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Patient Safety Checklist

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Whether you are a patient in the hospital or you are an advocate for a hospitalized loved one, create a patient safety checklist for medications, procedures, treatments, surgeries and hygiene. This prevents medical errors such as patient name mistakes, wrong patient-wrong treatment, wrong-site surgery, the spread of hospital infections and medication mistakes. All of these can be deadly.

- ✓ 1. If you are a patient in the hospital, enlist a family member or good friend to act as your advocate to oversee and monitor your care. He or she can implement these strategies for you if you are unable.
- ✓ 2. Keep a notebook and create a standardized patient safety checklist that will be verbally repeated with each new medical professional who administers medical treatment for you as the patient. This checklist includes your name and birth date, diagnosis, current list of medications and dosages, and allergies to medications.
- ✓ 3. If medications are to be administered, go over your list of medications and dosages and allergies to medications with the medical professionals. If you don't recognize a medication or something seems unusual or out of the ordinary, speak up in a respectful manner. Ask questions.
- ✓ 4. If you are to have surgery in the hospital, ask your advocate to accompany you to the operating room. He or she will not be allowed in. Ask to see the surgeon or other members of the surgical team. Go over your checklist: patient's name and birth date, name of surgery, and the correct site on the body which is to be operated on. You can mark this yourself with a permanent marker or ask the surgeon to do it.
- ✓ 5. If you are to have a procedure or treatment, go over your patient safety checklist with the administering medical professional. Your checklist includes your name and birth date, the name of the procedure or treatment, which medical professional ordered it and why you are having it. Include your medication checklist.
- ✓ 6. To prevent the spread of hospital infections, ask everyone who comes in contact with you to wash their hands. In a respectful manner, ask all physicians and nurses to wash their hands and put on disposable gloves before touching you. Place a sign on the wall above the your hospital bed asking everyone to please wash their hands before touching you.
- ✓ 7. If you are at risk of falling out of bed due to sedation, recovery from surgery or confusion, ask a loved one to be at your bedside at all times to help you. Patients can simply get out of bed to go to the bathroom and fall, causing serious injuries. You can hire a nurse or sitter to fill in for family.
- ✓ 8. If you are immobile in your hospital bed, your body needs to be turned regularly to prevent bed sores. Ask your advocate to work with your primary nurse to make sure that your body is turned the appropriate number of times in a day.
- ✓ 9. If you are unclear about any aspect of your medical care or treatment, ask questions. Physicians and nurses are dealing with patient overload and are all doing the very best they can. You can partner effectively with them to keep yourself safe in the hospital.