

Coma



What is it?

- Coma - Unconscious state, unresponsive to verbal or painful stimuli, a state like anesthesia or a deep sleep, cannot be aroused even with severe pain.
 - Glasgow coma scale is often used to determine levels of unconsciousness, prognosis.
- Obtundation - reduced arousal.
- Hypersomnia - excessive long or deep sleep, awakened only by energetic stimulation.
- Stupor - deep unresponsiveness, aroused briefly by being shaken repeatedly, pinched, spoken to loudly, stuck by a pin.

Causes:

- Causes - Serious illness, injuries, abnormalities of the brain.
- Brief Coma - mild head injury, seizure, reduced blood flow to the brain - fainting spell, stroke.

What can I do?

- See your Health Care Provider - for more information.
- Elevate Head - to prevent aspiration if feeding.
- See an RD - for help with calorie, fluid, vitamin, mineral, and fiber needs.
 - See FOOD FITNESS FIRST, INC.® for all of the above stated.
- See FOOD FITNESS FIRST, INC.® RD - online for help.
- Patient - may need TPN (Total Parenteral Nutrition).
- Medications often used:
 - Anticonvulsants - may aggravate folic acid metabolism, can cause decreased serum levels over a period of time.
 - Phenytoin (Dilantin).
 - Steroids - increases sodium retention, increased potassium, magnesium and calcium losses, increased nitrogen depletion.
 - Antacids - to prevent stress ulcers.
 - Cathartics - monitor electrolyte imbalances.