Recognizing and Managing Diarrhea After Small Bowel Resection

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Goals and Objectives

• Importance of recognizing post surgical diarrhea in the carcinoid patient.

• How and why of small bowel resection.

• Evaluation of post surgical diarrhea.

• Understand the causes of diarrhea after small bowel resection.

• Best methods for treatment.
Blinded by the Stripes.

• Tendency to attribute symptoms, especially diarrhea, to carcinoid syndrome.

• Can lead to inappropriate treatment and exacerbation of actual problem.

• Careful evaluation is imperative.
Small bowel resection

- Surgical procedure whereby a part of the small bowel is removed.
- Goal of extracting a tumor or an area of disease or obstruction.
- Diarrhea and malabsorption frequently occur following small bowel resection.
Evaluation of diarrhea after small bowel resection

• **Size Does Matter**
  – Severity of symptoms correlates to the length of bowel removed and amount of functioning bowel remaining.

• **Location, Location, Location**
  – Specific symptoms and deficiencies correspond to the part of bowel removed.
GI Absorption
Ileum

• Third and last portion of the small bowel.

• Separated from the colon by the ileocecal valve.

**Function**

Reabsorption of bile salts

Absorption of B12

*During ileal resection all or part of the ileum is removed resulting in decreased ability or inability to perform necessary functions.*
Bile Transit

Liver

Gallbladder

Duodenum & Jejunum

Ileum

95% reabsorbed

Bile Acid Diarrhea

Bile Acids spill into colon
Characteristics

- Chronic, profuse and watery
- Associated with eating
- Disappears with fasting
- High fat meals/large meals can worsen.
- Accompanied by urgency
- Not nocturnal.
Treatment

- Bind the bile acids with sequestrants
  - Welchol
  - Questran

- Can also bind medication: thyroid replacement, coumadin, birth control, phenytoin, glyburide

- Can decrease absorption of fat soluble vitamins (A,D,E,K)
B12 Deficiency

- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Pale Skin
- Swollen, smooth, bright red tongue
- Tingling or numbness in fingers and toes
- Impaired memory
- Depression
- Mood Changes

Treatment

- Check CBC and B12 level
- B12 supplementation
Key Points

✧ Don’t be blinded by the stripes!
✧ Carefully evaluate diarrhea in the post surgical patient.
✧ Symptoms correlate to location and length of bowel removed.
✧ Consider bile acid diarrhea and use sequestrants
✧ Monitor for B12 deficiency and correct
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