Blood Pressure Education for Nurses

Why do blood pressure monitoring and readings matter for HF patients?

Blood pressure readings are used as targets for adjusting medication doses to adhere to guideline treatment recommendations. For patients with Heart Failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF), the highest tolerated doses are most likely to improve heart function and to provide the highest level of protection against heart muscle damage.

What is the goal for treating blood pressure?

In hypertensive patients, the optimal blood pressure should be less than 130/80 mm Hg. When patients are educated about heart failure and the risks of having high blood pressure, medication adherence is better and patients are less likely to discontinue medications due to intolerances.

What should nurses tell patients about high blood pressure?

1. Stages of HF. Talk to patients with hypertension, even if they do not yet have heart failure. One idea is to review the stages of heart failure. Just having risk factors without symptoms or known damage is stage A!
2. BP ranges- be sure they understand their targets. We hope to keep their BP below 130/80, but if this may be different, for patients as they are getting regulated with medications.
3. Discuss the importance of keeping a log and communicating symptoms with their HF team

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4. Explain proper BP assessment technique, including sitting upright, arms below level of heart, legs uncrossed. Discuss with them the best times to take their BP, and how to look for reliable monitors for patient to purchase.