

# MONITORING CLIENT WITH PACEMAKER AT HOME

## PURPOSE

To assess client's ability to monitor pulse accurately.

To assess for signs and symptoms of pacemaker dysfunction.

To assess client's knowledge of pacemaker function and when to notify physician.

## APPLIES TO

- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses
- Therapists
- Other (Identify): \_\_\_\_\_

## EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES

- Clock or watch with second hand.
- Electrodes (if doing telephone ECG).
- Telephone and ECG transmitter (if ordered).
- Pacemaker magnet (if ordered by physician).

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PACEMAKER DYSFUNCTION

Dizziness, weakness, altered level of consciousness, irregular pulse, low blood pressure, decreased urine output, or fatigue.

## PROCEDURE

1. Wash hands. Refer to the Hand Washing procedure.
2. Establish a daily routine check. *Battery failure can be identified in early stages by routine monitoring of pulse.*
  - a. Have client sit on the side of the bed.
  - b. Count pulse for one full minute before arising.
  - c. Record on daily record.
3. Perform a general assessment of the client, including:
  - a. Condition of site of pain, redness, swelling, or fluid accumulation.
  - b. Chest pain or return of dyspnea, dizziness, edema, or slow pulse.
  - c. Client and/or family adaptation to presence of implanted device and monitoring function of device.
4. With the client in a resting position, check pulse for a full minute. Note a rate that falls below the rate set by pacemaker. A rate decreased by 5-10 beats may indicate a lowered generator function necessitating battery replacement.
5. If ordered by the physician, place a pacemaker magnet over the generator before taking the pulse. This verifies pacemaker function by creating a fixed mode. The pulse rate will reveal pacemaker function when the pulse is taken.
6. If the client has an ECG transmitter and electrodes, the pacemaker may be checked by a telephone ECG. To perform a telephone ECG following a call to a pacemaker clinic service:
  - a. Place and secure electrodes on the client's wrist.
  - b. Turn on the transmitter.
  - c. Position the telephone over the output part of the transmitter.
  - d. Listen for a beep as heart sounds are transmitted.
  - e. Place magnet over generator if requested.
  - f. Disconnect and restore equipment.
7. Contact physician if any of these symptoms are noted:
  - a. Sudden slowing or increasing in pulse rate.

- b. Irregular pulse.
  - c. Pain or redness over site (new pacemaker).
8. Wash hands. Refer to the Hand Washing procedure.

## **DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES**

1. Document in the clinical record:
  - a. Pulse rate.
  - b. General assessment findings including any reported pain, dizziness, pulse changes, edema or shortness of breath.
  - c. Pacemaker function.

## **RELATED PROCEDURES**

None.