NURSING PROCESS FOCUS  Clients Receiving Folic Acid

Assessment

Prior to administration:
- Obtain a complete health history including allergies, drug history, and possible drug interactions.
- Obtain a complete physical examination with special attention to symptoms related to anemic states such as pallor, fatigue, weakness, tachycardia, and shortness of breath.
- Obtain the following laboratory studies: folic acid levels, hemoglobin (Hb), hematocrit (Hct), and reticulocyte counts.
- Obtain a complete blood count (CBC) to determine the type of anemia present. (Folic acid is not beneficial in normocytic anemia, refractory anemia, and aplastic anemia.)

Potential Nursing Diagnoses

- Nutrition, Imbalanced: Less than Body Requirements
- Knowledge, Deficient, related to drug therapy
- Noncompliance, related to dietary and drug treatment
- Health Maintenance, Impaired, related to insufficient knowledge of actions and effects of prescribed drug therapy

Planning: Client Goals and Expected Outcomes

The client will:
- Exhibit improvement in serum folic acid level.
- Experience less fatigue and weakness.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the drug’s action by accurately describing drug side effects and precautions.
- Verbalize potential complications related to drug use and when to notify the healthcare provider.

Implementation

Interventions and (Rationales)

- Monitor client’s dietary intake of folic acid–containing foods. (Deficiency state may be caused by poor dietary habits.)
- Encourage client to conserve energy. (Anemia caused by folic acid deficiency may lead to weakness and fatigue.)
- Encourage client to take medication appropriately. (Taking medication as ordered increases its effectiveness.)

Client Education/Discharge Planning

- Instruct client to:
  - Eat foods high in folic acid such as vegetables, fruits, and organ meats.
  - Consult with the healthcare provider concerning amount of folic acid that should be in the diet.
- Advise client to:
  - Rest when tired and not overexert.
  - Plan activities to avoid fatigue.
- Instruct client to:
  - Avoid use of alcohol, because it increases folic acid requirements.
  - Take only the amount of drug prescribed.

Evaluation of Outcome Criteria

Evaluate the effectiveness of drug therapy by confirming that client goals and expected outcomes have been met (see “Planning”).
- The client’s serum folic acid level improves.
- The client reports less fatigue and weakness.
- The client demonstrates an understanding of the drug’s action by accurately describing drug side effects and precautions.
- The client verbalizes potential complications related to drug use and when to notify the healthcare provider.

Evaluation

- Include vitamin-rich foods (whole grains, fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, lean meats, and dairy products) in the diet.
- If attempting pregnancy, be sure to get adequate folic acid. Discuss folic acid requirements with your healthcare provider, and take a multivitamin to ensure adequate intake.

MINERALS

Minerals are inorganic substances needed in small amounts to maintain homeostasis. Minerals are classified as macrominerals or microminerals; the macrominerals must be ingested in larger amounts. A normal, balanced diet will provide the proper amounts of the required minerals in most people. The primary minerals used in pharmacotherapy are listed in Table 42.4.