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## HOSPICE PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### LIVER FAILURE

#### What is Liver Failure?

Liver failure refers to a condition in which the liver loses its ability to function effectively, leading to a disruption of vital processes within the body. This impairment can result from various causes, including chronic liver diseases, viral infections, alcohol-related liver disease, and certain genetic conditions.

#### What are the Signs and Symptoms of Liver Failure?

Liver failure may present with a range of symptoms, and its severity can vary. Common signs and symptoms include:

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Abdominal pain and swelling
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fatigue and weakness
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Confusion and disorientation
- Easy bruising and bleeding
- Fluid retention (edema)
- Dark-colored urine
- Pale-colored stools

#### What potential factors can cause Liver Failure?

Liver failure can be caused by various factors, including:

- Chronic liver diseases (cirrhosis)
- Viral hepatitis (hepatitis B, hepatitis C)
- Alcohol-related liver disease
- Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)
- Autoimmune hepatitis
- Hemochromatosis (excess iron accumulation in the liver)
- Acetaminophen (paracetamol) overdose
- Biliary obstruction
- Genetic liver disorders
- Toxic liver injury due to certain medications or chemicals

#### What can be done for the person with Liver Failure?

Managing liver failure involves supportive care, addressing the underlying causes, and, in severe cases, liver transplantation. Here are some general strategies:

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- Identification and treatment of the underlying cause of liver failure.
- Dietary modifications to manage complications like fluid retention and malnutrition.
- Medication management to control symptoms and address specific liver-related issues.
- Lifestyle changes, including abstinence from alcohol and adherence to a balanced diet.
- Regular monitoring of liver function through blood tests and imaging studies.
- Prevention of complications, such as infections and bleeding.
- Education about the importance of medication adherence and lifestyle modifications.
- Exploration of liver transplant evaluation for eligible candidates.
- Palliative care for individuals with advanced liver failure who may not be suitable candidates for transplantation.

**Open communication with healthcare providers, adherence to medical recommendations, and collaboration with a liver specialist (hepatologist) are essential for effective management. Additionally, connecting with liver disease organizations can offer valuable resources and support for individuals and their families facing the challenges of liver failure.**

