

Fast tracking pediatric patients through the surgical experience: The Arkansas children's way

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Fast tracking surgical patients is not a new concept by any means. However, in our institution, we designed a fast track method that has not only helped with the efficiency of moving patients through the perioperative area for a simple procedure, but also improved patient and parent satisfaction. Prior to the fast track implementation, patients came to our institution for minor operative procedures, (less than 15 min in length) and waited pre-operatively as long as patients having more complex procedures (two hours or more). It was identified that the longest time our families spent waiting was in the pre-op area being evaluated for anesthesia. Up to 25% of our patients and families were dissatisfied with the waiting time. The patient population of ear tube placement (10 min procedure) was the ideal candidate to trial for the fast track program. Prior to fast track, the average total time (arrival to discharge) for ear tube procedures was 205 min.

Goals for the fast track program:

1. Total time from arrival to discharge less than 2 hours
2. Decrease pre-operative wait time for patients and families
3. Improve patient and family satisfaction
 - Short procedures(10 minutes) were chosen: Ear tube placement, suture removal, laser, frenulotomy.
 - Arrival time was 30-45 min prior to surgery vs. 2 hours
 - Follow up phone calls to families were made within 24 hours of discharge

With our fast tracking method, we decreased our total time (arrival to discharge) from 205 to 78 min. and improved our parent/patient satisfaction.

Biography

Jennifer Aunspaugh, M.D. completed her anesthesia residency and pediatric anesthesia fellowship training at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, AR and Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville, TN, respectively. Currently, she is the medical director of the Ambulatory Surgery Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital and the program director for the pediatric anesthesia fellowship program. She is a founding member of the perioperative collaborative group at Arkansas Children's Hospital who concentrate on OR efficiency and improving quality of care. Prior to arriving in Arkansas, she was the director of the fast track program at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital.

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