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PACU Update

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The Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) is a key element in ensuring a successful operative experience. Recovery from surgery is dependent on a transition from intensive focus of the operating room to safe care in the hospital ward or home after surgery. The key area of transition is the Post Anesthetic Care Unit. It is in the PACU that the patient “awakens” from anesthesia. Respiratory function has to be maintained and stable vital signs have to be assured. In addition, pain issues as well as postoperative nausea have to be addressed. In an effort to facilitate throughput, each type of surgery is establishing protocols to aid in rapid recovery, minimize pain, increase ambulation, and decrease hospital stay. What are the keys to ensure patient safety in the PACU?

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