

Approach to the Surgical Patient

Important questions to ask as a clinical pharmacist

1. Med Rec – was it done preoperatively? Is it accurate? Was it used to create the post-operative medication orders?
 - a. Are all the meds that were ordered post op appropriate? Should any meds that are ordered actually be held because of the surgery/recovery/patient stability?
 - b. Are all the meds that were held preop restarted? Is that appropriate? If not, when should they be restarted (time frame or based on symptoms)?
 - c. Are there any errors on the med rec that require correction?
 - d. Has the surgery made any preop medications unnecessary or unsafe?
 - e. Do any of the medications continued from preop require extra monitoring in a surgical patient?
2. New medications / conditions
 - a. Did the surgery create the need for new medications by altering the body's physiology? Have they been prescribed and are they appropriate? Use NESA
 - b. Have any new prophylaxis agents been prescribed post operatively? Use NESA. Assess duration.
3. Managing post-operative complications

This is a list of common post-operative complications:

- i. N/V
- ii. Pain
- iii. Surgical site infection or other infection
- iv. Delirium
- v. AF
- vi. Hypotension (shock) or hypertension
- vii. Bleeding or hemorrhage
- viii. Thrombosis
- ix. Urinary retention
- x. Bowel obstruction, constipation or diarrhea

For each of these, consider:

- a. Does the patient have any of the following post-operative complications? How are you assessing for each one based on objective and subjective signs and symptoms?
 - b. Does the patient have appropriate therapy for these complications? Use NESA
 - c. If the patient is prescribed a prn medication, how much of it is being used and does that signal any DTP?
4. Discharge
 - a. What discharge counselling will the patient require?
 - b. What special authorities will the patient require?
 - c. Is there outpatient monitoring that can be facilitated by the pharmacist?
 - d. Is any seamless care activity necessary?