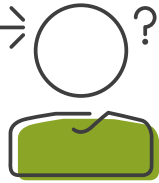


# Take **Charge** of Your Care

You are the center of your healthcare team. Let this special guide help you get the best results from your hospital stay.

## You're in **charge.**



You are the center of your healthcare team. Know what's happening every step of the way.

## Always **double-check.**



Pay attention and make sure you are getting the right treatments and medicines from the right hospital staff.

### **Know your medicines.**

Understand what they treat, why you need them and how to take them for the best results.



### **Educate yourself.**

Learn about your medical condition, tests and treatment options.



## **PARTICIPATE in your CARE**



### **Speak up.**

Ask questions and voice concerns. It's your body and you have the right to know.

### **Find a support person.**

Pick someone to help speak up for your care and needs during your stay.



## **Check before you go.**

Make an informed decision when selecting additional healthcare services. Choose only accredited providers who meet patient safety and quality standards. Go to [www.qualitycheck.org](http://www.qualitycheck.org) to learn more.



# Protect Your Health

## Take Charge of Your Care



### Speak Up

If you have questions or concerns, you have the right to ask and get a response from your doctor or nurse that makes sense to you. To help, share your answers to these questions with hospital staff.

- ◆ What language would you prefer to speak?
- ◆ Do you need glasses, hearing aids or other devices to help with talking to hospital staff?
- ◆ Do you prefer to hear, see or read health information?
- ◆ Do you have any cultural, ethnic or religious-based special needs?
- ◆ Who will be your support person who talks with hospital staff about your healthcare wishes?

### And Remember, Take Charge of Your Communication:

- ◆ **Ask About Jargon:** If you hear a medical term you don't understand, ask what it means.
- ◆ **Teach Back:** After you get instructions or an explanation, repeat back what you thought you heard so you can double-check that you understood.
- ◆ **Take Notes:** Write down any key facts your doctor tells you so you won't forget.



### Double-Check

Always double-check your name with staff to avoid errors.

### Check IDs

While you are here, many people will care for you (doctors, nurses, aides), and these same people will care for many patients. To prevent errors in your care:

- ◆ Ask to see the ID of everyone who comes into your room, so you know the name and job of the person caring for you. If you do not see an ID badge, contact your nurse immediately.
- ◆ Speak up if hospital staff does not check your ID. Any time staff enters your room to give you medicine, transport you, or perform procedures or treatments, state your name and birth date.

This may seem repetitive at times, but it helps ensure you receive the correct care.

# 5 Ways to Fight Infections

## Take Charge of Your Care

Tell friends and family not to visit if they are sick. And make sure all your guests wash their hands when they enter your room.



### Cleaning Tip

Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer under your nails, between your fingers, and on the palms and backs of your hands. Rub for 15 seconds (the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday”).

The hospital is a place you come to get well, but you also can come in contact with germs that can make you feel worse. Reduce your chances of infection by taking these safety precautions.

### 1. Clean your hands.

- ◆ after touching hospital objects or surfaces
- ◆ before eating
- ◆ after using the restroom

### 2. Ask hospital staff members to clean their hands.

This should be standard practice, but don't be afraid to remind them if they forget or to ask them to wear gloves when touching you. Ask visitors to clean their hands too!

### 3. Cover if you are sick.

If you get an infection, limit the spread of germs by sneezing and coughing into tissues you promptly throw away, and avoid touching other people. Ask the staff if there is anything else you should do—like wear a surgical mask—to prevent the spread of germs.

### 4. Keep an eye on bandages or dressings.

If a dressing on a wound or IV becomes loose or wet, let your nurse know. Also if you have a catheter or drainage tube, tell your nurse if it becomes loose or dislodged.

### 5. Keep your vaccinations up-to-date.

Make sure you are as protected as possible from the spread of infection. Check with hospital staff about whether it's safe for you to receive any vaccines you might need.



# Don't Ignore Pain

## Take Charge of Your Care

No one knows how much pain you are in but you. Tell your doctor or nurse when pain strikes, or if it comes back again after it goes away. Talk about your pain level throughout the course of your stay.

### Ask yourself, then share with your nurse:

- ◆ Where does it hurt?
- ◆ When does it hurt?
- ◆ Does it keep you from doing things—like sleeping, dressing, eating?

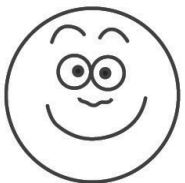


Starting to get uncomfortable? Pain medicine not working? Speak up. You may need to get more of the current pain medicine you are on or switch to a different kind of medicine to get relief. Don't try to ignore painful symptoms. Managing your pain will help with your healing process. Talk to your doctor or nurse when pain strikes.

### Which words describe your pain?

- |   |                                    |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> aching         | <input type="checkbox"/> dull      | <input type="checkbox"/> sharp     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bloating       | <input type="checkbox"/> numbing   | <input type="checkbox"/> shooting  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> burning        | <input type="checkbox"/> pressing  | <input type="checkbox"/> soreness  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> comes and goes | <input type="checkbox"/> pressure  | <input type="checkbox"/> stabbing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> constant       | <input type="checkbox"/> pulling   | <input type="checkbox"/> throbbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cramping       | <input type="checkbox"/> radiating | <input type="checkbox"/> tightness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cutting        | <input type="checkbox"/> searing   |                                    |

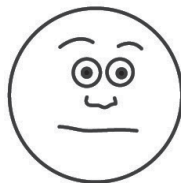
### Wong-Baker FACES® Pain Rating Scale



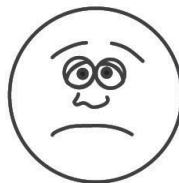
0  
No  
Hurt



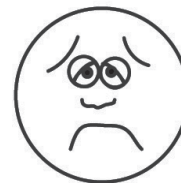
2  
Hurts  
Little Bit



4  
Hurts  
Little More



6  
Hurts  
Even More



8  
Hurts  
Whole Lot



10  
Hurts  
Worst

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# Safety & Preparation

## Take Charge of Your Care



### Prevent Falls

While you are here, you may feel dizzy or weak. Illness, procedures, medicines or even just lying down for too long can make you less steady on your feet. To keep yourself safe:

- ◆ Use the nurse call button for help getting out of bed.
- ◆ Ask for help going to the bathroom or walking around. (And use hospital handrails when they're available.)
- ◆ Wear nonslip socks or footwear.
- ◆ Keep often-used items within easy reach (glasses, remote, tissues, etc.).
- ◆ Make sure your wheelchair is locked when you get in or out of it. Never step on the footrest.

Patients of all ages are at risk for falls. It's better to be extra careful than risk another medical problem.



### Prepare for Surgery

Before your procedure, make sure you and your surgical staff confirm:

- ◆ **your name**
- ◆ **the type of surgery you are having**
- ◆ **the body part to be operated on**—In fact, hospital staff will mark the correct spot on your body. Make sure you or your support person checks that it's correct.

Take simple steps like these to help prevent medical mistakes.

#### Ask Questions

Ask your surgeon to take a "time out" to check: you're the right person, getting the right surgery, on the right body part.





# Be Proactive

## Take Charge of Your Care



### Don't forget

Tell the staff who you've picked to be your support person.

## Choose a Support Person

A trusted friend or family member can be a big help during your hospital stay. Select one key person to be your healthcare advocate. If you become stressed or your ability to communicate changes, this person can stand in for you—and stand up for your care.

A support person can:

- ◆ ask questions you might not think of and write down information
- ◆ double-check your medicines and treatments
- ◆ watch for signs your condition is getting worse and ask for help



### You Are Key

You are the most important member of your healthcare team. Make sure you:

- ◆ Understand your treatment
  - ◆ Ask questions
  - ◆ Speak up about pain
  - ◆ Know your medicines
  - ◆ Plan early for a successful discharge
- ◆ Tell your nurse if something doesn't seem right.
  - ◆ Know what time you normally get medicine, and tell your nurse if you don't get it.
  - ◆ Request drawings or illustrations to help you learn about your condition.
  - ◆ Read and understand all medical forms before signing. Ask if you need information explained.
  - ◆ If your treatment involves medical equipment, practice using it with your nurse before you leave the hospital.
  - ◆ Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. The more information you have, the better you will feel about making decisions.
  - ◆ Talk to your doctor and family about whether you want life-saving actions taken.

## Pay Attention to Your Care

# Manage Your Meds

## Take Charge of Your Care

### Prevent Medicine Errors

Be sure your doctors and nurses know:

- ◆ That your name matches the name on the medicine (use your ID bracelet to double-check).
- ◆ All the prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and herbal or vitamin supplements you take.
- ◆ Any allergies you have to medicines, anesthesia, foods, latex, etc.



### Take Care of Your Meds

Remember, take charge of your medicines. Think you're due for your next dose? Wondering if this new medicine can replace one you already take? Want to make sure all your medicines and supplements are safe to take together? Don't be afraid to ask.



Whether you take one medicine or five, it's important to know what you are taking and why. Ask your doctor these questions about any new (and current) medicines you take:

- ◆ What is the name of my medicine? Generic name?
- ◆ Why am I taking it? How will it help? When will it start working?
- ◆ What dose? How often? How long?
- ◆ What is the best time (morning, night, etc.) or way to take it (with food, with water)?
- ◆ What are possible side effects? What do I do if they happen?
- ◆ Are there any foods, drinks or activities to avoid?
- ◆ What do I do if I miss a dose?

For a medicine tracker, see p. X.