

Safe Surgery Checklist

The Goal

The Safe Surgery Checklist is a communication tool for the surgical team – including the patient – to reduce the number of preventable errors and adverse events.

Adapted from the World Health Organization checklist in 2009, the Safe Surgery Checklist has resulted in many “good catches”, demonstrating the value of this tool in ensuring safe surgical care is provided to all Albertans.

The Process

The checklist ensures critical information is shared between all members of the surgical team during three phases of surgery:

- Briefing before anesthesia
- Time out before incision
- Debriefing before going into the recovery room



By improving communication between all members of the care team during these three phases of surgery the Safe Surgery Checklist provides safety and reduces potential complications for patients.

Alternate versions of the checklist have been approved for use in Ophthalmology and C-Section procedures to support patient safety in these areas.

The Outcome

Approximately 98 percent of surgeries in Alberta are compliant with the use of the checklist, with a goal of 100 percent use for every surgery completed in an operating room across the province.

Use of the checklist is improving patient safety, resulting in better communication among the surgical team - including the patient - measurably reducing and preventing potential surgical errors such as the side or location of surgery, patient allergies to medications, and missing or incorrect surgical supplies.

The Team

This project transitioned to operations in December 2014. The Surgery Strategic Clinical Network continues to work collaboratively with the Zones and others to monitor and support the use of the Safe Surgery Checklist.

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