



Prevention of Aspiration Pneumonia

I. What is Aspiration Pneumonia

Aspiration pneumonia occurs when food, liquids, vomitus, or oral secretions are accidentally inhaled into the lungs, leading to inflammation or infection. Common causes include swallowing difficulties, aspiration of gastric contents after vomiting, or choking while eating or drinking.

Based on the cause, it can be classified into:

- Chemical pneumonitis: caused by inhalation of gastric acid or toxic gases, resulting in acute lung injury
- Bacterial pneumonia: caused by inhalation of secretions or foreign materials containing bacteria, leading to infection (most common)

II. Common Complications

1. Pleuritis, pleural effusion
2. Lung abscess, empyema
3. Endocarditis, arthritis, meningitis
4. Respiratory failure
5. Sepsis, septic shock

III. Common Examinations

1. Chest X-ray
2. Sputum culture (including aerobic and anaerobic bacteria; tuberculosis testing if needed)
3. Blood cultures and related tests
4. Additional examinations such as bronchoscopy when necessary

IV. Treatment Methods

1. Medication therapy:
 - Antibiotics: to control infection
 - Mucolytics: to help clear sputum
 - Bronchodilators: to relieve shortness of breath
 - Analgesics and antipyretics: to reduce discomfort
2. Oxygen therapy: administered as prescribed by the physician
3. Maintain airway patency: deep breathing, coughing, chest percussion, postural drainage, and suctioning when necessary
4. Regular follow-up with chest X-rays and blood tests

☞ Treatment duration is usually 7 – 14 days; if complications such as lung abscess or empyema occur, treatment may be required for 4 – 6 weeks

V. Nursing Care and Precautions

1. Wash hands and wear a mask before and after contact with the patient
2. Encourage deep breathing and coughing; assist with suctioning if needed
3. Reposition the patient every 2 hours
4. If using a ventilator, regularly remove accumulated water from the tubing
5. Elevate the head of the bed to 30 – 45 degrees before feeding
6. Perform daily oral and nasal hygiene to prevent bacterial growth
7. If fever, chills, or worsening shortness of breath occur, notify healthcare staff immediately

VI. Home Care Instructions

1. Medications:

- Take medications as prescribed; do not stop or adjust doses without medical advice
- Monitor for side effects (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea, palpitations, rash) and seek medical attention if they occur

2. Diet and Nutrition:

- Follow a high-protein, high-calorie diet
- Eat small, frequent meals and avoid overeating
- Do not lie down immediately after meals (remain upright for at least 30 minutes)
- Maintain adequate fluid intake

3. Infection Prevention:

- Maintain good oral hygiene and assist with sputum clearance
- Avoid talking while eating to prevent choking
- Ensure adequate nutrition, sufficient sleep, and appropriate physical activity

4. Sleeping Position:

- A side-lying position is recommended to reduce the risk of aspiration

**Wishing you good health, peace, and good fortune.
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