

The Patient's Safety Guide



Becoming an Active Participant In Your Care

Collaboration: The Key To Patient Safety



Patient Safety

Our team of dedicated physicians, nurses and healthcare staff believe that your safety is our number one priority and have designed systems to ensure just that:

Your Safety

However, we cannot do this alone. We need your help. We need you to be involved in your care in order to help us make you safe. We want you and your family/significant other to become part of our patient safety team.

What Can You Do?

Be Involved In YOUR Healthcare

The single most important way you can help to prevent errors is to be an active member of your healthcare team. That means taking part in every decision about your health care.

Research shows that patients who are more involved with their care tend to get better results.

Some specific tips, based on the latest scientific evidence about what works best, are listed for you.

Educate Yourself



on your diagnosis, medical tests you are undergoing and your treatment plan.

Speak up if you have questions or concerns, and if you do not understand, ask again.

We encourage you to discuss your questions and concerns with your physicians or any member of your healthcare team.

You have a right to question anyone who is involved with your care.

The objective of all medical treatment is to give you the best possible care, and to achieve that goal we need your help.

Ask a family member or friend to be there with you to be your advocate (advisor or supporter) whenever possible.

It is important to have someone who can help get things done and speak up for you if you cannot.

Make sure you know who is in charge of your care. This is especially important when many people are involved in your treatment or when you have multiple health problems.

Make sure that all healthcare professionals involved in your care have important health information about you. Do not assume that everyone knows everything they need to.

If you have a test, do not assume that no news is good news. Ask about the results. Find out when and how you will get the results of tests or procedures.

If you do not get test results when expected, call your doctor and ask for them. Ask what the results mean for your care.

If you are having surgery, make sure that you, your doctor and your surgeon all agree clearly on exactly what will be done.

Ask your doctor if your treatment is based on the latest evidence.

Pay Attention

to the care you are receiving.

All employees (doctors, nurses and other staff) wear a photo identification badge while on duty.

Know your healthcare professionals.

If you are not sure who someone is or what their role is, please ask.



Make sure your caregiver confirms who you are, that is, asks your full name and date of birth, and checks your name band before he or she administers medication or treatment.

When you are being discharged, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to explain the treatment plan you will use at home.

Know Your Medication

Recognize your medication. If the medications you are given do not look familiar, speak up and alert your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Make sure that all your doctors know all the medications you are taking. This includes prescription, over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs.

Make sure your doctor, nurse or pharmacist know about any allergies and adverse reactions you have had to medications.

Ask for information about your medications both when your medicines are prescribed and when you receive them. Ask that this information be given in terms you can understand.

- What is the medicine for?
- How am I supposed to take it and for how long?
- What side effects are likely?
- What do I do if they occur?
- Is the medicine safe to take with other medicines or dietary supplements I am taking?
- What food, drink or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?

When you pick up medicine from the pharmacy, ask “Is this the medicine that my doctor prescribed?” If the medicine looks different than you expected, ask the pharmacist about it.

If you have any questions about the directions on your medication labels, **ASK**. Medicine labels can be hard to understand.

- For example, ask if “four doses daily” means taking a dose every 6 hours around the clock or just during regular waking hours.
- Ask your pharmacist for the best device to measure your liquid medicine. Also, ask questions if you are not sure how to use it.
- Research shows that many people do not understand the right way to measure liquid medicines. For example, many use household teaspoons which often do not hold a true teaspoon of liquid, Special devices like marked syringes help people to measure the right dose. Being told how to use the devices helps even more.

Ask for written information about the side effects your medicine could cause. That way, you can report the problem right away and get help before it gets worse.



Make sure you and your caregivers are clear about what medications you take.

Be sure to tell your caregivers what medications you are taking, including non-prescription medications, vitamins and herbal remedies.

When you receive a prescription, make sure it is the right medication and the right dose.

Hand Washing



Did you know that each year, many lives and millions of dollars are lost due to the spread of infections in hospitals?

Do not be afraid to remind friends, family and healthcare providers to wash and sanitize their hands before coming into direct contact with you.

Proper Hand-Washing Techniques

Good hand-washing techniques include washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Antimicrobial wipes or towelettes are just as effective as soap and water in cleaning your hands but are not as good as alcohol-based sanitizers.

Proper Hand-Washing with Soap and Water

1. Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply liquid or clean bar soap. Lather well.
2. Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 15 seconds.
3. Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
4. Rinse well.
5. Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
6. Use a towel to turn off the faucet.

Fall Prevention



Upon admission you will be assessed for your risk of fall.

Use your call light for assistance. Do not attempt to get out of bed or walk without assistance.

If you are assessed as a fall risk, additional safety measures may be implemented.

Common Concerns

What can you do if you don't understand what your caregiver is saying? Tell them you don't understand. Use body language. If you don't understand, shake your head to show that "No, I don't understand." Ask lots of questions. By asking questions, you're helping them understand what you need.

What can you do if you speak another language? Ask for someone who speaks your language. This person can help you talk to caregivers. This person should work for the hospital. Their job is to help people who speak other languages. This person may not be in the office. He or she may be on the telephone. You have the right to get free help from someone who speaks your language. Ask if there is paper work in your language.

What can you do if you have trouble reading? Or if you cannot read? Don't be embarrassed. Tell your caregivers. They can help you. They can explain paperwork to you. They may even have paperwork that is easy to read and understand.

Your doctor's instructions are not clear. Should you try to figure it out yourself? NO. Instructions from your doctor or others are important. Tell them what you think the instructions are. Tell them if they need to write down the instructions. Tell them if you have a family member or friend who helps you take your medicine. Ask the doctor to have someone talk to your family member or friend, too.

What if you don't understand written instructions? Tell your caregivers. Tell them that you need to have the instructions read to you. Tell them you need instructions that are easy to read or that you need instructions in your language.

Questions or Concerns

From time to time, a patient or advocate may have a concern about care or service received. Please bring these concerns promptly to the attention of a staff member or the supervisor of the area. It is our sincere desire to correct issues quickly. At no time will your concern result in a negative impact on the patient or how the staff responds to your needs. If the issue is not resolved in a reasonable time, or you feel formal action is needed, you may file a grievance by calling (402) 644-7327. Please leave a message.

Written grievances can be mailed to:

Medical Staff Services and Quality Department
Faith Regional Health Services
2700 W. Norfolk Avenue
Norfolk, NE 68701

A formal complaint or grievance, or a report of issues with safety or quality of care can be filed directly with:

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
P.O. Box 95044
Lincoln, NE 68509-5044
(402) 471-2306

If you have issues concerning safety and quality of care, you may notify The Joint Commission:

Division of Accreditation Operations
Office of Quality Monitoring
The Joint Commission
One Renaissance Blvd.
Oak Brook Terrace, IL 60181
Phone: 1-800-994-6610
Email: complaint@jointcommission.org

Additional Resources:

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
www.ahrq.gov

VA National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS)
www.patientsafety.gov

Institute for Healthcare Improvement
www.ihl.org

