



Patient Safety Checklist

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Critical Conditions: The Essential Hospital Guide To Get Your Loved One Out Alive (Lemon Grove Press)
and *The Take-Charge Patient: How You Can Get The Best Medical Care* (Lemon Grove Press)

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. Enlist a love one to act as your advocate to oversee and monitor your care. Your advocate can implement these strategies for you if you are unable.
- ✓ 2. At each new medical encounter in the hospital, repeat the following information: your full name, your date of birth, your physician's name, your diagnosis, the name of the procedure, test, surgery or medication your doctor has ordered for you. Repeat any allergies to any medications.
- ✓ 3. Get a notebook and take notes on your daily progress, new medications, treatments etc., medical care. Write down the names of your primary nurses (registered nurses) and physicians and their contact information.
- ✓ 4. Create a list of your medications, their dosages and any allergies to medications. Keep this list in your notebook. If a medication is to be administered, go over your list of medications with medical professionals. If you don't recognize a medication or something seems out of the ordinary, speak up and ask questions.
- ✓ 5. If you are to have a test, procedure or treatment in the hospital, go over your checklist with the administering medical professional. List your name, date of birth, your physician's name and the name of the test, procedure or treatment your doctor ordered for you. Repeat your list of medications and any allergies to medications.
- ✓ 6. If you are to have surgery, ask your advocate to accompany you to the operating room. He/she will not be allowed in. Ask to see the surgeon or other members of the surgical team. Go over your checklist with these professionals. Repeat your full name, date of birth, your diagnosis, your doctor's name, the type of surgery you are supposed to have and note the correct site on your body to be operated on. You can mark this on your body yourself with a permanent marker or ask one of the medical professionals to do it for you. Repeat your list of medications and allergies to medications.
- ✓ 7. To help prevent the spread of hospital infections, ask everyone who comes in contact with you to wash their hands before touching you. Place a sign on the wall above your hospital bed that asks everyone to please wash their hands. In a polite manner, ask all physicians and nurses to wash their hands and put on disposable gloves before touching you. In a respectful manner, ask your physician to clean his/her stethoscope (the round flat part of the instrument) before touching your body.
- ✓ 8. If you are at risk of falling out of bed due to sedation, recovery or confusion, ask your advocate to be at your bedside at all times to help you. Patients can fall simply by trying to get to the bathroom. This can cause serious injuries. You can hire a nurse or sitter to fill in for your advocate.
- ✓ 9. 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.
- ✓ 10. If you are unclear about any aspect of your medical care, ask questions. You will not offend your doctors and nurses. They want you to understand your medical care too. You can partner with them to keep yourself safe in the hospital.