

major part of the responsibility and for which they may be ill prepared. They often fear that they will be unable to provide the care the child needs. One of the most difficult aspects of the diagnosis is the implications inherent in its etiology (i.e., the recognition that each parent contributed the gene responsible for the defect).

Hospital Care

Most patients with CF require hospitalization only for treatment of pulmonary infection, uncontrolled diabetes, or a coexisting medical problem that cannot be treated on an outpatient basis. Therefore, when patients with CF are hospitalized, implement standard precautions with meticulous hand washing to decrease the nosocomial spread of organisms to the CF patient and between hospitalized CF patients (especially when MRSA is prevalent). Contact precautions may be required for specific infections or to prevent transmission of infection between patients. Some institutions are issue contact precautions on all patients admitted with CF for their protection.

When the child with CF is hospitalized for diagnosis or treatment of pulmonary complications, aerosol therapy, and percussion and postural drainage are instituted or continued. Respiratory therapists often initiate, supervise, and provide these treatments; however, it is the nurse's responsibility to monitor the patient's tolerance to the procedure and evaluate the effectiveness of the procedure in relation to treatment goals. The nurse may at times administer aerosol therapy, perform chest percussion and postural drainage, assist with ACTs (such as the mechanical vest), and teach breathing exercises. Planning percussion and postural drainage so that it does not coincide with meals is difficult in the hospital situation but is essential to the effectiveness of this treatment.

Nursing assessments, including observation of respiratory pattern, work of breathing, and lung auscultation, are vital assessments. Noninvasive pulse oximetry provides valuable data about the patient's oxygenation status. Supplemental oxygen therapy is administered to the child with mild or moderate respiratory distress, and the child requires frequent assessment of the tolerance to the procedure.

One of the nursing challenges in the care of the child with CF is