


# Incorporating Age-Specific Plans of Care to Achieve Optimal Perioperative Outcomes 3.9

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*JULIANA MOWER, MSN, RN, CNS, CNS-CP, CNOR*

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### Purpose/Goal

To provide the learner with knowledge related to using age-specific plans of care to achieve optimal perioperative outcomes.

### Objectives

1. Describe how to develop an age-specific nursing care plan for a surgical patient.
2. Explain the purpose of a concept map.
3. Identify age-related characteristics pertinent to providing perioperative care.
4. Define polypharmacy.
5. Identify methods for improving communication with patients who have sensory impairments.

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Juliana Mower, MSN, RN, CNS, CNS-CP, CNOR, has no declared affiliation that could be perceived as posing a potential conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

The behavioral objectives for this program were created by Helen Starbuck Pashley, MA, BSN, RN, CNOR, clinical editor, with consultation from Susan Bakewell, MS, RN-BC, director, Perioperative Education. Ms Starbuck Pashley and Ms Bakewell have no declared affiliations that could be perceived as posing potential conflicts of interest in the publication of this article.

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## ABSTRACT

When developing a nursing plan of care, a perioperative nurse identifies nursing diagnoses during the preoperative patient assessment. The ability to identify age-specific outcomes (ie, infant/child, adolescent, adult, elderly adult) in addition to those that are universally applicable is a major responsibility of the perioperative RN. Having an individualized plan of care is one of the best ways to determine whether desired patient outcomes have been successfully attained. Nursing care plans address intraoperative and postoperative risks and allow for a smooth transfer of care throughout the perioperative experience. A good nursing care plan also includes education for the patient and his or her caregiver. Within an overall plan of care, the use of methods such as a concept or mind map can visually demonstrate the relationships between systems, nursing diagnoses, nursing interventions, and desirable outcomes. *AORN J* 102 (October 2015) 370-385. © AORN, Inc, 2015.

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One size does not fit all in developing plans of care for patients undergoing operative or other invasive procedures. In addition to identifying universally applicable outcomes, the perioperative nurse must identify age-specific outcomes. Two patients undergoing the same procedure may require very different preparations based on their ages. Adding to this challenge is the fact that a patient's physiological age may not accurately reflect his or her developmental stage. This is particularly true in children and adolescents, who may not fall neatly into a predetermined, age-specific category. The perioperative RN's critical thinking skills are a valuable asset in identifying a patient's unique needs, determining desirable outcomes, and then incorporating this information into an individualized plan of care that helps ensure safe, efficient, and effective nursing care.

Providing age-specific care requires addressing the typical changes that occur as a part of the normal aging process. The purpose of this article is to provide the basic or global components of a care plan and then develop it further by using the basic components as the foundation for expanding care interventions to all age groups with addendums that address several of the challenges specific to each age group. A sample concept map is provided to demonstrate the interrelationship of systems and desired outcomes for a pediatric patient.

In addition to the aging process, lifestyle factors and chronic disease processes affect body systems and may enhance or accelerate changes that are believed to be "normal" parts of aging, especially in adult and elderly populations. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to include comorbidities and

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