Clinical Dialysis/Patient Care/Bowel Protocol Hemodialysis

Bowel Protocol for Hemodialysis

Application:
Constipation is a common problem for people on dialysis in part due to fluid restrictions and a low potassium diet which limits the types and amount of fiber in their diets. Medications such as phosphorus binders and opioids also contribute to constipation.

Goal: The focus of the Bowel Protocol for Hemodialysis is to relieve and prevent constipation.

Policy:
1. All patients on hemodialysis will be evaluated for constipation and given the appropriate recommendation. Bowel Protocol orders will be entered using ICD-10 K59.00.

Procedure:
1. RD will interview patients on bowel movements as part of comprehensive assessments.

2. If a patient has **mild constipation or Type 3** on the Bristol Stool Form Scale, start option a, b or c one at a time. If effective, continue for maintenance:
   a. 1-2 tablespoons of cellulose fiber daily, take per package directions. Or 1-3 tablespoons ground flax or wheat bran daily, starting with 1 tablespoon per day as directed by RD, increasing by 1 tablespoon only as often as every 3 days.
   b. 2 prunes per day. Limit to 2 per day to avoid high potassium.
   c. If patient has gastroparesis and/or fiber and prunes are not effective, use docusate sodium 100mg/day increasing to up to 300mg/day. If no improvement move to number 3.

3. If a patient has **moderate constipation or Type 2** on the Bristol Stool Form Scale recommend:
    a. Polyethylene glycol 17gm powder in 4-8 ounces fluid daily. If no bowel movement after 3 days, contact MD for a laxative prescription. See attached laxative fax sheet.
    b. If no bowel movement after 3 days on laxative, notify MD.
    c. Do not recommend stimulant laxatives such as senna or bisacodyl as they are habit forming.

4. If a patient has **severe constipation Type 1** on the Bristol Stool Form Scale or hasn't had any bowel movement in 3 days refer to MD.
    a. RN can provide 1 dose of lactulose in the unit immediately before the patient leaves to go home. Lactulose takes effect within a couple of hours. **Do not give lactulose to a patient with dysphagia.**
    b. To administer lactulose, patient must have a prn order for lactulose using ICD-10 K59.00.
    c. Refer to MD regarding a long-term plan – use the Laxative Request fax

5. Maintenance
    a. Continue fiber and/or daily stool softener
    b. Get daily physical activity

Tools:
Bowel Habit Screening form
Bristol Stool Form Scale
Constipation Treatment Tips brochure
Constipation tip sheet
MD laxative rx request fax