

## Delegation and/or Medical Directive

### POST ANAESTHETIC CARE UNIT (PACU) DISCHARGE CRITERIA

1. A registered nurse may discharge a patient from the PACU when the Modified Aldrete Scale score is a minimum of 8/10 and the respiratory score is 2.
  - i. Patients with spinal anaesthesia must have regression of the sensory block by 2 dermatomes from the level the block was initiated, and regression of the sensory block must be lower than T12.
  - ii. Motor assessment using the Bromage scale with a minimum score of 2.
  - iii. Patient tolerates head of bed elevated at 30 degrees without hypotension or headache.
  - iv. Patients with continuous epidural analgesia may be discharged following one hour of monitoring if they meet the criteria for sensory block per physician order (PCEA Order Set). Patients will remain in PACU at least 30 minutes following a bolus of epidural opioid or local anaesthetic.
  - v. Upon discharge from PACU, the nurse receiving the patient on the floor/short stay unit (SSU) will be informed of the type of neuraxial anaesthetic technique used and the time of administration.
2. In addition to achieving a Modified Aldrete Scale score of 8/10, the patient assessment must meet the following standards before discharge from PACU.
  - i. Urinary Output:
    - 0.5mL/kg/hr. if the paediatric patient is on urinary drainage
    - Greater than or equal to 30mL/hr if the adult patient is on urinary drainage
    - no evidence of urinary retention
  - i. There will be no unusual surgical bleeding or swelling present. All drainage and suction tubes must function properly.
  - ii. Casts and tensors must show no sign of compromised circulatory or neurological status.
  - iii. Pain is less than or equal to 3 or less than or equal to the preoperative pain score.
  - iv. Excessive vomiting must be controlled.
  - v. The patient's temperature is at least 35 degrees C and not greater than 38.5 degrees C unless otherwise cleared by the attending anaesthetist.
3. The patient will remain in PACU for 15 minutes after the last bolus dose of intravenous narcotic and 30 minutes after the last dose of intramuscular opioid analgesic. **EXCEPTION:** patients on patient controlled analgesia (PCA) pumps.
4. If narcotic reversal agents, such as Naloxone are required, the patient will remain in the PACU for at least 1 hour following administration.
5. Following a bolus of intravenous atropine to treat symptomatic bradycardia, the patient will remain in PACU for at least 1 hour following administration.
6. The patient will remain in PACU if the receiving unit is not able to accept the patient.



## **Delegation and/or Medical Directive**

7. For those patients being discharged home, the following criteria must be met in addition to the above:
  - i. Patient will have received post-op and surgical instructions.
  - ii. Patient must be able to ambulate with minimal assistance.
  - iii. Patient must have an escort who will remain with the patient overnight.