

Nursing Best Practice: Promoting Medication Safety on Commonly Used Medications in the Ambulatory Surgery PACU

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Background Information: In the perioperative setting at a comprehensive and complex cancer center, multiple medications are utilized to provide high quality and safe patient care. Nursing staff are cross trained to work in various specialty areas within the unit. This required a need for awareness and understanding of the various medications available in each area for safe nursing practice.

Objectives of Project: To provide a quick reference guide for nurses on commonly used unit-based medications in each specialty area to serve as a resource tool to help promote medication safety and minimize medication errors.

Process of Implementation: Nurses were educated on commonly used unit-based medications utilizing a PowerPoint presentation. A printed quick reference guide was created and made available in the ASC PACU, Extended Recovery, IR PACU, Brachytherapy PACU, and Pre-Op areas. This provides an easy and quick access to unit-based available medications, medication doses, indications, and common side effects.

Statement of Successful Practice: The commonly used unit-based medication reference guide was successful in promoting medication safety, improved patient care, and nurse satisfaction. Feedback was obtained via a post-implementation survey of 41 nurses. The results show that 93% found the tool beneficial to their patient care, and 95% agreed it will promote medication safety during cross-training in another specialty area.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: A reference guide of commonly used unit-based medications is a great resource tool for nurses. It fosters medication safety and is useful for peri-anesthesia nurses in their daily nursing practice. Since implementation, the team has collaborated with leadership to incorporate the guide in the New Employee and cross-training orientation packet.