

Hypothermia Indoors? Protecting Kids in the Operating Room

New tool helps prevent dangerous, expensive complications for young surgical patients

Most parents wouldn't dream of sending their child outside on a blustery, cold day without the appropriate protective gear. Yet each year, nearly 1.3 million children under the age of 15 are exposed to the risk of hypothermia in a much less obvious environment – the operating room.¹ It happens throughout the year – on cold winter days and hot summer nights – and in most cases, parents are oblivious.

While hypothermia is commonly thought of as only a cold-weather phenomenon, it is one of the most common complications in surgical patients. Any patient receiving anesthesia is susceptible to inadvertent hypothermia, a condition where a patient's core temperature drops below the normal range. Anesthesia induction is a primary cause of this situation and more than half of all surgical patients will experience inadvertent hypothermia² unless patient warming measures are taken. Unplanned hypothermia can lead to serious complications such as increased rates of wound infection, longer hospital stays and increased mortality rates.^{2,3} These complications are also costly, adding an estimated \$2,500 to \$7,000 in healthcare costs for every affected patient.³

The good news is this all-too common condition may be easily and inexpensively prevented. A new pediatric patient warming gown from 3M is now available to hospitals nationwide to help prevent inadvertent hypothermia and its side effects.

"Our kid-friendly gown replaces traditional, flimsy cotton hospital gowns and will keep little patients warm and comfortable, and, most importantly, help them avoid the risks of hypothermia," said Julie Wick-Powell, senior product manager for the 3M™ Bair Paws™ system. The Bair Paws system features a single-use gown attached to a warming unit. Warm air flows through the gown, which provides patient warming before, during and after surgery.

Through a recent patient care quality measure implemented by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the government encourages warming for patients of all ages. Patient warming is not only important for alleviating common adverse effects like shivering, but it also works to avoid serious and costly complications of hypothermia that may be less widely known, but which pose risks to all surgical patients – young or old.

The warming gown is designed to fit the majority of elementary-aged children and features a kid-friendly color and pattern to help children feel more comfortable.

Currently, the Bair Paws system is used in more than 1,600 facilities throughout the U.S.

For more information about the Bair Paws pediatric warming gown, please visit www.bairpaws.com.

About Arizant Healthcare Inc., a 3M company

Arizant, headquartered in Eden Prairie, Minn., is the maker of surgical patient temperature management systems including 3M™ Bair Hugger™ therapy, the 3M™ Bair Paws™ patient adjustable warming system, and the 3M™ Ranger™ blood and fluid warming systems. Arizant created the category of forced-air warming, which is the preferred method of warming surgical patients in the U.S.

About 3M Infection Prevention Division

The 3M Infection Prevention Division is on a mission to provide health care professionals solutions to minimize

the risks of health care-associated infections. Combining science and technology, 3M has introduced more than 40 distinct technology platforms and a comprehensive portfolio of quality products that help the healthcare industry define and address current infection prevention best practices. With its system of people, products and process, 3M Infection Prevention remains a trusted partner committed to helping customers lead the way in controlling the risk of infection. For more information, please visit www.mmm.com/infectionprevention.

About 3M

3M captures the spark of new ideas and transforms them into thousands of ingenious products. A culture of creative collaboration inspires a never-ending stream of powerful technologies that make life better. With \$27 billion in sales, 3M employs about 80,000 people worldwide and has operations in more than 65 countries. For more information, visit www.3M.com or follow @3MNews on Twitter.

References:

¹ National Hospital Discharge Survey. *CDC*, July 30, 2008. www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr005.pdf.

² Young, V. Watson, M. Prevention of Perioperative Hypothermia in Plastic Surgery. *Aesthetic Surgery Journal*. 2006; 551-571.

³ Mahoney CB, Odom J. Maintaining intraoperative normothermia: A meta-analysis of outcomes with costs. *AANA Journal*. 1999; 67: 155-163.

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