Improving Patient Safety When Driving Following a Contrast Reaction

The Problem
- In September 2014 the National Transportation Safety Board issued Safety Recommendation 1-14-2 calling on healthcare providers to discuss with their patient the effects their medical condition and medications can have on their ability to safely operate a vehicle.
- Patient experiencing a mild to moderate contrast reaction have traditionally be treated with Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), observed and discharged. One of the side effects of Benadryl is a sedative effect.

Aim/Goal
- To improve patient safety while driving following a contrast reaction by providing a non-sedating alternative to a patient that will be operating a vehicle upon leaving Radiology.

The Team
- Bridget O’Bryan-Alberts RN MSN Nurse Manager Radiology
- Suzanne Swedeen RN MSN Quality Improvement Specialist Radiology
- Bettina Siewert MD, Vice Chair for Quality, Safety, and Performance Improvement
- May Adra, B.S., Pharm D, BCPS
- Samir Shah MD
- CT Operations Committee
- MRI Operations Committee
- Autumn Guyer MD Allergy
- Malik Gunjan Senapati MD
- Radiology QA/QI Committee
- Anna Kovalszki MD Allergy

The Interventions
Patient’s experiencing a mild to moderate contrast reaction will be asked if they will be operating a motor vehicle upon leaving the department. If the patient will be operating a motor vehicle upon leaving, the patient will be treated with Fexofenadine 180mg.

The Results/Progress to Date
- Contrast reactions guidelines for the Care of a Patient Experiencing a Contrast Related Event have be updated to include this change.
- This change has been presented to Nurses and MD throughout the department including Radiology Grand Rounds.

Lessons Learned
- When administering or ordering a medication for an outpatient, practitioners should consider the effects the medication may have on the patient’s ability to safely operate a vehicle in any mode of transportation and discuss these effects with the patient.
- Simple well thought out changes can markedly improve patient safety.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next
- Potential for roll out to other affiliates
- Potential for application to other sites of service within BIDMC

For more information, contact: Suzanne Swedeen RN MSN Quality Improvement Specialist Radiology ssweeden@bidmc.harvard.edu