

5/18/16

Patient Education Questions

1) What are the positives and negatives with using a prone gurney while my wound is healing?

A prone gurney allows a person to be mobile. A suprapubic catheter can be a barrier to using a prone gurney. It can also be taxing on the neck and shoulders.

2) What are the benefits of a supra pubic catheter compared to the Foley or ICPs?

The bladder is affected by SCI so managing this is important for one's health. ICP is usually performed 3-4 times a day. Catheters can be suprapubic or indwelling (urethral). The Suprapubic is placed directly into the bladder through the abdominal wall. Foley catheters are a type of catheter that can be used for both suprapubic and urethral applications.

3) What is the "Cough Assist" and what goes into an evaluation to be considered?

The abdominal muscles are the primary cough muscles. If a person cannot clear mucus from the airways an assisted cough is a method to help do this. An assistant can perform a maneuver similar to the Heimlich maneuver to "assist" with a cough. Machines such as the In-Exsufflator which can be used with a mask, mouthpiece or directly into the trach tube and uses positive and negative pressure during inhalation and exhalation. A doctor needs to order this device as the patient must be able to tolerate the pressures of the machine.

4) How do I prevent developing a DVT and what are some of the health effects if you develop one?

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) can be caused for anyone from long static positions such as a long plane ride. Prolonged bedrest and immobility make people susceptible to DVTs. Also recent trauma such as fractures in the lower leg bones can predispose people to DVTs. Common signs and symptoms may include: swelling, gradual onset of pain, redness, warmth to touch, worsening leg pain when flexing the foot, leg cramps. Prevention includes: avoiding prolonged immobility i.e. getting out of bed when able and moving, keeping the legs elevated while sitting or in bed, using compressions stockings, losing weight. DVTs can resolve on their own but can also result in death and should be taken seriously.

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5) How can I keep my bones healthy and prevent osteoporosis? I don't want to fall and break my bones.

Loss of bone is part of SCI and can leave people vulnerable to osteoporosis which is the thinning of the bones. This weakening of the bones predisposes individuals to bone fractures. Exercise and eating right and use of Vitamin D can help reduce the amount of bone loss that occurs. Use of standing frames is still recommended. Bisphosphate supplements can also be prescribed however there is still not enough evidence to show how beneficial they are for SIC individuals.

6) What is insulin resistance? Is it the same as pre-diabetes? How can I prevent developing these health conditions?

Insulin is a hormone produced specifically by the pancreas. It helps move sugar from the blood into body tissue for energy. Our body's cells cannot use glucose without insulin. SCI individuals are prone to Diabetes which involves the inability to produce enough insulin (Type I diabetes) and Insulin resistance (Type II diabetes) where the receptors that use the insulin are not working properly. Prevention includes proper diet, avoid simple carbohydrates, exercise, and avoid becoming overweight.

7) I've heard they can move nerves around to get things to work in your arms. Is this true?

Nerve transfers involve taking a branch of a functioning nerve and attaching it to another nerve which is not working so that signals can be transmitted into a muscle that is not working. The donor nerve is taken from a muscle that has dual innervations and can be reduced in some function. Retraining of the recipient muscle is needed for the brain to utilize the new connection. A period of immobility is required to protect the transferred nerve. This procedure is still being pioneered and careful evaluation is needed of donor and recipient nerves must be made.