ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
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Encephalopathy

Encephalopathy is a broad term for any diffuse disease of the brain that alters brain function or structure.

Common Symptoms:

Symptoms can vary widely depending on the cause and severity of the condition:

- Confusion or altered level of consciousness
- Memory problems or cognitive deficits
- Seizures
- Changes in personality or behavior
- Motor disturbances, such as weakness or tremors

Causes:

Potential causes:

- Encephalopathy can be caused by multiple different factors metabolic disturbances, infections, toxins, or lack of oxygen.

Hospice Considerations:

No cure is available for encephalopathy however treatment can manage the underlying cause. Encephalopathy can lead to profound changes in cognitive function and consciousness.

- **Advanced Symptoms:** When disease causes severe confusion, altered consciousness, and significant dependency for all care.
- **Symptom Management:** When managing symptoms such as agitation, seizures, and pain becomes difficult.

Symptom Management Tips:

- **Monitor Mental Status:** Regularly assess cognitive function and emotional state, noting any significant changes.

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- **Hydration and Nutrition:** Ensure the patient is well-hydrated and provide easy-to-eat foods that are nutritious (as tolerated).
- **Pain Management:** Administer medications for pain as prescribed and provide comfort measures like warm blankets or gentle touch.

How to Help:

- **Patient Tips:**
  - **Communicate Needs:** Use simple words or gestures to express needs and discomfort.
  - **Engage in Simple Activities:** Participate in low-stress activities that don't require extensive concentration.
  - **Prioritize Rest:** Ensure plenty of quiet time to minimize agitation and fatigue.

- **Caregiver Tips:**
  - **Create a Calm Environment:** Use soft lighting and quiet spaces to reduce confusion and agitation.
  - **Monitor for Pain or Discomfort:** Be attentive to signs of distress and communicate any findings to healthcare providers.
  - **Supportive Presence:** Provide emotional support and companionship, engaging in gentle conversation or familiar activities.

St. Francis Reflections is always available to assist with any questions or concerns 24/7

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