

# PATIENT SAFETY

*St. Mary Medical Center is committed to ensuring the best possible health outcome for every patient. In our efforts to support patient safety and reduce errors, we encourage patients to ask questions regarding all aspects of their medical care. Being involved in every decision about health care can lead to better results.*

1. Be involved in your health care. The single most important way you can help optimize your care and help to prevent error is to be an active member of your health care team. **ASK QUESTIONS!** Take active participation in every decision about your health care from start to finish.
  2. Make sure all of your doctors and nurses know about any medications you are taking including prescriptions, over-the-counter medication, and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs. Also reveal any allergies or adverse reactions you have had to medication(s).
  3. Be sure to **ASK** for information about your medication when it is prescribed and when you receive it. Make sure that caregivers give you information in terms that you can understand. Questions you may want to **ASK**: What is the medication(s) for? How am I supposed to take it, and for how long? What side effects are likely? What do I do if they occur? Is this medication safe to take with other medications or dietary supplements? What foods, drinks or activities should I avoid while taking this medication?
  4. **Speak up if you have questions or concerns.** Do not be afraid to question anyone who is involved in your care. Make sure that someone, such as your personal doctor, is in charge of your care. **ASK** a doctor or nurse about results of all tests performed. Do not assume that no news is good news. **ASK** doctors and nurses involved in your care about your condition and treatment during your hospital stay.
  5. **Provide all health professionals involved in your care with accurate information about yourself.** This is especially important if you have many health problems.
  6. Upon discharge from the hospital, **ASK** your doctor and nurses to explain the treatment plan you will use at home in words that you understand.
  7. **ASK** a family member or friend to be there with you and to be your advocate (someone who can help get things done and speak up for you if you can't). Even if you think you don't need help now, you might need it later. **ASK** about an Advance Directive if you do not have one. If you do, be sure to give a copy to the attending doctor and/or facility, i.e.: hospital, surgery center and primary doctor.
  8. Know that more is not always better. It is a good idea to find out why a test or treatment is needed and how it can help you. You may be better off without it.
  9. Hand hygiene is an important way to prevent the spread of infections in hospitals. It is OK and we encourage you to **ASK** your healthcare provider and visitors if they have sanitized or washed their hands.
  10. When you have any type of surgery **ASK** for the following information about your surgery in terms you can understand. Who will be assisting with my surgery? What is involved? How long will it take? What are the risks involved? How long will my recovery be? What are the expected outcomes?
  11. If you are having surgery, make sure that you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree and are clear on exactly what will be done, as well as the site of surgery.
- You have the right to participate in your safety. To report a safety or quality concern while you (or a family member) are a patient at St. Mary Medical Center, please contact the Unit Nurse Manager or the Patient Representative at extension 8865. All patients and staff also have the right to contact The Joint Commission at 1-800-994-6610 regarding the safety or quality of care provided.

*These Patient Safety Rights incorporate the requirements of The Joint Commission.*