MANAGEMENT OF NEUTROPENIA
Neutropenic Protocol

Policy:

To provide guidelines for the management of neutropenia in the radiation oncology patient.

1. Patients experiencing neutropenia or an immunocompromised state will be given verbal and written instructions by a nurse on neutropenic precautions, if instructed by a physician to do so.

2. All staff will follow/implement Neutropenic Precautions when patients present with neutropenia. (ANC less than 1.0 or 1,000)

3. Staff with known or suspected upper respiratory infections or fever will not provide care to patients who are neutropenic.

4. Patients experiencing neutropenia will not be placed in treatment or waiting room with patients who are known to be infectious.

Definition:

1. Neutropenia - an abnormal decrease in the number of white cells (neutrophils) essential for fighting infection. Normal neutrophil count is > 2000. Neutropenia occurs anytime the neutrophil count is < 1500. Neutropenic precautions will be instituted at an ANC of 1.0 or less according to Infection Control Isolation guidelines.

2. ANC - Absolute Neutrophil count
AGC - Absolute Granulocyte count

Procedure:

1. The radiation therapist will:
   a. when a patient is determined to be neutropenic and/or immunocompromised, notify the physician; and,
   b. request a nurse to provide verbal and written instructions (Neutropenia Precautions/Patient Information Sheet) to the patient and/or significant others, if directed by the physician to do so.

2. The radiation therapist, nursing staff, and/or physician will:
a. instruct the patient on a date/time to receive next blood count to assess white blood cell count.

b. assess patient's and/or significant others understanding of written/verbal instructions (i.e., patient verbalizes things to avoid and when to return to clinic for blood count);

c. if providing any type of treatment, not dependent on immune status, institute **Neutropenic Precautions**:

   a. Standard precautions are used
   
   b. Prep all Venipuncture sites according to infection control guidelines.
   
   c. Avoid all medications and/or temperatures rectally.
   
   d. Avoid parenteral medications.
   
   e. Minimize invasive procedures by coordinating Venipuncture.
   
   f. Avoid insertion of urinary catheters.
   
   g. No fresh fruit, vegetables, live or dried plants are allowed.

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