

Appendix

Nursing Protocol for Postoperative Care and Transfer of Patients with Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis to the Hospital Floor

The patients usually spend three hours in the postanesthesia care unit and are not released until seen and cleared by the orthopaedic and anesthesia service. An upright chest radiograph is made in the postanesthesia care unit if the thoracic spine is involved in the fusion. The hospital bed is delivered to the operating room so that there is only one transfer (from operating-room table to bed when the patient is still under some anesthesia). Although this transfer may seem like a small issue, it has substantial implications with respect to the need for a transfer from a gurney to a bed on arrival to the floor, which often causes considerable discomfort and anxiety. The nurse-to-patient ratio is 1:1 for at least the first six hours on the floor. In reality, it usually continues until the next morning, so patients receive twelve to fourteen hours of 1:1 care as this is easier from a staffing perspective. The registered nurse assesses the patient every hour and turns him or her every two hours. The nursing staff believes that turning the patient every two hours has a large effect in reducing patient stiffness the next day.