

A-140 Monitoring Client with Pacemaker at Home

Purpose

Assess client's ability to monitor pulse accurately.

Assess for signs and symptoms of pacemaker dysfunction.

Assess client's knowledge of pacemaker function and when to notify physician.

Applies To

Registered Nurses

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses

Other (*Identify*): _____

Equipment/Supplies

- Clock or watch with second hand.
- Electrodes (if doing telephone ECG).
- Telephone and ECG transmitter (if ordered).
- Pacemaker magnet (if ordered by physician).

Signs and Symptoms of Pacemaker Dysfunction

Dizziness, weakness, altered level of consciousness, irregular pulse, low blood pressure, decreased urine output, or fatigue.

Procedure

1. Wash hands. Refer to the hand washing procedure.
2. Establish a daily routine check. *Battery failure can be identified in early stages by routine monitoring of pulse.*
 - a. Have client sit on the side of the bed.
 - b. Count pulse for one full minute before arising.
 - c. Record on daily record.
3. Perform a general assessment of the client, including:
 - a. Condition of site of pain, redness, swelling, or fluid accumulation.
 - b. Chest pain or return of dyspnea, dizziness, edema, or slow pulse.
 - c. Client and/or family adaptation to presence of implanted device and monitoring function of device.
4. With the client in a resting position, check pulse for a full minute. Note a rate that falls below the rate set by pacemaker. A rate decreased by 5-10 beats may indicate a lowered generator function necessitating battery replacement.

5. If ordered by the physician, place a pacemaker magnet over the generator before taking the pulse. This verifies pacemaker function by creating a fixed mode. The pulse rate will reveal pacemaker function when the pulse is taken.
6. If the client has an ECG transmitter and electrodes, the pacemaker may be checked by a telephone ECG. To perform a telephone ECG following a call to a pacemaker clinic service:
 - a. Place and secure electrodes on the client's wrist.
 - b. Turn on the transmitter.
 - c. Position the telephone over the output part of the transmitter.
 - d. Listen for a beep as heart sounds are transmitted.
 - e. Place magnet over generator if requested.
 - f. Disconnect and restore equipment.
7. Contact physician if any of these symptoms are noted:
 - a. Sudden slowing or increasing in pulse rate.
 - b. Irregular pulse.
 - c. Pain or redness over site (new pacemaker).
8. Wash hands. Refer to the hand washing procedure.

Documentation Guidelines

Document in the clinical record:

1. Pulse rate.
2. General assessment findings including any reported pain, dizziness, pulse changes, edema or shortness of breath.
3. Pacemaker function.

Related Procedures

None

Policy History

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