

# Simple instruction sheet helps patients correctly take regular medications before surgery

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Patients may be more likely to take their regularly prescribed medications for chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension correctly before surgery when provided a simple instruction sheet, reveals a study presented at the Anesthesiology 2016 annual meeting. Taking medication correctly before surgery can improve patient safety and comfort, and reduce day-of-surgery cancellations.

"We looked at ways to help [patients](#) who were being admitted to the hospital on the morning of surgery ensure they complied with their physician's medication instructions," said Andrew Grant, M.B., Ch.B., study lead author, Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley, Scotland. "Our goal was to make sure patients were as healthy as possible before surgery, improve safety and limit surgical cancellations due to patients incorrectly omitting certain medications or simply taking them improperly."

As more patients having elective surgery are admitted to the hospital or ambulatory center on the day of surgery, it is important that they are appropriately prepared. Traditionally, these patients receive verbal instructions given at a pre-assessment clinic, where a patient's preoperative medications are assessed and optimized. Certain long-term medications should be continued on the day of surgery, while others should be temporarily stopped. When a patient makes a medication error before surgery, it can be potentially dangerous, causing harm and

discomfort, and can lead to the procedure being cancelled.

In the study, 48 patients undergoing elective orthopaedic surgery who had been given [verbal instructions](#), and 57 patients who were given a newly implemented simple, medication instruction sheet (which nurses filled in with patients) in a pre-assessment clinic were evaluated to determine the error rate in which they were taking their medications before [surgery](#).

After adoption of the instruction sheet, the rate in which patients properly took or omitted their medications increased from 54 percent to 74 percent. The number of patients who incorrectly omitted taking their medications decreased from 42 percent to 25 percent and those who incorrectly took their medications decreased from 6 percent to 2 percent, with use of the instruction sheet.

"This is an inexpensive intervention that has been highly rated by staff," said Dr. Grant. "While the approach seems simple, re-enforcement of delivered information in written format can increase patients' compliance with advice given at pre-assessment and actively engages them in their own health care."

Provided by American Society of Anesthesiologists

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