

**PROTOCOL FOR: Discharge of Inpatients (Phase 1)**

**POLICY:** Inpatients will remain in the PACU until the discharge criteria have been met or until otherwise evaluated for discharge by an attending physician.

**DESIRED PATIENT**

- OUTCOME:**
1. The patient will be free from injury related to transfer.
  2. The patient will have received appropriate medication(s), administered safely.
  3. The patient will meet admission criteria for the receiving unit.

**CLINICAL  
ASSESSMENT AND**

- CARE:**
1. Inpatients not scheduled for admission to the ICU will be transferred with:
    - a stable airway, effective cough, and regular breathing pattern;
    - stable vital signs for at least 30 minutes;
    - adequate pain control by patient report (0 - 10 or faces scale) or FLACC scale rating (0 - 10)
    - responsiveness to verbal stimuli;
    - tympanic temperature of  $\geq 97^{\circ}$  F;
    - patent venous access;
    - evidence of adequate extremity tissue perfusion, *prn*, including capillary refill of 3 seconds or less;
    - ability to move all extremities, unless chronic motor/sensory compromise exists or residual effects from spinal/epidural anesthesia exists;
    - if the patient has received a spinal or epidural anesthetic for the purpose of postoperative pain management, physical exam will reflect the expected effect of the anesthetic route, level of blockade, respiratory stability, and stable BP with the head of the bed elevated  $45^{\circ}$  and the injection site will be free of hematoma and leakage.
    - if the patient has received a spinal or epidural anesthetic for the purpose of the operative or invasive procedure only:
      - there will be evidence of regression of both motor and sensory blockade and stable BP with the head of the bed elevated  $45^{\circ}$ .
      - the injection site will be free of hematoma and leakage.
  2. Inpatients scheduled for admission to the ICU will be transferred with:
    - a stable airway and oxygen delivery system;
    - patent venous access;
    - appropriate monitoring devices

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- PATIENT TEACHING:**
1. Patient will receive instruction regarding *prn* analgesics and antiemetics.
  2. Patient will receive instruction, as appropriate, regarding PCA/PCEA use.
  3. Patient will receive instruction, as appropriate, regarding residual effects of long-acting spinal or epidural anesthetics or peripheral nerve blockade.
  4. Patient will receive instruction about procedures occurring in their course of postanesthesia nursing care.
  5. Patient will receive instruction regarding any other teaching/learning needs as deemed appropriate by the patient's primary RN.

**APPROVAL:** Nursing Standards Committee

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 1/98

**REVISION DATE:** 6/03, 2/08, 3/09