

Ten Important Patient Safety Tips

Please read this handout with your family or support person.

- 1. Participate in your medical care and all decisions about your treatment.** Write down any questions for your doctor or nurse. Ask for written information such as pamphlets or brochures about your medical condition and treatment. Make sure you understand all the information you receive.
- 2. Ask a family member or friend to be your “advocate.”**
Choose an advocate who will speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself, who can come to your appointments to help ask questions and remember answers and who can provide support to you while you get your care.
- 3. Read all medical forms carefully.**
Ask your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns about the forms you are signing, such as consent forms for surgery. Get answers to your questions before you sign any forms or documents.
- 4. Learn about medication safety:**
 - **Bring a list of all your medicines to your doctor’s appointments and to the hospital.** Include vitamins, herbal supplements and all over-the-counter medicines you take. Keep a record of vaccines you have had.
 - **Understand the medicine you will be taking.** When your doctor writes you a prescription, make sure you can understand what you are taking, when you are taking it and why you need it.
 - **Know the correct dose, time and reason for your medicines.**
Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about your medication instructions.
 - **Recognize your medicines:** Tell your nurse right away if you notice the color, the imprint (label on the medicine), the dose, or the timing of your medicine is different than at home.
 - **Tell your doctor/nurses about any allergies or side effects to medicines you have had in the past.** If you feel suddenly short of breath, have a rash, an itching sensation or hives, tell your doctor or nurse right away. You may be allergic to a medicine.
- 5. Wash your hands after using the bathroom and before eating.**

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If you are ever hospitalized:

6. Make sure your health care provider checks your identity (I.D.).

Your I.D. is the mark on your I.D. Band as well as your medical record number and/or birthday usually located on your wrist. Your health care provider should check your I.D. band before giving you any medicine, drawing blood or sending you for tests, treatments or procedures.

7. Before any surgery, test or procedure, review the correct procedure and operation site with the staff. The staff will ask you to confirm your name and the surgery or procedure you are having before they begin.

8. Move around safely in your hospital room to prevent falls:

- Know where the emergency call light is located.
- Make sure you can reach your call light before the medical staff leaves the room.
- Turn on your call light before you get out of bed
- Do not get out of bed without help from staff if you feel dizzy or weak.
- Sit on the edge of your bed for a few minutes before you stand up. This helps prevent dizziness.
- Wear slippers or shoes when you get up.
- Make sure the path to your bathroom is clear.

9. Before you leave the hospital, you will get a copy of your Medication List from your nurse. This list should match the instructions your doctor has given you about your medicines.

10. Speak up if you have questions or concerns about patient safety.

Speak with your provider or call (415) 884-1840 x 268 and leave a message. Someone will respond by the next business day.