty swallowing and speaking
12. Loss of coordination and balance
13. Shuffling steps, stooped position, and propulsive gait

#### C. Interventions ▲

1. Assess neurological status.
2. Assess ability to swallow and chew.
3. Provide high-calorie, high-protein, high-fiber soft diet with small, frequent feedings.
4. Increase fluid intake to 2000 mL/day.
5. Monitor for constipation.
6. Promote independence along with safety measures.
7. Avoid rushing the client with activities.
8. Assist with ambulation and provide assistive devices.
9. Instruct the client to rock back and forth to initiate movement.
10. Instruct the client to wear low-heeled shoes.
11. Encourage the client to lift feet when walking and to avoid prolonged sitting.

12. Provide a firm mattress and position the client prone, without a pillow, to facilitate proper posture.
13. Instruct in proper posture by teaching the client to hold the hands behind the back to keep the spine and neck erect.
14. Promote physical therapy and rehabilitation.
15. Administer antiparkinsonian medications to increase the level of dopamine in the CNS.
16. Instruct the client to avoid foods high in vitamin B<sub>6</sub> because they block the effects of antiparkinsonian medications.
17. Instruct the client to avoid monoamine oxidase inhibitors because they will precipitate hypertensive crisis.
18. See [Chapter 67](#) regarding medication to treat Parkinson's disease.

## **XV. Trigeminal Neuralgia**

### **A. Description**

1. Trigeminal neuralgia is a sensory disorder of the trigeminal (fifth cranial) nerve.
2. It results in severe, recurrent, sharp, facial pain along the trigeminal nerve.

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Client has severe pain on the lips, gums, or nose, or across the cheeks.
2. Situations that stimulate symptoms include cold, washing the face, chewing, or food or fluids of extreme temperatures.

### **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Instruct the client to avoid hot or cold foods and fluids.

2. Provide small feedings of liquid and soft foods.
3. Instruct the client to chew food on the unaffected side.
4. Administer medications as prescribed (see [Chapter 67](#)).

#### **D. Surgical interventions**

1. Microvascular decompression: Surgical relocation of the artery that compresses the trigeminal nerve as it enters the pons, which may relieve pain without compromising facial sensation
2. Radiofrequency waveforms: Create lesions that provide relief of pain without compromising touch or motor function
3. Rhizotomy: Resection of the root of the nerve to relieve pain
4. Glycerol injection: Destroys the myelinated fibers of the trigeminal nerve (may take up to 3 weeks for pain relief to occur)

## **XVI. Bell's Palsy (Facial Paralysis)**

### **A. Description**

1. Bell's palsy is caused by a lower motor neuron lesion of the seventh cranial nerve that may result from infection, trauma, hemorrhage, meningitis, or tumor.
2. It results in paralysis of one side of the face.
3. Recovery usually occurs in a few weeks, without residual effects.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Flaccid facial muscles
2. Inability to raise the eyebrows, frown, smile, close the eyelids, or puff out the

cheeks

3. Upward movement of the eye when attempting to close the eyelid

4. Loss of taste

### C. Interventions

1. Encourage facial exercises to prevent the loss of muscle tone (a face sling may be prescribed to prevent stretching of weak muscles).

2. Protect the eyes from dryness and prevent injury.

3. Promote frequent oral care.

4. Instruct the client to chew on the unaffected side.

## **XVII. Guillain-Barré Syndrome**

### A. Description

1. Guillain-Barré syndrome is an acute infectious neuronitis of the cranial and peripheral nerves.

2. The immune system overreacts to the infection and destroys the myelin sheath.

3. The syndrome usually is preceded by a mild upper respiratory infection or gastroenteritis.

4. The recovery is a slow process and can take years.

 **The major concern in Guillain-Barré syndrome is difficulty breathing; monitor respiratory status closely.**

### B. Assessment

1. Paresthesias

2. Pain and/or hypersensitivity such as with the weight of bed sheets or other items touching the body
3. Weakness of lower extremities
4. Gradual progressive weakness of the upper extremities and facial muscles
5. Possible progression to respiratory failure ▲
6. Cardiac dysrhythmias
7. CSF that reveals an elevated protein level
8. Abnormal electroencephalogram

#### C. Interventions

1. Care is directed toward the treatment of symptoms, including pain management.
2. Monitor respiratory status.
3. Provide respiratory treatments.
4. Prepare to initiate respiratory support. ▲
5. Monitor cardiac status.
6. Assess for complications of immobility.
7. Provide the client and family with support.

### **XVIII. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis**

#### A. Description

1. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.
2. It is a progressive degenerative disease involving the motor system.
3. The sensory and autonomic systems are not involved, and mental status changes do

not result from the disease.

4. The cause of the disease may be related to an excess of glutamate, a chemical responsible for relaying messages between the motor neurons.
5. As the disease progresses, muscle weakness and atrophy develop until a flaccid tetraplegia develops.
6. Eventually, the respiratory muscles become affected, leading to respiratory compromise, pneumonia, and death. ▲
7. No cure is known, and the treatment is symptomatic.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Respiratory difficulty ▲
2. Fatigue while talking
3. Muscle weakness and atrophy
4. Tongue atrophy
5. Dysphagia
6. Weakness of the hands and arms
7. Fasciculations of the face
8. Nasal quality of speech
9. Dysarthria

## **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Care is directed toward the treatment of symptoms.
2. Monitor respiratory status and institute measures to prevent aspiration.
3. Provide respiratory treatments.

4. Prepare to initiate respiratory support.
5. Assess for complications of immobility.
6. Address advance directives as appropriate
7. Provide the client and family with support.

## **XIX. Encephalitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain parenchyma and often of the meninges.
2. It affects the cerebrum, brainstem, and cerebellum.
3. It most often is caused by a viral agent, although bacteria, fungi, or parasites also may be involved.
4. Viral encephalitis is almost always preceded by a viral infection.

### **B. Transmission**

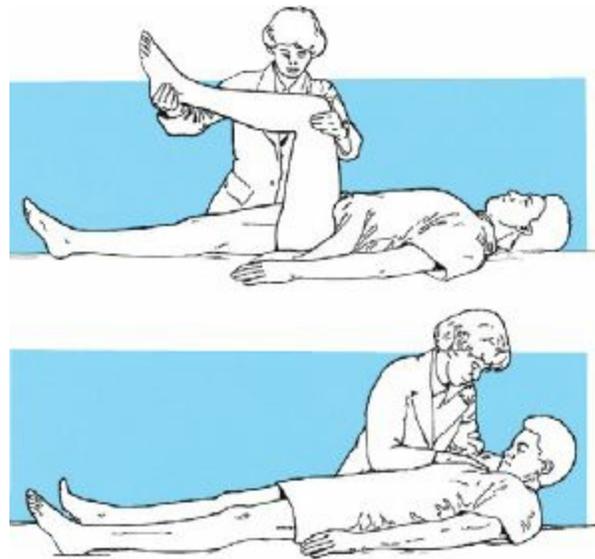
1. Arboviruses can be transmitted to human beings through the bite of an infected mosquito or tick.
2. Echovirus, coxsackievirus, poliovirus, herpes zoster virus, and viruses that cause mumps and chickenpox are common enteroviruses associated with encephalitis.
3. Herpes simplex type 1 virus can cause viral encephalitis.
4. The organism that causes amebic meningoencephalitis can enter the nasal mucosa of persons swimming in warm fresh water—for example, in a pond or lake.

### **C. Assessment** ▲

1. Presence of cold sores, lesions, or ulcerations of the oral cavity
2. History of insect bites and swimming in fresh water
3. Exposure to infectious diseases
4. Travel to areas where the disease is prevalent
5. Fever
6. Nausea and vomiting
7. Nuchal rigidity
8. Changes in level of consciousness and mental status
9. Signs of increased ICP
10. Motor dysfunction and focal neurological deficits

#### D. Interventions

1. Monitor vital and neurological signs.
2. Assess level of consciousness using the Glasgow Coma Scale.
3. Assess for mental status changes and personality and behavior changes.
4. Assess for signs of increased ICP.
5. Assess for the presence of nuchal rigidity and a positive **Kernig's sign** or **Brudzinski's sign**, indicating meningeal irritation (Fig. 66-5).



**FIGURE 66-5** Kernig's sign and Brudzinski's sign. (From Wilson S, Giddens J: *Health assessment for nursing practice*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2008, Mosby.)

6. Assist the client to turn, cough, and deep-breathe frequently.
7. Elevate the head of the bed 30 to 45 degrees.
8. Assess for muscle and neurological deficits.
9. Administer acyclovir (Zovirax) as prescribed (usually is the medication of choice for herpes encephalitis).
10. Initiate rehabilitation as needed for motor dysfunction or neurological deficits.

## **XX. West Nile Virus Infection** ▲

### **A. Description**

1. West Nile virus infection is a potentially serious illness that affects the CNS.
2. The virus is contracted primarily by the bite of an infected mosquito (mosquitoes become carriers when they feed on infected birds).
3. Symptoms typically develop between 3 and 14 days after being bitten by the

infected mosquito.

4. Neurological effects can be permanent.

## **B. Assessment**

1. Many individuals will not experience any symptoms.

2. Mild symptoms include fever; headache and body aches; nausea; vomiting; swollen glands; or a rash on the chest, stomach, or back.

3. Severe symptoms include a high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, paralysis, seizures, or coma.

**C.** Interventions are supportive; there is no specific treatment for the virus.

## **D. Prevention**

1. Use insect repellents containing DEET (diethyltoluamide) when outdoors and wear long sleeves and pants and light-colored clothing.

2. Stay indoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

3. Ensure that mosquito breeding sites are eliminated, such as standing water and water in bird baths, and keep wading pools empty and on their sides when not in use.

## **XXI. Meningitis**

### **A. Description**

1. Meningitis is inflammation of the arachnoid and pia mater of the brain and spinal cord.

2. It is caused by bacterial and viral organisms, although fungal and protozoan

meningitis also occur.

3. Predisposing factors include skull fractures, brain or spinal surgery, sinus or upper respiratory infections, the use of nasal sprays, and a compromised immune system.

4. Cerebrospinal fluid is analyzed to determine the diagnosis and type of meningitis. In meningitis, CSF is cloudy, with increased protein, increased white blood cells, and decreased glucose counts. ▲

**B. Transmission:** Transmission occurs in areas of high population density, crowded living areas such as college dormitories, and prisons.

**▲** Transmission of meningitis is by direct contact, including droplet spread.

**C. Assessment** (see [Box 66-4](#)) ▲

1. Mild lethargy

2. Photophobia

3. Deterioration in the level of consciousness

4. Signs of meningeal irritation, such as nuchal rigidity and a positive Kernig's sign and Brudzinski's sign

5. Red, macular rash with meningococcal meningitis

6. Abdominal and chest pain with viral meningitis

**D. Interventions**

1. Monitor vital signs and neurological signs.

2. Assess for signs of increased ICP.

3. Initiate seizure precautions.
4. Monitor for seizure activity.
5. Monitor for signs of meningeal irritation.
6. Perform cranial nerve assessment.
7. Assess peripheral vascular status (septic emboli may block circulation).
8. Maintain isolation precautions as necessary with bacterial meningitis.
9. Maintain urine and stool precautions with viral meningitis.
10. Maintain respiratory isolation for the client with pneumococcal meningitis. ▲
11. Elevate the head of the bed 30 degrees, and avoid neck flexion and extreme hip flexion.
12. Prevent stimulation and restrict visitors.
13. Administer analgesics as prescribed.
14. Administer antibiotics as prescribed.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Unilateral body neglect syndrome is particularly common with strokes in the right cerebral hemisphere. In this syndrome, the client is unaware of his or her left or paralyzed side and neglects that side. If the nurse makes this observation, the nurse should immediately assess the client for signs of injury and provide safety to the client. When assessed, the client with this syndrome often indicates that everything is fine and believes that he or she is sitting up straight in the chair. The client should be

taught to use both sides of the body and to attend to the affected side first. If the client is experiencing visual problems, the client is taught to turn the head from side-to-side to expand the visual field.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1011, 1019.



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**799.** The nurse is assessing the motor function of an unconscious client. The nurse should plan to use which technique to test the client's peripheral response to pain?

1. Sternal rub
2. Nail bed pressure
3. Pressure on the orbital rim
4. Squeezing of the sternocleidomastoid muscle

**800.** The nurse is caring for the client with increased intracranial pressure. The nurse would note which trend in vital signs if the intracranial pressure is rising?

1. Increasing temperature, increasing pulse, increasing respirations, decreasing blood pressure
2. Increasing temperature, decreasing pulse, decreasing respirations, increasing blood pressure
3. Decreasing temperature, decreasing pulse, increasing respirations, decreasing blood pressure
4. Decreasing temperature, increasing pulse, decreasing respirations, increasing blood pressure

**801.** A client recovering from a head injury is participating in care. The nurse determines that the client understands measures to prevent elevations in intracranial pressure if the nurse observes the client doing which activity?

1. Blowing the nose
2. Isometric exercises
3. Coughing vigorously
4. Exhaling during repositioning

**802.** A client has clear fluid leaking from the nose following a basilar skull fracture.

Which finding would alert the nurse that cerebrospinal fluid is present?

1. Fluid is clear and tests negative for glucose.
2. Fluid is grossly bloody in appearance and has a pH of 6.
3. Fluid clumps together on the dressing and has a pH of 7.
4. Fluid separates into concentric rings and tests positive for glucose.

**803.** A client with a spinal cord injury is prone to experiencing autonomic dysreflexia.

The nurse should avoid which measure to minimize the risk of occurrence?

1. Strict adherence to a bowel retraining program
2. Keeping the linen wrinkle-free under the client
3. Preventing unnecessary pressure on the lower limbs
4. Limiting bladder catheterization to once every 12 hours

**804.** The nurse is evaluating the neurological signs of a client in spinal shock following spinal cord injury. Which observation indicates that spinal shock persists?

1. Hyperreflexia
2. Positive reflexes

3. Flaccid paralysis
4. Reflex emptying of the bladder

**805.** The nurse is caring for a client who begins to experience seizure activity while in bed. Which action by the nurse is contraindicated?

1. Loosening restrictive clothing
2. Restraining the client's limbs
3. Removing the pillow and raising padded side rails
4. Positioning the client to the side, if possible, with the head flexed forward

**806.** The nurse is assigned to care for a client with complete right-sided hemiparesis.

Which characteristics are associated with this condition? **Select all that apply.**



1. The client is aphasic.
2. The client has weakness in the face and tongue.
3. The client has weakness on the right side of the body.
4. The client has complete bilateral paralysis of the arms and legs.
5. The client has lost the ability to move the right arm but is able to walk independently.
6. The client has lost the ability to ambulate independently but is able to feed and bathe himself or herself without assistance.

**807.** The nurse has instructed the family of a client with stroke (brain attack) who has homonymous hemianopsia about measures to help the client overcome the deficit.

Which statement suggests that the family understands the measures to use when caring for the client?

1. “We need to discourage him from wearing eyeglasses.”
2. “We need to place objects in his impaired field of vision.”
3. “We need to approach him from the impaired field of vision.”
4. “We need to remind him to turn his head to scan the lost visual field.”

**808.** The nurse is assessing the adaptation of a client to changes in functional status after a stroke (brain attack). Which observation indicates to the nurse that the client is adapting **most** successfully?

1. Gets angry with family if they interrupt a task
2. Experiences bouts of depression and irritability
3. Has difficulty with using modified feeding utensils
4. Consistently uses adaptive equipment in dressing self

**809.** The nurse is teaching a client with myasthenia gravis about the prevention of myasthenic and cholinergic crises. Which client activity suggests that teaching is **most effective**?

1. Eating large, well-balanced meals
2. Doing muscle-strengthening exercises
3. Doing all chores early in the day while less fatigued
4. Taking medications on time to maintain therapeutic blood levels

**810.** The nurse has given instructions to a client with Parkinson’s disease about

maintaining mobility. Which action demonstrates that the client understands the directions?

1. Sits in soft, deep chairs to promote comfort.
2. Exercises in the evening to combat fatigue.
3. Rocks back and forth to start movement with bradykinesia.
4. Buys clothes with many buttons to maintain finger dexterity.

**811.** The nurse has given suggestions to a client with trigeminal neuralgia about strategies to minimize episodes of pain. The nurse determines that the client **needs further education** if the client makes which statement?

1. "I will wash my face with cotton pads."
2. "I'll have to start chewing on my unaffected side."
3. "I'll try to eat my food either very warm or very cold."
4. "I should rinse my mouth if toothbrushing is painful."

**812.** The client is admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Which past medical history finding makes the client **most** at risk for this disease?

1. Meningitis or encephalitis during the last 5 years
2. Seizures or trauma to the brain within the last year
3. Back injury or trauma to the spinal cord during the last 2 years
4. Respiratory or gastrointestinal infection during the previous month

**813.** A client with Guillain-Barré syndrome has ascending paralysis and is intubated

and receiving mechanical ventilation. Which strategy should the nurse incorporate in the plan of care to help the client cope with this illness?

1. Giving client full control over care decisions and restricting visitors
2. Providing positive feedback and encouraging active range of motion
3. Providing information, giving positive feedback, and encouraging relaxation
4. Providing intravenously administered sedatives, reducing distractions, and limiting visitors

**814.** A client has a neurological deficit involving the limbic system. Which assessment finding is specific to this type of deficit?

1. Is disoriented to person, place, and time
2. Affect is flat, with periods of emotional lability
3. Cannot recall what was eaten for breakfast today
4. Demonstrates inability to add and subtract; does not know who is the president of the United States

**815.** The nurse is planning to institute seizure precautions for a client who is being admitted from the emergency department. Which measures should the nurse include in planning for the client's safety? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Padding the side rails of the bed
2. Placing an airway at the bedside
3. Placing the bed in the high position
4. Putting a padded tongue blade at the head of the bed

5. Placing oxygen and suction equipment at the bedside
6. Having intravenous equipment ready for insertion of an intravenous catheter

816. The nurse is evaluating the status of a client who had a craniotomy 3 days ago.

Which assessment finding would indicate that the client is developing meningitis as a complication of surgery?

1. A negative Kernig sign
2. Absence of nuchal rigidity
3. A positive Brudzinski sign
4. A Glasgow Coma Scale score of 15

817. The nurse has completed discharge instructions for a client with application of a halo device. Which action indicates that the client **needs further clarification** of the instructions?

1. Uses a straw for drinking.
2. Drives only during the daytime.
3. Uses caution because the device alters balance.
4. Washes the skin daily under the lamb's wool liner of the vest.

818. The nurse is admitting a client with Guillain-Barré syndrome to the nursing unit.

The client has ascending paralysis to the level of the waist. Knowing the complications of the disorder, the nurse should bring which **most essential** items into the client's room?

1. Nebulizer and pulse oximeter

2. Blood pressure cuff and flashlight
3. Flashlight and incentive spirometer
4. Electrocardiographic monitoring electrodes and intubation tray

## ANSWERS

799. 2

**Rationale:** Motor testing in the unconscious client can be done only by testing response to painful stimuli. Nail bed pressure tests a basic peripheral response. Cerebral responses to pain are tested using a sternal rub, placing upward pressure on the orbital rim, or squeezing the clavicle or sternocleidomastoid muscle.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, testing peripheral response to pain. The nail beds are the most distal of all the options and are therefore the most peripheral. Each of the other options may elicit a generalized response, but not a localized one.

**Review:** The technique for testing **peripheral response** to pain

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Pain

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 506.

800. 2

**Rationale:** A change in vital signs may be a late sign of increased intracranial pressure. Trends include increasing

temperature and blood pressure and decreasing pulse and respirations. Respiratory irregularities also may occur.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of increased intracranial pressure. If you remember that the temperature rises, then you are able to eliminate options 3 and 4. If you know that the client becomes bradycardic, or know that the blood pressure rises, you are able to select the correct option.

**Review:** The signs of **increased intracranial pressure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1027.

#### **801. 4**

**Rationale:** Activities that increase intrathoracic and intraabdominal pressures cause an indirect elevation of the intracranial pressure. Some of these activities include isometric exercises, Valsalva's maneuver, coughing, sneezing, and blowing the nose. Exhaling during activities such as repositioning or pulling up in bed, opens the glottis, which prevents intrathoracic pressure from rising.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, preventing elevations in intracranial pressure. Evaluate each option in terms of the tension it puts on the body. Doing so will help you eliminate each incorrect option systematically.

**Review:** The measures that will reduce or prevent **increased intracranial pressure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1435-1436.

#### 802. 4

**Rationale:** Leakage of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) from the ears or nose may accompany basilar skull fracture. CSF can be distinguished from other body fluids because the drainage will separate into bloody and yellow concentric rings on dressing material, called a *halo sign*. The fluid also tests positive for glucose.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of CSF. Recall that CSF contains glucose, whereas other secretions, such as mucus, do not. Knowing that CSF separates into rings also will help you answer this question.

**Review:** Testing for **cerebrospinal fluid**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1439-1440.

#### 803. 4

**Rationale:** The most frequent cause of autonomic dysreflexia is a distended bladder. Straight catheterization should be done every 4 to 6 hours (catheterization every 12 hours is too infrequent), and Foley catheters should be checked

frequently to prevent kinks in the tubing. Constipation and fecal impaction are other causes, so maintaining bowel regularity is important. Other causes include stimulation of the skin from tactile, thermal, or painful stimuli. The nurse administers care to minimize risk in these areas.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, preventing autonomic dysreflexia and the action to avoid. Remember that autonomic dysreflexia is caused by noxious stimuli to the bowel, bladder, or skin. With this in mind, you can eliminate easily each of the incorrect options.

**Review:** The measures to minimize the risk of **autonomic dysreflexia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1558.

### 804. 3

**Rationale:** Resolution of spinal shock is occurring when there is return of reflexes (especially flexors to noxious cutaneous stimuli), a state of hyperreflexia rather than flaccidity, and reflex emptying of the bladder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Recall that spinal shock is characterized by the loss of movement of skeletal muscles, loss of bowel or bladder wall function, and depressed reflex action. Return of any of these indicates that spinal shock is beginning to resolve. Note that options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike**, indicating the presence of reflexes.

**Review:** Signs of **spinal shock**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Baird, Bethel (2011), pp. 265-267.

## 805. 2

**Rationale:** Nursing actions during a seizure include providing for privacy, loosening restrictive clothing, removing the pillow and raising padded side rails in the bed, and placing the client on one side with the head flexed forward, if possible, to allow the tongue to fall forward and facilitate drainage. The limbs are never restrained because the strong muscle contractions could cause the client harm. If the client is not in bed when seizure activity begins, the nurse lowers the client to the floor, if possible, protects the head from injury, and moves furniture that may injure the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, action contraindicated during a seizure. Evaluate this question from the perspective of causing possible harm. No harm can come to the client from any of the options except for restraining the limbs. Remember, avoid restraints.

**Review:** Care of a client during a **seizure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 935; Swearingen (2012), p. 300.

❖ 806. 1, 2, 3

**Rationale:** Hemiparesis is a weakness of one side of the body that may occur after a stroke. It involves weakness of the face and tongue, arm, and leg on one side. These clients are also aphasic: unable to discriminate words and letters. They are generally very cautious and get anxious when attempting a new task. Complete bilateral paralysis does not occur in hemiparesis. The client with right-sided hemiparesis has weakness of the right arm and leg and needs assistance with feeding, bathing, and ambulating.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, right-sided hemiparesis. Recalling that hemiparesis indicates weakness and focusing on the **subject** will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The description of hemiparesis and care of the client with **hemiparesis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Functional Ability; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1009.

807. 4

**Rationale:** Homonymous hemianopsia is loss of half of the visual field. The client with homonymous hemianopsia should have objects placed in the intact field of vision, and the nurse also should approach the client from the intact side. The nurse instructs the client to scan the environment to overcome the visual deficit and does client teaching from within the intact field of vision. The nurse encourages the use of personal eyeglasses, if they are available.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, homonymous hemianopsia. Eliminate options 2 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike**. Recalling the definition of homonymous hemianopsia will direct you easily to the

correct option.

**Review:** Homonymous hemianopsia

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1478-1479.

**808. 4**

**Rationale:** Clients are evaluated as coping successfully with lifestyle changes after a brain attack (stroke) if they make appropriate lifestyle alterations, use the assistance of others, and have appropriate social interactions. Options 1 and 2 are not adaptive behaviors; option 3 indicates a not yet successful attempt to adapt.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most* and focus on the **subject**, indications that a client who has had a stroke is adapting most successfully. Options 1 and 2 are behaviors that may be expected in the client with a brain attack (stroke), but they are not adaptive responses. Instead, they are a result of the insult to the brain. Options 3 and 4 indicate that the client is trying to adapt, but the correct option has the best outcome.

**Review:** Care of the client with a **stroke**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Coping; Functional Ability

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1479, 1482.

#### 809. 4

**Rationale:** Clients with myasthenia gravis are taught to space out activities over the day to conserve energy and restore muscle strength. Taking medications correctly to maintain blood levels that are not too low or too high is important. Muscle-strengthening exercises are not helpful and can fatigue the client. Overeating is a cause of exacerbation of symptoms, as is exposure to heat, crowds, erratic sleep habits, and emotional stress.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most effective*. Recalling that the common causes of myasthenic and cholinergic crises are undermedication and overmedication, respectively, will assist you in eliminating each of the incorrect options. No other option would prevent both of those complications.

**Review:** Measures to prevent **myasthenic crisis** and **cholinergic crisis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 993; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1513-1514.

#### 810. 3

**Rationale:** The client with Parkinson's disease should exercise in the morning when energy levels are highest. The client should avoid sitting in soft deep chairs because they are difficult to get up from. The client can rock back and forth to initiate movement. The client should buy clothes with Velcro fasteners and slide-locking buckles to support

the ability to dress self.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, maintaining mobility in Parkinson's disease. Option 2 is not useful to clients with fatigue from any disorder, so eliminate this option first. Knowing that the client with Parkinson's has difficulty with movement and dexterity helps eliminate options 1 and 4 next.

**Review:** Client teaching points for **Parkinson's disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Mobility

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1510.

### 811. 3

**Rationale:** Facial pain can be minimized by using cotton pads to wash the face and using room temperature water.

The client should chew on the unaffected side of the mouth, eat a soft diet, and take in foods and beverages at room temperature. If toothbrushing triggers pain, an oral rinse after meals may be helpful instead.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *needs further education*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Recall that the pain of trigeminal neuralgia is triggered by mechanical or thermal stimuli. Very hot or cold foods are likely to trigger the pain, not relieve it.

**Review:** Client education points for **trigeminal neuralgia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Pain

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1001.

#### 812. 4

**Rationale:** Guillain-Barré syndrome is a clinical syndrome of unknown origin that involves cranial and peripheral nerves. Many clients report a history of respiratory or gastrointestinal infection in the 1 to 4 weeks before the onset of neurological deficits. On occasion, the syndrome can be triggered by vaccination or surgery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word**, *most*. Use knowledge regarding the causes related to this disorder. Remember that a recent history of respiratory or gastrointestinal infection is a predisposing factor.

**Review:** **Guillain-Barré syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**References:** Baird, Bethel (2011), pp. 661-662; Swearingen (2012), p. 261.

#### 813. 3

**Rationale:** The client with Guillain-Barré syndrome experiences fear and anxiety from the ascending paralysis and sudden onset of the disorder. The nurse can alleviate these fears by providing accurate information about the client's condition, giving expert care and positive feedback to the client, and encouraging relaxation and distraction. The family can become involved with selected care activities and provide diversion for the client as well.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, helping a client cope with illness. Option 1 should be eliminated first because it is not practical to think that the client would want full control over all care decisions. The client who is paralyzed cannot participate in active range of motion, which eliminates option 2. From the remaining options, the correct option is more beneficial in helping the client cope than the remaining, incorrect option.

**Review:** Care of the client with **Guillain-Barré syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Coping

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 990-991; Swearingen (2012), pp. 265-266.

## 814. 2

**Rationale:** The limbic system is responsible for feelings (affect) and emotions. Calculation ability and knowledge of current events relate to function of the frontal lobe. The cerebral hemispheres, with specific regional functions, control orientation. Recall of recent events is controlled by the hippocampus.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, neurological deficit of the limbic system. Recall that the limbic system is responsible for feelings and emotions to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The function of the **limbic system**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 907; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1409.

❖ **815. 1, 2, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** Seizure precautions may vary from agency to agency, but they generally have some common features. Usually, an airway, oxygen, and suctioning equipment are kept available at the bedside. The side rails of the bed are padded, and the bed is kept in the lowest position. The client has an intravenous access in place to have a readily accessible route if anticonvulsant medications must be administered. The use of padded tongue blades is highly controversial, and they should not be kept at the bedside. Forcing a tongue blade into the mouth during a seizure more likely will harm the client who bites down during seizure activity. Risks include blocking the airway from improper placement, chipping the client's teeth, and subsequent risk of aspirating tooth fragments. If the client has an aura before the seizure, it may give the nurse enough time to place an oral airway before seizure activity begins.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, seizure precautions. Evaluate this question from the perspective of causing possible harm. No harm can come to the client from any of the options except for placing the bed in the high position and using a tongue blade.

**Review:** Seizure precautions

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**References:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1499; Swearingen (2012), pp. 299-301.

### 816. 3

**Rationale:** Signs of meningeal irritation compatible with meningitis include nuchal rigidity, a positive Brudzinski sign, and positive Kernig sign. Nuchal rigidity is characterized by a stiff neck and soreness, which is especially noticeable when the neck is flexed. Kernig's sign is positive when the client feels pain and spasm of the hamstring muscles when the leg is fully flexed at the knee and hip. Brudzinski's sign is positive when the client flexes the hips and knees in response to the nurse gently flexing the head and neck onto the chest. A Glasgow Coma Scale score of 15 is a perfect score and indicates that the client is awake and alert, with no neurological deficits.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a client's diagnosis of meningitis. You can eliminate options 1, 2, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike** and are normal findings.

**Review:** The signs of **meningitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Intracranial Regulation

**Reference:** Baird, Bethel (2011), p. 646.

### 817. 2

**Rationale:** The halo device alters balance and can cause fatigue because of its weight. The client should cleanse the skin daily under the vest to protect the skin from ulceration and should avoid the use of powder or lotions. The liner should be changed if odor becomes a problem. The client should have food cut into small pieces to facilitate chewing and use a straw for drinking. Pin care is done as instructed. The client cannot drive at all because the device impairs the range of vision.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *needs further clarification*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Visualize this device to answer correctly. The inability to turn the head without turning the torso would contraindicate driving.

**Review:** Client education points related to a **halo device**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 975.

#### **818. 4**

**Rationale:** The client with Guillain-Barré syndrome is at risk for respiratory failure because of ascending paralysis. An intubation tray should be available for use. Another complication of this syndrome is cardiac dysrhythmias, which necessitates the use of electrocardiographic monitoring. Because the client is immobilized, the nurse should assess for deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism routinely. Although items in the incorrect options may be used in care, they are not the most essential items from the options provided.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most essential*. With an ascending paralysis, the client is at risk for involvement of respiratory muscles and subsequent respiratory failure. The correct option is the only one that includes an intubation tray, which would be needed if the client's status deteriorated to needing intubation and mechanical ventilation. This option most directly addresses the airway.

**Review:** Care of the client with **Guillain-Barré syndrome**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Applying

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Implementation

***Content Area:*** Adult Health—Neurological

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Safety

***References:*** Baird, Bethel (2011), pp. 663-664; Swearingen (2012), pp. 262-264.



## CHAPTER 67

# Neurological Medications

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A client with a traumatic brain injury experiencing restlessness and agitation due to the pain is receiving morphine sulfate. On assessment the nurse measures the respiratory rate and notes it to be 10 breaths/minute. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 960.*

### **I. Antimyasthenic Medications**

#### **A. Description**

1. Antimyasthenic medications, also called anticholinesterase medications, relieve muscle weakness associated with myasthenia gravis by blocking acetylcholine breakdown at the neuromuscular junction.
2. Antimyasthenic medications are used to treat or diagnose myasthenia gravis or to distinguish cholinergic crisis from myasthenic crisis.
3. Neostigmine bromide (Prostigmin), pyridostigmine (Mestinon), and ambenonium

chloride (Mytelase) are used to control myasthenic symptoms.

4. Edrophonium chloride (Enlon) is used to diagnose myasthenia gravis and to distinguish cholinergic crisis from myasthenic crisis.

## B. Medications (Box 67-1)

### BOX 67-1 Antimyasthenic Medications

- Ambenonium chloride (Mytelase)
- Edrophonium chloride (Tensilon)
- Neostigmine bromide (Prostigmin)
- Pyridostigmine (Mestinon)

## C. Side/adverse effects: Cholinergic crisis (Box 67-2) ▲

### BOX 67-2 Signs of Cholinergic Crisis

- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- Pupillary miosis
- Hypotension and dizziness
- Increased bronchial secretions
- Increased tearing and salivation
- Increased perspiration
- Bronchospasm, wheezing, and bradycardia

#### D. Interventions ▲

1. Assess neuromuscular status, including reflexes, muscle strength, and gait.
2. Monitor the client for signs and symptoms of medication overdose (cholinergic crisis) and underdose (myasthenic crisis).
3. Instruct the client to take medications on time to maintain therapeutic blood level, thus preventing weakness, because weakness can impair the client's ability to breathe and swallow.
4. Instruct the client to take the medication with a small amount of food to prevent gastrointestinal symptoms.
5. Instruct the client to eat 45 to 60 minutes after taking medications to decrease the risk for aspiration.
6. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.
7. Note that antimyasthenic therapy is lifelong therapy.
8. Evaluate for medication effectiveness, which is based on the improvement of neuromuscular symptoms or strength without cholinergic signs and symptoms.
9. When administering edrophonium chloride, have emergency resuscitation equipment on hand and atropine sulfate available for cholinergic crisis.

#### E. **Edrophonium test** (may be known as the *Tensilon test*) ▲

1. Edrophonium (Enlon) is injected intravenously.
2. The edrophonium test can cause bronchospasm, laryngospasm, hypotension, bradycardia, and cardiac arrest.

3. Atropine sulfate is the antidote for overdose.
4. Diagnosis of myasthenia gravis: Most myasthenic clients will show a significant improvement in muscle tone within 30 to 60 seconds after injection, and the muscle improvement lasts 4 to 5 minutes.
5. The edrophonium test is also used to diagnose cholinergic crisis (overdose with anticholinesterase) or myasthenic crisis (undermedication).
  - a. In cholinergic crisis, muscle tone does not improve after the administration of Tensilon, and muscle twitching may be noted around the eyes and face.
  - b. An edrophonium injection temporarily worsens the condition when a client is in cholinergic crisis (negative edrophonium test).
  - c. An edrophonium injection temporarily improves the condition when the client is in myasthenic crisis (positive edrophonium test).

## II. Antiparkinsonian Medications

### A. Description

1. Antiparkinsonian medications restore the balance of the neurotransmitters acetylcholine and dopamine in the central nervous system (CNS), decreasing the signs and symptoms of Parkinson's disease to maximize the client's functional abilities.
2. These medications include the dopaminergics, which stimulate the dopamine receptors; the anticholinergics, which block the cholinergic receptors; and the catechol-*O*-methyltransferase inhibitors, which inhibit the metabolism of

dopamine in the periphery.

## B. Dopaminergic medications

### 1. Description

- a. Dopaminergic medications stimulate the dopamine receptors and increase the amount of dopamine available in the CNS or enhance neurotransmission of dopamine.
- b. Dopaminergic medications are contraindicated in clients with cardiac, renal, or psychiatric disorders.

 Levodopa taken with a monoamine oxidase inhibitor antidepressant can cause a hypertensive crisis.

### 2. Medications (Box 67-3; Fig. 67-1)

#### **BOX 67-3** Medications to Treat Parkinson's Disease

##### Medications Affecting the Amount of Dopamine

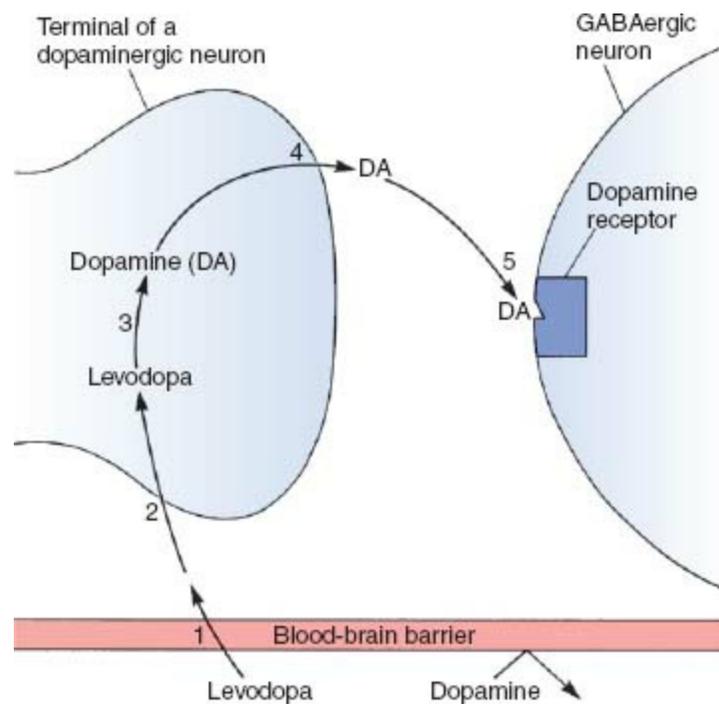
- Amantadine
- Apomorphine (Apokyn)
- Bromocriptine (Parlodel)
- Carbidopa; levodopa (Sinemet)
- Levodopa (Larodopa)
- Pramipexole (Mirapex)
- Ropinirole (Requip)
- Selegiline hydrochloride (Eldepryl)

## Anticholinergics

- Benztropine mesylate (Cogentin)
- Biperiden hydrochloride (Akineton)
- Trihexyphenidyl hydrochloride

## Catechol-*O*-Methyltransferase (COMT) Inhibitors

- Carbidopa/levodopa/entacapone (Stalevo)
- Entacapone (Comtan)
- Tolcapone (Tasmar)



**FIGURE 67-1** Steps leading to alteration of central nervous system function by levodopa. To produce its beneficial effects in Parkinson's disease (PD), levodopa must be (1) transported across the blood-brain barrier; (2) taken up by dopaminergic nerve terminals in the striatum; (3) converted into dopamine (DA); (4) released into

the synaptic space; and (5) bound to DA receptors on striatal GABAergic neurons, causing them to fire at a slower rate. Note that DA itself is unable to cross the blood-brain barrier, and hence cannot be used to treat PD. (From Lehne RA: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

### 3. Side/adverse effects ▲

- a. Dyskinesia
- b. Involuntary body movements
- c. Chest pain
- d. Nausea and vomiting
- e. Urinary retention
- f. Constipation
- g. Sleep disturbances, insomnia, or periods of sedation
- h. Orthostatic hypotension and dizziness
- i. Confusion
- j. Mood changes, especially depression
- k. Hallucinations
- l. Dry mouth

### 4. Interventions ▲

- a. Assess vital signs.
- b. Assess for risk of injury.
- c. Instruct the client to take the medication with food if nausea or vomiting occurs.
- d. Assess for signs and symptoms of parkinsonism such as rigidity, tremors,

akinesia, and bradykinesia, a stooped forward posture, shuffling gait, and masked facies.

- e. Monitor for signs of dyskinesia.
- f. Instruct the client to report side/adverse effects and symptoms of dyskinesia.
- g. Monitor the client for improvement in signs and symptoms of parkinsonism without the development of side/adverse effects from the medications.
- h. Instruct the client to change positions slowly to minimize orthostatic hypotension.
- i. Instruct the client not to discontinue the medication abruptly.
- j. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol.
- k. Inform the client that urine or perspiration may be discolored and that this is harmless, but may stain the clothing.
- l. Advise the client with diabetes mellitus that glucose testing should not be done by urine testing because the results will not be reliable.
- m. Instruct the client taking carbidopa-levodopa (Sinemet) to divide the total daily prescribed protein intake among all meals of the day; high-protein diets interfere with medication availability to the CNS.
- n. When administering levodopa, instruct the client to avoid excessive vitamin B<sub>6</sub> intake to prevent medication reactions.

## C. Anticholinergic medications

### 1. Description

- a. Anticholinergic medications block the cholinergic receptors in the CNS, thereby

suppressing acetylcholine activity.

- b.** Anticholinergic medications reduce the tremors and drooling but have a minimal effect on the bradykinesia, rigidity, and balance abnormalities.
- c.** Anticholinergic medications are contraindicated in clients with glaucoma. ▲
- d.** The client with chronic obstructive lung disease can develop dry, thick mucous secretions.

## 2. Medications (see [Box 67-3](#))

### 3. Side/adverse effects ▲

- a.** Blurred vision
- b.** Dryness of the nose, mouth, throat, and respiratory secretions
- c.** Increased pulse rate, palpitations, and dysrhythmias
- d.** Constipation
- e.** Urinary retention
- f.** Restlessness, confusion, depression, and hallucinations
- g.** Photophobia

### 4. Interventions ▲

- a.** Monitor vital signs.
- b.** Assess for risk of injury.
- c.** Monitor the client for improvement in signs and symptoms.
- d.** Assess the client's bowel and urinary function and monitor for urinary retention, constipation, and paralytic ileus.
- e.** Monitor for involuntary movements.

- f. Encourage the client to avoid alcohol, smoking, caffeine, and aspirin to decrease gastric acidity.
- g. Instruct the client to consult with a health care provider (HCP) before taking any nonprescription medications.
- h. Instruct the client to minimize dry mouth by increasing fluid intake and using ice chips, hard candy, or gum.
- i. Instruct the client to prevent constipation by increasing fluids and fiber in the diet.
- j. Instruct the client to use sunglasses in direct sunlight because of possible photophobia.
- k. Instruct the client to have routine eye examinations to assess intraocular pressure.

 If an anticholinergic medication is discontinued abruptly, the signs and symptoms of parkinsonism, such as rigidity, tremors, akinesia, bradykinesia, stooped forward posture, shuffling gait, and masked facies, may be intensified.

### III. Anticonvulsant Medications

#### A. Description

1. Anticonvulsant medications are used to depress abnormal neuronal discharges and prevent the spread of seizures to adjacent neurons.
2. Anticonvulsant medications should be used with caution in clients taking anticoagulants, aspirin, sulfonamides, cimetidine (Tagamet), and antipsychotic drugs. 

3. Absorption is decreased with the use of antacids, calcium preparations, and antineoplastic medications.

**B. Interventions for clients on anticonvulsants** ▲

1. Initiate seizure precautions.
2. Monitor urinary output.
3. Monitor liver and renal function tests and medication blood serum levels ([Table 67-1](#))

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**TABLE 67-1 Anticonvulsant Medications**

Medication	Therapeutic Serum Range
Amobarbital (Amytal)	1-5 mcg/mL
Carbamazepine (Tegretol)	3-14 mcg/mL
Clonazepam (Klonopin)	20-80 ng/mL
Ethosuximide (Zarontin)	40-100 mcg/mL
Ethotoin (Peganone)	10-50 mcg/mL
Lorazepam (Ativan)	50-240 ng/mL
Mephobarbital (Mebaral)	15-40 mcg/mL
Phenobarbital (Luminal)	15-40 mcg/mL
Phenytoin (Dilantin)	10-20 mcg/mL

4. Monitor for signs of medication toxicity, which would include CNS depression, ataxia, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, dizziness, restlessness, and visual disturbances.
5. If a seizure occurs, assess seizure activity, including location and duration.
6. Protect the client from hazards in the environment during a seizure.

**C. Client education** ([Box 67-4](#))

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Take the prescribed medication in the prescribed dose and frequency.

Take anticonvulsants with food to decrease gastrointestinal irritation, but avoid milk and antacids, which impair absorption.

If taking liquid medication, shake well before ingesting.

Do not discontinue the medications.

Avoid alcohol.

Avoid over-the-counter medications.

Wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

Use caution when driving or performing activities that require alertness.

Maintain good oral hygiene and use a soft toothbrush.

Maintain preventive dental checkups.

Maintain follow-up health care visits with periodic blood studies related to determining toxicity.

Monitor serum glucose levels (diabetes mellitus).

Urine may be a harmless pink-red or red-brown in color.

Report symptoms of sore throat, bruising, and nosebleeds, which may indicate a blood dyscrasia.

Inform the health care provider if side/adverse effects occur, such as bleeding gums, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, slurred speech, rash, or dizziness.

**D. Hydantoins:** Ethotoin (Peganone), fosphenytoin (Cerebyx), phenytoin (Dilantin) ▲

1. Hydantoin is used to treat partial and generalized tonic-clonic seizures.

2. Phenytoin (Dilantin) also is used to treat dysrhythmias.

3. Side/adverse effects

a. Gingival hyperplasia (reddened gums that bleed easily)

b. Slurred speech

c. Confusion

d. Sedation and drowsiness

e. Nausea and vomiting

f. Blurred vision and nystagmus

g. Headaches

h. Blood dyscrasias: Decreased platelet count and decreased white blood cell count

i. Elevated blood glucose level

j. Alopecia or hirsutism

k. Rash or pruritus

4. Interventions 

a. Tube feedings may interfere with the absorption of the enteral form of phenytoin and diminish the effectiveness of the medication; therefore, feedings should be scheduled as far as possible away from the time of phenytoin administration.

b. Monitor therapeutic serum levels to assess for toxicity.

c. Monitor for signs of toxicity.

d. When administering phenytoin intravenously, dilute in normal saline because

dextrose causes the medication to precipitate.

- e. When administering phenytoin intravenously, infuse with an inline filter and no faster than 25 to 50 mg/minute; otherwise, a decrease in blood pressure and cardiac dysrhythmias could occur.
- f. Assess for ataxia (staggering gait).
- g. Instruct the client to consult with the HCP before taking other medications to ensure compatibility with anticonvulsants.

**⚠️ Phenytoin must be given slowly to prevent hypotension and cardiac dysrhythmias, Also, it may decrease the effectiveness of some birth control pills and may cause teratogenic effects, if taken during pregnancy.**

**E. Barbiturates: Amobarbital (Amytal), mephobarbital (Mebaral), phenobarbital (Luminal)**

1. Barbiturates are used for tonic-clonic seizures and acute episodes of seizures caused by status epilepticus.
2. Barbiturates also may be used as adjuncts to anesthesia.
3. Side/adverse effects
  - a. Sedation, ataxia, and dizziness during initial treatment 
  - b. Mood changes
  - c. Hypotension
  - d. Respiratory depression 
  - e. Tolerance to the medication

**F. Benzodiazepines: Clonazepam (Klonopin), clorazepate (Tranxene), diazepam**

(Valium), lorazepam (Ativan)

1. Benzodiazepines are used to treat absence seizures.
2. Diazepam (Valium) and lorazepam (Ativan) are used to treat status epilepticus, anxiety, and skeletal muscle spasms.
3. Clorazepate (Tranxene) is used as adjunctive therapy for partial seizures.
4. Side/adverse effects
  - a. Sedation, drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision
  - b. For intravenous injection, administer slowly to prevent bradycardia. 🟢
  - c. Medication tolerance and drug dependency
  - d. Blood dyscrasias: Decreased platelet count and decreased white blood cell count
  - e. Hepatotoxicity

**⚠️** Flumazenil (Romazicon) reverses the effects of benzodiazepines. It should not be administered to clients with increased intracranial pressure or status epilepticus who were treated with benzodiazepines because these problems may recur with reversal.

**G.** Succinimides: Ethosuximide (Zarontin), methsuximide (Celontin)

1. Succinimides are used to treat absence seizures.
2. Side/adverse effects
  - a. Anorexia, nausea, vomiting
  - b. Blood dyscrasias

**H.** Valproates: valproic acid (Depakene, Depacon), divalproex sodium (Depakote ER)

1. Valproates are used to treat tonic-clonic, partial, and myoclonic seizures.

2. Side/adverse effects

a. Transient nausea, vomiting, and indigestion

b. Sedation, drowsiness, and dizziness

c. Pancreatitis

d. Blood dyscrasias: Decreased platelet count and decreased white blood cell count

e. Hepatotoxicity

## I. Iminostilbenes

1. Iminostilbenes are used to treat seizure disorders that have not responded to other anticonvulsants (Box 67-5). ▲

### BOX 67-5 Other Anticonvulsants

- Carbamazepine (Tegretol)
- Gabapentin (Neurontin)
- Lacosamide (Vimpat)
- Lamotrigine (Lamictal)
- Levetiracetam (Keppra)
- Oxcarbazepine (Trileptal)
- Pregabalin (Lyrica)
- Tiagabine (Gabitril Filmtab tablets)
- Topiramate (Topamax)

- Zonisamide (Zonegran)
- Vigabatrin (Sabril)

2. Iminostilbenes are used to treat trigeminal neuralgia. ▲

3. Side/adverse effects

- a. Drowsiness
- b. Dizziness
- c. Nausea and vomiting, dry mouth
- d. Constipation or diarrhea
- e. Rash
- f. Visual abnormalities
- g. Blood dyscrasias, agranulocytosis
- h. Headache

#### IV. Central Nervous System Stimulants

A. Description

1. Amphetamines and caffeine stimulate the cerebral cortex of the brain (Box 67-6).

##### **BOX 67-6** Amphetamines

- Amphetamine sulfate
- Amphetamine/dextroamphetamine (Adderall)
- Atomoxetine (Strattera)
- Dexmethylphenidate (Focalin)

- Methylphenidate hydrochloride (Ritalin, Concerta)

2. Amphetamines have a high potential for abuse.
3. Analeptics and caffeine act on the brainstem and medulla to stimulate respiration.
4. Anorexiant act on the cerebral cortex and hypothalamus to suppress appetite (Box 67-7).

### BOX 67-7 Anorexiant

- Benzphetamine hydrochloride (Didrex)
- Orlistat (Xenical, Alli)
- Phendimetrazine (Bontril, Melfiat-105)
- Phentermine hydrochloride (Adipex-P, Ionamin)
- Phentermine/topiramate (Qsymia)

5. Central nervous system stimulants are used to treat narcolepsy and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders.
6. Central nervous system stimulants are used as adjunctive therapy for exogenous obesity.
7. Other central nervous system stimulants: Doxapram (Dopram), theobromine, theophylline (Theo-24)

#### B. Side/adverse effects ▲

1. Irritability

2. Restlessness
3. Tremors
4. Insomnia
5. Heart palpitations
6. Tachycardia and dysrhythmias
7. Hypertension
8. Dry mouth
9. Anorexia and weight loss
10. Abdominal cramping
11. Diarrhea or constipation
12. Hepatic failure
13. Psychoses
14. Impotence
15. Dependence and tolerance

#### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess mental status.
3. Document the degree of inattention, impulsivity, hyperactivity, and periods of sleepiness.
4. Assess height, weight, and growth of the child.
5. Monitor complete blood count and white blood cell and platelet counts before and during therapy.

6. Monitor for side/adverse effects.
7. Monitor sleep patterns.
8. Monitor for withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, weakness, and headache.
9. Instruct the client to take the medication before meals.
10. Instruct the client to avoid foods and beverages containing caffeine to prevent additional stimulation.
11. Instruct the client not to chew or crush long-acting forms of the medications.
12. Instruct the client to read labels on over-the-counter products because many contain caffeine.
13. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol.
14. Instruct the client not to discontinue the medication abruptly (can produce extreme fatigue and depression).
15. Instruct the client to take the last daily dose of the CNS stimulant at least 6 hours before bedtime to prevent insomnia.
16. Monitor for drug dependence and abuse with amphetamines.
17. If a child is taking a CNS stimulant, instruct the parents to notify the school nurse. 
18. Monitor for calming effects of CNS stimulants within 3 to 4 weeks on children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.
19. Monitor growth in the child on long-term therapy with methylphenidate hydrochloride (Ritalin) or other medications to treat attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. 

## V. Nonopioid Analgesics

### A. Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs; [Box 67-8](#))

#### **BOX 67-8** Nonopioid Analgesics

##### Acetaminophen

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

##### Aspirin

- Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid; ASA, Aspergum, Bayer aspirin, Ecotrin)
- Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid), buffered (Alka-Seltzer, Bufferin)

##### Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs

- Fenoprofen (Nalfon)
- Ibuprofen ( Motrin IB, Advil)
- Naproxen (Anaprox, Naprosyn, Aleve, Naprelan)
- Oxaprozin (Daypro)

##### Cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) Inhibitor

- Celecoxib (Celebrex)

##### Other Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs

- Diclofenac (Voltaren)
- Diflunisal (Dolobid)
- Etodolac (Lodine)

- Indomethacin (Indocin)
- Ketoprofen (Orudis)
- Ketorolac (Toradol)
- Meclofenamate
- Mefenamic acid (Ponstel)
- Meloxicam (Mobic)
- Piroxicam (Feldene)
- Sulindac (Clinoril)
- Tolmetin

## 1. Description

- a. NSAIDs are aspirin and aspirin-like medications that inhibit the synthesis of prostaglandins.
- b. The medications act as an analgesic to relieve pain, an antipyretic to reduce body temperature, and an anticoagulant to inhibit platelet aggregation.
- c. NSAIDs are used to relieve inflammation and pain and to treat rheumatoid arthritis, bursitis, tendinitis, osteoarthritis, and acute gout.
- d. NSAIDs are contraindicated in clients with hypersensitivity or liver or renal disease. ▲
- e. Clients taking anticoagulants should not take aspirin or NSAIDs. ▲
- f. Aspirin and an NSAID should not be taken together because aspirin decreases the blood level and the effectiveness of the NSAID and can increase the risk of

bleeding.

- g. NSAIDs can increase the effects of warfarin (Coumadin), sulfonamides, cephalosporins, and phenytoin (Dilantin).
- h. Hypoglycemia can result if ibuprofen (Motrin IB) is taken with insulin or an oral hypoglycemic medication.
- i. A high risk of toxicity exists if ibuprofen is taken concurrently with calcium blockers.

 Adolescents and children with flu symptoms, viral illnesses, and varicella should not take aspirin because of the risk of Reye's syndrome.

## 2. Side/adverse effects (Box 67-9)

### **BOX 67-9** Side/Adverse Effects of Aspirin and Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs

#### Aspirin

- Allergic reactions (anaphylaxis, laryngeal edema)
- Bleeding (anemia, hemolysis, increased bleeding time)
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Flushing
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (distress, heartburn, nausea, vomiting)
- Headaches
- Decreased renal function

- Tinnitus
- Visual changes

### Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs

- Dysrhythmias
- Blood dyscrasias
- Cardiovascular thrombotic events
- Dizziness
- Gastric irritation
- Hepatotoxicity
- Hypotension
- Pruritus
- Decreased renal function
- Sodium and water retention
- Tinnitus

### 3. Interventions

- a. Assess client for allergies.
- b. Obtain a medication history on the client.
- c. Assess for history of gastric upset or bleeding or liver or renal disease.
- d. Assess the client for gastrointestinal upset during medication administration.
- e. Monitor for edema.
- f. Monitor the serum salicylate (aspirin) level when the client is taking high doses.

- g.** Monitor for signs of bleeding such as tarry stools, bleeding gums, petechiae, ecchymosis, and purpura.
- h.** Instruct the client to take the medication with water, milk, or food.
- i.** An enteric-coated or buffered form of aspirin can be taken to decrease gastric distress.
- j.** Instruct the client that enteric-coated tablets cannot be crushed or broken.
- k.** Clients taking aspirin should sit upright for 20 to 30 minutes after taking the dose.
- l.** Advise the client to inform other health care professionals if they are taking high doses of aspirin.
- m.** Note that aspirin should be discontinued 3 to 7 days before surgery to reduce the risk of bleeding.
- n.** Instruct the client to avoid alcoholic beverages.

## **B.** Acetaminophen (Tylenol) ▲

### **1.** Description

- a.** Acetaminophen inhibits prostaglandin synthesis.
- b.** Acetaminophen is used to decrease pain and fever.
- c.** Acetaminophen should not be taken if liver dysfunction exists. ▲

### **2.** Side/adverse effects

- a.** Anorexia, nausea, vomiting
- b.** Rash
- c.** Hypoglycemia

d. Oliguria

e. Hepatotoxicity ▲

### 3. Interventions ▲

a. Monitor vital signs.

b. Assess client for history of liver and renal dysfunction, alcoholism, and malnutrition.

c. Monitor for hepatic damage, which includes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.

d. Monitor liver enzyme test results.

e. Instruct the client that self-medication should not be used longer than 10 days for an adult and 5 days for a child.

f. Note that the antidote for acetaminophen is acetylcysteine (Mucomyst).

g. Evaluate for the effectiveness of the medication.

**⚠** Acetaminophen is contraindicated in clients with hepatic or renal disease, alcoholism, and/or hypersensitivity.

## VI. Opioid Analgesics

### A. Description

1. Opioid analgesics suppress pain impulses but can suppress respiration and coughing by acting on the respiratory and cough center in the medulla of the brainstem.

2. Opioid analgesics can produce euphoria and sedation and can cause physical

dependence.

3. Opioid analgesics are used for relief of mild, moderate, or severe pain.

**B. Medications (Box 67-10) ▲**

**BOX 67-10**

**Opioid Analgesics**

- Acetaminophen/hydrocodone (Lortab)
- Buprenorphine hydrochloride (Butrans)
- Butorphanol tartrate (Stadol)
- Codeine sulfate, codeine phosphate
- Fentanyl (Duragesic, Sublimaze)
- Hydrocodone (Hycodan)
- Hydromorphone hydrochloride (Dilaudid)
- Levorphanol tartrate
- Meperidine hydrochloride (Demerol)
- Methadone hydrochloride (Dolophine, Methadose)
- Morphine sulfate (Duramorph, MS Contin, Kadian, Oramorph SR)
- Nalbuphine hydrochloride (Nubain)
- Oxycodone (Roxicodone, OxyContin)
- Oxycodone hydrochloride; acetaminophen (Percocet)
- Oxycodone; aspirin (Percodan)
- Oxymorphone hydrochloride (Opana)
- Pentazocine (Talwin)

- Remifentanyl (Ultiva)
- Sufentanyl (Sufenta)
- Tramadol (Ultram)

### 1. Codeine sulfate

- a. Codeine sulfate also is an effective cough suppressant at low doses.
- b. Codeine sulfate can cause constipation.

### 2. Hydromorphone hydrochloride (Dilaudid)

- a. Hydromorphone can decrease respirations.
- b. Hydromorphone can cause constipation.

### 3. Meperidine hydrochloride (Demerol)

- a. Meperidine can cause hypotension, dizziness, urinary retention.
- b. Meperidine may be used for acute pain and as a preoperative medication.
- c. Meperidine may lead to **increased intracranial pressure (ICP)** in clients with head injuries.
- d. Meperidine is contraindicated in clients with head injuries and increased ICP, respiratory disorders, hypotension, shock, and severe hepatic and renal disease and in clients taking monoamine oxidase inhibitors.
- e. Meperidine should not be taken with alcohol or a sedative-hypnotic because it may increase the CNS depression.
- f. Meperidine should be used cautiously in children and adults with a seizure disorder or a history of seizures because it decreases the seizure threshold.

#### 4. Morphine sulfate

- a. Morphine can cause respiratory depression, orthostatic hypotension, and constipation. 🟢
- b. Morphine may cause nausea and vomiting because of increased vestibular sensitivity.
- c. Morphine is used for acute pain caused by myocardial infarction or cancer, for dyspnea caused by pulmonary edema, for surgery, and as a preoperative medication.
- d. Morphine is contraindicated in clients with severe respiratory disorders; head injuries; increased ICP; severe renal, hepatic, or pulmonary disease; or seizure activity.
- e. Morphine is used with caution in clients with blood loss or shock.

**⚠️ Respiratory depression is the priority concern with morphine sulfate.**

#### 5. Oxycodone with aspirin (Percodan)

- a. Percodan should not be taken by a client allergic to aspirin.
- b. Percodan can cause gastric irritation and should be taken with food or plenty of liquids.

6. Nalbuphine hydrochloride (Nubain) is preferable for treating the pain of a myocardial infarction because it reduces the oxygen needs of the heart without reducing blood pressure.

#### 7. Methadone hydrochloride (Dolophine)

- a. Dilute doses of oral concentrate with at least 90 mL of water.
  - b. Dilute dispersible tablets in at least 120 mL of water, orange juice, or acidic fruit beverage.
  - c. Methadone is used as a replacement medication for opiate dependence and to facilitate withdrawal.
8. Hydrocodone/homatropine (Hycodan) frequently is used for cough suppression.

C. Interventions for opioid analgesics ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Assess the client thoroughly before administering pain medication.
3. Initiate nursing measures such as massage, distraction, deep breathing and relaxation exercises, the application of heat or cold as prescribed, and providing care and comfort before administering the opioid analgesic.
4. Administer medications 30 to 60 minutes before painful activities.
5. Monitor respiratory rate and, if the rate is less than 12 breaths/minute in an adult, withhold the medication unless ventilatory support is being provided. ▲
6. Monitor pulse and, if bradycardia develops, withhold the dose and notify the HCP.
7. Monitor blood pressure for hypotension.
8. Auscultate breath sounds because opioid analgesics suppress the cough reflex.
9. Encourage activities such as turning, deep breathing, and incentive spirometry to prevent atelectasis and pneumonia.
10. Monitor level of consciousness.

11. Initiate safety precautions such as a night light, and supervised ambulation.
12. Monitor intake and output.
13. Assess for urinary retention.
14. Instruct the client to take oral doses with milk or a snack to reduce gastric irritation.
15. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol.
16. Instruct the client to avoid activities that require alertness.
17. Assess bowel function for constipation, abdominal distention, and decreased peristalsis.
18. Evaluate the effectiveness of medication.
19. Have an opioid antagonist, oxygen, and resuscitation equipment available.

#### **D. Morphine sulfate**

1. Side/adverse effects
  - a. Respiratory depression ▲
  - b. Orthostatic hypotension
  - c. Urinary retention
  - d. Nausea and vomiting
  - e. Constipation
  - f. Sedation, confusion, and hallucinations
  - g. Cough suppression
  - h. Reduction in pupillary size
  - i. Miosis

## 2. Interventions ▲

- a. Have naloxone available for overdose.
- b. Assess vital signs and level of consciousness.
- c. Compare rate and depth of respirations to baseline.
- d. Withhold the medication if the respiratory rate is less than 12 breaths/minute; respirations of less than 10 breaths/minute can indicate respiratory distress. ▲
- e. Monitor urinary output, which should be at least 30 mL/hour.
- f. Monitor bowel sounds for decreased peristalsis because constipation can occur.
- g. Monitor for pupil changes because pinpoint pupils can indicate morphine overdose.
- h. Avoid alcohol or CNS depressants because they can cause respiratory depression. ▲
- i. Instruct the client to report dizziness or difficulty breathing.
- j. If taking sustained-release morphine, the client may need short-acting opioid doses for breakthrough pain.
- k. To administer morphine intravenously, dilute in at least 5 mL of sterile water for injection and administer slowly over 4 to 5 minutes.
- l. Explain to client and family about administration and the side/adverse effects of the medication.

## E. Meperidine hydrochloride (Demerol)

### 1. Side/adverse effects

- a. Respiratory depression ▲

- b. Hypotension and dizziness
  - c. Tachycardia
  - d. Drowsiness and confusion
  - e. Constipation
  - f. Urinary retention
  - g. Nausea and vomiting
  - h. Seizures
  - i. Tremors
2. Interventions ▲
- a. Monitor vital signs.
  - b. Monitor for respiratory depression and hypotension. ▲
  - c. Have naloxone available for overdose.
  - d. Monitor for urinary retention.
  - e. Monitor bowel sounds and for constipation.
  - f. To administer meperidine intravenously, dilute in at least 5 mL of sterile water or normal saline for injection and administer the dose over 4 to 5 minutes.

## VII. Opioid Antagonists

- A. Opioid antagonists (Box 67-11) are used to treat respiratory depression from opioid overdose.

### BOX 67-11

### Opioid Antagonists

- Alvimopan (Entereg)

- Methylnaltrexone (Relistor)
- Naloxone
- Naltrexone (Vivitrol)

## B. Interventions

1. Monitor blood pressure, pulse, and respiratory rate every 5 minutes initially, tapering to every 15 minutes, and then every 30 minutes until the client is stable.
2. Place the client on a cardiac monitor and monitor cardiac rhythm.
3. Auscultate breath sounds.
4. Have resuscitation equipment available.
5. Do not leave the client unattended.
6. Monitor the client closely for several hours because when the effects of the antagonist wears off, the client may again display signs of opioid overdose.

## VIII. Osmotic Diuretics

### A. Description

1. Osmotic diuretics increase osmotic pressure of the glomerular filtrate, inhibiting reabsorption of water and electrolytes.
2. Osmotic diuretics are used for oliguria and to prevent kidney failure, decrease intracranial pressure, and decrease ICP in clients with narrow-angle glaucoma.
3. Mannitol is used with chemotherapy to induce diuresis.

### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Fluid and electrolyte imbalances
2. Pulmonary edema from the rapid shifts of fluid
3. Nausea and vomiting
4. Headache
5. Tachycardia from the rapid fluid loss
6. Hyponatremia and dehydration

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor weight.
3. Monitor urine output.
4. Monitor electrolyte levels.
5. Monitor lungs and heart sounds for signs of pulmonary edema.
6. Monitor for signs of dehydration.
7. Monitor neurological status.
8. Monitor for increased intraocular pressure.
9. Assess for signs of decreasing ICP if appropriate.
10. Change the client's position slowly to prevent orthostatic hypotension.
11. Monitor for crystallization in the vial of mannitol before administering the medication; if crystallization is noted, do not administer the medication from that vial.

**Answer:** Morphine sulfate is an opioid analgesic, and an adverse effect is respiratory depression. The nurse needs to monitor the respiratory rate closely and, if the rate is less than 12 breaths/minute in an adult, the nurse needs to withhold the medication unless ventilatory support is being provided, and contact the health care provider. The nurse needs to continue to monitor the client closely.

### **References**

Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 794; Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1028.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**819.** Carbidopa-levodopa (Sinemet) is prescribed for a client with Parkinson's disease. The nurse monitors the client for side/adverse effects to the medication.

Which finding indicates that the client is experiencing an adverse effect?

1. Pruritus
2. Tachycardia
3. Hypertension
4. Impaired voluntary movements

**820.** The home health nurse visits a client who is taking phenytoin (Dilantin) for control of seizures. During the assessment, the nurse notes that the client is taking birth control pills. Which information should the nurse include in the teaching plan?

1. Pregnancy should be avoided while taking phenytoin.

2. The client may stop the medication if it is causing severe gastrointestinal effects.
3. There is the potential of decreased effectiveness of birth control pills while taking phenytoin.
4. There is the increased risk of thrombophlebitis while taking phenytoin and birth control pills together.

**821.** The nurse is caring for a client in the emergency department who has been diagnosed with Bell's palsy. The client has been taking acetaminophen (Tylenol), and acetaminophen overdose is suspected. Which antidote should the nurse anticipate to be prescribed?

1. Pentostatin (Nipent)
2. Auranofin (Ridaura)
3. Fludarabine (Fludara)
4. Acetylcysteine (Mucomyst)

**822.** Meperidine hydrochloride (Demerol) has been prescribed for a client to treat pain. Which are side/adverse effects of this medication? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Diarrhea
2. Tremors
3. Drowsiness
4. Hypotension
5. Urinary frequency

**6.** Increased respiratory rate

**823.** A client is taking the prescribed dose of phenytoin (Dilantin) to control seizures.

Results of a phenytoin blood level study reveal a level of 35 mcg/mL. Which finding would be expected as a result of this laboratory result?

- 1.** Hypotension
- 2.** Tachycardia
- 3.** Slurred speech
- 4.** No abnormal finding

**824.** The client arrives at the emergency department complaining of back spasms. The

client states, “I have been taking two to three aspirin every 4 hours for the last week, and it hasn’t helped my back.” Since aspirin intoxication is suspected, the nurse should assess the client for which manifestation?

- 1.** Tinnitus
- 2.** Diarrhea
- 3.** Constipation
- 4.** Photosensitivity

**825.** A client with trigeminal neuralgia is being treated with carbamazepine

(Tegretol), 400 mg orally daily. Which value indicates that the client is experiencing an adverse effect to the medication?

- 1.** Uric acid level, 5 mg/dL
- 2.** Sodium level, 140 mEq/L

3. Blood urea nitrogen level, 15 mg/dL
4. White blood cell count, 3000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

**826.** The nurse is caring for a client with severe back pain. Codeine sulfate has been prescribed for the client. Specific to this medication, which intervention should the nurse include in the plan of care while the client is taking this medication?

1. Monitor radial pulse.
2. Monitor bowel activity.
3. Monitor apical heart rate.
4. Monitor peripheral pulses.

**827.** The nurse has given medication instructions to a client receiving phenytoin (Dilantin). Which statement indicates that the client has an adequate understanding of the instructions?

1. "Alcohol is not contraindicated while taking this medication."
2. "Good oral hygiene is needed, including brushing and flossing."
3. "The medication dose may be self-adjusted, depending on side effects."
4. "The morning dose of the medication should be taken before a serum drug level is drawn."

**828.** A client with myasthenia gravis has become increasingly weaker. The health care provider prepares to identify whether the client is reacting to an overdose of the medication (cholinergic crisis) or an increasing severity of the disease (myasthenic crisis). An injection of edrophonium is administered. Which finding

would indicate that the client is in cholinergic crisis?

1. No change in the condition
2. Complaints of muscle spasms
3. An improvement of the weakness
4. A temporary worsening of the condition

**829.** A client with trigeminal neuralgia tells the nurse that acetaminophen (Tylenol) is taken daily for the relief of generalized discomfort. Which laboratory value would indicate toxicity associated with the medication?

1. Sodium level of 140 mEq/L
2. Prothrombin time of 12 seconds
3. Direct bilirubin level of 2 mg/dL
4. Platelet count of 400,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>

## ANSWERS

**819. 4**

**Rationale:** Dyskinesia and impaired voluntary movement may occur with high levodopa dosages. Nausea, anorexia, dizziness, orthostatic hypotension, bradycardia, and akinesia are frequent side effects of the medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an adverse effect. Options 2 and 3 are **comparable or alike** and are cardiac-related options, so these options can be eliminated first. Next, focus on the client's diagnosis and select the correct option over option 1 because it relates to the neurological system.

**Review:** The side/adverse effects of **carbidopa-levodopa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 178-180.

### 820. 3

**Rationale:** Phenytoin enhances the rate of estrogen metabolism, which can decrease the effectiveness of some birth control pills. Options 1, 2, and 4 are inappropriate instructions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, teaching points for the client taking phenytoin. Telling a client that there is an increased risk of thrombophlebitis is incorrect and inappropriate and could cause anxiety in the client. A client should not be instructed to stop anticonvulsant medication, as indicated in option 2. Pregnancy does not need to be “avoided” while taking phenytoin; however, because phenytoin may cause some risk to the fetus (Pregnancy Category D drug), consultation with the health care provider should be done if pregnancy is considered.

**Review:** Medication interactions related to **phenytoin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**References:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 313; Lehne (2013), pp. 248-249.

**821. 4**

**Rationale:** The antidote for acetaminophen is acetylcysteine (Mucomyst). The normal therapeutic serum level of acetaminophen is 10 to 20 mcg/mL. A toxic level is higher than 50 mcg/mL, and levels higher than 200 mcg/mL could indicate hepatotoxicity. Auranofin (Ridaura) is a gold preparation used to treat rheumatoid arthritis.

Pentostatin (Nipent) and fludarabine (Fludara) are antineoplastic agents.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike** (antineoplastic agents). Recalling that auranofin is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The antidote for **acetaminophen**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 12.

❖ **822. 2, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** Meperidine hydrochloride is an opioid analgesic. Side/adverse effects include respiratory depression, drowsiness, hypotension, constipation, urinary retention, nausea, vomiting, and tremors.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject** of the question, side/adverse effects of meperidine. Recalling that this medication is an opioid analgesic and recalling the effects of an opioid analgesic will assist in identifying the correct options.

**Review:** The side/adverse effects of **meperidine hydrochloride**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Pain; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 733-735.

### 823. 3

**Rationale:** The therapeutic phenytoin level is 10 to 20 mcg/mL. At a level higher than 20 mcg/mL, involuntary movements of the eyeballs (nystagmus) occur. At a level higher than 30 mcg/mL, ataxia and slurred speech occur.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a phenytoin level of 35 mcg/mL. Use knowledge regarding the therapeutic phenytoin level. From this point, you must know the symptoms that would be noted in the client when the phenytoin level is 35 mcg/mL. Remember that ataxia and slurred speech occur with levels higher than 30 mcg/mL.

**Review:** The therapeutic level of **phenytoin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 931.

### 824. 1

**Rationale:** Mild intoxication with acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) is called salicylism and is experienced commonly when the daily dosage is higher than 4 g. Tinnitus (ringing in the ears) is the most frequent effect noted with intoxication. Hyperventilation may occur because salicylate stimulates the respiratory center. Fever may result, because salicylate interferes with the metabolic pathways coupling oxygen consumption and heat production. Options 2, 3, and 4 are not associated specifically with toxicity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, aspirin intoxication. Options 2 and 3 relate to gastrointestinal symptoms, are **comparable or alike**, and are eliminated first. From the remaining options, you must know that tinnitus occurs.

**Review:** **Aspirin intoxication**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 84-86.

**825. 4**

**Rationale:** Adverse effects of carbamazepine appear as blood dyscrasias, including aplastic anemia, agranulocytosis, thrombocytopenia, and leukopenia; cardiovascular disturbances including thrombophlebitis and dysrhythmias; and dermatological effects. The low white blood cell count reflects agranulocytosis. The laboratory values in options 1, 2, and 3 are normal values.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a side effect of carbamazepine. If you are familiar with normal laboratory values, you will note that the only option that indicates an abnormal value is the correct option.

**Review:** The adverse effects of **carbamazepine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Cellular Regulation

**References:** Lehne (2013), p. 249; Lewis et al (2011), pp. 654-655.

**826. 2**

**Rationale:** While the client is taking codeine sulfate, the nurse would monitor vital signs and assess for hypotension.

The nurse also should increase fluid intake, palpate the bladder for urinary retention, auscultate bowel sounds, and monitor the pattern of daily bowel activity and stool consistency because the medication causes constipation. The nurse should monitor respiratory status and initiate deep-breathing and coughing exercises. In addition, the nurse monitors the effectiveness of the pain medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a specific nursing consideration related to codeine. Eliminate options 1, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike**. In addition, relate codeine with constipation.

**Review:** Nursing measures related to the administration of **codeine sulfate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Pain

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), pp. 369, 595.

**827. 2**

**Rationale:** Typical anticonvulsant medication instructions include taking the prescribed daily dosage to keep the blood level of the drug constant and having a sample drawn for serum drug level determination before taking the morning dose. The client is taught not to stop the medication abruptly, to avoid alcohol, to check with a health care provider before taking over-the-counter medications, to avoid activities in which alertness and coordination are required until medication effects are known, to provide good oral hygiene, and to obtain regular dental care. The client should also wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, an understanding of medication instructions for phenytoin. Using knowledge of general principles related to medication administration will assist you in eliminating options 1 and 3. From the remaining options, recall that medications generally are not taken just before determining therapeutic serum levels because the results would be artificially high. This leaves oral hygiene as the correct option because of the risk of gingival hyperplasia.

**Review:** Client education related to **phenytoin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 931.

**828. 4**

**Rationale:** An edrophonium injection makes the client in cholinergic crisis temporarily worse. An improvement in the weakness indicates myasthenia crisis. Muscle spasms are not associated with this test.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, results of an edrophonium test. Recalling that a cholinergic crisis indicates an overdose of medication, it seems reasonable that a worsening of the condition will occur when additional medication is administered.

**Review:** Cholinergic crisis

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mobility

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 993-994; Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 277; Lehne (2013), p. 140.

### 829. 3

**Rationale:** In adults, overdose of acetaminophen causes liver damage. The correct option is an indicator of liver function and is the only option that indicates an abnormal laboratory value. The normal direct bilirubin level is 0 to 0.3 mg/dL. The normal sodium level is 135 to 145 mEq/L. The normal prothrombin time is 10 to 13 seconds. The normal platelet count is 150,000 to 400,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, acetaminophen toxicity. Knowledge that acetaminophen causes liver damage and knowledge of normal laboratory results will assist you in answering this question. The correct option is the only abnormal value. Also, of all the options, the bilirubin level is the laboratory value most directly related to

liver function.

**Review:** The effects of toxicity from **acetaminophen** and **normal laboratory values**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Neurological Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Cellular Regulation

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 908.

# UNIT XVII



## Musculoskeletal Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**cast** Stiff dressing or casting, made of plaster of Paris or synthetic material, to stabilize a part or parts of the body until healing occurs.

**compartment syndrome** Condition in which pressure increases in a confined anatomical space, leading to decreased blood flow, ischemia, and dysfunction of these tissues. Initial ischemia with pain, pallor, paresthesia, muscle weakness, and loss of pulses may progress to necrosis and permanent muscle cell dysfunction.

**external fixation** Stabilization of a fracture by the use of an external frame, with multiple pins applied through the bone.

**fat embolism** Sudden dislodgment of a fat globule that is freed into the circulation, where it can lodge in a blood vessel and obstruct blood flow to tissue distal to the

obstruction.

**internal fixation** Stabilization of a fracture that involves the application of screws, plates, pins, or nails to hold the fragments in alignment.

**reduction** Correction or realignment of a bone fracture or joint dislocation.

**traction** Exertion of a pulling force to a fractured bone or dislocated joint to establish and maintain correct alignment for healing and to decrease muscle spasms and pain.

## Pyramid to Success

The Pyramid to Success focuses on the emergency care for a client who sustains a fracture or other musculoskeletal injury, monitoring for complications related to fractures, and carrying out interventions if complications occur. Nursing care related to casts and traction is emphasized. Skill related to instructing the client in the use of an assistive device such as a cane, walker, or crutches is a Pyramid Point. Pyramid Points also include postoperative care following hip surgery or amputation and care of the client with rheumatoid arthritis or osteoporosis. Focus on the points related to the psychosocial effects as a result of the musculoskeletal disorder, such as unexpected body image changes, and the appropriate and available support services needed for the client.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Establishing priorities

Handling hazardous and infectious materials safely

Maintaining asepsis related to wounds

Maintaining confidentiality regarding the disorder and plan of care

Maintaining standard and other precautions

Preventing accidents and injuries

Providing a dietary consultation

Providing informed consent for diagnostic treatments and surgical procedures

Providing physical therapy and occupational therapy referrals

Upholding client rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Discussing expected body image changes

Performing physical assessment related to the musculoskeletal system

Promoting health related to diet and activity

Preventing diseases that occur as a result of the aging process

Providing home care instructions regarding care related to a musculoskeletal disorder

Reinforcing the importance of prescribed therapy

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing available support systems and use of community resources

Assessing the client's ability to cope with mobility limitations and restrictions, feelings of isolation, and loss of independence

Considering cultural, religious, and spiritual influences

Discussing situational role changes as a result of the musculoskeletal disorder

Identifying unexpected body image changes as a result of injury or disease

Identifying sensory and perceptual alterations

Mobilizing coping mechanisms

## **Physiological Integrity**

Identifying complications of a fracture

Identifying complications related to procedures or injuries

Providing care related to casts and traction

Promoting normal elimination patterns

Promoting self-care measures

Providing emergency care for a fracture or other injury

Providing measures to promote comfort

Teaching about the use of assistive devices for mobility such as canes, walkers, and crutches

Teaching pharmacological therapy



## CHAPTER 68

# Musculoskeletal System

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

The nurse employed in an industrial plant is called to an accident site in the plant in which an employee amputated his index finger on a saw. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 982.*

### **I. Anatomy and Physiology**

#### **A. Skeleton**

##### **1. Axial portion**

- a. Cranium**
- b. Vertebrae**
- c. Ribs**

##### **2. Appendicular portion**

- a. Limbs**
- b. Shoulders**

### c. Hips

## B. Types of bones: Long, short, flat, irregular

### 1. Spongy bone

- a. Spongy bone is located in the ends of long bones and the center of flat and irregular bones.
- b. Spongy bone can withstand forces applied in many directions.

### 2. Dense (compact) bone

- a. Dense bone covers spongy bone.
- b. Forms a cylinder around a central marrow cavity
- c. Better able to withstand longitudinal forces than horizontal forces

### 3. Characteristics of the bones

- a. Support and protect structures of the body
- b. Provide attachments for muscles, tendons, and ligaments
- c. Contain tissue in the central cavities, which aids in the formation of blood cells
- d. Assist in regulating calcium and phosphate concentrations

### 4. Bone growth

- a. The length of bone growth results from ossification of the epiphyseal cartilage at the ends of bones; bone growth stops between the ages of 18 and 25 years.
- b. The width of bone growth results from the activity of osteoblasts; it occurs throughout life but slows down with aging.

 As aging occurs, bone resorption accelerates, decreasing bone mass and predisposing the client to injury.

## C. Types of joints (Table 68-1)

**TABLE 68-1 Types of Joints**

Type	Description
Amphiarthrosis	Cartilaginous joint Slightly movable
Diarthrosis	Synovial joint Ball-and-socket joint Permit free movement
Synarthrosis	Fibrous or fixed joint No movement associated with these joints

### 1. Characteristics of joints

- a. Allow movement between bones
- b. Formed where two bones join
- c. Surfaces are covered with cartilage.
- d. Enclosed in a capsule (synovial joints)
- e. Contain a cavity filled with synovial fluid (synovial joints)
- f. Ligaments hold the bone and joint in the correct position.
- g. Articulation is the meeting point of two or more bones.

### 2. Synovial fluid

- a. Found in the synovial joint capsule
- b. Formed by the synovial membrane, which lines the joint capsule
- c. Lubricates the cartilage
- d. Provides a cushion against shocks

## D. Muscles

## 1. Characteristics of muscles

- a. Made up of bundles of muscle fibers
- b. Provide the force to move bones
- c. Assist in maintaining posture
- d. Assist with heat production

## 2. Process of contraction and relaxation

- a. Muscle contraction and relaxation require large amounts of adenosine triphosphate.
- b. Contraction also requires calcium, which functions as a catalyst.
- c. Acetylcholine released by the motor end plate of the motor neuron initiates an action potential.
- d. Acetylcholine is then destroyed by acetylcholinesterase.
- e. Calcium is required to contract muscle fibers and acts as a catalyst for the enzyme needed for the sliding-together action of actin and myosin.
- f. Following contraction, adenosine triphosphate transports calcium out to allow actin and myosin to separate and allow the muscle to relax.

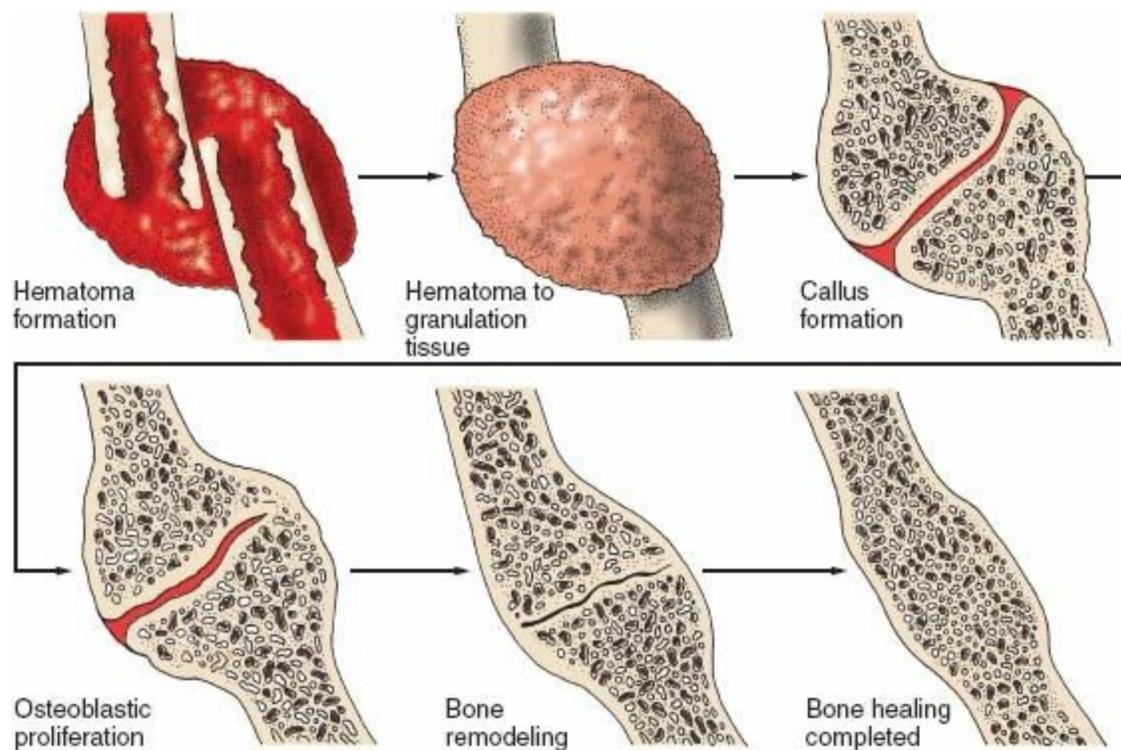
## 3. Skeletal muscles

- a. Skeletal muscles are attached to two bones and cross at least one joint.
- b. The point of origin is the point of attachment that does not move.
- c. The point of insertion is the point of attachment that moves when the muscle contracts.
- d. Skeletal muscles act in groups.

- e. Prime movers contract to produce movement.
- f. Antagonists relax.
- g. Synergists contract to stabilize body movement.
- h. Nerves activate and control the muscles.

**E. Bone healing** ▲

1. Description: Bone union or healing is the process that occurs after the integrity of a bone is interrupted.
2. Stages (Fig. 68-1)



**FIGURE 68-1** The stages of bone healing. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

**II. Risk Factors Associated with Musculoskeletal Disorders (Box 68-1)**

## **BOX 68-1** Risk Factors Associated with Musculoskeletal Disorders

- Autoimmune disorders
- Calcium deficiency
- Falls
- Hyperuricemia
- Infection
- Medications
- Metabolic disorders
- Neoplastic disorders
- Obesity
- Postmenopausal states
- Trauma and injury

### **III. Diagnostic Tests**

#### **A. Radiography**

1. Description: Radiography is a commonly used procedure to diagnose disorders of the musculoskeletal system.
2. Interventions 
  - a. Handle injured areas carefully and support extremities above and below the joint.

- b.** Administer analgesics as prescribed before the procedure, particularly if the client is in pain.
- c.** Remove any radiopaque objects, such as jewelry.
- d.** Ask the client if she is pregnant; may be contraindicated in pregnancy.
- e.** Shield client's testes, ovaries, or pregnant abdomen.
- f.** The client must lie still during a radiographic (x-ray) procedure.
- g.** Inform the client that exposure to radiation is minimal and not dangerous.
- h.** The health care provider is to wear a lead apron if staying in the room with the client.

## **B. Arthrocentesis**

- 1. Description:** Arthrocentesis is used to diagnose joint inflammation and infection.
  - a.** Arthrocentesis involves aspirating synovial fluid, blood, or pus via a needle inserted into a joint cavity.
  - b.** Medication, such as corticosteroids, may be instilled into the joint if necessary to alleviate inflammation.
- 2. Interventions** 
  - a.** Obtain informed consent.
  - b.** Apply an elastic compression bandage postprocedure as prescribed.
  - c.** Use ice to decrease pain and swelling.
  - d.** Pain may worsen after aspirating fluid from the joint; analgesics may be prescribed.
  - e.** Pain can continue up to 2 days after administration of corticosteroids into a

joint.

- f.** Instruct the client to rest the joint for 8 to 24 hours postprocedure.
- g.** Instruct the client to notify the health care provider (HCP) if a fever or swelling of the joint occurs.

### **C. Arthrography**

- 1. Description:** Arthrography is used in unexplained joint pain or inflammation to diagnose trauma to the joint capsule or ligaments.
  - a.** Arthrography is a radiographic examination of the soft tissues of the joint structures.
  - b.** A local anesthetic is used for the procedure.
  - c.** A contrast medium or air is injected into the joint cavity, and the joint is moved through range of motion as a series of x-rays are taken.
- 2. Interventions**
  - a.** Instruct the client to fast from food and fluids for 8 hours before the procedure as prescribed.
  - b.** Assess the client for allergies to iodine or shellfish before the procedure. ▲
  - c.** Obtain informed consent.
  - d.** Inform the client of the need to remain as still as possible, except when asked to reposition.
  - e.** Minimize the use of the joint for 12 hours after the procedure.
  - f.** Instruct the client that the joint may be edematous and tender for 1 to 2 days after the procedure and may be treated with ice packs and analgesics as prescribed.

-  **g.** Instruct the client that if edema and tenderness last longer than 2 days, the HCP should be notified.
- h.** If knee arthrography was performed, an elastic compression wrap over the knee may be prescribed for 3 to 4 days and ice applied to decrease pain and swelling.
- i.** If air has been used for injection, crepitus may be felt in the joint for up to 2 days.

#### **D. Arthroscopy**

- 1. Description:** Arthroscopy is used to diagnose and treat acute and chronic disorders of the joint.
  - a.** Arthroscopy provides an endoscopic examination of various joints.
  - b.** Articular cartilage abnormalities can be assessed, loose bodies removed, and the cartilage trimmed.
  - c.** A biopsy may be performed during the procedure.
- 2. Interventions**
  - a.** Instruct the client to fast for 8 to 12 hours before the procedure.
  - b.** Obtain informed consent.
  - c.** Administer pain medication as prescribed postprocedure.
  - d.** Assess the neurovascular status of the affected extremity. 
  - e.** An elastic compression bandage should be worn postprocedure for 2 to 4 days as prescribed.
  - f.** Instruct the client that walking without weight bearing usually is permitted after

sensation returns but to limit activity for 1 to 4 days as prescribed following the procedure.

- g.** Instruct the client to elevate the extremity as often as possible for 2 days following the procedure and to place ice on the site to minimize swelling.
- h.** Reinforce instructions regarding the use of crutches, which may be used for 5 to 7 days postprocedure for walking.
- i.** Advise the client to notify the HCP if fever or increased knee pain occurs or if edema continues for more than 3 days postprocedure. ▲

## **E. Bone mineral density measurements**

### **1. Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry**

- a.** Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry measures the bone mass of the spine, wrist and hip bones, and total body.
- b.** Radiation exposure is minimal.
- c.** Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry is used to diagnose metabolic bone disease and to monitor changes in bone density with treatment.
- d.** Inform the client that the procedure is painless.
- e.** All metallic objects are removed before the test. ▲

### **2. Quantitative ultrasound**

- a.** Quantitative ultrasound evaluates strength, density, and elasticity of various bones, using ultrasound rather than radiation.
- b.** Inform the client that the procedure is painless.

## **F. Bone scan**

1. Description: A bone scan is used to identify, evaluate, and stage bone cancer before and after treatment; it is also used to detect fractures.
  - a. Radioisotope is injected intravenously and will collect in areas that indicate abnormal bone metabolism and some fractures, if they exist.
  - b. The isotope is excreted in the urine and feces within 48 hours and is not harmful to others.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Food and fluids may be withheld, before the procedure.
- b. Obtain informed consent.
- c. Remove all jewelry and metal objects.
- d. Following the injection of the radioisotope, the client must drink 32 oz of water (if not contraindicated) to promote renal filtering of the excess isotope. ▲
- e. From 1 to 3 hours after the injection, have the client void to clear excess isotope from the bladder before the scanning procedure is completed.
- f. Inform the client of the need to lie supine during the procedure and that the procedure is not painful.
- g. Monitor the injection site for redness and swelling.
- h. Encourage oral fluid intake following the procedure.

**▲** No special precautions are required after a bone scan because a minimal amount of radioactivity exists in the radioisotope used for the procedure.

## G. Bone or muscle biopsy

**1. Description:** Biopsy may be done during surgery or through aspiration or punch or needle biopsy.

**2. Interventions**

- a.** Obtain informed consent.
- b.** Monitor for bleeding, swelling, hematoma, or severe pain. ▲
- c.** Elevate the site for 24 hours following the procedure to reduce edema.
- d.** Apply ice packs as prescribed following the procedure to prevent the development of a hematoma and decrease site discomfort.
- e.** Monitor for signs of infection following the procedure.
- f.** Inform the client that mild to moderate discomfort is normal following the procedure.

**H. Electromyography (EMG)**

**1. Description:** EMG is used to evaluate muscle weakness.

- a.** Electromyography measures electrical potential associated with skeletal muscle contractions.
- b.** Needles are inserted into the muscle, and recordings of muscular electrical activity are traced on recording paper through an oscilloscope.

**2. Interventions** ▲

- a.** Obtain informed consent.
- b.** Instruct the client that the needle insertion is uncomfortable.
- c.** Instruct the client not to take any stimulants or sedatives for 24 hours before the procedure.

- d. Inform the client that slight bruising may occur at the needle insertion sites.
- e. Mild analgesics can be used for the pain.

## IV. Injuries

### A. Strains

1. Strains are an excessive stretching of a muscle or tendon.
2. Management involves cold and heat applications, exercise with activity limitations, antiinflammatory medications, and muscle relaxants.
3. Surgical repair may be required for a severe strain (ruptured muscle or tendon).

### B. Sprains

1. Sprains are an excessive stretching of a ligament, usually caused by a twisting motion, such as in a fall or stepping onto an uneven surface.
2. Sprains are characterized by pain and swelling.
3. Management involves rest, ice, a compression bandage, and elevation (RICE) to reduce swelling, as well as joint support. RICE is considered a first-aid treatment, rather than a cure for soft tissue injuries. ▲
4. Casting may be required for moderate sprains to allow the tear to heal.
5. Surgery may be necessary for severe ligament damage.

### C. Rotator cuff injuries

1. The musculotendinous or rotator cuff of the shoulder can sustain a tear, usually as a result of trauma.
2. Injury is characterized by shoulder pain and the inability to maintain abduction of the arm at the shoulder (drop arm test).

3. Management involves nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), physical therapy, sling support, and ice-heat applications. ▲
4. Surgery may be required if medical management is unsuccessful or a complete tear is present.

## V. Fractures

- A. Description: A fracture is a break in the continuity of the bone caused by trauma, twisting as a result of muscle spasm or indirect loss of leverage, or bone decalcification and disease that result in osteopenia.
- B. Types of fractures ([Box 68-2](#))

### BOX 68-2 Types of Fractures

**Closed or Simple:** Skin over the fractured area remains intact.

**Comminuted:** The bone is splintered or crushed, creating numerous fragments.

**Complete:** The bone is separated completely by a break into two parts.

**Compression:** A fractured bone is compressed by other bone.

**Depressed:** Bone fragments are driven inward.

**Greenstick:** One side of the bone is broken and the other is bent; these fractures occur most commonly in children.

**Impacted:** A part of the fractured bone is driven into another bone.

**Incomplete:** Fracture line does not extend through the full transverse width of the bone.

**Oblique:** The fracture line runs at an angle across the axis of the bone.

**Open or Compound:** The bone is exposed to air through a break in the skin, and soft tissue injury and infection are common.

**Pathological:** The fracture results from weakening of the bone structure by pathological processes such as neoplasia; also called *spontaneous fracture*.

**Spiral:** The break partially encircles bone.

**Transverse:** The bone is fractured straight across.

### C. Assessment of a fracture of an extremity ▲

1. Pain or tenderness over the involved area
2. Decrease or loss of muscular strength or function
3. Obvious deformity of affected area
4. Crepitation, erythema, edema, or bruising
5. Muscle spasm and neurovascular impairment

### D. Initial care of a fracture of an extremity ▲

1. Immobilize affected extremity with cast or splint.
2. Assess neurovascular status of the extremity.
3. Interventions for a fracture: **Reduction, fixation, traction, cast**

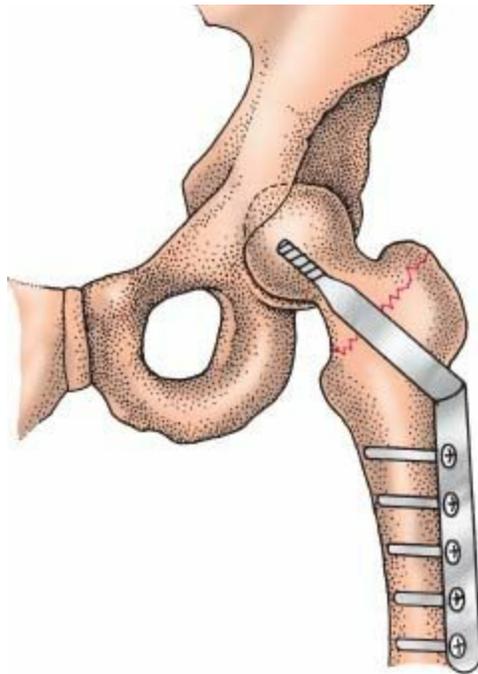
**⚠** If a compound (open) fracture exists, splint the extremity and cover the wound with a sterile dressing.

### E. **Reduction** restores the bone to proper alignment.

1. Closed reduction is a nonsurgical intervention performed by manual manipulation.
  - a. Closed reduction may be performed under local or general anesthesia.
  - b. A cast may be applied following reduction.
2. Open reduction involves a surgical intervention; the fracture may be treated with **internal fixation** devices.

## F. Fixation

1. Internal fixation follows an open reduction (Fig. 68-2).



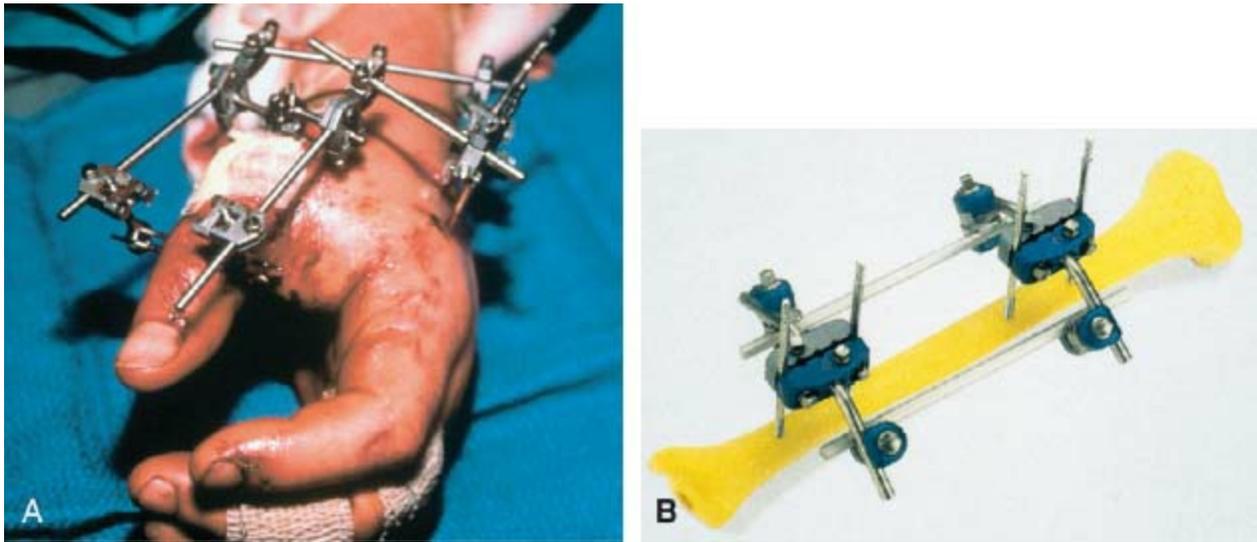
**FIGURE 68-2** A compression hip screw used for open reduction with internal fixation. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

- a. Internal fixation involves the application of screws, plates, pins, or intramedullary rods to hold the fragments in alignment.
- b. Internal fixation may involve the removal of damaged bone and replacement

with a prosthesis.

c. Internal fixation provides immediate bone stabilization.

2. **External fixation** is the use of an external frame to stabilize a fracture by attaching skeletal pins through bone fragments to a rigid external support (Fig. 68-3).



**FIGURE 68-3** External fixators.

**A**, Mini-Hoffman system in use on hand. **B**, Hoffman II on the tibia (standard system).

(From Lewis S, Dirksen S, Heitkemper P, Bucher L, Camera I: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

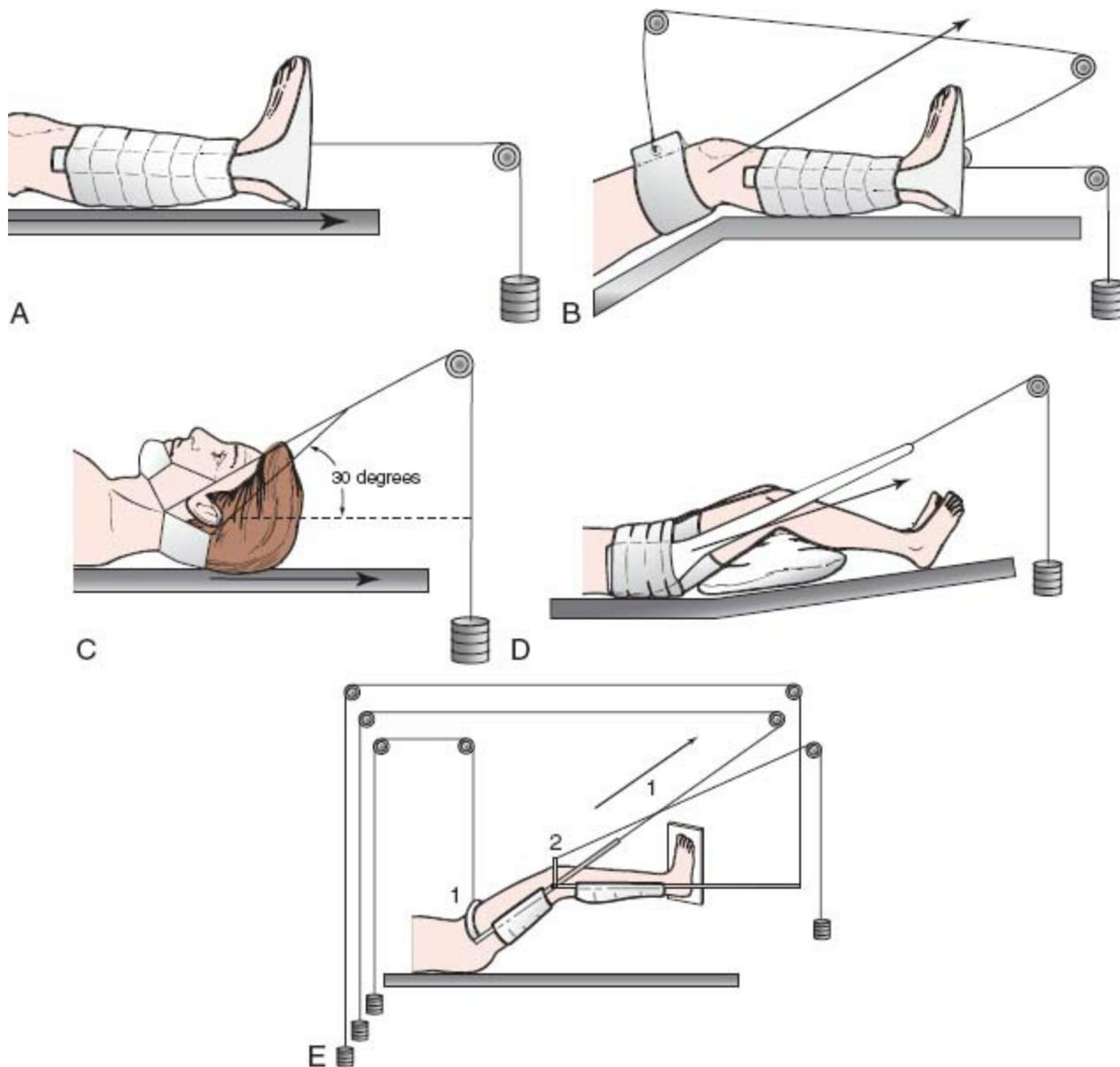
a. External fixation provides more freedom of movement than with traction.

b. Monitor pin stability and provide pin care to decrease infection risks.

c. Risk of infection exists with both fixation methods.

d. External fixation is commonly used when massive tissue trauma is present.

## G. Traction (Fig. 68-4)



**FIGURE 68-4** Types of traction.

**A**, Buck's traction. **B**, Russell's traction. **C**, Head halter traction. **D**, Pelvic traction. **E**, Balanced suspension traction. (From Lewis S, Heitkemper M, Dirksen S, O'Brien P, Bucher L: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

### 1. Description

- a. Traction is the exertion of a pulling force applied in two directions to reduce and immobilize a fracture.
- b. Traction provides proper bone alignment and reduces muscle spasms.

## 2. Interventions

- a. Maintain proper body alignment.
- b. Ensure that the weights hang freely and do not touch the floor.
- c. Do not remove or lift the weights without an HCP's prescription.
- d. Ensure that pulleys are not obstructed and that ropes in the pulleys move freely.
- e. Place knots in the ropes to prevent slipping.
- f. Check the ropes for fraying.

## H. Skeletal traction

### 1. Description

- a. Traction is applied mechanically to the bone with pins, wires, or tongs.
- b. Typical weight for skeletal traction is 25 to 40 lb.

### 2. Interventions

- a. Monitor color, motion, and sensation of the affected extremity.
- b. Monitor the insertion sites for redness, swelling, drainage, or increased pain.
- c. Provide insertion site care as prescribed.

- 3. Cervical tongs and a halo fixation device: See [Chapter 66](#) regarding care of the client with these types of devices.

## I. Skin traction

- 1. Description: Skin traction is applied by using elastic bandages or adhesive, foam

boot, or sling.

2. Cervical skin traction relieves muscle spasms and compression in the upper extremities and neck (see [Fig. 68-4](#)).
  - a. Cervical skin traction uses a head halter and chin pad to attach the traction.
  - b. Use powder to protect the ears from friction rub.
  - c. Position the client with the head of the bed elevated 30 to 40 degrees, and attach the weights to a pulley system over the head of the bed. ▲
3. Buck's (extension) skin traction is used to alleviate muscle spasms and immobilize a lower limb by maintaining a straight pull on the limb with the use of weights (see [Fig. 68-4](#)).
  - a. A boot appliance is applied to attach to the traction.
  - b. The weights are attached to a pulley; allow the weights to hang freely over the edge of bed. ▲
  - c. Not more than 8 to 10 lb of weight should be applied as prescribed.
  - d. Elevate the foot of the bed to provide the traction.
4. Russell's skin (sling) traction. See [Fig. 68-4](#) and [Chapter 46](#) regarding this type of traction.
5. Pelvic skin traction is used to relieve low back, hip, or leg pain or to reduce muscle spasm (see [Fig. 68-4](#)).
  - a. Apply the traction belt snugly over the pelvis and iliac crest and attach to the weights. ▲
  - b. Use measures as prescribed to prevent the client from slipping down in bed.

## **J. Balanced suspension traction (see Fig. 68-4)**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Balanced suspension traction is used with skin or skeletal traction.
- b.** Used to approximate fractures of the femur, tibia, or fibula
- c.** Balanced suspension traction is produced by a counterforce other than the client.

### **2. Interventions ▲**

- a.** Position the client in a low Fowler's position on either the side or the back.
- b.** Maintain a 20-degree angle from the thigh to the bed.
- c.** Protect the skin from breakdown.
- d.** Provide pin care if pins are used with the skeletal traction.
- e.** Clean the pin sites with sterile normal saline and hydrogen peroxide or povidone-iodine (Betadine) as prescribed or per agency policy.

## **K. Dunlop's traction**

- 1. Description:** Horizontal traction is used to align fractures of the humerus; vertical traction maintains the forearm in proper alignment.
- 2. Interventions:** Nursing care is similar to that for Buck's skin traction.

## **L. Casts**

- 1. Description:** Plaster, fiberglass, or air casts are used to immobilize bones and joints into correct alignment after a fracture or injury.
- 2. Interventions ▲**
  - a.** Keep the cast and extremity elevated.

- b. Allow a wet plaster cast 24 to 72 hours to dry (synthetic casts dry in 20 minutes).
- c. Handle a wet plaster cast with the palms of the hands until dry.
- d. Turn the extremity every 1 to 2 hours, unless contraindicated, to allow air circulation and promote drying of the cast.
- e. A hair dryer can be used on a cool setting to dry a plaster cast (heat cannot be used on a plaster cast because the cast heats up and burns the skin).
- f. Prepare for bivalving or cutting the cast if circulatory impairment occurs.
- g. Petal the cast or apply moleskin to the edges to protect the client's skin; maintain smooth edges around the cast to prevent crumbling of the cast material.
- h. Monitor for signs of infection such as increased temperature, hot spots on the cast, foul odor, or changes in pain.
- i. If an open draining area exists on the affected extremity, the HCP will make a cutout portion of the cast known as a *window*.
- j. Instruct the client not to stick objects inside the cast.
- k. Teach the client to keep the cast clean and dry.
- l. Instruct the client in isometric exercises to prevent muscle atrophy.

 Monitor a casted extremity for circulatory impairment such as pain, swelling, discoloration, tingling, numbness, coolness, or diminished pulse. Notify the HCP immediately if circulatory compromise occurs.

## VI. Complications of Fractures (Box 68-3)

- Avascular necrosis
- Compartment syndrome
- Fat embolism
- Infection and osteomyelitis
- Pulmonary embolism

### A. Fat embolism

1. Description: A fat embolism originates in the bone marrow and occurs after a fracture when a fat globule is released into the bloodstream.
  - a. Clients with long bone fractures are at the greatest risk for the development of a fat embolism.
  - b. Fat embolism can occur within the first 48 to 72 hours following the injury.
2. Assessment: Findings often suggest pulmonary embolism.
  - a. Restlessness, hypoxemia, or mental status changes
  - b. Tachycardia and hypotension
  - c. Dyspnea and tachypnea
  - d. Petechial rash over the upper chest and neck; these may fade quickly.
3. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## Actions to Take if the Client Develops a Fat Embolism

1. Notify the health care provider (HCP).
2. Administer oxygen.
3. Administer intravenous fluids.
4. Monitor vital signs and respiratory status.
5. Prepare for intubation and mechanical ventilation if necessary.
6. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

A fat embolism originates in the bone marrow and occurs after a fracture when a fat globule is released into the bloodstream. Fat embolism can occur within the first 48 to 72 hours following the injury and clients with long bone fractures are at the greatest risk for the development of a fat embolism. Findings are similar to those noted with pulmonary embolism and include restlessness, hypoxemia, mental status changes, dyspnea, tachypnea, tachycardia, and hypotension. In addition, a petechial rash may present over the upper chest and neck. The HCP is notified immediately while initiating emergency care. The client is maintained on bed rest and is repositioned only as necessary and gently. Oxygen is administered and intravenous hydration is administered to prevent hypovolemic shock. Vital signs and respiratory status are monitored closely and the client is prepared for intubation and mechanical ventilation if necessary. Corticosteroids may also be prescribed for the client. The nurse then documents the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

### *Reference*

Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, pp. 1146-1147.

## **B. Compartment syndrome**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Tough fascia surrounds muscle groups, forming compartments from which arteries, veins, and nerves enter and exit at opposite ends.
- b.** Compartment syndrome occurs when pressure increases within one or more compartments, leading to decreased blood flow, tissue ischemia, and neurovascular impairment.
- c.** Within 4 to 6 hours after the onset of compartment syndrome, neurovascular damage is irreversible if not treated.

### **2. Assessment**

- a.** Unrelieved or increased pain in the limb
- b.** Tissue that is distal to the involved area becomes pale, dusky, or edematous.
- c.** Pain with passive movement
- d.** Loss of sensation (paresthesia)
- e.** Pulselessness (a late sign)

### **3. Interventions**

- a.** Notify the HCP immediately and prepare to assist HCP.
- b.** If severe, assist the HCP with fasciotomy to relieve pressure and restore tissue

perfusion.

- c. Loosen tight dressings or bivalve restrictive cast as prescribed.

### **C. Infection and osteomyelitis**

**1. Description:** Infection and osteomyelitis (inflammatory response in bone tissue) can be caused by the introduction of organisms into bones leading to localized bone infection.

#### **2. Assessment**

- a. Tachycardia and fever (usually above 101° F).
- b. Erythema and pain in the area surrounding the infection
- c. Leukocytosis and elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR)

#### **3. Interventions**

- a. Notify the HCP.
- b. Prepare to initiate aggressive, long-term intravenous antibiotic therapy.
- c. Administer hyperbaric oxygen therapy to promote healing.
- d. Surgery is performed for resistant osteomyelitis with sequestrectomy and/or bone grafts.

### **D. Avascular necrosis**

**1. Description:** Avascular necrosis occurs when a fracture interrupts the blood supply to a section of bone, leading to bone death.

#### **2. Assessment**

- a. Pain
- b. Decreased sensation

### 3. Interventions

- a. Notify the HCP if pain or numbness occurs.
- b. Prepare the client for removal of necrotic tissue because it serves as a focus for infection.

## E. Pulmonary embolism

1. Description: Pulmonary embolism is caused by the movement of foreign particles (blood clot, fat, or air) into the pulmonary circulation.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Restlessness and apprehension
- b. Sudden onset of dyspnea and chest pain
- c. Cough, hemoptysis, hypoxemia, or crackles

### 3. Interventions

- a. Notify the HCP immediately if signs of emboli are present.
- b. Administer oxygen and other prescriptions; intravenous (IV) anticoagulant therapy may be prescribed.

## VII. Crutch Walking

### A. Description

1. An accurate measurement of the client for crutches is important because an incorrect measurement could damage the brachial plexus.
2. The distance between the axillae and the arm pieces on the crutches should be two to three fingerwidths in the axilla space.
3. The elbows should be slightly flexed, 20 to 30 degrees, when the client is

walking.

4. When ambulating with the client, stand on the affected side.
5. Instruct the client never to rest the axillae on the axillary bars.
6. Instruct the client to look up and outward when ambulating and to place the crutches 6 to 10 inches diagonally in front of the foot.
7. Instruct the client to stop ambulation if numbness or tingling in the hands or arms occurs.

## B. Crutch gaits (Table 68-2)

**TABLE 68-2 Crutch Gaits**

Type of Gait	Use	Procedure
Two-point gait	Used with partial weight-bearing limitations and with bilateral lower extremity prostheses	The crutch on the affected side and the unaffected foot are advanced at the same time
Three-point gait	Used for partial weight-bearing or no weight-bearing on the affected leg; requires that the client have strength and balance	Both crutches and the foot of the affected extremity are advanced together, followed by the foot of the unaffected extremity
Four-point gait	Used if weight-bearing is allowed and one foot can be placed in front of the other	The right crutch is advanced, then the left foot, then the left crutch, and then the right foot
Swing-to gait	Used when there is adequate muscle power and balance in the arms and legs	Both crutches are advanced together, then both legs are lifted and placed down on a spot behind the crutches. The feet and crutches form a tripod
Swing-through gait	Used when there is adequate muscle power and balance in the arms and legs	Both crutches are advanced together; then both legs are lifted through and beyond the crutches and placed down again at a point in front of the crutches

Adapted from Linton AD: *Introduction to medical-surgical nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.

### **C. Assisting the client with crutches to sit and stand ▲**

1. Place the unaffected leg against the front of the chair.
2. Move the crutches to the affected side, and grasp the arm of the chair with the hand on the unaffected side.
3. Flex the knee of the unaffected leg to lower self into the chair while placing the affected leg straight out in front.
4. Reverse the steps to move from a sitting to standing position.

### **D. Going up and down stairs ▲**

#### **1. Up the stairs**

- a. The client moves the unaffected leg up first.
- b. The client moves the affected leg and the crutches up.

#### **2. Down the stairs**

- a. The client moves the crutches and the affected leg down.
- b. The client moves the unaffected leg down.

## **VIII. Canes and Walkers**

**A. Description:** Canes and walkers are made of a lightweight material with a rubber tip at the bottom.

### **B. Interventions ▲**

1. Stand at the affected side of the client when ambulating; use of a gait or transfer belt may be necessary.
2. The handle should be at the level of the client's greater trochanter.

3. The client's elbow should be flexed at a 15- to 30-degree angle.
4. Instruct the client to hold the cane 4 to 6 inches to the side of the foot.
5. Instruct the client to hold the cane in the hand on the unaffected side so that the cane and weaker leg can work together with each step.
6. Instruct the client to move the cane at the same time as the affected leg.
7. Instruct the client to inspect the rubber tips regularly for worn places.

#### C. Hemicanes or quadripod canes

1. Hemicanes or quadripod canes are used for clients who have the use of only one upper extremity.
2. Hemicanes provide more security than a quadripod cane; however, both types provide more security than a single-tipped cane.
3. Position the cane at the client's unaffected side, with the straight, nonangled side adjacent to the body.
4. Position the cane 6 inches from the unaffected client's side, with the hand grip level with the greater trochanter.

#### D. Walker

1. Stand adjacent to the client on the affected side.
2. Instruct the client to put all four points of the walker flat on the floor before putting weight on the hand pieces.
3. Instruct the client to move the walker forward, followed by the affected or weaker foot and then the unaffected foot.

 Safety is the priority concern when the client uses an assistive device such as a cane, walker, or crutches. Be sure that the client demonstrates correct use of the device.

## **IX. Fractured Hip**

### **A. Types**

1. Intracapsular (femoral head is broken within the joint capsule)
  - a. Femoral head and neck receive decreased blood supply and heal slowly.
  - b. Skin traction is applied preoperatively to reduce the fracture and decrease muscle spasms.
  - c. Treatment includes a total hip replacement or open reduction internal fixation (ORIF) with femoral head replacement.
  - d. To prevent hip displacement postoperatively, avoid extreme hip flexion, and check the surgeon's prescriptions regarding positioning.
2. Extracapsular (fracture is outside the joint capsule)
  - a. Fracture can occur at the greater trochanter or can be an intertrochanteric fracture.
  - b. Preoperative treatment includes balanced suspension or skin traction to relieve muscle spasms and reduce pain.
  - c. Surgical treatment includes open reduction internal fixation with nail plate, screws, pins, or wires.

### **B. Postoperative interventions**

1. Monitor for signs of delirium and institute safety measures.

2. Maintain leg and hip in proper alignment and prevent internal or external rotation; avoid extreme hip flexion.
3. Follow the HCP's prescriptions regarding turning and repositioning; usually, turning to the unaffected side is allowed.
4. Elevate the head of the bed 30 to 45 degrees for meals only.
5. Assist the client to ambulate as prescribed by the HCP.
6. Avoid weight bearing on the affected leg as prescribed; instruct the client in the use of a walker to avoid weight bearing.
7. Weight bearing is often restricted after an ORIF and may not be restricted after total hip arthroplasty (THA); always refer to the HCP's prescriptions.
8. Keep the operative leg extended, supported, and elevated (preventing hip flexion) when getting the client out of bed.
9. Avoid hip flexion greater than 90 degrees and avoid low chairs when out of bed.
10. Monitor for wound infection or hemorrhage.
11. Neurovascular assessment of affected extremity: Check color, pulses, capillary refill, movement, and sensation.
12. Maintain the compression of the Hemovac or Jackson-Pratt drain to facilitate wound drainage.
13. Monitor and record drainage amount, which decreases consistently about 80 mL every 8 hours until 48 hours postoperatively.
14. Carry out postoperative blood salvage to collect, filter, and reinfuse salvaged blood into the client.

15. Use antiembolism stockings or sequential compression stockings as prescribed; encourage the client to flex and extend the feet to reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT).
16. Instruct the client to avoid crossing the legs and activities that require bending over.
17. Physical therapy will be instituted postoperatively with progressive ambulation as prescribed by the HCP.

## **X. Total Knee Replacement**

- A. Description: Total knee replacement is the implantation of a device to substitute for the femoral condyles and tibial joint surfaces.
- B. Postoperative interventions 
  1. Monitor surgical incision for drainage and infection.
  2. Begin continuous passive motion 24 to 48 hours postoperatively as prescribed to exercise the knee and provide moderate flexion and extension.
  3. Administer analgesics before continuous passive motion to decrease pain.
  4. Prepare the client for out-of-bed activities as prescribed; have the client avoid leg dangling.
  5. Avoid weight bearing and instruct the client in the use of the prescribed assistive device, such as a walker.
  6. Postoperative blood salvage may be prescribed to collect, filter, and reinfuse salvaged blood into client.

## **XI. Joint Dislocation and Subluxation**

- A.** Dislocation: Injury of the ligaments surrounding a joint, which leads to displacement or separating of the articular surfaces of the joint
- B.** Subluxation: Incomplete displacement of joint surfaces when forces disrupt the soft tissue that surrounds the joints
- C.** Assessment
  - 1. Asymmetry of the contour of affected body parts
  - 2. Pain, tenderness, dysfunction, and swelling
  - 3. Complications include neurovascular compromise, avascular necrosis, and open joint injuries.
  - 4. X-rays are taken to determine joint shifting.
- D.** Interventions
  - 1. Focus of treatment includes pain relief, joint support, and joint protection.
  - 2. Immediate treatment is done to reduce the dislocation and realign the dislocated joint.
  - 3. Open or closed reduction is done with a postprocedural joint immobilization.
  - 4. Intravenous conscious sedation, local, or general anesthesia is used during joint manipulation.
  - 5. Initial activity restriction is followed by gentle range-of-motion activities and a gradual return of activities to normal levels while supporting the affected joint.
  - 6. A weakened joint is prone to recurrent dislocation and may require extended activity restriction.

## **XII. Herniation: Intervertebral Disk**

- A.** Description: The nucleus of the disk protrudes into the annulus, causing nerve compression.
- B.** Cervical disk herniation occurs at the C5 to C6 and C6 to C7 interspaces.
  - 1.** Cervical disk herniation causes pain radiation to shoulders, arms, hands, scapulae, and pectoral muscles.
  - 2.** Motor and sensory deficits can include paresthesia, numbness, and weakness of the upper extremities. ▲
  - 3.** Interventions ▲
    - a.** Conservative management is used unless the client develops signs of neurological deterioration.
    - b.** Bed rest is prescribed to decrease pressure, inflammation, and pain.
    - c.** Immobilize the cervical area with cervical collar or brace.
    - d.** Apply heat to reduce muscle spasms and apply ice to reduce inflammation and swelling.
    - e.** Maintain head and spine alignment.
    - f.** Instruct the client in the use of analgesics, sedatives, antiinflammatory agents, and corticosteroids as prescribed.
    - g.** Prepare the client for a corticosteroid injection into the epidural space if prescribed.
    - h.** Assist and instruct the client in the use of a cervical collar or cervical traction as prescribed.

4. Cervical collar is used for cervical disk herniation.
  - a. A cervical collar limits neck movement and holds the head in a neutral or slightly flexed position.
  - b. The cervical collar may be worn intermittently or 24 hours daily.
  - c. Inspect the skin under the collar for irritation.
  - d. When prescribed and after pain decreases, exercises are done to strengthen the muscles.

5. Client education related to cervical disk conditions ▲

- a. Avoid flexing, extending, and rotating neck.
- b. Avoid the prone position and maintain neck, spine, and hips in a neutral position while sleeping.
- c. Minimize long periods of sitting.
- d. Instruct the client regarding medications such as analgesics, sedatives, antiinflammatory agents, and corticosteroids.

C. Lumbar disk herniation most often occurs at the L4 to L5 or L5 to S1 interspace.

1. Herniation produces muscle weakness, sensory deficits, and diminished tendon reflexes.
2. The client experiences pain and muscle spasms in the lower back, with radiation of the pain into one hip and down the leg (sciatica). ▲
3. Pain is relieved by bed rest and aggravated by movement, lifting, straining, and coughing.
4. Interventions

- a. Conservative management is indicated unless neurological deterioration or bowel and bladder dysfunction occurs.
  - b. Apply heat to decrease muscle spasms and apply ice to decrease inflammation and swelling.
  - c. Instruct the client to sleep on the side, with the knees and hips flexed, and place a pillow between the legs.
  - d. Apply pelvic traction as prescribed to relieve muscle spasms and decrease pain.
  - e. Begin progressive ambulation as inflammation, edema, and pain subside.
5. Client education related to lumbar disk conditions ▲
- a. Instruct the client in the use of prescribed medications such as analgesics, muscle relaxants, antiinflammatory agents, or corticosteroids.
  - b. Instruct the client about application techniques for corsets or braces to maintain immobilization and proper spine alignment.
  - c. Instruct the client in correct posture while sitting, standing, walking, and working.
  - d. Instruct the client in the correct technique to use when lifting objects such as bending the knees, maintaining a straight back, and avoiding lifting objects above the elbow level.
  - e. Instruct in a weight control program as prescribed.
  - f. Instruct the client in an exercise program to strengthen back and abdominal muscles as prescribed.

**D.** Disk surgery is used when spinal cord compression is suspected or client's symptoms do not respond to conservative treatment (Box 68-4).

### **BOX 68-4** Types of Disk Surgery

**Discectomy:** Removal of herniated disk tissue and related matter

**Discectomy with Fusion:** Fusion of vertebrae with bone graft

**Laminectomy:** Excision of part of the vertebrae (lamina) to remove the disk

**Laminotomy:** Division of the lamina of a vertebra

#### 1. Preoperative interventions

- a. Routine preoperative instructions are provided.
- b. Instruct the client about logrolling and range-of-motion exercises.

#### 2. Postoperative interventions: Cervical disk ▲

- a. Monitor for respiratory difficulty from inflammation or hematoma.
- b. Encourage coughing, deep breathing, and early ambulation as prescribed.
- c. Monitor for hoarseness and inability to cough effectively because this may indicate laryngeal nerve damage.
- d. Use throat sprays or lozenges for sore throat, avoiding anesthetic lozenges that may numb the throat and increase choking risks.
- e. Monitor the surgical wound for infection, swelling, redness, drainage, or pain.
- f. Provide a soft diet if the client complains of dysphagia.
- g. Monitor for sudden return of radicular pain, which may indicate cervical spine

instability.

**3. Postoperative interventions: Lumbar disk** 

- a.** Monitor for wound drainage and bleeding.
- b.** Monitor lower extremities for sensation, movement, color, temperature, and paresthesia.
- c.** Monitor for urinary retention, paralytic ileus, and constipation, which can result from decreased movement, opioid administration, or spinal cord compression.
- d.** Prevent constipation by encouraging a high-fiber diet, increased fluid intake, and stool softeners as prescribed.
- e.** Administer opioids and sedatives as prescribed to relieve pain and anxiety.
- f.** Assist and instruct the client to use a prescribed back brace or corset with cotton underwear to prevent skin irritation.

**4. Postoperative lumbar disk positioning**

- a.** In the immediate postoperative period, the client may be expected to lie supine or have other activity restrictions, depending on the specific surgical intervention.
- b.** Instruct the client to avoid spinal flexion or twisting and that the spine should be kept aligned.
- c.** Instruct the client to minimize sitting, which may place a strain on the surgical site.
- d.** When the client is lying supine, place a pillow under the neck and slightly flex the knees.

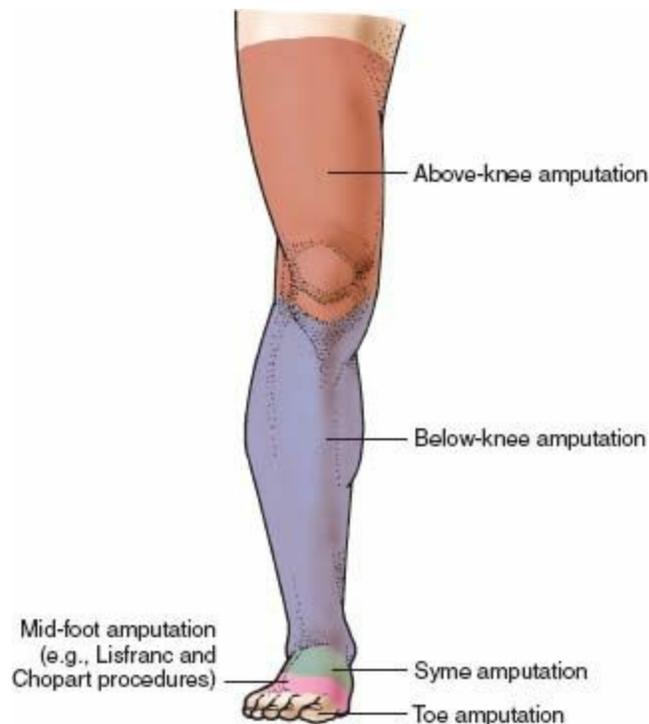
e. Avoid extreme hip flexion when lying on the side.

⚠ Following disk surgery, instruct the client in correct logrolling techniques for turning and repositioning and for getting out of bed.

### XIII. Amputation of a Lower Extremity

#### A. Description

1. Amputation (Fig. 68-5) is the surgical removal of a limb or part of the limb.

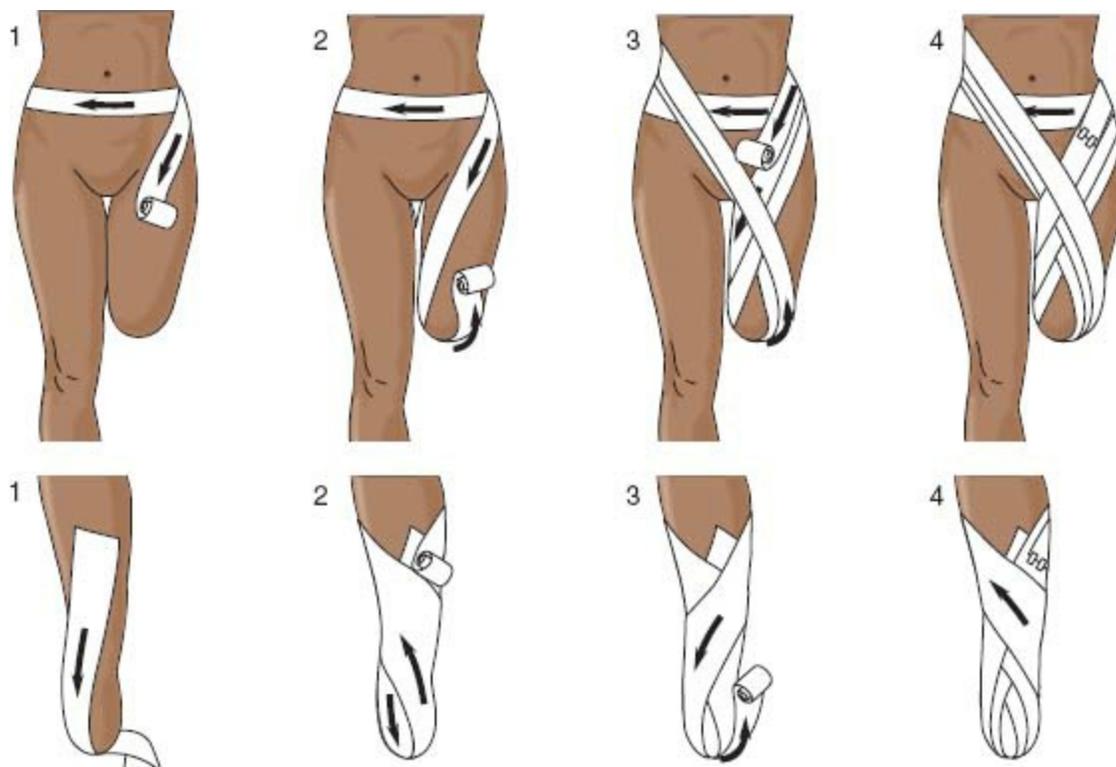


**FIGURE 68-5** Common levels of lower extremity amputation. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

2. Complications include hemorrhage, infection, phantom limb pain, neuroma, flexion contractures ▲

**B. Postoperative interventions** ▲

1. Monitor for signs of complications.
2. Mark bleeding and drainage on the dressing if it occurs.
3. Evaluate for phantom limb sensation and pain; explain sensation and pain to the client, and medicate the client as prescribed.
4. To prevent hip flexion contractures, do not elevate the residual limb on a pillow.
5. First 24 hours: Elevate the foot of the bed to reduce edema; then keep the bed flat to prevent hip flexion contractures, if prescribed by the HCP.
6. After 24 to 48 hours postoperatively, position the client prone to stretch the muscles and prevent hip flexion contractures, if prescribed.
7. Maintain surgical application of dressing, elastic compression wrap, or elastic stump (residual limb) shrinker as prescribed to reduce swelling, minimize pain, and mold the residual limb in preparation for prosthesis (Fig. 68-6)





**FIGURE 68-6** A common method of wrapping a residual limb. *Top*, Wrapping for above-knee amputation. *Bottom*, Wrapping for below-knee amputation. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

8. As prescribed, wash the residual limb with mild soap and water and dry completely.
  9. Massage the skin toward the suture line if prescribed, to mobilize scar and prevent its adherence to underlying bone.
  10. Prepare for the prosthesis and instruct the client in progressive resistive techniques by gently pushing the residual limb against pillows and progressing to firmer surfaces.
  11. Encourage verbalization regarding loss of the body part, and assist the client to identify coping mechanisms to deal with the loss.
- C. Interventions for below-knee amputation**
1. Prevent edema.
  2. Do not allow the residual limb to hang over the edge of the bed.
  3. Discourage long periods of sitting to lessen complications of knee flexion.
- D. Interventions for above-knee amputation**
1. Prevent internal or external rotation of the limb.
  2. Place a sandbag, rolled towel, or trochanter roll along the outside of the thigh to prevent external rotation.

## E. Rehabilitation

1. Instruct the client in the use of a mobility aid such as crutches or a walker.
2. Prepare the residual limb for a prosthesis.
3. Prepare the client for fitting of the residual limb for a prosthesis.
4. Instruct the client in exercises to maintain range of motion and upper body strengthening.
5. Provide psychosocial support to the client.

## F. Traumatic amputation: Emergency care ▲

1. Obtain emergency medical assistance (call 911)
2. Stay with the victim, check the amputation site, apply direct pressure with gauze or cloth (do not remove applied pressure dressing to prevent dislodging of a formed clot).
3. Elevate the extremity above heart level.
4. If finger(s) were amputated, place in a watertight sealed plastic bag and place the bag in ice water (not directly on ice) and transport to the emergency department with the victim.

## XIV. Rheumatoid Arthritis ▲

### A. Description

1. Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic systemic inflammatory disease (immune complex disorder); the cause may be related to a combination of environmental and genetic factors.

2. Rheumatoid arthritis leads to destruction of connective tissue and synovial membrane within the joints.
3. Rheumatoid arthritis weakens the joint, leading to dislocation and permanent deformity of the joint.
4. Pannus forms at the junction of synovial tissue and articular cartilage and projects into the joint cavity, causing necrosis.
5. Exacerbations of disease manifestations occur during periods of physical or emotional stress and fatigue.
6. Vasculitis can impede blood flow, leading to organ or organ system malfunction and failure caused by tissue ischemia.

#### **B. Assessment**

1. Inflammation, tenderness, and stiffness of the joints
2. Moderate to severe pain, with morning stiffness lasting longer than 30 minutes
3. Joint deformities, muscle atrophy, and decreased range of motion in affected joints
4. Spongy, soft feeling in the joints
5. Low-grade temperature, fatigue, and weakness
6. Anorexia, weight loss, and anemia
7. Elevated ESR and positive rheumatoid factor
8. Radiographic study showing joint deterioration
9. Synovial tissue biopsy reveals inflammation

#### **C. Rheumatoid factor**

1. Blood test used to assist in diagnosing rheumatoid arthritis

## 2. Values

- a. Nonreactive: 0 to 39 international units (IU)/mL
- b. Weakly reactive: 40 to 79 IU/mL
- c. Reactive: Higher than 80 IU/mL

**D. Medications:** Combination of pharmacological therapies includes nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs), and glucocorticoids

## E. Physical mobility

1. Preserve joint function.
2. Provide range-of-motion exercises to maintain joint motion and muscle strengthening.
3. Balance rest and activity.
4. Splints may be used during acute inflammation to prevent deformity.
5. Prevent flexion contractures.
6. Apply heat or cold therapy as prescribed to joints.
7. Apply paraffin baths and massage as prescribed.
8. Encourage consistency with exercise program.
9. Use joint-protecting devices.
10. Avoid weight bearing on inflamed joints.

## F. Self-care (Box 68-5)

### **BOX 68-5**

### **Client Education for Rheumatoid Arthritis and Degenerative Joint Disease**

Assist the client to identify and correct safety hazards in the home.

Instruct the client in the correct use of assistive or adaptive devices.

Instruct the client in energy conservation measures.

Review the prescribed exercise program.

Instruct the client to sit in a chair with a high straight back.

Instruct the client to use only a small pillow when lying down.

Instruct the client in measures to protect the joints.

Instruct the client regarding the prescribed medications.

Stress the importance of follow-up visits with the health care provider.

1. Assess the need for assistive devices such as raised toilet seats, self-rising chairs, wheelchairs, and scooters to facilitate mobility.
2. Work with an occupational therapist or health care provider to obtain assistive or adaptive devices.
3. Instruct the client in alternative strategies for providing activities of daily living.

#### **G. Fatigue**

1. Identify factors that may contribute to fatigue.
2. Monitor for signs of anemia and administer iron, folic acid, and vitamins as prescribed.
3. Monitor for medication-related blood loss by testing the stool for occult blood.
4. Instruct the client in measures to conserve energy, such as pacing activities and obtaining assistance when possible.

## H. Disturbed body image

1. Assess the client's reaction to the body change.
2. Encourage the client to verbalize feelings.
3. Assist the client with self-care activities and grooming.
4. Encourage the client to wear street clothes.

## I. Surgical interventions

1. Synovectomy: Surgical removal of the synovia to help maintain joint function
2. Arthrodesis: Bony fusion of a joint to regain some mobility
3. Joint replacement (arthroplasty): Surgical replacement of diseased joints with artificial joints; performed to restore motion to a joint and function to the muscles, ligaments, and other soft tissue structures that control a joint

## XV. Osteoarthritis (Degenerative Joint Disease) ▲

### A. Description

1. Osteoarthritis is marked by progressive deterioration of the articular cartilage.
2. Osteoarthritis causes bone buildup and the loss of articular cartilage in peripheral and axial joints.
3. Osteoarthritis affects the weight-bearing joints and joints that receive the greatest stress, such as the hips, knees, lower vertebral column, and hands.
4. The cause of primary osteoarthritis is not known. Risk factors include trauma, aging, obesity, genetic changes, and smoking.

### B. Assessment

1. Client experiences joint pain that diminishes after rest and intensifies after

activity, noted early in the disease process. ▲

2. As the disease progresses, pain occurs with slight motion or even at rest.
3. Symptoms are aggravated by temperature change and climate humidity.
4. Presence of Heberden's nodes or Bouchard's nodes (hands)
5. Joint swelling (may be minimal), crepitus, and limited range of motion
6. Difficulty getting up after prolonged sitting
7. Skeletal muscle disuse atrophy
8. Inability to perform activities of daily living
9. Compression of the spine as manifested by radiating pain, stiffness, and muscle spasms in one or both extremities

### C. Pain

1. Administer medications as prescribed such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or topical applications; if acetaminophen or topical agents do not relieve pain, then NSAIDs may be prescribed. Muscle relaxants may also be prescribed for muscle spasms, especially those occurring in the back.
2. Prepare the client for corticosteroid injections into joints as prescribed.
3. Position joints in function position and avoid flexion of knees and hips.
4. Immobilize the affected joint with a splint or brace until inflammation subsides.
5. Avoid large pillows under the head or knees.
6. Provide a bed or foot cradle to keep linen off of feet and legs until inflammation subsides.
7. Instruct the client in the importance of moist heat, hot packs or compresses, and

paraffin dips as prescribed.

**8.** Apply cold applications as prescribed when the joint is acutely inflamed.

**9.** Encourage adequate rest.

#### **D.** Nutrition

**1.** Encourage a well-balanced diet.

**2.** Maintain weight within normal range to decrease stress on the joints.

#### **E.** Physical mobility

**1.** Instruct the client to balance activity with rest and to participate in an exercise program that limits stressing affected joints.

**2.** Instruct the client that exercises should be active rather than passive and to stop exercise if pain occurs.

**3.** Instruct the client to limit exercise when joint inflammation is severe.

#### **F.** Surgical management

**1.** Osteotomy: The bone is resected to correct joint deformity, promote realignment, and reduce joint stress.

**2.** Total joint replacement or arthroplasty

**a.** Total joint replacement is performed when all measures of pain relief have failed.

**b.** Hips and knees are replaced most commonly.

**c.** Total joint replacement is contraindicated in the presence of infection, advanced osteoporosis, or severe joint inflammation.

## XVI. Osteoporosis ▲

### A. Description

1. Osteoporosis is a metabolic disease characterized by bone demineralization, with loss of calcium and phosphorus salts leading to fragile bones and the subsequent risk for fractures.
  2. Bone resorption accelerates as bone formation slows.
  3. Osteoporosis occurs most commonly in the wrist, hip, and vertebral column.
  4. Osteoporosis can occur postmenopausally or as a result of a metabolic disorder or calcium deficiency.
  5. Client may be asymptomatic until the bones become fragile and a minor injury or movement causes a fracture.
  6. Primary osteoporosis
    - a. Most often occurs in postmenopausal women; occurs in men with low testosterone levels
    - b. Risk factors include decreased calcium intake, deficient estrogen, and sedentary lifestyle.
  7. Secondary osteoporosis
    - a. Causes include prolonged therapy with corticosteroids, thyroid-reducing medications, aluminum-containing antacids, or anticonvulsants.
    - b. Associated with immobility, alcoholism, malnutrition, or malabsorption
  8. Risk factors ([Box 68-6](#))
- 

- Cigarette smoking
- Early menopause
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Family history
- Female gender
- Increasing age
- Insufficient intake of calcium
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Thin, small frame
- White (European descent) or Asian race

**B. Assessment**

1. Possibly asymptomatic
2. Back pain occurs after lifting, bending, or stooping.
3. Back pain that increases with palpation
4. Pelvic or hip pain, especially with weight bearing
5. Problems with balance
6. Decline in height from vertebral compression
7. Kyphosis of the dorsal spine, also known as “dowager’s hump”
8. Degeneration of lower thorax and lumbar vertebrae on radiographic studies

 The client with osteoporosis is at risk for pathological fractures.

### C. Interventions

1. Assess risk for and prevent injury in client's personal environment.
  - a. Assist client to identify and correct hazards in his or her environment.
  - b. Position household items and furniture to ensure an unobstructed walkway.
  - c. Use side rails to prevent falls.
  - d. Instruct in use of assistive devices such as a cane or walker.
  - e. Encourage the use of a firm mattress.
2. Provide personal care to client to reduce injuries.
  - a. Move the client gently when turning and repositioning.
  - b. Assist with ambulation if client is unsteady.
  - c. Provide gentle range-of-motion exercises.
  - d. Apply a back brace as prescribed during an acute phase to immobilize the spine and provide spinal column support.
3. Provide client instructions to promote optimal level of health and function.
  - a. Instruct the client in the use of good body mechanics.
  - b. Instruct the client in exercises to strengthen abdominal and back muscles to improve posture and provide support for the spine.
  - c. Instruct the client to avoid activities that can cause vertebral compression.
  - d. Instruct the client to eat a diet high in protein, calcium, vitamins C and D, and iron.
  - e. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol and coffee.

- f. Instruct the client to maintain an adequate fluid intake to prevent renal calculi.
4. Administer medications as prescribed to promote bone strength and decrease pain.

## **XVII. Gout**

### **A. Description**

1. Gout is a systemic disease in which urate crystals deposit in joints and other body tissues.
2. Gout results from abnormal amounts of uric acid in the body.
3. Primary gout results from a disorder of purine metabolism.
4. Secondary gout involves excessive uric acid in the blood caused by another disease.

### **B. Phases**

1. Asymptomatic: Client has no symptoms but serum uric acid level is elevated.
2. Acute: Client has excruciating pain and inflammation of one or more small joints, especially the great toe.
3. Intermittent: Client has intermittent periods without symptoms between acute attacks.
4. Chronic: Results from repeated episodes of acute gout
  - a. Chronic gout results in deposits of urate crystals under the skin.
  - b. Chronic gout results in deposits of urate crystals within major organs, such as the kidneys, leading to organ dysfunction.

### C. Assessment

1. Swelling and inflammation of the joints, leading to excruciating pain ▲
2. Tophi: Hard, irregularly shaped nodules in the skin containing chalky deposits of sodium urate
3. Low-grade fever, malaise, and headache
4. Pruritus from urate crystals in the skin
5. Presence of renal stones from elevated uric acid levels

### D. Interventions

1. Provide a low-purine diet as prescribed, avoiding foods such as organ meats, wines, and aged cheese.
2. Encourage a high fluid intake of 2000 mL/day to prevent stone formation.
3. Encourage weight reduction diet if required.
4. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol and starvation diets because they may precipitate a gout attack.
5. Increase urinary pH (above 6) by eating alkaline ash foods (see [Chapter 62](#)).
6. Provide bed rest during acute attacks, with the affected extremity elevated.
7. Monitor joint range-of-motion ability and appearance of joints.
8. Position the joint in mild flexion during acute attack.
9. Protect the affected joint from excessive movement or direct contact with sheets or blankets.
10. Provide heat or cold for local treatments to affected joint as prescribed.
11. Administer medications such as analgesic, antiinflammatory, and uricosuric agents

as prescribed.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** In a traumatic amputation, the nurse should call 911 to transport the victim to the hospital. While awaiting emergency medical assistance, the nurse should immediately check the amputation site and apply direct pressure with dry gauze. This pressure dressing is not removed to prevent dislodgment of a formed clot. The extremity is elevated above heart level. The amputated finger is placed in a watertight sealed plastic bag and the bag is placed in ice water (not directly on ice). The nurse stays with the victim until transport to the emergency department.

### **Reference**

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1165.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 830.** The nurse is conducting health screening for osteoporosis. Which client is at greatest risk of developing this disorder?
1. A 25-year-old woman who jogs
  2. A 36-year-old man who has asthma
  3. A 70-year-old man who consumes excess alcohol
  4. A sedentary 65-year-old woman who smokes cigarettes
- 831.** The nurse has given instructions to a client returning home after knee arthroscopy. Which statement by the client indicates that the instructions are understood?
1. "I can resume regular exercise tomorrow."
  2. "I can't eat food for the remainder of the day."
  3. "I need to stay off the leg entirely for the rest of the day."
  4. "I need to report a fever or site inflammation to my health care provider."
- 832.** The nurse is one of several persons who witnessed a vehicle hit a pedestrian at fairly low speed on a small street. The victim is dazed and tries to get up. The leg appears fractured. Which intervention should the nurse take?
1. Try to reduce the fracture manually.
  2. Assist the victim to get up and walk to the sidewalk.
  3. Leave the victim for a few moments to call an ambulance.
  4. Stay with the victim and encourage the person to remain still.

**833.** Which cast care instructions should the nurse provide to a client who just had a plaster cast applied to the right forearm? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Keep the cast clean and dry.
2. Allow the cast 24 to 72 hours to dry.
3. Keep the cast and extremity elevated.
4. Expect tingling and numbness in the extremity.
5. Use a hair dryer set on a warm to hot setting to dry the cast.
6. Use a soft padded object that will fit under the cast to scratch the skin under the cast.

**834.** The nurse is evaluating the pin sites of a client in skeletal traction. The nurse would be least concerned with which finding?

1. Inflammation
2. Serous drainage
3. Pain at a pin site
4. Purulent drainage

**835.** The nurse is assessing the casted extremity of a client. Which sign is indicative of infection?

1. Dependent edema
2. Diminished distal pulse
3. Presence of a “hot spot” on the cast
4. Coolness and pallor of the extremity

**836.** A client has sustained a closed fracture and has just had a cast applied to the affected arm. The client is complaining of intense pain. The nurse elevates the limb, applies an ice bag, and administers an analgesic, with little relief. Which problem may be causing this pain?

1. Infection under the cast
2. The anxiety of the client
3. Impaired tissue perfusion
4. The recent occurrence of the fracture

**837.** The nurse is admitting a client with multiple trauma to the nursing unit. The client has a leg fracture and had a plaster cast applied. Which position would be **best** for the casted leg?

1. Flat for 12 hours, then elevated for 12 hours.
2. Elevated for 3 hours and then flat for 1 hour.
3. Flat for 3 hours and then elevated for 1 hour.
4. Elevated on pillows continuously for 24 to 48 hours.

**838.** A client is being discharged to home after application of a plaster leg cast.

Which statement indicates that the client understands proper care of the cast?

1. "I need to avoid getting the cast wet."
2. "I need to cover the casted leg with warm blankets."
3. "I need to use my fingertips to lift and move my leg."
4. "I need to use something like a padded coat hanger end to scratch under the

cast if it itches.”

**839.** A client being measured for crutches asks the nurse why the crutches cannot rest up underneath the arm for extra support. The nurse responds knowing that which would **most likely** result from this improper crutch measurement?

1. A fall and further injury
2. Injury to the brachial plexus nerves
3. Skin breakdown in the area of the axilla
4. Impaired range of motion while the client ambulates

**840.** The nurse has given a client instructions about crutch safety. Which client statement indicates that the client understands the instructions? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. ”I should not use someone else’s crutches.”
2. “I need to remove any scatter rugs at home.”
3. “I can use crutch tips even when they are wet.”
4. “I need to have spare crutches and tips available.”
5. “When I’m using the crutches my arms need to be completely straight.”

**841.** The nurse is caring for a client being treated for fat embolus after multiple fractures. Which data would the nurse evaluate as the **most** favorable indication of resolution of the fat embolus?

1. Clear mentation
2. Minimal dyspnea

3. Oxygen saturation of 85%
4. Arterial oxygen level of 78 mm Hg

842. The nurse has conducted teaching with a client in an arm cast about the signs and symptoms of compartment syndrome. The nurse determines that the client understands the information if the client states that he or she should report which **early** symptom of compartment syndrome?

1. Cold, bluish-colored fingers
2. Numbness and tingling in the fingers
3. Pain that increases when the arm is dependent
4. Pain that is out of proportion to the severity of the fracture

843. A client with diabetes mellitus has had a right below-knee amputation. Given the client's history of diabetes mellitus, which should the nurse specifically observe in the postoperative period?

1. Hemorrhage
2. Edema of the residual limb
3. Slight redness of the incision
4. Separation of the wound edges

844. The nurse is caring for a client who had an above-knee amputation 2 days ago. The residual limb was wrapped with an elastic compression bandage, which has come off. Which **immediate** action should the nurse take?

1. Apply ice to the site.

2. Call the health care provider (HCP).
3. Apply a dry sterile dressing and elevate it on one pillow.
4. Rewrap the residual limb with an elastic compression bandage.

**845.** A client is complaining of low back pain that radiates down the left posterior thigh. The nurse should ask the client if the pain is worsened or aggravated by which factor?

1. Bed rest
2. Bending or lifting
3. Application of heat
4. Ibuprofen (Motrin IB)

**846.** The nurse is caring for a client who has had spinal fusion, with insertion of hardware. The nurse would be **most** concerned with which assessment finding?

1. Temperature of 101.6° F orally
2. Complaints of discomfort during repositioning
3. Old bloody drainage outlined on the surgical dressing
4. Discomfort during coughing and deep-breathing exercises

**847.** The nurse is caring for a client with a diagnosis of gout. Which laboratory value would the nurse expect to note in the client?

1. Calcium level of 9.0 mg/dL
2. Uric acid level of 8.6 mg/dL
3. Potassium level of 4.1 mEq/L

4. Phosphorus level of 3.1 mg/dL

**848.** A client with a hip fracture asks the nurse why Buck's (extension) traction is being applied before surgery. The nurse provides a response based on which purpose of Buck's (extension) traction?

1. Allows bony healing to begin before surgery
2. Provides rigid immobilization of the fracture site
3. Lengthens the fractured leg to prevent severing of blood vessels
4. Provides comfort by reducing muscle spasms and provides fracture immobilization

## ANSWERS

**830. 4**

**Rationale:** Risk factors for osteoporosis include female gender, being postmenopausal, advanced age, a low-calcium diet, excessive alcohol intake, being sedentary, and smoking cigarettes. Long-term use of corticosteroids, anticonvulsants, and/or furosemide (Lasix) also increases the risk.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, risk factors for osteoporosis. The 25-year-old woman who jogs (exercises using the long bones) has negligible risk. The 36-year-old man with asthma is eliminated next because his only risk factor might be long-term corticosteroid use to treat the asthma. Of the remaining options, the 65-year-old woman has higher risk (age, gender, postmenopausal, sedentary, smoking) than the 70-year-old man (age, alcohol consumption).

**Review:** The risk factors associated with **osteoporosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Mobility

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1120.

### 831. 4

**Rationale:** After arthroscopy, the client usually can walk carefully on the leg once sensation has returned. The client is instructed to avoid strenuous exercise for at least a few days. The client may resume the usual diet. Signs and symptoms of infection should be reported to the health care provider (HCP).

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, teaching points following knee arthroscopy. Recalling the general client teaching points related to surgical procedures and that a risk for infection exists after a surgical procedure will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Teaching points following **arthroscopy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), pp. 483-484.

### 832. 4

**Rationale:** With a suspected fracture, the victim is not moved unless it is dangerous to remain in that spot. The nurse should remain with the victim and have someone else call for emergency help. A fracture is not reduced at the scene. Before the victim is moved, the site of fracture is immobilized to prevent further injury.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike** in that either of these options could result in further injury to the victim. Of the remaining options, the more prudent action would be for the nurse to remain with the victim and have someone else call for emergency assistance.

**Review:** Immediate care of the victim with a **fracture**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mobility

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1153, 1160.

❖ **833. 1, 2, 3**

**Rationale:** A plaster cast takes 24 to 72 hours to dry (synthetic casts dry in 20 minutes). The cast and extremity should be elevated to reduce edema if prescribed. A wet cast is handled with the palms of the hand until it is dry, and the extremity is turned (unless contraindicated) so that all sides of the wet cast will dry. A cool setting on the hair dryer can be used to dry a plaster cast (heat cannot be used on a plaster cast because the cast heats up and burns the skin). The cast needs to be kept clean and dry, and the client is instructed not to stick anything under the cast because of the risk of breaking skin integrity. The client is instructed to monitor the extremity for circulatory impairment, such as pain, swelling, discoloration, tingling, numbness, coolness, or diminished pulse. The health care

provider is notified immediately if circulatory impairment occurs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a plaster cast. Recalling that edema occurs following a fracture and recalling the complications associated with a cast will assist you in answering the question.

**Review:** **Cast care** instructions

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1151.

## 834. 2

**Rationale:** A small amount of serous oozing is expected at pin insertion sites. Signs of infection such as inflammation, purulent drainage, and pain at the pin site are not expected findings and should be reported to the health care provider.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a finding that is of least concern. Options 1 and 4 seem to indicate an infectious problem and are eliminated first. From the remaining options, note that the complaint of pain is at “a pin site.” Also, knowing that serous drainage is an expected finding will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Expected findings in the client with **skeletal traction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1155.

**835. 3**

**Rationale:** Signs and symptoms of infection under a casted area include odor or purulent drainage from the cast or the presence of “hot spots,” which are areas of the cast that are warmer than others. The health care provider should be notified if any of these occur. Signs of impaired circulation in the distal limb include coolness and pallor of the skin, diminished distal pulse, and edema.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of infection. Think about what you would expect to note with infection—redness, swelling, heat, and purulent drainage. With this in mind, you can eliminate options 2 and 4 easily. From the remaining options, remember that “dependent edema” is not necessarily indicative of infection. Swelling would be continuous. The hot spot on the cast could signify infection underneath that area and is the correct answer to the question.

**Review:** Signs of infection in an extremity with a **cast**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1153.

**836. 3**

**Rationale:** Most pain associated with fractures can be minimized with rest, elevation, application of cold, and

administration of analgesics. Pain that is not relieved by these measures should be reported to the health care provider because pain unrelieved by medications and other measures may indicate neurovascular compromise. Because this is a new closed fracture and cast, infection would not have had time to set in. Intense pain after casting is normally not associated with anxiety or the recent occurrence of the injury. Treatment following the fracture should assist in relieving the pain associated with the injury.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, intense pain, and the data in the question. Use of the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with a **fracture** and new **cast**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Pain

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1150-1151; Swearingen (2012), pp. 477-478.

**837. 4**

**Rationale:** A casted extremity is elevated continuously for the first 24 to 48 hours to minimize swelling and promote venous drainage. Options 1, 2, and 3 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Recalling that edema is a concern following an injury and knowledge of the effects of gravity on edema will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with a new **cast**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1151.

**838. 1**

**Rationale:** A plaster cast must remain dry to keep its strength. The cast should be handled with the palms of the hands, not the fingertips, until fully dry. Air should circulate freely around the cast to help it dry; the cast also gives off heat as it dries. The client should never scratch under the cast; the client may use a hair dryer on the cool setting to relieve an itch.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client understanding about cast care. Knowing that a wet cast can be dented with the fingertips, causing pressure underneath, helps eliminate option 3 first. Knowing that the cast needs to dry helps eliminate option 2 next. Option 4 is dangerous to skin integrity and is also eliminated. Remember that plaster casts, once they have dried after application, should not become wet.

**Review:** Care of the client with a **cast**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), p. 478.

**839. 2**

**Rationale:** Crutches are measured so that the tops are two to three fingerwidths from the axillae. This ensures that the client's axillae are not resting on the crutch or bearing the weight of the crutch, which could result in injury to the nerves of the brachial plexus. Although the conditions in options 1, 3, and 4 can occur, they are not the most likely result from resting the axilla directly on the crutches.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Recalling the risk associated with brachial nerve plexus injury will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The complications associated with the use of **crutches**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 760-761.

❖ **840. 1, 2, 4**

**Rationale:** The client should use only crutches measured for the client. When assessing for home safety, make sure the client knows to remove any scatter rugs and does not walk on highly waxed floors. The tips should be inspected for wear, and spare crutches and tips should be available if needed. Crutch tips should remain dry. If crutch tips get wet, the client should dry them with a cloth or paper towel. When walking with crutches, both elbows need to be flexed not more than 30 degrees when the palms are on the handle.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client understanding of instructions of using crutches. Read each option and think about the safety associated with each instruction. This will assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** Client teaching points related to safety and the use of **crutches**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 760-761.

#### 841. 1

**Rationale:** An altered mental state is an early indication of fat emboli; therefore, clear mentation is a good indicator that a fat embolus is resolving. Eupnea, not minimal dyspnea, is a normal sign. Arterial oxygen levels should be 80 to 100 mm Hg. Oxygen saturation should be higher than 95%.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Knowing that the arterial oxygen and oxygen saturation levels are below normal helps eliminate options 3 and 4. Dyspnea, even at a minimal level, is not normal, so eliminate option 2.

**Review:** The expected outcomes in a client being treated for **fat embolism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Evidence; Perfusion

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1146-1147; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1604.

#### 842. 2

**Rationale:** The earliest symptom of compartment syndrome is paresthesia (numbness and tingling in the fingers).

Other symptoms include pain unrelieved by opioids, pain that increases with limb elevation, and pallor and coolness to the distal limb. Cyanosis is a late sign. Pain that is out of proportion to the severity of the fracture, along with other symptoms associated with the pain, is not an early manifestation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *early*. Knowing that compartment syndrome is characterized by insufficient circulation and ischemia caused by pressure will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The early manifestations of **compartment syndrome**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Perfusion

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1145-1146.

#### 843. 4

**Rationale:** Clients with diabetes mellitus are more prone to wound infection and delayed wound healing because of the disease. Postoperative edema of the residual limb and hemorrhage are complications in the immediate postoperative period that apply to any client with an amputation. Slight redness of the incision is considered normal, as long as it is dry and intact.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the client with diabetes mellitus. Recalling that diabetes mellitus increases the client's chances of developing infection and delayed wound healing will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The complications associated with an **amputation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Glucose Regulation; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1251.

**844. 4**

**Rationale:** If the client with an amputation has a cast or elastic compression bandage that slips off, the nurse must wrap the residual limb immediately with another elastic compression bandage. Otherwise, excessive edema will form rapidly, which could cause a significant delay in rehabilitation. If the client had a cast that slipped off, the nurse would have to call the HCP so that a new one could be applied. Elevation on one pillow is not going to impede the development of edema greatly once compression is released. Ice would be of limited value in controlling edema from this cause. If the HCP were called, the prescription likely would be to reapply the compression dressing anyway.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediate* and focus on the data in the question. Recalling that excessive edema can form rapidly in the residual limb will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client after **amputation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Swearingen (2012), pp. 472-473.

**845. 2**

**Rationale:** Low back pain that radiates into one leg (sciatica) is consistent with herniated lumbar disk. The nurse assesses the client to see whether the pain is aggravated by events that increase intraspinal pressure, such as bending, lifting, sneezing, and coughing, or by lifting the leg straight up while supine (straight leg-raising test). Bed rest, heat (or sometimes ice), and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs usually relieve back pain.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, factors that aggravate back pain. Recall that bed rest, heat (or sometimes ice), and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs usually relieve back pain, whereas bending, lifting, and straining aggravate it.

**Review:** The causes of **back pain**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Pain

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 961-962.

**846. 1**

**Rationale:** The nursing assessment conducted after spinal surgery is similar to that done after other surgical procedures. For this specific type of surgery, the nurse assesses the neurovascular status of the lower extremities,

watches for signs and symptoms of infection, and inspects the surgical site for evidence of cerebrospinal fluid leakage (drainage is clear and tests positive for glucose). A mild temperature is expected after insertion of hardware, but a temperature of 101.6° F should be reported.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Thus, you are looking for the option that has the greatest deviation from normal. Options 2 and 4 are expected after surgery and, although the nurse tries to minimize discomfort, the client is likely to have some discomfort, even with proper analgesic use. The words *old* and *outlined* in option 3 indicate that this is not a new occurrence. This leaves the temperature of 101.6° F, which is excessive and should be reported.

**Review:** The signs of complications following **spinal fusion**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 964.

**847. 2**

**Rationale:** In addition to the presence of clinical manifestations, gout is diagnosed by the presence of persistent hyperuricemia, with a uric acid level higher than 8 mg/dL; a normal value ranges from 2.5 to 8 mg/dL. Options 1, 3, and 4 indicate normal laboratory values. In addition, the presence of uric acid in an aspirated sample of synovial fluid confirms the diagnosis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manifestation of gout. Use knowledge of normal laboratory values. Recalling that increased uric acid levels occur in gout and noting that the correct option has the only abnormal value

will assist you in answering the question.

**Review:** The manifestations of **gout** and the normal **uric acid** level

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 349.

#### 848. 4

**Rationale:** Buck's (extension) traction is a type of skin traction often applied after hip fracture before the fracture is reduced in surgery. Traction reduces muscle spasms and helps immobilize the fracture. Traction does not allow for bony healing to begin or provide rigid immobilization. Traction does not lengthen the leg for the purpose of preventing blood vessel severance.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, use of traction following a hip fracture. Read each option carefully.

Noting the words *provides comfort and fracture immobilization* will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The purpose of **Buck's** (extension) traction

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mobility

***Reference:*** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1153, 1160.



## CHAPTER 69

# Musculoskeletal Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) is prescribed for a client experiencing muscle spasms. The nurse reviews the client's record and notes that the client is currently taking phenelzine (Nardil). What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 992.*

### I. Skeletal Muscle Relaxants

#### A. Description

1. Skeletal muscle relaxants ([Box 69-1](#)) act directly on the neuromuscular junction or act indirectly on the central nervous system (CNS).

#### BOX 69-1 Skeletal Muscle Relaxants

- Baclofen
- Carisoprodol (Soma)

- Chlorzoxazone (Paraflex, Parafon Forte, Remular-S)
- Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril, Amrix)
- Dantrolene (Dantrium)
- Diazepam (Valium)
- Metaxalone (Skelaxin)
- Methocarbamol (Robaxin)
- Orphenadrine (Norflex)
- Tizanidine (Zanaflex)

2. Centrally acting muscle relaxants depress neuron activity in the spinal cord or brain.
3. Peripherally acting muscle relaxants act directly on the skeletal muscles, interfering with calcium release from muscle tubules and thus preventing the fibers from contracting.
4. Skeletal muscle relaxants are used to prevent or relieve muscle spasms and treat spasticity associated with spinal cord disease or lesions, acute painful musculoskeletal conditions, and chronic debilitating disorders such as multiple sclerosis, brain attacks (stroke), or cerebral palsy.
5. Skeletal muscle relaxants are contraindicated in clients with severe liver, renal, or heart disease; these medications are often metabolized in the liver or excreted by the kidneys. ▲
6. Skeletal muscle relaxants should not be taken with CNS depressants, such as

barbiturates, opioids, alcohol, sedatives, hypnotics, or tricyclic antidepressants, unless specifically prescribed. ▲

## **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Dizziness and hypotension
2. Drowsiness and muscle weakness ▲
3. Dry mouth
4. Gastrointestinal upset
5. Photosensitivity
6. Liver toxicity ▲

## **C. Interventions ▲**

1. Obtain a medical history.
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Monitor for CNS side/adverse effects.
4. Assess for risk of injury.
5. Assess involved joints and muscles for pain and mobility.
6. Monitor renal function studies.
7. Instruct the client to take the medication with food to decrease gastrointestinal upset.
8. Instruct the client to report side/adverse effects.
9. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol and CNS depressants.
10. Instruct the client to avoid activities requiring alertness, such as driving or operating equipment.

**⚠️ Monitor liver function tests when a client is taking a skeletal muscle relaxant because hepatotoxicity can occur.**

## **D. Nursing considerations**

### **1. Baclofen** ▲

- a.** Baclofen causes CNS effects such as drowsiness, dizziness, weakness, and fatigue and nausea, constipation, and urinary retention.
- b.** Administer with caution in the client with renal or hepatic dysfunction or a seizure disorder.
- c.** Baclofen can be administered by the health care provider (HCP) through intrathecal infusion using an implantable pump or by direct intrathecal administration over 1 minute.
- d.** Instruct the client with an implantable pump to maintain medication refill appointments to prevent the pump from emptying and experiencing sudden withdrawal symptoms, which could be life-threatening.

### **2. Carisoprodol (Soma)**

- a.** Advise the client to take the medication with food to prevent gastrointestinal upset.
- b.** Instruct the client to report any rash or hypersensitivity to the HCP. ▲

### **3. Chlorzoxazone (Paraflex, Parafon Forte, Remular-S)**

- a.** Monitor the client for hypersensitivity reactions such as urticaria, redness or itching, and possibly angioedema. ▲
- b.** Chlorzoxazone may cause malaise and may cause the urine to turn orange or red.

c. Can cause hepatitis and hepatic necrosis.

#### 4. Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril, Amrix)

a. Cyclobenzaprine is contraindicated in clients who have received monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) within 14 days of initiation of cyclobenzaprine therapy and in clients with cardiac disorders. ▲

b. Cyclobenzaprine has significant anticholinergic (atropine-like) effects and should be used with caution in clients with a history of urinary retention, angle-closure glaucoma, or increased intraocular pressure.

c. Cyclobenzaprine should be used only for short-term therapy (2 to 3 weeks).

#### 5. Dantrolene (Dantrium)

a. Dantrolene acts directly on skeletal muscles to relieve spasticity.

b. Liver damage is the most serious adverse effect. ▲

c. Liver function values should be monitored before the initiation of treatment and during treatment.

d. Dantrolene can cause gastrointestinal bleeding, urinary frequency, impotence, photosensitivity, rash, and muscle weakness.

e. Instruct the client to wear protective clothing when in the sun.

f. Instruct the client to notify the HCP if rash, bloody or tarry stools, or yellow discoloration of the skin or eyes occurs.

#### 6. Diazepam (Valium)

a. Acts on the CNS to suppress spasticity; does not affect skeletal muscle directly

b. Sedation is a common side effect. ▲

## 7. Methocarbamol (Robaxin)

- a. The parenteral form is contraindicated in clients with renal impairment.
- b. The parenteral form can cause hypotension, bradycardia, anaphylaxis, and seizures, especially when the medication is given too rapidly.
- c. Monitor site for extravasation, which can result in thrombophlebitis and tissue sloughing.
- d. Methocarbamol may cause the urine to turn brown, black, or green.
- e. Inform the client to notify the HCP if blurred vision, nasal congestion, urticaria, or rash occurs. 

8. Tizanidine (Zanaflex) and metaxalone (Skelaxin): Can cause liver damage

9. Orphenadrine (Norflex) has significant anticholinergic (atropine-like) effects and should be used with caution in clients with a history of urinary retention, angle-closure glaucoma, or increased intraocular pressure.

 Safety is a primary concern when the client is taking a skeletal muscle relaxant because these medications cause drowsiness.

## II. Antigout Medications

### A. Description

1. Antigout medications (allopurinol [Zyloprim], colchicine [Colcrys], probenecid, sulfinpyrazone) reduce uric acid production and increase uric acid excretion (uricosuric) to prevent or relieve gout or to manage hyperuricemia.
2. Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are used for their

antiinflammatory effects and to relieve pain during an acute gouty attack (see [Chapter 67](#) for information on NSAIDs).

3. Glucocorticoids may be prescribed to reduce inflammation during an acute gout attack (see [Chapter 55](#) for information on glucocorticoids).
4. Antigout medications should be used cautiously in clients with gastrointestinal, renal, cardiac, or hepatic disease. ▲

## B. Side/adverse effects

1. Headaches
2. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
3. Blood dyscrasias, such as bone marrow depression ▲
4. Flushed skin and rash
5. Uric acid kidney stones ▲
6. Sore gums
7. Metallic taste

## C. Interventions

1. Assess serum uric acid levels.
2. Monitor intake and output.
3. Maintain a fluid intake of at least 2000 to 3000 mL/day to prevent kidney stones. ▲
4. Monitor complete blood cell count and renal and liver function studies.
5. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol and caffeine because these products can increase uric acid levels.
6. Encourage the client to comply with therapy to prevent elevated uric acid levels,

which can trigger a gout attack.

7. Instruct the client to avoid foods high in purine as prescribed, such as wine, alcohol, organ meats, sardines, salmon, scallops, and gravy. ▲
8. Instruct the client to take the medication with food to decrease gastric irritation.
9. Instruct the client to report side/adverse effects to the HCP.
10. Caution the client not to take aspirin with these medications because this could trigger a gout attack. ▲

#### **D. Nursing considerations**

##### **1. Allopurinol (Zyloprim)**

- a. Can increase the effect of warfarin (Coumadin) and oral hypoglycemic agents
- b. Instruct the client not to take large doses of vitamin C while taking allopurinol because kidney stones may occur.
- c. Hypersensitivity syndrome (rare) can occur, characterized by rash, fever, eosinophilia, and liver and kidney alterations (medication is withheld and the HCP is notified).
- d. Advise the client to minimize exposure to sunlight and have an annual eye examination because visual changes can occur from prolonged use of allopurinol. ▲

##### **2. Colchicine (Colcrys)**

- a. Used with caution in older clients, debilitated clients, and clients with cardiac, renal, and/or gastrointestinal disease.
- b. If gastrointestinal symptoms occur (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal

pain), the medication is withheld and the HCP is notified. ▲

### 3. Probenecid

- a. Mild gastrointestinal effects can occur and can be reduced by taking the medication with food.
- b. Aspirin and other salicylates interfere with the uricosuric action of the medication.

### 4. Sulfipyrazone

- a. Contraindicated in clients with active ulcer disease; used with caution in clients with a history of ulcer disease
- b. Salicylates counteract the uricosuric action of the medication.
- c. Inhibits hepatic metabolism of tolbutamide (Orinase), causing hypoglycemia, and of warfarin, causing bleeding tendencies.

⚠ The concurrent use of antigout medications and aspirin causes elevated uric acid levels; the client should be instructed to take acetaminophen (Tylenol) if prescribed rather than aspirin.

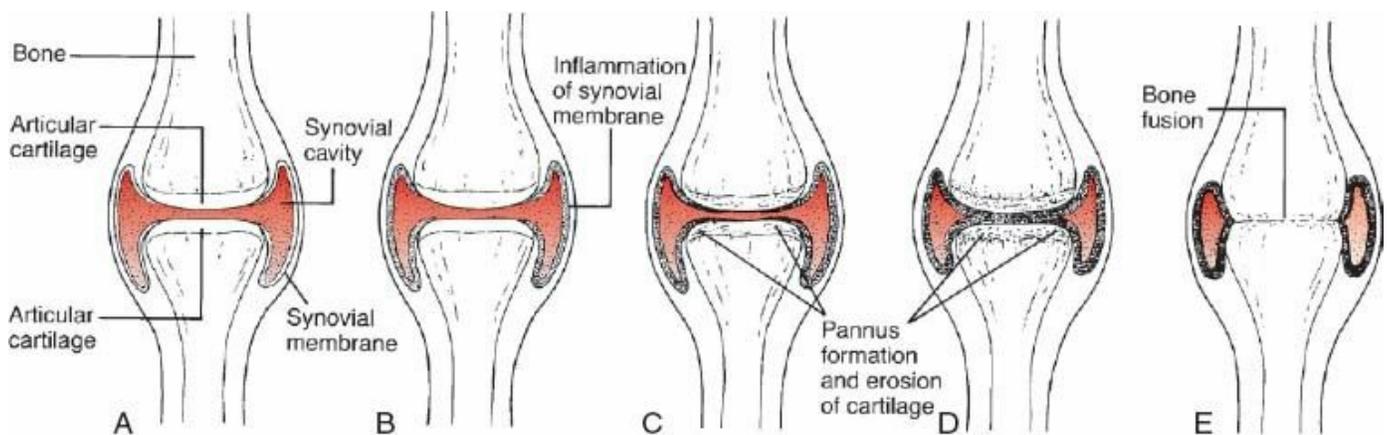
## III. Antiarthritic Medications (Box 69-2)

### BOX 69-2 Antiarthritic Medications

- Anakinra (Kineret)
- Adalimumab (Humira)
- Auranofin (Ridaura)
- Aurothioglucose (Solganal)

- Azathioprine (Imuran)
- Cyclosporine (Neoral)
- Etanercept
- Gold sodium thiomalate (Aurolate, Myochrysine)
- Hydroxychloroquine sulfate (Plaquenil)
- Leflunomide (Arava)
- Methotrexate (Rheumatrex, Trexall)
- Penicillamine (Cuprimine)
- Infliximab (Remicade)
- Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine)

**A. Description (Fig. 69-1)**



**FIGURE 69-1** Progressive joint degeneration in rheumatoid arthritis. **A**, Healthy joint. **B**, Inflammation of synovial membrane. **C**, Onset of pannus formation and cartilage erosion. **D**, Pannus formation progresses and cartilage deteriorates further. **E**, Complete destruction of joint cavity, together with fusion of articulating bones.

(From Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

1. Rheumatoid arthritis occurs as inflammation progresses into the synovia, cartilage, and bone; if this inflammation is not controlled, it will lead to joint destruction, thus affecting client mobility and comfort.
2. The focus of treatment is early diagnosis and aggressive treatment in order to preserve joint function.
3. Medication therapy includes NSAIDs, glucocorticoids, and disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs).
4. Gold salts: Use of gold salts has decreased, but their purpose is to reduce the progression of joint damage caused by arthritic processes. Gold toxicity, characterized by pruritus, rash, metallic taste, stomatitis, and diarrhea, can occur; if toxicity occurs, dimercaprol (British antilewisite [BAL] in oil) may be prescribed to enhance gold excretion.

## **B. DMARDs**

1. Description
  - a. DMARDs are effective antirheumatic medications that are used to slow the degenerative effects of the disorder.
  - b. DMARDs are usually prescribed secondary to NSAIDs but are often the first choice in the treatment of severe arthritis.
2. Common side/adverse effects of DMARDs include injection site inflammation and pain, ecchymosis, and edema; pancytopenia and infection; fatigue, headache,

nausea, vomiting, and flulike symptoms; and allergic response. ▲

### 3. Interventions ▲

- a. Instruct the client to monitor for signs of infection and report signs to the HCP.
- b. Monitor the injection site for signs of irritation, pain, inflammation, and swelling.
- c. Instruct the client to consult with the HCP before receiving live vaccines and to avoid exposure to infections.
- d. Inform the client about the importance of laboratory tests for neutrophil counts, white blood cell counts, and platelet counts before initiation of treatment and during treatment.

4. Anakinra (Kineret): Injection site reactions are common (pruritus, erythema, rash, pain).

### 5. Adalimumab (Humira)

- a. Injection site reactions are common.
- b. Has been associated with neurological injury (numbness, tingling, dizziness, visual disturbances, weakness in the legs)

6. Auranofin: Oral gold preparation (not commonly used)

7. Gold sodium thiomalate (Aurolate, Myochrysine), aurothioglucose (Solganal): Intramuscular gold preparations (not commonly used)

8. Azathioprine (Imuran): Immunosuppressive and antiinflammatory actions; toxic effects include hepatitis and blood dyscrasias.

9. Cyclosporine (Neoral): Immunosuppressive actions; can cause nephrotoxicity

## 10. Etanercept

- a. Injection site reactions are common.
- b. Poses a risk for heart failure; has been associated with central nervous system demyelinating disorders and hematological disorders

11. Hydroxychloroquine sulfate (Plaquenil): Associated with retinal damage; inform the client to contact the HCP if visual disturbances occur.

12. Leflunomide (Arava): Side/adverse effects include diarrhea, respiratory infection, reversible alopecia, rash, and nausea; is hepatotoxic

13. Methotrexate (Rheumatrex, Trexall): Can cause hepatic fibrosis, bone marrow suppression, gastrointestinal ulceration, and pneumonitis

14. Penicillamine (Cuprimine): Can cause bone marrow suppression and autoimmune disorders

15. Infliximab (Remicade): Can cause infusion reactions (fever, chills, pruritus, urticaria, chest pain); is hepatotoxic

16. Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine): Can cause gastrointestinal and dermatological reactions, bone marrow suppression, hepatitis

C. NSAIDs may be prescribed for their antiinflammatory and analgesic effects (see [Chapter 67](#) for information on NSAIDs). ▲

D. Glucocorticoids may be prescribed for their antiinflammatory effects (see [Chapter 55](#) for information on glucocorticoids).

## IV. Medications to Prevent and Treat Osteoporosis ▲

## A. Description

1. Osteoporosis is characterized by decreased bone mass and increased bone fragility.
2. Calcium and vitamin D supplementation can reduce the risk of osteoporosis; calcium maximizes bone growth early in life and maintains bone integrity later in life, and vitamin D ensures calcium absorption (see [Chapter 55](#) for information on calcium and vitamin D supplements).
3. Treatment is aimed at reducing the occurrence of fractures by maintaining or increasing bone strength.
4. Medications that decrease bone resorption (antiresorptive) and medications that promote bone formation are used ([Box 69-3](#)).

### **BOX 69-3** Medications to Prevent or Treat Osteoporosis

- Calcium and vitamin D
- Alendronate (Fosamax)
- Calcitonin, salmon (Miacalcin)
- Ibandronate
- Raloxifene (Evista)
- Risedronate (Actonel)
- Teriparatide (Forteo)

5. Antiresorptive medications include raloxifene (Evista), calcitonin, and

bisphosphonates.

6. Teriparatide (Forteo) promotes bone growth.

**⚠** Do not confuse Fosamax with Flomax, which is a medication used for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

## B. Interventions

### 1. Calcitonin, salmon (Miacalcin)

- a. Calcitonin is secreted by the thyroid gland and inhibits osteoclastic bone resorption.
- b. Instruct the client how to administer the intranasal or subcutaneous form, depending on the route prescribed.
- c. Intranasal route: Examine the nares for irritation; alternate nostrils for doses. 
- d. When calcitonin is taken, it is important to monitor for hypocalcemia. 

### 2. Bisphosphonates

- a. Bisphosphonates inhibit osteoclast-mediated bone resorption, thereby increasing total bone mass.
- b. Bisphosphonates include alendronate (Fosamax), risedronate (Actonel), and ibandronate.
- c. Contraindicated for clients with esophageal disorders that can impede swallowing and for clients who cannot sit or stand for at least 30 minutes (60 minutes with ibandronate) 
- d. Adverse effects include esophagitis, muscle pain, and ocular problems; the client is instructed to contact the HCP if adverse effects occur.

 Because of the risk of esophagitis, bisphosphonates must be administered in the morning before eating or drinking with a full glass of water; the client must then remain sitting or standing and postpone ingesting anything for at least 30 minutes (60 minutes with ibandronate).

### 3. Raloxifene (Evista)

- a. Antiresorptive medication (nonbisphosphonate)
- b. Contraindicated in clients who have a history of venous thrombotic events 
- c. Needs to be discontinued 72 hours prior to prolonged immobilization periods (such as with periods of extended bed rest)
- d. Instruct the client to avoid extended periods of restricted activity (such as when traveling).

### 4. Teriparatide (Forteo)

- a. Teriparatide stimulates new bone formation, thus increasing bone mass.
- b. Teriparatide is a portion of the human parathyroid hormone and works by increasing the action of osteoblasts.
- c. Is usually reserved for clients at high risk for fractures
- d. Has been associated with the development of bone cancer 

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Cyclobenzaprine is a muscle relaxant and is contraindicated in clients who have received monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) within 14 days of initiation of

cyclobenzaprine therapy and in clients with cardiac disorders. The nurse should contact the health care provider and question the cyclobenzaprine prescription before the initiation of therapy.

### ***Reference***

Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 282-283.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

- 849.** A client has been on treatment for rheumatoid arthritis for 3 weeks. During the administration of etanercept, which is **most important** for the nurse to assess?
1. The injection site for itching and edema
  2. The white blood cell counts and platelet counts
  3. Whether the client is experiencing fatigue and joint pain
  4. Whether the client is experiencing a metallic taste in the mouth, and a loss of appetite
- 850.** Allopurinol (Zyloprim) is prescribed for a client and the nurse provides medication instructions to the client. Which instruction should the nurse provide?
1. Drink 3000 mL of fluid a day.
  2. Take the medication on an empty stomach.
  3. The effect of the medication will occur immediately.
  4. Any swelling of the lips is a normal expected response.
- 851.** Colchicine (Colcrys) is prescribed for a client with a diagnosis of gout. The

nurse reviews the client's record, knowing that this medication would be used with caution in which disorder?

1. Myxedema
2. Kidney disease
3. Hypothyroidism
4. Diabetes mellitus

**852.** Alendronate (Fosamax) is prescribed for a client with osteoporosis and the nurse is providing instructions on administration of the medication. Which instruction should the nurse provide?

1. Take the medication at bedtime.
2. Take the medication in the morning with breakfast.
3. Lie down for 30 minutes after taking the medication.
4. Take the medication with a full glass of water after rising in the morning.

**853.** The nurse is preparing discharge instructions for a client receiving baclofen. Which instruction should be included in the teaching plan?

1. Restrict fluid intake.
2. Avoid the use of alcohol.
3. Stop the medication if diarrhea occurs.
4. Notify the health care provider (HCP) if fatigue occurs.

**854.** The nurse is analyzing the laboratory studies on a client receiving dantrolene sodium (Dantrium). Which laboratory test would identify an adverse effect

associated with the administration of this medication?

1. Platelet count
2. Creatinine level
3. Liver function tests
4. Blood urea nitrogen level

**855.** Cyclobenzaprine hydrochloride (Flexeril) is prescribed for a client for muscle spasms and the nurse is reviewing the client's record. Which disorder, if noted in the record, would indicate a need to contact the health care provider about the administration of this medication?

1. Glaucoma
2. Emphysema
3. Hypothyroidism
4. Diabetes mellitus

**856.** In monitoring a client's response to disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs), which assessment findings would the nurse consider acceptable responses? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Symptom control during periods of emotional stress
2. Normal white blood cell, platelet, and neutrophil counts
3. Radiological findings that show no progression of joint degeneration
4. An increased range of motion in the affected joints 3 months into therapy
5. Inflammation and irritation at the injection site 3 days after the injection is

given

6. A low-grade temperature on rising in the morning that remains throughout the day

**857.** The nurse is administering an intravenous dose of methocarbamol (Robaxin) to a client with multiple sclerosis. For which side/adverse effects should the nurse monitor?

1. Tachycardia
2. Rapid pulse
3. Bradycardia
4. Hypertension

## ANSWERS

**849. 2**

**Rationale:** Infection and pancytopenia are side/adverse effects of etanercept. Laboratory studies are performed prior to and during medication treatment. The appearance of abnormal white blood cell counts and abnormal platelet counts can alert the nurse to a potentially life-threatening infection. Injection site itching is a common occurrence following administration. A metallic taste and loss of appetite are not common signs of side/adverse effects of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most important*. Option 4 can be eliminated, because this is not a common side/adverse effect. In early treatment, residual fatigue and joint pain may still be apparent. For the remaining options, the correct option monitors for a hematological disorder, which could indicate a reason for

discontinuing this medication and should be reported.

**Review:** Side/adverse effects of **etanercept**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 440-441.

## 850. 1

**Rationale:** Clients taking allopurinol are encouraged to drink 3000 mL of fluid a day. A full therapeutic effect may take 1 week or longer. Allopurinol is to be given with, or immediately after, meals or milk. A client who develops a rash, irritation of the eyes, or swelling of the lips or mouth should contact the health care provider because this may indicate hypersensitivity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client instructions for allopurinol. Option 4 can be eliminated easily because it indicates hypersensitivity, which is not a normal expected response. From the remaining options, recalling that this medication is used to treat gout will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The client instructions related to **allopurinol**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 34-36.

**851. 2**

**Rationale:** Colchicine is used with caution in older clients, debilitated clients, and clients with cardiac, kidney, or gastrointestinal disease. The disorders in options 1, 3, and 4 are not concerns with administration of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the cautions associated with colchicine. Note that options 1, 3, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and are endocrine-related disorders. The correct option is different from the others.

**Review:** The cautions associated with **colchicine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 931.

**852. 4**

**Rationale:** Precautions need to be taken with the administration of alendronate to prevent gastrointestinal side/adverse effects (especially esophageal irritation) and to increase absorption of the medication. The medication needs to be taken with a full glass of water after rising in the morning. The client should not eat or drink anything for 30 minutes following administration and should not lie down after taking the medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the administration of alendronate. Recalling that this medication can cause esophageal irritation will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Client teaching points for **alendronate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 29-31.

**853. 2**

**Rationale:** Baclofen is a skeletal muscle relaxant. The client should be cautioned against the use of alcohol and other central nervous system depressants because baclofen potentiates the depressant activity of these agents.

Constipation rather than diarrhea is a side/adverse effect. Restriction of fluids is not necessary, but the client should be warned that urinary retention can occur. Fatigue is related to a central nervous system effect that is most intense during the early phase of therapy and diminishes with continued medication use. The client does not need to notify the HCP about fatigue.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, teaching points for baclofen. Recalling that baclofen is a skeletal muscle relaxant will direct you easily to the correct option. If you were unsure of the correct option, use general principles related to medication administration. Alcohol should be avoided with the use of medications.

**Review:** Client teaching points related to **baclofen**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 255-256.

**854. 3**

**Rationale:** Dose-related liver damage is the most serious adverse effect of dantrolene. To reduce the risk of liver damage, liver function tests should be performed before treatment and throughout the treatment interval. Dantrolene is administered at the lowest effective dosage for the shortest time necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 4 because these tests assess kidney function and are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, you must recall that this medication affects liver function.

**Review:** Side/adverse effects of **dantrolene**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 296-297.

**855. 1**

**Rationale:** Because cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) has anticholinergic effects, it should be used with caution in clients with a history of urinary retention, glaucoma, and increased intraocular pressure. Cyclobenzaprine should be used only for a short time (2 to 3 weeks). The conditions in options 2, 3, and 4 are not a concern with this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a contraindication to cyclobenzaprine. Recalling that this medication has anticholinergic effects will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The contraindications of **cyclobenzaprine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 282-283.

❖ **856. 1, 2, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** Because emotional stress frequently exacerbates the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, the absence of symptoms is a positive finding. DMARDs are given to slow the progression of joint degeneration. In addition, an improvement in the range of motion after 3 months of therapy with normal blood work is a positive finding. Temperature elevation and inflammation and irritation at the medication injection site could indicate signs of infection.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, acceptable responses to therapy. Recalling that signs of an infection can indicate an unexpected finding will assist in eliminating options 5 and 6.

**Review:** The expected effects of **disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Evidence

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 920, 928-929.

**857. 3**

**Rationale:** Intravenous administration of methocarbamol can cause hypotension and bradycardia. The nurse needs to monitor for these side/adverse effects. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not effects with administration of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike**. Knowledge about the specific side/adverse effects related to the intravenous use of this medication will direct you to the correct option. Remember that hypotension and bradycardia can occur with intravenous administration of methocarbamol.

**Review:** Side and adverse effects of **methocarbamol**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Musculoskeletal Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 745-746.

# UNIT XVIII



## Immune Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**acquired immunity** Immunity received passively from the mother's antibodies, animal serum, or antibodies produced in response to a disease. Immunization produces active acquired immunity.

**allergy** An abnormal, individual response to certain substances that normally do not trigger such an exaggerated reaction.

**cellular response** A delayed response against slowly developing bacterial infections; also called *delayed hypersensitivity*.

**humoral response** An immediate response that provides protection against acute, rapidly developing bacterial and viral infections.

**immunodeficiency** The absence or inadequate production of immune bodies.

**innate immunity** Immunity present at birth, and is the first-line defense against

pathogens; also known as *natural immunity*.

**Kaposi's sarcoma** Skin lesions that occur in individuals with a compromised immune system.

**Lyme disease** An infection acquired from a tick bite. Ticks live in wooded areas and survive by attaching to a host.

## Pyramid to Success

Pyramid Points focus on the effects of and complications associated with an immune deficiency. Specific focus relates to the nursing care related to the disorder, the impact of the treatment or disorder, and client adaptation. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome is a Pyramid focus, along with protecting the client from infection and preventing the transmission of infection to other individuals. Psychosocial issues relate to social isolation and the body image disturbances that can occur as a result of the immune disorder.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

- Acting as an advocate related to the client's decisions
- Addressing advance directives
- Consulting with members of the health care team
- Establishing priorities
- Handling hazardous and infectious materials safely
- Implementing standard and other precautions
- Maintaining asepsis
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding diagnosis
- Ensuring that informed consent for treatments and procedures has been obtained
- Preventing infection
- Upholding client rights

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

- Ensuring that the client receives recommended immunizations
- Implementing health screening measures
- Monitoring for expected body image changes
- Performing physical assessment techniques related to the immune system
- Preventing disease related to infection
- Providing health promotion programs
- Respecting client lifestyle choices

## **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assisting in mobilizing appropriate support and resource systems

Assisting the client and family to cope

Assisting the client to cope, adapt, and solve problems during illness or stressful events

Considering religious, spiritual, and cultural preferences

Discussing grief and loss related to death and the dying process

Promoting a positive environment to maintain optimal quality of life

## **Physiological Integrity**

Managing pain

Managing medical emergencies

Monitoring for the expected and unexpected responses to treatments

Promoting nutrition

Protecting the client from infection

Providing basic care and comfort

Reviewing diagnostic test and laboratory test results



## CHAPTER 70

# Immune Disorders

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse notes that a client with scleroderma (systemic sclerosis) is having difficulty swallowing. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 1005.*

### I. Functions of the Immune System ▲

- A. The immune system provides protection against invasion by microorganisms from outside the body.
- B. The immune system protects the body from internal threats and maintains the internal environment by removing dead or damaged cells.

### II. Immune Response

- A. T lymphocytes and B lymphocytes
  - 1. Lymphocytes are produced in the bone marrow and migrate to lymphoid tissue,

where they remain dormant until they need to form sensitized lymphocytes for cellular immunity or antibodies for humoral immunity.

2. Some B lymphocytes lie dormant until a specific antigen enters the body, at which time they greatly increase in number and are available for defense.
3. Types of T lymphocytes include helper/inducer, suppressor, and cytotoxic/cytolytic.
4. T and B lymphocytes are necessary for a normal immune response. ▲

### B. Humoral response

1. Humoral response is immediate.
2. This type of response provides protection against acute, rapidly developing bacterial and viral infections.

### C. Cellular response

1. Cellular response is delayed; this is also called *delayed hypersensitivity*.
2. This type of response is active against slowly developing bacterial infections and is involved in autoimmune responses, some allergic reactions, and rejection of foreign cells.

## III. Immunity ▲

### A. Innate immunity

1. Innate immunity is also called *native* or *natural immunity*.
2. It is present at birth and includes biochemical, physical, and mechanical barriers of defense, as well as the inflammatory response.

### B. Acquired immunity

1. Acquired or adaptive immunity is received passively from the mother's antibodies, animal serum, or antibodies produced in response to a disease.
2. Immunization produces active acquired immunity.

#### **IV. Immunizations (see Chapter 48 for information about immunizations)**

#### **V. Laboratory Studies**

##### **A. Anti-nuclear antibody (ANA) titer determination**

1. The ANA titer determination is a blood test used for the differential diagnosis of rheumatic diseases and for the detection of anti-nucleoprotein factors and patterns associated with certain autoimmune diseases.
2. The test is positive at a titer of 1:20 or 1:40, depending on the laboratory.
3. A positive result does not necessarily confirm a disease. 🟩
4. The ANA titer is positive in most individuals diagnosed with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE); it may also be positive in individuals with systemic sclerosis (scleroderma) or rheumatoid arthritis.
5. An ANA titer result can be false positive in some individuals.

##### **B. Anti-dsDNA antibody test**

1. The anti-dsDNA (double-stranded DNA) antibody test is a blood test done specifically to identify or differentiate DNA antibodies found in SLE.
2. The test supports a diagnosis, monitors disease activity and response to therapy, and establishes a prognosis for SLE.
3. Values

- a. Negative: Lower than 70 units by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA)
  - b. Borderline: 70 to 200 units
  - c. Positive: Higher than 200 units
- C. See [Chapter 11](#) for testing related to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- D. Skin testing 

1. Description

- a. The administration of an allergen to the surface of the skin or into the dermis
- b. Administered by patch, scratch, or intradermal techniques

2. Preprocedure interventions

- a. Discontinue systemic corticosteroids or antihistamine therapy 5 days before the test as prescribed.
- b. Obtain informed consent.

3. Postprocedure interventions

- a. Record the site, date, and time of the test.
- b. Record the date and time for follow-up site reading.
- c. Have client remain in waiting room or office for at least 30 minutes after the injection to monitor for adverse effects.
- d. Inspect the site for erythema, papules, vesicles, edema, and wheal ([Fig. 70-1](#)).

Test Results	Interpretation
	Negative—Wheal less than 0.5 cm in diameter
	Positive—Wheal 0.5 cm in diameter (1+)
	Positive—Wheal 1.0 cm in diameter (2+)
	Positive—Wheal 1.5 cm in diameter (3+)
	Positive—Wheal 2.0 cm in diameter (4+)

**FIGURE 70-1** Interpretation of intradermal test results, based on the size of the wheal after 15 to 30 minutes. (From Monahan F, Sands J, Neighbors M, Marek J, Green C: *Phipps' medical-surgical nursing: Health and illness perspectives*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

- e. Measure flare along with the wheal and document the size and other findings.
- f. Provide the client with a list of potential allergens, if identified.

**⚠️ Have resuscitation equipment available if skin testing is performed because the allergen may induce an anaphylactic reaction.**

## VI. Hypersensitivity and Allergy ▲

### A. Description

1. An **allergy** is an abnormal, individual response to certain substances that normally do not trigger such an exaggerated reaction.
2. In some types of allergies, a reaction occurs on a second and subsequent contact

with the allergen.

3. Skin testing may be done to determine the allergen.

4. Types of hypersensitivity reactions ([Table 70-1](#))

**TABLE 70-1** Types of Hypersensitivity Reactions

Type	Causative Component	Pathological Process	Reaction
I: Immediate, anaphylactic	IgE	Mast cell degranulation ↓ Histamine and leukotriene release	Anaphylaxis Atopic diseases Skin reactions
II: Cytolytic, cytotoxic	IgG IgM Complement	Complement fixation ↓ Cell lysis	ABO incompatibility Drug-induced hemolytic anemia
III: Immune complex	Antigen-antibody complexes	Deposition in vessels and tissue walls ↓ Inflammation	Arthus reaction Serum sickness Systemic lupus erythematosus Acute glomerulonephritis
IV: Cell-mediated, delayed	Sensitized T cells	Lymphokine release	Tuberculosis Contact dermatitis Transplant rejection

*Ig*, Immunoglobulin.

From Black J, Hawks J: *Medical-surgical nursing: Clinical management for positive outcomes*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2005, Saunders.

## B. Assessment

1. History of exposure to allergens
2. Itching, tearing, and burning of eyes and skin
3. Rashes
4. Nose twitching, nasal stuffiness

## C. Interventions

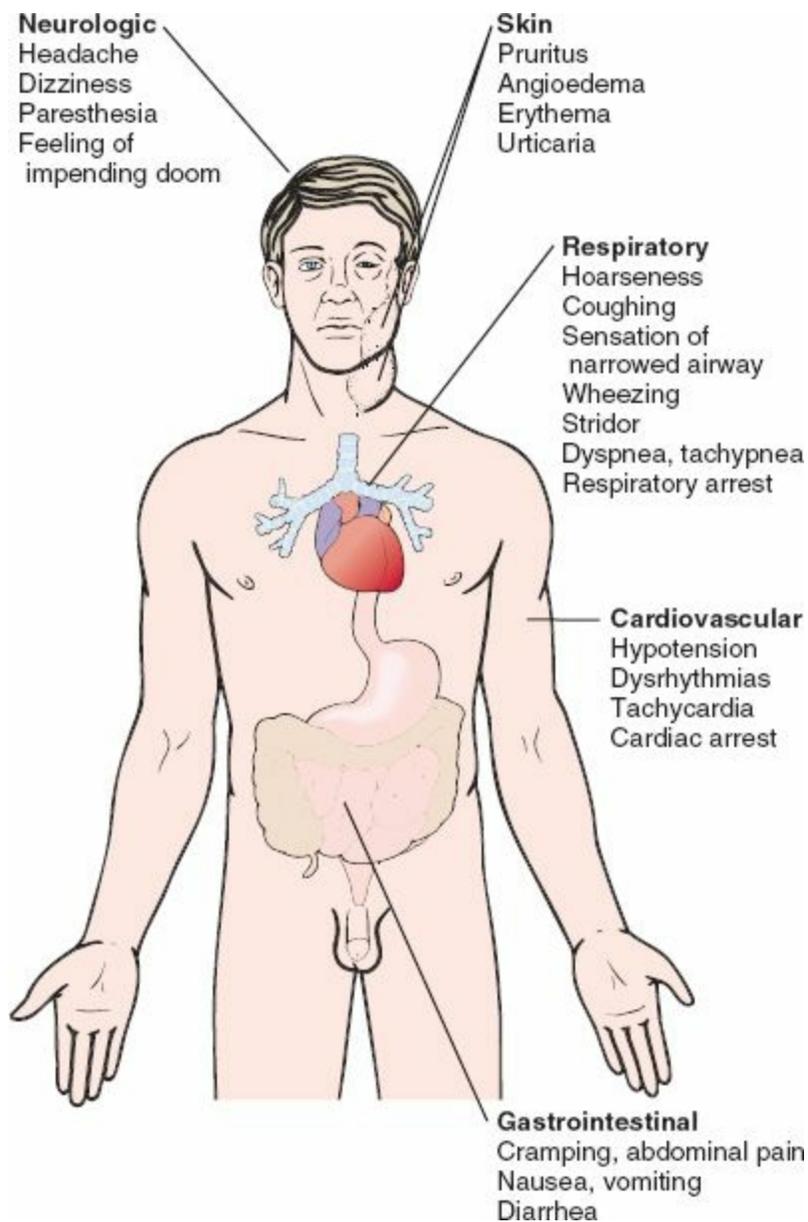
1. Identification of the specific allergen
2. Management of the symptoms with antihistamines, antiinflammatory agents, or corticosteroids
3. Ointments, creams, wet compresses, and soothing baths for local reactions
4. Desensitization programs may be recommended.

## VII. Anaphylaxis

### A. Description

1. Anaphylaxis is a serious and immediate hypersensitivity reaction that releases histamine from the damaged cells.
2. Anaphylaxis can be systemic or cutaneous (localized).

### B. Assessment (Fig. 70-2)



**FIGURE 70-2** Clinical manifestations of a systemic anaphylactic reaction. (From Lewis S, Heitkemper M, Dirksen S, O'Brien P, Bucher L: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

C. Interventions (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take if a Client Develops Anaphylaxis

1. Quickly assess respiratory status and maintain a patent airway.
2. Call the health care provider (HCP) or Rapid Response Team.
3. Administer oxygen.
4. Start an intravenous (IV) line and infuse normal saline.
5. Prepare to administer diphenhydramine (Benadryl) and epinephrine (adrenaline).
6. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

If the client experiences an anaphylactic reaction, the immediate action would be to assess the respiratory status quickly and maintain a patent airway. The HCP or Rapid Response Team is called. In the meantime, the nurse stays with the client and monitors the client's vital signs and for signs of shock. An IV device is inserted if one is not already in place and normal saline is infused. The nurse then prepares for the administration of diphenhydramine and epinephrine and other medications as prescribed. The head of the bed is elevated if the client's blood pressure is normal. The client's feet and legs may be raised if the blood pressure is low. The nurse documents the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders, p. 390.

## VIII. Latex Allergy

### A. Description

1. Latex allergy is a hypersensitivity to latex.
2. The source of the allergic reaction is thought to be the proteins in the natural rubber latex or the various chemicals used in the manufacturing process of latex gloves.
3. Symptoms of the allergy can range from mild contact dermatitis to moderately severe symptoms of rhinitis, conjunctivitis, urticaria, and bronchospasm to severe life-threatening anaphylaxis. ▲

### B. Common routes of exposure (Box 70-1) ▲

#### BOX 70-1 Products That May Contain Natural Rubber Latex

- Ace bandages (brown)
- Adhesive or elastic bandages
- Ambu bag
- Balloons
- Blood pressure cuff (tubing and bladder)
- Catheter leg bag straps
- Catheters
- Condoms
- Diaphragms

- Elastic pressure stockings
- Electrocardiographic pads
- Feminine hygiene pads
- Gloves
- Intravenous catheters, tubing, and rubber injection ports
- Nasogastric tubes
- Pads for crutches
- Prepackaged enema kits
- Rubber stoppers on medication vials
- Stethoscopes
- Syringes

*Note:* Health care agencies use as many nonlatex products as possible and have nonlatex supplies available for clients with a latex allergy.

1. Cutaneous: Natural latex gloves and latex balloons
2. Percutaneous and parenteral: Intravenous lines and catheters; hemodialysis equipment
3. Mucosal: Use of latex condoms, catheters, airways, and nipples
4. Aerosol: Aerosolization of powder from latex gloves can occur when gloves are dispensed from the box or when gloves are removed from the hands.

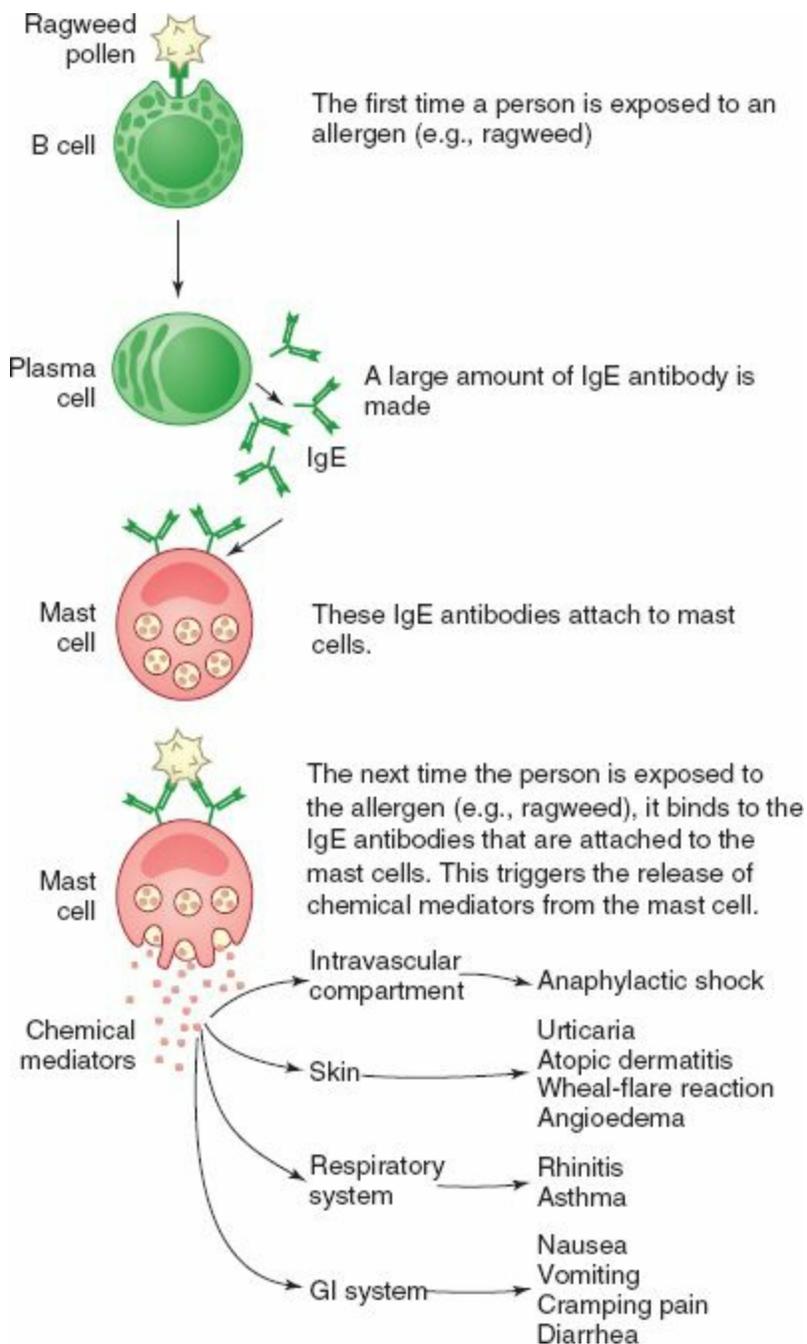
#### C. At-risk individuals

1. Health care workers

2. Individuals who work in the rubber industry
3. Individuals having multiple surgeries
4. Individuals with spina bifida
5. Individuals who wear gloves frequently, such as food handlers, hairdressers, and auto mechanics
6. Individuals allergic to kiwis, bananas, pineapples, tropical fruits, grapes, avocados, potatoes, hazelnuts, and water chestnuts

**D. Assessment** ▲

1. Anaphylaxis or type I hypersensitivity is a response to natural rubber latex ([Fig. 70-3](#); also see [Fig. 70-2](#)).



**FIGURE 70-3** Steps in a type I allergic reaction. *GI*, Gastrointestinal. (From Lewis S, Heitkemper M, Dirksen S, O'Brien P, Bucher L: *Medical-surgical nursing: Assessment and management of clinical problems*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2011, Mosby.)

2. A delayed type IV hypersensitivity reaction can occur; symptoms of contact dermatitis include pruritus, edema, erythema, vesicles, papules, and crusting and

thickening of the skin and can occur within 6 to 48 hours following exposure.

#### E. Interventions (Box 70-2) ▲

##### **BOX 70-2** Interventions for the Client with a Latex Allergy

Ask the client about a known allergy to latex when performing the initial assessment.

Identify risk factors for a latex allergy in the client.

Use nonlatex gloves and all latex-safe supplies.

Keep a latex-safe supply cart near the client's room.

Apply a cloth barrier to the client's arm under a blood pressure cuff.

Use latex-free syringes, medication containers (glass ampules), and latex-safe intravenous equipment.

Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

Instruct the client about the importance of informing health care providers and local and paramedic ambulance companies about the allergy.

## **IX. Immunodeficiency**

### **A. Description**

1. **Immunodeficiency** is the absence or inadequate production of immune bodies. ▲
2. The disorder can be congenital (primary) or acquired (secondary).
3. Treatment depends on the inadequacy of immune bodies and its primary cause.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Factors that decrease immune function

2. Frequent infections
3. Nutritional status
4. Medication history, such as use of corticosteroids for long periods
5. History of alcohol or drug abuse

#### C. Interventions

1. Protect the client from infection.
2. Promote a balanced diet with adequate nutrition.
3. Use strict aseptic technique for all procedures.
4. Provide psychosocial care regarding lifestyle changes and role changes.
5. Instruct the client in measures to prevent infection.
6. Instruct the client to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet.

 The priority concern for a client with immunodeficiency is infection.

## X. Autoimmune Disease

### A. Description

1. Body is unable to recognize its own cells as a part of itself. 
2. Autoimmune disease can affect collagenous tissue.

### B. Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)

#### 1. Description

- a. Chronic, progressive, systemic inflammatory disease that can cause major organs and systems to fail
- b. Connective tissue and fibrin deposits collect in blood vessels on collagen fibers

and on organs.

- c. The deposits lead to necrosis and inflammation in blood vessels, lymph nodes, gastrointestinal tract, and pleura.
- d. No cure for the disease is known but remissions are frequently experienced by clients who manage their care well.

## 2. Causes

- a. The cause of SLE is unknown, but is believed to be a defect in immunological mechanisms, with a genetic origin.
- b. Precipitating factors include medications, stress, genetic factors, sunlight or ultraviolet light, and pregnancy.
- c. Discoid lupus erythematosus is possible with some medications but totally disappears after the medication is stopped; the only manifestation is the skin rash that occurs in lupus.

## 3. Assessment

- a. Assess for precipitating factors.
- b. Erythema of the face (malar rash; also called a butterfly rash)
- c. Dry, scaly, raised rash on the face or upper body
- d. Fever
- e. Weakness, malaise, and fatigue
- f. Anorexia
- g. Weight loss
- h. Photosensitivity

**i.** Joint pain

**j.** Erythema of the palms

**k.** Anemia

**l.** Positive anti-nuclear antibody (ANA) test and lupus erythematosus (LE) preparation

**m.** Elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) and C-reactive protein level

#### **4.** Interventions ▲

**a.** Monitor skin integrity and provide frequent oral care.

**b.** Instruct the client to clean the skin with a mild soap, avoiding harsh and perfumed substances.

**c.** Assist with the use of ointments and creams for the rash as prescribed.

**d.** Identify factors contributing to fatigue.

**e.** Administer iron, folic acid, or vitamin supplements as prescribed if anemia occurs.

**f.** Provide a high-vitamin and high-iron diet.

**g.** Provide a high-protein diet if there is no evidence of kidney disease.

**h.** Instruct in measures to conserve energy, such as pacing activities and balancing rest with exercise.

**i.** Administer topical or systemic corticosteroids, salicylates, and nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs as prescribed for pain and inflammation.

**j.** Administer medications to decrease the inflammatory response as prescribed.

**k.** Monitor intake and output, as well as daily weight for signs of fluid overload if

corticosteroids are used.

- l.** Instruct the client to avoid exposure to sunlight and ultraviolet light.
- m.** Monitor for proteinuria and red cell casts in the urine.
- n.** Monitor for bruising, bleeding, and injury.
- o.** Assist with plasmapheresis as prescribed to remove autoantibodies and immune complexes from the blood before organ damage occurs.
- p.** Monitor for signs of organ involvement such as pleuritis, nephritis, pericarditis, coronary artery disease, hypertension, neuritis, anemia, and peritonitis.
- q.** Note that lupus nephritis occurs early in the disease process.
- r.** Provide supportive therapy as major organs become affected.
- s.** Provide emotional support and encourage the client to verbalize feelings.
- t.** Provide information regarding support groups and encourage the use of community resources.

 **For the client with SLE, monitor the blood urea nitrogen and creatinine levels frequently for signs of renal impairment.**

## **C. Scleroderma (systemic sclerosis)**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Scleroderma is a chronic connective tissue disease, similar to SLE, that is characterized by inflammation, fibrosis, and sclerosis.
- b.** This disorder affects the connective tissue throughout the body.
- c.** It causes fibrotic changes involving the skin, synovial membranes, esophagus, heart, lungs, kidneys, and gastrointestinal tract.

**d.** Treatment is directed toward forcing the disease into remission and slowing its progress.

## **2.** Assessment ▲

**a.** Pain

**b.** Stiffness and muscle weakness

**c.** Pitting edema of the hands and fingers that progresses to the rest of the body

**d.** Taut and shiny skin that is free from wrinkles

**e.** Skin tissue is tight, hard, and thick, loses its elasticity, and adheres to underlying structures.

**f.** Dysphagia

**g.** Decreased range of motion

**h.** Joint contractures

**i.** Inability to perform activities of daily living

## **3.** Interventions ▲

**a.** Encourage activity as tolerated.

**b.** Maintain a constant room temperature.

**c.** Provide small frequent meals, eliminating foods that stimulate gastric secretions, such as spicy foods, caffeine, and alcohol.

**d.** Monitor for esophageal involvement; if present, advise the client to sit up for 1 to 2 hours after meals.

**e.** Provide supportive therapy as the major organs become affected.

**f.** Administer corticosteroids as prescribed for inflammation.

g. Provide emotional support and encourage the use of resources as necessary.

## **D. Polyarteritis nodosa**

### **1. Description**

- a. Polyarteritis nodosa is a collagen disease; it is a form of systemic vasculitis that causes inflammation of the arteries in visceral organs, brain, and skin.
- b. Treatment is similar to the treatment for SLE.
- c. Polyarteritis nodosa affects middle-aged men.
- d. The cause is unknown and the prognosis is poor.
- e. Renal disorders and cardiac involvement are the most frequent causes of death.

### **2. Assessment** ▲

- a. Malaise and weakness
- b. Low-grade fever
- c. Severe abdominal pain
- d. Bloody diarrhea
- e. Weight loss
- f. Elevated ESR

### **3. Interventions** ▲

- a. Provide supportive care as required.
- b. Provide a well-balanced diet.
- c. Administer corticosteroids and analgesics to control pain and inflammation.
- d. Provide emotional support and encourage the client to verbalize feelings.
- e. Initiate support services for the client.

## E. Pemphigus

### 1. Description

- a. Pemphigus is a rare autoimmune disease that occurs predominantly between middle and old age.
- b. The cause is unknown, and the disorder is potentially fatal.
- c. Treatment is aimed at suppressing the immune response and blister formation.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Fragile, partial-thickness lesions bleed, weep, and form crusts when bullae are disrupted.
- b. Debilitation, malaise, pain, and dysphagia
- c. Nikolsky's sign: Separation of the epidermis caused by rubbing the skin ▲
- d. Leukocytosis, eosinophilia, foul-smelling discharge from skin

### 3. Interventions

- a. Provide supportive care.
- b. Provide oral hygiene and increase fluid intake.
- c. Soothe oral lesions.
- d. Assist with soothing baths, as prescribed for relief of symptoms.
- e. Administer topical or systemic antibiotics as prescribed for secondary infections.
- f. Administer corticosteroids and cytotoxic agents as prescribed to bring about remission.

## **XI. Goodpasture's Syndrome**

### **A. Description**

1. Goodpasture's syndrome is an autoimmune disorder; autoantibodies are made against the glomerular basement membrane and alveolar basement membrane.
2. Goodpasture's syndrome is most common in males and young adults who smoke; the exact cause is unknown.
3. The lungs and the kidneys are affected primarily, and the disorder usually is not diagnosed until significant pulmonary or renal involvement occurs. ▲

### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Clinical manifestations indicating pulmonary and renal involvement
2. Shortness of breath
3. Hemoptysis
4. Decreased urine output
5. Edema and weight gain
6. Hypertension and tachycardia

### **C. Interventions** ▲

1. Focus on suppressing the autoimmune response with medications such as corticosteroids, and on plasmapheresis (filtration of the plasma to remove some proteins) to remove the autoantibodies.
2. Provide supportive therapy for pulmonary and renal involvement.

## **XII. Lyme Disease** ▲

## A. Description

1. **Lyme disease** is an infection caused by the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi*, acquired from a tick bite (ticks live in wooded areas and survive by attaching to a host).
2. Infection with the spirochete stimulates inflammatory cytokines and autoimmune mechanisms.

## B. Assessment (Box 70-3; Fig. 70-4)

### **BOX 70-3** Assessment and Stages of Lyme Disease

#### **First Stage**

Symptoms can occur several days to months following the bite.

A small red pimple develops that may spread into a ring-shaped rash; it may occur anywhere on the body.

Rash may be large or small, or may not occur at all.

Flulike symptoms occur, such as headaches, stiff neck, muscle aches, and fatigue.

#### **Second Stage**

This stage occurs several weeks following the bite.

Joint pain occurs.

Neurological complications occur.

Cardiac complications occur.

#### **Third Stage**

Large joints become involved.

Arthritis progresses.



**FIGURE 70-4** Erythema migrans of Lyme disease. (From Swartz M: *Textbook of physical diagnosis: History and examination*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

1. The typical ring-shaped rash of Lyme disease does not occur in all clients. Many clients never develop a rash. In addition, if a rash does occur, it can occur anywhere on the body, not only at the site of the bite.

### C. Interventions

1. Gently remove the tick with tweezers, wash the skin with antiseptic, and dispose of the tick by flushing it down the toilet; the tick may also be placed in a sealed jar so that the health care provider can inspect it and determine its type.
2. Perform a blood test 4 to 6 weeks after a bite to detect the presence of the disease (testing before this time is not reliable).
3. Instruct the client in the administration of antibiotics as prescribed; these are

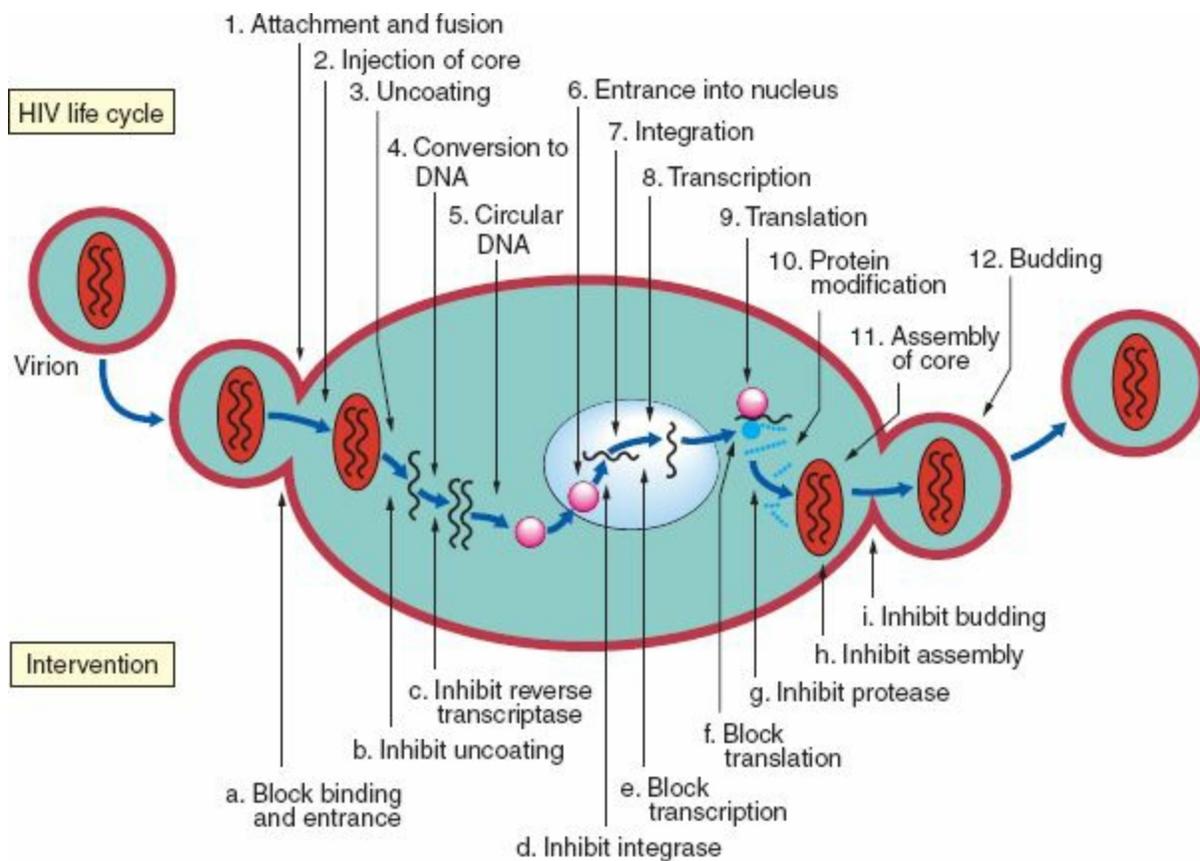
initiated immediately (even before the blood testing results are known).

4. Instruct the client to avoid areas that contain ticks, such as wooded grassy areas, especially in the summer months.
5. Instruct the client to wear long-sleeved tops, long pants, closed shoes, and hats while outside.
6. Instruct the client to spray the body with tick repellent before going outside.
7. Instruct the client to examine the body when returning inside for the presence of ticks.

### **XIII. Immunodeficiency Syndrome**

#### **A. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)**

1. AIDS is a viral disease caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which destroys T cells, thereby increasing susceptibility to infection and malignancy (Fig. 70-5). ▲



**FIGURE 70-5** The life cycle of HIV. (From Ignatavicius D, Workman ML: *Medical-surgical nursing: Patient-centered collaborative care*, ed 7, Philadelphia, 2013, Saunders.)

2. The syndrome is manifested clinically by opportunistic infection and unusual neoplasms.
3. AIDS is considered a chronic illness.
4. The disease has a long incubation period, sometimes 10 years or longer.
5. Manifestations may not appear until late in the infection.

## B. Diagnosis and monitoring the client with AIDS

1. See [Chapter 11](#) for diagnostic tests.
2. Refer to [Box 70-4](#) for tests used to evaluate the progression of HIV infection.

**BOX 70-4****Tests Used to Evaluate Progression of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection****Complete Blood Cell Count**

- White blood cell (WBC) count (normal to decreased)
- Lymphopenia (< 30% of the normal number of WBCs)
- Thrombocytopenia (decreased platelet count)

**Lymphocyte Screen**

- Reduced CD4<sup>+</sup>/CD8<sup>+</sup> T-cell ratio
- CD4<sup>+</sup> (helper) lymphocytes decreased
- CD8<sup>+</sup> lymphocytes increased

**Quantitative Immunoglobulin**

- Immunoglobulin G (IgG) level increased
- IgA level frequently increased

**Chemistry Panel**

- Lactate dehydrogenase level increased (all fractions)
- Serum albumin level decreased
- Total protein increased
- Cholesterol level decreased
- AST and ALT levels elevated

**Energy Panel**

- Nonreactive (anergic) or poorly reactive to infectious agents or environmental materials (e.g., pokeweed, phytohemagglutinin mitogens and antigens, mumps, *Candida*)

### Hepatitis B Surface Antigen Testing

- To detect the presence of hepatitis B

### Blood Cultures

- To detect septicemia

### Chest Radiography

- To detect *Pneumocystis jiroveci* infection or tuberculosis

*ALT*, Alanine aminotransferase; *AST*, aspartate aminotransferase.

Data from Copstead-Kirkhorn L, Banasik J: *Pathophysiology*, ed 5, St. Louis, 2014, Mosby.

## C. High-risk groups

1. Heterosexual or homosexual contact with high-risk individuals
2. Intravenous drug abusers
3. Persons receiving blood products
4. Health care workers
5. Babies born to infected mothers

## D. Assessment ▲

1. Malaise, fever, anorexia, weight loss, influenza-like symptoms

2. Lymphadenopathy for at least 3 months
3. Leukopenia
4. Diarrhea
5. Fatigue
6. Night sweats
7. Presence of opportunistic infections
8. Protozoan infections (*Pneumocystis jiroveci* pneumonia, a major source of mortality)
9. Neoplasms (**Kaposi's sarcoma**, purplish-red lesions of internal organs and skin, B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, cervical cancer)
10. Fungal infections (candidiasis, histoplasmosis)
11. Viral infections (cytomegalovirus, herpes simplex)
12. Bacterial infections

#### E. Interventions ▲

1. Provide respiratory support.
2. Administer oxygen and respiratory treatments as prescribed.
3. Provide psychosocial support as needed.
4. Maintain fluid and electrolyte balance.
5. Monitor for signs of infection.
6. Prevent the spread of infection.
7. Initiate standard and other necessary precautions.
8. Provide comfort as necessary.

9. Provide meticulous skin care.
10. Provide adequate nutritional support as prescribed.
11. See [Chapters 29](#) and [47](#) for additional information on AIDS.

## **F. Kaposi's sarcoma**

1. Description: Skin lesions that occur primarily in individuals with a compromised immune system
2. Assessment
  - a. Kaposi's sarcoma is a slow-growing tumor that appears as raised, oblong, purplish, reddish-brown lesions; may be tender or nontender.
  - b. Organ involvement includes the lymph nodes, airways or lungs, or any part of the gastrointestinal tract from the mouth to anus.
3. Interventions 
  - a. Maintain standard precautions.
  - b. Provide protective isolation if the immune system is depressed.
  - c. Prepare the client for radiation therapy or chemotherapy as prescribed.
  - d. Administer immunotherapy, as prescribed, to stabilize the immune system.

## **XIV. Posttransplantation Immunodeficiency**

### **A. Description**

1. Secondary immunodeficiency is immunosuppression caused by therapeutic agents.
2. The client must take immunosuppressive agents for the rest of his or her life posttransplantation to decrease rejection of the transplanted organ or tissue.

## B. Diagnosis and monitoring of posttransplantation clients

1. Check renal and hepatic function.
2. Monitor the complete cell count with differential to determine signs of infection.
3. Assess all body secretions periodically for blood.

## C. High-risk clients ▲

1. Clients with a history of malignancy or premalignancy have an increased susceptibility to malignancy if immunosuppressed.
2. Clients with recent infection or exposure to tuberculosis, herpes zoster, or chickenpox have a high risk for severe generalized disease when on immunosuppressive agents.

## D. Assessment ▲

1. Assess for signs of opportunistic infections.
2. Assess nutritional status.
3. Assess for signs of rejection (signs will depend on the organ or tissue transplant).

## E. Interventions

1. Strict aseptic technique is necessary.
2. Provide teaching regarding asepsis and the signs of infection and rejection.
3. Provide psychosocial support as needed.
4. Provide client teaching about immunosuppressants.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Major organ damage can occur with diffuse scleroderma, with esophageal

involvement being one complication. The nurse should continuously assess the client's ability to swallow. If esophageal involvement is suspected, the nurse should collaborate with the health care provider about scheduling a swallowing study. The nurse should also collaborate with the nutritionist about dietary changes, such as the need for small frequent meals, and minimizing the intake of foods and liquids that stimulate gastric secretion (spicy foods, caffeine, alcohol). The client should also sit up for 1 to 2 hours after meals.

### ***Reference***

Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 347-348.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

- 858.** The nurse prepares to give a bath and change the bed linens of a client with cutaneous Kaposi's sarcoma lesions. The lesions are open and draining a scant amount of serous fluid. Which would the nurse incorporate into the plan during the bathing of this client?
- 1.** Wearing gloves
  - 2.** Wearing a gown and gloves
  - 3.** Wearing a gown, gloves, and a mask
  - 4.** Wear a gown and gloves to change the bed linens and gloves only for the bath
- 859.** The nurse provides home care instructions to a client with systemic lupus erythematosus and tells the client about methods to manage fatigue. Which

statement by the client indicates a **need for further instructions**?

1. "I should take hot baths because they are relaxing."
2. "I should sit whenever possible to conserve my energy."
3. "I should avoid long periods of rest because it causes joint stiffness."
4. "I should do some exercises, such as walking, when I am not fatigued."

**860.** A client develops an anaphylactic reaction after receiving morphine sulfate. The nurse should plan to institute which actions? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Administer oxygen.
2. Quickly assess the client's respiratory status.
3. Document the event, interventions, and client's response.
4. Leave the client briefly to contact a health care provider.
5. Keep the client supine regardless of the blood pressure readings.
6. Start an intravenous (IV) infusion of D5W and administer a 500-mL bolus.

**861.** A client with pemphigus is being seen in the clinic regularly. The nurse plans care based on which description of this condition?

1. The presence of tiny red vesicles
2. An autoimmune disease that causes blistering in the epidermis
3. The presence of skin vesicles found along the nerve caused by a virus
4. The presence of red, raised papules and large plaques covered by silvery scales

**862.** The nurse is assisting in planning care for a client with a diagnosis of

immunodeficiency and should incorporate which action as a **priority** in the plan?

1. Protecting the client from infection
2. Providing emotional support to decrease fear
3. Encouraging discussion about lifestyle changes
4. Identifying factors that decreased the immune function

**863.** A client calls the nurse in the emergency department and states that he was just stung by a bumble bee while gardening. The client is afraid of a severe reaction because the client's neighbor experienced such a reaction just 1 week ago. Which nursing action should the nurse take?

1. Advise the client to soak the site in hydrogen peroxide.
2. Ask the client if he ever sustained a bee sting in the past.
3. Tell the client to call an ambulance for transport to the emergency department.
4. Tell the client not to worry about the sting unless difficulty with breathing occurs.

**864.** The community health nurse is conducting a research study and is identifying clients in the community at risk for latex allergy. Which client population is at **most** risk for developing this type of allergy?

1. Hairdressers
2. The homeless
3. Children in day care centers
4. Individuals living in a group home

**865.** Which interventions apply in the care of a client at high risk for an allergic response to a latex allergy? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Use nonlatex gloves.
2. Use medications from glass ampules.
3. Place the client in a private room only.
4. Keep a latex-safe supply cart available in the client's area.
5. Avoid the use of medication vials that have rubber stoppers.
6. Use a blood pressure cuff from an electronic device only to measure the blood pressure.

**866.** The camp nurse prepares to instruct a group of children about Lyme disease.

Which information should the nurse include in the instructions?

1. Lyme disease is caused by a tick carried by deer.
2. Lyme disease is caused by contamination from cat feces.
3. Lyme disease can be caused by the inhalation of spores from bird droppings.
4. Lyme disease can be contagious through skin contact with an infected individual.

**867.** A client is diagnosed with scleroderma. Which intervention should the nurse anticipate to be prescribed?

1. Maintain bed rest as much as possible.
2. Administer corticosteroids as prescribed for inflammation.
3. Advise the client to remain supine for 1 to 2 hours after meals.

4. Keep the room temperature warm during the day and cool at night.

**868.** A female client arrives at the health care clinic and tells the nurse that she was just bitten by a tick and would like to be tested for Lyme disease. The client tells the nurse that she removed the tick and flushed it down the toilet. Which nursing actions are **most appropriate? Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Tell the client that testing is not necessary unless arthralgia develops.
2. Tell the client to avoid any woody, grassy areas that may contain ticks.
3. Instruct the client to immediately start to take the antibiotics that are prescribed.
4. Inform the client to plan to have a blood test 4 to 6 weeks after a bite to detect the presence of the disease.
5. Tell the client if this happens again to never remove the tick but vigorously scrub the area with an antiseptic.

**869.** The nurse is preparing a group of Cub Scouts for an overnight camping trip and instructs the scouts about the methods to prevent Lyme disease. Which statement by one of the Cub Scouts indicates a **need for further instructions?**

1. "I need to bring a hat to wear during the trip."
2. "I should wear long-sleeved tops and long pants."
3. "I should not use insect repellents because it will attract the ticks."
4. "I need to wear closed shoes and socks that can be pulled up over my pants."

**870.** The client with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome is diagnosed with

cutaneous Kaposi's sarcoma. Based on this diagnosis, the nurse understands that this has been confirmed by which finding?

1. Swelling in the genital area
2. Swelling in the lower extremities
3. Positive punch biopsy of the cutaneous lesions
4. Appearance of reddish-blue lesions noted on the skin

**871.** The nurse is conducting allergy skin testing on a client. Which postprocedure interventions are **most appropriate** for the nurse to perform? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Record site, date, and time of the test.
2. Give the client a list of potential allergens if identified.
3. Estimate the size of the wheal and document the finding.
4. Tell the client to return to have the site inspected only if there is a reaction.
5. Have the client wait in the waiting room for at least 1 to 2 hours after injection.

**872.** The home care nurse is performing an assessment on a client who has been diagnosed with an allergy to latex. In determining the client's risk factors, the nurse should question the client about an allergy to which food item?

1. Eggs
2. Milk
3. Yogurt
4. Bananas

# ANSWERS

**858. 2**

**Rationale:** Gowns and gloves are required if the nurse anticipates contact with soiled items such as those with wound drainage, or is caring for a client who is incontinent with diarrhea or a client who has an ileostomy or colostomy. Masks are not required unless droplet or airborne precautions are necessary. Regardless of the amount of wound drainage, a gown and gloves must be worn.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the method of transmission of infection from Kaposi's sarcoma.

Read the question, noting the task that is presented; in this case, it is bathing and changing linens. Eliminate option 3 because the method of transmission is not respiratory. Eliminate options 1 and 4 because neither provide adequate protection based on the method of transmission.

**Review:** **Standard and transmission-based precautions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 410, 414.

**859. 1**

**Rationale:** To help reduce fatigue in the client with systemic lupus erythematosus, the nurse should instruct the client to sit whenever possible, avoid hot baths (because they exacerbate fatigue), schedule moderate low-impact

exercises when not fatigued, and maintain a balanced diet. The client is instructed to avoid long periods of rest because it promotes joint stiffness.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select the incorrect client statement. Also, focus on the **subject**, fatigue. This will assist in directing you to the correct option as the action that would exacerbate fatigue.

**Review:** Measures to prevent fatigue in a client with **systemic lupus erythematosus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Immunity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 345; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1669.

### ❖ 86 0. 1, 2, 3

**Rationale:** An anaphylactic reaction requires immediate action, starting with quickly assessing the client's respiratory status. Although the health care provider and the Rapid Response Team must be notified immediately, the nurse must stay with the client. Oxygen is administered and an IV of normal saline is started and infused per HCP prescription. Documentation of the event, actions taken, and client outcomes needs to be done. The head of the bed should be elevated if the client's blood pressure is normal.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interventions the nurse should plan to take for an anaphylactic reaction. Read each option carefully and think about the pathophysiology that occurs in this reaction to answer correctly.

**Review:** Interventions for a client with an **anaphylactic reaction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Emergency Situations

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 390; Lewis et al (2011), p. 223.

## 861. 2

**Rationale:** Pemphigus is an autoimmune disease that causes blistering in the epidermis. The client has large flaccid blisters (bullae). Because the blisters are in the epidermis, they have a thin covering of skin and break easily, leaving large denuded areas of skin. On initial examination, clients may have crusting areas instead of intact blisters. Option 1 describes eczema, option 3 describes herpes zoster, and option 4 describes psoriasis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the characteristics of pemphigus. Think about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder and recall that pemphigus vulgaris is an autoimmune disorder.

**Review:** The characteristics of **pemphigus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Immunity; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 508.

**862. 1**

**Rationale:** The client with immunodeficiency has inadequate or absence of immune bodies and is at risk for infection. The priority nursing intervention would be to protect the client from infection. Options 2, 3, and 4 may be components of care but are not the priority.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to answer the question. Remember that physiological needs are the priority. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The care of a client with **immunodeficiency**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Immunity; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 357.

**863. 2**

**Rationale:** In some types of allergies, a reaction occurs only on second and subsequent contacts with the allergen. The appropriate action, therefore, would be to ask the client if he ever experienced a bee sting in the past. Option 1 is not appropriate advice. Option 3 is unnecessary. The client should not be told “not to worry.”

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use the **steps of the nursing process** to answer the question. The correct option is the only one that addresses assessment.

**Review:** Information related to **hypersensitivity and allergy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 145; Potter et al (2013), pp. 320-322.

**864. 1**

**Rationale:** Individuals most at risk for developing a latex allergy include health care workers, individuals who work in the rubber industry, or those who have had multiple surgeries, have spina bifida, wear gloves frequently, such as food handlers, hairdressers, and auto mechanics, or are allergic to kiwis, bananas, pineapples, tropical fruits, grapes, avocados, potatoes, hazelnuts, or water chestnuts.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a latex allergy, and note the **strategic word** *most*. Recalling the cause and the sources of latex and of the allergic reaction will direct you easily to the correct option.

**Review:** The cause of **latex allergy** and the individuals at risk

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Immunity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 391, 439; Potter et al (2013), pp. 489, 1272.

❖ **865. 1, 2, 4, 5**

**Rationale:** If a client is allergic to latex and is at high risk for an allergic response, the nurse would use nonlatex gloves and latex-safe supplies, and would keep a latex-safe supply cart available in the client's area. Any supplies

or materials that contain latex would be avoided. These include blood pressure cuffs and medication vials with rubber stoppers that require puncture with a needle. It is not necessary to place the client in a private room.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the client at high risk for an allergic response to latex. Recalling that items that contain rubber are likely to contain latex will direct you to the correct interventions. Also, noting the **closed-ended word** *only* in options 3 and 6 will assist in eliminating these options.

**Review:** Care of the client with a **latex allergy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 391; Lewis et al (2011), p. 225.

## 866. 1

**Rationale:** Lyme disease is a multisystem infection that results from a bite by a tick carried by several species of deer. Persons bitten by the *Ixodes scapularis* or *I. pacificus* tick can become infected with the spirochete

*Borrelia burgdorferi*. Toxoplasmosis is caused by the ingestion of cysts from contaminated cat feces.

Histoplasmosis is caused by the inhalation of spores from bat or bird droppings. Lyme disease cannot be transmitted from one person to another.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the cause of Lyme disease. It is necessary to recall that this disease is caused by a tick bite.

**Review:** The cause of **Lyme disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 352-353.

**867. 2**

**Rationale:** Scleroderma is a chronic connective tissue disease similar to systemic lupus erythematosus.

Corticosteroids may be prescribed to treat inflammation. Topical agents may provide some relief from joint pain.

Activity is encouraged as tolerated and the room temperature needs to be constant. Clients need to sit up for 1 to 2 hours after meals if esophageal involvement is present.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, scleroderma. Think about the pathophysiology associated with this condition and read each option carefully to assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** Nursing interventions for the client with **scleroderma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 347-348.

❖ **868. 2, 3, 4**

**Rationale:** A blood test is available to detect Lyme disease; however, the test is not reliable if performed before 4 to 6 weeks following the tick bite. Antibody formation takes place in the following manner. Immunoglobulin M is detected 3 to 4 weeks after Lyme disease onset, peaks at 6 to 8 weeks, and then gradually disappears; immunoglobulin G is detected 2 to 3 months after infection and may remain elevated for years. Areas that ticks inhabit need to be avoided. Ticks should be removed with tweezers and then the area is washed with an antiseptic. Options 1 and 5 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, measures to take if Lyme disease is suspected. Also note the **strategic words**, most appropriate. Eliminate option 1 because treatment should begin before the arthralgia develops. Eliminate option 5 because ticks need to be removed.

**Review:** The method of diagnosing **Lyme disease**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 353.

### 869. 3

**Rationale:** In the prevention of Lyme disease, individuals need to be instructed to use an insect repellent on the skin and clothes when in an area where ticks are likely to be found. Long-sleeved tops and long pants, closed shoes, and a hat or cap should be worn. If possible, heavily wooded areas or areas with thick underbrush should be avoided. Socks can be pulled up and over the pant legs to prevent ticks from entering under clothing.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instructions*. These words indicate a

**negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Note that the correct option uses the words *should not*. Reading carefully will assist in directing you to this option.

**Review:** The measures to prevent contact with **ticks**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 853.

### 870. 3

**Rationale:** Kaposi's sarcoma lesions begin as red, dark blue, or purple macules on the lower legs that change into plaques. These large plaques ulcerate or open and drain. The lesions spread by metastasis through the upper body and then to the face and oral mucosa. They can move to the lymphatic system, lungs, and gastrointestinal tract. Late disease results in swelling and pain in the lower extremities, penis, scrotum, or face. Diagnosis is made by punch biopsy of cutaneous lesions and biopsy of pulmonary and gastrointestinal lesions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, diagnosing Kaposi's sarcoma. Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because these symptoms occur late in the development of Kaposi's sarcoma. From the remaining options, note the word *confirmed*. This word will assist in directing you to the option that will confirm the diagnosis, the biopsy of the lesions.

**Review:** Diagnostic measures for **Kaposi's sarcoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 367.

❖ **871. 1, 2**

**Rationale:** Skin testing involves administration of an allergen to the surface of the skin or into the dermis. Site, date, and time of the test must be recorded, and the client must return at a specific date and time for a follow-up site evaluation, even if no reaction is suspected; a list of potential allergens is identified. For the follow-up evaluation, the size of the site has to be measured and not estimated. After injection, clients only need to be monitored for about 30 minutes to assess for any adverse effects.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate option 3 because any results must be accurately measured and not estimated. Eliminate option 4 because of the **closed-ended word** *only*. Eliminate option 5 because it is unreasonable to have the client wait 1 to 2 hours.

**Review:** Interventions for clients receiving **skin testing**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Immunity

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 385-386; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 563-564.

**872. 4**

**Rationale:** Individuals who are allergic to kiwis, bananas, pineapples, tropical fruits, grapes, avocados, potatoes, hazelnuts, or water chestnuts are at risk for developing a latex allergy. This is thought to be the result of a possible cross-reaction between the food and the latex allergen. Options 1, 2, and 3 are unrelated to latex allergy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Recall knowledge regarding the food items related to a latex allergy. Eliminate options 1, 2, and 3 because they are **comparable or alike** and relate to dairy products.

**Review:** The food items associated with a risk for **latex allergy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Immune

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 872.



## CHAPTER 71

# Immunological Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A hospitalized client who is receiving ceftriaxone (Rocephin) to treat an infection develops severe diarrhea. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 1016.*

### I. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

A. Medications include nucleoside-nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors, nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, protease inhibitors, and fusion inhibitors (Box 71-1; Fig. 71-1).

#### BOX 71-1 Medications for HIV and AIDS

##### Nucleoside-Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTIs)

- Abacavir (Ziagen)

- Abacavir/lamivudine (Epzicom)
- Didanosine (Videx)
- Emtricitabine (Emtriva)
- Emtricitabine/tenofovir (Truvada)
- Emtricitabine/tenofovir/efavirenz (Atripla)
- Lamivudine (Epivir)
- Lamivudine/zidovudine (Combivir)
- Lamivudine/zidovudine/abacavir (Trizivir)
- Stavudine (d4T, Zerit)
- Tenofovir (Viread)
- Zalcitabine (ddC, Hivid)
- Zidovudine (Retrovir, azidothymidine, AZT, ZDV)

### **Nonnucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NNRTIs)**

- Delavirdine (Rescriptor)
- Efavirenz (Sustiva)
- Etravirine (Intelence)
- Nevirapine (Viramune)

### **Protease Inhibitors (PIs)**

- Amprenavir/vitamin E
- Atazanavir (Reyataz)
- Darunavir (Prezista)

- Fosamprenavir (Lexiva)
- Indinavir (Crixivan)
- Lopinavir/ritonavir (Kaletra)
- Nelfinavir (Viracept)
- Ritonavir (Norvir)
- Saquinavir (Invirase)
- Tipranavir (Aptivus)

### **Integrase Inhibitor**

- Raltegravir (Isentress)

### **Fusion Inhibitor**

- Enfuvirtide (Fuzeon)

### **CCR5 Antagonist**

- Maraviroc (Selzentry)

### **Antiinflammatory Medication**

- Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine)

### **Antiinfective Medications**

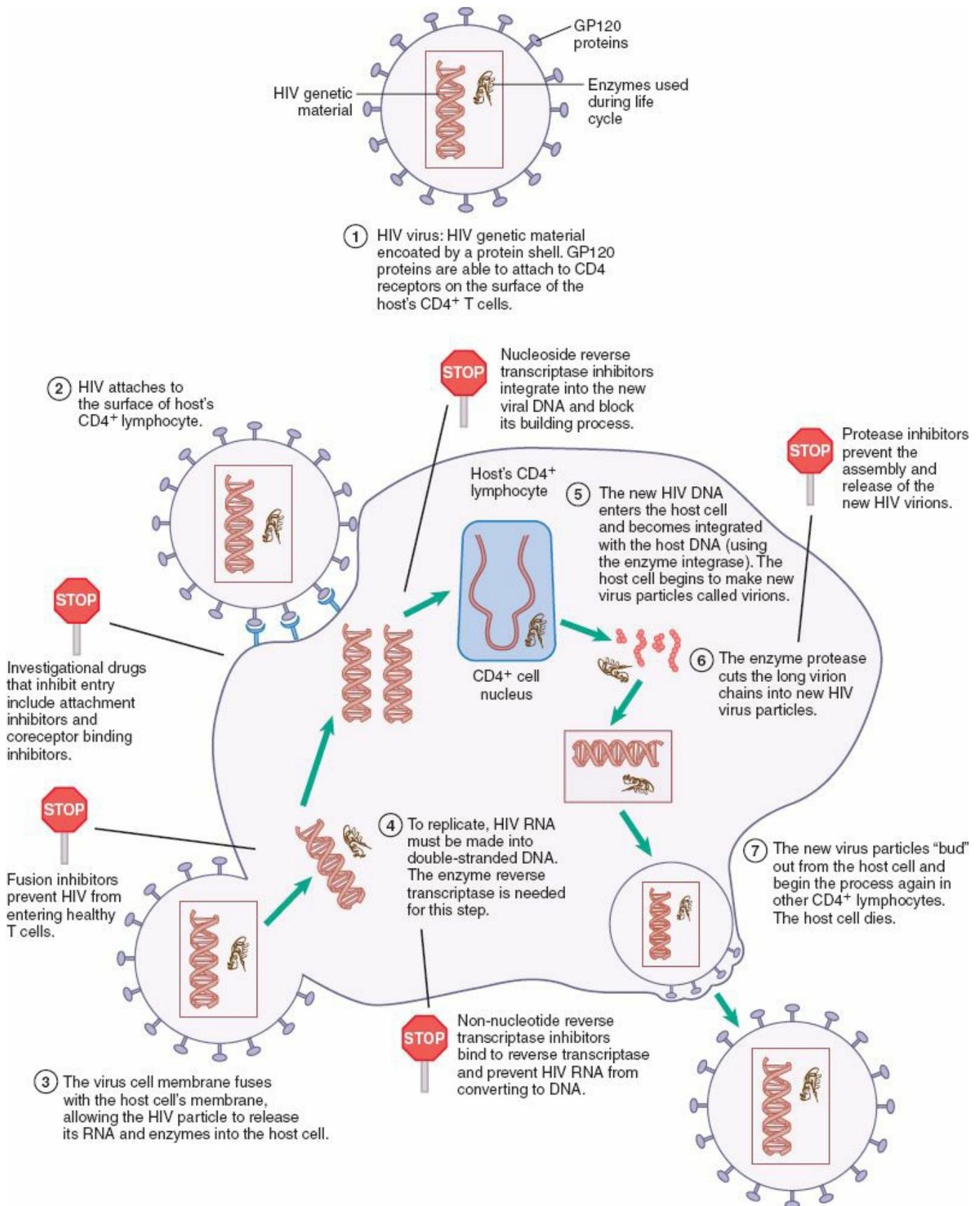
- Atovaquone (Mepron)
- Metronidazole (Flagyl)
- Pentamidine isethionate (Pentam 300)
- Sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (Bactrim)

## **Antifungal Medications**

- Amphotericin B
- Fluconazole (Diflucan)
- Ketoconazole

## **Antiviral Medications**

- Acyclovir (Zovirax)
- Foscarnet
- Ganciclovir



**FIGURE 71-1** Steps in the life cycle of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV),

with correlation to medications. (From Black J, Hawks J: *Medical-surgical nursing: Clinical management for positive outcomes*, ed 8, St. Louis, 2009, Saunders.)

- B.** Nucleoside-nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors and nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors work by inhibiting the activity of reverse transcriptase.
- C.** Protease inhibitors work by interfering with the activity of the enzyme protease.
- D.** Fusion inhibitors work by inhibiting the binding of human immunodeficiency virus to cells.
- E.** Standard treatment consists of using three or four medications in regimens known as highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART); this therapy is not curative but can delay or reverse loss of immune function, preserve health, and prolong life. ▲
- F.** Other medications include those that are used to treat complications or opportunistic infections that develop (see [Box 71-1](#)).
- G.** Nucleoside-nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) ▲
  - 1.** Abacavir (Ziagen): Can cause nausea; monitor for hypersensitivity reaction, including fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, malaise, sore throat, shortness of breath, cough, and rash.
  - 2.** Abacavir/lamivudine (Epzicom): In addition to the effects that can occur from abacavir and lamivudine, hypersensitivity reactions, lactic acidosis, and severe hepatomegaly can occur.
  - 3.** Didanosine (Videx): Can cause nausea, diarrhea, peripheral neuropathy, hepatotoxicity, and pancreatitis
  - 4.** Emtricitabine (Emtriva): Can cause headache, diarrhea, nausea, rash,

hyperpigmentation of the palms and soles, lactic acidosis, and severe hepatomegaly

5. Emtricitabine/tenofovir (Truvada): In addition to the effects that can occur from emtricitabine and tenofovir, lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly can occur.
  6. Lamivudine (Epivir): Causes nausea and nasal congestion
  7. Lamivudine/zidovudine (Combivir): Can cause anemia and neutropenia and lactic acidosis with hepatomegaly
  8. Lamivudine/zidovudine/abacavir (Trizivir): In addition to the effects that can occur from lamivudine, zidovudine, and abacavir, hypersensitivity reactions, anemia, neutropenia, lactic acidosis, and severe hepatomegaly can occur.
  9. Stavudine (d4T, Zerit): Can cause peripheral neuropathy and pancreatitis
  10. Tenofovir (Viread): Can cause nausea and vomiting
  11. Zalcitabine (ddC, Hivid): Can cause oral ulcers, peripheral neuropathy, hepatotoxicity, and pancreatitis
  12. Zidovudine (Retrovir): Can cause nausea, vomiting, anemia, leukopenia, myopathy, fatigue, and headache
- H. Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs) ▲**
1. Delavirdine (Rescriptor): Can cause rash, liver function changes, and pruritus
  2. Efavirenz (Sustiva): Can cause rash, dizziness, confusion, difficulty concentrating, dreams, and encephalopathy
  3. Etravirine (Intelence): Can cause rash, gastrointestinal disturbances, headache, hypertension, and peripheral neuropathy

4. Nevirapine (Viramune): Can cause rash, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, hepatitis, and increased transaminase levels

## I. Protease inhibitors (PIs) ▲

### 1. Amprenavir/vitamin E

a. Can cause nausea, vomiting, headache, altered taste sensations, perioral paresthesia, rashes, and altered liver function

b. Oral solution contains an alcohol that can interact with metronidazole (Flagyl); can cause feelings of inebriation.

2. Atazanavir (Reyataz): Can cause nausea, headache, infection, vomiting, diarrhea, drowsiness, insomnia, fever, hyperglycemia, hyperlipidemia, and increased bleeding in clients with hemophilia

3. Fosamprenavir (Lexiva): Similar to amprenavir; can cause nausea, vomiting, headache, altered taste sensations, perioral paresthesia, rashes, and altered liver function

4. Indinavir (Crixivan): Can cause nausea, diarrhea, hyperbilirubinemia, nephritis, and kidney stones

5. Lopinavir/ritonavir combination (Kaletra): Can cause nausea, diarrhea, altered taste sensations, circumoral paresthesia, and hepatitis

6. Nelfinavir (Viracept): Can cause nausea, flatulence, and diarrhea

7. Ritonavir (Norvir): Can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, altered taste sensations, circumoral paresthesia, hepatitis, and increased triglyceride levels

8. Saquinavir (Invirase): Can cause nausea, diarrhea, photosensitivity, and headache

9. Tipranavir (Aptivus): Hepatotoxicity (liver damage); can also cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, and fatigue

**J. Integrase inhibitor: Raltegravir (Isentress)**

1. Stops HIV replication and is used in combination with other antiretroviral medications
2. Common side/adverse effects include nausea, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, and itching.

**K. Chemokine receptor 5 (CCR5) antagonist: Maraviroc (Selzentry)**

1. Binds with CCR5 and blocks viral entry
2. Most common side/adverse effects are cough, dizziness, pyrexia, rash, abdominal pain, musculoskeletal symptoms, and upper respiratory tract infections; liver injury and cardiovascular events have occurred in some clients.

**L. Fusion inhibitor: Enfuvirtide (Fuzeon)** can cause skin irritation at injection site, fatigue, nausea, insomnia, and peripheral neuropathy. ▲

**M. Antiinfective and antiinflammatory medications:** Used to treat opportunistic infections such as *Pneumocystis jiroveci* pneumonia; *Toxoplasma* encephalitis is treated with sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (Bactrim; see [Box 71-1](#)) ▲

**N. Antifungal medications:** Used to treat candidiasis, cryptococcal meningitis (see [Box 71-1](#)) ▲

**O. Antiviral medications:** Used to treat cytomegalovirus retinitis, herpes simplex, varicella-zoster virus (see [Box 71-1](#)) ▲

**▲ The client with HIV or AIDS is at high risk for the development of**

opportunistic infections.

## II. Immunosuppressants (Box 71-2; Fig. 71-2) ▲

### BOX 71-2 Immunosuppressants

#### Calcineurin Inhibitors

- Cyclosporine (Sandimmune)
- Tacrolimus (Prograf)

#### Cytotoxic Medications

- Azathioprine (Imuran)
- Cyclophosphamide (Neosar)
- Methotrexate (Rheumatrex, Trexall)
- Mycophenolate mofetil (CellCept)
- Mycophenolic acid (Myfortic)

#### Antibodies

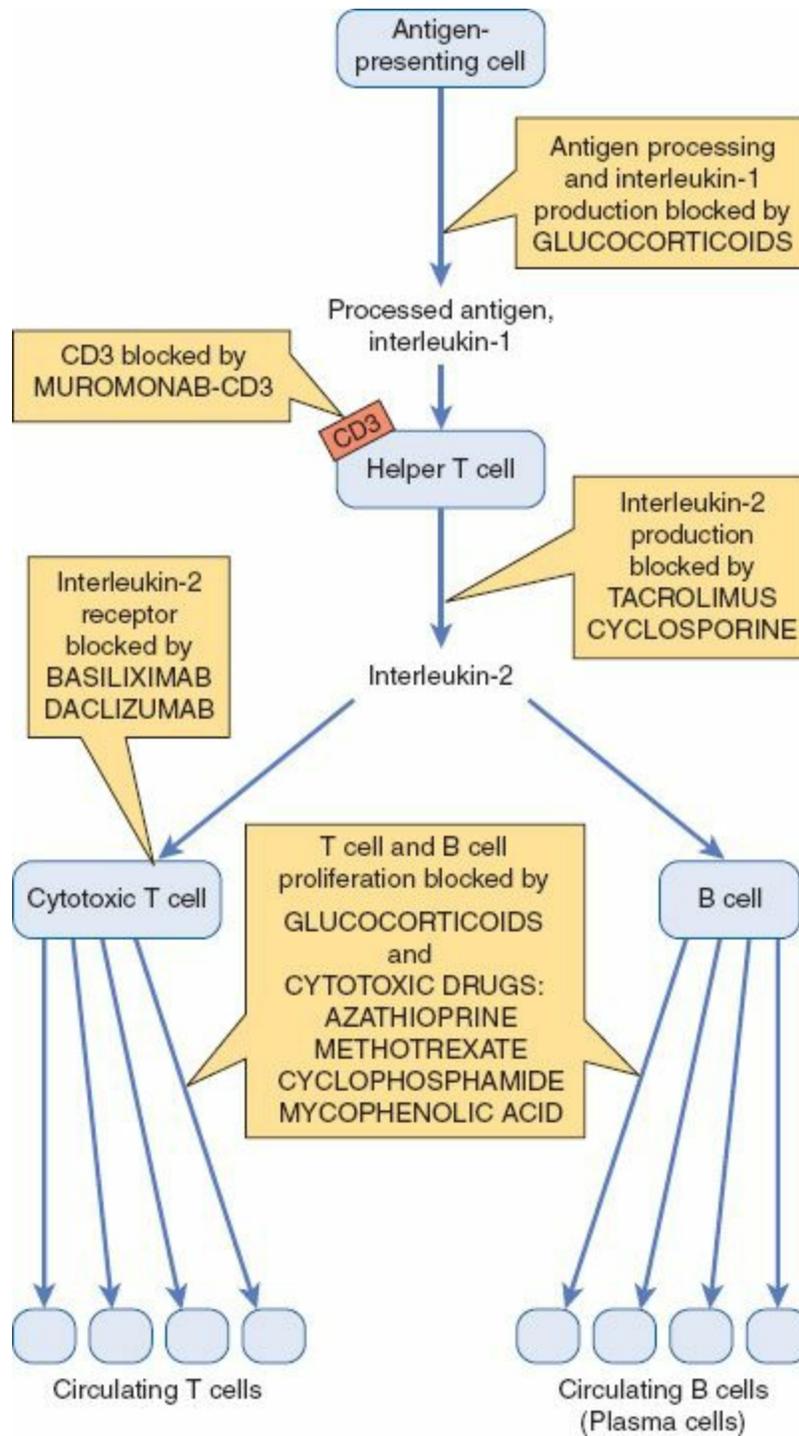
- Basiliximab (Simulect)
- Daclizumab (Zenapax)
- Lymphocyte immune globulin, anti-thymocyte globulin (equine)
- Muromonab-CD3 (Orthoclone OKT3)
- Rh<sub>0</sub>(D) immune globulin (RhoGAM)

#### Other

- Sirolimus (Rapamune)

## Glucocorticoids

■ See Chapter 55



**FIGURE 71-2** Sites of action of immunosuppressant drugs. (From Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

**A. Description:** Immunosuppressants are used for transplant recipients to prevent organ or tissue rejection and to treat autoimmune disorders such as systemic lupus erythematosus.

**B. Cyclosporine (Sandimmune)**

1. Used for prevention of rejection following allogeneic organ transplantation
2. Usually administered with a glucocorticoid and another immunosuppressant
3. The most common adverse effects are nephrotoxicity, infection, hypertension, and hirsutism.

**C. Tacrolimus (Prograf)**

1. Used for prevention of rejection following liver or kidney transplantation
2. Adverse effects include nephrotoxicity, neurotoxicity, gastrointestinal effects, hypertension, hyperkalemia, hyperglycemia, hirsutism, and gum hyperplasia.

**D. Azathioprine (Imuran)**

1. Generally used with renal transplant recipients
2. Can cause neutropenia and thrombocytopenia

**E. Cyclophosphamide (Neosar)**

1. Used for its immunosuppressant action to treat autoimmune disorders
2. Can cause neutropenia and hemorrhagic cystitis

**F. Methotrexate (Rheumatrex, Trexall)**

1. Used for its immunosuppressant action to treat autoimmune disorders
2. Can cause hepatic fibrosis and cirrhosis, bone marrow suppression, ulcerative

stomatitis, and renal damage

**G. Mycophenolate mofetil (CellCept) and mycophenolic acid (Myfortic)**

1. Used to prevent rejection following kidney, heart, and liver transplantation
2. Can cause diarrhea, vomiting, neutropenia, sepsis; increased risk of infection and malignancies, especially lymphomas

**H. Basiliximab (Simulect); daclizumab (Zenapax)**

1. Used to prevent rejection following kidney transplantation
2. Can cause severe acute hypersensitivity reactions, including anaphylaxis

**I. Lymphocyte immune globulin, anti-thymocyte globulin (equine)**

1. Used to prevent rejection following kidney, heart, liver, and bone marrow transplantation
2. Side/adverse effects include fever, chills, leukopenia, and skin reactions.
3. Can cause anaphylactoid reactions

**J. Sirolimus (Rapamune)**

1. Used to prevent renal transplant rejection
2. Increases the risk of infection; raises cholesterol and triglyceride levels; can cause renal injury
3. Other side/adverse effects include rash, acne, anemia, thrombocytopenia, joint pain, diarrhea, and hypokalemia.

 **Monitor the client taking an immunosuppressant closely for signs of infection.**

**III. Immunizations (see Chapter 48)**

## IV. Antibiotics (Box 71-3)

### BOX 71-3

### Antibiotics

#### Aminoglycosides

- Amikacin (Amikin)
- Gentamicin
- Kanamycin (Kantrex)
- Neomycin (Neo-Fradin)
- Streptomycin
- Tobramycin (Nebcin)

#### Cephalosporins

- Cefaclor (Ceclor)
- Cefadroxil (Duricef)
- Cefazolin (Ancef, Kefzol)
- Cefdinir (Omnicef)
- Cefditoren (Spectracef)
- Cefepime (Maxipime)
- Cefotaxime (Claforan)
- Cefotetan (Cefotan)
- Cefoxitin (Mefoxin)
- Cefpodoxime (Vantin)

- Cefprozil (Cefzil)
- Ceftazidime (Ceptaz, Fortaz, Tazicef)
- Ceftibuten (Cedax)
- Ceftizoxime (Cefizox)
- Ceftriaxone (Rocephin)
- Cefuroxime (Ceftin)
- Cephalexin (Keflex)
- Loracarbef (Lorabid)

### **Fluoroquinolones**

- Ciprofloxacin (Cipro)
- Gatifloxacin (Tequin)
- Gemifloxacin (Factive)
- Levofloxacin (Levaquin)
- Lomefloxacin (Maxaquin)
- Moxifloxacin (Avelox)
- Norfloxacin (Noroxin)
- Ofloxacin (Floxin)
- Trovafloxacin (Trovan)

### **Macrolides**

- Azithromycin (Zithromax)
- Clarithromycin (Biaxin)

- Dirithromycin (Dynabac)
- Erythromycin

### **Lincosamides**

- Clindamycin (Cleocin)
- Lincomycin (Lincocin)

### **Monobactam**

- Aztreonam (Azactam)

### **Penicillins**

- Amoxicillin (Amoxil)
- Ampicillin (Principen)
- Carbenicillin (Geocillin)
- Penicillin G (Bicillin L-A, Permapen, Pfizerpen, Wycillin)
- Penicillin V (Veetids)
- Piperacillin
- Ticarcillin (Ticar)

### **Penicillinase-Resistant Penicillins**

- Dicloxacillin
- Nafcillin
- Oxacillin

### **Sulfonamides**

- Sulfamethoxazole
- Sulfadiazine
- Sulfasalazine
- Sulfisoxazole
- Trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMZ; Bactrim, Cotrim, Septra)

### **Tetracyclines**

- Demeclocycline (Declomycin)
- Doxycycline (Vibramycin)
- Minocycline (Minocin)
- Oxytetracycline
- Tetracycline (Sumycin)

### **Antimycobacterials**

- Antituberculosis agents (see [Chapter 59](#))
- Leprostatics: Clofazimine (Lamprene)

### **Antifungal Medications**

- Amphotericin B
- Fluconazole (Diflucan)
- Ketoconazole

### **Antiviral Medications**

- Acyclovir (Zovirax)
- Foscarnet

## ■ Ganciclovir (Cytovene)

A. Inhibit the growth of bacteria

B. Include medication classifications of aminoglycosides, cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones, macrolides, lincosamides, monobactams, penicillins and penicillinase-resistant penicillins, sulfonamides, tetracyclines, antimycobacterials, and others (see [Box 71-3](#))

C. Adverse effects ([Table 71-1](#))

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**TABLE 71-1 Antibiotics and Their Adverse Effects**

Classification	Adverse Effects
Aminoglycosides	Ototoxicity Confusion, disorientation Renal toxicity Gastrointestinal irritation Palpitations, blood pressure changes Hypersensitivity reactions
Cephalosporins	Gastrointestinal disturbances Pseudomembranous colitis Headache, dizziness, lethargy, paresthesias Nephrotoxicity Superinfections
Fluoroquinolones	Headache, dizziness, insomnia, depression Gastrointestinal effects Bone marrow depression Fever, rash, photosensitivity
Macrolides	Gastrointestinal effects Pseudomembranous colitis Confusion, abnormal thinking Superinfections

Lincosamides	Hypersensitivity reactions Gastrointestinal effects Pseudomembranous colitis Bone marrow depression
Monobactams	Gastrointestinal effects Hepatotoxicity Allergic reactions
Penicillins and penicillinase-resistant penicillins	Gastrointestinal effects, including sore mouth and furry tongue Superinfections Hypersensitivity reactions, including anaphylaxis
Sulfonamides	Gastrointestinal effects Hepatotoxicity Nephrotoxicity Bone marrow depression Dermatological effects, including hypersensitivity and photosensitivity Headache, dizziness, vertigo, ataxia, depression, seizures
Tetracyclines	Gastrointestinal effects Hepatotoxicity Teeth (staining) and bone damage Superinfections Dermatological reactions, including rash and photosensitivity Hypersensitivity reactions
Antimycobacterials, leprostatics	Gastrointestinal effects Neuritis, dizziness, headache, malaise, drowsiness, hallucinations
Antifungals	Gastrointestinal effects Headache, rash, anemia, hepatotoxicity Hearing loss, peripheral neuritis

#### D. Nursing considerations

1. Assess for allergies.
2. Monitor appropriate laboratory values before therapy as appropriate and during therapy to assess for adverse effects.
3. Monitor for adverse effects and report to health care provider if any occur.
4. Determine appropriate method of administration and provide instructions to the

client.

5. Monitor intake and output.
6. Encourage fluid intake (unless contraindicated).
7. Initiate safety precautions because of possible central nervous system effects.
8. Teach client about the medication and how to take the medication; emphasize the importance of completing the full prescribed course.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** Ceftriaxone (Rocephin) is a cephalosporin. Some adverse effects include gastrointestinal disturbances, pseudomembranous colitis, and superinfections. If the client develops severe diarrhea, the nurse should contact the health care provider immediately because of the potential development of an adverse effect. In some situations, antibiotic-associated gastrointestinal disturbances such as diarrhea may require contact precautions.

### **Reference**

Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 213.

## **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**873.** The client with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and *Pneumocystis jiroveci* infection has been receiving pentamidine (Pentam 300). The client develops a temperature of 101° F. The nurse continues to assess the client, knowing that this

sign **most likely** indicates which condition?

1. That the dose of the medication is too low
2. That the client is experiencing toxic effects of the medication
3. That the client has developed inadequacy of thermoregulation
4. That the client has developed another infection caused by leukopenic effects of the medication

**874.** The nurse caring for a client who is taking an aminoglycoside should monitor the client for which adverse effects of the medication? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Seizures
2. Ototoxicity
3. Renal toxicity
4. Dysrhythmias
5. Hepatotoxicity

**875.** Ketoconazole is prescribed for a client with a diagnosis of candidiasis. Which interventions should the nurse include when administering this medication?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Restrict fluid intake.
2. Monitor liver function studies.
3. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol.
4. Administer the medication with an antacid.
5. Instruct the client to avoid exposure to the sun.

6. Administer the medication on an empty stomach.

876. The nurse is caring for a client who has been taking a sulfonamide and should monitor for signs/symptoms of which side/adverse effects of the medication?

Select all that apply. ❖

1. Ototoxicity
2. Palpitations
3. Nephrotoxicity
4. Bone marrow depression
5. Gastrointestinal (GI) effects
6. Increased white blood cell (WBC) count

877. The nurse is reviewing the results of serum laboratory studies drawn on a client with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome who is receiving didanosine (Videx). The nurse interprets that the client may have the medication discontinued by the health care provider if which elevated result is noted?

1. Serum protein level
2. Blood glucose level
3. Serum amylase level
4. Serum creatinine level

878. The nurse is caring for a postrenal transplantation client taking cyclosporine (Sandimmune). The nurse notes an increase in one of the client's vital signs and the client is complaining of a headache. What vital sign is **most likely** increased?

1. Pulse
2. Respirations
3. Blood pressure
4. Pulse oximetry

**879.** Amikacin (Amikin) is prescribed for a client with a bacterial infection. The nurse instructs the client to contact the health care provider (HCP) **immediately** if which occurs?

1. Nausea
2. Lethargy
3. Hearing loss
4. Muscle aches

**880.** The nurse is assigned to care for a client with cytomegalovirus retinitis and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome who is receiving foscarnet, an antiviral medication. The nurse should monitor the results of which laboratory study while the client is taking this medication?

1. CD4 cell count
2. Lymphocyte count
3. Serum albumin level
4. Serum creatinine level

**881.** A client who is human immunodeficiency virus seropositive has been taking stavudine (d4T, Zerit). The nurse should monitor which **most** closely while the

client is taking this medication?

1. Gait
2. Appetite
3. Level of consciousness
4. Gastrointestinal function

## ANSWERS

873. 4

**Rationale:** Frequent side/adverse effects of this medication include leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, and anemia. The client should be monitored routinely for signs and symptoms of infection. Options 1, 2, and 3 are inaccurate interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Focus on the data in the question. Noting that the temperature is elevated will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The side/adverse effects of **pentamidine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Immunity

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 917-919.

❖ 874. 2, 3, 4

**Rationale:** Aminoglycosides are administered to inhibit the growth of bacteria. Adverse effects of this medication include confusion, ototoxicity, renal toxicity, gastrointestinal irritation, palpitations (dysrhythmias), blood pressure changes, and hypersensitivity reactions. Therefore, the remaining options are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, adverse effects. It is necessary to know the adverse effects associated with this medication to answer correctly.

**Review:** The adverse effects of **aminoglycosides**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 1101-1102.

❖ 875. 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** Ketoconazole is an antifungal medication. There is no reason for the client to restrict fluid intake; in fact, this could be harmful to the client. The medication is hepatotoxic, and the nurse monitors liver function. It is administered with food (not on an empty stomach) and antacids are avoided for 2 hours after taking the medication to ensure absorption. The client is also instructed to avoid alcohol. In addition, the client is instructed to avoid exposure to the sun because the medication increases photosensitivity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, administration procedures, and recall that it is an antifungal medication. Next, use general medication guidelines to select the correct interventions. Also, remember that this medication is administered with food and that it is hepatotoxic.

**Review:** Administration procedures for **ketoconazole**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 649-650.

❖ **876. 3, 4, 5**

**Rationale:** Side/adverse effects include nephrotoxicity, bone marrow depression, GI effects, hepatotoxicity, dermatological effects, and some neurological symptoms including headache, dizziness, vertigo, ataxia, depression, and seizures. Options 1, 2, and 6 are unrelated to this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, *side/adverse effects*. It is necessary to know the adverse effects associated with this medication to answer correctly.

**Review:** The adverse effects of **sulfonamides**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 1108-1109.

**877. 3**

**Rationale:** Didanosine can cause pancreatitis. A serum amylase level that is increased to 1.5 to 2 times normal may signify pancreatitis in the client with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and is potentially fatal. The medication may have to be discontinued. The medication is also hepatotoxic and can result in liver failure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, adverse effects of didanosine. Recalling that this medication can cause damage to the pancreas and is hepatotoxic will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **didanosine**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 344-346.

### 878. 3

**Rationale:** Hypertension can occur in a client taking cyclosporine (Sandimmune) and, because this client is also complaining of a headache, the blood pressure is the vital sign to be monitored most closely. Other adverse effects include infection, nephrotoxicity, and hirsutism. Options 1, 2, and 4 are unrelated to the use of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely*. Focus on the name of the medication and recall that this medication can cause hypertension. Also, noting that the client has a headache will also assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** The adverse effects of **cyclosporine (Sandimmune)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Immunity

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), p. 287.

### 879. 3

**Rationale:** Amikacin (Amikin) is an aminoglycoside. Side/adverse effects of aminoglycosides include ototoxicity (hearing problems), confusion, disorientation, gastrointestinal irritation, palpitations, blood pressure changes, nephrotoxicity, and hypersensitivity. The nurse instructs the client to report hearing loss to the HCP immediately. Lethargy and muscle aches are not associated with the use of this medication. It is not necessary to contact the HCP immediately if nausea occurs. If nausea persists or results in vomiting, the HCP should be notified.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediately*. Recalling that this medication is an aminoglycoside (most aminoglycoside medication names end in *-cin*) and that aminoglycosides are ototoxic will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The side/adverse effects of **aminoglycosides**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 47-49.

### 880. 4

**Rationale:** Foscarnet is toxic to the kidneys. The serum creatinine level is monitored before therapy, two or three times per week during induction therapy, and at least weekly during maintenance therapy. Foscarnet also may cause decreased levels of calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium. Thus, these levels also are measured with the same frequency.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the laboratory value to be monitored. Recalling that this medication is nephrotoxic will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The adverse effects of **foscarnet**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 512-513.

## 881. 1

**Rationale:** Stavudine is an antiretroviral used to manage human immunodeficiency virus infection in clients who do not respond to or who cannot tolerate conventional therapy. The medication can cause peripheral neuropathy, and the nurse should monitor the client's gait closely and ask the client about paresthesia. Options 2, 3, and 4 are unrelated to this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Focus on the name of the medication. Recalling that this medication causes peripheral neuropathy will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The adverse effects of **stavudine**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Analyzing

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Pharmacology—Immune Medications

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Safety

***Reference:*** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 1087-1088.

# UNIT XIX



## Mental Health Disorders of the Adult Client

### PYRAMID TERMS

**abuse** When directed toward another, includes acts of misuse, deceit, or exploitation; the wrong or improper use or action toward another individual that results in injury, damage, maltreatment, or corruption.

**addiction** State of dependence or compulsive use. In relation to drug dependence, addiction incorporates the concepts of loss of control with respect to the use of a drug, taking the drug despite related problems and complications, and a tendency to relapse.

**coping mechanism** Method used to decrease anxiety.

**crisis** Temporary state of disequilibrium in which an individual's usual coping mechanisms or problem-solving methods fail. Crisis can result in personality growth

or personality disorganization.

**defense mechanism** Coping mechanism used in an effort to protect the individual from feelings of anxiety. As anxiety increases and becomes overwhelming, the individual copes by using defense mechanisms to protect the ego and decrease anxiety.

**milieu** Physical and social environment in which an individual lives. Milieu therapy focuses on positive physical and social environmental manipulation to produce positive change.

**restraints (security devices)** Physical restraints include any manual method or mechanical device, material, or equipment that inhibits free movement. Chemical restraints include the administration of medications for the specific purpose of inhibiting a specific behavior or movement.

**seclusion** Placing a client alone in a specially designed room that protects the client and allows for close supervision. Seclusion is the last selected measure in a process to maximize safety to the client and others.

**suicide** The ultimate act of self-destruction in which an individual purposefully ends his or her own life.

**suicide attempt** Any willful, self-inflicted, or life-threatening attempt by an individual that has not led to death.

## Pyramid to Success

The Pyramid to Success focuses on the therapeutic nurse-client relationship, client rights, hospital admission procedures, the ethical and legal issues related to the care of a client with a mental health disorder, and grief and loss. Pyramid Points also focus on the use of restraints (security devices), seclusion, and electroconvulsive therapy. Care for a client with an addiction, such as an eating disorder or drug or alcohol disorder, is another focus area. Additional areas of focus include anxiety, depression, suicide, abuse and neglect, violence, rape crisis interventions, posttraumatic stress disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorders. Pyramid Points address the use of medications prescribed for a client with a mental health disorder, particularly lithium carbonate (Lithobid) and the benzodiazepines.

## **Client Needs**

### **Safe and Effective Care Environment**

Ensuring client advocacy

Implementing legal responsibilities related to reporting incidences of abuse, neglect, or violence

Maintaining confidentiality

Obtaining informed consent related to treatments, such as restraints (security devices), seclusion, and electroconvulsive therapy

Providing psychiatric consultations and referrals

Providing safety to the client and others

Upholding client rights

Using restraints (security devices) and seclusion appropriately and safely

### **Health Promotion and Maintenance**

Identifying individual lifestyle choices

Performing psychosocial assessment techniques

Providing health promotion programs related to addictions

Identifying community resources for the client

### **Psychosocial Integrity**

Assessing for abuse and neglect situations

Assessing for chemical dependency

Assessing for domestic violence

Addressing grief and loss issues

Caring for the client who has been sexually abused or raped

Considering religious, cultural, and spiritual influences on health

Developing a therapeutic nurse-client relationship

Identifying coping mechanisms

Identifying support systems

Implementing behavioral interventions

Providing crisis intervention

Providing a therapeutic milieu

Teaching stress-management techniques

## **Physiological Integrity**

Administering medications as prescribed

Assessing for abusive and self-destructive behavior

Monitoring elimination patterns

Monitoring for alterations in body systems related to addictions

Monitoring for expected and untoward effects of medications

Monitoring for potential complications related to medications and treatments, such as  
electroconvulsive therapy

Monitoring laboratory values related to medication therapy

Monitoring rest and sleep patterns

Providing adequate nutrition

Providing personal hygiene measures



## CHAPTER 72

# Foundations of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A client needs assistance in using coping mechanisms to decrease anxiety. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 1026.*

### I. Nurse-Client Relationship

#### A. Principles

1. Genuineness, respect, and empathic understanding are characteristics important to the development of a therapeutic nurse-client relationship.
2. The client should be cared for in a holistic manner.
3. The nurse considers the client's cultural beliefs and values in assessing the client's response to the nurse-client relationship and his or her adaptation to stressors.

4. Appropriate limits and boundaries define and facilitate a therapeutic nurse-client relationship.
5. Honest and open communication are important for the development of trust, an underpinning of the therapeutic nurse-client relationship.
6. The nurse uses therapeutic communication techniques to encourage the client to express thoughts and feelings as they address identified problem areas.
7. The nurse respects the client's confidentiality and limits discussion of the client to members of the treatment team.
8. The goal of the nurse-client relationship is to assist the client to develop problem-solving abilities and  **coping mechanisms.**

 The nurse needs to consider the religious and spiritual practices of the client and whether these practices may give the client hope, comfort, and support while healing.

## **B. Phases of a therapeutic nurse-client relationship**

### **1. Preinteraction phase**

- a. The preinteraction phase begins before the nurse's first contact with the client.
- b. The nurse's task in the preinteraction phase is to focus on his or her own preconceived ideas, stereotypes, biases, and values that may impinge on the nurse-client relationship.

### **2. Orientation or introductory phase**

- a. Acceptance, trust, and boundaries are established.
- b. Expectations and the time frame of the relationship are identified (establishing a

contract).

- c. Client-centered goals are defined.
- d. Termination and separation of the relationship are discussed in anticipation of the time-limited nature of the relationship. ▲

### 3. Working phase

- a. Exploring, focusing on, and evaluating the client's concerns and problems occurs; an attitude of acceptance and active listening assists the client to express thoughts and feelings.
- b. Encouraging independence in the client facilitates recovery and leads to readiness for termination.

### 4. Termination or separation phase

- a. Prepare the client for termination and separation on initial contact. ▲
- b. Evaluate progress and achievement of goals.
- c. Identify responses related to termination and separation, such as anger, distancing from the relationship, a return of symptoms, and dependency.
- d. Encourage the client to express feelings about termination.
- e. Identify the client's strengths and anticipated needs for follow-up care.
- f. Refer the client to community resources and other support systems.

### C. Family as an extension of the client ▲

- 1. Family members should be viewed as collaborators in the management of a client's mental health needs (maintain confidentiality as necessary).
- 2. Competence and caring focused toward family members enhance the nurse's

ability to identify client and family needs and to select and implement effective interventions directed toward promoting adaptive functioning.

3. Nurses have a professional obligation to be aware of and sensitive to the cultural and ethnic factors that affect the structure and resulting needs of the client and his/her family.
4. Educating family members regarding the client's illness, identification of symptoms, and effective management of maladaptive behaviors plays a vital role in the client's quality of life.

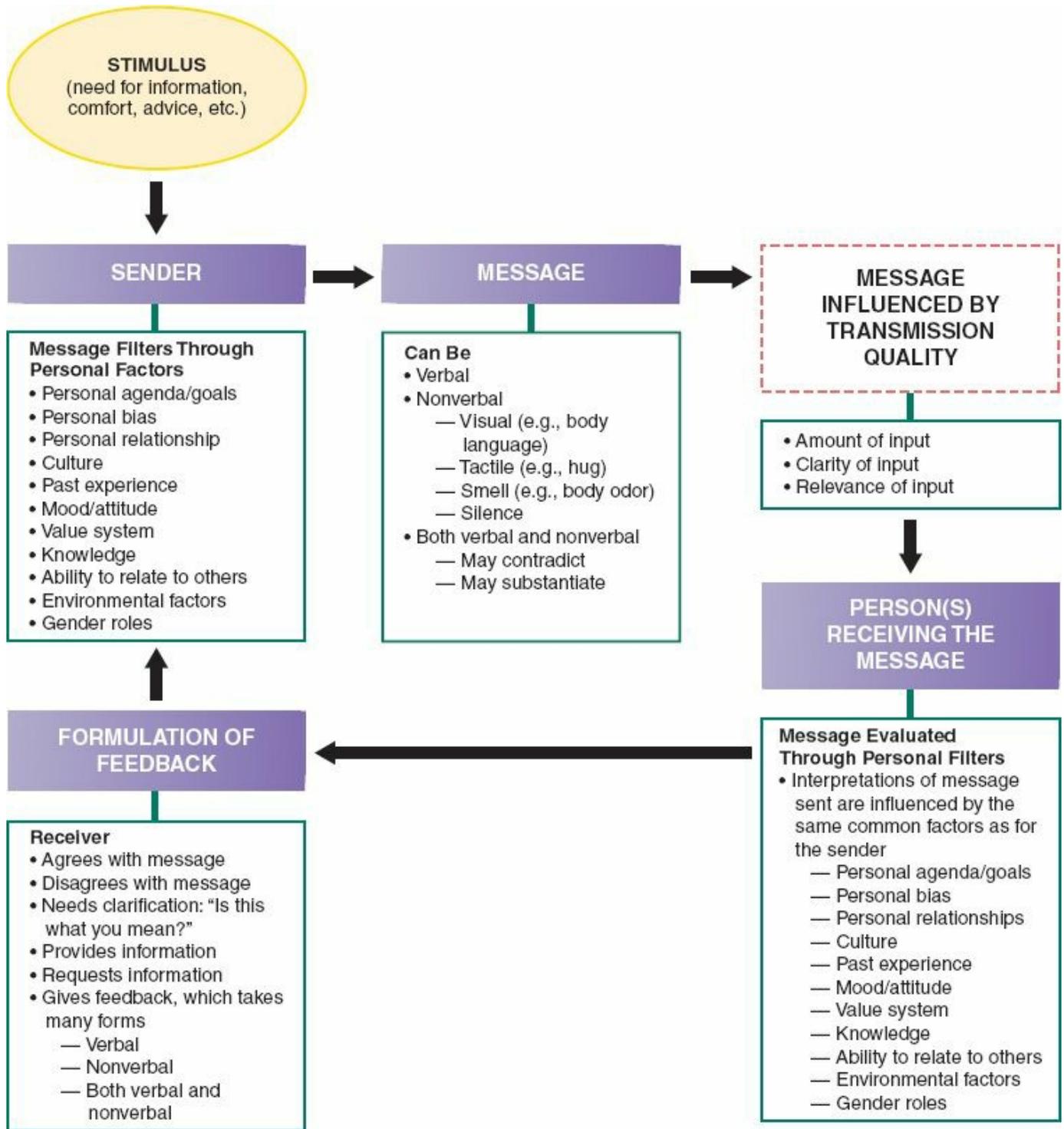
#### **D. Impact of culture, ethnicity, and spirituality on client care ▲**

1. Cultural competency allows the nurse to recognize the uniqueness of each client and the impact that culture, values, and spiritual beliefs have on an individual's mental health as well as the treatment required for existing mental illness.
2. A client's culture, ethnicity, value, and spiritual belief systems can impact all aspects of mental health care, including medication therapies, and can act as either protective or risk factors when dealing with the development and/or treatment of psychiatric disorders.
3. Nurses must be aware of the impact their own culture, values, and beliefs have on the care they provide and to avoid biases.
4. The treatment plan must be agreed upon by both client and nurse and take into consideration the needs of the client whenever possible.

## **II. Therapeutic Communication Process ▲**

### **A. Principles**

1. Communication includes verbal and nonverbal expression (Fig. 72-1).



**FIGURE 72-1** Operational definition of communication. (From Varcarolis E, Carson V, Shoemaker N: *Foundations of psychiatric mental health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

2. Successful communication includes appropriateness, efficiency, flexibility, and feedback.
3. Anxiety in the nurse or client impedes communication.
4. Communication needs to be goal-directed within a professional framework.

**B. Therapeutic and nontherapeutic communication techniques (Box 72-1)**

**BOX 72-1 Therapeutic and Nontherapeutic Communication Techniques**

**Therapeutic Techniques**

- Clarifying and validating
- Encouraging formulation of a plan of action
- Focusing and refocusing
- Listening
- Maintaining neutral responses
- Maintaining silence
- Providing acknowledgment and feedback
- Providing information and presenting reality
- Providing nonverbal encouragement
- Reflecting
- Restating
- Sharing perceptions
- Summarizing

- Using broad openings and open-ended questions

### Nontherapeutic Techniques

- Asking the client “Why?”
- Being defensive or challenging the client
- Changing the subject
- Giving advice or approval or disapproval
- Making stereotypical comments
- Making value judgments
- Placing the client’s feelings on hold
- Providing false reassurance

## III. Mental Health

- A. Mental health is a lifelong process of successful adaptation to changing internal and external environments.
- B. A mentally healthy individual is *in contact with reality*, can relate to people and situations in their environment, and resolve conflicts within a problem-solving framework.
- C. A mentally healthy individual has psychobiological resilience.

## IV. Psychiatric–Mental Health Illness

### A. Description

1. Psychiatric illness is the loss of the ability to respond to the internal and external

environment in ways that are in harmony with oneself or the expectations of society.

2. Psychiatric illness is characterized by thought or behavior patterns that impair functioning and cause distress.

#### **B. Personality characteristics**

1. Self-concept is distorted.
2. Perception of strengths and weaknesses is unrealistic.
3. Thoughts and perceptions may not be reality-based.
4. The ability to find meaning and purpose in life may be impaired.
5. Life direction and productivity may be disturbed.
6. Meeting one's own needs may be problematic.
7. Excessive reliance or preoccupation on the thoughts, opinions, and actions of self or others may be present.

#### **C. Adaptations to stress**

1. The individual's sense of self-control may be affected.
2. Perception of the environment may be distorted.
3. Coping mechanisms may not exist or may be ineffective.

#### **D. Interpersonal relationships**

1. Interpersonal relationships may be minimally existent or may be negatively affected.
2. The ability to enjoy sustained intimacy in relationships is impaired. 🟩

### **V. Coping and Defense Mechanisms**

## A. Coping mechanisms

1. Coping involves any effort to decrease anxiety.
2. Coping mechanisms can be constructive or destructive, task- or problem-oriented in relation to direct problem solving, cognitively oriented in an attempt to neutralize the meaning of the problem, or defense- or emotion-oriented, thus regulating the response to protect oneself. ▲

## B. Defense mechanisms

1. As anxiety increases, the individual copes by using defense mechanisms.
2. A defense mechanism is a coping mechanism used in an effort to protect the individual from feelings of anxiety; as anxiety increases and becomes overwhelming, the individual copes by using defense mechanisms to protect the ego and decrease anxiety (Box 72-2).

### BOX 72-2 Types of Defense Mechanisms

**Compensation:** Putting forth extra effort to achieve in areas where one has a real or imagined deficiency

**Conversion:** Expression of emotional conflicts through physical symptoms

**Denial:** Disowning consciously intolerable thoughts and impulses

**Displacement:** Feelings toward one person are directed to another who is less threatening, satisfying an impulse with a substitute object

**Dissociation:** Blocking of an anxiety-provoking event or period of time from the conscious mind

***Fantasy:*** Gratification by imaginary achievements and wishful thinking

***Fixation:*** Never advancing to the next level of emotional development and organization; persistence in later life of interests and behavior patterns appropriate to an earlier age

***Identification:*** Unconscious attempt to change oneself to resemble an admired person

***Insulation:*** Withdrawing into passivity and becoming inaccessible so as to avoid further threatening situations

***Intellectualization:*** Excessive reasoning to avoid feelings; the thinking is disconnected from feelings, and situations are dealt with at a cognitive level

***Introjection:*** Type of identification in which the individual incorporates the traits or values of another into himself or herself

***Isolation:*** Response in which a person blocks feelings associated with an unpleasant experience

***Projection:*** Transferring one's internal feelings, thoughts, and unacceptable ideas and traits to someone else

***Rationalization:*** Attempt to make unacceptable feelings and behaviors acceptable by justifying the behavior

***Reaction Formation:*** Developing conscious attitudes and behaviors and acting out behaviors opposite to what one really feels

***Regression:*** Returning to an earlier developmental stage to express an impulse to deal with anxiety

**Repression:** Unconscious process in which the client blocks undesirable and unacceptable thoughts from conscious expression

**Sublimation:** Replacement of an unacceptable need, attitude, or emotion with one more socially acceptable

**Substitution:** Replacement of a valued unacceptable object with an object more acceptable to the ego

**Suppression:** Conscious, deliberate forgetting of unacceptable or painful thoughts, ideas, and feelings

**Symbolization:** Conscious use of an idea or object to represent another actual event or object; often, the meaning is unclear because the symbol may be representative of something unconscious

**Undoing:** Engaging in behavior considered to be the opposite of a previous unacceptable behavior, thought, or feeling

3. Coping mechanisms and defense mechanisms are used by the client to decrease anxiety.

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Assist the client to identify the source of anxiety and to explore methods to reduce anxiety.

2. Assess the client's use of defense mechanisms.

3. Facilitate appropriate use of defense mechanisms.

4. Determine whether the defense mechanisms used by the client are effective for

him or her or create additional distress.

5. Avoid criticizing the client's behavior and the use of defense mechanisms.

## **VI. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders***

- A. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders*, published by the American Psychiatric Association, provides guidelines for health care personnel for identifying and categorizing mental illness.
- B. The manual is a system used in clinical, research, and educational settings, in which diagnostic criteria are included for each mental health disorder.
- C. The manual addresses culturally diverse populations and illness that may be associated with a particular culture.
- D. Dual diagnosis: Refers to the client who has both a mental health disorder and a substance abuse disorder; also known as comorbidity or co-occurring disorders.
- E. See American Psychiatric Association for updates:  
<http://www.dsm5.org/Pages/Default.aspx>.

## **VII. Types of Mental Health Admissions and Discharges**

- A. Voluntary admission
  - 1. The client (or the client's guardian) seeks admission for care.
  - 2. The voluntary client is free to sign out of the hospital with health care provider (HCP) notification and prescription.
  - 3. Detaining a voluntary client against her or his will is termed *false imprisonment*.
  - 4. The client retains full civil rights ([Box 72-3](#)).

- Right to accessible health care
- Right to coordination and continuity of health care
- Right to courteous and individualized health care
- Right to information about the qualifications, names, and titles of personnel delivering care
- Right to refuse observation by individuals not directly involved in care
- Right to privacy and confidentiality
- Right to informed consent
- Right to treatment and to refuse treatment
- Right to treatment in the least restrictive setting
- Right not to be subjected to unnecessary restraints
- Right to habeas corpus; may request a hearing at any time to be released from the hospital
- Right to information about diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment
- Right to information on the charges of service
- Right to communicate with people outside the hospital through written correspondence, telephone, and personal visits
- Right to keep clothing and personal effects
- Right to be employed
- Right to religious freedom
- Right to execute wills

- Right to retain licenses, privileges, or permits established by the law, such as a driver's or professional license

From Stuart G: *Principles and practice of psychiatric nursing*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2009, Mosby.

## B. Right to confidentiality ▲

1. A client has a right to confidentiality of his or her medical information; the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 ensures client confidentiality with regard to the release and electronic transmission of data.
2. Information sometimes must be released in life-threatening situations without the client's consent.
3. In the event of a specific threat against an identified individual, the health care professional has a legal obligation to warn the intended victim of a client's threats of harm.

**⚠** Except in an emergency situation, client information can be released only with the client's informed consent, which specifies the information that can be released and the time frame for which the release is valid.

## C. Involuntary admission ▲

1. Involuntary admission may be necessary when a person is mentally ill, is a danger to self or others, or is in need of psychiatric treatment or physical care.
2. Involuntary admission occurs when a person is admitted or detained involuntarily

for mental health treatment because of actual or imminent danger to self or others.

3. A client who is admitted involuntarily retains his or her right for informed consent.
4. The client retains the right to refuse treatments, including medications, unless a separate and specific treatment order is obtained from the court.
5. The client loses the right to refuse treatment when he or she poses an immediate danger to self or others, requiring immediate action by the health care team.
6. An order from a judge is required for involuntary admissions except in the case of emergency, which allows time to obtain the necessary order from a judge; in the case of all involuntary admissions, legal counsel must be provided for the client.
7. A court hearing is held by a judge within a specified time period for a client admitted involuntarily; the specific time period varies by state.
8. In most states, a client can institute a court hearing to seek an expedient judicial discharge (a writ of habeas corpus).
9. At the court hearing, a determination is made as to whether the client may be released from the hospital or detained for further treatment and evaluation, or committed to a mental health facility for an undetermined period.
10. A client has the right to treatment in the least restrictive treatment environment; if treatment objectives can be achieved by court-ordered treatment to an outpatient facility as opposed to an inpatient facility, the client has the right to be treated in the outpatient setting.
11. A client is considered legally competent unless he or she has been declared

incompetent through a legal hearing separate from the involuntary commitment hearing.

- 12.** In the course of providing nursing care and carrying out medical prescriptions, if the nurse believes that a client lacks competency to make informed decisions, action should be initiated to determine whether a legal guardian needs to be appointed by the court. ▲

#### **D.** Release from the hospital

##### **1.** Description

- a.** A client may be released voluntarily, against medical advice, or with conditions (conditional release).
- b.** A client who has sought voluntary admission has the right to demand and receive release. ▲

##### **2.** Voluntary release

- a.** In the absence of an act of self-harm or danger to others, a voluntary client should never be detained.
- b.** If a voluntary client wishes to be discharged from treatment, but is considered potentially dangerous to self or others, the HCP can order the client to be detained while legal proceedings for involuntary status are sought.
- c.** Some states provide for conditional release of involuntarily hospitalized clients; this enables the treating HCP to prescribe continued treatment on an outpatient basis as opposed to discharging the client to follow-up on his or her own initiative.

- d. Conditional release usually involves outpatient treatment for a specified period to determine the client's compliance with medication protocol, ability to meet basic needs, and ability to reintegrate into the community.
- e. An involuntary client who is released conditionally may be reinstitutionalized while the commitment is still in effect without recommencement of formal admission procedures. ▲

### 3. Discharge planning and follow-up care

- a. Discharge (unconditional release) is the termination of the client-institution relationship.
- b. This unconditional release may be ordered by the psychiatrist, court, or administration for involuntarily admitted clients and may be requested by voluntary clients at any time.
- c. In most states, the client can institute a court hearing to seek an expedient judicial discharge (writ of habeas corpus).
- d. Discharge planning and follow-up care are important for the continued well-being of the client with a mental health disorder.
- e. Aftercare case managers are used to facilitate the client's adaptation back into the community and to provide early referral if the treatment plan is unsuccessful.

**CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

***Answer:*** A coping mechanism involves any effort to decrease anxiety and can be constructive or destructive, task-oriented, or defense-oriented. The nurse should first help the client to identify the source of anxiety. Next, the nurse should explore with the client various methods to reduce anxiety, such as relaxation methods. The client may use a defense mechanism to protect himself or herself from anxiety. A defense mechanism is a coping mechanism used in an effort to protect the individual from feelings of anxiety; as anxiety increases and becomes overwhelming, the individual copes by using defense mechanisms to protect the ego and decrease anxiety. If this occurs, the nurse should facilitate appropriate and constructive use of the defense mechanism, and determine whether the defense mechanism used by the client is effective for him or her or creates additional distress. The nurse should never criticize the client's behavior or the use of defense mechanisms.

### ***Reference***

Stuart (2013), pp. 224-227.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**882.** A client with a diagnosis of major depression who has attempted suicide says to the nurse, “I should have died. I’ve always been a failure. Nothing ever goes right for me.” Which response demonstrates therapeutic communication?

1. “You have everything to live for.”
2. “Why do you see yourself as a failure?”
3. “Feeling like this is all part of being depressed.”
4. “You’ve been feeling like a failure for a while?”

**883.** When the community health nurse visits a client at home, the client states, “I haven’t slept at all the last couple of nights.” Which response by the nurse illustrates a therapeutic communication response to this client?

1. “I see.”
2. “Really?”
3. “You’re having difficulty sleeping?”
4. “Sometimes, I have trouble sleeping too.”

**884.** A client experiencing disturbed thought processes believes that his food is being poisoned. Which communication technique should the nurse use to encourage the client to eat?

1. Using open-ended questions and silence
2. Sharing personal preference regarding food choices
3. Documenting reasons why the client does not want to eat

4. Offering opinions about the necessity of adequate nutrition

**885.** A client admitted to a mental health unit for treatment of psychotic behavior spends hours at the locked exit door shouting, “Let me out. There’s nothing wrong with me. I don’t belong here.” What defense mechanism is the client implementing?

1. Denial
2. Projection
3. Regression
4. Rationalization

**886.** A client diagnosed with terminal cancer says to the nurse, “I’m going to die, and I wish my family would stop hoping for a cure! I get so angry when they carry on like this. After all, I’m the one who’s dying.” Which response by the nurse is therapeutic?

1. “Have you shared your feelings with your family?”
2. “I think we should talk more about your anger with your family.”
3. “You’re feeling angry that your family continues to hope for you to be cured?”
4. “You are probably very depressed, which is understandable with such a diagnosis.”

**887.** On review of the client’s record, the nurse notes that the admission was voluntary. Based on this information, the nurse anticipates which client behavior?

1. Fearfulness regarding treatment measures.

2. Anger and aggressiveness directed toward others.
3. An understanding of the pathology and symptoms of the diagnosis.
4. A willingness to participate in the planning of the care and treatment plan.

**888.** A client admitted voluntarily for treatment of an anxiety disorder demands to be released from the hospital. Which action should the nurse take **initially**?

1. Contact the client's health care provider (HCP).
2. Call the client's family to arrange for transportation.
3. Attempt to persuade the client to stay "for only a few more days."
4. Tell the client that leaving would likely result in an involuntary commitment.

**889.** When reviewing the admission assessment, the nurse notes that a client was admitted to the mental health unit involuntarily. Based on this type of admission, the nurse should provide which intervention for this client?

1. Monitor closely for harm to self or others
2. Assist in completing an application for admission
3. Supply the client with written information about their mental illness
4. Provide an opportunity for the family to discuss why they felt the admission was needed

**890.** The nurse is preparing a client for the termination phase of the nurse-client relationship. The nurse prepares to implement which nursing task that is **most appropriate** for this phase?

1. Planning short-term goals

2. Making appropriate referrals
3. Developing realistic solutions
4. Identifying expected outcomes

**891.** The nurse is providing care to a client admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of acute anxiety disorder. The client says to the nurse, “I have a secret that I want to tell you. You won’t tell anyone about it, will you?” What is the **most appropriate** nursing response?

1. “No, I won’t tell anyone.”
2. “I cannot promise to keep a secret.”
3. “It depends on what the secret is about.”
4. “If you tell me the secret, I may need to document it.”

**892.** The nurse employed in a mental health clinic is greeted by a neighbor in a local grocery store. The neighbor says to the nurse, “How is Carol doing? She is my best friend and is seen at your clinic every week.” Which is the **most appropriate** nursing response?

1. “I cannot discuss any client situation with you.”
2. “If you want to know about Carol, you need to ask her yourself.”
3. “Only because you’re worried about a friend, I’ll tell you that she is improving.”
4. “Being her friend, you know she is having a difficult time and deserves her privacy.”

**893.** The nurse calls security and has physical restraints applied when a client who was admitted voluntarily becomes both physically and verbally abusive while demanding to be discharged from the hospital. Which represents the possible legal ramifications for the nurse associated with these interventions? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Libel
2. Battery
3. Assault
4. Slander
5. False imprisonment

**894.** The nurse in the mental health unit recognizes which as being therapeutic communication techniques? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Restating
2. Listening
3. Asking the client, “Why?”
4. Maintaining neutral responses
5. Providing acknowledgment and feedback
6. Giving advice and approval or disapproval

**895.** A client being seen in the emergency department immediately after being sexually assaulted appears calm and controlled. The nurse analyzes this behavior as indicating which defense mechanism?

1. Denial
2. Projection
3. Rationalization
4. Intellectualization

**896.** A client's unresolved feelings related to loss would be **most likely** observed during which phase of the therapeutic nurse-client relationship?

1. Trusting
2. Working
3. Orientation
4. Termination

**897.** The nurse is working with a client who despite making a heroic effort was unable to rescue a neighbor trapped in a house fire. Which client-focused action should the nurse engage in during the working phase of the nurse-client relationship?

1. Exploring the client's ability to function
2. Exploring the client's potential for self-harm
3. Inquiring about the client's perception or appraisal of why the rescue was unsuccessful
4. Inquiring about and examining the client's feelings for any that may block adaptive coping

**898.** Which statement demonstrates the **best** understanding of the nurse's role regarding ensuring that each client's rights are respected?

1. “Autonomy is the fundamental right of each and every client.”
2. “A client’s rights are guaranteed by both state and federal laws.”
3. “Being respectful and concerned will ensure that I’m attentive to my clients’ rights.”
4. “Regardless of the client’s condition, all nurses have the duty to respect client rights.”

## ANSWERS

882. 4

**Rationale:** Responding to the feelings expressed by a client is an effective therapeutic communication technique.

The correct option is an example of the use of restating. The remaining options block communication because they minimize the client’s experience and do not facilitate exploration of the client’s expressed feelings. In addition, use of the word “why” is nontherapeutic.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of **therapeutic communication techniques** to direct you to the option that directly addresses the client’s feelings and concerns. Also, the correct option is the only one stated in the form of a question that is open-ended; it will encourage the verbalization of feelings.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Communication

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 121, 123.

**883. 3**

**Rationale:** The correct option uses the therapeutic communication technique of restatement. Although restatement is a technique that has a prompting component to it, it repeats the client's major theme, which assists the nurse to obtain a more specific perception of the problem from the client. The remaining options are not therapeutic responses since none encourage the client to expand on the problem. Offering personal experiences moves the focus away from the client and onto the nurse.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of **therapeutic communication techniques**. "I see" is a general lead but does not provide the client with the opportunity to continue the discussion. "Really" can be a response that may make the client feel that he or she is not believable. Providing personal experiences focuses on the nurse's problem and thus minimizes the client's concerns. The correct option will provide the perception of the problem from the client's perspective.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Mood and Affect

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 72; Varcarolis (2013), pp. 121, 123.

**884. 1**

**Rationale:** Open-ended questions and silence are strategies used to encourage clients to discuss their problems.

Sharing personal food preferences is not a client-centered intervention. The remaining options are not helpful to the client because they do not encourage the client to express feelings. The nurse should not offer opinions and should encourage the client to identify the reasons for the behavior.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of **therapeutic communication techniques**. First eliminate options that do not support the client's expression of feelings. Any option that is not client-centered should be eliminated next. Focusing on the client's feelings will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Psychosis

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 17, 27.

**885. 1**

**Rationale:** Denial is refusal to admit to a painful reality, which is treated as if it does not exist. In projection, a person unconsciously rejects emotionally unacceptable features and attributes them to other persons, objects, or situations. Regression allows the client to return to an earlier, more comforting, although less mature, way of behaving. Rationalization is justifying illogical or unreasonable ideas, actions, or feelings by developing acceptable explanations that satisfy the teller and the listener.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, defense mechanisms. The words in the question that should direct

you to the correct option are *There's nothing wrong with me*. Select the option that recognizes the client's attempt to avoid looking at the reality of the situation. The other options lack this characteristic.

**Review:** Defense mechanisms

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Coping; Psychosis

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 226.

**886. 3**

**Rationale:** Restating is a therapeutic communication technique in which the nurse repeats what the client says to show understanding and to review what was said. While it is appropriate for the nurse to attempt to assess the client's ability to discuss feelings openly with family members, it does not help the client discuss the feelings causing the anger. The nurse's attempt to focus on the central issue of anger is premature. The nurse would never make a judgment regarding the reason for the client's feeling; this is nontherapeutic in the one-to-one relationship.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of **therapeutic communication techniques**. The correct option is the only one that identifies the use of a therapeutic technique (restatement) and focuses on the client's feelings.

**Review:** Therapeutic communication techniques

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Family Dynamics

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 121, 123.

**887. 4**

**Rationale:** In general, clients seek voluntary admission. If a client seeks voluntary admission, the most likely expectation is that the client will participate in the treatment program since they are actively seeking help. The remaining options are not characteristics of this type of admission. Fearfulness, anger, and aggressiveness are more characteristic of an involuntary admission. Voluntary admission does not guarantee a client's understanding of their illness, only of their desire for help.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, voluntary admission. This should direct you to the correct option.

Note the relationship between the word *voluntary* and the correct option.

**Review:** Various types of hospital **admission processes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Mood and Affect

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 82-83.

**888. 1**

**Rationale:** In general, clients seek voluntary admission. Voluntary clients have the right to demand and obtain release. The nurse needs to be familiar with the state and facility policies and procedures. The best nursing action is to contact the HCP, who has the authority to discuss discharge with the client. While arranging for safe

transportation is appropriate it is premature in this situation and should be done only with the client's permission.

While it is appropriate to discuss why the client feels the need to leave and the possible outcomes of leaving against medical advice, attempting to get the client to agree to staying "a few more days" has little value and will not likely be successful. Many states require that the client submit a written release notice to the facility staff members, who reevaluate the client's condition for possible conversion to involuntary status if necessary, according to criteria established by law. While this is a possibility, it should not be used as a threat to the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initially*. Noting the type of hospital admission will assist in directing you to the correct option while eliminating those that are unlikely to occur. Calling the family should be eliminated, based on the issues of client rights and confidentiality. To "persuade" a client to stay in the hospital is inappropriate. Threatening the client is inappropriate and illegal.

**Review:** Various types of hospital **admission** and **discharge processes**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Health Care Law

**References:** Stuart (2013), p. 115; Varcarolis (2013), p. 83.

**889. 1**

**Rationale:** Involuntary admission is necessary when a person is a danger to self or others or is in need of psychiatric treatment regardless of the client's willingness to consent to the hospitalization. A written request is a component of a voluntary admission. Providing written information regarding the illness is likely premature initially. The family may have had no role to play in the client's admission.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, involuntary admission. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory**: safety is the priority if a physiological need does not exist. This should direct you to the correct option. Also, note that the remaining options are not always true of an involuntary admission.

**Review: Involuntary admission**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Interpersonal Violence; Safety

**References:** Keltner, Schwecke, Bostro (2011), p. 37; Stuart (2013), p. 113.

## 890. 2

**Rationale:** Tasks of the termination phase include evaluating client performance, evaluating achievement of expected outcomes, evaluating future needs, making appropriate referrals, and dealing with the common behaviors associated with termination. The remaining options identify tasks appropriate for the working phase of the relationship.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focusing on the **subject**, the termination phase, should direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Phases of the nurse-client relationship**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Professionalism

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 20-21.

**891. 2**

**Rationale:** The nurse should never promise to keep a secret. Secrets are never appropriate in a therapeutic relationship. The nurse needs to be honest and tell the client that a promise cannot be made to keep the secret. The remaining options are inappropriate responses since they either promise to keep the secret or provide the criteria for when a secret may be appropriately kept.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Understanding the need for open, honest communication with the client will direct you to the correct option. The remaining options can be eliminated because they do not foster the nurse-client relationship.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Ethics

**References:** Swearingen (2012), pp. 675-676; Varcarolis (2013), p. 140.

**892. 1**

**Rationale:** The nurse is required to maintain confidentiality regarding the client and the client's care. Confidentiality is basic to the therapeutic relationship and is a client's right. The most appropriate response to the neighbor is the

statement of that responsibility in a direct, but polite manner. A blunt statement that does not acknowledge why the nurse cannot reveal client information may be taken as disrespectful and uncaring. The remaining options identify statements that do not maintain client confidentiality.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focusing on maintaining confidentiality will direct you to the correct option. This focus will also assist you in eliminating options that inappropriately give such information without being unnecessarily blunt or rude.

**Review:** Confidentiality issues

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Health Care Law

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 142.

❖ 893. 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** False imprisonment is an act with the intent to confine a person to a specific area. The nurse can be charged with false imprisonment if the nurse prohibits a client from leaving the hospital if the client has been admitted voluntarily and if no agency or legal policies exist for detaining the client. Assault and battery are related to the act of restraining the client in a situation that did not meet criteria for such an intervention. Libel and slander are not applicable here since the nurse did not write or verbally make untrue statements about the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, legal ramifications of nursing actions related to hospital admission. Noting the words *admitted voluntarily* will assist you in selecting the options related to inappropriately preventing the client from leaving the hospital; a right to which a voluntarily committed client is entitled. The remaining options

do not relate to acts that prevent the client from leaving the hospital.

**Review:** **Client rights** related to hospital admission

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Law; Safety

**References:** Keltner, Schwecke, Bostro (2011), p. 37; Varcarolis (2013), p. 89.

❖ 894. 1, 2, 4, 5

**Rationale:** Therapeutic communication techniques include listening, maintaining silence, maintaining neutral responses, using broad openings and open-ended questions, focusing and refocusing, restating, clarifying and validating, sharing perceptions, reflecting, providing acknowledgment and feedback, giving information, presenting reality, encouraging formulation of a plan of action, providing nonverbal encouragement, and summarizing. Asking why is often interpreted as being accusatory by the client and should also be avoided. Providing advice or giving approval or disapproval are barriers to communication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of **therapeutic communication techniques**. This will assist you in both selecting the correct answers and eliminating the examples of nontherapeutic communication.

**Review:** **Therapeutic** and **nontherapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Communication

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 120-122.

**895. 1**

**Rationale:** Denial is refusal to admit to a painful reality and may be a response by a victim of sexual abuse. In this case the client is not acknowledging the trauma of the assault either verbally or nonverbally. Projection is transferring one's internal feelings, thoughts, and unacceptable ideas and traits to someone else. Rationalization is justifying the unacceptable attributes about oneself. Intellectualization is the excessive use of abstract thinking or generalizations to decrease painful thinking.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a defense mechanism, and note the words *calm* and *controlled*.

These behaviors indicate denial in a sexually abused victim.

**Review: Defense mechanisms**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Coping

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 172, 426-429.

**896. 4**

**Rationale:** In the termination phase, the relationship comes to a close. Ending treatment sometimes may be traumatic for clients who have come to value the relationship and the help. Because loss is an issue, any unresolved

feelings related to loss may resurface during this phase. The remaining options are not specifically associated with this issue of unresolved feelings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most likely* and the words *unresolved* and *loss* in the question.

Considering the phases of the therapeutic nurse-client relationship will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Phases of the nurse-client relationship**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Professionalism

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 20-21, 562.

**897. 4**

**Rationale:** The client must first deal with feelings and negative responses before the client can work through the meaning of the crisis. The correct option pertains directly to the client's feelings and is client-focused. The remaining options do not directly focus on or address the client's feelings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the working phase of the nurse-client relationship. Also, note the words *client-focused action*. Think about the interventions that occur in this phase. Select the option that focuses on the feelings of the client.

**Review: Phases of the nurse-client relationship**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process: Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Coping

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 19, 21.

**898. 3**

**Rationale:** The nurse needs to respect and have concern for the client; this is vital to protecting the client's rights.

While it is true the autonomy is a basic client right, there are other rights that must also be both respected and facilitated. State and federal laws do protect a client's rights, but it is sensitivity to those rights that will ensure that the nurse secures these rights for the client. It is a fact that safeguarding a client's rights is a nursing responsibility, but stating that fact does not show understanding or respect for the concept.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Focus on the broad issue of client rights and how the nurse will respect and preserve these rights. This is the **umbrella option**. Also note the word *respected* in the question and *respectful* in the correct option.

**Review:** The nurse's role with regard to **client rights**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Professionalism

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 32, 38.



## CHAPTER 73

# Models of Care

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

The nurse is asked to develop a group therapy session for clients with voluntary admission to the mental health unit. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 1034.*

### I. Milieu Therapy

#### A. Description

1. The **milieu** refers to the physical and social environment in which an individual is receiving treatment. ▲
2. Milieu therapy uses a safe environment to meet the individual client's treatment needs.
3. Safety is the most important priority in managing the milieu.
4. Milieu therapy is staffed by persons educated to provide support, understanding, and individual attention; all encounters with the client have the goal of being

“therapeutic.”

5. All members of the treatment team contribute to the planning and functioning of the milieu; the team generally includes a registered nurse, social worker, exercise therapist, recreational therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, occupational therapist, and clinical nurse specialist or nurse practitioner.
6. All members of the treatment team are viewed as significant and valuable to the client’s successful treatment outcomes.

## **B. Focus of milieu therapy**

1. The physical and social environment (living, learning, working environment) is used to effect a positive change directed toward accomplishing the client’s treatment goals.
2. Community meetings, activity groups, social skills groups, and physical exercise programs are used to accomplish treatment goals.
3. One-to-one relationships with staff are used to examine client behaviors, feelings, and interactions within the context of the therapeutic group activities. ▲

▲ The focus of milieu therapy is to empower the client through involvement in setting his or her own goals and to develop purposeful relationships with the staff to assist in meeting these goals.

## **II. Interpersonal Psychotherapy**

### **A. Description**

1. A treatment modality that uses a therapeutic relationship to modify the client’s feelings, attitudes, and behaviors.

2. Therapeutic communication forms the foundation of the therapist-client relationship.

## **B. Focus of interpersonal psychotherapy**

1. To establish a contract, clarify roles, and work within an agreed-on time frame to help meet the client's goals
2. The therapist-client relationship is used as a way for the client to examine other relationships in his or her life.

## **C. Levels of psychotherapy**

### **1. Supportive therapy**

- a. Allows the client to express feelings, explore alternatives, and make decisions in a safe, caring environment
- b. May be needed briefly or over a period of years
- c. No plan exists to introduce new methods of coping; instead, the therapist reinforces the client's existing  **coping mechanisms** .

### **2. Reeducative therapy**

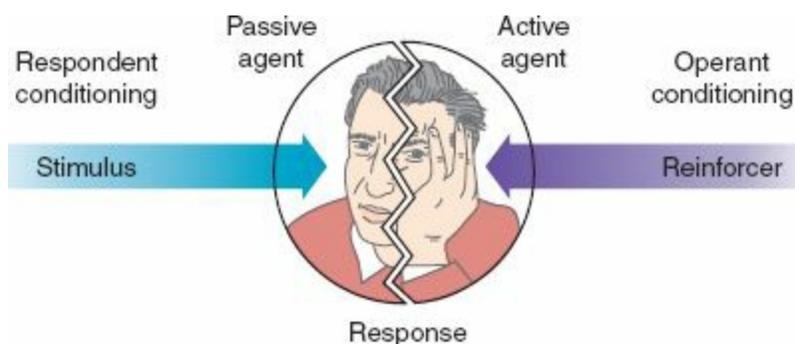
- a. Involves learning new ways of perceiving and behaving
- b. The client explores alternatives in a planned, systematic way; this requires a longer period of therapy than supportive therapy.
- c. The client enters into a contract that specifies desired changes of behavior.
- d. Techniques may include short-term psychotherapy, reality therapy, cognitive restructuring, behavior modification, and development of coping skills.

### **3. Reconstructive therapy**

- a. Psychotherapy or psychoanalysis is used to make major changes in the client's life.
- b. Several years of therapy may be required, and focus is on all aspects of the client's life.
- c. Emotional and cognitive restructuring of self takes place.
- d. Positive outcomes include a greater understanding of self and others, more emotional freedom, and the development of potential abilities. ▲

### III. Behavior Therapy

- A. Treatment approach that uses the principles of skinnerian (operant conditioning) or pavlovian (classical conditioning) behavior theory to bring about behavioral change
- B. The belief is that most behaviors are learned.
- C. *Operant conditioning* refers to the manipulation of selected reinforcers to elicit and strengthen desired behavioral responses; the *reinforcer* refers to the consequence of the behavior, which is defined as anything that increases the occurrence of a behavior (Fig. 73-1).



**FIGURE 73-1** Respondent versus operant conditioning. (From Varcarolis E, Carson V, Shoemaker N: *Foundations of psychiatric mental health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis,

2010, Saunders.)

- D.** In classical conditioning (respondent conditioning), the individual responds to a stimulus, but is basically a passive agent (see Fig. 73-1). ▲
- E.** Desensitization is a form of behavior therapy whereby exposure to increasing increments of a feared stimulus is paired with increasing levels of relaxation, which helps reduce the intensity of fear to a more tolerable level.
- F.** Aversion therapy is a form of behavior therapy whereby negative reinforcement is used to change behavior; a stimulus attractive to the client is paired with an unpleasant event in hopes of endowing the stimulus with negative properties and dissuading the behavior.
- G.** Modeling is behavioral therapy whereby the therapist acts as a role model for specific identified behaviors so that the client learns through imitation.

#### **IV. Cognitive Therapy**

- A.** An active, directive, time-limited, structured approach used to treat a variety of disorders, including anxiety, depression, and phobias
- B.** It is based on the principle that how individuals feel and behave is determined by how they think about the world and their place in it; their cognitions are based on the attitudes or assumptions developed from previous experiences.
- C.** Therapeutic techniques are designed to identify, reality-test, and correct distorted conceptualizations and the dysfunctional beliefs underlying these cognitions.
- D.** Rational emotive therapy is a type of cognitive therapy in which the therapist focuses

on how irrational beliefs and thoughts contribute to psychological distress.

**E.** The therapist helps the individual change the way he or she thinks, relieving symptoms. ▲

## **V. Group Development and Group Therapy** ▲

**A.** Description: Group therapy involves a therapist and, ideally, five to eight members working on their individual goals within the context of a group, which presumably increases the opportunity for feedback and support.

**B.** Stages of group development

### **1.** Initial stage

- a.** During this stage, group development involves superficial rather than open and trusting communication.
- b.** Members become acquainted with each other and search for similarities between themselves and other group members.
- c.** Members may be unclear about the purpose or goals of the group.
- d.** Group norms, roles, and responsibilities are established.
- e.** The work of termination begins in this stage and is expanded upon throughout the working stage. ▲

### **2.** Working stage

- a.** During this stage, the real work of the group is accomplished.
- b.** Members are familiar with each other, the group leader, and the group roles and feel free to address and attempt to solve their problems.
- c.** Conflict and cooperation surface during the group's work as the members learn

to work with each other.

### 3. Termination stage

- a. Begins with the initial meeting
- b. Members' feelings are explored regarding their accomplishments and the impending termination of the group.
- c. The termination stage provides an opportunity for members to learn to deal more realistically and comfortably with this normal part of human experience.

## C. Group therapy models (*Note:* These models apply to individual or group psychotherapy.)

### 1. Psychoanalytical group psychotherapy

- a. The therapist holds a main position.
- b. Each client in the group has a relationship with the therapist.
- c. Communication is focused on three levels—unconscious, semiconscious, and conscious information.

### 2. Transactional analysis

- a. The three ego states of the individual are examined.
- b. The goal is for individuals in the group to communicate from the proper ego states for the situation and responses of others, lessening conflict and promoting mature relationships.

### 3. Rogerian therapy

- a. The therapist's goal is to help the members express their feelings toward one another during group sessions.

b. The therapist's role is one of encouraging the expression of feelings, clarifying these feelings with clients, and accepting clients and their feelings nonjudgmentally.

#### 4. Gestalt therapy

a. Emphasis is on the "here and now."

b. Emphasizes self-expression, self-exploration, and self-awareness in the present

c. The client and therapist focus on everyday problems and try to solve them.

d. The individual becomes aware of the total self and the surrounding environment.

e. Awareness of the problem renders the client capable of change.

f. The therapist's role is to help the members express their feelings and grow from their experiences.

5. Interpersonal group therapy: Promotes the individual's comfort with others in the group, which then transfers to other relationships 

6. Self-help or support groups ([Box 73-1](#))

### **BOX 73-1** Self-Help and Support Groups

- Adult Children of Alcoholics
- Al-Anon
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Bereavement groups
- Cancer support groups

- Co-Dependents Anonymous
- Gamblers Anonymous
- Groups to help deal with unexpected body image changes, such as mastectomy or colostomy
- Groups to help deal with caring for family members
- Mental illness support groups
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Overeaters Anonymous
- Parents without Partners
- Recovery groups, such as for individuals who have experienced trauma
- Smoking cessation groups

 Support groups are based on the premise that individuals who have experienced and are insightful concerning a problem are able to help others who have a similar problem.

## **VI. Family Therapy**

- A.** Family therapy is a specific intervention mode based on the premise that the member with the presenting symptoms signals the presence of problems in the entire family; this premise also assumes that a change in one member will bring about changes in other members.
- B.** The therapist works to assist family members to identify and express their thoughts and feelings; define family roles and rules; try new, more productive styles of

relating; and restore strength to the family.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The nurse should first identify the individuals who should be a part of the group. It may be necessary, depending on the agency protocol, to have a health care provider's prescription for attending group therapy. Next, the nurse should inform the selected individuals of the prescribed therapy and invite them to participate. Ideally, there should be five to eight members working on his or her individual goals within the context of a group, which presumably increases the opportunity for feedback and support. At the first meeting, the nurse should discuss the stages of the group and the expectations of each member.

### **Reference**

Varcarolis (2013), pp. 39-40, 42.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**899.** The nurse employed in a mental health unit of a hospital is the leader of a group psychotherapy session. What is the nurse's role during the termination stage of group development?

1. Acknowledging that the group has identified goals
2. Encouraging the accomplishment of the group's work
3. Acknowledging the contributions of each group member
4. Encouraging members to become acquainted with one another

**900.** Which are characteristics of the termination stage of group development? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. The group evaluates the experience.
2. The real work of the group is accomplished.
3. Group interaction involves superficial conversation.
4. Group members become acquainted with each other.
5. Some structuring of group norms, roles, and responsibilities takes place.
6. The group explores members' feelings about the group and the impending separation.

**901.** When a client is admitted to an inpatient mental health unit with the diagnosis of anorexia nervosa, a cognitive behavioral approach is used as part of the treatment plan. The nurse understands that which is the purpose of this approach?

1. Providing a supportive environment

2. Examining intrapsychic conflicts and past issues
3. Emphasizing social interaction with clients who withdraw
4. Helping the client to examine dysfunctional thoughts and beliefs

**902.** The nurse understands that which **best** describes Gestalt therapy?

1. It emphasizes self-expression, self-exploration, and self-awareness in the present.
2. It promotes the individual's comfort in the group, which then transfers to other relationships.
3. The therapist focuses on how irrational beliefs and thoughts contribute to psychological distress.
4. The therapist's goal is to help others express their feelings toward one another during group sessions.

**903.** A client is preparing to attend a Gamblers Anonymous meeting for the first time.

The nurse should tell the client that which is the first step in this 12-step program?

1. Admitting to having a problem
2. Substituting other activities for gambling
3. Stating that the gambling will be stopped
4. Discontinuing relationships with people who gamble

**904.** Which describes the **primary** focus of milieu therapy?

1. A form of behavior modification therapy

2. A cognitive approach to changing behavior
3. A living, learning, or working environment
4. A behavioral approach to changing behavior

905. While being treated, a client is introduced to short periods of exposure to the phobic object while in a relaxed state. What term is used to describe this form of behavior modification?

1. Milieu therapy
2. Aversion therapy
3. Self-control therapy
4. Systematic desensitization

906. A client is planning to attend Overeaters Anonymous. Which statement by the client indicates a **need for additional information** regarding this self-help group?

1. "The leader is a nurse or psychiatrist."
2. "The members provide support to each other."
3. "People who have a similar problem are able to help others."
4. "It is designed to serve people who have a common problem."

907. What is the **most appropriate** nursing action to help manage a manic client who is monopolizing a group therapy session?

1. Ask the client to leave the group for this session only.
2. Refer the client to another group that includes other manic clients.

3. Tell the client to stop monopolizing in a firm but compassionate manner.
4. Thank the client for the input, but inform the client that now others need a chance to contribute.

**908.** Which type of therapeutic approach has the characteristic that all team members are seen as equally important in helping clients meet their goals?

1. Milieu therapy
2. Interpersonal therapy
3. Behavior modification
4. Rational emotive therapy

## ANSWERS

**899. 3**

**Rationale:** In the termination stage, the group leader's task is to acknowledge the contributions of each member and the experience of the group as a whole. In this stage, the group members prepare for separation and assist each other to prepare for the future. Acknowledging that the group has identified goals and encouraging group bonding both occur during the initial stage. Encouraging accomplishment of the group's work is appropriate during the working stage.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the termination stage. Think about the definition of this term and the characteristics of this stage to answer correctly.

**Review:** Stages of **group development**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration, Professionalism

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 624-625.

❖ **900. 1, 6**

**Rationale:** The stages of group development include the initial stage, the working stage, and the termination stage.

During the initial stage, the group members become acquainted with each other, and some structuring of group

norms, roles, and responsibilities takes place. During the initial stage, group interaction involves superficial

conversation. During the working stage, the real work of the group is accomplished. During the termination stage,

the group evaluates the experience and explores members' feelings about the group and the impending separation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the termination stage. Reading each item presented and recalling the stages of group development will assist you in answering this question.

**Review:** Stages of **group development**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration, Communication

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 624-625.

**901. 4**

**Rationale:** Cognitive behavioral therapy is used to help the client identify and examine dysfunctional thoughts and to identify and examine values and beliefs that maintain these thoughts. The remaining options, while therapeutic in certain situations, are not the focus of cognitive behavioral therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the purpose of a cognitive behavioral approach. Note the relationship of the word *cognitive* in the question and *thoughts* in the correct option.

**Review:** **Cognitive behavioral therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Communication

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), pp. 598, 600-601; Stuart (2013), pp. 490-491.

## 902. 1

**Rationale:** Gestalt therapy emphasizes self-expression, self-exploration, and self-awareness in the present. The client and therapist focus on everyday problems and try to solve them. Interpersonal group therapy promotes the individual's comfort in the group, which then transfers to other relationships. In rational emotive therapy, the therapist focuses on how irrational beliefs and thoughts contribute to psychological distress. In Rogerian therapy, the therapist's goal is to help others express their feelings toward one another during group sessions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Recalling that Gestalt therapy focuses on the “here and now” will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Gestalt therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration, Communication

**Reference:** *Mosby's dictionary of medicine, nursing & health professions* (2013), pp. 760-761.

### 903. 1

**Rationale:** The first step in the 12-step program is to admit that a problem exists. Substituting other activities for gambling may be a strategy but it is not the first step. The remaining options are not realistic strategies for the initial step in a 12-step program.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the first step in the 12-step program. This will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** **12-step program**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction, Caregiving

**References:** Stuart (2013), p. 467.

### 904. 3

**Rationale:** Milieu therapy, or “therapeutic community,” has as its focus a living, learning, or working environment.

Such therapy may be based on numerous therapeutic modalities ranging from structured behavioral therapy to spontaneous, humanistically oriented approaches. Although milieu therapy may include behavioral approaches, the correct option describes its primary focus.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *primary*. Note that the incorrect options are **comparable or alike** and are specific to a type of therapy.

**Review:** **Milieu therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Collaboration

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 109.

**905. 4**

**Rationale:** Systematic desensitization is a form of therapy used when the client is introduced to short periods of exposure to the phobic object while in a relaxed state. Exposure is gradually increased until the anxiety about or fear of the object or situation has ceased. Milieu management refers to providing a safe, therapeutic environment and is applicable to not just this scenario. The remaining options are incorrect since they do not involve the intervention described.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a specific type of therapy. Focusing on the words *introduced to short periods of exposure* will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Systematic desensitization**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Caregiving

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 189; Varcarolis (2013), p. 31.

### 906. 1

**Rationale:** The sponsor of a self-help group is an experienced member of the group. The nurse or psychiatrist may be asked by the group to serve as a resource, but would not be the leader of the group. The remaining options are characteristics of a self-help group.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for additional information* in the question. These words indicate a **negative event query** and the need to select the incorrect statement as the answer. Next, focus on the **subject**, a self-help group. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Self-help group**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination, Collaboration

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 175, 626.

### 907. 4

**Rationale:** If a client is monopolizing the group, the nurse must be direct and decisive. The best action is to thank

the client and suggest that the client stop talking and try listening to others. Although telling the client to stop monopolizing in a firm but compassionate manner may be a direct response, the correct option is more specific and provides direction for the client. The remaining options are inappropriate since they are not directed towards helping the client in a therapeutic manner.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Use your understanding of therapeutic communication techniques to assist in directing you to the correct option. Note that the correct option is specific and provides direction for the client.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Leadership, Professionalism

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), pp. 611-612; Stuart (2013), pp. 618-619.

**908. 1**

**Rationale:** All treatment team members are viewed as significant and valuable to the client's successful treatment outcomes in milieu therapy. Interpersonal therapy is based on a one-to-one or group therapy approach in which the therapist-client relationship is often used as a way for the client to examine other relationships in his or her life.

Behavior modification is based on rewards and punishment. Rational emotive therapy deals with the correction of distorted thinking.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, characteristics of a type of therapy. Note the relationship between the words *helping clients meet their goals* and the correct option.

**Review:** Types of therapy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination, Caregiving

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 109. Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), pp. 286, 312.



## CHAPTER 74

# Mental Health Disorders

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

A client is experiencing visual hallucinations. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 1054.*

### **I. Anxiety**

#### **A. Description**

1. A normal response to stress
2. It is a subjective experience that includes feelings of apprehension, uneasiness, uncertainty, or dread.
3. Occurs as a result of a threat that may be misperceived or misinterpreted or of a threat to identity or self-esteem.
4. Anxiety may result when values are threatened or preceding new experiences.

#### **B. Types of anxiety**

1. Normal: A healthy type of anxiety

2. Acute: Precipitated by imminent loss or change that threatens one's sense of security

3. Chronic: Anxiety that persists as a characteristic response to daily activities ▲

### C. Levels of anxiety

#### 1. Mild

- a. Mild anxiety is associated with the tension of everyday life.
- b. The individual is alert.
- c. The perceptual field is increased.
- d. Mild anxiety can be motivating, produce growth, enhance creativity, and increase learning. ▲

#### 2. Moderate

- a. The focus is on immediate concerns.
- b. Moderate anxiety narrows the perceptual field.
- c. Selective inattentiveness occurs.
- d. Learning and problem solving still occur. ▲

#### 3. Severe

- a. Severe anxiety is a feeling that something bad is about to happen.
- b. A significant narrowing in the perceptual field occurs.
- c. Focus is on minute or scattered details.
- d. All behavior is aimed at relieving the anxiety.
- e. Learning and problem solving are impossible.
- f. The individual needs direction to focus. ▲

#### 4. Panic

- a. Panic is associated with dread and terror and a sense of impending doom.
- b. The personality is disorganized.
- c. The individual is unable to communicate or function effectively.
- d. Increased motor activity occurs.
- e. Loss of rational thoughts with distorted perception occurs.
- f. Inability to concentrate occurs.
- g. If prolonged, panic can lead to exhaustion and death. ▲

**D.** Interventions: General nursing measures (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#))

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take for a Client Experiencing Anxiety

1. Provide a calm environment, decrease environmental stimuli, and stay with the client.
2. Ask the client to identify what and how he or she feels.
3. Encourage the client to describe and discuss his or her feelings.
4. Help the client to identify the causes of the feelings if he or she is having difficulty doing so.
5. Listen to the client for expressions of helplessness and hopelessness.
6. Document the event, significant information, actions taken and follow-up actions, and the client's response.

If a client experiences anxiety, immediate actions are to provide a calm environment, decrease environmental stimuli, and stay with the client. Excess stimulation would escalate the anxiety. Next, asking the client to identify what and how he or she feels and helping the client to identify the causes of the feelings help to increase the client's awareness of the connection between behaviors and feelings. This awareness helps to decrease the anxiety. While listening to the client, the nurse observes for expressions of helplessness and hopelessness that could indicate self-harm intentions. The nurse provides follow-up care as needed, based on observations and assessments. Finally, the nurse documents the event, significant information, actions taken and follow-up actions, and the client's response.

### ***Reference***

Varcarolis E: *Essentials of psychiatric mental health nursing: A communication approach to evidence-based care*, ed 2, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders, p. 212.

1. Recognize the anxiety.
2. Establish trust.
3. Protect the client.
4. Do not criticize **coping mechanisms**.
5. Do not force the client into situations that provoke anxiety.
6. Modify the environment by setting limits or limiting interaction with others.
7. Provide creative outlets.

8. Monitor for signs of impending destructive behavior.
9. Promote relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises or guided imagery.
10. Monitor vital signs, and administer antianxiety medications as prescribed.

 The immediate nursing action for a client with anxiety is to decrease stimuli in the environment and provide a calm and quiet environment.

**E. Interventions: Mild to moderate levels** 

1. Help the client identify the anxiety.
2. Encourage the client to talk about feelings and concerns.
3. Help the client identify thoughts and feelings that occurred before the onset of anxiety.
4. Encourage problem solving.
5. Encourage gross motor exercise.

**F. Interventions: Severe to panic levels** 

1. Reduce the anxiety quickly.
2. Use a calm manner.
3. Always remain with the client.
4. Minimize environmental stimuli.
5. Provide clear, simple statements.
6. Use a low-pitched voice.
7. Attend to the physical needs of the client.
8. Provide gross motor activity. 

9. Administer antianxiety medications as prescribed.

## II. Generalized Anxiety Disorder

### A. Description

1. Generalized anxiety disorder is an unrealistic anxiety about everyday worries that persists over time and is not associated with another psychiatric or medical disorder.
2. Physical symptoms occur.

### B. Assessment

1. Restlessness and inability to relax
2. Episodes of trembling and shakiness
3. Chronic muscular tension
4. Dizziness
5. Inability to concentrate
6. Chronic fatigue and sleep problems
7. Inability to recognize the connection between the anxiety and physical symptoms
8. Client is focused on the physical discomfort. ▲

### C. Panic disorder

#### 1. Description

- a. Panic disorder produces a sudden onset of feelings of intense apprehension and dread.
- b. The cause usually cannot be identified.

c. Severe, recurrent, intermittent anxiety attacks lasting 5 to 30 minutes occur.

## 2. Assessment

a. Choking sensation

b. Labored breathing

c. Pounding heart

d. Chest pain

e. Dizziness

f. Nausea

g. Blurred vision

h. Numbness or tingling of the extremities

i. Sense of unreality and helplessness

j. Fear of being trapped

k. Fear of dying

## 3. Interventions

a. Remain with the client.

b. Attend to physical symptoms.

c. Assist the client to identify the thoughts that aroused the anxiety and identify the basis for these thoughts.

d. Assist the client to change the unrealistic thoughts to more realistic thoughts.

e. Use cognitive restructuring to replace distorted thinking.

f. Administer antianxiety medications if prescribed.

### III. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

A. Description: After experiencing a psychologically traumatic event, the individual is prone to reexperience the event and have recurrent and intrusive dreams or flashbacks. ▲

#### B. Stressors

1. Natural disaster
2. Terrorist attack
3. Combat experiences
4. Accidents
5. Rape
6. Crime or violence
7. Sexual, physical, and emotional **abuse**
8. Reexperiencing the event as flashbacks

#### C. Assessment

1. Emotional numbness
2. Detachment
3. Depression
4. Anxiety
5. Sleep disturbances and nightmares
6. Flashbacks of event
7. Hypervigilance
8. Guilt about surviving the event

9. Poor concentration and avoidance of activities that trigger the memory of the event

**D. Interventions (Box 74-1)**

**BOX 74-1 Interventions for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder**

Be nonjudgmental and supportive.

Assure client that his or her feelings and behaviors are normal reactions.

Assist client to recognize the association between his or her feelings and behaviors and the trauma experience.

Encourage client to express his or her feelings; provide individual therapy that addresses loss of control or anger issues.

Assist client to develop adaptive coping mechanisms and to use relaxation techniques.

Encourage use of support groups.

Facilitate a progressive review of the trauma experience.

Encourage client to establish and reestablish relationships.

Inform client that hypnotherapy or systematic desensitization may be used as a form of treatment.

**IV. Phobias**

**A. Description**

1. Irrational fear of an object or situation that persists, although the person may recognize it as unreasonable

2. Associated with panic-level anxiety if the object, situation, or activity cannot be avoided
3. **Defense mechanisms** commonly used include repression and displacement.

**B. Types (Box 74-2)**

**BOX 74-2**      **Types of Phobias**

***Acrophobia:*** Fear of heights

***Agoraphobia:*** Fear of open spaces

***Astraphobia:*** Fear of electrical storms

***Claustrophobia:*** Fear of closed spaces

***Hematophobia:*** Fear of blood

***Hydrophobia:*** Fear of water

***Monophobia:*** Fear of being alone

***Mysophobia:*** Fear of dirt or germs

***Nyctophobia:*** Fear of darkness

***Pyrophobia:*** Fear of fires

***Social Phobia:*** Fear of situations in which one might be embarrassed or criticized;  
fear of making a fool of oneself

***Xenophobia:*** Fear of strangers

***Zoophobia:*** Fear of animals

**C. Interventions**

1. Identify the basis of the anxiety.
2. Allow the client to verbalize feelings about the anxiety-producing object or situation; frequently talking about the feared object is the first step in the desensitization process.
3. Teach relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises, muscle relaxation exercises, and visualization of pleasant situations.
4. Promote desensitization by gradually introducing the individual to the feared object or situation in small doses. ▲

⚠ Always stay with the client experiencing anxiety to promote safety and security. Never force the client to have contact with the phobic object or situation.

## V. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

A. Obsessions: Preoccupation with persistently intrusive thoughts and ideas ▲

B. Compulsions ▲

1. A compulsion is the performance of rituals or repetitive behaviors designed to prevent some event, divert unacceptable thoughts, and decrease anxiety.
2. Obsessions and compulsions often occur together and can disrupt normal daily activities.
3. Anxiety occurs when one resists obsessions or compulsions and from being powerless to resist the thoughts or rituals.
4. Obsessive thoughts can involve issues of violence, aggression, sexual behavior, orderliness, or religion and uncontrollably can interrupt conscious thoughts and

the ability to function. ▲

C. Compulsive behavior patterns (behaviors or rituals)

1. Compulsive behavior patterns decrease the anxiety.
2. The patterns are associated with the obsessive thoughts.
3. The patterns neutralize the thought.
4. During stressful times, the ritualistic behavior increases.
5. Defense mechanisms include repression, displacement, and undoing.

D. Interventions (Box 74-3) ▲

**BOX 74-3** Interventions for Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Ensure that basic needs (food, rest, grooming) are met.

Identify situations that precipitate compulsive behavior; encourage the client to verbalize concerns and feelings.

Be empathetic toward the client and aware of his or her need to perform the compulsive behavior.

Do not interrupt compulsive behaviors unless they jeopardize the safety of the client or others (provide for client safety related to the behavior).

Allow time for the client to perform the compulsive behavior, but set limits on behaviors that may interfere with the client's physical well-being to protect the client from physical harm.

Implement a schedule for the client that distracts from the behaviors (structure simple activities, games, or tasks for the client).

Establish a written contract that assists the client to decrease the frequency of compulsive behaviors gradually.

Recognize and reinforce positive nonritualistic behaviors.

## VI. Somatoform Disorders

### A. Description

1. Somatoform disorders are characterized by persistent worry or complaints regarding physical illness without supportive physical findings.
2. The client focuses on the physical signs and symptoms and is unable to control the signs and symptoms.
3. The physical signs and symptoms increase with psychosocial stressors.
4. The anxiety is redirected into a somatic concern.
5. The client may unconsciously use somatization for secondary gains, such as increased attention and decreased responsibilities. ▲

### B. Conversion disorder ▲

#### 1. Description

- a. The sudden onset of a physical symptom or a deficit suggesting loss of or altered body function related to psychological conflict or a neurological disorder.
- b. Conversion disorder is an expression of a psychological conflict or need.
- c. The most common conversion symptoms are blindness, deafness, paralysis, and the inability to talk.

- d.** Conversion disorder has no organic cause.
- e.** Symptoms are beyond the conscious control of the client and are directly related to conflict.
- f.** The development of physical symptoms reduces anxiety.

## **2.** Assessment

- a.** Rule out a physiological cause for symptoms or deficits.
- b.** “*La belle indifférence*”: Unconcerned with symptoms
- c.** Physical limitation or disability
- d.** Feelings of guilt, anxiety, or frustration
- e.** Low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy
- f.** Unexpressed anger or conflict
- g.** Secondary gain

## **C.** Hypochondriasis

### **1.** Description

- a.** Preoccupation with fears of having a serious disease
- b.** No evidence of physical illness exists.
- c.** Hypochondriasis significantly impairs social and occupational functioning.

### **2.** Assessment

- a.** Preoccupation with physical functioning
- b.** Frequent somatic complaints
- c.** Complaints of fatigue and insomnia
- d.** Anxiety

- e. Difficulty expressing feelings
- f. Extensive use of home remedies or nonprescription medications
- g. Repeatedly visiting a health care provider despite repeated reassurance and normal test results
- h. Secondary gain

#### **D. Somatization disorder**

##### **1. Description**

- a. The client has multiple physical complaints involving numerous body systems.
- b. The cause of these complaints is presumed to be psychological.

##### **2. Assessment**

- a. Physical complaints of pain; denial of emotional problems; and signs of anxiety, fear, and low self-esteem may be present.
- b. Secondary gain

#### **E. Interventions**

1. Obtain a nursing history and assess for physical problems.
2. Explore the needs being met by the physical symptoms with the client.
3. Assist the client to identify alternative ways of meeting needs.
4. Assist the client to relate feelings and conflicts to the physical symptoms. ▲
5. Convey understanding that the physical symptoms are real to the client. ▲
6. Assure the client that physical illness has been ruled out.
7. Explore the source of anxiety and stimulate verbalization of anxiety.
8. Encourage the use of relaxation techniques as the anxiety increases.

9. Use a pain assessment scale if the client complains of pain, and implement pain reduction measures as required.
10. Report and assess any new physical complaint.
11. Encourage diversional activities.
12. Provide positive feedback.
13. Assist the client in recognizing his or her own feelings and emotions.
14. Administer antianxiety medications if prescribed.

 For a client with a somatoform disorder, allow a specific time period for the client to discuss physical complaints because the client will feel less threatened if this behavior is limited rather than stopped completely. Avoid responding with positive reinforcement about the physical complaints.

## VII. Dissociative Disorder

### A. Description

1. Dissociative disorder is a disruption in integrative functions of memory, consciousness, or identity.
2. Dissociative disorder is associated with exposure to an extremely traumatic event.

### B. Dissociative identity disorder (DID), formally called *multiple personality disorder*

#### 1. Description

- a. Two or more fully developed, distinct, and unique personalities exist within the client.
- b. The host is the primary personality, and the other personalities are referred to as *alters*.

- c. Alter personalities may take full control of the client, one at a time, and may or may not be aware of each other.
- d. The alters may be aware of the host, but the host is not usually aware of the alters.

## 2. Assessment

- a. The client may have an inability to recall important information (unrelated to ordinary forgetfulness).
- b. Transition from one personality to the other is related to stress or a traumatic event and is sudden.
- c. Dissociation is used as a method of distancing and defending one's self from anxiety and traumatizing experiences.

## C. Dissociative amnesia

### 1. Description

- a. Inability to recall important personal information because it provokes anxiety
- b. Memory impairment may range from partial to almost complete.

### 2. Assessment

- a. Localized: The client blocks out all memories about a specified period.
- b. Selective: The client recalls some but not all memories about a specified period.
- c. Generalized: The client has a loss of all memory about past life.

## D. Dissociative fugue

### 1. Description

- a. The client assumes a new identity in a new environment.
- b. The disorder may occur suddenly.

## 2. Assessment

- a. The client may drift from place to place.
- b. The client develops few social relationships.
- c. When the fugue lifts, the client returns home and is unable to recall the fugue state.

## E. Depersonalization disorder

1. Description: An altered self-perception in which one's own reality is temporarily lost or changed

## 2. Assessment

- a. Feelings of detachment
- b. Intact reality testing

## F. Interventions

1. Develop a trusting relationship with the client.
2. Encourage verbal expression of painful experiences, anxieties, and concerns.
3. Explore methods of coping.
4. Identify sources of conflict.
5. Focus on the client's strengths and skills.
6. Orient the client.
7. Provide nondemanding simple routines.
8. Allow the client to progress at his or her own pace.

9. Implement stress reduction techniques.
10. Plan for individual, group, or family psychotherapy to integrate dissociated aspects of personality or memory and to expand self-awareness.

## VIII. Mood Disorders

### A. Bipolar disorder ▲

#### 1. Description (Box 74-4)

#### **BOX 74-4** Assessment of Bipolar Disorder

##### **Mania**

- Becomes angry quickly
- Delusional self-confidence
- Constantly pushing limits, manipulating, and finding fault
- Euphoric with intense feelings of well-being
- Demonstrates little or no inhibition
- Distracted by environmental stimuli
- Extroverted personality
- Flight of ideas
- Grandiose and persecutory delusions
- High and unstable affect
- Significant decrease in appetite
- Inability to eat or sleep because of involvement in more important things
- Unlimited energy

- Inappropriate affect
- Dress that is inappropriately bizarre, loud, and/or colorful
- Make-up is colorful and overdone
- Initiation of activity
- Pressured and/or clanging speech
- Restlessness
- Sexually promiscuous
- Urgent motor activity

### Depression

- Increased or decreased appetite
- Decrease in activities of daily living
- Decreased emotion and physical activity
- Easily fatigued
- Inability to make decisions
- Poor concentration
- Internalizing hostility
- Introverted personality
- Social isolation and withdrawn from groups
- Lack of energy
- Lack of initiative
- Lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem

- Lack of sexual interest
- Psychomotor retardation
- Suicidal thinking

- a. Bipolar disorder is characterized by episodes of mania and depression with periods of normal mood and activity in between.
- b. The medication of choice has traditionally been lithium carbonate, which can be toxic and requires regular monitoring of serum lithium levels to help keep the medication's therapeutic index level appropriate; a stable intake of adequate dietary sodium and fluid (2 to 3 L daily) must be maintained to avoid toxicity.
- c. Other medications such as valproic acid (Depakote) or carbamazepine (Tegretol) may be prescribed both to reduce the symptoms of acute bipolar manic episodes and for maintenance therapy; lamotrigine (Lamictal) may be recommended for maintenance therapy.
- d. Antianxiety agents may be prescribed to assist in managing the psychomotor agitation characteristic of mania; these medications should be avoided in clients with a history of substance abuse.
- e. Atypical antipsychotic medications such as olanzapine (Zyprexa), aripiprazole (Abilify), and risperidone (Risperdal) may be prescribed for both their sedative and mood-stabilizing effects.

## 2. Interventions for mania (Box 74-5) ▲

**Aggressive Behavior**

Assist client in identifying feelings of frustration and aggression.

Encourage client to talk out instead of acting out feelings of frustration.

Assist client in identifying precipitating events or situations that lead to aggressive behavior.

Describe the consequences of the behavior on self and others.

Assist in identifying previous coping mechanisms.

Assist client in problem-solving techniques to cope with frustration or aggression.

**Deescalation Techniques**

Maintain safety for client, other clients, and self.

Maintain large personal space and use a nonaggressive posture.

Use a calm approach and communicate with a calm, clear tone of voice (be assertive, not aggressive).

Determine what client considers to be his or her need.

Avoid verbal struggles.

Provide client with clear options that deal with client's behavior.

Assist client with problem-solving and decision-making regarding options.

**Manipulative Behavior**

Set clear, consistent, realistic, and enforceable limits, and communicate expected behaviors.

Be clear about consequences associated with exceeding set limits and follow through with consequences in a nonpunitive manner, if necessary.

Discuss client's behavior in a nonjudgmental and nonthreatening manner.

Avoid power struggles with client (avoid arguing with client).

Assist client in developing means of setting limits on own behavior.

- a. Remove hazardous objects from the environment (this should be done for all clients).
- b. Assess the client closely for fatigue.
- c. Monitor the client's sleep patterns; use comfort measures to promote sleep.
- d. Provide frequent rest periods.
- e. Provide a private room if possible.
- f. Encourage the client to ventilate feelings.
- g. Use calm, slow interactions.
- h. Help the client focus on one topic during the conversation.
- i. Ignore or distract the client from grandiose thinking.
- j. Present reality to the client.
- k. Do not argue with the client.
- l. Limit group activities and assess the client's tolerance level; solitary activities may be necessary.
- m. Provide high-calorie finger foods and fluids.
- n. Supervise the client's choice of clothing.

- o. Reduce environmental stimuli.
- p. Set limits on inappropriate behaviors.
- q. Provide physical activities and outlets for tension.
- r. Avoid competitive games.
- s. Provide gross motor activities such as walking.
- t. Provide structured activities or one-to-one activities with the nurse.
- u. Provide simple and direct explanations for routine procedures.
- v. Supervise the administration of medication; administer a hypnotic or sedative medication as prescribed.
- w. **Seclusion** may be considered if hyperactive behavior is dangerous due to altered sensory perceptions.

3. Depression: See [Section IX](#).

## **IX. Depression** ▲

### **A. Description**

1. Depression affects feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.
2. It can occur after a loss, including loss of self-esteem, the end of a significant relationship, the death of a loved one, or a traumatic event.
3. The loss is followed by grief and mourning; if this process does not resolve, depression results.
4. Depression may be mild, moderate, or severe.
5. Treatment includes counseling, antidepressant medication, and electroconvulsive

therapy (ECT).

6. See [Box 74-4](#) for general assessment findings.

## **B. Mild depression**

1. Mild depression is triggered by an external event and follows the normal grief reaction.
2. Mild depression lasts less than 2 weeks.
3. Feeling sad
4. Feeling let down or disappointed
5. Mild alterations in sleep patterns
6. Feeling less alert
7. Irritability
8. Disinterested in spending time with others
9. Increased or decreased appetite
10. Increased use of alcohol or drugs

## **C. Moderate depression**

1. Moderate depression persists over time.
2. The person experiences a sense of change and often seeks help.
3. Despondent and gloomy
4. Dejected
5. Low self-esteem
6. Helplessness and powerlessness
7. May experience intense anxiety and anger

8. Diurnal variation: The person may feel better at a certain time of the day.
9. Slow thought processes and difficulty in concentrating
10. Rumination: Persistent thinking about and discussion of a particular subject
11. Negative thinking and suicidal thoughts (see [Chapter 76](#))
12. Sleep disturbances
13. Social withdrawal
14. Anorexia, weight loss, and fatigue
15. Somatic complaints
16. Menstrual changes
17. Increased use of alcohol or drugs

**D. Severe depression**

1. Intense and pervasive
2. Despair and hopelessness
3. Guilt and worthlessness
4. Flat affect
5. May show agitation and pace about
6. Poor posture and unkempt appearance
7. Decreased speech
8. Self-destructive thoughts; however, the person may lack energy to act on the thought.
9. Social withdrawal
10. Poor concentration and overwhelmed by simple tasks

11. Severe psychomotor retardation
12. Anorexia and considerable weight loss
13. Constipation and urinary retention
14. Lack of sexual interest
15. Terminal insomnia
16. Diurnal variation: The person may feel better at a certain time of the day.
17. Delusions and hallucinations

E. Interventions (Box 74-6) ▲

**BOX 74-6** Interventions for Depressed Clients

**Risk for Harm**

Assess for homicidal and suicidal ideation.

Provide safety from suicidal actions (be certain that there are no harmful objects in the environment).

Do not leave the client alone for extended periods.

If the client has a suicidal plan, place on one-to-one supervision.

Form a “no-suicide contract” with the client.

**Activities**

Use gentle encouragement to participate in activities of daily living and unit therapies.

Do not push decision-making or the making of complex choices or decisions that the client is not ready for.

Provide achievable activities in which client can achieve success (focus on strengths).

Begin client with one-to-one activities.

Provide activities for easy mastery to increase self-esteem and help in alleviating guilt feelings and that do not require a great deal of concentration (simple card games, drawing).

Engage in gross motor activities (walking).

Eventually bring the client into small group activities and then large groups.

### **Nutrition**

Monitor nutritional intake and weight. Offer small, high-calorie, high-protein snacks and fluids throughout the day.

Stay with the client during meals.

### **Hygiene Care**

Monitor for general hygiene and self-care deficits; deficits may indicate worsening depression.

Assist with activities of daily living.

### **Sleep Patterns**

Monitor sleep patterns.

Decrease environmental stimuli at bedtime.

Spend time with the client before bedtime.

### **Altered Thought Processes**

Remind client of times when he or she felt better and was successful.

Spend time with client to convey the client's worth and value.

Encourage the client to discuss losses or changes in the life situation.

Encourage the client to express sadness or anger and allow adequate time for verbal responses.

Respond to anger therapeutically.

 For a client at risk for self-harm, ask the client directly, "Have you thought of hurting yourself?"

## X. Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

### A. Description

1. ECT is an effective treatment for depression (not a cure); an electrical current is delivered through electrodes attached to the temples that cause a brief seizure within the brain; outward movement is usually a slight movement of hands, feet, or a toe because premedication is given to relax the muscles.
2. The usual course is 6 to 12 treatments given 2 or 3 times per week; maintenance ECT once a month may help decrease the relapse rate for a client with recurrent depression.
3. ECT is not always effective in clients with dysthymic depression, depression and personality disorders, drug dependence, or depression secondary to situational or social difficulties.

4. At-risk clients include clients with recent myocardial infarction, brain attack (stroke), or intracranial mass lesions.

**B. Uses (Box 74-7)**

**BOX 74-7 Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT): Indications for Use**

- When antidepressant medications have no effect
- When there is a need for a rapid definitive response, such as when a client is suicidal or homicidal
- When the client is in extreme agitation or stupor
- When the risks of other treatments outweigh the risk of ECT
- When the client has a history of poor medication response, a history of good ECT response, or both
- When the client prefers ECT as a treatment

1. Clients with major depressive and bipolar depressive disorders, especially when psychotic symptoms are present, such as delusions of guilt, somatic delusions, and delusions of infidelity
2. Clients who have depression with marked psychomotor retardation and stupor
3. Manic clients whose conditions are resistant to lithium and antipsychotic medications and clients who are rapid cyclers (a client with a bipolar disorder who has many episodes of mood swings close together)
4. Clients with schizophrenia (especially catatonia), clients with schizoaffective

syndromes, and psychotic clients

### **C. Preprocedure**

1. Explain the procedure to the client.
2. Encourage the client to discuss feelings, including myths regarding ECT.
3. Teach the client and family what to expect.
4. Informed consent must be obtained when voluntary clients are being treated.
5. For involuntary clients, when informed consent cannot be obtained, permission may be obtained from the next of kin, although in some states the permission for ECT must be obtained from the court.
6. Maintain NPO status after midnight or at least 4 hours before treatment as prescribed.
7. Baseline vital signs are taken.
8. The client is requested to void.
9. Hairpins, contact lenses, and dentures are removed.
10. Administer preprocedure medication as prescribed.

### **D. During the procedure**

1. Place a blood pressure cuff on one of the client's arms.
2. As the intravenous line is inserted, electroencephalographic and electrocardiographic electrodes are attached.
3. A pulse oximeter is placed on the client's finger.
4. Blood pressure is monitored throughout the treatment.
5. Medications administered may include a short-acting anesthetic and a muscle

relaxant.

6. Throughout the procedure, 100% oxygen by mask via positive pressure is administered.
7. An airway or bite-block is placed to prevent biting the tongue.
8. An electrical stimulus is administered; a brief seizure occurs.

#### E. Postprocedure

1. The client is transported to a recovery room with the blood pressure cuff and oximeter in place, where oxygen, suction, and other emergency equipment are available.
2. When the client is awake, talk to the client and take vital signs.
3. The client may be confused; provide frequent orientation (brief, distinct, and simple) and reassurance.
4. The client returns to the nursing unit when at least a 90% oxygen saturation level is maintained, vital signs are stable, and mental status is satisfactory.
5. Assess the gag reflex before giving the client fluids, food, or medication.

#### F. Potential side effects

1. Major side effects include confusion, disorientation, and short-term memory loss.
2. The client may be confused and disoriented on awakening.
3. Memory deficits may occur, but memory usually recovers completely, although some clients have memory loss lasting 6 months.

 Monitor both a depressed client as well as a client who has recently been prescribed an antidepressant medication closely for signs of suicidal ideation. If

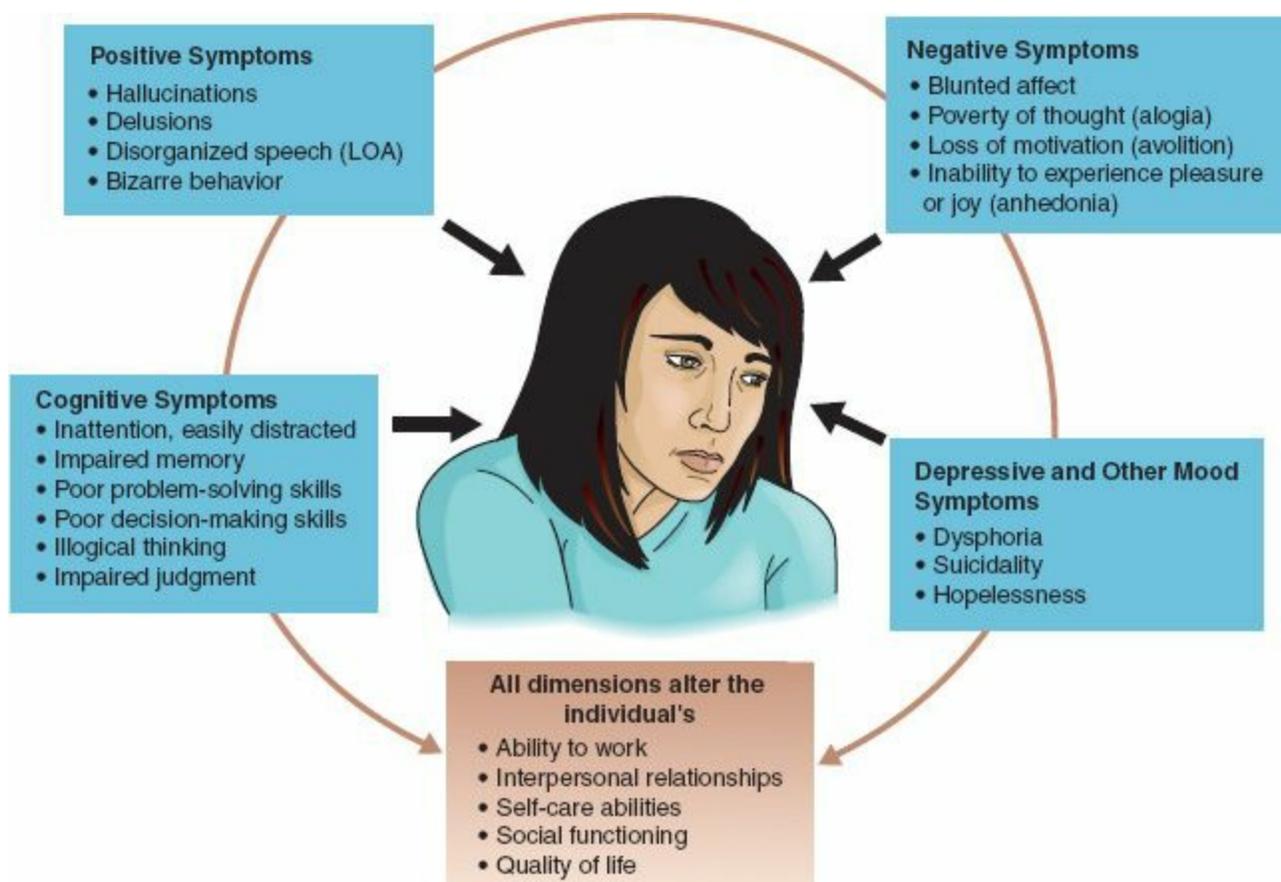
the client presents with increased energy, monitor closely because it could mean that the client now has the energy to perform the suicide act.

## XI. Schizophrenia

### A. Description

1. Schizophrenia is a group of mental disorders characterized by psychotic features (hallucinations and delusions), disordered thought processes, and disrupted interpersonal relationships.
2. Disturbances in affect, mood, behavior, and thought processes occur. ▲

### B. Assessment (Fig. 74-1)



**FIGURE 74-1** Treatment-relevant dimensions of schizophrenia. *LOA*, Looseness of association. (From Varcarolis E, Carson V, Shoemaker N: *Foundations of*

*psychiatric mental health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

1. Physical characteristics

- a. Unkempt appearance
- b. Body image distortions
- c. May be preoccupied with somatic complaints
- d. May neglect hygiene, eating, sleeping, and elimination

2. Motor activity (Box 74-8)

**BOX 74-8**      **Abnormal Motor Behaviors**

**Description**

- Abnormal motor behavior or activity displayed by mentally ill client that occurs as a result of a psychiatric disorder

**Types**

***Echolalia***

- Repeating the speech of another person

***Echopraxia***

- Repeating the movements of another person

***Waxy Flexibility***

- Having one's arms or legs placed in a certain position and holding that same position for hours

- a. Catatonic posturing: Holding bizarre postures for long periods
  - b. Catatonic excitement: Moving excitedly, with no environmental stimuli present
  - c. Possible total immobilization
  - d. Inability to respond to commands or responding only to commands
  - e. Waxy flexibility
  - f. Repetitive or stereotyped movements
  - g. Motor activity that may be increased, as evidenced by agitation, pacing, inability to sleep, loss of appetite and weight, and impulsiveness
  - h. Possible inability to initiate activity (anergia)
- 3. Emotional characteristics**
- a. Mistrust
  - b. View of the world as threatening and unsafe
  - c. Affect blunted, flat, or inappropriate
  - d. May display feelings of ambivalence, helplessness, anxiety, anger, guilt, or depression in response to hallucinations or delusions or as a result of grief related to losses imposed by the illness
- 4. Compulsive rituals: Constant repetitive activity performed as an attempt to solve conflicting feelings**
- 5. Overcompliance: Attempt to deny responsibility for any action by doing only what another person instructs exactly**
- 6. Affective disturbances**

- a. Flat or incongruent affect or inappropriate affect
- b. Altered thought processes

## 7. Abnormal thought processes (Box 74-9)

### **BOX 74-9** Abnormal Thought Processes

#### **Description**

- Abnormal thought processes displayed by mentally ill client that occur as a result of a psychiatric disorder

#### **Types**

##### ***Circumstantiality***

- Before getting to the point or answering a question, client gets caught up in countless details and explanations

##### ***Confabulation***

- Filling a memory gap with detailed fantasy believed by the teller; the purpose of confabulation is to maintain self-esteem; seen in organic conditions such as Korsakoff's psychosis

##### ***Flight of Ideas***

- Constant flow of speech in which client jumps from one topic to another in rapid succession; a connection between topics exists, although it is sometimes difficult to identify; seen in manic states

### ***Looseness of Association***

- Haphazard, illogical, and confused thinking and interrupted connections in thought; seen mostly in schizophrenic disorders

### ***Neologisms***

- Client makes up words that have meaning only for the individual; often part of a delusional system

### ***Thought Blocking***

- Sudden cessation of a thought in the middle of a sentence; client is unable to continue the train of thought; often, sudden new thoughts come up unrelated to the topic

### ***Word Salad***

- Mixture of words and phrases that has no meaning

- a. Impaired reality testing
- b. Fragmentation of thoughts
- c. Thought blocking
- d. Loose associations
- e. Echolalia
- f. Distorted perception of the environment
- g. Neologisms
- h. Magical thinking

- i. Inability to conceptualize meaning in words or thoughts
  - j. Inability to organize facts logically
  - k. Delusions associated with thought processes or content
8. Types of delusions (Box 74-10) ▲

## BOX 74-10

## Delusions

### Description

- A false belief held to be true, even when there is evidence to the contrary

### Types

#### *Grandeur*

- False belief that one is a powerful and important person

#### *Jealousy*

- False belief that one's partner or mate is going out with other persons

#### *Persecution*

- Thought that one is being singled out for harm by others

### Interventions

Ask client to describe the delusion.

Be open and honest in interactions to reduce suspiciousness.

Focus conversation on reality-based topics, rather than on the delusion.

Encourage client to express feelings and focus on feelings that the delusions generate.

If client obsesses on the delusion, set firm limits on the amount of time for talking about the delusion.

Do not argue with client or try to convince client that the delusions are false.

Validate if part of the delusion is real.

- a. Loss of reference, in which the client believes that certain events, situations, or interactions are related directly to self
- b. Delusions of persecution, in which the client believes that he or she is being harassed, threatened, or persecuted by some powerful force
- c. Delusions of grandeur, in which the client attaches special significance to self in relation to others or the universe and has an exaggerated sense of self that has no basis in reality
- d. Somatic delusions, in which the client believes that his or her body is changing or responding in an unusual way, which has no basis in reality

## 9. Perceptual distortions

- a. Illusions, which may be brief experiences with a misinterpretation or misperception of reality
- b. Hallucinations (five senses) with no basis in reality ([Box 74-11](#)), such as perceiving objects, sensations, or images

### **BOX 74-11**

### **Hallucinations**

#### **Description**

- Sense perception (occurs with one of the five senses) for which no external stimuli exist; can have an organic or functional cause

## Types

### *Auditory*

- Hearing voices when none are present

### *Gustatory*

- Experiencing taste in the absence of stimuli

### *Olfactory*

- Smelling smells that do not exist

### *Tactile*

- Feeling touch sensations in the absence of stimuli

### *Visual*

- Seeing things that are not there

## Interventions

Ask client directly about hallucination.

Avoid reacting to hallucination as if it were real.

Decrease stimuli or move client to another area.

Do not negate client's experience.

Focus on reality-based topics.

Attempt to engage client's attention through a concrete activity.

Respond verbally to anything real that client talks about.

Avoid touching client.

Monitor for signs of increasing anxiety or agitation, which may indicate that hallucinations are increasing.

## 10. Language and communication disturbances (Box 74-12)

### BOX 74-12

### Language and Communication Disturbances

**Clang Association:** Repetition of words or phrases that are similar in sound but in no other way

**Echolalia:** Repetition of words or phrases heard from another person

**Mutism:** Absence of verbal speech

**Neologism:** A newly devised word that has special meaning only to the client

**Pressured Speech:** Speaking as if the words are being forced out quickly

**Verbigeration:** Purposeless repetition of words or phrases

**Word Salad:** Form of speech in which words or phrases are connected meaninglessly

- a. Related to disorders in thought process
- b. Inability to organize language
- c. Difficulty communicating clearly
- d. Inappropriate responses to a situation

- e. A single word or phrase may represent the whole meaning of the conversation such that the client may feel that he or she has communicated adequately.
- f. Development of a private language

### C. Types of schizophrenia

#### 1. Catatonic schizophrenia

- a. Psychomotor disturbances
- b. Immobility
- c. Stupor
- d. Waxy flexibility
- e. Excessive purposeless motor activity
- f. Echolalia
- g. Automatic obedience
- h. Stereotyped or repetitive behavior

#### 2. Disorganized schizophrenia

- a. Extreme social withdrawal
- b. Disorganized speech or behavior
- c. Flat or inappropriate affect
- d. Silliness unrelated to speech
- e. Stereotyped behaviors
- f. Grimacing mannerisms
- g. Inability to perform activities of daily living

#### 3. Paranoid schizophrenia

- a. Suspiciousness
- b. Hostility
- c. Delusions
- d. Auditory hallucinations
- e. Anxiety and anger
- f. Aloofness
- g. Persecutory themes
- h. Violence

#### 4. Residual schizophrenia

- a. Diagnosed as schizophrenic in the past
- b. Time limited between attacks, but may last for many years
- c. The client exhibits considerable social isolation and withdrawal and impaired role functioning.

#### 5. Undifferentiated schizophrenia

- a. Undifferentiated schizophrenia does not meet the criteria for catatonic, disorganized, or paranoid, schizophrenia.
- b. Delusions and hallucinations
- c. Disorganized speech
- d. Disorganized or catatonic behavior
- e. Flat affect
- f. Social withdrawal

#### D. Interventions (Box 74-13) ▲

Assess client's physical needs.

Set limits on client's behavior when it interferes with others and becomes disruptive.

Maintain a safe environment.

Initiate one-on-one interaction and progress to small groups as tolerated.

Spend time with client, even if client is unable to respond.

Monitor for altered thought processes.

Maintain ego boundaries and avoid touching client.

Limit the time of interaction with client.

Avoid an overly warm approach; a neutral approach is less threatening.

Do not make promises to client that cannot be kept.

Establish daily routines.

Assist client to improve grooming and accept responsibility for personal care.

Sit with client in silence if necessary.

Provide brief, frequent contact with client.

Tell client when you are leaving.

Tell client when you do not understand.

Do not "go along" with client's delusions or hallucinations.

Provide simple concrete activities, such as puzzles or word games.

Reorient client as necessary.

Help client establish what is real and unreal.

Stay with client if he or she is frightened.

Speak to client in a simple, direct, and concise manner.

Reassure client that the environment is safe.

Remove client from group situations if client's behavior is too bizarre, disturbing, or dangerous to others.

Set realistic goals.

Initially, do not offer choices to client, and gradually assist client in making his or her own decisions.

Use canned or packaged food, especially with a paranoid schizophrenic client.

Provide a radio or tape player at night for insomnia.

Explain to client everything that is being done.

Set limits on client's behavior if client is unable to do so.

Decrease excessive stimuli in the environment.

Monitor for suicide risk.

Assist client to use alternative means to express feelings, such as through music or art therapy or writing.

#### E. Interventions: Active hallucinations ▲

1. Monitor for hallucination cues and assess content of hallucinations.
2. Intervene with one-on-one contact.
3. Decrease stimuli or move the client to another area.
4. Avoid conveying to the client that others also are experiencing the hallucination.
5. Respond verbally to anything real that the client talks about.

6. Avoid touching the client.
7. Encourage the client to express feelings.
8. During a hallucination, attempt to engage the client's attention through a concrete activity.
9. Accept and do not joke about or judge the client's behavior.
10. Provide easy activities and a structured environment with routine activities of daily living.
11. Monitor for signs of increasing fear, anxiety, or agitation.
12. Decrease stimuli as needed.
13. Administer medications as prescribed.

 For a client with hallucinations, safety is the first priority—ensure that the client does not have an auditory command telling him or her to harm self or others.

#### F. Interventions: Delusions

1. Interact based on reality.
2. Encourage the client to express feelings.
3. Do not dispute the client or try to convince the client that delusions are false.
4. Initiate activities on a one-on-one basis.
5. Alter hospital routines as necessary, such as using canned or packaged food or food from home.
6. Recognize accomplishments and provide positive feedback for successes.

## **XII. Paranoid Disorders**

### **A. Description**

1. Paranoid disorder is a concrete, pervasive delusional system characterized by persecutory and grandiose beliefs.
2. The client exhibits suspiciousness and mistrust of others.
3. The client often is viewed by others as hostile, stubborn, and defensive.

### **B. Behaviors**

1. Suspicious and mistrustful
2. Emotionally distant
3. Distortion of reality
4. Poor insight and poor judgments
5. Hypervigilance
6. Low self-esteem
7. Highly sensitive, difficulty in admitting own error, and taking pride in being correct
8. Hypercritical and intolerant of others
9. Hostile, aggressive, and quarrelsome
10. Evasive
11. Concrete thinking

### **C. Delusions** ▲

1. Delusions serve a purpose in establishing identity and self-esteem.
2. The client may have grandiose and persecutory delusions.

3. Process of delusion includes denial, projection, and rationalization.
4. As trust in others increases, the need for delusions decreases.

#### **D. Types of paranoid disorders**

##### **1. Paranoid personality disorder (see [Section XIII,C,3](#))**

- a. Suspicious
- b. Nonpsychotic
- c. No hallucinations or delusions
- d. No symptoms of schizophrenia

##### **2. Paranoia-induced state**

- a. Abrupt onset in response to stress; subsides when stress decreases
- b. No hallucinations, but experiences paranoid delusions
- c. May be sensitive and suspicious before the development of delusions
- d. No symptoms of schizophrenia

##### **3. Paranoia**

- a. Exhibits an organized delusional system
- b. No hallucinations
- c. Reserved and sensitive before onset
- d. Psychotic state
- e. No symptoms of schizophrenia

##### **4. Paranoid schizophrenia**

- a. Before the onset, the client becomes cold, withdrawn, distrustful, resentful, argumentative, sarcastic, and defiant

- b. Bizarre, numerous, and changeable delusions occur
- c. Delusions become less logical as the client becomes more disorganized
- d. Persecutory hallucinations occur
- e. Psychotic state ensues
- f. All symptoms of schizophrenia are present

E. Interventions (Box 74-14) ▲

**BOX 74-14**

**Interventions for Paranoid Disorders**

- Assess for suicide risk.
- Diminish suspicious behavior.
- Avoid direct eye contact.
- Establish a trusting relationship.
- Promote increased self-esteem.
- Remain calm, nonthreatening, and nonjudgmental.
- Provide continuity of care.
- Respond honestly to client.
- Follow through on commitments made to client.
- Acknowledge client's feelings, but tell client that you do not share his or her interpretation of an event.
- Provide a daily schedule of activities.
- Assist client to identify diversionary activities.
- Gradually introduce client to groups.

Refocus conversation to reality-based topics.

Use role playing to help client identify thoughts and feelings.

Provide positive reinforcement for successes.

Do not argue with delusions.

Use concrete, specific words.

Do not be secretive with client.

Do not whisper in client's presence.

Assure client that he or she will be safe.

Involve client in noncompetitive tasks.

Provide client with the opportunity to complete small tasks.

Monitor eating, drinking, sleeping, and elimination patterns.

Limit physical contact.

Monitor for agitation, and decrease stimuli as needed.

 Do not whisper or laugh in front of a client with a paranoid disorder because the client will think that you are talking about or laughing at him or her; this increases the paranoia.

### **XIII. Personality Disorders**

#### **A. Description**

1. Personality disorders include various inflexible maladaptive behavior patterns or traits that may impair functioning and relationships.
2. The client usually remains in touch with reality and typically has a lack of insight

into his or her behavior.

3. Stress exacerbates manifestations of the personality disorder.
4. In severe cases, the personality disorder may deteriorate to a psychotic state.

## **B. Characteristics**

### **1. Poor impulse control**

- a. Acting out to manage internal pain
- b. Forms of acting out include physical and verbal attacks, such as yelling and swearing, and self-injurious behaviors, such as cutting own skin, banging the head, punching self, manipulation, substance abuse, promiscuous sexual behaviors, and **suicide attempts**.
- c. The client may be preoccupied with such things as self, religion, or sex.

### **2. Mood characteristics**

- a. May experience abandonment and depression
- b. Moods may include rage, guilt, fear, and emptiness.

### **3. Impaired judgment**

- a. Difficulty with problem-solving
- b. Inability to perceive the consequences of behavior

### **4. Impaired reality testing: Distortion of reality and often projection of own feelings onto others**

### **5. Impaired object relations: Rigid and inflexible, with difficulty in intimate relationships**

### **6. Impaired self-perception: Distorted self-perception and experience of self-hate or**

self-idealization

**7. Impaired thought processes**

- a. Concrete or diffuse thinking**
- b. Difficulty concentrating**
- c. Impaired memory**

**8. Impaired stimulus barrier**

- a. Inability to regulate incoming sensory stimuli**
- b. Increased excitability**
- c. Excessive response to noise and light**
- d. Poor attention span**
- e. Agitated**
- f. Insomnia**

**C. Cluster A personality disorder types include the odd, eccentric types—schizoid, schizotypal, and paranoid.**

**1. Schizoid personality disorder is characterized by an inability to form warm, close social relationships.**

- a. Social detachment and lack of close relationships**
- b. Interest in solitary activities**
- c. Aloof and indifferent**
- d. Restricted expression of emotions**
- e. Lack of interest in others**

**2. Schizotypal personality disorder is characterized by the display of abnormal or**

highly unusual thoughts, perceptions, speech, and behavior patterns.

- a. Suspicious
- b. Paranoia
- c. Magical thinking
- d. Odd thinking and speech
- e. Relationship deficits

3. Paranoid personality disorder is characterized by suspiciousness and mistrust of others (paranoia).

- a. May be suspicious and distrusting
- b. May be argumentative
- c. May be hostile, aloof
- d. May be rigid, critical, and controlling of others
- e. May have thoughts of grandiosity

**D.** Cluster B personality disorders include the overemotional, erratic types—histrionic, narcissistic, antisocial, and borderline.

1. Histrionic personality disorder is characterized by overly dramatic and intensely expressive behavior.

- a. Lively and dramatic and enjoys being the center of attention
- b. Has poor and shallow interpersonal relations
- c. May be sexually seductive or provocative
- d. Dramatizes his or her life and may appear theatrical
- e. Overly concerned with appearance

- f. Easily bored**
- 2. Narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by an increased sense of self-importance and preoccupation with fantasies and unlimited success.**
    - a. Need for admiration and inflation of accomplishments**
    - b. Overestimation of abilities and underestimation of contributions of others**
    - c. Lack of empathy and sensitivity to needs of others**
  - 3. Antisocial personality disorder comprises a pattern of irresponsible and antisocial behavior, selfishness, an inability to maintain lasting relationships, poor sexual adjustment, a failure to accept social norms, and a tendency toward irritability and aggressiveness.**
    - a. Perceives the world as hostile**
    - b. Superficial charm, yet can become hostile**
    - c. No shame or guilt**
    - d. Self-centered**
    - e. Unreliable**
    - f. Easily bored**
    - g. Poor work history**
    - h. Inability to tolerate frustration**
    - i. View others as objects to be manipulated**
    - j. Poor judgment**
    - k. Impulsive**
  - 4. Borderline personality disorder is characterized by instability in interpersonal**

relationships, unstable mood and self-image, and impulsive and unpredictable behavior.

- a.** Unclear identity
- b.** Unstable and intense
- c.** Extreme shifts in mood
- d.** Easily angered
- e.** Easily bored
- f.** Argumentative
- g.** Depression
- h.** Self-destructive behavior
- i.** Manipulation
- j.** Inability to tolerate anxiety
- k.** Chronic feelings of emptiness and fear of being alone
- l.** Splitting—sees others as all good or all bad; creates conflict between individuals by playing one person against another

**E.** Cluster C personality disorders include the anxious, fearful types of personality disorders—obsessive-compulsive personality, avoidant, and dependent.

**1.** Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder is characterized by difficulty expressing warm and tender emotions, perfectionism, stubbornness, the need to control others, and a devotion to work.

- a.** Overly conscientious
- b.** Inflexible and preoccupied with details and rules

- c. Extremely devoted to work to the exclusion of leisure activities and friendships
  - d. Miserly and stubborn
  - e. Hoarding behavior
  - f. Engages in rituals
2. Avoidant personality disorder is characterized by social withdrawal and extreme sensitivity to potential rejection.
- a. Feelings of inadequacy
  - b. Hypersensitive to reactions of others and poor reaction to criticism
  - c. Social isolation
  - d. Lack of support system
3. Dependent personality disorder is characterized by an intense lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, and inability to function independently, such that the individual passively allows others to make decisions and assume responsibility for major areas in the person's life; the dependent client has great difficulty making decisions. ▲

**F. General interventions for a client with a personality disorder ▲**

1. Maintain safety against self-destructive behaviors.
2. Allow the client to make choices and be as independent as possible.
3. Encourage the client to discuss feelings rather than act them out.
4. Provide consistency in response to the client's acting-out behaviors.
5. Discuss expectations and responsibilities with the client.
6. Discuss the consequences that will follow certain behaviors.

7. Inform the client that harm to self, others, and property is unacceptable.
8. Identify splitting behavior.
9. Assist the client to deal directly with anger.
10. Develop a written safety or behavioral contract with the client.
11. Encourage the client to keep a journal recording daily feelings.
12. Encourage the client to participate in group activities, and praise nonmanipulative behavior.
13. Set and maintain limits to decrease manipulative behavior.
14. Remove the client from group situations in which attention-seeking behaviors occur.
15. Provide realistic praise for positive behaviors in social situations.

#### **XIV. Cognitive Impairment Disorders**

**A.** Autism: See [Chapter 45](#).

**B.** Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: See [Chapter 45](#).

**C.** Dementia and Alzheimer's disease ▲

##### **1. Dementia**

- a. Dementia is a syndrome with progressive deterioration in intellectual functioning secondary to structural or functional changes.
- b. Long-term and short-term memory loss occur, with impairment in judgment, abstract thinking, problem-solving ability, and behavior.
- c. Dementia results in a self-care deficit.
- d. Dementia-like symptoms can be a result of physiological conditions and such

conditions must be ruled out initially.

e. The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer's disease.

## 2. Alzheimer's disease (Box 74-15)

### BOX 74-15

### Alzheimer's Disease

**Agnosia:** Failure to recognize or identify familiar objects despite intact sensory function

**Amnesia:** Loss of memory caused by brain degeneration

**Aphasia:** Language disturbance in understanding and expressing spoken words

**Apraxia:** Inability to perform motor activities, despite intact motor function

- a. Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible form of senile dementia caused by nerve cell deterioration.
- b. Individuals with Alzheimer's disease experience cognitive deterioration and progressive loss of ability to carry out activities of daily living.
- c. The client experiences a steady decline in physical and mental functioning and usually requires long-term care in a specialized facility in the final stages of the illness.
- d. Stages and major characteristic of Alzheimer's disease: Stage 1 (mild): forgetfulness; stage 2 (moderate): confusion; stage 3 (moderate to severe): ambulatory dementia; and stage 4 (late): end stage.

## 3. Interventions

- a.** Identify and reinforce retained skills.
- b.** Provide continuity of care.
- c.** Orient the client to the environment.
- d.** Furnish the environment with familiar possessions.
- e.** Acknowledge the client's feelings.
- f.** Assist the client and family members to manage memory deficits and behavior changes.
- g.** Encourage family members to express feelings about caregiving.
- h.** Provide the caregiver with support and identify the resources and support groups available.
- i.** Monitor the client's activities of daily living.
- j.** Remind the client how to perform self-care activities.
- k.** Help the client maintain independence.
- l.** Provide the client with consistent routines.
- m.** Provide the client with exercise, such as walking with an escort.
- n.** Avoid activities that tax the memory.
- o.** Allow the client plenty of time to complete a task.
- p.** Use constant encouragement with the client with a simple step-by-step approach.
- q.** Provide the client with activities that distract and occupy time, such as listening to music, coloring, and watching television.
- r.** Provide the client with mental stimulation with simple games or activities.

#### 4. Wandering ▲

- a. Provide the client with a safe environment.
- b. Prevent unsafe wandering.
- c. Provide the client with close supervision.
- d. Close and secure doors.
- e. Use identification bracelets and electronic surveillance.
- f. Sundown syndrome (sundowning) is characterized by a pronounced increase in symptoms and problem behaviors in the evening.

**▲ Providing a safe environment is a priority in the care of a client with Alzheimer's disease.**

#### 5. Communication ▲

- a. Adapt to the communication level of the client.
- b. Use a firm volume and a low-pitched voice to communicate.
- c. Stand directly in front of the client and maintain eye contact.
- d. Call the client by name and identify self; wait for a response.
- e. Use a calm and reassuring voice.
- f. Use pantomime gestures if the client is unable to understand spoken words.
- g. Speak slowly and clearly, using short words and simple sentences.
- h. Ask only one question at a time and give one direction at a time.
- i. Repeat questions if necessary, but do not rephrase.

#### 6. Impaired judgment ▲

- a. Remove throw rugs, toxic substances, and dangerous electrical appliances from the environment.
- b. Reduce hot water heater temperature.

7. Altered thought processes ▲

- a. Call the client by name.
- b. Orient the client frequently.
- c. Use familiar objects in the room.
- d. Place a calendar and clock in a visible place.
- e. Maintain familiar routines.
- f. Allow the client to reminisce.
- g. Make tasks simple.
- h. Allow time for the client to complete a task.
- i. Provide positive reinforcement for positive behaviors.

8. Altered sleep patterns ▲

- a. Allow the client to wander in a safe place until he or she becomes tired.
- b. Prevent shadows in the room by using indirect light.
- c. Avoid the use of hypnotics because they cause confusion and aggravate the sundown effect.

9. Agitation ▲

- a. Assess the precipitant of the agitation.
- b. Reassure the client.
- c. Remove items that can be hazardous when the client is agitated.

- d. Approach the client slowly and calmly from the front, and speak, gesture, and move slowly.
- e. Remove the client to a less stressful environment; decrease excess stimuli.
- f. Use touch gently.
- g. Do not argue with or force the client to do something.

## XV. Psychosexual Alterations

### A. Sexuality

1. One's sense of being a sexual individual
2. Includes how one looks, behaves, and relates to others

### B. Sexual expression (Box 74-16)

#### BOX 74-16

#### Sexual Expression

**Bisexuality:** Sexual attraction to and activity with both genders

**Heterosexuality:** Male-female sexual relationships

**Homosexuality:** Sexual attraction to a member of the same gender

**Transvestism:** Obsession with wearing clothing of the opposite gender

### C. Alterations in sexual behavior

1. Transsexualism: Feeling that one's gender is inappropriate and desiring to acquire sexual characteristics of the opposite gender
2. Exhibitionism: Sexual urges and fantasies that result in exposure of genitals to strangers to bring sexual gratification or arousal

3. Fetishism: Using nonliving objects for sexual gratification
4. Pedophilia: Desiring sexual activity with a child younger than 13 years of age
5. Sexual masochism: Sexual gratification that involves receiving pain
6. Sexual sadism: Sexual gratification that involves inflicting pain
7. Voyeurism: Sexual gratification through observing others disrobing or engaging in sexual activity
8. Zoophilia: Intense sexual arousal or desire for sexual contact with animals
9. Frotteurism: Intense sexual arousal or desire when rubbing against a nonconsenting person

#### D. Interventions

1. Assess sexual history, history of trauma or abuse, and precipitating event for the sexual disorder.
2. Encourage the client to explore personal beliefs.
3. Provide a nonjudgmental attitude.
4. Ensure the client does not present a harm to self or others.
5. Provide supportive psychotherapy.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** If a client is actively hallucinating, the nurse should intervene with one-on-one contact. The nurse should ask the client directly about the hallucination and avoid reacting to the hallucination as if it were real. The nurse should decrease stimuli or

move the client to another area and avoid indicating to the client that others also are experiencing the hallucination. The nurse should encourage the client to express feelings, focus on reality-based topics, and respond verbally to anything real that the client talks about. The nurse also avoids touching the client. During a hallucination, the nurse also should attempt to engage the client's attention through a concrete activity and monitor for signs of increasing anxiety or agitation, which may indicate that the hallucinations are increasing.

### ***References***

Stuart (2013), pp. 366-367; Varcarolis (2013), p. 315.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**909.** A client says to the nurse, “The federal guards were sent to kill me.” What is the **best** nursing response to the client’s concern?

1. “I don’t believe this is true.”
2. “The guards are not out to kill you.”
3. “Do you feel afraid that people are trying to hurt you?”
4. “What makes you think the guards were sent to hurt you?”

**910.** A client diagnosed with delirium becomes disoriented and confused at night.

Which intervention should the nurse implement **initially**?

1. Move the client next to the nurse’s station.
2. Use an indirect light source and turn off the television.
3. Keep the television and a soft light on during the night.
4. Play soft music during the night, and maintain a well-lit room.

**911.** A client is admitted to the mental health unit with a diagnosis of depression. The nurse should develop a plan of care for the client that includes which intervention?

1. Encouraging quiet reading and writing for the first few days
2. Identification of physical activities that will provide exercise
3. No socializing activities, until the client asks to participate in milieu
4. A structured program of activities in which the client can participate

**912.** When planning the discharge of a client with chronic anxiety, the nurse directs the goals at promoting a safe environment at home. Which is the **most appropriate** maintenance goal?

1. Suppressing feelings of anxiety
2. Identifying anxiety-producing situations
3. Continued contact with a crisis counselor
4. Eliminating all anxiety from daily situations

**913.** A client is unwilling to go out of the house for fear of “making a fool of myself in public.” Because of this fear, the client remains homebound. Based on these data, which mental health disorder is the client experiencing?

1. Agoraphobia
2. Social phobia
3. Claustrophobia
4. Hypochondriasis

**914.** The nurse is conducting a group therapy session. During the session, a client diagnosed with mania consistently disrupts the group’s interactions. Which intervention should the nurse **initially** implement?

1. Setting limits on the client’s behavior
2. Asking the client to leave the group session
3. Asking another nurse to escort the client out of the group session
4. Telling the client that they will not be able to attend any future group sessions

**915.** A client is admitted to a medical nursing unit with a diagnosis of acute blindness after being involved in a hit-and-run accident. When diagnostic testing cannot identify any organic reason why this client cannot see, a mental health consult is prescribed. Which condition will be the focus of this consult?

1. Psychosis
2. Repression
3. Conversion disorder
4. Dissociative disorder

**916.** A manic client begins to make sexual advance towards visitors in the dayroom. When the nurse firmly states that this is inappropriate and will not be allowed, the client becomes verbally abusive and threatens physical violence to the nurse. Based on the analysis of this situation, which intervention should the nurse implement?

1. Place the client in seclusion for 30 minutes.
2. Tell the client that the behavior is inappropriate.
3. Escort the client to their room, with the assistance of other staff.
4. Tell the client that their telephone privileges are revoked for 24 hours.

**917.** Which nursing interventions are appropriate for a hospitalized client with mania who is exhibiting manipulative behavior? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Communicate expected behaviors to the client.
2. Ensure that the client knows that they are not in charge of the nursing unit.

3. Assist the client in identifying ways of setting limits on personal behaviors.
4. Follow through about the consequences of behavior in a nonpunitive manner.
5. Enforce rules by informing the client that they will not be allowed to attend therapy groups.
6. Have the client state the consequences for behaving in ways that are viewed as unacceptable.

**918.** The nurse observes that a client is pacing, agitated, and presenting aggressive gestures. The client's speech pattern is rapid, and affect is belligerent. Based on these observations, what is the nurse's **immediate priority** of care?

1. Provide safety for the client and other clients on the unit.
2. Provide the clients on the unit with a sense of comfort and safety.
3. Assist the staff in caring for the client in a controlled environment.
4. Offer the client a less stimulating area to calm down in and gain control.

**919.** The nurse is preparing a client with a history of command hallucinations for discharge by providing instructions on interventions for managing hallucinations and anxiety. Which statement in response to these instructions suggests to the nurse that the client understands the instructions?

1. "My medications aren't likely to make me anxious."
2. "I'll go to support group and talk so that I don't hurt anyone."
3. "It's not likely that I'll get anxious or hear things if I get enough sleep and eat well."

4. “When I begin to hallucinate, I’ll call my therapist and talk about what I should do.”

920. The nurse is caring for a client diagnosed with catatonic stupor who is lying on the bed in a fetal position. What is the **most appropriate** nursing intervention?

1. Ask direct questions to encourage talking.
2. Leave the client alone so as to minimize external stimuli.
3. Sit beside the client in silence with occasional open-ended questions.
4. Take the client into the dayroom with other clients so that they can help watch him.

921. The nurse is caring for a client who is experiencing disturbed thought processes as a result of paranoia. In formulating nursing interventions with the members of the health care team, what **best** instruction should the nurse provide to the staff?

1. Increase socialization of the client with peers.
2. Avoid laughing or whispering in front of the client.
3. Begin to educate the client about social supports in the community.
4. Have the client sign a release of information to appropriate parties for assessment purposes.

922. The nurse is planning activities for a client diagnosed with bipolar disorder with aggressive social behavior. Which activity would be **most appropriate** for this client?

1. Chess

2. Writing
3. Ping pong
4. Basketball

## ANSWERS

909. 3

**Rationale:** It is most therapeutic for the nurse to empathize with the client's experience. The remaining options lack this connection with the client. Disagreeing with delusions may make the client more defensive, and the client may cling to the delusions even more. Encouraging discussion regarding the delusion is inappropriate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Use **therapeutic communication techniques**. Eliminate options that show disagreement with the client or encourage any discussion regarding the delusion.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques** for the client with **delusions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Communication, Psychosis

**References:** Stuart (2013), p. 367; Varcarolis (2013), pp. 314-315.

910. 2

**Rationale:** Provision of a consistent daily routine and a low stimulating environment is important when a client is disoriented. Noise, including radio and television, may add to the confusion and disorientation. Moving the client next

to the nurses' station may become necessary but is not the initial action.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial* in the question. Eliminate options that are inappropriate or premature actions and may increase stimulation and add to the confusion. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care for the client who is **confused** or **disoriented**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Cognition

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), pp. 368, 380-381; Varcarolis (2013), pp. 335, 339.

#### 911. 4

**Rationale:** A client with depression often is withdrawn while experiencing difficulty concentrating, loss of interest or pleasure, low energy, fatigue, and feelings of worthlessness and poor self-esteem. The plan of care needs to provide successful experiences in a stimulating yet structured environment. The remaining options are either too “restrictive” or offer little or no structure and stimulation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the plan for a client with depression. Recall that a depressed client requires a structured and stimulating program in a safe environment. The correct option is the only one that will provide a safe and effective environment.

**Review:** Care for the client with **depression**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Mood and Affect, Safety

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 312-313.

## 912. 2

**Rationale:** Recognizing situations that produce anxiety allows the client to prepare to cope with anxiety or avoid a specific stimulus. Counselors will not be available for all anxiety-producing situations, and this option does not encourage the development of internal strengths. Suppressing feelings will not resolve anxiety. Elimination of all anxiety from life is impossible.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate any option that contains the **closed-ended word** *all* or suggests that feelings should be suppressed. Note that the correct option is more client-centered and helps prepare the client to deal with anxiety should it occur.

**Review:** Home care instructions for a client with **chronic anxiety**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Health Promotion

**References:** Stuart (2013), pp. 234-235; Varcarolis (2013), p. 179.

## 913. 2

**Rationale:** Social phobia is a fear of situations in which one might be embarrassed or criticized, such as the fear of

speaking, performing, or eating in public. The person fears making a fool of oneself. Agoraphobia is a fear of open spaces and the fear of being trapped in a situation from which there may not be an escape. Claustrophobia is a fear of closed places. Clients with hypochondriacal symptoms focus their anxiety on physical complaints and are preoccupied with their health.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a type of phobia. Focusing on the words *making a fool of myself* will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Phobias**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Caregiving

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 175.

**914. 1**

**Rationale:** Manic clients may be talkative and can dominate group meetings or therapy sessions by their excessive talking. If this occurs, the nurse initially would set limits on the client's behavior. Initially, asking the client to leave the session or asking another person to escort the client out of the session is inappropriate. This may agitate the client and escalate the client's behavior further. Barring the client from group sessions is also an inappropriate action because it violates the client's right to receive treatment and is a threatening action.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initially*. Eliminate options that are **comparable or alike** and relate to the client leaving the session. Next, eliminate the option that violates the client's right to receive treatment and is a threatening action. Remember that setting firm limits with the client initially is best.

**Review:** Care for the client with **mania**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Psychosis

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 40-41.

### 915. 3

**Rationale:** A conversion disorder is the alteration or loss of a physical function that cannot be explained by any known pathophysiological mechanism. A conversion disorder is thought to be an expression of a psychological need or conflict. In this situation, the client witnessed an accident that was so psychologically painful that the client became blind. Psychosis is a state in which a person's mental capacity to recognize reality, communicate, and relate to others is impaired, interfering with the person's ability to deal with life's demands. Repression is a coping mechanism in which unacceptable feelings are kept out of awareness. A dissociative disorder is a disturbance or alteration in the normally integrative functions of identity, memory, or consciousness.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the cause of acute blindness. The key to the correct option lies in the fact that the client presents no organic reason to account for the blindness—hence, a conversion disorder.

**Review:** **Defense mechanisms** associated with **conversion disorders**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Psychosis

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 193, 199.

**916. 3**

**Rationale:** The client is at risk for injury to self and others and should be escorted out of the dayroom. Seclusion is premature in this situation. Telling the client that the behavior is inappropriate has already been attempted by the nurse. Denying privileges may increase the agitation that already exists in this client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to answer the question. Remember that if a physiological need is not present then focus on safety. Look for the option that promotes safety of the client, other clients, and staff.

**Review:** Appropriate interventions when dealing with a **manic** client

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Mood and Affect, Safety

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 286-287.

❖ **917. 1, 3, 4, 6**

**Rationale:** Interventions for dealing with the client exhibiting manipulative behavior include setting clear, consistent, and enforceable limits on manipulative behaviors; being clear with the client regarding the consequences of exceeding limits set; following through with the consequences in a nonpunitive manner; and assisting the client in

identifying means of setting limits on personal behaviors. Ensuring that the client knows that he or she is not in charge of the nursing unit is inappropriate; power struggles need to be avoided. Enforcing rules and informing the client that he or she will not be allowed to attend therapy groups is a violation of a client's rights.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, manipulative behavior. Recalling clients' rights and that power struggles need to be avoided will assist in selecting the correct interventions.

**Review:** Care for the client with **manipulative behavior**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Mood and Affect

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 287.

**918. 1**

**Rationale:** Safety of the client and other clients is the priority. The correct option is the only one that addresses the safety needs of the client as well as those of the other clients.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *immediate priority* and use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to prioritize. Note the words *agitated*, *aggressive*, and *belligerent*. Safety is the priority focus if a physiological need does not exist. Also, the correct option is the **umbrella option** and addresses the safety of all.

**Review:** Nursing interventions to provide **safety** to clients

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Safety

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 605; Varcarolis (2013), pp. 335, 456-457.

**919. 4**

**Rationale:** The risk for impulsive and aggressive behavior may increase if a client is receiving command hallucinations to harm self or others. If the client is experiencing a hallucination, the nurse should ask the client whether he or she has intentions to hurt him- or herself or others. Talking about auditory hallucinations can interfere with subvocal muscular activity associated with a hallucination. The client statements in the remaining options will aid in wellness, but are not specific interventions for hallucinations, if they occur.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, managing hallucinations and anxiety. The correct option is a specific agreement to seek help and evidences self-responsible commitment and control over one's own behavior. The remaining options are interventions that a client can carry out to aid wellness.

**Review:** Teaching points for a client with a history of **hallucinations**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Safety

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 315.

**920. 3**

**Rationale:** Clients who are withdrawn may be immobile and mute and may require consistent, repeated

approaches. Communication with withdrawn clients requires much patience from the nurse. Interventions include the establishment of interpersonal contact. The nurse facilitates communication with the client by sitting in silence, asking open-ended questions rather than direct questions, and pausing to provide opportunities for the client to respond. While overstimulation is not appropriate, there is no therapeutic value in ignoring the client. The client's safety is not the responsibility of other clients.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate options that are either nontherapeutic or that place the responsibility of client care and safety on someone other than appropriate staff. Also eliminate options that are not examples of therapeutic communication. The correct option provides for client supervision and communication as appropriate.

**Review:** Care for the client with **catatonic stupor**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Psychosis, Safety

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 272; Varcarolis (2013), pp. 258, 310.

**921. 2**

**Rationale:** Disturbed thought process related to paranoia is the client's problem, and the plan of care must address this problem. The client is experiencing paranoia and is distrustful and suspicious of others. The members of the health care team need to establish a rapport and trust with the client. Laughing or whispering in front of the client would be counterproductive. The remaining options ask the client to trust on a multitude of levels. These options are actions that are too intrusive for a client who is paranoid.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interventions for paranoia, and note the **strategic word** *best*. Note that the client has paranoia, and thinking about its definition will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Paranoia

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Psychosis

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 315.

922. 2

**Rationale:** Solitary activities that require a short attention span with mild physical exertion are the most appropriate activities for a client who is exhibiting aggressive behavior. Writing (journaling), walks with staff, and finger painting are activities that minimize stimuli and provide a constructive release for tension. The remaining options have a competitive element to them and should be avoided because they can stimulate aggression and increase psychomotor activity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate options that include activities that the client cannot do alone and are competitive in nature. The correct option identifies a solitary activity.

**Review:** Care for the **aggressive client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

***Content Area:*** Mental Health

***Priority Concepts:*** Mood and Affect, Safety

***Reference:*** Stuart (2013), p. 373.



## CHAPTER 75

# Addictions

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

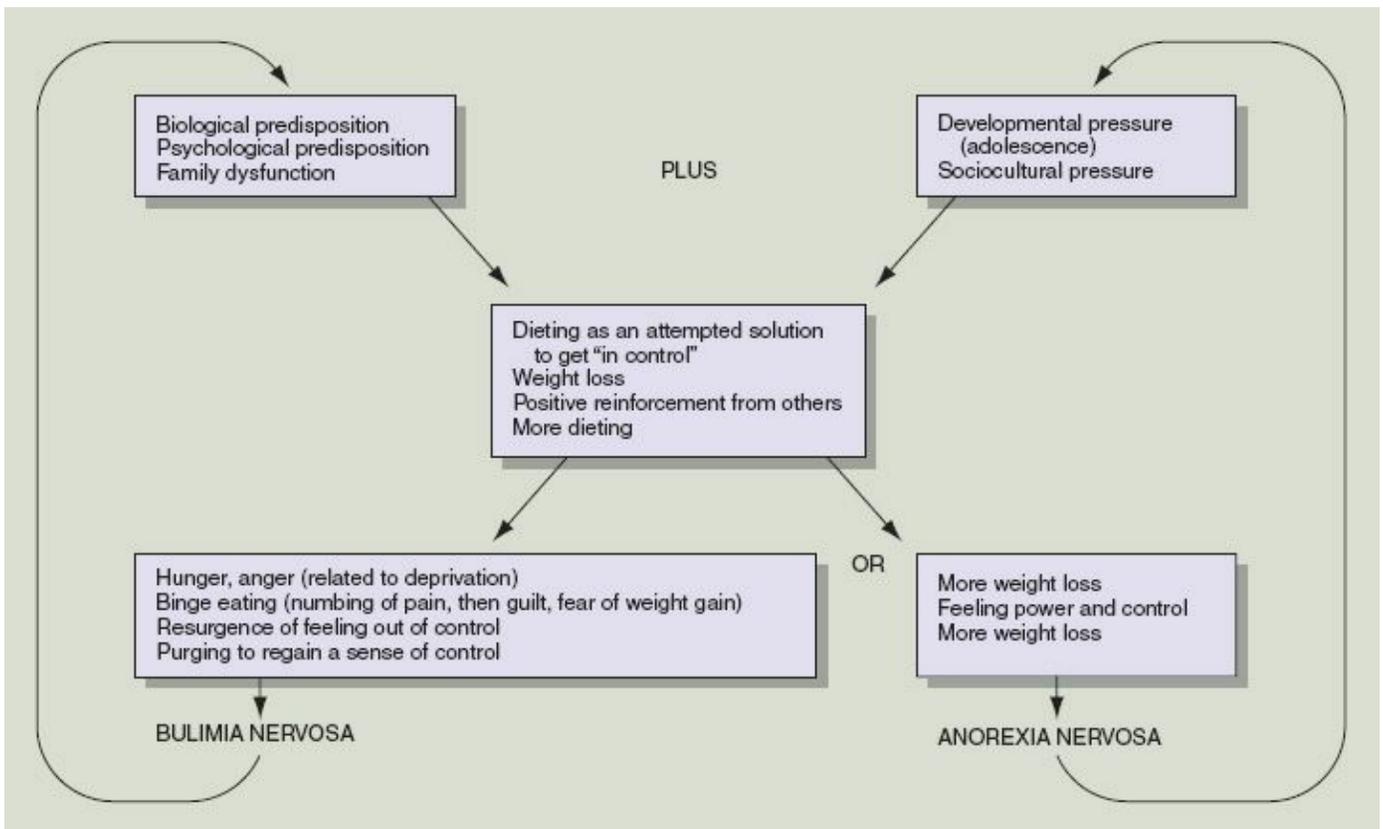
The nurse notes that a client is experiencing signs of alcohol withdrawal delirium.

What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 1066.*

### **I. Eating Disorders**

**A.** Description: Eating disorders are characterized by uncertain self-identification and grossly disturbed eating habits (Fig. 75-1).



**FIGURE 75-1** Cycle of eating disorders. (From Fortinash K, Holoday-Worret P: *Psychiatric mental health nursing*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2008, Mosby.)

## B. Compulsive overeating

1. Compulsive overeating is bingelike overeating without purging.
2. Food consumption is out of the individual's control and occurs in a stereotyped fashion.
3. Repulsed by eating, that is, the eating relieves tension but does not produce pleasure
4. Aware that eating patterns are abnormal and feels depressed after eating
5. Eats secretly during a binge and consumes high-calorie and easily digestible food
6. Repeatedly tries to diet, but without success

7. Feels helpless and hopeless about weight
8. Responds to feelings of guilt, anger, depression, boredom, loneliness, inadequacy, or ambivalence by eating ▲

## C. Anorexia nervosa

### 1. Description

- a. Onset often is associated with a stressful life event.
- b. Intensely fears obesity.
- c. Body image is distorted and a disturbed self-concept is common.
- d. Preoccupied with foods that prevent weight gain and has a phobia against foods that produce weight gain.
- e. The eating disorder can be life-threatening.
- f. Death can occur from starvation, **suicide**, cardiomyopathies, or electrolyte imbalance. ▲

### 2. Assessment ▲

- a. Refusal to eat and appetite loss
- b. Appetite denial
- c. Feelings of lack of control
- d. Compulsive exercising
- e. Overachiever and perfectionist
- f. Physical alterations: Many occur and can include decreased temperature, pulse, and blood pressure; weight loss; gastrointestinal disturbances such as constipation; teeth and gum deterioration; esophageal varices from induced

vomiting; electrolyte imbalances; dry, scaly skin; presence of lanugo on extremities; sleep disturbances; hormone deficiencies; amenorrhea for at least three consecutive menstrual periods; cyanosis and numbness of extremities; bone degeneration.

## **D. Bulimia nervosa**

### **1. Description**

- a.** Indulges in eating binges followed by purging behaviors.
- b.** Most clients remain within a normal weight range, but think that their lives are dominated by the eating-related conflict. ▲

### **2. Assessment**

- a.** Preoccupied with body shape and weight
- b.** Consumption of high-calorie food in secret; guilt about secretive eating
- c.** Binge-purge syndrome ▲
- d.** Attempts to lose weight through diets, vomiting, enemas, cathartics, and amphetamines or diuretics
- e.** Has a need to control, yet experiences feelings of powerlessness or loss of control
- f.** Low self-esteem
- g.** Poor interpersonal relationships
- h.** Decreased interest, or absence of interest, in sex
- i.** Mood swings
- j.** Electrolyte imbalances

**k. Physical alterations:** Similar to those that occur with anorexia nervosa

**E. Interventions:** Clients with an eating disorder ▲

1. Assess nutritional status and the severity of any medical problems.
2. Establish a one-to-one therapeutic relationship with the client; the nurse needs to establish trust and recognize any client reluctance to establish a relationship.
3. Establish a contract concerning the nutritional plan for the day.
4. Assist to identify precipitants to the eating disorder.
5. Encourage the client to express feelings about the eating behavior and how the client feels about his or her body.
6. Be accepting and nonjudgmental.
7. Work on exploring self-concept and establishing identity.
8. Implement behavior modification techniques.
9. If in a health care facility, supervise during mealtimes and for a specified period after meals and monitor intake and output; set a time limit for each meal and provide a pleasant, relaxed environment for eating.
10. Monitor for signs of physical complications related to the eating disorder.
11. Weigh daily at the same time, using the same scale, after the client voids (weighing each day may decrease anxiety in some clients); when weighing the client, ensure that the client is wearing the same clothing as when the previous weight was taken.
12. Monitor and restore fluid and electrolyte balance.
13. Monitor elimination patterns.

14. Assess and limit the client's activity level (anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa).
15. Encourage the client to participate in diversional activities.
16. Assess suicide potential.
17. Administer antidepressant medication if prescribed.
18. Encourage psychotherapy.
19. Refer to support groups.

## II. Substance Abuse Disorders

- A. Description: Substance abuse disorders cause behavioral and physiological changes (Box 75-1).

### BOX 75-1 CAGE Screening Questionnaire

C Have you ever felt the need to cut down on your drinking/drug use?

A Have you ever been annoyed at criticism of your drinking/drug use?

G Have you ever felt guilty about something that you have done when you have been drinking or taking drugs?

E Have you ever had an eye opener—drinking or taking drugs first thing in the morning to get going or to avoid withdrawal symptoms?

### B. Substance dependence

1. Substance dependence is a pattern of repeated use of a substance, which usually results in tolerance, withdrawal, and compulsive drug-taking behavior.

2. Substances are taken in larger amounts and over longer periods than was intended.
3. There is a desire to cut down, but efforts to decrease or discontinue use are unsuccessful.
4. Daily activities revolve around the use of a substance.

 Screening tools are available to assess a substance abuse disorder, including Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST), Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST), and CAGE screening questionnaire.

C. Substance tolerance is the need for increased amounts of the substance to achieve the desired effect. 

#### D. Substance abuse

1. Uses substances recurrently.
2. Recurrent, significant harmful consequences related to the use of substances are experienced.
3. The client may have legal issues to resolve, and involvement with the legal system is common.

#### E. Substance withdrawal

1. Physiological and substance-specific cognitive symptoms occur.
2. Substance withdrawal occurs when an individual experiences a decrease in blood levels of a substance on which the individual is physiologically dependent. 

#### F. Other factors to consider in a client with a substance-related disorder

1. Rebellion and peer group pressure in adolescence may contribute to the onset of substance use.

2. Substance use may become a **coping mechanism** for decreasing physical and emotional pain.
3. Depression may precede or occur as a result of or in association with substance use.
4. Grief and loss may be associated with substance use.

**G. Dysfunctional behaviors related to substance abuse**

1. Preoccupation with obtaining and using substance
2. Manipulation to avoid consequences of behavior
3. Impulsiveness
4. Anger, including physical and verbal **abuse**
5. Avoidance of relationships outside the family unit
6. Relationships within the family become dysfunctional as the children take on atypical roles to protect the family unit
7. Sense of self-importance and requiring special treatment
8. Denial—blaming everything but the substance use for problems
9. Use of rationalization and projection to justify unacceptable behavior
10. Low self-esteem
11. Depression
12. Codependency issues ▲
  - a. *Codependency* refers to the presence of coexisting behaviors present in a significant other, which serves to enable the addict or alcoholic to continue the irresponsible patterns of use without experiencing consequences.

- b. Examples of codependency: Paying bills for which the addict or alcoholic is responsible, bailing the addict or alcoholic out of jail, helping the addict or alcoholic to call in sick to employment agency.
- c. It is important to address codependency issues with the family to maximize the chance for recovery of the client with the **addiction** and the person with the codependent behaviors.

### III. Alcohol Abuse

#### A. Description

1. Alcohol is a central nervous system (CNS) depressant affecting all body tissues.
2. Physical dependence is a biological need for alcohol to avoid physical withdrawal symptoms, whereas psychological dependence refers to craving for the subjective effect of alcohol.

#### B. Risk factors

1. Biological predisposition; genetic and familial predisposition may also be a risk factor.
2. Depressed and highly anxious characteristics
3. Low self-esteem
4. Poor self-control
5. History of rebelliousness, poor school performance, delinquency
6. Poor parental relationships

#### C. Assessment

1. Slurred speech
2. Uncoordinated movements
3. Unsteady gait
4. Restlessness
5. Belligerence
6. Confusion
7. Sneaking drinks, drinking in the morning, experiencing blackouts
8. Binge drinking
9. Arguments about drinking
10. Missing work
11. Increased tolerance to alcohol
12. Intoxication, with blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.1% (100 mg alcohol/dL blood) or greater (legal BAC may vary state to state)

 Part of the assessment should include the type of alcohol, how much, for how long, and when last consumed.

#### **D. Psychological symptoms**

1. Depression
2. Hostility
3. Suspiciousness
4. Rationalization
5. Irritability

6. Isolation

7. Decrease in inhibitions

8. Decrease in self-esteem

9. Denial that a problem exists ▲

E. Complications associated with chronic alcohol use ▲

1. Vitamin deficiencies

a. Vitamin B deficiency causing peripheral neuropathies

b. Thiamine deficiency, causing Korsakoff's syndrome

2. Alcohol-induced persistent amnesic disorder, causing severe memory problems

3. Wernicke's encephalopathy, causing confusion, ataxia, and abnormal eye movements

4. Hepatitis; cirrhosis of the liver

5. Esophagitis and gastritis

6. Pancreatitis

7. Anemias

8. Immune system dysfunctions

9. Brain damage

10. Peripheral neuropathy

11. Cardiac disorders

#### **IV. Alcohol Withdrawal**

A. Description

1. Early signs develop within a few hours after cessation of alcohol intake.
2. These signs peak after 24 to 48 hours and then rapidly disappear, unless the withdrawal progresses to alcohol withdrawal delirium.
3. At the onset of withdrawal ([Box 75-2](#)), follow agency protocol using specified withdrawal assessment scales as indicated by unit or agency policy.

### **BOX 75-2** Early Signs of Alcohol Withdrawal

- Anorexia (nausea and vomiting may occur)
- Anxiety
- Easily startled
- Hyperalertness
- Hypertension
- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Jerky movements
- Possibly experiences hallucinations, illusions, delusions, or vivid nightmares
- Possibly reports a feeling of “shaking inside”
- Seizures (usually appear 7 to 48 hours after cessation of alcohol)
- Tachycardia
- Tremors

4. Chlordiazepoxide (Librium) is a commonly prescribed medication for acute

alcohol withdrawal and is usually given orally, unless a more immediate onset is required (any benzodiazepine would decrease the withdrawal symptoms because of cross-tolerance; see [Chapter 77](#) for a list of benzodiazepines).

5. An intramuscular injection of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (thiamine) followed by several days of oral administration is usually prescribed to prevent Wernicke's encephalopathy.

**B.** Withdrawal (see [Box 75-2](#))

**C.** Withdrawal delirium: The state of delirium usually peaks 48 to 72 hours after cessation or reduction of intake (although can occur later) and lasts 2 to 3 days ([Box 75-3](#)). ▲

### **BOX 75-3** Manifestations of Alcohol Withdrawal Delirium

- Agitation
- Anorexia
- Anxiety
- Delirium
- Diaphoresis
- Disorientation with fluctuating levels of consciousness
- Fever (temperature 100 ° F to 103 ° F)
- Hallucinations and delusions
- Insomnia
- Tachycardia and hypertension

**⚠** Withdrawal delirium is a medical emergency. Death can occur from myocardial infarction, fat emboli, peripheral vascular collapse, electrolyte imbalance, aspiration pneumonia, or suicide.

#### **D. Interventions** ▲

1. Provide care in a nonjudgmental manner.
2. Check the client frequently.
3. Monitor vital signs and neurological signs (every 15 minutes) and provide one-to-one supervision.
4. Provide a quiet, nonstimulating environment; encourage a family member (one at a time) to stay with the client to minimize anxiety.
5. Orient frequently.
6. Explain all treatments and procedures in a quiet and simple manner.
7. Initiate seizure precautions.
8. Administer sedating or anticonvulsant medication as prescribed.
9. Provide small, frequent, high-carbohydrate foods (administer antiemetic before meals as needed).
10. Monitor intake and output.
11. Administer vitamins (multivitamin, vitamin B complex including thiamine, and vitamin C)
12. Assist with activities of daily living and assist with ambulation if stable.
13. Allow to express fears.

#### **E. Disulfiram (Antabuse) therapy**

## 1. Description

- a. Disulfiram is an alcohol deterrent that may be prescribed for alcoholic dependence.
- b. The medication sensitizes the client to alcohol, so that a disulfiram-alcohol reaction occurs if alcohol is ingested.
- c. The client must abstain from alcohol for at least 12 hours before the initial dose is administered.
- d. Adverse effects usually begin within several minutes to 0.5 hour after consuming alcohol and may last 0.5 to 2 hours.
- e. The client must avoid drinking alcohol for 14 days after disulfiram therapy has been discontinued; otherwise, the client is at risk for a disulfiram-alcohol reaction.

## 2. Adverse effects

- a. Facial flushing
- b. Sweating
- c. Throbbing headache
- d. Neck pain
- e. Nausea and vomiting
- f. Hypotension
- g. Tachycardia
- h. Respiratory distress

## 3. Client education ▲

- a. Educate about the effects of the medication.
- b. Ensure agreement to abstain from alcohol and any alcohol-containing substances.
- c. Inform the client that effects of the medication may occur for several days after discontinuance.
- d. Other medications used to assist with cravings include acamprosate calcium (Campral) and naltrexone (ReVia)

**F. Dealing with the client who abuses alcohol (Boxes 75-4 and 75-5) ▲**

**BOX 75-4 Dealing with the Client Who Abuses Alcohol**

Direct the client's focus to the substance abuse problem.

Identify situations that precipitate angry feelings with the client.

Set limits on manipulative behavior and verbal and physical abuse.

Hold the client firmly to reasonable limits, consistently reinforcing rules, with reasonable consequences for breaking rules.

Hold the client accountable for all behaviors.

Assist the client to explore strengths and weaknesses.

Encourage the client to focus on strengths if the client is losing control.

Encourage the client to participate in group therapy and support groups.

**BOX 75-5 Therapies for Clients with Substance Abuse and for Their Families**

- Behavior therapy, aversion conditioning with medication
- Hospitalization
- Psychotherapy (individual, group, family)
- 12-Step support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous; Narcotics Anonymous; Pills Anonymous; Al-Anon, Al-a-Teen, or Narc-Anon (for family members and friends of alcoholics or addicts); and Adult Children of Alcoholics
- Transitional living programs (halfway houses)

 Instruct the client who is on disulfiram (Antabuse) therapy to avoid the use of substances that contain alcohol, such as cough medicines, rubbing compounds, vinegar, mouthwashes, and aftershave lotions. The client needs to read the labels of all products.

## V. Drug Dependency

### A. CNS depressants

1. CNS depressants include alcohol, benzodiazepines, and barbiturates and act as a depressant, sedative, or hypnotic.
2. Intoxication (Box 75-6)

#### **BOX 75-6** Intoxication: Central Nervous System Depressants

- Drowsiness
- Hypotension
- Impairment of memory, attention, judgment, and social or occupational functioning

- Incoordination and unsteady gait
- Irritability
- Slurred speech

3. Overdose can produce cardiovascular or respiratory depression, coma, shock, seizures, and death.
4. Overdose: If the client is awake, vomiting is induced and activated charcoal is administered; if the client is comatose, establishment and maintenance of an airway and gastric lavage with activated charcoal are the priorities; seizure precautions are indicated. ▲
5. Flumazenil (Romazicon) intravenously may be used for benzodiazepine overdose to reverse the effects.
6. Withdrawal effects include nausea, vomiting, tachycardia, diaphoresis, irritability, tremors, insomnia, and seizures; withdrawal must be treated with a carefully titrated similar drug (abrupt withdrawal can lead to death).
7. Withdrawal from CNS depressants such as barbiturates is generally treated with a barbiturate such as phenobarbital or a long-acting benzodiazepine.

## **B. CNS stimulants**

1. CNS stimulants include substances such as amphetamines, cocaine, and crack.
2. Intoxication ([Box 75-7](#))

- Dilated pupils
- Euphoria
- Hypertension
- Impairment of judgment and social or occupational functioning
- Insomnia
- Nausea and vomiting
- Paranoia, delusions, hallucinations
- Potential for violence
- Tachycardia

3. Overdose can produce respiratory distress, ataxia, hyperpyrexia, seizures, coma, stroke, myocardial infarction, and death.
4. Overdose is treated with antipsychotics and management of associated effects.
5. Withdrawal effects include fatigue, depression, agitation, apathy, anxiety, insomnia, disorientation, lethargy, and craving.
6. Withdrawal is treated with antidepressants, a dopamine agonist, or bromocriptine (Parlodel); withdrawal is primarily supportive, particularly when dealing with the severe depression and suicidal ideation that accompanies stimulant withdrawal. ▲

## C. Opioids

1. Opioids include substances such as opium, heroin, meperidine (Demerol), morphine sulfate, codeine sulfate, methadone (Dolophine), hydromorphone

(Dilaudid), oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Lortab), and fentanyl (Sublimaze).

## 2. Intoxication (Box 75-8)

### BOX 75-8 Intoxication: Opioids

- Constricted pupils
- Decreased respirations
- Drowsiness
- Euphoria
- Hypotension
- Impairment of memory, attention, and judgment
- Psychomotor retardation
- Slurred speech

3. Overdose can produce respiratory depression, shock, coma, seizures, and death.
4. Overdose is treated with an opioid antagonist such as naloxone.
5. Withdrawal effects include yawning, insomnia, irritability, rhinorrhea, diaphoresis, cramps, nausea and vomiting, muscle aches, chills, fever, lacrimation, and diarrhea. ▲
6. Withdrawal may be treated by methadone detoxification or tapering dosage with other opioids.
7. Clonidine (Catapres), an  $\alpha$ -adrenergic blocker, assists in reducing the severity of

sympathetic nervous system–generated withdrawal discomfort.

8. Specific measures for symptom management may also be used, such as bismuth subsalicylate (Kaopectate) for diarrhea and acetaminophen (Tylenol) for muscle aches.

#### D. Hallucinogens

1. Hallucinogens include substances such as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), mescaline (peyote), psilocybin (mushrooms), and phencyclidine (PCP).
2. Intoxication ([Box 75-9](#))

#### **BOX 75-9** Intoxication: Hallucinogens

- Agitation and belligerence
- Anxiety and depression
- Bizarre behavior, regressive behavior, or violent behavior
- Blank stare
- Diaphoresis
- Dilated pupils
- Elevated vital signs including blood pressure
- Hallucinations
- Impairment of judgment and social and occupational functioning
- Incoordination
- Muscular rigidity and chronic jerking
- Paranoia

- Seizures
- Tachycardia
- Tremors

3. Overdose effects of LSD, peyote, and psilocybin include psychosis, brain damage, and death; effects of PCP include psychosis, hypertensive crisis, hyperthermia, seizures, and respiratory arrest.
4. Treatment (LSD, peyote, psilocybin) involves low environmental stimuli (speak slowly, clearly, and in a low voice) and medications to treat anxiety.
5. Treatment (PCP) involves possible gastric lavage (if alert); treatment to acidify the urine to assist in excreting the drug; and interventions to treat behavioral disturbances, hyperthermia, hypertension, and respiratory distress. ▲
6. Management of withdrawal is primarily supportive and may include medications to target particular problem behaviors, such as agitation.

 Flashbacks, which are unexpected reexperiences of the effects of taking a hallucinogenic drug, can occur for extended periods of time after its original use. Safety during flashbacks is a priority.

## E. Inhalants

1. Inhalants include gases or liquids such as butane, paint thinner, paint and wax removers, airplane glue, nail polish remover, and nitrous oxide.
2. Intoxication ([Box 75-10](#))

- Enhancement of sexual pleasure
- Euphoria
- Excitation followed by drowsiness, lightheadedness, disinhibition, and agitation
- Giggling and laughter

3. Overdose can cause damage to the nervous system and death. ▲
4. Management of withdrawal is mainly supportive, including the treatment of affected body systems.

#### F. Marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*)

1. Generally is smoked, but can be ingested.
2. Causes euphoria, detachment, relaxation, talkativeness, slowed perception of time, anxiety, and paranoia.
3. Long-term dependence can result in lethargy, difficulty concentrating, memory loss, and possibly chronic respiratory disorders.
4. Withdrawal management is mainly supportive.

#### G. Other recreational and club drugs

 There are many types of illegal street drugs that are harmful. The nurse needs to be knowledgeable about the physiological effects of these various drugs, be able to recognize the signs associated with their use, and be prepared to provide immediate treatment.

1. Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, ecstasy),  $\gamma$ -hydroxybutyrate (GHB),

methamphetamine (crank, meth, crystal meth), and ketamine (special K)

2. Effects include euphoria, increased energy, increased self-confidence, and increased sociability.
3. Adverse effects include hyperthermia, rhabdomyolysis, kidney failure, hepatotoxicity, depression, panic attacks, psychosis, cardiovascular collapse, and death.
4. Programs for addiction also address nicotine withdrawal and the pharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions for this problem, such as nicotine patches, nicotine inhalers, and bupropion (Zyban) for the reduction of withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
5. Anabolic steroids have also gained increased attention as increasingly adverse events, including death, have become more widely publicized.

#### H. Interventions: Withdrawal (Box 75-11) ▲

##### **BOX 75-11**

##### **Withdrawal: Nursing Care**

Obtain information regarding the type of drug and amount consumed.

Assess vital signs.

Remove unnecessary objects from the environment.

Provide one-to-one supervision if necessary.

Provide a quiet, calm environment with minimal stimuli.

Maintain client orientation.

Ensure client's safety by implementing seizure precautions.

Use security devices if necessary and as prescribed to prevent client from harming self and others.

Provide for physical needs.

Provide food and fluids as tolerated.

Administer medications as prescribed to decrease withdrawal symptoms.

Collect blood and urine samples for drug screening.

1. Initiate seizure precautions.
2. Hydrate the client.
3. Monitor vital signs every hour.
4. Monitor intake and output.
5. Orient the client frequently.
6. Maintain minimal stimuli.
7. Approach in an accepting and nonjudgmental manner.
8. Direct focus to the substance abuse problem.
9. Assist with identifying situations that precipitate angry feelings.
10. Assist to deal with emotions.
11. Limit placing blame or rationalizing to explain the substance abuse problem.
12. Assist to use assertive techniques rather than manipulation to meet needs.
13. Set limits on manipulative behavior and verbal and physical abuse.
14. Maintain firm and reasonable limits, consistently reinforcing rules, with reasonable consequences for breaking rules.

15. Hold accountable for all behaviors.
16. Assist to explore strengths and weaknesses.
17. Encourage to focus on strengths if the client is losing control.
18. Encourage to participate in unit activities.
19. Encourage to participate in group therapy and support groups.

#### I. Dual diagnoses

1. Sometimes the use of alcohol and drugs masks underlying psychiatric pathology.
2. Psychiatric pathology may also be precipitated by substance use and abuse.
3. When psychiatric disorders and substance abuse are present together, it is often referred to as *dual diagnosis*.
4. Separating psychiatric diagnosis from substance dependence can be done only over time after a sustained period of abstinence.

#### J. Addiction and abuse in health care professionals: Suspicious signs

1. Frequently reporting that drugs have been wasted without being witnessed by another nurse
2. Reporting administering maximum dosages of controlled substances to clients when other nurses do not administer the maximum dose
3. A variance in usual pain relief in the absence of a change in dosage or frequency of administration in their clients
4. Work patterns include the following: Always volunteering to carry narcotic (opioids) keys; choosing shifts in which less supervision is present; choosing work areas where the use of controlled substances is high, such as critical care

units, operating room, anesthesia, and trauma units.

5. Nurses have a professional and ethical obligation to report impaired coworkers.
6. Most impaired nurses are able to return to work through the State Board of Nursing assistance and monitoring programs; such programs usually require strict adherence to clearly stated rules and regular reports and drug screens.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

**Answer:** The nurse should immediately contact the health care provider if signs of alcohol withdrawal delirium occur and the nurse should follow agency protocol using specified assessment scales. One-to-one supervision needs to be provided to ensure safety. The nurse should provide care in a nonjudgmental manner and monitor vital signs and neurological signs (every 15 minutes). The environment should be quiet and nonstimulating, and a family member should be encouraged to stay with the client to minimize anxiety. The nurse should orient the client frequently, explain all treatments and procedures in a quiet and simple manner, initiate seizure precautions, and administer sedating or anticonvulsant medication as prescribed. In addition, the nurse should provide small, frequent, high-carbohydrate foods (administer antiemetic before meals as needed).

### **Reference**

Stuart (2013), p. 454.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**923.** The home health nurse visits a client at home and determines that the client is dependent on drugs. During the assessment, which action should the nurse take to plan appropriate nursing care?

1. Ask the client why he started taking illegal drugs.
2. Ask the client about the amount of drug use and its effect.
3. Ask the client how long he thought that he could take drugs without someone finding out.
4. Not ask any questions for fear that the client is in denial and will throw the nurse out of the home.

**924.** Which interventions are **most appropriate** for caring for a client in alcohol withdrawal? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Maintain NPO status.
3. Provide a safe environment.
4. Address hallucinations therapeutically.
5. Provide stimulation in the environment.
6. Provide reality orientation as appropriate.

**925.** The nurse determines that the wife of an alcoholic client is benefiting from attending an Al-Anon group if the nurse hears the wife make which statement?

1. "I no longer feel that I deserve the beatings my husband inflicts on me."

2. “My attendance at the meetings has helped me to see that I provoke my husband’s violence.”
3. “I enjoy attending the meetings because they get me out of the house and away from my husband.”
4. “I can tolerate my husband’s destructive behaviors now that I know they are common with alcoholics.”

926. A hospitalized client with a history of alcohol abuse tells the nurse, “I am leaving now. I have to go. I don’t want any more treatment. I have things that I have to do right away.” The client has not been discharged and is scheduled for an important diagnostic test to be performed in 1 hour. After the nurse discusses the client’s concerns with the client, the client dresses and begins to walk out of the hospital room. What action should the nurse take?

1. Call the nursing supervisor.
2. Call security to block all exit areas.
3. Restrain the client until the health care provider (HCP) can be reached.
4. Tell the client that the client cannot return to this hospital again if the client leaves now.

927. The nurse is preparing to perform an admission assessment on a client with a diagnosis of bulimia nervosa. Which assessment findings does the nurse expect to note? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Dental decay

2. Moist oily skin
3. Loss of tooth enamel
4. Electrolyte imbalances
5. Body weight well below ideal range

**928.** The nurse is caring for a female client who was admitted to the mental health unit recently for anorexia nervosa. The nurse enters the client's room and notes that the client is engaged in rigorous push-ups. Which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Interrupt the client and weigh her immediately.
2. Interrupt the client and offer to take her for a walk.
3. Allow the client to complete her exercise program.
4. Tell the client that she is not allowed to exercise rigorously.

**929.** A client with a diagnosis of anorexia nervosa, who is in a state of starvation, is in a two-bed room. A newly admitted client will be assigned to this client's room. Which client would be the **best** choice as a roommate for the client with anorexia nervosa?

1. A client with pneumonia
2. A client undergoing diagnostic tests
3. A client who thrives on managing others
4. A client who could benefit from the client's assistance at mealtime

**930.** The nurse is monitoring a hospitalized client who abuses alcohol. Which findings

should alert the nurse to the potential for alcohol withdrawal delirium?

1. Hypotension, ataxia, hunger
2. Stupor, lethargy, muscular rigidity
3. Hypotension, coarse hand tremors, lethargy
4. Hypertension, changes in level of consciousness, hallucinations

**931.** The spouse of a client admitted to the mental health unit for alcohol withdrawal says to the nurse, “I should get out of this bad situation.” What is the **most** helpful response by the nurse?

1. “Why don’t you tell your wife about this?”
2. “What do you find difficult about this situation?”
3. “This is not the best time to make that decision.”
4. “I agree with you. You should get out of this situation.”

**932.** A client with anorexia nervosa is a member of a pre-discharge support group. The client verbalizes that she would like to buy some new clothes, but her finances are limited. Group members have brought some used clothes to the client to replace the client’s old clothes. The client believes that the new clothes were much too tight and has reduced her calorie intake to 800 calories daily. How should the nurse evaluate this behavior?

1. Normal behavior
2. Evidence of the client’s disturbed body image
3. Regression as the client is moving toward the community

#### 4. Indicative of the client's ambivalence about hospital discharge

## ANSWERS

923. 2

**Rationale:** Whenever the nurse carries out an assessment for a client who is dependent on drugs, it is best for the nurse to attempt to elicit information by being nonjudgmental and direct. Option 1 is incorrect because it is judgmental and off-focus, and reflects the nurse's bias. Option 3 is incorrect because it is judgmental, insensitive, and aggressive, which is nontherapeutic. Option 4 is incorrect because it indicates passivity on the nurse's part and uses rationalization to avoid the therapeutic nursing intervention.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, providing appropriate nursing care. Use of **therapeutic communication techniques** will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Assessment of a client who is dependent on **drugs**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction, Communication

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 226.

❖ 924. 1, 3, 4, 6

**Rationale:** When the client is experiencing withdrawal from alcohol, the priority for care is to prevent the client from harming self or others. The nurse would provide a low-stimulation environment to maintain the client in as

calm a state as possible. The nurse would monitor the vital signs closely and report abnormal findings. The nurse would reorient the client to reality frequently and would address hallucinations therapeutically. Adequate nutritional and fluid intake need to be maintained.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Use **therapeutic communication techniques** to assist in selecting the correct interventions. Also, recalling the characteristics associated with alcohol withdrawal will assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** Interventions for the client experiencing **alcohol withdrawal**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction, Caregiving

**References:** Stuart (2013), pp. 458-459; Swearingen (2012), p. 713.

**925. 1**

**Rationale:** Al-Anon support groups are a protected, supportive opportunity for spouses and significant others to learn what to expect and to obtain excellent pointers about successful behavioral changes. The correct option is the healthiest response because it exemplifies an understanding that the alcoholic partner is responsible for his behavior and cannot be allowed to blame family members for loss of control. Option 2 is incorrect because the nonalcoholic partner should not feel responsible when the spouse loses control. Option 3 indicates that the group is viewed as an escape, not as a place to work on issues. Option 4 indicates that the wife remains codependent.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the therapeutic effect of attending an Al-Anon group. Noting the

words *benefiting from attending an Al-Anon group* will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The purpose of specific **support groups**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction, Family Dynamics

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 378-379.

**926. 1**

**Rationale:** Most health care facilities have documents that the client is asked to sign relating to the client's responsibilities when the client leaves against medical advice. The client should be asked to wait to speak to the HCP before leaving and to sign the "against medical advice" document before leaving. If the client refuses to do so, the nurse cannot hold the client against the client's will. Therefore, in this situation, the nurse should call the nursing supervisor. The nurse can be charged with false imprisonment if a client is made to believe wrongfully that he or she cannot leave the hospital. Restraining the client and calling security to block exits constitutes false imprisonment. All clients have a right to health care and cannot be told otherwise.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Keeping the concept of false imprisonment in mind, eliminate options 2 and 3 because they are **comparable or alike**. Eliminate option 4, knowing that all clients have a right to health care. From the options presented, the best action is presented in the correct option.

**Review:** Points related to **false imprisonment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Health Care Law

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 89.

❖ 927. 1, 3, 4

**Rationale:** Clients with bulimia nervosa initially may not appear to be physically or emotionally ill. They are often at or slightly below ideal body weight. On further inspection, a client exhibits dental decay and loss of tooth enamel if the client has been inducing vomiting. Electrolyte imbalances are present. Dry, scaly skin (rather than moist, oily skin) is present.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, assessment findings in bulimia nervosa. It is necessary to recall that in anorexia nervosa the body weight is normally well below ideal body weight and that clients with bulimia nervosa are often at or slightly below ideal body weight. Also, remember that skin texture will be dry and scaly.

**Review:** Characteristics of **anorexia nervosa** and **bulimia nervosa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process/Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Nutrition

**References:** Stuart (2013), p. 482; Varcarolis (2013), pp. 232-233, 238.

928. 2

**Rationale:** Clients with anorexia nervosa frequently are preoccupied with rigorous exercise and push themselves

beyond normal limits to work off caloric intake. The nurse must provide for appropriate exercise and place limits on rigorous activities. The correct option stops the harmful behavior yet provides the client with an activity to decrease anxiety that is not harmful. Weighing the client immediately reinforces the client's preoccupation with weight.

Allowing the client to complete the exercise program can be harmful to the client. Telling the client that she is not allowed to complete the exercise program will increase the client's anxiety.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and focus on the client's diagnosis. Also, focus on the need for the nurse to maintain safety and to set firm limits with clients who have this disorder.

**Review:** Interventions for the client with **anorexia nervosa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Safety

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 490.

## 929. 2

**Rationale:** The client undergoing diagnostic tests is an acceptable roommate. The client with anorexia nervosa is most likely experiencing hematological complications, such as leukopenia. Having a roommate with pneumonia would place the client with anorexia nervosa at risk for infection. The client with anorexia nervosa should not be put in a situation in which the client can focus on the nutritional needs of others or be managed by others because this may contribute to sublimation and suppression of personal hunger.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best* and note the words *in a state of starvation* in the question.

Recalling the characteristics of anorexia nervosa and that the client is immunocompromised as a result of starvation

will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with **anorexia nervosa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Safety

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 232.

#### 930. 4

**Rationale:** Symptoms associated with alcohol withdrawal delirium typically include anxiety, insomnia, anorexia, hypertension, disorientation, hallucinations, changes in level of consciousness, agitation, fever, and delusions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, findings associated with withdrawal delirium. Review each option carefully to ensure that all the symptoms in the option are correct. Eliminate options 1 and 3 first, knowing that hypertension rather than hypotension occurs. From the remaining options, recalling that the client who is stuporous is not likely to exhibit withdrawal delirium will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Symptoms associated with **withdrawal delirium**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Addiction, Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 454.

**931. 2**

**Rationale:** The most helpful response is one that encourages the client to solve problems. Giving advice implies that the nurse knows what is best and can foster dependency. The nurse should not agree with the client, and the nurse should not request that the client provide explanations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Use **therapeutic communication techniques**. Eliminate option 1 because of the word *why*, which should be avoided in communication. Eliminate option 3 because this option places the client's feelings on hold. Eliminate option 4 because the nurse is agreeing with the client. The correct option is the only one that addresses the client's feelings.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Communication

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 349; Stuart (2013), pp. 27, 566.

**932. 2**

**Rationale:** Disturbed body image is a concern with clients with anorexia nervosa. Although the client may struggle with ambivalence and show regressed behavior, the client's coping pattern relates to the basic issue of disturbed body image. The nurse should address this need in the support group.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, signs of disturbed body image. Note the relationship between the

information in the question and the correct option.

**Review:** Needs of a client with **anorexia nervosa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Coping

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 486, 492-493.



## CHAPTER 76

# Crisis Theory and Intervention

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A female victim of rape has just arrived at the emergency department. What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p. 1078.*

### I. Crisis Intervention

#### A. Description

1. **Crisis** is a temporary state of severe emotional disorganization caused by failure of **coping mechanisms** and lack of support.
2. The ability for decision-making and problem-solving is inadequate.
3. Treatment is aimed at assisting the client and the family through the stressful situation.

#### B. Phases of a crisis ▲

1. Phase 1: External precipitating event

## 2. Phase 2

- a. Perception of the threat
- b. Increase in anxiety
- c. Client may cope or resolve the crisis.

## 3. Phase 3

- a. Failure of coping
- b. Increasing disorganization
- c. Emergence of physical symptoms
- d. Relationship problems

## 4. Phase 4

- a. Mobilization of internal and external resources
- b. Goal is to return the client to at least a precrisis level of functioning.

### C. Types of crises (Box 76-1)

#### **BOX 76-1** Types of Crises

##### **Maturation**

- Relates to developmental stages and associated role changes; examples include marriage, birth of a child, and retirement

##### **Situational**

- Arises from an external source, is often unanticipated, and is associated with a life event that upsets an individual's or group's psychological equilibrium; examples include loss of a job or a change in job, change in financial status, death of a loved

one, divorce, abortion, addition of new family members, pregnancy, and severe physical or mental illness

### Adventitious

- Relates to a crisis of disaster or an event that is not a part of everyday life and is unplanned and accidental; this type of crisis may result from a natural disaster or catastrophic event, such as a flood, earthquake, hurricane, fire, tornado, war, riots, act of terrorism, or a crime of violence, such as rape, assault, murder, or spousal or child or elder abuse

#### D. Crisis intervention ▲

1. Treatment is immediate, supportive, and directly responsive to the immediate crisis.
2. Interventions are goal-directed.
3. Feelings of the client are acknowledged.
4. Intervention provides opportunities for expression and validation of feelings.
5. Connections are made between the meaning of the event and the crisis.
6. The client explores alternative coping mechanisms and tries out new behaviors.

#### II. Grief ▲

- A. Grief is a natural emotional response to loss that individuals must experience as they attempt to accept the loss.
- B. Grief usually involves moving through a series of stages or tasks to help resolve the grief (Box 76-2).

**Stage 1: Shock and Disbelief**

Individual may have feelings of numbness, difficulties with decision-making, emotional outbursts, denial, and isolation.

**Stage 2: Experiencing the Loss**

If the grief response is the result of a loss of a loved one, the individual may feel angry at the loved one who died or may feel guilt about the death.

Bargaining or depression or both also may occur in this stage.

**Stage 3: Reintegration**

Individual begins to reorganize his or her life and accepts the reality of the loss.

- C. Depending on the type of loss, feelings associated with grief include anger, frustration, loneliness, sadness, guilt, regret, and peace.
- D. Healing can occur when the pain of the loss has lessened and the individual has adapted to the loss; if the grief is the result of the loss of a loved one, the individual continues to experience memories of the deceased.
- E. Types of grief
  1. Normal grief: Physical, emotional, cognitive, or behavioral reactions can occur; the process of resolution can take months to years.
  2. Anticipatory grief occurs before the loss of a loved one and is associated with an acute, chronic, or terminal illness.

3. Disenfranchised grief occurs when a loss of a loved one is experienced and cannot be acknowledged openly (societal norms do not define the loss as a loss within its traditional definition).
4. Dysfunctional grief occurs with prolonged emotional instability and a lack of progression to successful coping with the loss.
5. Grief in children is based on the developmental level of the child (Box 76-3).

### **BOX 76-3**

### **Grief in Children**

#### **Birth to 1 Year**

Infant has no concept of death.

Infant reacts to the loss of mother or caregiver.

#### **1 to 2 Years**

Toddler may see death as reversible.

Grief response occurs only to the death of the significant person in the toddler's life.

Toddler may scream, withdraw, or become disinterested in the environment.

#### **2 to 5 Years**

Child may see death as reversible.

Child has a sense of loss and is concerned about who will provide care.

Regressive or aggressive behavior may occur.

#### **5 to 9 Years**

Child begins to see death as permanent.

Child may feel responsible for the occurrence.

Child has difficulty concentrating.

### **Preadolescent through Adolescent**

Adolescent sees death as permanent.

Adolescent experiences a strong emotional reaction.

Adolescent may regress.

### **III. Loss**

- A. Loss is the absence of something desired or previously thought to be available. ▲
- B. Actual loss can be identified by others and can arise in response to or in anticipation of a situation.
- C. Perceived loss is experienced by one person and cannot be verified by others.
- D. Anticipatory loss is experienced before the loss occurs.
- E. Mourning
  - 1. Mourning is the outward and social expression of loss.
  - 2. Mourning may be dictated by cultural and religious beliefs.
- F. Bereavement
  - 1. Bereavement includes the inner feelings and the outward reactions of the individual experiencing the loss.
  - 2. Bereavement includes grief and mourning.

### **IV. Nurse's Role: Grief and Loss (Box 76-4) ▲**

Determine how much the client and family want to know about the situation.

Determine whether there is a spokesperson for the family.

Be aware of cultural and religious beliefs and how they may affect the communication process; consider personal space issues, eye contact, and touch.

Obtain an interpreter, if necessary.

Allow opportunity for informed choices.

Assist with the decision-making process if asked; use problem-solving to assist in decision-making, and avoid interjecting personal views or opinions.

Encourage expression of feelings, concerns, and fears.

Be honest, and let the client and family know that you will not abandon them.

Ask the client and family about their expectations and needs.

Be a sensitive listener; sit in silence if necessary and appropriate.

Extend touch and hold the client's or family member's hand if appropriate.

Encourage reminiscing.

If you do not know what to do in a particular situation, seek assistance.

If you do not know what to say to a client or family who is talking about death or another loss, listen attentively and use therapeutic communication techniques, such as open-ended questions or reflection.

Acknowledge your own feelings; let the client and family know that the topic of conversation is a difficult one and that you do not know what to say.

Realize that it is acceptable to cry with the client and family during the grief process.

- A. Allow ongoing opportunities for fully informed choices.
- B. Facilitate the grief process; assess the individual's grief, and assist the individual to feel the loss and complete the tasks of the grief process.
- C. Grief affects individuals physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually; a multidisciplinary team approach, including a bereavement specialist, facilitates the grief process.

 The nurse's role in the grief and loss process includes communicating with the client, family members, and significant other. The nurse must consider the individual's culture, religion, family structure, life experiences, coping skills, and support systems.

## V. Suicidal Behavior

### A. Description

1. Suicidal clients characteristically have feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and hopelessness that are so overwhelming that they feel unable to go on with life and feel unfit to live.
2. The nurse caring for a depressed client always considers the possibility of **suicide**.

### B. High-risk groups

1. Clients with a history of previous **suicide attempts**
2. Family history of suicide attempts
3. Adolescents

4. Older adults
5. Disabled or terminally ill clients
6. Clients with personality disorders
7. Clients with organic brain syndrome or dementia
8. Depressed or psychotic clients (see [Chapter 74](#) for information on depression)
9. Substance abusers

C. Clues ([Box 76-5](#))

**BOX 76-5** Suicidal Clues

- Giving away personal, special, and prized possessions
- Canceling social engagements
- Making out or changing a will
- Taking out or changing insurance policies
- Positive or negative changes in behavior
- Poor appetite
- Sleeping difficulties
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Loss of interest in activities
- Client statements indicating an intent to attempt suicide
- Sudden calmness or improvement in a depressed client
- Client inquiries about poisons, guns, or other lethal items or objects

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## D. Assessment (Box 76-6)

### **BOX 76-6** Suicidal Client: Assessment

#### **Plan**

Does the client have a plan?

What is the plan, how lethal is the plan, and how likely is death to occur?

Does the client have the means to carry out the plan?

#### **Client History of Attempts**

What suicide attempts occurred in the past and what harm occurred?

Was the client accidentally rescued?

Have the past attempts and methods been the same, or have methods increased in lethality?

#### **Psychosocial Factors**

Is the client alone or alienated from others?

Is hostility or depression present?

Do hallucinations exist?

Is substance abuse present?

Has the client had any recent losses or physical illness?

Has the client had any environmental or lifestyle changes?

## E. Interventions

1. Initiate suicide precautions.
2. Remove harmful objects.
3. Do not leave the client alone.
4. Provide a nonjudgmental, caring attitude.
5. Develop a no-suicide contract that is written, dated, and signed and that indicates alternative behavior at times of suicidal thoughts.
6. Encourage the client to talk about feelings and to identify positive aspects about self.
7. Encourage active participation in own care.
8. Keep the client active by assigning achievable tasks.
9. Check that visitors do not leave harmful objects in the client's room.
10. Identify support systems.
11. Do not allow the client to leave the unit unless accompanied by a staff member.
12. Continue to assess the client's suicide potential.

 Provide one-to-one supervision at all times for the client at risk for suicide.

## **VI. Abusive Behaviors**

### **A. Anger**

1. Anger is a feeling of annoyance that may be displaced onto an object or person.
2. Anger is used to avoid anxiety and gives a feeling of power in situations in which the person feels out of control.

### **B. Aggression can be harmful and destructive when not controlled.**

C. Violence is physical force that is threatening to the safety of self and others. ▲

D. Assessment

1. History of violence or self-harm
2. Poor impulse control and low tolerance of frustration
3. Defiant and argumentative
4. Raising of voice
5. Making verbal threats
6. Pacing and agitation
7. Muscle rigidity
8. Flushed face
9. Glaring at others

E. Interventions ▲

1. Maintain safety.
2. Use a calm approach and communicate with a calm, clear tone of voice (be assertive, not aggressive, and avoid verbal struggles).
3. Maintain a large personal space and use a nonaggressive posture.
4. Listen actively and acknowledge the client's anger.
5. Determine what the client considers to be his or her need.
6. Provide the client with clear options that deal with the client's behavior, set limits on behavior, and make the client aware of the consequences of anger and violence.
7. Discuss the use of **restraints** or **seclusion** if the client is unable to control angry

behavior that may lead to violence.

8. Assist the client with problem-solving and decision-making regarding the options.

**F. restraints (security devices) and seclusion ▲**

**1. Description**

- a. Physical restraints: Any manual method or mechanical device, material, or equipment that inhibits free movement
- b. Seclusion: A process in which a client is placed alone in a specially designed room for protection and close supervision
- c. Chemical restraints: Medications given for a specific purpose of inhibiting a specific behavior or movement and that have an impact on the client's ability to relate to the environment

**2. Use of restraints and seclusion**

**⚠ Restraints require a written prescription by a health care provider, which must be reviewed and renewed every 24 hours; the prescription must specify the type of restraint to be used, the duration of the restraint or seclusion, and the criteria for release (agency policy and procedures need to be followed).**

- a. Restraints and seclusion should never be used as punishment or for the convenience of the health care staff.
- b. Restraints and seclusion are used when behavior is physically harmful to the client or others and when alternative or less restrictive measures are insufficient in protecting the client or others from harm. ▲
- c. Restraints and seclusion are used when the client anticipates that a controlled

environment would be helpful and requests restraints or seclusion. ▲

- d. The nurse must document the behavior leading to the use of restraints or seclusion.
- e. In an emergency, a qualified nurse may place a client in restraints or seclusion and obtain a written or verbal prescription as soon as possible thereafter.
- f. Within 1 hour of the initiation of restraints or seclusion, the psychiatrist must make a face-to-face assessment and evaluation of the client and must continuously reevaluate the need for continued restraints or seclusion.
- g. While in restraints or seclusion, the client must be protected from all sources of harm.
- h. The client in restraints or seclusion needs constant one-to-one supervision; physical, safety, and comfort needs must be assessed every 15 to 30 minutes, and these observations are also documented (e.g., food, fluids, bathroom needs, range-of-motion exercise, and ambulation). ▲

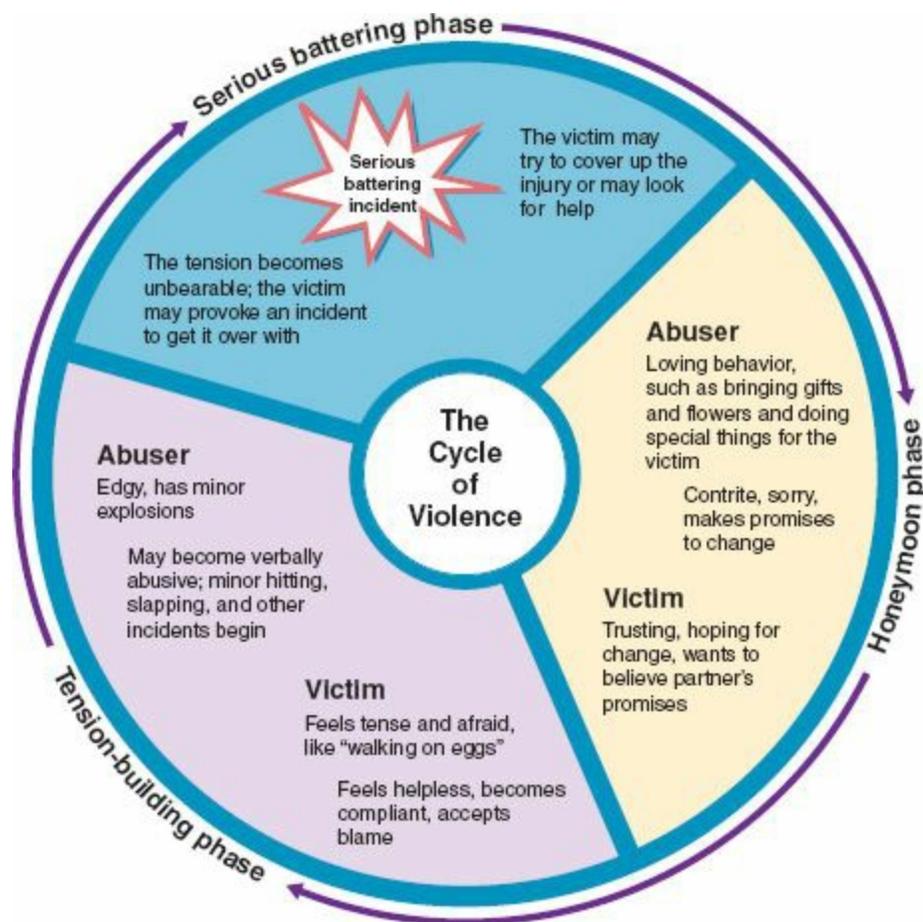
## VII. Bullying

- A. Bullying is the **abuse** of power by an individual on another through repeated aggressive acts.
- B. It most often occurs in children and in high school or college environments but can also occur in the workplace or other environments.
- C. The bully feels power from sources such as physical strength, maturity, a higher status within a peer group, from knowing the victim's weaknesses, or from support of others.

- D.** Bullying can occur in the form of physical harm, relational aggression, isolation and exclusion, and verbal harm such as slander, rumors, or threats; it is both intentionally cruel and unprovoked.
- E.** Cyberbullying is also a form of bullying and occurs in the form of Internet messages on social media networks, text messages, e-mails, photos being posted, and rumors.
- F.** The bullied person is repeatedly experiencing negative actions from the bully(s).
- G.** These bully acts can lead to depression, low self-esteem, humiliation, isolation, and social withdrawal in the victim; it could result in suicide and murder.
- H.** The nurse's responsibility is to observe for signs of bullying and to educate teachers, school administrators, and parents about bullying behaviors and signs that it may be occurring.

## **VIII. Family Violence**

### **A.** Description ([Fig. 76-1](#))



**FIGURE 76-1** The cycle of violence. (From Varcarolis E, Carson V, Shoemaker N: *Foundations of psychiatric mental health nursing*, ed 6, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

1. Violence begins with threats or verbal or physical minor assaults (tension building), and the victim attempts to comply with the requests of the abuser.
2. The abuser loses control and becomes destructive and harmful (acute battering), while the victim attempts to protect himself or herself.
3. After the battering, the abuser becomes loving and attempts to make peace (calmness and diffusion of tension).
4. The abuser justifies that violence is normal and the victim is responsible for the abuse.

5. Outsiders are usually unaware of what is happening in the family.
6. Family members are isolated socially and lack autonomy and trust among each other; caring and intimacy in the family are absent.
7. Family members expect other members of the family to meet their needs, but none are able to do so.
8. The abuser threatens to abandon the family.

**B. Types of violence (Box 76-7)**

**BOX 76-7**      **Types of Violence**

***Physical Violence:*** Infliction of physical pain or bodily harm

***Sexual Violence:*** Any form of sexual contact without consent

***Emotional Violence:*** Infliction of mental anguish

***Physical Neglect:*** Failure to provide health care to prevent or treat physical or emotional illnesses

***Developmental Neglect:*** Failure to provide physical and cognitive stimulation needed to prevent developmental deficits

***Educational Neglect:*** Depriving a child of education

***Economic Exploitation:*** Illegal or improper exploitation of money, funds, or other resources for one's personal gain

**C. The vulnerable person (victim) ▲**

1. The vulnerable person is the one in the family unit against whom violence is

perpetrated.

2. The most vulnerable individuals are children and older adults.
3. The perpetrator of violence and the person targeted by the violence can be male or female.
4. Battering is a crime.

#### **D. Characteristics of abusers**

1. Impaired self-esteem
2. Strong dependency needs
3. Narcissistic and suspicious
4. History of abuse during childhood
5. Perceive victims as their property and believe that they are entitled to abuse them

#### **E. Characteristics of victims**

1. Feel trapped, dependent, helpless, and powerless.
2. May become depressed as they are trapped in the abusers' power and control cycle (see [Fig. 76-1](#)).
3. As victims' self-esteem becomes diminished with chronic abuse, they may blame themselves for the violence and be unable to see a way out of the situation.

#### **F. Interventions**

1. Report suspected or actual cases of child abuse or abuse of an older adult to appropriate authorities (follow state and agency guidelines).
2. Assess for evidence of physical injuries.
3. Ensure privacy and confidentiality during the assessment, and provide a

nonjudgmental and empathetic approach to foster trust; reassure the victim that he or she has not done anything wrong. [Box 76-8](#) lists sample assessment questions.

### **BOX 76-8**

### **Assessment Questions for Violence and Abuse**

“Has anyone ever touched you in a way that made you uncomfortable?”

“Is anyone hurting you now?”

“How do you and your partner deal with anger (or disagreement)?”

“Has your partner ever hit you?”

“Have you ever been threatened by \_\_\_\_\_?”

“Does your partner prevent you from seeing family or friends?”

“Does your partner ever use the children to manipulate you?”

“Did (or does) anyone in your family deal with anger by hitting?”

“Who do you play with most often? Is there anyone you do not like playing with? Are there games you don’t like playing?”

4. Assist the victim to develop self-protective and other problem-solving abilities.
5. Even if the victim is not ready to leave the situation, encourage the victim to develop a specific safety plan (a fast escape if the violence returns) and where to obtain help (hotlines, safe houses, and shelters); an abused person is usually reluctant to call the police.
6. Assess suicidal potential of the victim.
7. Assess the potential for homicide.

8. Assess for the use of drugs and alcohol.
9. Determine family coping patterns and support systems.
10. Provide support and assistance in coping with contacting the legal system.
11. Assist in resolving family dysfunction with prescribed therapies.
12. Encourage individual therapy for the victim that promotes coping with the trauma and prevents further psychological conflict.
13. Encourage individual therapy for the abuser that focuses on preventing violent behavior and repairing relationships.
14. Encourage psychotherapy, counseling, group therapy, and support groups to assist family members to develop coping strategies.
15. Assist the family to identify an access to community and personal resources.
16. Maintain accurate and thorough medical health records.

## **IX. Child Abduction**

### **A. Description**

1. Child abduction is the kidnapping of a child (or infant) by an older person.
2. Occurrences
  - a. A stranger may kidnap a child for criminal or mischievous purposes.
  - b. A stranger may kidnap a child (or infant) to bring up him or her as that person's own child.
  - c. A parent removes or retains a child from the other parent's care (often in the course of or after divorce proceedings).

3. Because of the increased independence that occurs in the preschool-age child, parents are less able to provide the constant protection they once did when the child reaches this age; interventions (including teaching the child) that ensure protection are necessary. ▲

## B. Interventions ▲

1. Instruct the parents to teach a child basic guidelines about personal safety that include the following:
  - a. Do not go anywhere alone.
  - b. Always tell an adult where he or she is going and when he or she will return.
  - c. Say *no* if he or she feels uncomfortable with a situation.
  - d. Do not talk with strangers or get into their cars.
  - e. Do not help anyone look for a lost dog or cat and do not accept candy from a stranger.
  - f. If lost in a store, do not wander around looking for the parent; go at once to a clerk or guard.
2. Children need to learn their full name, address, and parent's name.
3. Watch for posttraumatic stress disorder in any child who has experienced an abduction.

## X. Child Abuse

### A. Description

1. Abuse is the nonaccidental physical injury or the nonaccidental act of omission of

care by a parent or person responsible for a child; abuse comprises neglect and physical, sexual, and emotional maltreatment.

2. Neglect can be in the form of physical or emotional neglect and involves the deprivation of basic needs, supervision, medical care, or education and failure to meet a child's needs for attention and affection.
3. Sexual abuse can involve incest, molestation, exhibitionism, pornography, prostitution, or pedophilia; findings associated with sexual abuse may not be easily apparent in a child.
4. Shaken baby syndrome is caused by the violent shaking of an infant and results in intracranial (usually subdural hemorrhage) trauma; this can lead to cerebral edema and death.

#### B. Assessment (Box 76-9)

### **BOX 76-9** Child Neglect and Abuse: Assessment Findings

#### **Neglect**

- Inadequate weight gain
- Poor hygiene
- Consistent hunger
- Inconsistent school attendance
- Constant fatigue
- Reports of lack of child supervision
- Delinquency

## Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, burns, or fractures
- Bald spots on the scalp
- Apprehensive child
- Extreme aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Fear of parents
- Lack of crying (older infant, toddler, or young preschool child) when approached by a stranger
- Spiral fractures without history of trauma from a sports injury

## Emotional Abuse

- Speech disorders
- Habit disorders such as sucking, biting, and rocking
- Psychoneurotic reactions
- Learning disorders
- Suicide attempts

## Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Pain, swelling, or itching of genitals
- Bruises, bleeding, or lacerations in genital or anal area
- Unwillingness to change clothes or unwillingness to participate in gym activities
- Poor peer relations

## Shaken Baby Syndrome

- External signs of trauma are usually absent
- Ophthalmoscopic examination reveals retinal hemorrhages
- Full bulging fontanel and head circumference greater than expected

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Support the child during a thorough physical assessment.
2. Assess injuries.
3. If shaken baby syndrome is suspected, monitor the infant for a decrease in level of consciousness, which can indicate increased intracranial pressure (ICP).
4. Report a case of suspected abuse; nurses are legally required to report all cases of suspected child abuse to the appropriate local or state agency.
5. Place the child in an environment that is safe, preventing further injury.
6. Document information related to the suspected abuse in an objective manner.
7. Assess parents' strengths and weaknesses, normal coping mechanisms, and presence or absence of support systems.
8. Assist the family in identifying stressors, support systems, and resources.
9. Refer the family to appropriate support groups.

**⚠** Nurses are legally required to report all cases of suspected child abuse to the appropriate local or state agency.

## XI. Latchkey Children ▲

### A. Description

1. Children who do not have adult supervision before or after school hours; they are left to care for themselves during these times
2. Occurs when children are members of a single- parent family or both parents work and need to leave the home before children are brought to school
3. This situation induces a stress-provoking environment for the children and places the children at risk for an unsafe situation, injury, and delinquent behavior.

#### **B. Interventions**

1. Identify the latchkey child.
2. Encourage the parent to teach the child about self-care and self-help skills.
3. Assist the parent to identify possible alternatives rather than leaving the children alone.
4. Inform the parent about available community resources such as after-school programs for children.

## **XII. Abuse of the Older Adult** ▲

#### **A. Description**

1. Abuse of an older adult involves physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; neglect; and economic exploitation.
2. Older adults at most risk include individuals who are dependent because of illness, immobility, or altered mental status.
3. Factors that contribute to abuse and neglect include long-standing family violence, caregiver stress, and the older adult's increasing dependence on others. ▲

4. Victims may attempt to dismiss injuries as accidental, and abusers may prevent victims from receiving proper medical care to avoid discovery.
5. Victims often are isolated socially by their abusers.

## **B. Assessment**

### **1. Physical abuse**

- a. Sprains, dislocations, or fractures
- b. Abrasions, bruises, or lacerations
- c. Pressure sores
- d. Puncture wounds
- e. Burns
- f. Skin tears

### **2. Sexual abuse**

- a. Torn or stained underclothing
- b. Discomfort or bleeding in the genital area
- c. Difficulty in walking or sitting
- d. Unexplained genital infections or disease

### **3. Emotional abuse**

- a. Confusion
- b. Fearful and agitated
- c. Changes in appetite and weight
- d. Withdrawn and loss of interest in self and social activities

### **4. Neglect**

- a. Disheveled appearance
- b. Dressed inadequately or inappropriately
- c. Dehydration and malnutrition
- d. Lacking physical needs, such as glasses, hearing aids, and dentures

5. Signs of medication overdose

6. Economic exploitation

- a. Inability to pay bills and fearful when discussing finances
- b. Confused, inaccurate, or no knowledge of finances

### C. Interventions

1. Assess for physical injuries and treat physical injuries.
2. Report cases of suspected abuse to appropriate authorities (follow state and agency guidelines).
3. Separate the older adult from the abusive environment, if possible, and contact adult protective services for assistance in placement while the abuse is being investigated.
4. Explore alternative living arrangements that are least restrictive and disruptive to the victim.
5. The older adult who has been abused may need assistance for financial or legal matters.
6. Provide referrals to emergency community resources.
7. When working with caregivers, assess the need for respite care or counseling if needed to deal with caregiver stress (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)).

# PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

## Actions to Take When an Older Client Is Physically Abused

1. Assess and treat the wounds.
2. Ensure the victim is removed from the threatening environment.
3. Adhere to mandatory abuse reporting laws.
4. Notify the caseworker of the situation.
5. Document the occurrence, findings, actions taken, and the victim's response.

When a victim is abused, the priority is to assess and treat any physical injuries. The nurse stays with the victim and provides comfort and support. After physical injuries are treated, the nurse ensures that the client is safe and is removed from the threatening environment. Elder abuse needs to be reported, so the nurse would adhere to the mandatory abuse reporting laws of the state. The nurse also contacts the caseworker of the situation so that the incident is reported and follow-up can occur. If there is no caseworker, the nurse contacts social services or the appropriate service to initiate this process. Finally, the nurse documents the occurrence, findings, actions taken, and the victim's response.

### ***Reference***

Varcarolis, E: *Essentials of psychiatric mental health nursing: A communication approach to evidence-based care*, ed 2, St. Louis, 2013, Saunders, pp. 415-417.

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### **XIII. Rape and Sexual Assault**

#### **A. Description**

1. Rape is engaging another person in a sexual act or sexual intercourse through the use of force or coercion and without the consent of the sexual partner.
2. The victim is not required by law to report the rape or assault.
3. Often, the victim is blamed by others and receives no support from significant others.
4. Acquaintance rape involves someone known to the victim.
5. Statutory rape is the act of sexual intercourse with a person younger than the age of legal consent, even if the minor consents.
6. Marital rape
  - a. The belief that marriage bestows rights to sex whenever wanted and without consent of the partner contributes to the occurrence of marital rape.
  - b. Victims of marital rape describe being forced to perform acts they did not wish to perform and being physically abused during sex.

#### **B. Assessment** ▲

1. Female client
  - a. Obtain the date of the last menstrual period.
  - b. Determine the form of birth control used and the last act of intercourse before rape.
  - c. Determine the duration of intercourse, orifices violated, and whether penile

penetration occurred.

**d.** Determine whether a condom was used by the perpetrator.

**2.** Shame, embarrassment, and humiliation

**3.** Anger and revenge

**4.** Afraid to tell others because of fear of not being believed

**C.** Males may be sexually abused as children and as adults and are the usual targeted victim of pedophiles; males may have more difficulty with disclosing their abuse.

**D.** Rape trauma syndrome

**1.** Sleep disturbances, nightmares

**2.** Loss of appetite

**3.** Fears, anxiety, phobias, suspicion

**4.** Decrease in activities and motivation

**5.** Disruptions in relationships with partner, family, friends

**6.** Self-blame, guilt, shame

**7.** Lowered self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness

**8.** Somatic complaints

**9.** See [Chapter 74](#) for information on posttraumatic stress disorder

**E.** Interventions 

**1.** Perform the assessment in a quiet, private area.

**2.** Stay with the victim.

**3.** Assess the victim's stress level before performing treatments and procedures.

**4.** Victim should not shower, bathe, douche (female), or change clothing until an

examination is performed.

5. Obtain written consent for the examination, photographs, laboratory tests, release of information, and laboratory samples.
6. Assist with the female pelvic examination and obtain specimens to detect semen (the pelvic examination may trigger a flashback of the attack); a shower and fresh clothing should be made available to the client after the examination.
7. Preserve any evidence.
8. Treat physical injuries and provide client safety.
9. Document all events in the care of the victim.
10. Reinforce to the victim that surviving the assault is most important; if the victim survived the rape, he or she did exactly what was necessary to stay alive.
11. Refer the victim to crisis intervention and support groups.

## **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* The nurse should first take the victim to a quiet and private room and assess the victim's stress level before performing treatments and procedures. The nurse needs to stay with the victim. The victim should not shower, bathe, douche (female), or change clothing until an examination is performed. The nurse should obtain consent for an examination, photographs, laboratory tests, release of information, and laboratory samples. The nurse should assist with the female pelvic examination (the pelvic examination may trigger a flashback of the attack). A shower and fresh clothing should be made available to the client after the examination. Any evidence

needs to be preserved and physical injuries need to be treated. The nurse should provide for client safety, document all events in the care of the victim, reinforce to the victim that surviving the assault is most important; if the victim survived the rape, he or she did exactly what was necessary to stay alive. When appropriate, the nurse should refer the victim to crisis intervention and support groups.

***Reference***

Varcarolis (2013), pp. 426-427.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**933.** The nurse in the emergency department is caring for a young female victim of sexual assault. The client's physical assessment is complete, and physical evidence has been collected. The nurse notes that the client is withdrawn, confused, and at times physically immobile. How should the nurse interpret these behaviors?

1. Signs of depression
2. Normal reactions to a devastating event
3. Evidence that the client is a high suicide risk
4. Indicative of the need for hospital admission

**934.** The nurse is reviewing the assessment data of a client admitted to the mental health unit. The nurse notes that the admission nurse documented that the client is experiencing anxiety as a result of a situational crisis. The nurse determines that this type of crisis could be caused by which event?

1. Witnessing a murder
2. The death of a loved one
3. A fire that destroyed the client's home
4. A recent rape episode experienced by the client

**935.** The nurse is conducting an initial assessment on a client in crisis. When assessing the client's perception of the precipitating event that led to the crisis, what is the **most appropriate** question?

1. “With whom do you live?”
2. “Who is available to help you?”
3. “What leads you to seek help now?”
4. “What do you usually do to feel better?”

**936.** The nurse is developing a plan of care for a client in a crisis state. When developing the plan, the nurse should consider which factor?

1. A crisis state indicates that the client has a mental illness.
2. A crisis state indicates that the client has an emotional illness.
3. Presenting symptoms in a crisis situation are similar for all clients experiencing a crisis.
4. A client’s response to a crisis is individualized and what constitutes a crisis for one client may not constitute a crisis for another client.

**937.** The nurse observes that a client with a potential for violence is agitated, pacing up and down the hallway, and is making aggressive and belligerent gestures at other clients. Which statement would be **most appropriate** to make to this client?

1. “You need to stop that behavior now.”
2. “You will need to be placed in seclusion.”
3. “You seem restless; tell me what is happening.”
4. “You will need to be restrained if you do not change your behavior.”

**938.** A depressed client on an inpatient unit says to the nurse, “My family would be better off without me.” What is the nurse’s **best** response?

1. "Have you talked to your family about this?"
2. "Everyone feels this way when they are depressed."
3. "You will feel better once your medication begins to work."
4. "You sound very upset. Are you thinking of hurting yourself?"

**939.** The nurse has been observing a client closely who has been displaying aggressive behaviors. The nurse observes that the behavior displayed by the client is escalating. Which nursing intervention is **least helpful** to this client at this time?

1. Initiate confinement measures.
2. Acknowledge the client's behavior.
3. Assist the client to an area that is quiet.
4. Maintain a safe distance from the client.

**940.** Which behavior observed by the nurse indicates a suspicion that a depressed adolescent client may be suicidal?

1. The adolescent gives away a DVD and a cherished autographed picture of a performer.
2. The adolescent runs out of the therapy group, swearing at the group leader, and runs to her room.
3. The adolescent becomes angry while speaking on the telephone and slams down the receiver.
4. The adolescent gets angry with her roommate when the roommate borrows the

client's clothes without asking.

**941.** The police arrive at the emergency department with a client who has lacerated both wrists. What is the **initial** nursing action?

1. Administer an antianxiety agent.
2. Examine and treat the wound sites.
3. Secure and record a detailed history.
4. Encourage and assist the client to ventilate feelings.

**942.** A moderately depressed client who was hospitalized 2 days ago suddenly begins smiling and reporting that the crisis is over. The client says to the nurse, "I'm finally cured." How should the nurse interpret this behavior as a cue to modify the treatment plan?

1. Suggesting a reduction of medication
2. Allowing increased "in-room" activities
3. Increasing the level of suicide precautions
4. Allowing the client off-unit privileges as needed

**943.** The nurse is planning care for a client being admitted to the nursing unit who attempted suicide. Which **priority** nursing intervention should the nurse include in the plan of care?

1. One-to-one suicide precautions
2. Suicide precautions with 30-minute checks
3. Checking the whereabouts of the client every 15 minutes

4. Asking the client to report suicidal thoughts immediately

944. The emergency department nurse is caring for an adult client who is a victim of family violence. Which **priority** instruction should be included in the discharge instructions?

1. Information regarding shelters
2. Instructions regarding calling the police
3. Instructions regarding self-defense classes
4. Explaining the importance of leaving the violent situation

945. A female victim of a sexual assault is being seen in the crisis center. The client states that she still feels “as though the rape just happened yesterday,” even though it has been a few months since the incident. What is the **most appropriate** nursing response?

1. “You need to try to be realistic. The rape did not just occur.”
2. “It will take some time to get over these feelings about your rape.”
3. “Tell me more about the incident that causes you to feel like the rape just occurred.”
4. “What do you think that you can do to alleviate some of your fears about being raped again?”

946. A client is admitted to the mental health unit after an attempted suicide by hanging. The nurse can **best** ensure client safety by which action?

1. Requesting that a peer remain with the client at all times

2. Removing the client's clothing and placing the client in a hospital gown
3. Assigning a staff member to the client who will remain with the client at all times
4. Admitting the client to a seclusion room where all potentially dangerous articles are removed

947. A client is admitted with a recent history of severe anxiety following a home invasion and robbery. During the initial assessment interview, which statement by the client would indicate to the nurse the possible diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. "I'm afraid of spiders."
2. "I keep reliving the robbery."
3. "I see his face everywhere I go."
4. "I don't want anything to eat now."
5. "I might have died over a few dollars in my pocket."
6. "I have to wash my hands over and over again many times."

## ANSWERS

933. 2

**Rationale:** During the acute phase of the rape crisis, the client can display a wide range of emotional and somatic responses. The symptoms noted indicate a normal reaction. Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, client response to a crisis. Use knowledge regarding client responses to

devastating events and focus on the symptoms noted in the question to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal and abnormal client responses to dealing with a **crisis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Coping

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 428-429.

**934. 2**

**Rationale:** A situational crisis arises from external rather than internal sources. External situations that could precipitate a crisis include loss of or change of a job, the death of a loved one, abortion, change in financial status, divorce, addition of new family members, pregnancy, and severe illness. Options 1, 3, and 4 identify adventitious crises. An adventitious crisis refers to a crisis of disaster; it is unplanned or accidental.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, situational crisis. Recall that this type of crises arises from an external source, is often unanticipated, and is associated with a life event that upsets an individual's or group's psychological equilibrium. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Types of **crises**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Coping

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 389.

**935. 3**

**Rationale:** The nurse's initial task when assessing a client in crisis is to assess the individual or family and the problem. The more clearly the problem can be defined, the better the chance a solution can be found. The correct option would assist in determining data related to the precipitating event that led to the crisis. Options 1 and 2 assess situational supports. Option 4 assesses personal coping skills.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Also note the **subject**, assessment techniques for the client in crisis, and note the words *precipitating event* and *led to the crisis*. Eliminate options 1 and 2 because these data would determine support systems. Eliminate option 4 because this question would be asked when determining coping skills.

**Review:** Assessment techniques for the client in **crisis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Coping, Family Dynamics

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 485; Varcarolis (2013), p. 388.

**936. 4**

**Rationale:** Although each crisis response can be described in similar terms as far as presenting symptoms are concerned, what constitutes a crisis for one client may not constitute a crisis for another client because each is a unique individual. Being in the crisis state does not mean that the client has a mental or emotional illness.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate option 3 because of the **closed-ended word** *all*. Next, eliminate options 1 and 2 because a crisis does not indicate “illness.”

**Review:** The characteristics of a **crisis** state

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Coping

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 186.

937. 3

**Rationale:** The best statement is to ask the client what is causing the agitation. This will assist the client to become aware of the behavior and may assist the nurse in planning appropriate interventions for the client. Option 1 is demanding behavior that could cause increased agitation in the client. Options 2 and 4 are threats to the client and are inappropriate.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Eliminate option 1 because of the demand that it places on the client. Eliminate options 2 and 4 because they indicate threats to the client.

**Review:** Appropriate nursing actions for the client experiencing **agitation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Coping

**References:** Keltner, Bostrom, McGuinness (2011), pp. 62-65; Stuart (2013), pp. 427-428.

**938. 4**

**Rationale:** Clients who are depressed may be at risk for suicide. It is critical for the nurse to assess suicidal ideation and plan. The nurse should ask the client directly whether a plan for self-harm exists. Options 1, 2, and 3 do not deal directly with the client's feelings.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Recalling **therapeutic communication techniques** will assist in directing you to the correct option. Option 4 is the only option that deals directly with the client's feelings. In addition, clients at risk for suicide need to be assessed directly regarding the potential for self-harm.

**Review:** Care of the client at risk for **suicide**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment: Safety

**References:** Stuart (2013), pp. 25-29; Varcarolis (2013), p. 440.

**939. 1**

**Rationale:** During the escalation period, the client's behavior is moving toward loss of control. Nursing actions include taking control, maintaining a safe distance, acknowledging behavior, moving the client to a quiet area, and medicating the client if appropriate. To initiate confinement measures during this period is inappropriate. Initiation of confinement measures, if needed, is most appropriate during the crisis period.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic words** *least helpful*. Also note the words *aggressive behaviors* and *escalating*. Recalling that the least restrictive measures should be used will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with **aggressive** behavior

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Coping, Safety

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 427, 588.

**940. 1**

**Rationale:** A depressed suicidal client often gives away that which is of value as a way of saying goodbye and wanting to be remembered. Options 2, 3, and 4 deal with anger and acting-out behaviors that are often typical of any adolescent.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2, 3, and 4 because they are **comparable or alike**. The correct option is different and is an action that could indicate that the client may be “saying goodbye.”

**Review:** Behaviors indicative of **suicide** intent

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Mood and Affect; Safety

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 438.

**941. 2**

**Rationale:** The initial nursing action is to assess and treat the self-inflicted injuries. Injuries from lacerated wrists can lead to a life-threatening situation. Other interventions, such as options 1, 3, and 4, may follow after the client has been treated medically.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *initial*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to prioritize. Physiological needs come first. The correct option addresses the physiological need.

**Review:** Care of the client who has attempted **suicide**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving; Safety

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 514; Varcarolis (2013), p. 442.

**942. 3**

**Rationale:** A client who is moderately depressed and has only been in the hospital 2 days is unlikely to have such a dramatic cure. When a depression suddenly lifts, it is likely that the client may have made the decision to harm himself or herself. Suicide precautions are necessary to keep the client safe. The remaining options are therefore incorrect interpretations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, suicide precautions. Options 1 and 4 support the client's notion that a cure has occurred. Option 2 allows the client to increase self-isolation and would present a threat to the client's

safety. Knowing that safety is of the utmost importance will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Suicide precautions**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Safety

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 337.

**943. 1**

**Rationale:** One-to-one suicide precautions are required for a client who has attempted suicide. Options 2 and 3 may be appropriate, but not at the present time, considering the situation. Option 4 also may be an appropriate nursing intervention, but the priority is identified in the correct option. The best intervention is constant supervision so that the nurse may intervene as needed if the client attempts to harm himself or herself.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic word** *priority*, noting the words *attempted suicide*. The correct option is the only one that provides a safe environment.

**Review:** Interventions for the **suicidal client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Safety

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 337.

944. 1

**Rationale:** Tertiary prevention of family violence includes assisting the victim after the abuse has already occurred. The nurse should provide the client with information regarding where to obtain help, including a specific plan for removing the self from the abuser and information regarding escape, hotlines, and the location of shelters. An abused person is usually reluctant to call the police. Teaching the victim to fight back is not the appropriate action for the victim when dealing with a violent person. Explaining the importance of leaving the violent situation is important, but a specific plan is necessary.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Focus on the **subject** of the question, which relates to providing the client with a safe environment. The correct option provides a specific plan for safety.

**Review:** Nursing measures for a victim **family violence**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Interpersonal Violence; Safety

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 532; Stuart (2013), p. 740.

945. 3

**Rationale:** The correct option allows the client to express her ideas and feelings more fully and portrays a nonhurried, nonjudgmental, supportive attitude on the part of the nurse. Clients need to be reassured that their feelings are normal and that they may express their concerns freely in a safe, caring environment. Option 1 immediately blocks communication. Option 2 places the client's feelings on hold. Option 4 places the problem-

solving totally on the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Also, focus on the **subject**, the most appropriate response to the client. Use **therapeutic communication techniques**. The correct option is the only one that addresses the client's feelings. Always address the client's feelings first.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Communication, Coping

**References:** Keltner, Schwecke, Bostro (2011), pp. 62-65; Stuart (2013), p. 748.

### 946. 3

**Rationale:** Hanging is a serious suicide attempt. The plan of care must reflect action that ensures the client's safety. Constant observation status (one-to-one) with a staff member is the best choice. Placing the client in a hospital gown and requesting that a peer remain with the client would not ensure a safe environment. Seclusion should not be the initial intervention, and the least restrictive measure should be used.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Focus on the **subject**, care of the client at risk for suicide. Eliminate option 4 because seclusion should not be the initial intervention. Eliminate option 1 next because the responsibility to safeguard a client is not the peer's responsibility. Eliminate option 2 because removing one's clothing would not maximize all possible safety strategies.

**Review:** Nursing interventions for the client at risk for **suicide**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Caregiving, Safety

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 513; Stuart (2013), p. 337.

❖ 947. 2, 3, 5

**Rationale:** Reliving an event, experiencing emotional numbness (facing possible death), and having flashbacks of the event (seeing the same face everywhere) are all common occurrences with posttraumatic stress disorder. The statement, “I’m afraid of spiders,” is more relative to having a phobia. The statement “I have to wash my hands over and over again many times” describes ritual compulsive behaviors to decrease anxiety for someone with obsessive compulsive disorder. Stating “I don’t want anything to eat now” is vague and could relate to numerous conditions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, posttraumatic stress disorder. There is no indication about a fear of spiders being part of the problem. There is no information in the question to support that the client has ritual behaviors. The client stating he doesn’t want anything to eat at the time is not relative to this client’s situation. Responses 2, 3, and 5 all indicate the client is experiencing posttraumatic stress disorder from a recent home invasion and robbery event.

**Review:** Posttraumatic stress disorder

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

***Content Area:*** Mental Health

***Priority Concepts:*** Anxiety, Coping

***References:*** Keltner, Schwecke, Bostro (2011), p. 309; Stuart (2013), p. 228.



## CHAPTER 77

# Psychiatric Medications

### CRITICAL THINKING What Should You Do?

A client has been taking alprazolam (Xanax) on a long-term basis for the treatment of anxiety. The health care provider has informed the nurse that the medication will be discontinued and the client needs instructions about tapering off of the medication.

What should the nurse do?

*Answer located on p.1092.*

### I. Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) (Box 77-1)

#### BOX 77-1 Reuptake Inhibitors

##### Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors

- Citalopram (Celexa)
- Escitalopram (Lexapro)
- Fluoxetine (Prozac)

- Fluvoxamine (Luvox)
- Paroxetine (Paxil, Pexeva)
- Sertraline (Zoloft)
- Vilazodone hydrochloride (Viibryd)

### **Serotonin-Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors**

- Venlafaxine (Effexor)
- Duloxetine (Cymbalta)
- Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq)

### **Atypical Antidepressants**

- Bupropion (Wellbutrin, Budeprion)
- Mirtazapine (Remeron)
- Nefazodone
- Trazodone (Desyrel, Oleptro)

#### **A. Description**

1. Inhibit serotonin uptake and elicit an antidepressant response
2. The potential for medication interactions is high, and complete medication assessments must be obtained and evaluated; inquire about the use of herbal therapies, especially St. John's wort.

#### **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Nausea, vomiting, cramping, and diarrhea
2. Dry mouth

3. Central nervous system (CNS) stimulation, including akathisia (restlessness, agitation)
4. Increased sweating
5. Blood pressure changes
6. Photosensitivity
7. Insomnia, somnolence (sleepy, drowsy), apathy
8. Nervousness
9. Headache, dizziness
10. Weight loss or gain
11. Decreased libido
12. Apathy
13. Tremors
14. Seizure activity

### C. Interventions

1. SSRIs interact with numerous medications.
2. Monitor vital signs because SSRIs can potentially lower or elevate blood pressure.
3. Monitor weight.
4. Initiate safety precautions, particularly if dizziness occurs.
5. Instruct the client to avoid alcohol.
6. Administer with a snack or meal to reduce the risk of dizziness and lightheadedness.

7. Monitor the suicidal client, especially during improved mood and increased energy levels.
8. Instruct the client taking fluoxetine (Prozac) or bupropion (Wellbutrin, Budeprion) to take the medication early in the day to prevent interference with sleep.
9. For the client on long-term therapy, monitor liver and renal function test results; altered values may occur, requiring dosage adjustments.
10. Monitor white blood cell and neutrophil counts; the medication may be discontinued if levels decrease below normal.
11. If priapism (painful, prolonged penile erection) occurs, the medication is withheld and the health care provider (HCP) is notified.
12. Inform about the possibility of decreased libido.
13. Instruct to change positions slowly to avoid a hypotensive effect.
14. Caution the client about photosensitivity and to take measures to prevent exposure to sunlight.
15. Educate about the potential for discontinuation syndrome if medication is stopped abruptly rather than tapered; the syndrome is characterized by gastrointestinal distress, behavioral or perceptual oddities, movement problems, and sleep disturbances.
16. Be aware of the potential for serotonin syndrome, characterized by elevated temperature, muscle rigidity, and elevated creatine phosphokinase levels; this risk is greatly increased when SSRIs are given with monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs). This medication combination needs to be avoided.

17. Instruct that over-the-counter (OTC) cold medicines can increase the likelihood of serotonin syndrome.
18. In pregnancy, consultation with an obstetrician is recommended regarding taking these medications.
19. Monitor the medication response in children, adolescents, and older adults closely because the response may be different than in an adult client.
20. Encourage psychotherapy.

## II. Tricyclic Antidepressants (Box 77-2)

### BOX 77-2 Tricyclic Antidepressants

- Amoxapine
- Amitriptyline (Elavil)
- Clomipramine (Anafranil)
- Desipramine (Norpramin)
- Doxepin (Sinequan)
- Imipramine (Tofranil)
- Nortriptyline (Pamelor)
- Protriptyline (Vivactil)
- Trimipramine (Surmontil)

#### A. Description

1. Block the reuptake of norepinephrine (and serotonin) at the presynaptic junction;

used to treat depression

2. May reduce seizure threshold
3. May reduce effectiveness of antihypertensive agents
4. Concurrent use with alcohol or antihistamines can cause CNS depression.
5. Concurrent use with MAOIs can cause hypertensive crisis.
6. Cardiac toxicity can occur, and all clients should receive an electrocardiogram (ECG) before treatment and periodically thereafter. ▲
7. Overdose is life-threatening, necessitating immediate treatment (see [Priority Nursing Actions](#)). ▲

## PRIORITY NURSING ACTIONS

### Actions to Take for a Tricyclic Antidepressant Overdose

1. Check airway and maintain a patent airway.
2. Administer oxygen.
3. Check vital signs.
4. Obtain an electrocardiogram.
5. Prepare for gastric lavage with activated charcoal.
6. Prepare to administer physostigmine (a cholinesterase inhibitor) and antidysrhythmic medications.
7. Document the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

A tricyclic antidepressant overdose can be life-threatening. Signs and symptoms

include dysrhythmias, including tachycardia, intraventricular blocks, complete atrioventricular block, and ventricular fibrillation; hypothermia; flushing; dry mouth; dilation of the pupils; confusion, agitation, and hallucinations; and seizures followed by coma. The immediate action is to check the airway and institute measures such as oxygen to maintain an adequate oxygenation level. Vital signs are checked and monitored, and an electrocardiogram is obtained to check for dysrhythmias. Gastric lavage with activated charcoal is done to prevent further absorption of the medication. Physostigmine (a cholinesterase inhibitor) is given to counteract anticholinergic effects, and antidysrhythmics are administered as needed. The nurse documents the event, actions taken, and the client's response.

### ***Reference***

Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 8, Philadelphia, 2013, Mosby, pp. 366-367.

**8.** The tricyclic antidepressant clomipramine (Anafranil) may be used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder.

### **B.** Side/adverse effects

**1.** Anticholinergic effects: Dry mouth, difficulty voiding, dilated pupils and blurred vision, decreased gastrointestinal motility, constipation

**2.** Photosensitivity

**3.** Cardiovascular disturbances such as tachycardia or dysrhythmias; orthostatic

hypotension

4. Sedation

5. Seizures (with bupropion)

6. Weight gain

7. Anxiety, restlessness, irritability

8. Decreased or increased libido with ejaculatory and erection disturbances

### C. Interventions

1. Monitor the suicidal client, especially during improved mood and increased energy levels.

2. Instruct to change positions slowly to avoid a hypotensive effect.

3. Monitor pattern of daily bowel activity.

4. Assess for urinary retention.

5. For the client on long-term therapy, monitor liver and renal function test results.

6. Administer with food or milk if gastrointestinal distress occurs.

7. Administer the entire daily oral dose at one time, preferably at bedtime because of the sedative effect.

8. Instruct to avoid alcohol and nonprescription medications to prevent adverse medication interactions.

9. Instruct to avoid driving and other activities requiring alertness until the response is known; sedation is expected in early therapy and may subside with time.

10. When the medication is discontinued by the HCP, it should be tapered gradually.

11. The potential for medication interactions with OTC cold medications exists.

12. Caution the client about photosensitivity and to take measures to prevent exposure to sunlight.
13. Encourage oral hygiene and the use of hard candies and mouth rinses to relieve dry mouth.
14. Encourage psychotherapy.

 Inform the client that antidepressant medication may take several weeks to produce the desired effect (client response may not occur until 2 to 4 weeks after the first dose).

### III. Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs) (Box 77-3)

#### **BOX 77-3** Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)

- Phenelzine (Nardil)
- Tranylcypromine (Parnate)
- Isocarboxazid (Marplan)
- Selegiline (Emsam)

#### A. Description

1. Inhibit the enzyme monoamine oxidase, which is present in the brain, blood platelets, liver, spleen, and kidneys
2. Monoamine oxidase metabolizes amines, norepinephrine, and serotonin, so the concentration of these amines increases with MAOIs.
3. Clients who have depression and have not responded to other antidepressant

therapies, including electroconvulsive therapy, may be given MAOIs.

4. Concurrent use with amphetamines, antidepressants, dopamine, epinephrine, guanethidine, levodopa, methyl dopa, nasal decongestants, norepinephrine, reserpine, tyramine-containing foods, or vasoconstrictors may cause hypertensive crisis.
5. Concurrent use with opioid analgesics may cause hypertension or hypotension, coma, or seizures.

## **B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Orthostatic hypotension
2. Restlessness
3. Insomnia
4. Dizziness
5. Weakness, lethargy
6. Gastrointestinal upset
7. Dry mouth
8. Weight gain
9. Peripheral edema
10. Anticholinergic effects
11. CNS stimulation (anxiety, agitation, mania)
12. Delay in ejaculation

## **C. Hypertensive crisis** 🟩

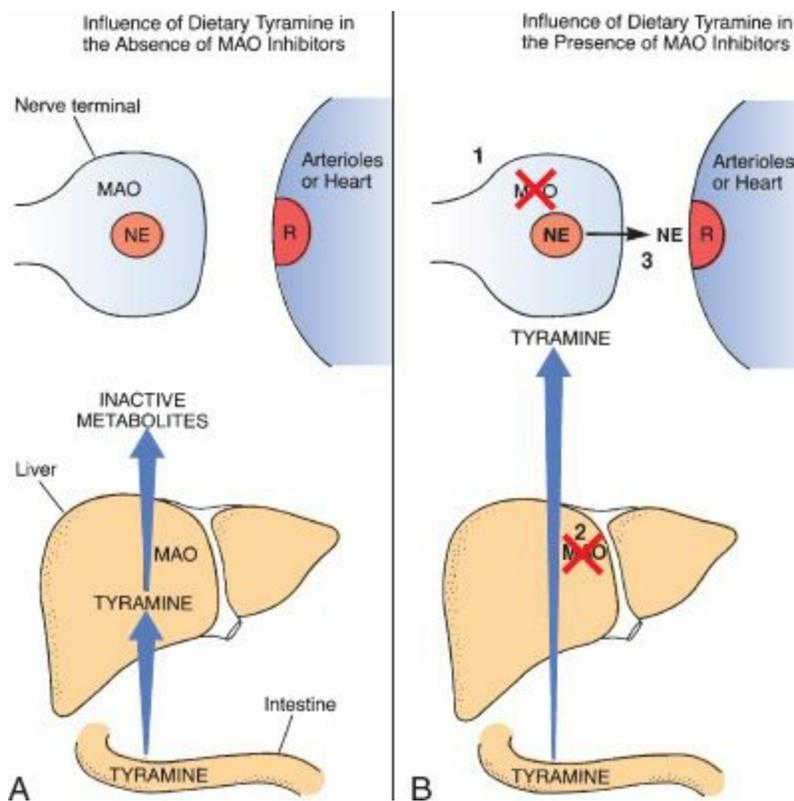
1. Hypertension

2. Occipital headache radiating frontally
3. Neck stiffness and soreness
4. Nausea and vomiting
5. Sweating
6. Fever and chills
7. Clammy skin
8. Dilated pupils
9. Palpitations, tachycardia, or bradycardia
10. Constricting chest pain
11. Antidote for hypertensive crisis: Phentolamine by intravenous injection

**D. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor blood pressure frequently for hypertension.
2. Monitor for signs of hypertensive crisis.
3. If palpitations or frequent headaches occur, withhold the medication and notify the HCP.
4. Administer with food if gastrointestinal distress occurs.
5. Instruct that the medication effect may be noted during the first week of therapy, but maximum benefit may take 3 weeks.
6. Instruct to report headache, neck stiffness, or neck soreness immediately.
7. Instruct to change positions slowly to prevent orthostatic hypotension.
8. Instruct to avoid caffeine or OTC preparations such as weight-reducing pills or medications for hay fever and colds.

9. Monitor compliance with medication administration.
10. Instruct to carry a Medic-Alert card indicating that an MAOI medication is being taken.
11. Avoid administering the medication in the evening because insomnia may result.
12. When the medication is discontinued by the HCP, it should be discontinued gradually.
13. Instruct to avoid foods that require bacteria or molds for their preparation or preservation and foods that contain tyramine (Fig. 77-1; Box 77-4).



**FIGURE 77-1** Interaction between dietary tyramine and monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs). **A**, In the absence of MAOIs, much of the ingested tyramine is inactivated by MAO in the intestinal wall (not shown in the figure). Any dietary tyramine that is not metabolized in the intestinal wall is transported directly to the

liver, where it undergoes immediate inactivation by hepatic MAO. No tyramine reaches the general circulation. **B**, Three events occur in the presence of MAOIs: (1) inhibition of neuronal MAO increases levels of norepinephrine (NE) in sympathetic nerve terminals; (2) inhibition of intestinal and hepatic MAO allows dietary tyramine to pass through the intestinal wall and liver and enter the systemic circulation intact; (3) on reaching peripheral sympathetic nerve terminals, tyramine promotes the release of accumulated NE stores, causing massive vasoconstriction and excessive stimulation of the heart. *R*, Receptor for NE. (From Lehne R: *Pharmacology for nursing care*, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Saunders.)

#### **BOX 77-4** Foods That Contain Tyramine

- Avocados
- Bananas
- Beef or chicken liver
- Brewer's yeast
- Broad beans
- Caffeine, such as in coffee, tea, or chocolate
- Cheese, especially aged, except cottage cheese
- Eggplant
- Figs
- Meat extracts and tenderizers
- Overripe fruit
- Papaya

- Pickled herring
- Raisins
- Red wine, beer, sherry
- Sauerkraut
- Sausage, bologna, pepperoni, salami
- Sour cream
- Soy sauce
- Yogurt

*Note;* These foods need to be avoided in the client taking an MAOI. Even a small amount of tyramine can increase the blood pressure and the force and/or rate of heart contractions.

 Teach the client about foods that contain tyramine. Consuming tyramine-containing foods when taking an MAOI can cause hypertensive crisis.

#### IV. Mood Stabilizers (Box 77-5)

##### **BOX 77-5** Mood Stabilizers

##### Lithium Preparations

- Lithium carbonate
- Lithium citrate

##### Other Mood Stabilizers

- Aripiprazole (Abilify)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol)
- Gabapentin (Neurontin)
- Lamotrigine (Lamictal)
- Olanzapine (Zyprexa)
- Olanzapine/fluoxetine (Symbyax)
- Oxcarbazepine (Trileptal)
- Quetiapine (Seroquel)
- Risperidone (Risperdal)
- Valproate sodium (Depacon, Depakene, Depakote)
- Ziprasidone (Geodon)

**A. Description:** Affect cellular transport mechanism and enhance serotonin or  $\gamma$ -aminobutyric acid (GABA) function, or both, which are associated with mood

**B. Lithium**

1. Concurrent use with diuretics, fluoxetine (Prozac), methyldopa, or nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs increases lithium reabsorption by the kidney or inhibits lithium excretion, either of which increases the risk of lithium toxicity.
2. Acetazolamide (Diamox), theophylline, phenothiazines, or sodium bicarbonate may increase renal excretion of lithium, reducing its effectiveness.
3. The therapeutic dose is only slightly less than the amount producing toxicity.
4. The therapeutic drug serum level of lithium is 0.6 to 1.2 mEq/L; the actual dose at

which the therapeutic effect is achieved and the levels at which toxicity occurs are highly variable among individual clients. ▲

5. The causes of an increase in the lithium level include decreased sodium intake; fluid and electrolyte loss associated with excessive sweating, dehydration, diarrhea, or diuretic therapy; and illness or overdose.
6. Serum lithium levels should be checked frequently after initiation of therapy and then every 1 to 2 months or whenever any behavioral change suggests an altered serum level.
7. Blood samples to check serum lithium levels should be drawn in the morning, 12 hours after the last dose was taken.
8. Lithium is classified as pregnancy category D; it crosses the placental barrier freely and has been associated with fetal toxicity.

#### C. Side/adverse effects

1. Polyuria
2. Polydipsia
3. Anorexia, nausea
4. Dry mouth
5. Mild thirst
6. Weight gain
7. Abdominal bloating
8. Soft stools or diarrhea
9. Fine hand tremors

**10.** Inability to concentrate

**11.** Muscle weakness

**12.** Lethargy

**13.** Fatigue

**14.** Headache

**15.** Hair loss

**16.** Hypothyroidism

**D.** Interventions ▲

1. Monitor the suicidal client, especially during improved mood and increased energy levels.
2. Administer the medication with food to minimize gastrointestinal irritation.
3. Instruct to avoid excessive amounts of coffee, tea, or cola, which have a diuretic effect.
4. Do not administer diuretics while the client is taking lithium.
5. Instruct to avoid alcohol.
6. Instruct to avoid OTC medications.
7. Instruct that he or she may take a missed dose within 2 hours of the scheduled time; otherwise, the client should skip the missed dose and take the next dose at the scheduled time.
8. Instruct not to adjust the dosage or stop the medication without consulting the HCP because lithium should be tapered and not discontinued abruptly.
9. Instruct about the signs and symptoms of lithium toxicity.

10. Instruct to notify the HCP if polyuria, prolonged vomiting, diarrhea, or fever occurs.
11. Instruct that the therapeutic response to the medication is noted in 1 to 3 weeks.
12. Monitor the ECG, renal function tests, and thyroid tests (ensure that these tests are performed before the start of therapy).
13. Monitor weight.

 Instruct the client taking lithium to maintain a fluid intake of six to eight glasses of water a day and an adequate salt intake to prevent lithium toxicity.

#### E. Lithium toxicity

##### 1. Description

- a. Occurs when ingested lithium cannot be detoxified and excreted by the kidneys
- b. Symptoms of toxicity begin to appear when the serum lithium level is 1.5 to 2 mEq/L.

##### 2. Mild toxicity

- a. Serum lithium level is 1.5 mEq/L.
- b. Apathy
- c. Lethargy
- d. Diminished concentration
- e. Mild ataxia
- f. Coarse hand tremors
- g. Slight muscle weakness

##### 3. Moderate toxicity

- a. Serum lithium level 1.5 to 2.5 mEq/L
- b. Nausea, vomiting
- c. Severe diarrhea
- d. Mild to moderate ataxia and incoordination
- e. Slurred speech
- f. Tinnitus
- g. Blurred vision
- h. Muscle twitching
- i. Irregular tremor

**4. Severe toxicity**

- a. Serum lithium level greater than 2.5 mEq/L
- b. Nystagmus
- c. Muscle fasciculations
- d. Deep tendon hyperreflexia
- e. Visual or tactile hallucinations
- f. Oliguria or anuria
- g. Impaired level of consciousness
- h. Tonic-clonic seizures or coma, leading to death

**5. Interventions for lithium toxicity** ▲

- a. Withhold lithium and notify the HCP.
- b. Monitor vital signs and level of consciousness.
- c. Monitor cardiac status.

- d. Prepare to obtain samples to monitor lithium, electrolyte, blood urea nitrogen, and creatinine levels and perform a complete blood cell count.
- e. Monitor for suicidal tendencies and institute **suicide** precautions.

## V. Antianxiety or Anxiolytic Medications

### A. Description

1. Antianxiety medications depress the CNS, increasing the effects of GABA, which produces relaxation and may depress the limbic system.
2. Benzodiazepines have anxiety-reducing (anxiolytic), sedative-hypnotic, muscle-relaxing, and anticonvulsant actions ([Box 77-6](#)).

#### **BOX 77-6** Benzodiazepines

- Alprazolam (Xanax, Niravam)
- Chlordiazepoxide (Librium)
- Clonazepam (Klonopin)
- Clorazepate (Tranxene)
- Diazepam (Valium)
- Flurazepam (Dalmane)
- Lorazepam (Ativan)
- Midazolam
- Oxazepam (Serax)
- Quazepam (Doral)

- Temazepam (Restoril)

- Triazolam (Halcion)

### Nonbenzodiazepine Anxiolytic

- Buspirone (Buspar)

3. Benzodiazepines are contraindicated in clients with acute narrow-angle glaucoma and should be used cautiously in children and older adults.
4. Benzodiazepines interact with other CNS medications, producing an additive effect.
5. Abrupt withdrawal of benzodiazepines can be potentially life-threatening, and withdrawal should occur only under medical supervision.

### B. Side/adverse effects

1. Daytime sedation
2. Ataxia
3. Dizziness
4. Headaches
5. Blurred or double vision
6. Hypotension
7. Tremor
8. Amnesia
9. Slurred speech
10. Urinary incontinence

**11. Constipation**

**12. Paradoxical CNS excitement**

**13. Lethargy**

**14. Behavioral change**

**C. Acute toxicity ▲**

**1. Somnolence**

**2. Confusion**

**3. Diminished reflexes and coma**

**4. Flumazenil (Romazicon), a benzodiazepine antagonist administered intravenously, reverses benzodiazepine intoxication in 5 minutes.**

**5. A client being treated for an overdose of a benzodiazepine may experience agitation, restlessness, discomfort, and anxiety.**

**D. Interventions ▲**

**1. Monitor for motor responses such as agitation, trembling, and tension.**

**2. Monitor for autonomic responses such as cold clammy hands and sweating.**

**3. Monitor for paradoxical CNS excitement during early therapy, particularly in older adults and debilitated clients.**

**4. Monitor for visual disturbances because the medications can worsen glaucoma.**

**5. Monitor liver and renal function test results and complete blood cell counts.**

**6. Reduce the medication dose as prescribed for the older adult client and for the client with impaired liver function.**

**7. Initiate safety precautions because the older adult client is at risk for falling when**

taking the medication for sleep or anxiety.

8. Assist with ambulation if drowsiness or lightheadedness occurs.
9. Instruct that drowsiness usually disappears during continued therapy.
10. Instruct to avoid tasks that require alertness until the response to the medication is established.
11. Instruct to avoid alcohol.
12. Instruct not to take other medications without consulting the HCP.
13. Instruct not to stop the medication abruptly (can result in seizure activity).

#### E. Withdrawal ▲

1. To lessen withdrawal symptoms, the dosage of a benzodiazepine should be tapered gradually over 2 to 6 weeks.
2. Abrupt or too rapid withdrawal results in the following:
  - a. Restlessness
  - b. Irritability
  - c. Insomnia
  - d. Hand tremors
  - e. Abdominal or muscle cramps
  - f. Sweating
  - g. Vomiting
  - h. Seizures

## VI. Barbiturates and Sedative-Hypnotics (Box 77-7)

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**Barbiturates**

- Amobarbital sodium (Amytal)
- Butabarbital sodium (Butisol)
- Pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal)
- Phenobarbital sodium (Luminal)
- Secobarbital sodium (Seconal)

**Sedative-Hypnotics**

- Chloral hydrate (Somnote)
- Eszopiclone (Lunesta)
- Meprobamate (Trancot)
- Ramelteon (Rozerem)
- Zaleplon (Sonata)
- Zolpidem (Ambien)

**A. Description**

1. Depress the reticular activating system by promoting the inhibitory synaptic action of the neurotransmitter GABA
2. Used for short-term treatment of insomnia or for sedation to relieve anxiety, tension, and apprehension

**B. Side/adverse effects**

1. Dizziness and drowsiness

2. Confusion
3. Irritability
4. Allergic reactions
5. Agranulocytosis
6. Thrombocytopenic purpura
7. Megaloblastic anemia

#### **C. Overdose**

1. Tachycardia
2. Hypotension
3. Cold and clammy skin
4. Dilated pupils
5. Weak and rapid pulse
6. Signs of shock
7. Depressed respirations
8. Absent reflexes
9. Coma and death may result from respiratory and cardiovascular collapse.

#### **D. Withdrawal**

1. Severe withdrawal symptoms begin within 24 hours after the medication is discontinued in an individual with severe medication dependence.
2. Gradual withdrawal is used to detoxify a dependent client.
3. Anxiety
4. Insomnia

5. Nightmares
6. Daytime agitation
7. Tremors
8. Delirium
9. Seizures
10. Behavioral changes

#### E. Interventions

1. Administer lower doses as prescribed for the older client.
2. Medications should be used with caution in the client who has suicidal tendencies or has a history of drug **addiction**.
3. Maintain safety by supervising ambulation and using side rails at night as appropriate.
4. Instruct to take the medication as directed.
5. Instruct to avoid driving or operating hazardous equipment if drowsiness, dizziness, or unsteadiness occurs.
6. Instruct to avoid alcohol.
7. For insomnia, instruct to take the medication 30 minutes before bedtime; avoid taking with a large amount of food to help absorption.
8. Instruct that a hangover effect may occur in the morning.
9. Instruct not to discontinue the medication abruptly.
10. Instruct clients taking chloral hydrate to take the medication with food and a full glass of water, fruit juice, or ginger ale to prevent gastric irritation.

## VII. Antipsychotic Medications (Box 77-8)

### BOX 77-8 Antipsychotic Medications

#### Typical Antipsychotics

- Chlorpromazine
- Fluphenazine decanoate (Prolixin Decanoate)
- Haloperidol
- Loxapine (Loxitane)
- Molindone (Moban)
- Perphenazine
- Pimozide (Orap)
- Thiothixene (Navane)
- Trifluoperazine

#### Atypical Antipsychotics

- Aripiprazole (Abilify)
- Clozapine (Clozaril)
- Olanzapine (Zyprexa)
- Paliperidone (Invega)
- Quetiapine (Seroquel)
- Risperidone (Risperdal)
- Ziprasidone (Geodon)

## A. Description

1. Improve the thought processes and behavior of the client with psychotic symptoms, especially clients with schizophrenia.
2. Affect dopamine receptors in the brain, reducing psychotic symptoms
3. Typical antipsychotics are more effective for positive symptoms of schizophrenia, such as hallucinations, aggression, and delusions; typical antipsychotic medications also block the chemoreceptor trigger zone and vomiting center in the brain, producing an antiemetic effect.
4. Atypical antipsychotics are more effective for the negative symptoms of schizophrenia, such as avolition, apathy, and alogia.
5. The effects of antipsychotic medications are potentiated when given with other medications acting on the CNS.

## B. Side/adverse effects (Box 77-9)

### **BOX 77-9** Side/Adverse Effects of Antipsychotic Medications

#### Anticholinergic Effects

- Dry mouth
- Increased heart rate
- Urinary retention
- Constipation
- Hypotension

#### Extrapyramidal Effects

- Parkinsonism
- Tremors
- Masklike facies
- Rigidity
- Shuffling gait
- Dysphagia
- Drooling

### **Dystonias**

- Abnormal or involuntary eye movements, including oculogyric crisis
- Facial grimacing
- Twisting of the torso or other muscle groups

### **Akathisia**

- Restlessness
- Constant moving about

### **Tardive Dyskinesia**

- Protrusion of the tongue
- Chewing motion
- Involuntary movements of the body and extremities

### **Other Side/Adverse Effects**

- Drowsiness
- Blood dyscrasias
- Pruritus

- Photosensitivity
- Elevated blood glucose level
- Increased weight
- Impaired body temperature regulation
- Gynecomastia
- Lactation

## C. Extrapyrarnidal syndrome

### 1. Parkinsonism

- a. Tremors
- b. Masklike facies
- c. Dysphagia, drooling
- d. Rigidity, shuffling gait

### 2. Dystonia

- a. Facial grimacing
- b. Abnormal or involuntary eye movements

### 3. Akathisia

- a. Restlessness
- b. Constant moving about

### 4. Tardive dyskinesia

- a. Protrusion of the tongue
- b. Chewing motions

**c. Involuntary movements of the body and extremities**

**D. Interventions** ▲

1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor for symptoms of neuroleptic malignant syndrome (can occur with antipsychotic medications); Refer to [Section VIII](#).
3. Monitor urine output.
4. Monitor serum glucose level.
5. Administer the medication with food or milk to decrease gastric irritation.
6. For oral use, the liquid form might be preferred because some clients hide tablets in their mouths to avoid taking them.
7. The absorption rate is faster with the liquid form of oral medication.
8. Avoid skin contact with the liquid concentrate to prevent contact dermatitis.
9. Protect the liquid concentrate from light.
10. Dilute the liquid concentrate with fruit juice.
11. Inform that a full therapeutic effect of the medication may not be evident for 3 to 6 weeks after initiation of therapy; however, an observable therapeutic response may be apparent after 7 to 10 days.
12. Inform that some medications may cause a harmless change in urine color to pinkish to red-brown.
13. Instruct to use sunscreen, hats, and protective clothing when outdoors.
14. Instruct to avoid alcohol or other CNS depressants.
15. Instruct to change positions slowly to avoid orthostatic hypotension.

16. Instruct to report signs of agranulocytosis, including sore throat, fever, and malaise.
17. Instruct to report signs of liver dysfunction, including jaundice, malaise, fever, and right upper abdominal pain.
18. When discontinuing antipsychotics, the medication dosage should be reduced gradually to avoid sudden recurrence of psychotic symptoms.

 **Monitor for extrapyramidal side/adverse effects in the client taking an antipsychotic medication.**

## **VIII. Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome**

### **A. Description**

1. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome is a potentially fatal syndrome that may occur at any time during therapy with neuroleptic (antipsychotic) medications.
2. Although rare, neuroleptic malignant syndrome more commonly occurs at the initiation of therapy, after the client has changed from one medication to another, after a dosage increase, or when a combination of medications is used.

### **B. Assessment**

1. Dyspnea or tachypnea
2. Tachycardia or irregular pulse rate
3. Fever
4. High or low blood pressure
5. Increased sweating

6. Loss of bladder control
7. Skeletal muscle rigidity
8. Pale skin
9. Excessive weakness or fatigue
10. Altered level of consciousness
11. Seizures
12. Severe extrapyramidal side/adverse effects
13. Difficulty swallowing
14. Excessive salivation
15. Oculogyric crisis
16. Dyskinesia
17. Elevated white blood cell count, liver function results, and creatine phosphokinase level

### C. Interventions ▲

1. Notify the HCP.
2. Monitor vital signs.
3. Initiate safety and seizure precautions.
4. Prepare to discontinue the medication.
5. Monitor level of consciousness.
6. Administer antipyretics as prescribed.
7. Use a cooling blanket to lower the body temperature.
8. Monitor electrolyte levels and administer fluids intravenously as prescribed.

## IX. Medications to Treat Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (Box 77-10)

### BOX 77-10

### Medications to Treat Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

- Amphetamine
- Atomoxetine (Strattera)
- Dexmethylphenidate (Focalin)
- Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine)
- Dextroamphetamine and amphetamine (Adderall XR, Adderall)
- Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse)
- Methamphetamine (Desoxyn)
- Methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta, Metadate CD, Methylin)

- A.** Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder may require medication to reduce hyperactive behavior and lengthen attention span.
- B.** Medications that are most effective in controlling this disorder are CNS stimulants.
- C.** CNS stimulants, which increase agitation and activity in adults, have a calming effect on children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and increase alertness and sensitivity to stimuli.
- D.** Side/adverse effects
1. Tachycardia
  2. Anorexia and weight loss

3. Elevated blood pressure

4. Dizziness

5. Agitation

#### E. Interventions

1. Monitor for CNS side/adverse effects.

2. Obtain a baseline ECG.

3. Monitor the blood pressure.

4. Instruct the child and parents that OTC medications need to be avoided.

5. Instruct the child and parents that the last dose of the day should be taken at least 6 hours before bedtime (14 hours for extended-release forms) to prevent insomnia.

6. Monitor height and weight (particularly in children).

7. Reinforce that several weeks of therapy may be necessary before the therapeutic effect is noted.

8. Instruct the client and parents that a drug-free period may be prescribed to allow growth of the child if the medication has caused growth retardation.

#### X. Medications to Treat Alzheimer's Disease (Box 77-11) ▲

##### **BOX 77-11**

##### Medications to Treat Alzheimer's Disease

- Donepezil (Aricept)
- Galantamine (Razadyne)
- Memantine (Namenda)

## ■ Rivastigmine (Exelon)

**A.** Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors may be used in clients with Alzheimer's disease to improve cognitive functions in the early stages.

### **B.** Donepezil (Aricept)

1. An inhibitor of acetylcholinesterase used to treat mild to moderate dementia of Alzheimer's disease
2. Side/adverse effects include nausea and diarrhea.
3. Donepezil can slow the heart rate through its vagotonic effect.

### **C.** Galantamine (Razadyne)

1. An inhibitor of cholinesterase used to treat mild to moderate dementia of Alzheimer's disease.
2. Side/adverse effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, and weight loss.
3. Galantamine can cause bronchoconstriction; it should be used with caution in clients with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

### **D.** Memantine (Namenda)

1. *N*-Methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor antagonist indicated for treatment of moderate to severe dementia of Alzheimer's disease
2. Side/adverse effects include dizziness, headache, confusion, and gastrointestinal disturbances.
3. Memantine should not be used in combination with other NMDA antagonists such

as amantadine or ketamine (Ketalar); such combinations produce undesirable additive effects.

4. Sodium bicarbonate and other medications that alkalinize the urine can decrease renal excretion of memantine; accumulation to toxic levels can result.

#### E. Rivastigmine (Exelon)

1. Cholinesterase inhibitor used to treat mild to moderate dementia of Alzheimer's disease
2. Side/adverse effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and anorexia.
3. Rivastigmine should be used with caution in clients with peptic ulcer disease, bradycardia, sick sinus syndrome, urinary obstruction, and lung disease because it enhances cholinergic transmission, intensifying symptoms of these disorders.

#### F. Tacrine (Cognex)

1. A centrally acting cholinesterase inhibitor used to treat mild to moderate dementia of Alzheimer's disease
2. Side/adverse effects include ataxia, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
3. An adverse effect is hepatotoxicity; liver function studies need to be monitored.

### **CRITICAL THINKING** What Should You Do?

*Answer:* Alprazolam is a benzodiazepine and to prevent withdrawal or lessen withdrawal symptoms, the nurse should instruct the client to taper the dose gradually

over 2 to 6 weeks as specifically prescribed by the health care provider. The nurse should inform the client that abrupt or too rapid withdrawal can result in restlessness, irritability, insomnia, hand tremors, abdominal or muscle cramps, sweating, vomiting, and seizures. The nurse informs the client that if any of these manifestations occur during tapering, they should be reported immediately to the health care provider.

### ***Reference***

Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 37-39.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

948. A client's medication sheet contains a prescription for sertraline (Zoloft). To ensure safe administration of the medication, how should the nurse administer the dose?

1. On an empty stomach
2. At the same time each evening
3. Evenly spaced around the clock
4. As needed when the client complains of depression

949. A client with schizophrenia has been started on medication therapy with clozapine (Clozaril). The nurse should assess the results of which laboratory study to monitor for adverse effects from this medication?

1. Platelet count
2. Blood glucose level
3. Liver function studies
4. White blood cell count

950. A client is scheduled for discharge and will be taking phenobarbital sodium (Luminal) for an extended period. The nurse would place **highest priority** on teaching the client which point that directly relates to client safety?

1. Take the medication only with meals.
2. Take the medication at the same time each day.
3. Use a dose container to help prevent missed doses.

4. Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medication.

**951.** The nurse is describing the medication side and adverse effects to a client who is taking oxazepam (Serax). What information should the nurse incorporate in the discussion?

1. Consume a low-fiber diet.
2. Increase fluids and bulk in the diet.
3. Rest if the heart begins to beat rapidly.
4. Take antidiarrheal agents if diarrhea occurs.

**952.** The nurse is administering risperidone (Risperdal) to a client who is scheduled to be discharged. Before discharge, which instruction should the nurse provide to the client?

1. Get adequate sunlight.
2. Continue driving as usual.
3. Avoid foods rich in potassium.
4. Get up slowly when changing positions.

**953.** The nurse is teaching a client who is being started on imipramine (Tofranil) about the medication. The nurse should inform the client to expect maximum desired effects at what time period following initiation of the medication?

1. In 2 months
2. In 2 to 3 weeks
3. During the first week

4. During the sixth week of administration

954. A hospitalized client is started on phenelzine (Nardil) for the treatment of depression. The nurse should instruct the client that which foods are acceptable to consume while taking this medication? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Figs

2. Yogurt

3. Crackers

4. Aged cheese

5. Tossed salad

6. Oatmeal raisin cookies

955. The nurse notes that a client with schizophrenia and receiving an antipsychotic medication is moving her mouth, protruding her tongue, and grimacing as she watches television. The nurse determines that the client is experiencing which medication complication?

1. Parkinsonism

2. Tardive dyskinesia

3. Hypertensive crisis

4. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome

956. The nurse is performing a follow-up teaching session with a client discharged 1 month ago. The client is taking fluoxetine (Prozac). What information would be important for the nurse to obtain during this client visit regarding the

side/adverse effects of the medication?

1. Cardiovascular symptoms
2. Gastrointestinal dysfunctions
3. Problems with mouth dryness
4. Problems with excessive sweating

**957.** A client who has been taking buspirone (Buspar) for 1 month returns to the clinic for a follow-up assessment. The nurse determines that the medication is **effective** if the absence of which manifestation has occurred?

1. Paranoid thought process
2. Rapid heartbeat or anxiety
3. Alcohol withdrawal symptoms
4. Thought broadcasting or delusions

**958.** A client taking lithium carbonate reports vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, blurred vision, tinnitus, and tremors. The lithium level is 2.5 mEq/L. This level is indicative of which finding?

1. Toxic
2. Normal
3. Slightly above normal
4. Excessively below normal

**959.** A client gives the home health nurse a bottle of clomipramine (Anafranil). The nurse notes that the medication has not been taken by the client in 2 months.

Which behavior observed in the client would validate noncompliance with this medication?

1. Complaints of insomnia
2. Complaints of hunger and fatigue
3. A pulse rate less than 60 beats/minute
4. Frequent hand-washing with hot soapy water

**960.** A hospitalized client has begun taking bupropion (Wellbutrin) as an antidepressant agent. The nurse understands that which is an adverse effect, indicating that the client is taking an excessive amount of medication?

1. Constipation
2. Seizure activity
3. Increased weight
4. Dizziness when getting upright

**961.** A client receiving tricyclic antidepressants arrives at the mental health clinic. Which observation would indicate that the client is following the medication plan correctly?

1. Client reports not going to work for this past week.
  2. Client complains of not being able to “do anything” anymore.
  3. Client arrives at the clinic neat and appropriate in appearance.
  4. Client reports sleeping 12 hours per night and 3 to 4 hours during the day.
- 

# ANSWERS

948. 2

**Rationale:** Sertraline (Zoloft) is classified as an antidepressant. Sertraline (Zoloft) generally is administered once every 24 hours. It may be administered in the morning or evening, but evening administration may be preferable because drowsiness is a side effect. The medication may be administered without food or with food if gastrointestinal distress occurs. Sertraline (Zoloft) is not prescribed for use as needed.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, administration of sertraline (Zoloft). Recalling that this medication is an antidepressant administered daily will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Sertraline (Zoloft)

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Mood and Affect

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), p. 376.

949. 4

**Rationale:** A client taking clozapine (Clozaril) may experience agranulocytosis, which is monitored by reviewing the results of the white blood cell count. Treatment is interrupted if the white blood cell count decreases to less than 3000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. Agranulocytosis could be fatal if undetected and untreated. The other laboratory studies are not related specifically to the use of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, complications associated with clozapine (Clozaril). Recalling that this

medication causes agranulocytosis will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Adverse effects of **clozapine (Clozaril)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Psychosis

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 266-267.

**950. 4**

**Rationale:** Phenobarbital is an anticonvulsant and hypnotic agent. The client should avoid taking any other central nervous system depressants such as alcohol while taking this medication. The medication may be given without regard to meals. Taking the medication at the same time each day enhances compliance and maintains more stable blood levels of the medication. Using a dose container or “pillbox” may be helpful for some clients.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client safety, and note the **strategic words** “highest priority.”

Eliminate option 1 because of the **closed-ended word** *only*. Although options 2 and 3 are correct teaching points, these are not the highest priority from the options provided. Remember that alcohol should not be consumed when a hypnotic is taken because of its adverse effects.

**Review:** Client teaching point related to **phenobarbital**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 923-925.

## 951. 2

**Rationale:** Oxazepam (Serax) causes constipation, and the client is instructed to increase fluid intake and bulk (high fiber) in the diet. If the heart begins to beat fast, the health care provider (HCP) is notified because this could indicate overdose. In addition, diarrhea could indicate an incomplete intestinal obstruction and, if this occurs, the HCP is notified.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, side/adverse effects of oxazepam (Serax). Recalling that constipation is a side effect of this medication will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Side effects and adverse effects of **oxazepam (Serax)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Elimination

**References:** Lehne (2013), pp. 404-405; Varcarolis (2013), p. 184.

## 952. 4

**Rationale:** Risperidone (Risperdal) can cause orthostatic hypotension. Sunlight should be avoided by the client taking this medication. With any psychotropic medication, caution needs to be taken (such as with driving or other activities requiring alertness) until the individual can determine whether his or her level of alertness is affected. Food interaction is not a concern.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, parameters to monitor for the client taking risperidone. It is necessary to know the nursing considerations related to the administration of risperidone and that risperidone can cause orthostatic hypotension. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Risperidone (Risperdal)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 1023-1025.

**953. 2**

**Rationale:** The maximum therapeutic effects of imipramine (Tofranil) may not occur for 2 to 3 weeks after antidepressant therapy has been initiated. Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, the desired effect of this medication, and focus on the word “maximum.” Recalling that it takes 2 to 3 weeks for a maximum therapeutic effect to occur with most antidepressants will direct you to the correct option.

**Review: Imipramine (Tofranil)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Client Education

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 600-601.

❖ 954. 3, 5

**Rationale:** Phenelzine is a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI). The client should avoid ingesting foods that are high in tyramine. Ingestion of these foods could trigger a potentially fatal hypertensive crisis. Foods to avoid include yogurt; aged cheeses; smoked or processed meats; red wines; and fruits such as avocados, raisins, or figs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, acceptable food items while taking MAOIs. Recall that phenelzine is an MAOI and that foods high in tyramine needed to be avoided. Next, from the food items listed in the question, identify the foods that are tyramine-free.

**Review:** Food items containing **tyramine** and **monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Nutrition; Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 921-923.

955. 2

**Rationale:** Tardive dyskinesia is a reaction that can occur from antipsychotic medication. It is characterized by uncontrollable involuntary movements of the body and extremities, particularly the tongue. Parkinsonism is characterized by tremors, masklike facies, rigidity, and a shuffling gait. Hypertensive crisis can occur from the use of monoamine oxidase inhibitors and is characterized by hypertension, occipital headache radiating frontally, neck stiffness and soreness, nausea, and vomiting. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome is a potentially fatal syndrome that

may occur at any time during therapy with neuroleptic (antipsychotic) medications. It is characterized by dyspnea or tachypnea, tachycardia or irregular pulse rate, fever, blood pressure changes, increased sweating, loss of bladder control, and skeletal muscle rigidity.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, a complication of antipsychotic medications. To direct you to the correct option, remember that tardive dyskinesia is characterized by uncontrollable involuntary movements of the body and extremities, particularly the tongue.

**Review:** **Extrapyramidal side effects** and **tardive dyskinesia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Psychosis

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 324.

**956. 2**

**Rationale:** The most common side/adverse effects related to this medication include central nervous system and gastrointestinal system dysfunction. Fluoxetine (Prozac) affects the gastrointestinal system by causing nausea and vomiting, cramping, and diarrhea. Cardiovascular symptoms, dry mouth, and excessive sweating are not side/adverse effects associated with this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, common side/adverse effects of fluoxetine (Prozac). It is necessary to remember that this medication causes gastrointestinal problems. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Side/adverse effects of **fluoxetine (Prozac)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 492-494.

**957. 2**

**Rationale:** Buspirone (Buspar) is not recommended for the treatment of paranoid thought disorders, drug or alcohol withdrawal, or schizophrenia. Buspirone (Buspar) most often is indicated for the treatment of anxiety.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *effective*. Note the words “absence of which manifestation” in the question. Recalling that buspirone (Buspar) is an antianxiety medication will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The action and use of **buspirone (Buspar)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety, Evidence

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 157-158.

**958. 1**

**Rationale:** Maintenance serum levels of lithium are 0.6 to 1.2 mEq/L. Symptoms of toxicity begin to appear at levels of 1.5 to 2 mEq/L. Lithium toxicity requires immediate medical attention with lavage and possible peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, therapeutic serum medication level of lithium. Recalling that the high end of the maintenance level is 1.2 mEq/L will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The therapeutic serum level of **lithium carbonate**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Safety

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), p. 291.

#### 959. 4

**Rationale:** Clomipramine (Anafranil) is a tricyclic antidepressant used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Sedation sometimes occurs. Insomnia seldom is a side effect. Weight gain and tachycardia are side/adverse effects of this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, noncompliance with clomipramine (Anafranil). Recalling that this medication is a tricyclic antidepressant used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The purpose of **clomipramine (Anafranil)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Safety

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 401.

**960. 2**

**Rationale:** Seizure activity can occur in clients taking bupropion (Wellbutrin) dosages greater than 450 mg daily.

Weight gain is an occasional side effect, whereas constipation is a common side effect of this medication. This medication does not cause significant orthostatic blood pressure changes.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, signs of toxicity associated with bupropion (Wellbutrin). Note the words *excessive amount*. These words will direct you to the correct option, the option that identifies the most serious concern.

**Review: Bupropion (Wellbutrin)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment, Safety

**Reference:** Hodgson, Kizior (2013), pp. 155-157.

**961. 3**

**Rationale:** Depressed individuals sleep for long periods, are unable to go to work, and feel as if they cannot “do anything.” When these clients have had some therapeutic effect from their medication, they report resolution of many of these complaints and exhibit an improvement in their appearance. Options 1, 2, and 4 identify continued depression.

***Test-Taking Strategy:*** The client's behaviors or reports identified in options 1, 2, and 4 are **comparable or alike** and are symptoms of depression. The improvement in appearance indicates a therapeutic response to the medication, indicating compliance with the medication regimen.

***Review:*** Expected effects of **tricyclic antidepressants**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Evaluating

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Evaluation

***Content Area:*** Pharmacology—Psychiatric Medications

***Priority Concepts:*** Clinical Judgment; Mood and Affect

***References:*** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 578; Varcarolis (2013), pp. 264-265.

# UNIT XX



## Comprehensive Test

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**962.** The emergency department nurse is caring for a client who has been identified as a victim of physical abuse. In planning care for the client, which is the **priority** nursing action?

1. Adhering to the mandatory abuse-reporting laws
2. Notifying the case worker of the family situation
3. Removing the client from any immediate danger
4. Obtaining treatment for the abusing family member

**963.** The nurse assesses a client with the admitting diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder, mania. Which client symptoms require the nurse's **immediate** action?

1. Incessant talking and sexual innuendoes
2. Grandiose delusions and poor concentration

3. Outlandish behaviors and inappropriate dress
4. Nonstop physical activity and poor nutritional intake

**964.** The nurse is caring for a client who was involuntarily hospitalized and is scheduled for electroconvulsive therapy. The nurse notes that an informed consent has not been obtained for the procedure. Based on this information, what is the nurse's **best** determination?

1. The informed consent does not need to be obtained.
2. The informed consent should be obtained from the family.
3. The informed consent needs to be obtained from the client.
4. The health care provider will provide the informed consent.

**965.** A client newly diagnosed with diabetes mellitus is instructed by the health care provider to obtain glucagon for emergency home use. The client asks a home care nurse about the purpose of the medication. What is the nurse's **best** response to the client's question?

1. "It will boost the cells in your pancreas if you have insufficient insulin."
2. "It will help promote insulin absorption when your glucose levels are high."
3. "It is for the times when your blood glucose is too low from too much insulin."
4. "It will help prevent lipoatrophy from the multiple insulin injections over the years."

**966.** The nurse is providing care to a Puerto Rican–American client who is terminally ill. Numerous family members are present most of the time, and many of the

family members are very emotional. What is the **most appropriate** nursing action for this client?

1. Restrict the number of family members visiting at one time.
2. Inform the family that emotional outbursts are to be avoided.
3. Make the necessary arrangements so family members can visit.
4. Contact the health care provider to speak to the family regarding their behaviors.

**967.** A client presents to the emergency department with upper gastrointestinal bleeding and is in moderate distress. In planning care, what is the **priority** nursing action for this client?

1. Assessment of vital signs
2. Completion of abdominal examination
3. Insertion of the prescribed nasogastric tube
4. Thorough investigation of precipitating events

**968.** The nurse is performing an assessment on a client with dementia. Which data gathered during the assessment indicates a manifestation associated with dementia?

1. Uses confabulation
2. Improvement in sleeping
3. Absence of sundown syndrome
4. Presence of personal hygienic care

**969.** The nurse is caring for a client with anorexia nervosa. Which behavior is characteristic of this disorder and reflects anxiety management?

1. Engaging in immoral acts
2. Always reinforcing self-approval
3. Observing rigid rules and regulations
4. Having the need always to make the right decision

**970.** The nurse provides instructions to a malnourished pregnant client regarding iron supplementation. Which client statement indicates an understanding of the instructions?

1. "Iron supplements will give me diarrhea."
2. "Meat does not provide iron and should be avoided."
3. "The iron is best absorbed if taken on an empty stomach."
4. "On the days that I eat green leafy vegetables or calf liver I can omit taking the iron supplement."

**971.** Levothyroxine (Synthroid) is prescribed for a client diagnosed with hypothyroidism. Upon review of the client's record, the nurse notes that the client is taking warfarin (Coumadin). Which modification to the plan of care should the nurse review with the client's health care provider?

1. A decreased dosage of levothyroxine
2. An increased dosage of levothyroxine
3. A decreased dosage of warfarin sodium

4. An increased dosage of warfarin sodium

**972.** The nurse is teaching a client with emphysema about positions that help breathing during dyspneic episodes. The nurse instructs the client to avoid which position that could aggravate breathing?

1. Sitting up and leaning on a table
2. Standing and leaning against a wall
3. Sitting up with the elbows resting on knees
4. Lying on the back in a low-Fowler's position

**973.** A client is about to undergo a lumbar puncture. The nurse describes to the client that which position will be used during the procedure?

1. Side-lying with a pillow under the hip
2. Prone with a pillow under the abdomen
3. Prone in slight Trendelenburg's position
4. Side-lying with the legs pulled up and the head bent down onto the chest

**974.** The nurse recognizes that which intervention is unlikely to facilitate effective communication between a dying client and family?

1. The nurse encourages the client and family to identify and discuss feelings openly.
2. The nurse assists the client and family in carrying out spiritually meaningful practices.
3. The nurse makes decisions for the client and family to relieve them of

unnecessary demands.

4. The nurse maintains a calm attitude and one of acceptance when the family or client expresses anger.

**975.** A depressed client verbalizes feelings of low self-esteem and self-worth typified by statements such as “I’m such a failure. I can’t do anything right.” How should the nurse plan on responding to the client’s statement?

1. Reassure the client that things will get better.
2. Tell the client that this is not true and that we all have a purpose in life.
3. Identify recent behaviors or accomplishments that demonstrate the client’s skills.
4. Remain with the client and sit in silence; this will encourage the client to verbalize feelings.

**976.** The nurse has just admitted to the nursing unit a client with a basilar skull fracture who is at risk for increased intracranial pressure. Pending specific health care provider prescriptions, the nurse should safely place the client in which positions? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Head midline
2. Neck in neutral position
3. Head of bed elevated 30 to 45 degrees
4. Head turned to the side when flat in bed
5. Neck and jaw flexed forward when opening the mouth

977. The nurse reviews the arterial blood gas results of an assigned client and notes that the laboratory report indicates a pH of 7.30,  $P_{CO_2}$  of 58 mm Hg,  $P_{O_2}$  of 80 mm Hg, and  $HCO_3$  of 27 mEq/L. The nurse interprets that the client has which acid-base disturbance?

1. Metabolic acidosis
2. Metabolic alkalosis
3. Respiratory acidosis
4. Respiratory alkalosis

978. The nurse has admitted a client to the clinical nursing unit after undergoing a right mastectomy. The nurse should plan to place the right arm in which position?

1. Elevated on a pillow
2. Level with the right atrium
3. Dependent to the right atrium
4. Elevated above shoulder level

979. On the second postpartum day, a client complains of burning on urination, urgency, and frequency of urination. A urinalysis indicates the presence of a urinary tract infection. The nurse instructs the client regarding measures to take for the treatment of the infection. Which client statement indicates to the nurse the **need for further instruction**?

1. "I need to urinate frequently throughout the day."
2. "The prescribed medication must be taken until it is finished."

3. “My fluid intake should be increased to at least 3000 mL daily.”
4. “Foods and fluids that will increase urine alkalinity should be consumed.”

980. A client received 20 units of Humulin N insulin subcutaneously at 08:00. At what time should the nurse plan to assess the client for a hypoglycemic reaction?

1. 10:00
2. 11:00
3. 17:00
4. 23:00

981. The nurse is the first responder after a tornado has destroyed many homes in the community. Which victim should the nurse attend to **first**?

1. The 32-year-old pregnant woman who exclaims, “My baby is not moving.”
2. The 2-year-old standing next to an adult family member screaming, “I want my mommy!”
3. The 4-year-old complaining, “My leg is bleeding so bad, I am afraid it is going to fall off!”
4. The 88-year-old who is sitting next to her husband sobbing, “My husband is dead. My husband is dead.”

982. A pregnant client at 10 weeks’ gestation calls the prenatal clinic to report a recent exposure to a child with rubella. The nurse reviews the client’s chart.

What is the nurse’s **best** response to the client? **Refer to chart.** ❖

History and Physical	Laboratory/Diagnostic Results	Medications
GTPAL 1,0,0,0,0	VDRL nonreactive	Prenatal vitamins
Weight 135 lb	Rubella immune	
Positive Goodell and Chadwick	Rh positive, Type O	

1. “You should avoid all school-age children during pregnancy.”
2. “There is no need to be concerned if you don’t have a fever or rash within the next 2 days.”
3. “You were wise to call. Your rubella titer indicates that you are immune and your baby is not at risk.”
4. “Be sure to tell the health care provider in 2 weeks as additional screening will be prescribed during your second trimester.”

**983.** A breast-feeding mother of an infant with lactose intolerance asks the nurse about dietary measures. What food should the nurse tell the mother to avoid while breast-feeding?

1. Egg yolk
2. Dried beans
3. Hard cheeses
4. Green leafy vegetables

**984.** A client with diabetes mellitus is told that amputation of the leg is necessary to sustain life. The client is very upset and tells the nurse, “This is all my health care provider’s fault. I have done everything I’ve been asked to do!” Which nursing interpretation is **best** for this situation?

1. An expected coping mechanism
2. An ineffective coping mechanism
3. A need to notify the hospital lawyer
4. An expression of guilt on the part of the client

**985.** A client with terminal cancer arrives at the emergency department dead on arrival (DOA). After an autopsy is prescribed, the client's family requests no autopsy be performed. Which response to the family is **most appropriate**?

1. "The decision is made by the medical examiner."
2. "An autopsy is mandatory for any client who is DOA."
3. "I will contact the medical examiner regarding your request."
4. "It is required by federal law. Tell me why you don't want the autopsy done?"

**986.** A client who is positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) delivers a newborn infant. The nurse provides instructions to help the client regarding care of her infant. Which client statement indicates the **need for further instruction**?

1. "I will be sure to wash my hands before and after bathroom use."
2. "I need to breast-feed, especially for the first 6 weeks postpartum."
3. "Support groups are available to assist me with understanding my diagnosis of HIV."
4. "My newborn infant should be on antiviral medications for the first 6 weeks after delivery."

**987.** An adolescent client is diagnosed with conjunctivitis, and the nurse provides

information to the client about the use of contact lenses. Which client statement indicates the **need for further information**?

1. "I should obtain new contact lenses."
2. "I should not wear my contact lenses."
3. "My old contact lenses should be discarded."
4. "My contact lenses can be worn if they are cleaned as directed."

**988.** The nurse teaches a client newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes about storing Humulin N insulin. Which statement indicates to the nurse that the client understood the discharge teaching?

1. "I should keep the insulin in the cabinet during the day only."
2. "I know I have to keep my insulin in the refrigerator at all times."
3. "I can store the open insulin bottle in the kitchen cabinet for 1 month."
4. "The best place for my insulin is on the window sill, but in the cupboard is just as good."

**989.** The nurse is caring for a client scheduled for a transsphenoidal hypophysectomy. The preoperative teaching instructions should include which **most important** statement?

1. "Your hair will need to be shaved."
2. "You will receive spinal anesthesia."
3. "You will need to ambulate after surgery."
4. "Brushing your teeth will not be permitted for at least 2 weeks after surgery."

**990.** During a routine prenatal visit, a client complains of gums that bleed easily with brushing. The nurse performs an assessment and teaches the client about proper nutrition to minimize this problem. Which client statement indicates an understanding of the proper nutrition to minimize this problem?

1. "I will drink 8 oz of water with each meal."
2. "I will eat three servings of cracked wheat bread each day."
3. "I will eat two saltine crackers before I get up each morning."
4. "I will eat fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks and for dessert each day."

**991.** A 6-year-old child has just been diagnosed with localized Hodgkin's disease, and chemotherapy is planned to begin immediately. The mother of the child asks the nurse why radiation therapy was not prescribed as a part of the treatment. What is the nurse's **best** response?

1. "It's very costly, and chemotherapy works just as well."
2. "I'm not sure. I'll discuss it with the health care provider."
3. "Sometimes age has to do with the decision for radiation therapy."
4. "The health care provider would prefer that you discuss treatment options with the oncologist."

**992.** An infant born with an imperforate anus returns from surgery with a colostomy. The nurse assesses the stoma and notes that it is red and edematous. What is the **best** nursing action based on this finding?

1. Elevate the buttocks.

2. Document the findings.
3. Apply ice immediately.
4. Call the health care provider.

**993.** The nurse is performing an initial assessment on a newborn infant. When assessing the infant's head, the nurse notes that the ears are low-set. Which nursing action is **most appropriate**?

1. Document the findings.
2. Arrange for hearing testing.
3. Notify the health care provider.
4. Cover the ears with gauze pads.

**994.** The clinic nurse is assessing jaundice in a child with hepatitis. Which anatomical area would provide the **best** data regarding the presence of jaundice?

1. The nail beds
2. The skin in the sacral area
3. The skin in the abdominal area
4. The membranes in the ear canal

**995.** The nurse is assigned to care for a client in traction. The nurse prepares a plan of care for the client and includes which nursing action in the plan?

1. Ensure that the knots are at the pulleys.
2. Check the weights to ensure that they are off of the floor.
3. Ensure that the head of the bed is kept at a 45- to 90-degree angle.

4. Monitor the weights to ensure that they are resting on a firm surface.

996. The nurse is setting up the physical environment for an interview with a client and plans to obtain subjective data regarding the client's health. Which interventions are appropriate? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Set the room temperature at a comfortable level.
2. Remove distracting objects from the interviewing area.
3. Place a chair for the client across from the nurse's desk.
4. Ensure comfortable seating at eye level for the client and nurse.
5. Provide seating for the client so that the client faces a strong light.
6. Ensure that the distance between the client and nurse is at least 7 feet.

997. The nurse is caring for an older adult who has been placed in Buck's extension traction after a hip fracture. On assessment of the client, the nurse notes that the client is disoriented. What is the **best** nursing action based on this information?

1. Apply restraints to the client.
2. Ask the family to stay with the client.
3. Place a clock and calendar in the client's room.
4. Ask the laboratory to perform electrolyte studies.

998. The nurse is preparing a plan of care for a client in skin traction. The nurse should monitor for which **priority** finding in this client?

1. Urinary incontinence
2. Signs of skin breakdown

3. The presence of bowel sounds
4. Signs of infection around the pin sites

**999.** The home care nurse is visiting a client who is in a body cast. While performing an assessment, the nurse plans to evaluate the psychosocial adjustment of the client to the cast. What is the **most appropriate** assessment for this client?

1. The need for sensory stimulation
2. The amount of home care support available
3. The ability to perform activities of daily living
4. The type of transportation available for follow-up care

**1000.** What action should the nurse consider when counseling a client of the Amish tradition?

1. Speak only to the husband.
2. Use complex medical terminology.
3. Avoid using scientific or medical jargon.
4. Stand close to the client and speak loudly.

**1001.** A client has refused to eat more than a few spoonfuls of breakfast. The health care provider has prescribed that tube feedings be initiated if the client fails to eat at least half of a meal because the client had been losing weight for the previous 2 months. The nurse enters the room, looks at the tray, and states, “If you don’t eat any more than that, I’m going to have to put a tube down your throat and get a feeding in that way.” The client begins crying and tries to eat more. Based on the

nurse's actions, the nurse may be accused of which violation?

1. Assault
2. Battery
3. Slander
4. Invasion of privacy

**1002.** When making assignments to a team consisting of a registered nurse (RN), one licensed practical nurse (LPN), and two unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP), which is the **best** client for the LPN?

1. A client requiring frequent temperature checks
2. A client requiring assistance with ambulation every 4 hours
3. A client on a mechanical ventilator requiring frequent assessment and suctioning
4. A client with a spinal cord injury requiring urinary catheterization every 6 hours as prescribed

**1003.** To perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the nurse should use this method to open the airway in which situation? **Refer to figure.** ❖



(From Harkreader H, Hogan MA, Thobaben M: *Fundamentals of nursing: Caring*

*and clinical judgment*, ed 3, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders)

1. If neck trauma is suspected
2. In all situations requiring CPR
3. If the client has a history of seizures
4. If the client has a history of headaches

**1004.** The nurse teaches skin care to a client receiving external radiation therapy. Which client statement indicates the **need for further instruction**?

1. "I will handle the area gently."
2. "I will wear loose-fitting clothing."
3. "I will avoid the use of deodorants."
4. "I will limit sun exposure to 1 hour daily."

**1005.** The health care provider's prescription reads levothyroxine (Synthroid), 150 mcg orally daily. The medication label reads Synthroid, 0.1 mg per tablet. The nurse should administer how many tablet(s) to the client? **Fill in the blank.** ❖

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ tablet(s)

**1006.** Metformin (Glucophage) is prescribed for a client with type 2 diabetes mellitus. What is the **most** common side effect that the nurse should include in the client's teaching plan?

1. Weight gain
2. Hypoglycemia

3. Flushing and palpitations
4. Gastrointestinal disturbances

**1007.** Which nursing actions apply to the care of a child who is having a seizure? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Time the seizure.
2. Restrain the child.
3. Stay with the child.
4. Insert an oral airway.
5. Place the child in a lateral side-lying position.
6. Loosen clothing around the child's neck.

**1008.** The nurse is conducting an interview of a 60-year-old client and is concerned about the possibility of benign prostatic hyperplasia. Which are characteristics of this disorder? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Nocturia
2. Incontinence
3. Enlarged prostate
4. Nocturnal emissions
5. Decreased desire for sexual intercourse

**1009.** The nursing instructor asks a nursing student to identify the priorities of care for an assigned client. Which statement indicates that the student correctly identifies the **priority** client needs?

1. Actual or life-threatening concerns are the priority.
2. Completing care in a reasonable time frame is the priority.
3. Time constraints related to the client's needs are the priority.
4. Obtaining needed supplies to care for the client is the priority.

**1010.** A client arrives at the clinic complaining of fatigue, lack of energy, constipation, and depression. Hypothyroidism is diagnosed, and levothyroxine (Synthroid) is prescribed. What is an expected outcome of the medication?

1. Alleviate depression
2. Increase energy levels
3. Increase blood glucose levels
4. Achieve normal thyroid hormone levels

**1011.** The community health nurse is preparing a poster for an educational session for a group of women and will be discussing the risk factors associated with breast cancer. Which risk factors for breast cancer should the nurse list on the poster?

**Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Multiparity
2. Early menarche
3. Early menopause
4. Family history of breast cancer
5. High-dose radiation exposure to chest
6. Previous cancer of the breast, uterus, or ovaries

**1012.** The nurse is caring for a client with acute pancreatitis and is monitoring the client for paralytic ileus. Which assessment data should alert the nurse to this occurrence?

1. Inability to pass flatus
2. Loss of anal sphincter control
3. Severe, constant pain with rapid onset
4. Firm, nontender mass palpable at the lower right costal margin

**1013.** The nurse inspects the color of the drainage from a nasogastric tube on a postoperative client approximately 24 hours after gastric surgery. Which finding indicates the need to notify the health care provider?

1. Dark red drainage
2. Dark brown drainage
3. Green-tinged drainage
4. Light yellowish brown drainage

**1014.** The nurse is preparing to discontinue a client's nasogastric tube. The client is positioned properly, and the tube has been flushed with 15 mL of air to clear secretions. Before removing the tube, the nurse should make which statement to the client?

1. "Take a deep breath when I tell you and hold it while I remove the tube."
2. "Take a deep breath when I tell you and bear down while I remove the tube."
3. "Take a deep breath when I tell you and slowly exhale while I remove the

tube.”

4. “Take a deep breath when I tell you and breathe normally while I remove the tube.”

**1015.** A client with a history of lung disease is at risk for developing respiratory acidosis. The nurse should assess the client for which signs and symptoms characteristic of this disorder?

1. Bradycardia and hyperactivity
2. Decreased respiratory rate and depth
3. Headache, restlessness, and confusion
4. Bradypnea, dizziness, and paresthesias

**1016.** The nurse is caring for a client with a resolved intestinal obstruction who has a nasogastric tube in place. The client has tolerated the tube being clamped every 2 hours for 1 hour. The health care provider has now prescribed that the nasogastric tube be removed. What is the **priority** nursing assessment prior to removing the tube?

1. Checking for normal serum electrolyte levels
2. Checking for normal pH of the gastric aspirate
3. Checking for proper nasogastric tube placement
4. Checking for the presence of bowel sounds in all four quadrants

**1017.** The nurse has administered approximately half of an enema solution to a preoperative client when the client complains of pain and cramping. Which

nursing action is **most appropriate** at this time?

1. Reassure the client and continue the flow.
2. Raise the enema bag so that the solution can be instilled quickly.
3. Discontinue the enema and notify the health care provider (HCP).
4. Clamp the tubing for 30 seconds and restart the flow at a slower rate.

**1018.** A client experiencing a great deal of stress and anxiety is being taught to use self-control therapy. Which statement by the client indicates a **need for further teaching** about the therapy?

1. "This form of therapy can be applied to new situations."
2. "An advantage of this technique is that change is likely to last."
3. "Talking to oneself is a basic component of this form of therapy."
4. "This form of therapy provides a negative reinforcement when the stimulus is produced."

**1019.** The nurse is preparing a list of home care instructions regarding stoma and laryngectomy care to a client with laryngeal cancer who had a laryngectomy.

Which instructions should be included in the list? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Restrict fluid intake.
2. Obtain a Medic-Alert bracelet.
3. Keep the humidity in the home low.
4. Prevent debris from entering the stoma.
5. Avoid exposure to people with infections.

6. Avoid swimming and use care when showering.

**1020.** The health care provider prescribes 2000 mL of 5% dextrose and half-normal saline to infuse over 24 hours. The drop factor is 15 drops (gtt)/1 mL. The nurse should set the flow rate at how many drops per minute? **Fill in the blank. Record your answer to the nearest whole number.** ❖

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ gtt/minute

**1021.** A client is returned to the nursing unit after thoracic surgery with chest tubes in place. During the first few hours postoperatively, what type of drainage should the nurse expect?

1. Serous
2. Bloody
3. Serosanguineous
4. Bloody, with frequent small clots

**1022.** A client has had radical neck dissection and begins to hemorrhage at the incision site. The nurse should take which actions in this situation? **Select all that apply.**



1. Monitor vital signs.
2. Monitor the client's airway.
3. Apply manual pressure over the site.
4. Lower the head of the bed to a flat position.
5. Call the health care provider (HCP) immediately.

**1023.** A sexually active 20-year-old client has developed viral hepatitis. Which client statement indicates the **need for further teaching**?

1. "I should avoid drinking alcohol."
2. "I can go back to work right away."
3. "My partner should get the vaccine."
4. "A condom should be used for sexual intercourse."

**1024.** The nurse should include which interventions in the plan of care for a client with hypothyroidism? **Select all that apply.** ❖

1. Provide a cool environment for the client.
2. Instruct the client to consume a high-fat diet.
3. Instruct the client about thyroid replacement therapy.
4. Encourage the client to consume fluids and high-fiber foods in the diet.
5. Inform the client that iodine preparations will be prescribed to treat the disorder.
6. Instruct the client to contact the health care provider (HCP) if episodes of chest pain occur.

**1025.** The nurse is preparing to care for a client who will be weaned from a cuffed tracheostomy tube. The nurse is planning to use a tracheostomy plug and plans to insert it into the opening in the outer cannula. Which nursing action is required before plugging the tube?

1. Deflate the cuff on the tube.

2. Place the inner cannula into the tube.
3. Ensure that the client is able to speak.
4. Ensure that the client is able to swallow.

**1026.** A client is diagnosed with glaucoma. Which nursing assessment data identifies a risk factor associated with this eye disorder?

1. Cardiovascular disease
2. Frequent urinary tract infections
3. A history of migraine headaches
4. Frequent upper respiratory infections

**1027.** A client with retinal detachment is admitted to the nursing unit in preparation for a scleral buckling procedure. Which prescription should the nurse anticipate?

1. Allowing bathroom privileges only
2. Elevating the head of the bed to 45 degrees
3. Wearing dark glasses to read or watch television
4. Placing an eye patch over the client's affected eye

**1028.** The nurse is caring for a client who is on strict bed rest and develops a plan of care with goals related to the prevention of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary emboli. Which nursing action is **most** helpful in preventing these disorders from developing?

1. Restricting fluids
2. Placing a pillow under the knees

3. Encouraging active range-of-motion exercises
4. Applying a heating pad to the lower extremities

**1029.** The nurse is caring for a client who is at risk for suicide. What is the **priority** nursing action for this client?

1. Provide authority, action, and participation.
2. Display an attitude of detachment, confrontation, and efficiency.
3. Demonstrate confidence in the client's ability to deal with stressors.
4. Provide hope and reassurance that the problems will resolve themselves.

**1030.** A client with tuberculosis whose status is being monitored in an ambulatory care clinic asks the nurse when it is permissible to return to work. What factor should the nurse include when responding to the client?

1. Five blood cultures are negative.
2. Three sputum cultures are negative.
3. A blood culture and a chest x-ray are negative.
4. A sputum culture and a Mantoux test are negative.

**1031.** A client comes to the emergency department after an assault and is extremely agitated, trembling, and hyperventilating. What is the **priority** nursing action for this client?

1. Begin to teach relaxation techniques.
2. Encourage the client to discuss the assault.
3. Remain with the client until the anxiety decreases.

4. Place the client in a quiet room alone to decrease stimulation.

**1032.** The nurse is caring for a client admitted to the hospital with a suspected diagnosis of acute appendicitis. Which laboratory result should the nurse expect to note if the client does have appendicitis?

1. Leukopenia with a shift to the left
2. Leukocytosis with a shift to the left
3. Leukopenia with a shift to the right
4. Leukocytosis with a shift to the right

**1033.** The nurse is developing a plan of care for a client who was experiencing anxiety after the loss of a job. The client is now verbalizing concerns regarding the ability to meet role expectations and financial obligations. What is the **priority** nursing problem for this client?

1. Anxiety
2. Unrealistic outlook
3. Lack of ability to cope effectively
4. Disturbances in thoughts and ideas

**1034.** The nurse is monitoring the chest tube drainage system in a client with a chest tube. The nurse notes intermittent bubbling in the water seal chamber. Which is the **most appropriate** nursing action?

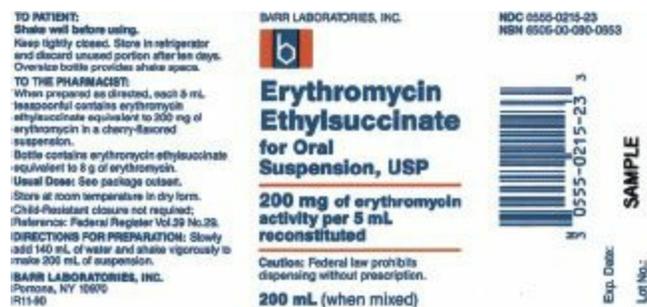
1. Check for an air leak.
2. Document the findings.

3. Notify the health care provider.
4. Change the chest tube drainage system.

**1035.** After performing an initial abdominal assessment on a client with a diagnosis of cholelithiasis, the nurse documents that the bowel sounds are normal. Which description **best** describes “normal bowel sounds”?

1. Waves of loud gurgles auscultated in all four quadrants
2. Low-pitched swishing auscultated in one or two quadrants
3. Relatively high-pitched clicks or gurgles auscultated in all four quadrants
4. Very high-pitched loud rushes auscultated especially in one or two quadrants

**1036.** The health care provider prescribes erythromycin suspension (erythromycin ethylsuccinate), 800 mg by mouth twice daily. After reconstitution, how many milliliters should the nurse pour into the medicine cup to deliver the prescribed dose? **Refer to figure. Fill in the blank.** ❖



(From Brown M, Mulholland J: *Drug calculations: Ratio and proportion: Problems for clinical practice*, ed 9, St. Louis, 2012, Saunders)

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ mL

# ANSWERS

**962. 3**

**Rationale:** Whenever an abused client remains in the abusive environment, priority must be placed on ascertaining whether the client is in any immediate danger. If so, emergency action must be taken to remove the client from the abusing situation. Options 1, 2, and 4 may be appropriate interventions, but are not the priority.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory**, remembering that if a physiological need is not present, safety is the priority. This will direct you to the correct option, the only one that directly addresses client safety.

**Review:** Care of the client who is a victim of **physical abuse**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Interpersonal Violence; Safety

**Reference:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 532.

**963. 4**

**Rationale:** Mania is a mood characterized by excitement, euphoria, hyperactivity, excessive energy, decreased need for sleep, and impaired ability to concentrate or complete a single train of thought. The client's mood is predominantly elevated, expansive, or irritable. All of the options reflect a client's possible symptoms. The correct option clearly presents a problem, however, that compromises physiological integrity and needs to be addressed immediately.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *immediate* and use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** to assist you in answering the question. The correct option is the only one that reflects a physiological need.

**Review:** Care of the client with **mania**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Psychosis; Safety

**Reference:** Varcarolis (2013), pp. 287, 290.

### 964. 3

**Rationale:** Clients who are admitted involuntarily do not lose their right to informed consent. Clients must be considered legally competent until they have been declared incompetent through a legal proceeding. The best determination for the nurse to make is to obtain the informed consent from the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, informed consent. Knowledge regarding the hospital admission processes and client's rights will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Client rights** and **informed consent**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Health Care Law

**References:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), pp. 4-5, 619; Stuart (2013), p. 597.

**965. 3**

**Rationale:** Glucagon is used to treat hypoglycemia resulting from insulin overdose. The family of the client is instructed in how to administer the medication. In an unconscious client, arousal usually occurs within 20 minutes of glucagon injection. When consciousness has been regained, oral carbohydrates should be given. Lipoatrophy and lipohypertrophy result from insulin injections.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the purpose of this medication. Noting the word *glucagon* will assist in determining that the medication contains some form of *glucose*. This relationship will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The purpose of **glucagon**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 938.

**966. 3**

**Rationale:** In the Puerto Rican–American culture, loud crying and other physical manifestations of grief are considered socially acceptable. Of the options provided, the correct option is the only one that identifies a culturally sensitive approach on the part of the nurse. Options 1, 2, and 4 are inappropriate nursing interventions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the clients of the question, the

family members. Use therapeutic nursing interventions, recalling the characteristics of the culture and the importance of cultural sensitivity. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The nurse's role and responsibilities regarding **cultural awareness**.

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Culture; Family Dynamics

**References:** Giger (2013), p. 582; Lewis et al (2011), p. 158.

**967. 1**

**Rationale:** The priority nursing action is to assess the vital signs. This would indicate the amount of blood loss that has occurred and provide a baseline by which to monitor the progress of treatment. The client may be unable to provide subjective data until the immediate physical needs are met. Although an abdominal examination and an assessment of the precipitating events may be necessary, these actions are not the priority. Insertion of a nasogastric tube is not the priority; in addition, the vital signs should be checked before performing this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority* and use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. This will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care for the client with **gastrointestinal bleeding**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1227-1228.

**968. 1**

**Rationale:** The clinical picture of dementia ranges from mild cognitive deficits to severe, life-threatening alterations in neurological functioning. For the client to use confabulation or the fabrication of events or experiences to fill in memory gaps is not unusual. Often, lack of inhibitions on the part of the client may constitute the first indication of something being “wrong” to the client’s significant others (e.g., the client may undress in front of others, or the formerly well-mannered client may exhibit slovenly table manners). As the dementia progresses, the client will have difficulty sleeping and episodes of wandering or sundowning.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the client’s diagnosis and note the **subject**, a manifestation. Think about the characteristics of dementia to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Manifestations associated with **dementia**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Cognition; Safety

**Reference:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), p. 371.

**969. 3**

**Rationale:** Clients with anorexia nervosa have the desire to please others. Their need to be correct or perfect interferes with rational decision-making processes. These clients are moralistic. Rules and rituals help these clients

manage their anxiety.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, managing anxiety. Eliminate options 2 and 4 because of the **closed-ended word** *always*. Option 1 is not characteristic of a client with anorexia.

**Review:** Care for the client with **anorexia nervosa**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Coping

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), p. 483.

### 970. 3

**Rationale:** Iron is needed to allow for transfer of adequate iron to the fetus and to permit expansion of the maternal red blood cell mass. During pregnancy, the relative excess of plasma causes a decrease in the hemoglobin concentration and hematocrit, known as *physiological anemia of pregnancy*. This is a normal adaptation during pregnancy. Iron is best absorbed if taken on an empty stomach. Iron supplements usually cause constipation. Meats are an excellent source of iron. The client needs to take the iron supplements regardless of food intake.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, iron supplementation during pregnancy. Focus on the words *understanding of the instructions*. Knowledge of basic principles related to nutrition during pregnancy will assist in eliminating options 2 and 4. From the remaining options, remember that iron causes constipation.

**Review:** Client teaching points related to **iron** supplementation

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 285.

### 971. 3

**Rationale:** Levothyroxine (Synthroid) accelerates the degradation of vitamin K–dependent clotting factors. As a result, the effects of warfarin (Coumadin) are enhanced. If thyroid hormone replacement therapy is instituted in a client who has been taking warfarin, the dosage of warfarin should be reduced.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the use of levothyroxine (Synthroid) concurrently with warfarin (Coumadin). Recalling that levothyroxine enhances the effects of warfarin will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Levothyroxine (Synthroid)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Collaboration; Safety

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 747-748.

### 972. 4

**Rationale:** The client should use the positions outlined in options 1, 2, and 3. These allow for maximal chest expansion. The client should not lie on the back because it reduces movement of a large area of the client's chest wall. Sitting is better than standing, whenever possible. If no chair is available, leaning against a wall while standing

allows accessory muscles to be used for breathing and not posture control.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the positions to avoid that could aggravate breathing. Also, note that options 1, 2, and 3 are **comparable or alike** in that they all address upright positions.

**Review:** Client teaching points related to **emphysema**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 618.

#### 973. 4

**Rationale:** A client undergoing lumbar puncture is positioned lying on the side, with the legs pulled up to the abdomen and the head bent down onto the chest. This position helps open the spaces between the vertebrae and allows for easier needle insertion by the health care provider. The nurse remains with the client during the procedure to help the client maintain this position. The other options identify incorrect positions for this procedure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, lumbar puncture. Recalling that a lumbar puncture is the introduction of a needle into the subarachnoid space will direct you to the correct option. It is reasonable that the position of the client must facilitate this, and the correct option is the only position that flexes the vertebrae and widens the spaces between them.

**Review:** Care of the client undergoing **lumbar puncture (LP)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1419, 1421.

**974. 3**

**Rationale:** Maintaining effective and open communication among family members affected by death and grief is of the greatest importance. Option 1 describes encouraging discussion of feelings and is likely to enhance communications. Option 2 is also an effective intervention because spiritual practices give meaning to life and have an impact on how people react to crisis. Option 4 is also an effective technique because the client and family need to know that someone will be there who is supportive and nonjudgmental. The correct option describes the nurse removing autonomy and decision-making from the client and family, who are already experiencing feelings of loss of control in that they cannot change the process of dying. This is an ineffective intervention, which could impair communication further.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the intervention that is unlikely to facilitate effective communication.

Use of **therapeutic communication techniques** and focusing on the **subject** will assist in answering correctly.

Also, understanding that people in crisis usually feel helpless and unable to control their circumstances can assist in identifying the correct option as a response that further removes control.

**Review:** **Therapeutic communication techniques**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Caring

***Content Area:*** Developmental Stages—End-of-Life Care

***Priority Concepts:*** Caregiving; Family Dynamics

***Reference:*** Lewis et al (2011), p. 161.

**975. 3**

***Rationale:*** Feelings of low self-esteem and worthlessness are common symptoms of a depressed client. An effective plan of care to enhance the client's personal self-esteem is to provide experiences for the client that are challenging, but that will not be met with failure. Reminders of the client's past accomplishments or personal successes are ways to interrupt the client's negative self-talk and distorted cognitive view of self. Options 1 and 2 give advice and devalue the client's feelings. Silence may be interpreted as agreement.

***Test-Taking Strategy:*** Use **therapeutic communication techniques** and focus on the client's diagnosis. You can eliminate options 1 and 2 easily because they are nontherapeutic. From the remaining options, focusing on the client's diagnosis will direct you to the correct option.

***Review:*** Care of the client with **depression**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Applying

***Client Needs:*** Psychosocial Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Implementation

***Content Area:*** Mental Health

***Priority Concepts:*** Coping; Mood and Affect

***Reference:*** Stuart (2013), pp. 266-267.

❖ **976. 1, 2, 3**

**Rationale:** Use of proper positions promotes venous drainage from the cranium to keep intracranial pressure from elevating. The head of the client at risk for or with increased intracranial pressure should be positioned so that the head is in a neutral, midline position. The head of the bed should be raised to 30 to 45 degrees. The nurse should avoid flexing or extending the neck or turning the head from side to side.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the client with increased intracranial pressure. Visualize each of the positions identified in the options and identify those that will promote venous drainage from the cranium.

**Review:** Care of the client with **increased intracranial pressure**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1436-1437.

**977. 3**

**Rationale:** The normal pH is 7.35 to 7.45. Normal PCO<sub>2</sub> is 35 to 45 mm Hg. In respiratory acidosis, the pH is low and PCO<sub>2</sub> is elevated. Options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect interpretations of the values identified in the question.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interpretation of arterial blood gas (ABG) levels. Remember that in a respiratory imbalance you will find an opposite response between the pH and PCO<sub>2</sub>. Also, remember that the pH is low in an acidotic condition. Recalling this information will allow you to eliminate each of the incorrect options.

**Review:** Interpretation of **arterial blood gas (ABG) results**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 203, 205.

**978. 1**

**Rationale:** The client's operative arm should be positioned so that it is elevated on a pillow and not exceeding shoulder elevation. This position promotes optimal drainage from the limb, without impairing the circulation to the arm. If the arm is positioned flat (option 2) or dependent (option 3), this could increase the edema in the arm, which is contraindicated because of lymphatic disruption caused by surgery.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the client following mastectomy. Read each option carefully and attempt to visualize the position identified in the option. Using the principles of circulation and gravity will direct you to the correct option. The correct option avoids the two extremes of height (dependent, above shoulder level) in positioning the limb affected by surgery.

**Review:** Care of the client who has undergone **mastectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Perfusion; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1602.

979. 4

**Rationale:** A client with a urinary tract infection must be encouraged to take the medication for the entire time it is prescribed. The client should also be instructed to drink at least 3000 mL of fluid each day to flush the infection from the bladder and to urinate frequently throughout the day. Foods and fluids that acidify the urine need to be encouraged.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Recall that foods and fluids that acidify the urine should be consumed, rather than foods and fluids that cause urine alkalinity.

**Review:** Nursing considerations for a client with **urinary tract infection**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Postpartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 730-732, 834.

**980. 3**

**Rationale:** Humulin N is an intermediate-acting insulin. The onset of action is 1.5 hours, it peaks in 4 to 12 hours, and the duration of action is 16 to 24 hours. Hypoglycemic reactions most likely occur during peak time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, characteristics of Humulin N insulin, and use knowledge regarding the onset, peak, and duration of action. Recalling that it is an intermediate-acting insulin and recalling that peak action is between 4 and 12 hours will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Characteristics of **Humulin N insulin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Glucose Regulation; Safety

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1431; Lilley et al (2014), pp. 517, 519.

**981. 3**

**Rationale:** Priority nursing care in disaster situations needs to be delivered to the living and not the dead. The child who is bleeding badly is the priority. The bleeding could be from an arterial vessel; if the bleeding is not stopped, the child is at risk for shock and death. The pregnant client is the next priority, but the absence of fetal movement may or may not be indicative of fetal demise. The 2-year-old is with a family member and is safe at this time. The 88-year-old woman will need comfort measures; there is no information indicating she is physically hurt.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *first*. Use **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory** when answering this question. Physical before psychosocial and use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**. Bleeding is the priority.

**Review:** **Disasters** and **triage**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Synthesizing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Disasters

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 157-158.

### ❖ 982. 3

**Rationale:** Rubella virus is spread by aerosol droplet transmission through the upper respiratory tract and has an incubation period of 14 to 21 days. The risks of maternal and subsequent fetal infection during the second trimester include hearing loss and congenital anomalies; these risks decrease after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Rubella titer determination is a standard antenatal test for pregnant women during their initial screening and entry into the health care delivery system. As noted in this client's chart, she is immune to rubella. The correct option is the only option that helps clarify maternal concerns with accurate information.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best* and recall knowledge regarding the transmission of rubella virus to the fetus. Also, use of **therapeutic communication techniques** will direct you to the correct option. The correct option addresses the client's concerns.

**Review:** **Rubella** in pregnancy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Immunity; Safety

**References:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 163; McKinney et al (2013), pp. 30-31.

**983. 3**

**Rationale:** Breast-feeding mothers with lactose-intolerant infants need to be encouraged to limit dairy products.

Cheese is a dairy product. Alternative calcium sources that can be consumed by the mother include egg yolk, dried beans, green leafy vegetables, cauliflower, and molasses.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, foods to avoid during breast-feeding with a lactose-intolerant infant.

Knowledge that lactose is the sugar found in dairy products will easily direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Dietary management for an infant with **lactose intolerance**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Nutrition

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), pp. 315-316.

**984. 1**

**Rationale:** The nurse needs to be aware of the effective and ineffective coping mechanisms that can occur in a

client when loss is anticipated. The expression of anger is known to be a normal response to impending loss, and the anger may be directed toward the self, God or other spiritual being, or caregivers. Notifying the hospital lawyer is inappropriate. Guilt may or may not be a component of the client's feelings, and the data in the question do not indicate that guilt is present.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, psychosocial care of a client needing amputation. Focus on the data provided in the question. Note that the correct option and option 2 address coping mechanisms. This provides you with the clue that one of these options may be the correct response. In addition, knowledge of the stages of grief associated with loss will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Stages of **grief** and expected client responses

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Coping

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1165.

**985. 3**

**Rationale:** An autopsy is required by state law in certain circumstances, including the sudden death of a client and a death that occurs under suspicious circumstances. A client may have provided oral or written instructions regarding an autopsy after death. If an autopsy is not required by law, these oral or written requests will be granted. If no oral or written instructions were provided, state law determines who has the authority to consent for an autopsy. Most often, the decision rests with the surviving relative or next of kin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Use knowledge regarding the laws and

issues surrounding autopsy and **therapeutic communication techniques** to answer the question. Eliminate options 2 and 4 because these statements are not completely accurate and are not therapeutic in this situation. From the remaining options, the correct option is the therapeutic and appropriate response to the family.

**Review:** Issues and laws surrounding **autopsy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Caring

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—End-of-Life Care

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Law; Professionalism

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 301, 724.

**986. 2**

**Rationale:** The mode of perinatal transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to the fetus or neonate of an HIV-positive woman can occur during the antenatal, intrapartal, or postpartum period. HIV transmission can occur during breast-feeding. HIV-positive clients should be encouraged to bottle-feed their infants per the health care provider's prescription. Frequent hand-washing is encouraged. Support groups and community agencies can be identified to assist the parents with the newborn infant's home care, the impact of the diagnosis of HIV infection, and available financial resources. It is recommended that infants of HIV-positive clients receive antiviral medications for the first 6 weeks of life.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction* in the question. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Recalling the methods of transmission of HIV and that breast-feeding is discouraged in the HIV-positive woman will direct you to the correct

option.

**Review:** Home care measures for the client with **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 608.

**987. 4**

**Rationale:** If the adolescent wears contact lenses, he or she should be instructed to discontinue wearing them until the infection has cleared completely. Obtaining new contact lenses would eliminate the chance of reinfection from contaminated contact lenses and would lessen the risk of a corneal ulceration.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further information* in the question. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Options 1, 2, and 3 are **comparable or alike** in that they relate to avoiding the use of contact lenses during infection.

**Review:** Treatment measures for **conjunctivitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Child Health—Eye/Ear

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Infection

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2011), pp. 616-617, 934; Potter et al (2013), p. 511.

**988. 3**

**Rationale:** An insulin vial in current use can be kept at room temperature for 1 month without significant loss of activity. Direct sunlight and heat must be avoided. Therefore, options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, client understanding of discharge instructions related to storage of insulin.

Noting the **closed-ended word** *only* in option 1 and *at all times* in option 2 will assist in eliminating these options.

Recalling that direct sunlight and heat need to be avoided will assist you in eliminating option 4.

**Review:** Concepts related to **insulin**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 783.

**989. 4**

**Rationale:** Based on the location of the surgical procedure, spinal anesthesia would not be used. In addition, the hair would not be shaved. Although ambulating is important, specific to this procedure is avoiding brushing the teeth to prevent disruption of the surgical site.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Consider the anatomical location and the surgical procedure itself to eliminate options 1 and 2. Although you may be tempted to select option 3, note the **strategic words** *most important*. Because of the anatomical location of the surgery, the action in the correct option is most important.

**Review:** **Transphenoidal hypophysectomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Safety; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1377.

**990. 4**

**Rationale:** Fresh fruits and vegetables provide vitamins and minerals needed for healthy gums. Drinking water with meals has no direct effect on gums. Cracked wheat bread may abrade the tender gums. Eating saltine crackers can also abrade the tender gums.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject** of the question, dental health during pregnancy. Eliminate options 2 and 3 first because these measures could irritate fragile gums. From the remaining options, eliminate option 1 by remembering that drinking water with meals has no direct effect on gums and does not provide needed vitamins and minerals.

**Review:** Measures to promote dental health during **pregnancy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Antepartum

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Nutrition

**Reference:** Lowdermilk et al (2012), p. 346.

**991. 3**

**Rationale:** Radiation therapy is usually delayed until a child is 8 years old, whenever possible, to prevent retardation of bone growth and soft tissue development. Options 1, 2, and 4 are inappropriate responses to the mother and place the mother's question on hold.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, effects of radiation therapy, and the age of the child. In addition, use **therapeutic communication techniques** and knowledge regarding the effects of radiation to answer this question. Options 1, 2, and 4 are nontherapeutic and place the mother's inquiry on hold. Also use the child's age as a guide in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Effects of **radiation therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Oncological

**Priority Concepts:** Development; Safety

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1270-1271.

**992. 2**

**Rationale:** A fresh colostomy stoma would be red and edematous, but this would decrease with time. The colostomy site then becomes pink without evidence of abnormal drainage, swelling, or skin breakdown. The nurse should document these findings because this is a normal expectation. Options 1, 3, and 4 are inappropriate and unnecessary interventions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, postoperative colostomy assessment. Note the words *returns from*

*surgery.* The nurse should expect redness and edema at this time.

**Review:** Postoperative **colostomy** assessment

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Tissue Integrity

**References:** Hockenberry, Wilson (2013), pp. 811-812; Perry, Potter, Elkin (2012), pp. 481-482.

### 993. 3

**Rationale:** Low or oddly placed ears are associated with various congenital defects and should be reported immediately. Although the findings should be documented, the most appropriate action would be to notify the health care provider. Options 2 and 4 are inaccurate and inappropriate nursing actions.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *most appropriate*. Focus on the **subject**, normal assessment findings in a newborn. Use knowledge regarding the normal assessment findings in a newborn infant to answer this question. Recalling that low-set ears are an abnormal finding will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Normal assessment findings in a **newborn**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Maternity—Newborn

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Development

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 481.

994. 1

**Rationale:** Jaundice, if present, is best assessed in the sclera, nail beds, and mucous membranes. Generalized jaundice appears in the skin throughout the body. Option 3 is an inappropriate area to assess for the presence of jaundice.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best* in the question. Options 2 and 3 can be eliminated first because jaundice present in the skin is known as generalized jaundice. From the remaining options, recalling that skin discoloration can best be assessed in the nail beds will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Assessment findings related to **jaundice**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Child Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Perfusion

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), p. 1109.

995. 2

**Rationale:** To achieve proper traction, weights need to be free-hanging, with knots kept away from the pulleys. Weights should not be kept resting on a firm surface. The head of the bed is usually kept low to provide countertraction.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care for a client in traction. Attempt to visualize the traction, recalling that there must be weight to exert the pull from the traction setup. This concept will assist in eliminating options 1 and 4. Recalling that countertraction is needed will assist in eliminating option 3.

**Review:** Care for a client in **traction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1154.

❖ 996. 1, 2, 4

**Rationale:** When preparing the physical environment for an interview, the nurse should set the room temperature at a comfortable level. The nurse should provide sufficient lighting for the client and nurse to see each other. The nurse should avoid having the client face a strong light because the client would have to squint into the full light. Distracting objects and equipment should be removed from the interview area. The nurse should arrange seating so that the nurse and client are seated comfortably at eye level, and the nurse avoids facing the client across a desk or table because this creates a barrier. The distance between the nurse and the client should be set by the nurse at 4 to 5 feet. If the nurse places the client any closer, the nurse will be invading the client's private space and may create anxiety in the client. If the nurse places the client farther away, the nurse may be seen as distant and aloof by the client.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, interviewing techniques. Read each intervention carefully. Use the guidelines for preparing the physical environment for conducting an interview to select the appropriate interventions.

**Review:** Guidelines for client **interview**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Developmental Stages—Health Assessment/Physical Exam

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), pp. 2, 29.

**997. 3**

**Rationale:** An inactive older adult may become disoriented because of lack of sensory stimulation. The most appropriate nursing intervention would be to reorient the client frequently and to place objects such as a clock and a calendar in the client's room to maintain orientation. Restraints may cause further disorientation and should not be applied unless specifically prescribed; agency policies and procedures should be followed before the application of restraints. The family can assist with orientation of the client, but it is inappropriate to ask the family to stay with the client. It is not within the scope of nursing practice to prescribe laboratory studies.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best* and eliminate option 4 first because it is not within the realm of nursing practice to prescribe laboratory studies. Next, eliminate option 1 because restraints may add to the disorientation that the client is experiencing. It is inappropriate to place the responsibility of the client on the family, so eliminate option 2. Also, note the relationship between the words *disoriented* in the question and the implications of reorientation in the correct option.

**Review:** Care for the client with **disorientation**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Cognition; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1532, 1584.

**998. 2**

**Rationale:** Skin traction is achieved by Ace wraps, boots, and slings that apply a direct force on the client's skin.

Traction is maintained with 5 to 8 lb of weight, and this type of traction can cause skin breakdown. Urinary incontinence is not related to the use of skin traction. Although constipation can occur as a result of immobility and monitoring bowel sounds may be a component of the assessment, this intervention is not the priority assessment.

There are no pin sites with skin traction.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Eliminate option 4 first because there are no pin sites with skin traction. Visualizing the traction setup and knowledge of the complications associated with this type of traction will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Complications associated with **skin traction**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1153.

**999. 1**

**Rationale:** A psychosocial assessment of a client who is immobilized would most appropriately include the need for sensory stimulation. This assessment should also include such factors as body image, past and present coping skills,

and coping methods used during the period of immobilization. Although home care support, the ability to perform activities of daily living, and transportation are components of an assessment, they are not as specifically related to psychosocial adjustment as is the need for sensory stimulation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic words** *most appropriate* and note the **subject**, psychosocial adjustment. Option 3 can be eliminated first because it relates to physiological integrity rather than psychosocial integrity. Next, eliminate options 2 and 4 because they are most closely related to physical supports, rather than psychosocial needs of the client.

**Review:** Components of a **psychosocial assessment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Musculoskeletal

**Priority Concepts:** Mobility; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 1601-1602.

### **1000. 3**

**Rationale:** Complex scientific or medical terminology should be avoided when counseling an Amish client (or any client). When counseling a female Amish client, most often the husband and wife will want to discuss health care options together. Standing close and speaking loudly is inappropriate in most counseling situations.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Use knowledge of the Amish society and **therapeutic communication techniques** to answer this question. Options 2 and 4 can be eliminated first because option 4 is inappropriate and option 2 is not a therapeutic intervention. In addition, note that options 2 and 3 are opposite, which may indicate that one of these options is correct. Option 1 can be eliminated because of Amish cultural habits.

**Review:** Cultural considerations in the care of the client who is **Amish**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Communication and Documentation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Cultural Awareness

**Priority Concepts:** Communication; Culture

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 102.

### **1001. 1**

**Rationale:** Assault occurs when a person puts another person in fear of harmful or offensive contact and the victim fears and believes that harm will result as a result of the threat. In this situation, the nurse could be accused of the tort of assault. Battery is the intentional touching of another's body without the person's consent. Slander is verbal communication that is false and harms the reputation of another. Invasion of privacy is committed when the nurse intrudes into the client's personal affairs or violates confidentiality.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, legal implications for nursing care. Focusing on the words used by the nurse and noting that the nurse threatens the client will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** **Legal** implications for the nurse in the care of clients and **assault**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Ethical/Legal

**Priority Concepts:** Ethics; Health Care Law

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 301.

#### 1002. 4

**Rationale:** When delegating nursing assignments, the nurse needs to consider the skills and educational level of the nursing staff. Frequent temperature checks and ambulation can most appropriately be provided by the UAP, considering the clients identified in each option. The client on the mechanical ventilator requiring frequent assessment and suctioning should most appropriately be cared for by the RN. The LPN is skilled in urinary catheterization, so the client in option 4 would be assigned to this staff member.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the principles related to delegations and assignments, and consider the education and job position as described by the nurse practice act and employee guidelines. Note the word *assessment* in option 3. This should alert you that this client should be assigned to the registered nurse. Options 1 and 2 can be eliminated because a UAP can perform these tasks.

**Review:** Principles related to **delegation** and **assignment-making**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Delegating

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Safety

**References:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 282-283; Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 530-531.

#### ❖ 1003. 1

**Rationale:** The jaw thrust without the head tilt maneuver is used when head or neck trauma is suspected. This maneuver opens the airway while maintaining proper head and neck alignment, reducing the risk of further damage

to the neck. Options 2, 3, and 4 are incorrect. In addition, it is unlikely that the nurse would be able to obtain data about the client's history.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the figure and note that it is a jaw-thrust maneuver. Eliminate option 2 because of the **closed-ended word** *all*. Noting that the client requires CPR and that the figure illustrates that the client's neck remains stable will assist in eliminating options 3 and 4.

**Review:** **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation** guidelines

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Critical Care—Basic Life Support/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1767.

#### 1004. 4

**Rationale:** The client needs to be instructed to avoid exposure to the sun. Because of the risk of altered skin integrity, options 1, 2, and 3 are accurate measures in the care of a client receiving external radiation therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further instruction*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is an incorrect statement. Eliminate option 1 because of the word *gently* and option 2 because of the word *loose*. From the remaining options, recalling that sun exposure is to be avoided will assist in answering the question.

**Review:** Skin care measures for the client receiving **external radiation therapy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Tissue Integrity

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 413.

❖ **1005. 1.5**

**Rationale:** It is necessary to convert 150 mcg to mg. In the metric system, to convert smaller to larger, divide by 1000 or move the decimal three places to the left: 150 mcg = 0.15 mg. Next, use the formula to calculate the correct dose.

$$\frac{\text{Desired}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Quantity}$$
$$\frac{0.15 \text{ mg}}{0.1 \text{ mg}} \times 1 \text{ tablet} = 1.5 \text{ tablets}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a medication calculation problem. In this medication calculation problem, it is necessary first to convert micrograms to milligrams. Next, use the formula to calculate the correct dose. Recheck your work using a calculator, and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review:** **Medication calculation** problems

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medication/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Quality; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 573-574.

**1006. 4**

**Rationale:** The most common side effect of metformin (Glucophage) is gastrointestinal disturbances, including decreased appetite, nausea, and diarrhea. These generally subside over time. This medication does not cause weight gain; clients lose an average of 7 to 8 lb because the medication causes nausea and decreased appetite. Although hypoglycemia can occur, it is not the most common side effect. Flushing and palpitations are not specifically associated with this medication.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. To answer correctly, it is necessary to recall that the most common side effect of metformin is gastrointestinal disturbances.

**Review:** Side effects of **metformin (Glucophage)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Glucose Regulation

**Reference:** Kee, Hayes, McCuiston (2012), p. 792.

❖ **1007. 1, 3, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** During a seizure, the child is placed on his or her side in a lateral position. Positioning on the side prevents aspiration because saliva drains out the corner of the child's mouth. The child is not restrained because this could cause injury to the child. The nurse should loosen clothing around the child's neck and ensure a patent airway. Nothing is placed in the child's mouth during a seizure because this could injure the child's mouth, gums, or teeth. The nurse should stay with the child to reduce the risk of injury and allow for observation and timing of the seizure.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the child experiencing seizures, and visualize this clinical

situation. Recalling that airway patency and safety are the priorities will assist in determining the correct interventions.

**Review:** Care of the child experiencing **seizures**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Child Health—Neurological

**Priority Concepts:** Intracranial Regulation; Safety

**Reference:** McKinney et al (2013), pp. 1435-1436.

❖ **1008. 1, 2, 3**

**Rationale:** Nocturia, incontinence, and an enlarged prostate are characteristics of BPH and need to be assessed for in all male clients over 50 years of age. Nocturnal emissions are commonly associated with prepubescent males. Low testosterone levels (not BPH) may be associated with a decreased desire for sexual intercourse.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, characteristics of BPH. Thinking about the pathophysiology associated with this disorder will assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** **Benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Reproductive

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Reproduction

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 1577-1578.

**1009. 1**

**Rationale:** Setting priorities means deciding which client needs or problems require immediate action and which can be delayed until a later time because they are not urgent. Client problems that involve actual or life-threatening concerns are always considered first. Although completing care in a reasonable time frame, time constraints, and obtaining needed supplies are components of time management, these items are not the priority in planning care for the client, based on the options provided.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. Recall the principles related to prioritizing to answer the question. Noting the words *life-threatening* in the correct option will assist in directing you to this option.

**Review:** **Prioritization** principles

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Leadership/Management—Prioritizing

**Priority Concepts:** Care Coordination; Clinical Judgment

**References:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 238, 838-840; Yoder-Wise (2011), pp. 565-567.

**1010. 4**

**Rationale:** Laboratory determinations of the serum thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) level are an important means of evaluation. Successful therapy causes elevated TSH levels to decline. These levels begin their decline within hours of the onset of therapy and continue to decrease as plasma levels of thyroid hormone build up. If an adequate dosage is administered, TSH levels remain suppressed for the duration of therapy. Although energy levels may increase and the client's mood may improve following effective treatment, these are not noted until normal

thyroid hormone levels are achieved with medication therapy. An increase in the blood glucose level is not associated with this condition.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, therapeutic effects of this medication. Note the words *expected outcome*. Relate the diagnosis of hypothyroidism with thyroid hormone levels in the correct option.

**Review:** Therapeutic effects of **levothyroxine (Synthroid)**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluation

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Evaluation

**Content Area:** Pharmacology—Endocrine Medications

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Functional Ability

**Reference:** Lehne (2013), pp. 747-748.

❖ **1011. 2, 4, 5, 6**

**Rationale:** Risk factors for breast cancer include nulliparity or first child born after age 30 years; early menarche; late menopause; family history of breast cancer; high-dose radiation exposure to the chest; and previous cancer of the breast, uterus, or ovaries.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the risk factors associated with breast cancer. Thinking about the physiology associated with the reproductive system and the most common causes of cancer will assist in answering the question.

**Review:** Risk factors associated with **breast cancer**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Health Promotion and Maintenance

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Cellular Regulation; Client Education

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1593; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1311.

### 1012. 1

**Rationale:** An inflammatory reaction such as acute pancreatitis can cause paralytic ileus, the most common form of nonmechanical obstruction. Inability to pass flatus is a clinical manifestation of paralytic ileus. Loss of sphincter control is not a sign of paralytic ileus. Pain is associated with paralytic ileus, but the pain usually manifests as a more constant generalized discomfort. Option 4 is the description of the physical finding of liver enlargement. The liver may be enlarged in cases of cirrhosis or hepatitis. Although this client may have an enlarged liver, an enlarged liver is not a sign of paralytic ileus or intestinal obstruction.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, clinical manifestations of paralytic ileus. Noting the word *paralytic* will assist in directing you to the correct option.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations of **paralytic ileus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1254.

### 1013. 1

**Rationale:** For the first 12 hours after gastric surgery, the nasogastric tube drainage may be dark brown to dark

red. Later, the drainage should change to a light yellowish brown color. The presence of bile may cause a green tinge. The health care provider (HCP) should be notified if dark red drainage, a sign of hemorrhage, is noted 24 hours postoperatively.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the need to notify the HCP. Recall that bleeding is a concern in the postoperative client. This concept will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Signs of postoperative complications following **gastric surgery**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Collaboration

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 290.

#### 1014. 1

**Rationale:** The client should take a deep breath because the client's airway will be temporarily obstructed during tube removal. The client is then told to hold the breath and the tube is withdrawn slowly and evenly over the course of 3 to 6 seconds (coil the tube around the hand while removing it) while the breath is held. Bearing down could inhibit the removal of the tube. Exhaling is not possible during removal because the airway is temporarily obstructed during removal. Breathing normally could result in aspiration of gastric secretions during inhalation.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for removal of a nasogastric tube, and attempt to visualize the process of tube removal to direct you to the correct option. Remember, holding the breath facilitates the process of removal.

**Review:** The procedure for removal of a **nasogastric tube**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 1112.

### 1015. 3

**Rationale:** When a client is experiencing respiratory acidosis, the respiratory rate and depth increase in an attempt to compensate. The client also experiences headache; restlessness; mental status changes, such as drowsiness and confusion; visual disturbances; diaphoresis; cyanosis as the hypoxia becomes more acute; hyperkalemia; rapid, irregular pulse; and dysrhythmias. Options 1, 2, and 4 are not specifically associated with this disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, clinical manifestations associated with respiratory acidosis, and use knowledge of the signs and symptoms of respiratory acidosis to answer this question. Eliminate options 2 and 4 first because they are **comparable or alike** and address a decreased respiratory rate. Remember that headache, restlessness, and confusion occur in respiratory acidosis.

**Review:** Clinical manifestations associated with **respiratory acidosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Acid-Base

**Priority Concepts:** Acid-Base Balance; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), pp. 203-204.

**1016. 4**

**Rationale:** Distention, vomiting, and abdominal pain are a few of the symptoms associated with intestinal obstruction. Nasogastric tubes may be used to remove gas and fluid from the stomach, relieving distention and vomiting. Bowel sounds return to normal as the obstruction is resolved and normal bowel function is restored. Discontinuing the nasogastric tube before normal bowel function may result in a return of the symptoms, necessitating reinsertion of the nasogastric tube. Serum electrolyte levels, pH of the gastric aspirate, and tube placement are important assessments for the client with a nasogastric tube in place, but would not assist in determining the readiness for removing the nasogastric tube.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 2 and 3 first because they are **comparable or alike**. Assessing the pH of the gastric aspirate is one method of assessing tube placement. From the remaining options, focus on the client's diagnosis to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with a **nasogastric tube**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 1119.

**1017. 4**

**Rationale:** The enema fluid should be administered slowly. If the client complains of fullness or pain, the flow is stopped for 30 seconds and restarted at a slower rate. Although client reassurance is important, continuing the flow is inappropriate. Slow enema administration and stopping the flow temporarily, if necessary, decrease the likelihood of intestinal spasm and premature ejection of the solution. The higher the solution container is held above the rectum, the faster the flow and the greater the force in the rectum; this could increase cramping. There is no need to discontinue the enema and notify the HCP at this time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Eliminate options 1 and 2 first because they are **comparable or alike**. From the remaining options, focusing on the **subject**, pain and cramping on enema administration, will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** The procedure for administering an **enema**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Elimination

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Elimination

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), p. 1113.

#### 1018. 4

**Rationale:** Negative reinforcement when the stimulus is produced is descriptive of aversion therapy. Options 1, 2, and 3 are characteristics of self-control therapy.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic words** *need for further teaching* in the question. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Think about the **subject**, self-control. This **subject** will assist in answering correctly.

**Review:** Self-control therapy

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Stress

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 225-226.

❖ 1019. 2, 4, 5, 6

**Rationale:** The nurse should teach the client how to care for the stoma, depending on the type of laryngectomy performed. Most interventions focus on protection of the stoma and the prevention of infection. Interventions include to obtain a Medic-Alert bracelet, to prevent debris from entering the stoma, to avoid exposure to people with infections, and to avoid swimming and use care when showering. Additional interventions include wearing a stoma guard or high-collared clothing to protect the stoma, increasing the humidity in the home, and increasing fluid intake to 3000 mL/day to keep the secretions thin.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, client instructions regarding stoma care. Recalling that most interventions focus on protection of the stoma and the prevention of infection will assist in identifying the client instructions for home care.

**Review:** Stoma care

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Oncology

**Priority Concepts:** Client Education; Gas Exchange

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 597; Lewis et al (2011), p. 542.

❖ **1020. 21**

**Rationale:** Use the intravenous flow rate formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total volume prescribed} \times \text{Drop factor}}{\text{Time in minutes}} = \text{gtt/minute}$$

$$\frac{2000 \text{ mL} \times 15 \text{ gtt/mL}}{1440 \text{ minutes}} = 20.8 \text{ gtt/minute} = 21 \text{ gtt/minute}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a medication calculation. Use the formula for calculating intravenous flow rates when answering the question. Verify the answer using a calculator, and be sure to round the answer to the nearest whole number.

**Review:** **Intravenous infusion rates**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Medication/IV Calculations

**Priority Concepts:** Health Care Quality; Safety

**Reference:** Potter et al (2013), pp. 925-926.

**1021. 2**

**Rationale:** In the first few hours after surgery, the drainage from the chest tube is bloody. After several hours, it becomes serosanguineous. The client should not experience frequent clotting. Proper chest tube function should allow for drainage of blood before it has the chance to clot in the chest or the tubing.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, expected findings after thoracic surgery. Recall that after thoracic surgery, there may be considerable capillary oozing for hours in the postoperative period. This will lead you to choose the bloody drainage option over the serous or serosanguineous drainage options. Knowing that patent chest tubes do not allow blood to collect in the pleural space, eliminates the option of blood with clots.

**Review:** Assessment measures for the client with a **chest tube**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 572.

❖ **1022. 1, 2, 3, 5**

**Rationale:** If the client begins to hemorrhage from the surgical site after radical neck dissection, the nurse elevates the head of the bed to maintain airway patency and prevent aspiration. The nurse applies pressure over the bleeding site and calls the HCP immediately. The nurse also monitors the client's airway and vital signs.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, nursing actions for hemorrhage, and on the client situation. Use the **ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation**—to assist in answering the question. Note that lowering the head of the bed to a flat position increases the client's risk for aspiration.

**Review:** Nursing actions if the client begins to **hemorrhage**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), pp. 538-540.

**1023. 2**

**Rationale:** To prevent transmission of hepatitis, vaccination of the partner is advised. In addition, a condom is advised during sexual intercourse. Alcohol should be avoided because it is detoxified in the liver and may interfere with recovery. Rest is especially important until laboratory studies show that liver function has returned to normal. The client's activity is increased gradually, and the client should not return to work right away.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **strategic words** *need for further teaching*. These words indicate a **negative event query** and ask you to select an option that is incorrect. Think about the pathophysiology associated with hepatitis to direct you to the incorrect client statement. Remember that rest is needed for the liver to heal.

**Review:** Client instructions regarding **hepatitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Evaluating

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Client Education

**References:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1304; Lewis et al (2011), p. 1068.

❖ **1024. 3, 4, 6**

**Rationale:** The clinical manifestations of hypothyroidism are the result of decreased metabolism from low levels of

thyroid hormone. Interventions are aimed at replacement of the hormone and providing measures to support the signs and symptoms related to decreased metabolism. The client often has cold intolerance and requires a warm environment. The nurse encourages the client to consume a well-balanced diet that is low in fat for weight reduction and high in fluids and high-fiber foods to prevent constipation. Iodine preparations may be used to treat hyperthyroidism. Iodine preparations decrease blood flow through the thyroid gland and reduce the production and release of thyroid hormone; they are not used to treat hypothyroidism. The client is instructed to notify the HCP if chest pain occurs because it could be an indication of overreplacement of thyroid hormone.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, hypothyroidism. Recalling the manifestations of this disorder and that in this disorder the client has a decreased metabolic rate will assist in determining the appropriate interventions.

**Review:** Interventions for the client with **hypothyroidism**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Endocrine

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Caregiving

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 1271.

## 1025. 1

**Rationale:** Plugging a tracheostomy tube is usually done by inserting the tracheostomy plug (decannulation stopper) into the opening of the outer cannula. This closes off the tracheostomy, and airflow and respiration occur normally through the nose and mouth. When plugging a cuffed tracheostomy tube, the cuff must be deflated. If it remains inflated, ventilation cannot occur, and respiratory arrest could result. A tracheostomy plug could not be placed in a tracheostomy if an inner cannula was in place. The ability to swallow or speak is unrelated to weaning and plugging

the tube.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, care of the client with a tracheostomy, and note the word *required* in the question. Think about the structure and function of a tracheostomy tube. Recalling that an inflated cuff would cause airway obstruction, will assist in directing you to the option that addresses a priority physiological need.

**Review:** Care of the client with a **tracheostomy**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Gas Exchange; Safety

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 535.

## 1026. 1

**Rationale:** Hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, and obesity are associated with the development of glaucoma. Options 2, 3, and 4 do not identify risk factors associated with this eye disorder.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, a risk factor associated with glaucoma. Recall that glaucoma is associated with increased pressure in the eye. This will assist to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Risk factors associated with **glaucoma**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Health Promotion; Sensory Perception

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 422.

**1027. 4**

**Rationale:** The nurse places an eye patch over the client's affected eye to reduce eye movement. Some clients may need bilateral patching. Depending on the location and size of the retinal break, activity restrictions may be needed immediately. These restrictions are necessary to prevent further tearing or detachment and to promote drainage of any subretinal fluid. Therefore, reading and watching television are not allowed. The client's position is prescribed by the health care provider; normally the client's prescription is to lie flat.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, retinal detachment. Remember that the eye needs to be protected and rested. This should direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Care of the client with **retinal detachment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Eye

**Priority Concepts:** Sensory Perception; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1069.

**1028. 3**

**Rationale:** Clients at greatest risk for deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary emboli are immobilized clients. Basic preventive measures include early ambulation, leg elevation, active leg exercises, elastic stockings, and intermittent pneumatic calf compression. Keeping the client well hydrated is essential because dehydration predisposes to

clotting. A pillow under the knees may cause venous stasis. Heat should not be applied without a health care provider's prescription.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *most*. Focus on the **subject**, measures to prevent deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary emboli. Use basic principles related to the care of the immobile client to answer this question.

**Review:** Prevention measures for **deep vein thrombosis** and **pulmonary embolus**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Planning

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Clotting

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 99.

## 1029. 1

**Rationale:** A crisis is an acute, time-limited state of disequilibrium resulting from situational, developmental, or societal sources of stress. A person in this state is temporarily unable to cope with or adapt to the stressor by using previous coping mechanisms. The person who intervenes in this situation (the nurse) “takes over” for the client (authority) who is not in control and devises a plan (action) to secure and maintain the client's safety. When this has occurred, the nurse works collaboratively with the client (participates) in developing new coping and problem-solving strategies.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. A client who experiences a suicidal crisis is in a state of acute disequilibrium. Remember that in a crisis an authority figure must emerge to take action.

**Review:** Care of the **suicidal client**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Mood and Affect; Safety

**Reference:** Stuart (2013), pp. 335-336.

### 1030. 2

**Rationale:** The client with tuberculosis must have sputum cultures performed every 2 to 4 weeks after initiation of antituberculosis drug therapy. The client may return to work when the results of three sputum cultures are negative because the client is considered noninfectious at that point. Options 1, 3, and 4 are not reliable determinants of a noninfectious status.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, concepts related to tuberculosis. Knowing that a positive Mantoux test never reverts to negative helps you eliminate option 4. From the remaining options, think about the mode of transmission of tuberculosis to direct you to the correct option. Remember, three negative sputum cultures are required.

**Review:** Concepts related to **tuberculosis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Teaching and Learning

**Content Area:** Fundamental Skills—Infection Control

**Priority Concepts:** Infection; Safety

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 657.

**1031. 3**

**Rationale:** This client is in a severe state of anxiety. When a client is in a severe or panic state of anxiety, it is crucial for the nurse to remain with the client. The client in a severe state of anxiety would be unable to learn relaxation techniques. Discussing the assault at this point would increase the client's level of anxiety further. Placing the client in a quiet room alone may also increase the anxiety level.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *priority*. The priority action in this situation is to remain with the client.

**Review:** Interventions for the client experiencing **anxiety**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Safe and Effective Care Environment

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Clinical Judgment

**Reference:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), pp. 197-198.

**1032. 2**

**Rationale:** Laboratory findings do not establish the diagnosis of appendicitis, but there is often an elevation of the white blood cell count (leukocytosis) with a shift to the left (an increased number of immature white blood cells). Options 1, 3, and 4 are incorrect because they are not associated findings in acute appendicitis.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, appendicitis. Knowledge that an inflammatory process causes an increase in the white blood cell count will assist in eliminating options 1 and 3. From the remaining options, it is

necessary to understand the significance of a shift to the left.

**Review:** **Appendicitis**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Inflammation

**Reference:** Ignatavicius, Workman (2013), p. 1267.

**1033. 3**

**Rationale:** Lack of ability to cope effectively may be evidenced by a client's inability to meet basic needs, inability to meet role expectations, alteration in social participation, use of inappropriate defense mechanisms, or impairment of usual patterns of communication. Anxiety is a broad description and can occur as a result of many triggers and although the client was experiencing anxiety, the client's concern now is the ability to meet role expectations and financial obligations. There is no information in the question that indicates an unrealistic outlook or disturbances in thoughts and ideas.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Focus on the **subject**, concerns regarding the ability to meet role expectations and financial obligations. Option 1 can be eliminated because the client was previously experiencing anxiety. Eliminate options 2 and 4 because there are no data in the question that address these problems.

**Review:** **Anxiety**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Analyzing

**Client Needs:** Psychosocial Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Analysis

**Content Area:** Mental Health

**Priority Concepts:** Anxiety; Coping

**Reference:** Fortinash, Holoday-Worret (2012), pp. 484-485.

1034. 2

**Rationale:** Bubbling in the water seal chamber is caused by air passing out of the pleural space into the fluid in the chamber. Intermittent (not constant) bubbling is normal. It indicates that the system is accomplishing one of its purposes, removing air from the pleural space. Continuous bubbling during inspiration and expiration indicates that an air leak exists. If this occurs, it must be corrected. Notifying the health care provider and changing the chest tube drainage system are not indicated at this time.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, chest tube drainage systems, and focus on the words *intermittent bubbling* and *water seal chamber*. Recalling that intermittent (not constant) bubbling is normal in this chamber will direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Chest tube drainage systems

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Applying

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Implementation

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Respiratory

**Priority Concepts:** Clinical Judgment; Gas Exchange

**Reference:** Lewis et al (2011), p. 572.

1035. 3

**Rationale:** Although frequency and intensity of bowel sounds vary depending on the phase of digestion, normal

bowel sounds are relatively high-pitched clicks or gurgles. Loud gurgles (borborygmi) indicate hyperperistalsis. A swishing or buzzing sound represents turbulent blood flow associated with a bruit. Bruits are not normal sounds. Bowel sounds are very high-pitched and loud (hyperresonance) when the intestines are under tension, such as in intestinal obstruction. Therefore, options 1, 2, and 4 are incorrect.

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **strategic word** *best*. Note the **subject**, techniques for abdominal assessment.

Normally, bowel sounds are audible in all four quadrants, so options 2 and 4 can be eliminated. From the remaining options, use knowledge regarding normal findings to direct you to the correct option.

**Review:** Techniques for **abdominal assessment**

**Level of Cognitive Ability:** Understanding

**Client Needs:** Physiological Integrity

**Integrated Process:** Nursing Process—Assessment

**Content Area:** Adult Health—Gastrointestinal

**Priority Concepts:** Elimination; Health Promotion

**Reference:** Jarvis (2012), pp. 539-540.

### ❖ 1036. 20

**Rationale:** Use the medication calculation formula:

$$\frac{\text{Prescribed}}{\text{Available}} \times \text{Quantity} = \text{mL/dose}$$

$$\frac{800 \text{ mg}}{200 \text{ mg}} \times 5 \text{ mL} = 20 \text{ mL}$$

**Test-Taking Strategy:** Note the **subject**, medication calculations. Review the label for the correct reconstitution, which states 200 mg in 5 mL. Calculate the prescribed number of milligrams per milliliter. Use a calculator to verify the answer and make sure that the answer makes sense.

**Review:** **Medication calculations**

***Level of Cognitive Ability:*** Applying

***Client Needs:*** Physiological Integrity

***Integrated Process:*** Nursing Process—Implementation

***Content Area:*** Fundamental Skills—Medication/IV Calculations

***Priority Concepts:*** Health Care Quality; Safety

***References:*** Brown, Mulholland (2012), p. 81; Potter et al (2013), pp. 574-577.



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