



AORN and The Joint Commission Team Up For Time Out Super Heroes

The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) and The Joint Commission are observing National Time Out Day on June 14 by reminding surgical teams of the importance of taking a surgical “time out” for every patient, every time. By taking a time out before operative and other invasive procedures, surgical team members confirm the patient, the procedure and the surgery. Despite this requirement, The Joint Commission estimates wrong site surgeries occur up to 40 times each week.

AORN and The Joint Commission encourage every surgical team member to be a SUPER HERO for patient safety. This SUPER HERO acronym stands for nine elements that come into play as part of practicing a time out:

- S**upport a safety culture
- U**se The Joint Commission’s Universal Protocol and AORN Surgical Checklist
- P**roactively reduce risk in the OR
- E**ffect change in your organization
- R**educe harm to patients
- H**ave frank discussions about hazardous situations
- E**mpower others to speak up when a patient is at-risk
- R**espect others on the surgical team
- O**penly seek opportunities for improving patient safety

AORN’s Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Linda Groah, MSN, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC, FAAN, said, “While the SUPER HERO theme provides a fun focus for National Time Out Day this year, its safety culture components are serious and should resonate with perioperative teams in their shared goal to create the safest surgical experience for their patients.”

Joint Commission President and Chief Executive Officer Mark R. Chassin, MD, FACP, MPP, MPH, said “An effective time out is a cornerstone of patient safety and safety culture that needs continual reinforcement. That is why The Joint Commission supports the efforts of the Association of periOperative Nurses in raising awareness of practices that prevent wrong-site, wrong-side, wrong-procedure or wrong-person surgery.”

The History of Time Out

In 2004, The Joint Commission, the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care, and a catalyst for high-reliability in health care, introduced the Universal Protocol, a simple process for preventing wrong site surgery.

The Universal Protocol calls for the patient and surgeon to confirm the procedure and mark the body

part to be operated on. It also calls for every member of the surgical team to participate in a time out before operating to ensure that the correct procedure is about to begin on the correct part of the correct patient.

AORN responded to the Universal Protocol by creating the National Time Out Day to raise awareness. In 2008, AORN also developed a combined surgical safety checklist to enable individual facilities to meet the Joint Commission's Universal Protocol and the World Health Organization's standards while customizing the check list to their surgical specialties.

About AORN

AORN represents the interests of more than 160,000 perioperative nurses by providing evidence-based research, nursing education, standards, and practice resources—including *Guidelines for Perioperative Practice* and the peer-reviewed, monthly publication *AORN Journal*—to enable optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures. AORN's 40,000 registered nurse members manage, teach, and practice perioperative nursing, are enrolled in nursing education or are engaged in perioperative research. www.aorn.org

###