

Make Your Hospital Stay a Safe Stay!

Tips on what YOU can do to help.



THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE BETTER YOUR CARE WILL BE.

Learn as much as you can about the care you will get. Speak up if you have concerns, and ask questions if there is something you do not understand.

Your health care team cares about you. They work hard to make your hospital stay safe. But, you too can help ensure your safety! The best way to stay safe is to be informed and involved in your care. To do this, learn as much as you can about your care. Make sure you understand the care and treatment you will get. And, follow your treatment plan and take part in decisions about your care.

Here are some safety tips to follow during your hospital stay:

✓ **Ask your health care team questions about your care.**

Do not be scared or embarrassed to ask questions! Make sure you understand the answers. You can write down questions to ask your doctors and nurses on the *Questions To Ask Form* on the back of this brochure.

✓ **Get to know your health care team.**

You will see many different people. If someone comes into your room that you do not know, ask who they are and what they are going to do. And, make sure they know who you are. Wear your ID bracelet at all times. Make sure someone checks your ID bracelet before you get any kind of treatment or medicine.



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✓ Give your health care team important information about you.

Make sure you tell your health care team your:

- Medical history including special conditions and illnesses.
- Immunization (shot) history.
- All the medicines you take. Be sure to include any vitamins, herbs, dietary supplements and other over-the-counter (non-prescription) medicines.
- Any food, medicine or herb allergy.
- Any special diet you are on.
- The names and phone numbers of your doctors, clinics and pharmacy.

✓ **Find an Advocate to help you.**

An advocate is someone you can trust to help you with your health care. Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate. Your advocate can help you ask questions and remember important information. Your advocate can help make sure you get the right medicines and treatments.

✓ **Bring all the medicines you are taking or a list of them.**

This should include vitamins, herbs, dietary supplements and other over-the-counter (non-prescription) medicines. If you have ever had an allergic reaction to any medicine, tell your doctor or nurse.

✓ **Learn about the medicines your doctor prescribes (orders) for you.**

Write down the names of medicines that your doctor gives you. Ask your doctor to tell you why you are taking the medicine and what it will do for you. Get to know what the medicine looks like. Before you take a medicine, look at it. If it looks different than what you have taken before, tell someone.

✓ **Learn about any surgery you will have done.**

Before you have surgery, make sure you and your doctor are clear on what will be done. Know the site of the surgery and what is being done.

Ask your doctor these questions:

- What will be done?
- How long will it take?
- What will happen after the surgery?
- How will I feel during my recovery?

BE CAREFUL GETTING OUT OF BED

Ask for help before you get out of bed or a chair, especially if you feel dizzy or unsteady on your feet. Wear non-skid slippers or slipper socks.

✓ Before you go home, make sure you understand your discharge instructions.

Ask your doctor:

- What medicines you are to take, how much and how often.
- When you can get back to your regular activities.
- What eating plan you are to follow.
- How to use any medical equipment at home.

Be sure to get all instructions in writing. If you can not read and understand them, ask someone to tell you the information. Repeat back the instructions to your doctor or nurse. Ask for a name and phone number of someone you can call if you have questions when you get home.

