

Section: Division of Nursing
Approval: _____

* **PROCEDURE** *

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Minor Procedure
(Scope)

TITLE: ELECTROCAUTERY/ELECTROSURGERY/COAGULATION

PURPOSE: To outline the steps for utilizing electrocautery

- SUPPORTIVE DATA:**
1. Electrocautery is an adjunctive procedure to endoscopy or surgery, which provides three basic effects - cutting, fulguration and desiccation (the latter two are usually referred to as coagulation).
 2. Indications:
 - a. Presence of colonic or gastric polyps or masses
 - b. Need for large mucosal biopsy
 - c. Presence of GI bleeding – upper or lower GI tract
 - d. Need for sphincterotomy
 - e. Cautery for surgical procedure

- EQUIPMENT LIST:**
1. Equipment specific to endoscopic or surgical procedure being performed
 2. Electrosurgical unit (Valleylab)/ERBE or ERBE with Argon Plasma Coagulator
 3. Disposable return electrode (grounding pad)
 4. Polypectomy snare, sphincterotome, cautery tips or other electrosurgical accessories necessary as determined by the type of procedure to be performed
 5. Electrical connector adapters
 6. Disposable razor

CONTENT:

PROCEDURE STEPS:

KEY POINTS:

A. Pre-Procedure Assessment/Care

Contraindications

1. Refer to specific endoscopy procedure.
2. Ascertain if patient has a pacemaker, AICD, hip replacement, or artificial joints and notify physician if present.
3. Follow the manufacturer guidelines for equipment set up.

1. Coagulopathy
 2. Poor bowel prep, if used in conjunction with colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy
 3. Uncooperative patient
 4. Massive hemorrhage that requires surgery.
 5. Inability to visualize probe tip.
- While electrocautery can safely be performed with the majority of newer model pacemakers, definite determination must be made before the procedure. With AICD have trained practitioner/cardiologist present to deactivate if necessary and reactivate post procedure.

4. Patient teaching:
 - a. Explain the presence of the grounding pad
 - b. Instruct the patient not to touch side rails, IV poles or other metal objects during the procedure
 - c. Assure the patient that the electrocautery procedure is painless

B. Responsibilities During Procedure

1. Apply the return electrode (grounding pad) as per manufacturer's guidelines. Pad should have generous contact on healthy tissue, free of excessive hair.

The placement of the grounding pad should be as far away as possible from the pacemaker, hip pin or artificial joint and as close to the site of use as possible malfunction of the pacemaker and burns from internal metal prosthesis may occur.
2. Do not turn power on until physician is ready to use the electrosurgical unit. Turn power off immediately after use.
3. Place foot pedal in appropriate position for the physician; monitor foot placement as the procedure continues.
4. Verify with the physician which mode (coagulation, cut or blend) is desired, verbally repeating mode and settings.
5. Verbally confirm each setting change.
6. If electrical current is not conducted, check unit and all connections for secure fitting.
7. Reassure and encourage the patient, keeping him as still as possible.

Potential Complications:

1. Thermal injury
2. Hemorrhage
3. Perforation
4. Transmural burns
5. Explosion
6. Deep ulceration

C. Post-Procedure Assessment/Care:

1. Check for skin damage or burns near and under the grounding pad.
2. Monitor patient and document results.
3. Monitor for abdominal pain and/or distention with endoscopic use.
4. Document power settings.
5. Refer to specific procedure for discharge procedure and instructions.

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