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Congenital heart disease support Initial assessment

Child Health Nursing | Initial assessment

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Fictional educational example. Individualize using verified patient findings, authorized treatment and current local protocols. No real patient record or observed outcome is claimed.

Clinical assessment

Subjective: Tires and sweats during feeds and takes longer to finish.

Objective findings and required checks: Poor weight gain and respiratory effort; the specific cardiac lesion determines assessment and targets.

Physical examination and investigations: Review cardiology diagnosis, echo findings, growth, feeding and individualized oxygenation goals.

Supply actual values, units, timing and trends during supervised application. Do not invent missing clinical data.

Clinical focus and pathophysiology

Congenital heart disease support: A structural cardiac lesion may alter circulation and increase cardiac work or reduce oxygen delivery.

Medical / surgical management

Coordinate cardiology care, pacing of feeds and prescribed nutrition/medicine plans; monitor fatigue and perfusion.

Illustrative drug and treatment study

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Medicine / treatment	Purpose	Nursing checks
Prescribed cardiac medicine	Manage the specific lesion or heart-failure symptoms	Verify pediatric prescription and drug-specific monitoring
prescribed nutrition support	Meet energy needs safely	Monitor tolerance and growth.

Treatment examples are not a prescription. Verify the authorized product, dose, route, timing, contraindications and current local product information.

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Nursing care plan

Nursing diagnoses use original clinical problem wording. They are not the licensed NANDA-I classification. Verify any formal label or code against your institution's licensed current edition; select actual or risk diagnoses only when supported by assessment.

Context task: Establish the immediate clinical priorities and verify the baseline before assuming a diagnosis.

Set individualized measurable targets and an exact review time. Select actual or risk statements only when supported by assessment.

Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about dizziness, chest discomfort, fatigue and cold extremities. Assess: Assess consciousness, pulse, blood pressure, capillary refill and urine trend.	Reduced circulation to vulnerable tissues. Possible factors: altered blood flow or cardiac function. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Circulation and consciousness remain within the clinician-agreed targets. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Describes symptoms that require immediate review and the agreed follow-up plan.	1. Trend perfusion findings and escalate new chest pain, shock or altered consciousness immediately. Rationale: Poor circulation can rapidly threaten organ function. 2. Balance activity and rest and maintain the ordered monitoring schedule. Rationale: Reducing demand supports recovery while trends guide treatment. 3. Administer prescribed therapy and monitor effects and adverse reactions. Rationale: Response monitoring supports safe correction of the underlying problem. 4. Coordinate cardiology care, pacing of feeds and prescribed nutrition/medicine plans; monitor fatigue and perfusion. Rationale: A structural cardiac lesion may alter circulation and increase cardiac work or reduce oxygen delivery. The condition-specific plan addresses the underlying problem while response is monitored.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about breathlessness, chest tightness and activity tolerance. Assess: Record respiratory rate, effort, SpO2 and mental state against the prescribed target.	Breathing difficulty affecting oxygenation. Possible factors: altered ventilation or gas exchange. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Breathing effort improves and oxygenation remains within the individualized target. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Explains the respiratory action plan and demonstrates the prescribed device technique.	1. Reassess work of breathing and response to each intervention. Rationale: Trend changes identify deterioration earlier than a single reading. 2. Position to ease breathing, cluster care and allow rest. Rationale: This can reduce respiratory demand and distress. 3. Give oxygen and respiratory medicines only according to the clinical prescription or emergency protocol. Rationale: Individualized treatment supports oxygenation without unsafe blanket targets.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.
Ask: Ask about usual diet, recent intake, weight change and food access. Assess: Assess growth or weight trends, intake record and relevant nutritional findings.	Nutritional intake below current needs. Possible factors: poor appetite, increased requirements or feeding difficulty. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Tolerates the agreed nutrition plan without new complications. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Explains the individualized meal or feeding plan and follow-up arrangements.	1. Assess nutritional risk and confirm swallowing safety and any fasting order. Rationale: The appropriate feeding route depends on clinical safety. 2. Offer suitable small meals or prescribed feeds with dietitian input when indicated. Rationale: Individualized support improves intake and nutrient adequacy. 3. Monitor tolerance, weight or growth and metabolic findings where required. Rationale: Progress and complications guide adjustment of support.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask what the learner already knows and wants to understand. Assess: Use teach-back or demonstration to identify specific gaps.	Learning needs about the condition and care plan. Possible factors: new information, complex treatment or limited prior teaching. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Explains the most important immediate action in their own words. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates the agreed care skills and names follow-up and warning signs.	1. Assess language, literacy, hearing, vision and preferred learning method. Rationale: Accessible teaching improves understanding. 2. Teach a few condition-specific points using plain language and demonstration. Rationale: Focused information is easier to retain and apply. 3. Use teach-back, correct misunderstandings and provide an accessible written plan. Rationale: Checking understanding supports safer self-management. 4. Teach lesion-specific warning signs, feeding plan, medicine measurement and scheduled cardiology review. Rationale: Condition-specific teaching connects the treatment plan to safe continuing care.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Health education and continuing care

Teach lesion-specific warning signs, feeding plan, medicine measurement and scheduled cardiology review.

Transition only after clinical readiness is confirmed. Reconcile medicines, check access and caregiver support, and document who will review the patient and when.

Urgent warning signs

New cyanosis, collapse, marked feeding intolerance or severe breathing difficulty needs urgent specialist assessment.

Evaluation and conclusion

For each goal, document met, partly met or not met using observed evidence and the review time. Reassess and revise if progress is inadequate. Individual assessment, prioritized care and coordinated review guide this topic.

Quick Revision

- A structural cardiac lesion may alter circulation and increase cardiac work or reduce oxygen delivery.

- Priority concerns: Reduced circulation to vulnerable tissues; Breathing difficulty affecting oxygenation; Nutritional intake below current needs; Learning needs about the condition and care plan.

- New cyanosis, collapse, marked feeding intolerance or severe breathing difficulty needs urgent specialist assessment.

- Teach lesion-specific warning signs, feeding plan, medicine measurement and scheduled cardiology review.

Exam / viva: Which finding changes the order of priorities, and what must be escalated immediately?

References

Nursing Fundamentals, 2e - Ernstmeyer & Christman (editors), Open RN / WisTech Open, 2024
https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/nursingfundamentals/

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Nursing Pharmacology, 2e - Ernstmeyer & Christman (editors), Open RN / WisTech Open, 2023
https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/pharmacology2e/

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https://www.indiannursingcouncil.org/gazette-notification

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