

EDUCATING PERIANESTHESIA PATIENTS REGARDING SAFE PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION DISPOSAL

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Over 250 million prescriptions for opioids were written in 2012 alone. Alarming, during that same 12-month period, an average of forty-six persons died each day from an overdose of those same medications. Opioids are routinely prescribed for the majority of surgical patients for control of post-operative pain. However, research has shown more than half of the doses supplied remained unused by the patient. These circumstances can lead to the well-documented problem of prescription medication abuse by persons other than the patient, as well as safety concerns for children in the home. In addition, prescription medications that are disposed of improperly may become environmental contaminants. With the signing into law of the "Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act" in October 12, 2010, perianesthesia nurses now have the opportunity and the responsibility to educate patients about safe prescription medication disposal, prior to discharge.

OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT:

At the conclusion of the presentation, the participants will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of educating patients about safe prescription medication disposal.
2. Identify legal, environmentally safe prescription medication disposal methods.
3. Discuss patient education strategies regarding safe prescription medication disposal.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

Poster/PowerPoint will include the following information:

- Statistics on unsafe patient practices regarding prescription medications
- Explanation of safe disposal of prescription medications
- Recommendations for patient education in the perianesthesia setting

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:

Successful implementation of patient education practices in the perianesthesia setting can contribute to a decrease in prescription medication abuse, accidental ingestion of opioids by children, and environmental contamination.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING:

Due to the significant number of postoperative opioid prescriptions, perianesthesia nurses need to take a leadership role in addressing the issue of timely, legal, and environmentally safe prescription medication disposal. This presentation will heighten awareness and provide practice guidelines for addressing this important issue.