Patient Tips

Canadian Patient Safety Week
Semaine nationale de la sécurité des patients

- Wash your hands when you visit the hospital or other health care environments and ask your doctor or healthcare provider to do the same.
- Make your doctor aware if you have seen or are seeing more than one doctor about your problems.
- Make sure that all health professionals involved in your care have important health information about you. Don't assume they have all the information they need about you.
- Keep a medical journal that keeps the details about your treatment and care. Include information such as medications prescribed, tests you receive and other important information provided by your health care team. If you're unable to do this, ask a friend or family member to do this for you.
- When you visit the doctor or go to the hospital, bring you medications – or an updated list – with you.
- Ask someone to be your health advocate to take notes, ask questions and if needed, make decisions on your behalf.
- Be aware of your surroundings in hospitals or other health care settings. Spills or equipment may cause you to slip or fall.
- Find out why a test or treatment is needed and how it can help you. Make sure you know what is involved and what the expected outcomes are.
- If you have a test, don't assume that no news is good news. Find out when and how you will get the results of tests or procedures. If you do not get them when expected, don't assume the results are fine. Call your doctor and ask for them.
- Make sure any prescriptions your doctor writes are legible and that you know the name of the drug prescribed.
- Ensure your doctor knows all the medications, herbal supplements or vitamins you are taking. Even over-the-counter medications, such as cold medicine or vitamins, can have an effect on prescription medications.
- Take your medications as prescribed. Ensure you understand what the medicine is for, how you are supposed to take it and any possible side effects. If you are unclear about a medication or are concerned about side effects, contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately.
- Keep track of any adverse reactions or allergies you have to food or medications.
- If you're being discharged from the hospital, ask your doctor to write down any treatment plans or instructions you will need at home. This information should be shared with your family doctor as well.

For more information on patient safety and what is happening in your community please visit the Canadian Patient Safety Institute's website at www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca.

The Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) was established in 2003 as an independent not-for-profit corporation, operating collaboratively with health professionals and organizations, regulatory bodies, and governments to build and advance a safer healthcare system for Canadians. CPSI performs a coordinating and leadership role across health sectors and systems, promotes leading practices and raises awareness about patient safety by working in collaboration with partners, patients, their families and the general public. For more information on patient safety and what is happening in your community please visit our website at www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca.

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