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AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA (Medical Emergency Card)

Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD) results from a sudden rise in blood pressure in an individual with a spinal cord injury (SCI), with a neurological level of T6 or above.

The cause of AD is a pain stimulus below the level of injury, resulting in an unopposed sympathetic system discharge. Raising the blood pressure 20-40mm Hg systolic above the person's normal baseline blood pressure, may trigger the symptoms of AD.

Symptoms of Autonomic Dysreflexia

- Increased blood pressure
- Severe headache
- Flushing & sweating above the level of the SCI
- Bradycardia
- Anxiety
- Cardiac irregularities
- Bronchospasm or respiratory distress
- Goose bumps on skin above the level of the SCI

If left untreated, this condition can result in seizure, retinal hemorrhage, stroke or in extreme cases, death.

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If any symptoms of AD appear, ensure the following:

- Keep the person in a 90° upright position.
- Check there is free urinary drainage.
- Check for distended bowel.
- Check for ingrowing toenails and skin sores.
- Assess for other possible noxious stimuli.
- Hypertension should be treated medically if it persists with prescribed Nifedipine.

Card Holder's Medical Information

Name:

Baseline Blood Pressure:

Level of Injury:

Emergency Contact:

Relationship:

Phone Number:

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