

OR NURSES: How do you transfer a patient from bed to OR table?

All you OR nurses, I would love to hear from you on how you transfer patients in your facility. Transferring a patient from the gurney to the OR table and vice versa is one of the least mentally stressful parts of our job right? Doesn't everyone do it the same way?

I am here to tell you that transferring of patients is one of those areas that everyone seems to be particular about in different facility. When I started to transfer my patient, on my first assignment, the way I had always done it, I was corrected by the local staff. At first, I started to question my technique. Was I doing it in such a way that was wrong or somehow inferior? Who cares how a patient is transferred as long as it is safe and does the job? On my next assignment, I tried to transfer the patient the way I learned at the last place. I got the same response. Soon I learned that transferring patients is one of those quirky areas that each facility feels personal about.

Many places use those short rollers. For some, a nicely folded sheet is used around the roller to move the patient. Other places don't want you to bother taking so much time to get a sheet when a small blue towel will do the trick. Then you have the places that use the long rollers and others that use the plastic slides (that look like they would be great for snow boarding). Have you ever worked in a facility that uses lifts? The lifts are a metal empty bed frame that attaches by straps to a leather sling that is already placed under the patient. Once the patient is lifted off the bed, they are suspended in the frame like a hammock and can be rolled to recovery. I always worry that one of the straps will come lose and the patient will go toppling to the floor, but I have yet to see it happen. They are a pain to use, but great for the patients. No rolling is required.

Furthermore, while we are talking about transferring patients, I would like to talk about how patients are transferred to the operating room. Most places use a gurney, but some places, especially outpatient facilities, will use wheel chairs or sometimes the patients are encouraged to walk into the operating room. This always feels strange to me. I am just waiting for the day a patient faints on me in the middle of the hallway.

From now on, I don't assume I know how to transfer a patient. One of the first things I try to observe when I go to a new place is how they are going about their transfers. This makes things a lot better for me. I look like I fit in now and I don't have to ask them how they transfer their patients. I am sure I would only get that look that says....don't you know how to transfer a patient? That is one of the most basic parts of your job right?