PATIENT SAFETY IN THE HOSPITAL

While you are a patient in the hospital, it is important for you to understand how to prevent accidents. You have a great deal of control over safety. What you do and how you do things can prevent slips, falls, bumps, breaks, and bruises.

Being a patient in the hospital is different than being home in familiar surroundings. Everything is new to you. This includes where the furniture is, where the bathroom is, where the light switches are, even where you keep things like slippers and robes.

SAFETY TIPS

REDUCE YOUR RISK OF FALLING

- **Become familiar with your new surroundings.** By learning the location of the different items in your room, it may prevent you from bumping into them or tripping. This is especially important during the evening and night hours when the lighting is dim.

- You should also tell the hospital staff that if you have any generalized weakness and any history of fall before coming to the hospital.

- **Use the call bell whenever you need help.** The cord bell is usually tied to the bed rail or clipped onto the bed linen. It is important to keep the call bell within your reach. There is also a call bell in the bathroom for you to use if you need help.

- Be sure to tell the nursing staff when you are going to take a shower or bath.

- If you are allowed to get out of bed. Make sure you wear "rubber sole" slippers to avoid slipping.

- If you are feeling lightheaded or dizzy or ill or have been medicated, do not try to walk on your own. **Call for help.**

- If you see a spill on the floor, notify a member of the health care team. **Do not walk on it or around it.**

- **When moving about, always use handrails.** The handrails are located in the bathrooms, showers, and hallways to help you support yourself and prevent accidents.

- Do not leave your unit at any time without informing your nurse.

NO SMOKING

There is no smoking anywhere in the hospital. This includes the patient rooms, the bathrooms and the waiting areas. If you and/or your family would like information about stop smoking programs, contact the Patient Education Department at (718) 270-3739.
HOSPITAL FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT SAFETY

- **Never lean on hospital furniture or equipment.** Most of the furniture and equipment in the hospital are on wheels that may cause you to lose your balance or slip.

- **Never try to get out of bed if it is in a high position or lower the bedside rails or climb over them.** The side rails are up for your safety. If you need assistance, use the call bell to call for help.

- **Visitors**, if you lower a side rail while you are visiting, make sure you raise it back before leaving.

- **Always move slowly and carefully.** Moving slowly in and out of bed, walking to the bathroom, even riding in a wheelchair slowly can all help prevent accidents.

- **Whenever using a wheelchair, always follow good safety practices.** To prevent falling, always use wheel locks or brakes when moving in or out of a wheelchair. Never lean too far forward for an object - the wheel chair could tip forward. Try to keep aisles clear by staying to one side so no one bumps into you or the chair. When moving in a wheelchair, always keep your feet on the chair supports and your arms inside the chair.

- **No electrical devices can be used in the hospital unless they are battery operated.** This includes shavers, hair-dryers, or radios. Only hospital approved and safety checked electrical devices can be used such as the hospital T.V.

- **Use of cell phones are not permitted** anywhere in the hospital because it may interfere with vital life support equipment.

MEDICATION SAFETY

- Please make sure that the hospital staff ask you about your identification (your first and last name with date of birth) and check your Identification band when you are given medications, foods, being transferred between locations, taking any tests, collecting any specimens, etc. to promote safety.

- Please ask any hospital staff "Did you wash your hands?" including the doctors and nurses when they want to give you your medication or do any physical exam.

- Before you are given you any new medications, please ask your doctors and nurses to teach you about your new medication, potential side effects, and drug-food interaction. In addition, you should tell your doctors and nurses about all the medications you were taking before coming to the hospital. You should also tell the hospital staff during your admission that if you have any allergic reactions to food, drugs or anything else.

- **Never take any medications except those prescribed by your doctor and administered by your nurse.** It is important to prevent possible harmful drug interactions. If you have prescription drugs or over-the-counter medicines from home, you should send them home with your family. If this is not possible, give them to your nurse for storage. They will be returned to you when you leave the hospital.
PROCEDURE OR SURGERY

Before undergoing any procedure or surgery of any part of your body such as, right foot or left foot, right knee or left knee, right hand or left hand, right eye or left eye, right breast or left breast, etc), please verify and reconfirm it with your doctors, nurses, and hospital staff about the exact site and side of your body part that requires the procedure or surgery.

* IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SAFETY WHILE IN THE HOSPITAL, PLEASE ASK ANY MEMBERS OF YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM.

References

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