

Home Care Instruction for Eye Surgery – Using Health Literacy Best Practices

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Background Information: Health literacy is a well-established best practice that nurses can use to provide home care instructions post hospital stay. It is an excellent place to start, especially given the intensity of care, complexity of medications and importance of patient adherence. Nurses provide extensive information in a condensed period of time about how to take care at home. With the anxiety of surgery, potential side effects of anesthesia and the time limitations of an outpatient setting, there is greater risk for patients being unprepared when they leave our care. Patients report this as an overwhelming experience, sometimes with little retention of the information given. Multiple methods of education using health literacy best practices work to achieve that goal to improve patient outcomes.

Objectives of Project: Provide clear, concise, easily navigated home care information using health literacy best practice for patients undergoing eye surgery in a hospital-based ambulatory setting.

Process of Implementation: The patient information previously provided was a lengthy, bulleted, paragraph-style text written at an 11th grade reading level, included in a lengthy discharge summary. Health literacy best practices were used to create documents for each of the surgeries our unit performs. Home care information was then categorized using icons and simple sentences written at a 5th grade reading level. Each of these new documents is one page and is given separately from the hospital after visit summary. Staff training occurred to validate and verify how to use these new tools with our patients and their families. The unit successfully adopted this practice over a two month trial period.

Statement of Successful Practice: Staff chose to continue the new teaching materials and reliably using health literacy best practices. Furthermore, staff reported the value to the interaction with the patient or family and described the simplicity of education materials. Patients reported satisfaction with fewer papers given to them and how easily they could find information they needed to be successful at home in regard to recovery.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:

- Clear, concise information provided in a simple format
- Promoting healthy behaviors at home
- Patient satisfaction with home care information