

Anorexia

Definition

Loss of appetite

Causes

- > Food odors
- > Drugs
- > Stress
- > Psychological problems
- > Fear
- > Illness

Pathophysiology and Etiology

The appetite center in the hypothalamus stimulates or suppresses appetite

Signs and Symptoms

The most common:

- > No hunger
- > No desire to eat
- > Nauseous from the smell or thought of food
- > Eat small amounts by obligation or coercion
- > Hypovitaminosis

Diagnostic Findings

- > ↓ Hemoglobin and blood cell counts
- > Abnormally enlarged RBCs
- > ↓ Serum albumin, electrolyte, and protein w/ cardiac dysrhythmias

Medical and Surgical Management

If anorexia is severe

High-calorie diet, high-calorie supplemental feedings, tube feedings, and total parenteral nutrition (TPN)

Nursing Management

Monitor weight daily, monitor I&O, and compile a dietary history

Nausea and Vomiting

Pathophysiology and Etiology

> The vomiting center in the medulla is sensitive to parasympathetic neurotransmitters released in response to gastric irritation

Causes

Nausea and Vomiting (cont)

> Drugs, infections and inflammatory conditions of the GI tract, intestinal obstruction, systemic infections, lesions of the central nervous system, food poisoning, stress, early pregnancy, and uremia

Nausea

- > nausea → vomiting
- > usually results from distention of duodenum
- > accompanying symptoms: ↑ salivation and peripheral vasoconstriction → cold and clammy skin and tachycardia

The Valsava Maneuver

- > Accompanies the forceful expulsion of stomach contents
- > Causes dizziness, hypotension, and bradycardia

Signs and Symptoms

- > Nausea
- > Loss of appetite and refusal to eat
- > Retching vomiting
- > Polydipsia and oliguria r/t dehydration
- > Dry and dull eyes/oral mucosa and poor skin turgor r/t fluid loss
- > Ingestion of noxious substances: excessive alcohol, contaminated food, or drugs w/ GI side effects

Diagnostic Findings

- > ↓ serum sodium and chloride
- > ↑ bicarbonate levels to compensate loss of chloride and accumulation of metabolic acids
- > ↑ hematocrit due to hemoconcentration caused by dehydration

Medical and Surgical Management

- > IV fluids, electrolyte replacement, and drug therapy if n/v is severe
- > Elimination of the cause
- > Symptomatic relief using antiemetics

Antiemetic Medications

Serotonin (5-HT₃) Receptor Antagonists

Examples

- > Ondansetron (Zofran)
- > Palonosetron (Aloxi)
- > Granisetron

Uses

Chemotherapy nausea, post-op vomiting, hyperemesis in pregnancy

Action

Blocks neural receptors for 5HT₃



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