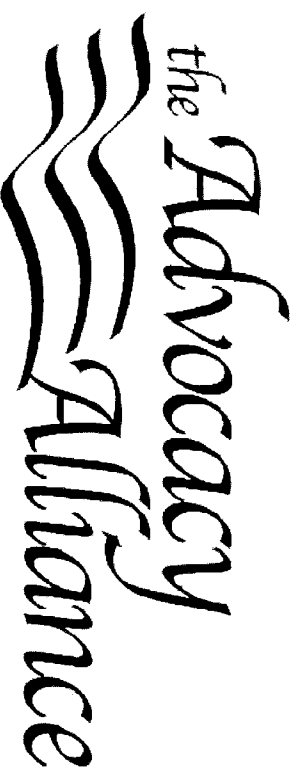


Common Chronic Health Conditions



Health Care Quality Units

Disclaimer

- The information presented to you today is to increase your awareness. It is not intended to replace medical advice or instructions from your health care practitioner or your agency policy.

Objectives

- The participant will learn:
 - Basic facts about various Common Chronic Health Conditions
 - Challenges in treating Common Chronic Health Conditions
 - How pain and polypharmacy impact Common Chronic Health Conditions
 - Preparation tips for Medical Appointments

Vocabulary:

- Acute condition: sudden severe onset with a short duration
- Chronic condition: develops and worsens over extended period of time
- Compliance: willingness to follow medical advice
- Non-compliance: refusal to follow medical advice

Challenges:

- People with IDD may have a difficult time expressing their symptoms in ways that can be easily understood
- Medical symptoms can be easily confused with challenging behaviors
- Pain or a worsening condition can be difficult for anyone to describe
- Some individuals have difficulty understanding the importance of long term healthy habits
- All Individuals have the right to refuse

Hypothyroidism:

- Thyroid gland not producing enough thyroid hormone
- Signs and symptoms include: fatigue, constipation, muscle weakness, cold sensitivity dry skin, unexplained weight gain, feeling depressed
- Treated by replacing the hormone and monitored with blood testing
- Medication should be taken alone, at the same time, every day

Seizures:

- Occur when the brain experiences abnormal electrical activity
- Vary in length, type and presentation from person to person
- Epilepsy is used to describe a condition when a person has reoccurring seizures
- Must take medication every day
- Refer to Agency's policy on calling 911

Dementia:

- Can be difficult to diagnose, especially if the person is non-verbal or, has limited communication skills
- There are several types of Dementia. Alzheimer's Disease is the most commonly known
- People with Down Syndrome have an increased risk of diagnosis
- No cure or set timeframe

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD):

- GERD is the return of the stomach's contents back up into the esophagus
- Can be painful
- Treatment includes:
 - Avoidance of irritants
 - Reduce portions
 - Elevate head of bed
 - Do not eat 2-3 hours before bedtime

Dysphagia:

- Difficulty chewing and/or swallowing food and fluid from the mouth to the stomach
- It is not a disease but a symptom of another condition
- There is a risk that food, fluids or foreign substances will get into the lungs causing signs and symptoms of aspiration
- Treatment can include diet modifications and adaptive equipment
- Important to follow Physician ordered diet

Diabetes:

- Type 1 Diabetes: pancreas does not produce insulin
- Type 2 Diabetes: pancreas does not make enough insulin or the body is unable to use the insulin that is produced
- Diagnosed through blood testing
- Symptoms can include excessive thirst, fatigue and loss of consciousness
- Treatment can include change of diet, increase exercise and medications
- Poorly controlled Diabetes can led to long term side effects

High Cholesterol:

- Can build up in arteries which can lead to stroke, heart attacks and Coronary Artery Disease
- Can be genetic or a result of dietary choices
- Treatment includes dietary changes, exercise, medications and surgery
- Can take years to develop and has little to no signs and symptoms

Hypertension:

- New guidelines for high blood pressure, consistent readings of 130/80 or higher
- Can be caused by heredity, age, obesity, stress, smoking, diet high in salt and some medical conditions
- Treatment: yearly blood testing, diet changes and medication
- Side effects include kidney damage and blindness
- High blood pressure can increase the risk of stroke and heart attacks

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD):

- Lack of oxygen containing blood delivered to heart
- Symptoms include chest pain(angina), shortness of breath and heart attack
- Metabolic syndrome; high blood pressure, high triglycerides, low HDL, elevated insulin levels and excess body fat around waist, increases the risk of CAD
- Refer to Agency's policy on calling 911

Asthma:

- Narrowing of airways that swell and produce extra mucus
- Breathing can be difficult can trigger coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath
- Different triggers
- Increased risk of pneumonia
- Managed by inhalers
- Can lead to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Osteoporosis:

- Disorder that results in a loss of bone mass, deterioration of bone which can lead to fragile bones and fractures
- Caused by certain medications, age, certain medical conditions and immobility
- Diagnosed by bone density testing
- Treatment includes increasing intake of Calcium/Vitamin D, exercise, medication, pain management and surgery

Arthritis:

- Inflammation of one or more joints, can happen in any joint and can severely impact daily life
- Symptoms are joint pain and stiffness which worsen with age
- Most common types are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis
- Diagnosed by physical exam, blood tests and Imaging
- Treated with medication, physical therapy and surgery

Constipation:

- Alteration in the individual's bowel movement including consistency, shape and frequency
- Caused by dehydration, medical conditions and medication
- Signs can be easily overlooked
- Can be fatal

Obesity:

- Overweight and Obesity are two different diagnoses
- Caused by increased portion size, decreased activity level, certain medical conditions and side effects of medications
- Can cause difficulty in performing daily tasks
- Increase risk of Cancer, Heart disease, Type 2 Diabetes, Stroke and skin breakdown

Pain:

- Shown and experienced in multiple ways
- Must be treated with non-medical and/or medical interventions
- Did the intervention work? If not, what is the next step?
- Can be a sign of medical emergency
- Don't forget to chart regarding the pain and the response to the interventions

Polyparmacy:

- The simultaneous use of multiple medications to treat a single condition
- Very common in individuals diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability
- Every medication, including supplements, have side effects
- Side effects can lead to medical emergencies
- Every change in behavior is a communication and must be acknowledged

Medical Appointments:

- Is the medical book updated?
- Has there been any changes since the last appointment?
- Which signs and symptoms have been displayed?
- What were the interventions and the response?
- All information from consults, tests and other medical and mental health appointments

References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/>

<https://www.heart.org/>

<http://www.diabetes.org/>

<https://www.aafa.org/>

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