

Please read this handout with your family or support person.

Ten Important Patient Safety Tips

- 1. Participate in your medical care and all decisions about your treatment.** Ask for written information about your medical condition and treatment. Write down questions for your doctor or nurse. Ask questions and pay attention to all the information you get.
- 2. 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 consents for surgery. Get answers to your questions before you sign any forms. You have a right to know.
- 3. Ask a family member or friend to be your “advocate.”** Choose a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (an advisor or supporter) who can support you and help ask questions for you if you cannot do so for yourself.
- 4. Make sure your health care provider checks your identity (I.D.).** Your I.D. is the name on your I.D. band as well as your medical record number and/or birthday. 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.
- 5. 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. In some cases, your doctor will mark the spot on your body to be operated on. Make sure that your correct body part is marked. Ask your surgeon if they will take a “time out” just before your surgery. This is done to make sure they are doing the right surgery on the right body part on the right person.
- 6. 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 weak or dizzy.
 - 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.

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Ten Important Patient Safety Tips *(continued)*

7. **Wash your hands.** Wash your hands after using the bathroom, before eating, and after you cough or sneeze. Your health care providers wash their hands or use the alcohol hand gel before and after your care. Speak up if you feel that your care providers are not washing their hands! For everyone's protection, cover your cough. Use a disposable tissue or cough into your sleeve. Always clean your hands afterwards.
8. **Learn about medication safety:**
 - **Bring a list of all of your medicines to your doctor's appointments and to the hospital.** Include vitamins, herbal supplements and over-the-counter medicines you take. Keep a record of vaccines you have had. You may even bring in your medicine bottles when you arrive at your doctor's office or the hospital.
 - **Understand your medicines.** Make sure you know which medicines you take, why you take them, and their dosage and timing instructions. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about your medicine instructions. When you get a new prescription, make sure you know what the medicine is for and any possible side effects.
 - **Recognize your medicines:** Tell your nurse right away if you notice the color, the 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, hives or an itching sensation, tell your nurse right away. You may be allergic to a medicine.
 - 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.
9. **Learn how to use a Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) pump (if you have one):** Patient Control Analgesia (PCA) is a helpful way to treat pain. With the push of a button, you get a set amount of pain medicine through the intravenous (IV) line in your vein. **Note:** For your safety, a PCA pump is for patient use only. The PCA dosing button should not be pushed by anyone else except the patient. Ask for help when getting out of bed if you are using a PCA pump.
10. **Speak up if you have questions or concerns about patient safety.** Call **(415) 600-2814** and leave a message with the Customer Service department. For the St. Luke's Campus, call **(415) 641-6773**. Someone will respond within one business day. For information on the web, visit:
 - The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org and click on "Speak Up."
 - The National Patient Safety Foundation® at www.npsf.org.