

Healthcare professionals today are committed to patient safety and are taking strong measures to make sure that your care is as safe as possible. But you, too, can help. Here are some hints that will help you be a part of the patient safety team, right alongside your doctors and nurses.



- ◆ **Talk to your doctors, nurses and pharmacists.**
- ◆ **Ask questions** about every part of your care until you are comfortable in making the best and most informed decisions.
 - ❖ *Write down your questions* and bring them with you to see your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask – it is your right to get answers.
 - ❖ *Write down the answers* as you are talking with your healthcare provider so you can review them later.
- ◆ **Don't be afraid that you will bother or insult your doctor or healthcare professional.** They want to know if you have concerns or are worried about your treatment.

- ◆ **Ask a family member or friend to come with you to act as your advocate.** It is easy to be overwhelmed by a lot of information, especially if you are ill. An advocate is someone you can trust to look after your welfare and help you ask important questions.

The more you know the better your care will be...

- ❖ Learn as much as you can about your illness, condition, treatment plans and any tests you will be undergoing. Use the Internet, your local library, support groups and information from your doctors.
- ❖ Learn about your choices. There are always choices to be made in your treatment plan. Find out what they are so that you can make the best decisions.
- ❖ Don't hesitate to ask for a second opinion if you have any doubts or concerns about your care.

Work with your doctors and nurses by providing complete information. If possible, write down and bring with you...

- ❖ Medical history, including special conditions and illnesses.
- ❖ Immunizations and vaccinations.
- ❖ All medications, including herbal and dietary supplements and over-the-counter drugs.
- ❖ Allergies and sensitivities.
- ❖ Names and numbers of your doctors, clinics and pharmacy.

- ◆ **Bring along your current medications,** including over-the-counter products and dietary and herbal supplements.
- ◆ **Be sure to mention all allergies and sensitivities.**
- ◆ **Write down the names of all medications you will be receiving in the hospital.**
- ◆ **Check that the medicine you are about to take matches what you have written down.** If the names differ or something doesn't seem right, call it to the attention of your doctor or nurse.



- ◆ **Answer all questions about your health as truthfully and completely as possible.** Provide any and all information that you feel may be important, even if your doctor, nurse or pharmacist does not ask a specific question about what is on your mind.

- ◆ **Be sure you understand your discharge instructions before you leave the hospital or clinic.** Your doctor or nurse will review with you the name of any medication you are prescribed, the dose amount, how often you will be taking the medicine and any additional care instructions that you should follow once you are home.
 - ❖ To make sure that you understand, repeat back the verbal instructions.
 - ❖ Be sure that you can understand the written information and that it is readable.
 - ❖ Get the name and number of someone you can call if you have questions.



In the hospital, you can help ensure your safety...

- ❖ Ask everyone – caregivers and visitors – to wash their hands. Hand washing is the best way to fight the spread of infection.
- ❖ Ask every person to identify himself or herself when they come into your room.
- ❖ Before you go in for a procedure, ask to make sure they have the right patient and are doing the correct procedure.
- ❖ Question all medications that you are about to receive while you are in the hospital. Make sure you have the correct medication, in the correct dose.
- ❖ Report anything unusual to your doctor, such as any changes in your condition.



All photos from the Patient Safety: Your Role in Making Healthcare Safer video.

*“The more
involved I am
in my care
the better my
care will be.”*



Your doctors and nurses care about you and will do their best to keep you safe.

But safety is everyone's responsibility.

By becoming involved and actively participating in your own care, you will make a big difference in ensuring your own safety.



The **Stand Up for Patient Safety**® campaign, open to hospitals and health systems, calls for continuous improvement in patient safety and reducing medical error in all healthcare settings.



NPSF gratefully acknowledges **3M** for funding the *Patient Safety: Your Role in Making Healthcare Safer* video and companion brochure.

To order additional brochures and videos, please visit the **National Patient Safety Foundation**® online at www.npsf.org.



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Patient Safety:



**Your Role in Making
Healthcare Safer**



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