

Washington hospitals and doctors are committed to providing safe, efficient, and high quality care every day. Washington is one of only a few states where all our community hospitals are engaged in a national campaign to improve patient safety and quality. This commitment is just one way Washington hospitals and doctors are national leaders in patient safety and health care quality.

You can help, too. Patients and their families are important members of any care team. By actively participating in your own care, you can help your caregivers provide you with a safe and high-quality health care experience.

*Help us
Help you*

• YOUR ROLE IN SAFE CARE •

To order copies of this brochure or for more information, contact:



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Ways You Can Help Improve Your Care

1. Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns.

- Choose a doctor you feel comfortable talking to.
- Write down your questions for your health care team so you don't forget them. Take notes when you meet with your doctor.
- Ask questions and make sure you understand the answers.
- If you think something is wrong, speak up. You have the right to ask about your own care.
- If you are hospitalized, know what the treatment will include, and how long the treatment should last.
- Tell your doctor and other members of your health care team about recent hospitalizations and care you're receiving.

2. Involve your loved ones.

- If possible, have a friend or family member with you to help ask questions and understand the answers. It's easy to be overwhelmed by the amount of information presented.

3. Know your medications and supplements.

- Give your doctor and pharmacist a list of all the medications you take, including non-prescription medications, vitamins, and herbal remedies.
- Read the label when you get your medication including all warnings.
- Ask about side effects and what to avoid while taking the medication.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any drug allergies.
- Make sure your medication is what the doctor ordered and that you know what it's for and how to use it. Ask the pharmacist about your medication if it looks different than you expected.

4. Help prevent the spread of infection.

- Remind friends, family, and caregivers to wash/sanitize their hands before coming into direct contact with you. Cleaning hands is an important way to prevent the spread of infection.

- Discourage family or friends with an active cough from visiting you at the hospital or accompanying you on your doctor visits.

5. Understand what will happen if you need surgery.

- Ask your surgeon: Exactly what will you be doing? About how long will it take? What will happen after the surgery? How can I expect to feel during recovery?
- Make sure your surgeon has explained any potential complications.
- Tell the surgeon, anesthesiologist, and nurses about any allergies or bad reactions to anesthesia.
- Verify that the doctor or nurse has clearly marked the body part to be operated upon.

6. Know what to do after you are discharged from the hospital.

- Make sure you feel comfortable with discharge instructions given by your health care team.
- Review medications you are prescribed with your doctor or nurse, including the medications' names, dosage amounts, and how often you will be taking them.
- Ask your doctor or nurse to provide the phone number to call if you have questions following your discharge.