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# Heparin administration safety Initial assessment

Pharmacology-related Cases | 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: Asks why injections and blood checks are needed.

Objective findings and required checks: Injection-site bruising and blood-count trends require monitoring.

Physical examination and investigations: Verify the exact product and indication, weight/renal considerations, platelets and product-specific coagulation monitoring when ordered.

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

## Clinical focus and pathophysiology

Heparin administration safety: Heparin products reduce coagulation but can cause bleeding and immune-mediated platelet complications.

## Medical / surgical management

Use the correct prescribed product, route and administration procedure; monitor bleeding and platelet-related concerns.

## Illustrative drug and treatment study



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| Medicine / treatment | Purpose | Nursing checks |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Prescribed heparin product | Provide indicated thrombosis prevention or treatment | Check product, dose order, platelets and required tests |
| no product interchange without authorization | Prevent potency and regimen errors | Clarify discrepancies with pharmacy/prescriber. |

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 bleeding, dizziness, bruising and relevant medicines. Assess: Assess blood loss, circulation, consciousness and ordered coagulation or blood counts. | Bleeding or vulnerability to further blood loss. Possible factors: tissue injury, altered coagulation or treatment effects. Validate against the patient's assessment. | Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Blood loss is recognized promptly and circulation is supported by the emergency or treatment plan. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Identifies bleeding warning signs and medicine-related precautions. | 1. Quantify visible loss where possible and escalate active significant bleeding immediately. Rationale: Underestimating blood loss can delay life-saving care. 2. Prepare ordered access, investigations and treatment while monitoring perfusion. Rationale: Coordinated response supports rapid stabilization. 3. Avoid unnecessary traumatic procedures and apply appropriate bleeding precautions. Rationale: Reducing additional injury limits preventable blood loss. 4. Use the correct prescribed product, route and administration procedure; monitor bleeding and platelet-related concerns. Rationale: Heparin products reduce coagulation but can cause bleeding and immune-mediated platelet complications. 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 medicine names, timing, symptoms and non-prescribed products. Assess: Review observations, medication record and relevant drug-specific investigations. | Possible treatment-related harm requiring prompt assessment. Possible factors: adverse medication effects or an administration problem. Validate against the patient's assessment. | Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: The suspected adverse event is escalated and no further avoidable exposure occurs. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Explains the revised medication plan and warning symptoms before discharge. | 1. Assess airway, breathing, circulation and the time course of symptoms. Rationale: Serious adverse reactions require immediate stabilization. 2. Escalate suspected toxicity and follow the authorized hold, monitoring or antidote instructions. Rationale: Treatment decisions depend on the drug and clinical severity. 3. Document and communicate the reaction and reconcile the medicine list. Rationale: Accurate records reduce repeat exposure and support pharmacovigilance. | 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 exposure, wound symptoms and recent invasive devices. Assess: Inspect relevant sites and monitor systemic findings and investigation trends. | Vulnerability to infection or worsening infection. Possible factors: disrupted barriers, exposure or reduced host defence. Validate against the patient's assessment. | Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Aseptic care is maintained and any new signs of infection are escalated promptly. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates relevant hygiene and explains the infection-prevention plan. | 1. Use hand hygiene and risk-based standard or transmission precautions. Rationale: Interrupting transmission protects the patient, staff and other patients. 2. Review invasive device need with the team and maintain indicated aseptic care. Rationale: Unnecessary devices and barrier breaks increase infection exposure. 3. Monitor for systemic deterioration and administer prescribed antimicrobials on schedule. Rationale: Early escalation and timely indicated treatment reduce avoidable harm. | 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. Explain injection care, bleeding signs, medicine interactions and follow-up. 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

Explain injection care, bleeding signs, medicine interactions and follow-up.

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

**Major bleeding, a substantial platelet fall, new thrombosis or severe reaction needs urgent review.**

## 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

- Heparin products reduce coagulation but can cause bleeding and immune-mediated platelet complications.

- Priority concerns: Bleeding or vulnerability to further blood loss; Possible treatment-related harm requiring prompt assessment; Vulnerability to infection or worsening infection; Learning needs about the condition and care plan.

- Major bleeding, a substantial platelet fall, new thrombosis or severe reaction needs urgent review.

- Explain injection care, bleeding signs, medicine interactions and follow-up.

**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/

Nursing Pharmacology, 2e - Ernstmeyer & Christman (editors), Open RN / WisTech Open, 2023
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