

DISCHARGING PATIENTS FROM THE RECOVERY ROOM

1. GENERAL ANAESTHESIA

Patients should be 'ward ready' before being discharged from recovery. The best way to determine this is to have standard discharge criteria, so that irrespective of the recovery nurse's experience, a certain standard is obtained as long as the criteria are followed.

There are a number of published international discharge protocols, one of the more practical being the Aldrete Criteria:

SCORE	2	1	0
ACTIVITY	Moves all 4 limbs	Moves 2 limbs	No limb movement
RESPIRATION	Deep breathing + cough	Limited breathing	Apnoea
CIRCULATION	BP within 20% of normal	BP 20-50% of normal	BP <> 50% of normal
CONSCIOUSNESS	Can answer questions	Aroused by calling name	No response to audible stimulus
COLOUR	Pink (O ₂ sat > 90% after 5min on room air)	Neither pink nor cyanotic	Cyanotic (O ₂ sat < 85% on room air)

WARD READY: SCORE = 8 OR >8

2. SPINAL ANAESTHESIA