

## **Preoperative Preference Cards: A Complete Guide to Prepping Surgical Patients**

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**Introduction:** As nurses at Houston Methodist The Woodlands, it is our responsibility to provide an exemplary uniform standard of care to our patients. The Preoperative Preference Cards establishes that standard of care. This quality improvement based practice project represents the positive outcomes that effects the patients, staff and doctors. The preference cards will provide a guideline to specific surgeries as a reference for not only seasoned nurses, new nurses and various departments throughout the hospital.

**Identification of the problem:** As a new nurse or an experienced nurse, there are ample things to learn in a career throughout the surgical department. Each surgery or surgeon has developed a preference to prepping their patients. Quality and standards of care are continuously updated and monitored for best care practices. Staff have the overwhelming tasks to learn these standards whether for an open heart surgery or an abdominal surgery. This daunting assignment has caused delays in care, frustration among staff and surgeons and most importantly placed patients at risk for disapproval or errors.

**Purpose of the Study:** Preoperative Preference Cards were developed to help standardize the nursing care performed in the Preoperative area at Houston Methodist The Woodlands. The development of these cards were based on best practice care from the formidable standards of accrediting agencies, certification standards and best care pathways. They are also compiled with the knowledge from the surgeons, anesthesiologist, circulating nurses and perioperative staff for this standard of care. Preference cards increased patient satisfaction, patient outcome, efficiency and throughput, nursing and surgeon satisfaction. This was measured from almost two thousand patient experience scores, seventy one Preoperative and Post Anesthesia Care Unit Nurse surveys and preoperative care intervals during this time frame.

**Results:** Preoperative care duration decreased by overall average of twenty minutes. Patient outcome experience increased satisfaction average from eighty five percent in July to almost ninety four in August and remained above the ninetieth percentile through December of 2021. Astonishingly staff surveys reported a one hundred percent satisfaction score based on implementation and usefulness of the preference cards.

**Conclusion:** The Preoperative Preference Cards are showing positive trends for usefulness and efficiency of the department through patient safety and throughput. As we grow and innovate here at Houston Methodist The Woodlands, the preference cards will do the same as they can be utilized across the entire hospital. In the future, these preference cards can be utilized system wide as well as tailored to other hospitals in our community.