

## **WARM UP TO PATIENT SAFETY AND SATISFACTION**

Team Leaders: Kim Sheffield, BSN, RN, CPAN, Brenda Moore, BSN, RN, CAPA  
UF Health, Gainesville, Florida

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The prevention of unplanned perioperative hypothermia and promotion of normothermia is a national priority in the prevention of surgical site infection, and has been designated as a quality measure by the Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP). Hypothermia is defined as a core temperature less than 36°C. It has many adverse effects ranging from patient thermal discomfort to increased morbidity and mortality. The potential negative consequences include possible myocardial infarction, increased risk of infection, poor wound healing, altered drug effects, and increased length of hospital stay. The American Society of Peri-Anesthesia Nurses Clinical Practice Guidelines recommends forced air warming for all patients at high risk for perioperative hypothermia.

### **OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT:**

- Prevent unplanned perioperative hypothermia by applying forced air warming gowns to preoperative patients.
- Increase staff awareness of the potential risks and adverse effects of this complication.
- Improve patient satisfaction and thermal comfort levels throughout their perioperative experience.

### **PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:**

PACU, Preop and OR staff were educated regarding the prevention and treatment of perioperative hypothermia. In-services were provided for application and use of the Bair Hugger warmers and gowns. Bair Hugger gowns were applied on admission to Preop and PACU. Patient/family education was provided as to the benefits of prewarming.

### **STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:**

Patient surveys reported increased satisfaction & level of thermal comfort with utilization of the forced air warmer gowns. Incidence of hypothermia on arrival to med-surgical floors has decreased. Both patient satisfaction and improved patient care indicate that continued usage of forced air warming (Bair Hugger gowns) is beneficial.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING:**

Forced air warming improved patient comfort and satisfaction as well as meeting SCIP core measures in patient safety.