

Case Study Synopsis

Case Study: Fluid Balance

Suggested Uses: Fundamentals, Medical-Surgical

Clara Bidalchi is an 86-year-old female with hypertension who has become increasingly weak and confused. Clara's daughter tells the nurse that her mother takes a "water pill" for her blood pressure. Clara is admitted with fluid volume deficit.

The nurse assesses Clara for orthostatic vital sign changes and recognizes the need to assess skin turgor. The nurse calculates Clara's recent weight loss, converting kilograms to pounds, and estimates her fluid loss. The nurse is aware of age-related factors such as protein binding and hepatic blood flow that may impact the effect of medications.

The nurse responds to an inappropriate prescription for 3% Normal Saline and takes action when an incorrect IV solution and rate of flow are found infusing. A variance report is completed, and the healthcare provider is notified of the error. The next day, the nurse uses the nursing process to decide on a course of action in response to an IV pump obstruction alarm and also takes action when the IV site is inflamed.

Later, when measuring intake and output, the nurse selects dietary items to include in measuring oral fluid intake and recognizes that the client may now be at risk for fluid volume excess. The nurse assesses the client for signs of fluid volume excess and finds abnormal breath sounds, pitting edema, and a rapid, bounding pulse.

The nurse questions a new prescription for IV push potassium chloride and monitors lab values related to the administration of hydrochlorothiazide. The nurse checks to see if the tablet can be cut in half and correctly identifies the client before the dose is given.