AHRQ Safety Program for Improving

Surgical Care and Recovery

Template for Building and Implementing Your ISCR Pathway

**Purpose of tool:** The template below may help clinicians develop enhanced recovery pathways based on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Safety Program for Improving Surgical Care and Recovery (ISCR), and may help guide the building of order sets for the electronic health record (EHR).

**How to complete it:** Your ISCR champion should gather the [ISCR team](https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/hai/tools/surgery/8-building-core-team.docx) to complete the different cells of the grid below for a given pathway. It may take many discussions, but the team needs to agree on the various components. There can and will be exceptions, of course.

**How to use it:** Some suggested pathway elements are listed in each category of the grid. Review your pathway worksheet and the pathway your team has agreed on as you enter elements into the appropriate boxes. Be as clear, specific, and consistent as possible to avoid pathway confusion—you can reference more detailed documents as needed. For example, it may not be practical to list the entire intraoperative anesthesia protocol in this grid, so consider just listing where the final protocols are stored, for example in your hospital’s intranet.

It can be helpful to post the final pathway grid where it is easily accessible to clinicians. Examples include placing it on the wall in the unit conference rooms, nursing stations, on the hospital intranet, or as a link in your EHR so all providers can easily see what ISCR patients should be doing each day.

**All information provided in this table represents potential considerations. Rows for other activities, such as ordering tests, may be added to help you complete this table with information from your hospital’s pathway**. **Colorectal surgery pathway** **examples are provided to help you populate the template.** You should include notes for any exceptions or contraindications to processes as needed. For example, if your pathway includes venous thromboembolism (VTE) prophylaxis administered in the preop area and possible epidurals for regional analgesia, include timing of preoperative VTE prophylaxis for patients with and without epidurals. Some suggestions are included.

ISCR Pathway Grid

| Activity | Prior to Surgery | Prep Area  (Day of Surgery) | Intraop | PACU/Postop Day 0 | Postop  Day 1 | Postop Day 2 | Postop  Day 3 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Medications and Pain Control  Input all medications that are part of your hospital’s pathway. It is especially helpful to list the multimodal regimens so staff have a visual reference. | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * Mechanical bowel preparation, including oral antibiotics regimen * Skin preparation | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * Preop VTE prophylaxis * Preop multimodal analgesia bundle * Regional analgesia | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * Standard anesthesia protocol (list key points) * Antibiotic prophylaxis * VTE prophylaxis (if not given in preop period) * Analgesic and anti-nausea medications given at end of case * Regional analgesia | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * VTE prophylaxis regimen * Multimodal analgesia regimen * Regional analgesia | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * IV fluids * Multimodal analgesia regimen * Regional analgesia | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * IV fluids * Multimodal analgesia regimen * Regional analgesia | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * IV fluids * Multimodal analgesia regimen |
| Nursing and Treatment Activities | N/A | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * Warming blanket applied * Preop skin preparation | Modify and add details:  *Examples:*   * Sequential compression devices * Warming blanket * Surgical skin prep protocol | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Indwelling catheter plan | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Indwelling catheter plan | Modify and add details: | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Okay to shower |
| Physical Activity | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Preop exercise recommendations | N/A | N/A | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Mobility goal | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Mobility goal | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Mobility goal | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Mobility goal |
| Nutrition | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Presurgical liquids | N/A | N/A | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Clear liquids | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Clear liquids and advance to solid food as tolerated | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Solid food | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Solid food |
| Consults  (List any consults that are needed for your pathway. Most consults  [e.g., cardiac consults] are patient-specific) | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Preop clearance | N/A | N/A | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Ostomy nurse if needed | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Teaching | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Preop clinic – Provide ISCR patient education booklet, and teach about any important elements prior to surgery (e.g., preop bathing and bowel prep as applicable) | N/A | N/A | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Review Patient Education Booklet/ Checklist with patient | Modify and add details:  *Example:*   * Start discharge planning | N/A | N/A |

Abbreviations: DC = discontinue; intraop = interoperative; IV = intravenous; N/A = not applicable; OOB = out of bed; PACU = post-anesthesia care unit; postop = postoperative; PO = by mouth; POD = postoperative day; POD 0 = the date the patient’s procedure/surgery ends; preop = preoperative; prep = preparation; PRN = as needed; q = every; hrs = hours; VTE = venous thromboembolism

AHRQ Pub. No. 23-0052

June 2023