

A-120 R Measuring and Recording Edema

Purpose

Assess client for fluid retention.

Assess cardiopulmonary status.

Provide a uniform and objective approach to measuring central, peripheral, and abdominal edema.

Evaluate the effect of diuretics.

Evaluate the client adherence to prescribed medications, diet and activity.

Applies To

Registered Nurses

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses

Other (*Identify*): _____

Equipment/Supplies

Tape measure (optional)

Assessment Guidelines for Circulatory Overload

- Crackles, wheezes on auscultation, dyspnea, mental status
- Changes or deviation from baseline
- Adherence to medications, diet, and activity
- Weight

Procedure

1. Wash hands. Refer to the hand washing procedure.
2. Inspect areas of skin for edema:
 - a. Dependent edema in:
 - Feet
 - Ankles
 - Sacrum
 - Scapular areas
 - Arms
 - Hands
3. Assess pedal edema by measuring above bony prominences:
 - a. Dorsum of the foot, above the ankle, and mid-calf.

- b. Assess edema in hand between the joints.
 - c. Assess abdominal girth by measuring at the naval area.
- 4. Assess color, location, and shape of area.
- 5. Palpate areas of edema, noting mobility, consistency, and tenderness.
- 6. Assess for pitting edema. Press edematous area firmly with thumb for 5 to 10 seconds. Remove thumb; note extent of indentation and how long it lasts.
- 7. Measure edema on a scale of 1+ to 4+ edema. You may use a tape measure.
 - a. 1+ edema = 2 mm induration.
 - b. 2+ edema = 4 mm induration.
 - c. 3+ edema = 6 mm induration.
 - d. 4+ edema = 8 mm induration.

Documentation Guidelines

Document in the clinical record:

- 1. Location and amount of edema noted.

Related Procedures

None

Policy History

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