UNIT 3 INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH CONDITIONS/PROBLEMS RELATED TO DIGESTIVE AND URINARY ORGANS

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:
• enlist the names of the organs of digestive system;
• identify the different parts of the system; and
• discuss the functions and diseases of digestive system.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have discussed problems and care of patient with nervous system, mainly focusing supportive care. It is important to learn about condition affecting digestive and urinary system.

It becomes easy to learn if we know meaning, causes, sign and symptoms of a disease and this understanding helps to give better care to the patient. Hence this unit is going to deal with diseases of major organs of digestive and urinary system as well as care of the patient.

3.2 CONDITIONS AFFECTING DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

There are many conditions affecting the digestive system, but as you will be looking
after patients who are chronically ill and who require home care so we will only discuss those conditions. These are as follows:

- Chronic liver failure
- Pancreatitis
- Diabetes
- Cancer of stomach
- Cancer of colon

### 3.2.1 Chronic Liver Failure or Cirrhosis of Liver

**Definition**

This is a disease of liver. The liver becomes hard and liver cells die and unable to carry out the normal function of liver.

**Cause**

- Viral hepatitis
- Excessive intake of alcohol
- Infection, malnutrition or protein deficiency

**Signs and symptoms**

- Bleeding from stomach.
- Loss of appetite (loss of interest for the food).
- Prominent vein on the abdomen.
- Low grade fever.
- Enlarged abdomen.
- Prone to infection.
- Yellow colour of eye, nail and skin.

### 3.2.2 Pancreatitis

**Definition**

In pancreatitis there is inflammation of the pancreas. The enzymes which are secreted by the pancreas become more active.

**Causes**

- Gallbladder Stones.
- Excessive alcohol.

**Signs and symptoms**

- Sudden onset of severe abdominal pain, which shifts to the back.
- Shock.
- Vomiting.
• Pulse becomes rapid.
• Low blood pressure.

3.2.3 Diabetes

Definition
It is very common disease in which blood glucose become more than normal (Normal blood sugar level is 80-120mg/100c.c of blood).

Causes:
• Enough insulin is not produced as a result sugar level rises in the blood. Sugar is excreted through kidney. Action of insulin is to lower the levels of sugar in blood.
• Obesity
• Genetic
• Stress

Signs and symptoms:
• Polyuria (excessive output of urine) or increased frequency of urination.
• Thirst (constant desire to drink water).
• Increased hunger
• Loss of energy, lack of interest.
• Leg cramps.
• Non-healing of wounds.
• Repeated infection.
• Vision disturbances.

3.2.4 Cancer of Stomach

Cancer of the stomach is very common among middle aged people.

Causes
• Spicy food
• Stress
• Malnutrition
• Chronic gastric ulcer

Signs and symptoms:
• Abdominal pain while taking food.
• Loss of weight.
• Anemia, paleness.
• Loss of appetite (lack of interest in food).
• A solid mass is felt in abdomen.
3.2.5 Cancer of Colon

Cancer colon is the commonest cause. It is common in middle aged or elderly person but it may occur among young also.

Signs and symptoms:

- Change in bowel habit, constipation followed by diarrhoea.
- Bleeding per rectum.
- Abdominal pain.
- Weight loss.
- Lack of appetite.
- Hard mass felt in abdomen.

3.3 CARE OF PATIENTS RELATED TO CONDITIONS AFFECTING DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Due to long term suffering the patient becomes weak, so diet should be soft, less spicy, preferably boiled, bland diet, while serving the food it should be attractive and served in small amounts frequently. During meal time the atmosphere should be calm and quiet. For the aged people very soft food to be taken and time to be given for chewing and swallowing. Help as well as stay with the aged people is very important. You will be studying about the dietary management in detail in Block 3, Unit 4 also.

General Instructions

- Avoid alcohol intake and cigarette smoking.
- Body weight to be recorded weekly.
- For diabetic patient the food containing sugar and fried food to be restricted.
- Talk to and listen to the patient. Share his/her feelings.
- Every day mouth care and sponge to be given. General cleanliness to be maintained.
- In case of patient with diarrhoea, home available fluid diet like light tea, lassi, whey water, rice water and well cooked food to be given. Food hygiene and hand washing with soap and water before cooking, serving of food and eating to be maintained.
- For patient with constipation, adequate amount (6-8 glasses) of water to drink and food containing roughage or fibres should be given.
- Patient anxiety to be released, relaxation therapy (watching T.V., talking with friends and relatives, attending social programme helps the patient to relax.
- Timing for intake of drugs should be mentioned as per doctor’s advice.
- Protect the skin around surgical opening (colostomy) from irritation and infections. Empty the colostomy bag every 6 hours and change the bag every 2-4 days. For more details refer skill 11.
Check Your Progress 1

1) What are different conditions which affect digestive system?

2) List down the care to be given to a patient with digestive disorder.

3.4 CONDITIONS AFFECTING URINARY SYSTEM

Now let us discuss about the common diseases of urinary system. They are acute renal failure and chronic renal failure. Now we will discuss regarding chronic renal failure which requires long time care at home.

3.4.1 Chronic Renal Failure

Definition

When kidney cannot function normally and urine formation is affected it is known as renal failure. It result in accommodation of body wastes such as urea and creatinine which are poisonous to the body and must be excreted through urine.

Causes

- Disease of kidney
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure

Signs and symptoms

- Patients become very sick.
- Vomiting tendency, diarrhoea.
- No response to stimuli.
- Coma (loss of consciousness).
- High blood pressure.
- Cough.
- Pale colour of the body.
- Itching all over the body.
- Retention of fluid in the body such Ascites, accumulation of fluids in abdomen and swelling in the legs, face etc.
3.4.2 Care of Patient with Kidney Disease

- Patient should be encouraged to take bed rest.
- Restriction of fluid as advised by doctor.
- Fluid intake and urine output to be measured for 24 hours/every day and recorded.
- The food containing protein e.g. milk, dal, egg, meat to be given in less amount.
- Less or no salt to be allowed (Salt free diet).
- Body’s weight to be recorded everyday – due to swelling on face, abdomen, legs it becomes very important to record weight every day at the same times usually before breakfast, empty stomach so that even small changes in weight can also be recorded.
- Check B.P. of the patient.
- Patient to be given mouth care, bath, hair care everyday, clean clothes to be given for prevention of infection.
- Talk to the patient, discuss any topic which he or she is interested and listen to the problems what he or she wants to share.
- Be with the patient even if he/she is out of the bed to see that she does not fall or injure himself/herself. There should be bed railings for prevention of fall from the bed.
- Keep one call bell within her/his reach for any help.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are the causes of chronic renal failure?

2) What are the restrictions of food in case of a patient with renal failure?

3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed regarding some of the common disease conditions of digestive and urinary system. The emphasis is also given on the causes, sign and symptoms so that it would be easy for you to make out that which system of the body is affected and what can be done to prevent further damage to the system. Recording of vital signs and blood pressure has to be measured more frequently – every hourly or as per instructions of doctor. Maintaining strict intake/output chart plays very important role in monitoring the functioning of kidneys.
3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) • Chronic liver failure
    • Pancreatitis
    • Diabetes
    • Cancer of stomach
    • Cancer of Colon

2) • Avoid alcohol and no smoking
    • Record body weight weekly
    • Restrict the intake of fried food and food with sugar
    • Share his/her feelings.
    • In case of diarrhoea, home available food to be given

Check Your Progress 2

1) Causes of chronic renal failure
    • Diseases of kidney
    • Diabetes
    • High blood pressure

2) Restriction of fluids
    • The food containing proteins e.g. milk, dal, egg, meat
    • Less or no salt is allowed.