

CHEMOTHERAPY AND PERIOPERATIVE NURSES

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Background Information: The University Of Chicago Medicine (UCM) reestablished chemotherapy infused surgical cases following expansion of our oncology program. There was a need to update policy and guidelines related to safe handling of chemotherapy due to several changes including: post-operative patient disposition from the intensive care unit to the post-anesthesia recovery unit [PACU]; regulatory guideline revisions by National Institute for Occupational Safety Health (NIOSH) and other federal agencies; and recommendations by the Oncology Nurse Society (ONS) to minimize exposure to perioperative nurses when working with hazardous drugs.

Objectives of Project: The perioperative nurses needed education about the updated policy and guidelines for chemotherapy precautions when providing care for the perioperative chemotherapy patient. The training module also needed revising to accurately represent the revised policy and guidelines.

Process of Implementation: Education content for nurses focused on personal protective equipment (PPE) and chemotherapy waste disposal among other updates. Content for the perioperative staff included surgical preferences during chemotherapy infused cases and chemotherapy precautions. Based on adult-learning principles, modalities included inservices and hands on demonstration of PPE provided during daily huddles and monthly staff meetings.

Statement of Successful Practice: The policy and guidelines were updated to reflect current national standards. A total of 130 (100% participation) nurses were provided education via computer based modules, inservices, and daily huddles and staff meetings.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: A multidisciplinary approach using a review of updated standards is key to developing comprehensive policies and guideline. Inservices and hands on demonstrations with return demonstrations rather than computer based modules were critical for nurses initially learning about PPE and waste disposal to ensure safe handling of chemotherapy.