Medications – Heparin Injection Administration

PURPOSE:
For anticoagulant therapy in treatment of deep vein thrombosis, myocardial infarction, embolism and prevention of embolism.

CONSIDERATIONS:
1. Heparin prolongs the blood clotting time.
2. Heparin injection must be given subcutaneously into fatty tissue. The most common site is the abdominal fat pad.
3. Adverse side effects are irritation and mild pain at injection site, hemorrhaging, excessively prolonged clotting time and thrombocytopenia.
4. Hypersensitive reactions may include chills, fever, itching, rhinitis, burning feet and conjunctivitis.
5. The injection site should not be massaged after the injection, as small blood vessels may rupture and a hematoma develop.
6. DO NOT aspirate to check for blood because it may damage tissue and cause a hematoma.
7. Applying ice to injection site prior to injection will decrease irritating effects of heparin injection.
8. Patient/caregiver can be taught to administer heparin.
9. Instructions given to patient/caregiver.
10. Use at least 2 patient identifiers prior to administering medications.

EQUIPMENT:
Heparin
Alcohol prep pad
Gauze
Syringes (24- to 27-gauge needle, 1/2-7/8 inch)
Puncture-proof container
Gloves

PROCEDURE:
1. Check physician’s order for activated partial thromboplastin time (APTT) tests to be drawn, dosage of heparin, frequency and route of administration.
2. Adhere to Standard Precautions.
3. Identify patient and explain procedure.
4. Observe and assess for signs of bleeding and bruising. If present, hold dose and notify physician.
5. Draw up heparin after having injected equal amount of air into container. Recheck heparin dosage. Remove needle from syringe and attach new needle.
6. Select injection site. (See Medications—Subcutaneous Injection.)
   [Note: Site of injections of heparin must be rotated each time.]
7. Clean site with alcohol prep pads by starting at the center and moving outward in circular motion. Allow to air dry.
8. Pinch skin to elevate subcutaneous tissue; insert needle at 45-90 degree angle, depending on amount of fatty tissue and needle size. Once needle is inserted, skin may be released. DO NOT aspirate.
9. Inject heparin slowly.
10. Hold sterile gauze/antiseptic wipe over site and withdraw needle. Press site for a few seconds. DO NOT massage site.
11. Discard soiled supplies in appropriate containers.

AFTER CARE:
1. Document in patient’s record:
   a. Medication administered, dose, time, route and site.
   b. Patient’s response to procedure, side effects and management.
   c. Instructions given to patient/caregiver.
   d. Communication with the physician.