



Positive Quality Intervention: Oncolytic-Induced Diarrhea

Description of PQI: This PQI will discuss management strategies for oncolytic medication-induced diarrhea including combinations of fluid hydration therapies, antimotility agents such as loperamide, and dose modifications.

Background: A common side effect with many oncolytic therapies is medication-induced diarrhea which can result from chemotherapy or targeted therapy regimens. Medication-induced diarrhea will present with increasing frequency and consistency of bowel movements and drastic changes in hydration status and electrolyte levels. Oncolytic-induced diarrhea can lead to life threatening dehydration and electrolyte imbalances.

PQI process:

Identify patients who are taking an oncolytic agent with a known diarrhea side effect.

Common oral oncolytic agents that cause diarrhea:

- Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitors
- Multi-kinase Inhibitors
- Capecitabine, everolimus

Upon receiving a prescription for any agents that commonly cause diarrhea:

- Counsel patient on importance diarrhea management and risks of dehydration (life-threatening)
- Provide loperamide and dosing instructions (listed below) to patient
- Keep loperamide well stocked
- Counsel patient on appropriate diet (listed below)
- Schedule follow up phone call within first few days or week of starting therapy to assess if patient is experiencing diarrhea
 - If loperamide not controlling diarrhea then contact prescriber for Lomotil (or another antidiarrheal)
 - If severe will need to bring in for fluid and electrolyte replacement

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Drug therapy:

- **Loperamide (OTC):**
 - Take two caplets (4 mg) followed by one caplet (2 mg) every two hours until you have had no diarrhea for 12 hours
 - During the night, take two caplets (4 mg) at bed time and continue every four hours during the night until morning
 - Stop taking loperamide only after there is no sign of diarrhea for 12 hours
 - Max of 16 mg per day (up to 24 mg for chemotherapy induced diarrhea under medical supervision)
- **Diphenoxalate/Atropine (RX only):**
 - Take two tablets (5mg) three to four times daily (Max of eight tablets per day).
 - Atropinism (dryness of the skin and mucous membranes, tachycardia, urinary retention, and hyperthermia) has been reported
 - Respiratory depression has been reported

Diet

- Avoid greasy, spicy or fried food
- Avoid milk, caffeine, alcohol
- Avoid high fiber vegetables
- Eat small meals
- B-R-A-T diet
 - Bananas, Rice, Apple Sauce, Tea (decaffeinated)/ or Toast

Patient Centered Activities:

- Adhere to suggested dosing and diet strategies listed above
- If taking antidiarrheal and without relief for 48 hours, then contact clinic
- Drink plenty of fluids per day: 6-8 large glasses (water, clear liquids, soup, sports drinks)
- Start Loperamide at the first onset of diarrhea
- If you are taking immunotherapy (IV) then contact your clinic immediately at the first onset of diarrhea

References:

1. Micromedex Drug Database

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