



SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOSPITALIZED CHILD

People go to the hospital for surgeries, procedures, and treatments. While your child is in the hospital, busy caregivers can use your help. Work together with caregivers to create the best place for your child by making it a safe place. Patient safety helps prevent injury, errors, and the spread of germs. Practice patient safety by using the tips listed below. The following are some things you can do to assure a safe hospital stay for your child:

- Ask health care providers to identify themselves and explain what they are doing and be sure they correctly look at your child's identification bracelet.
- Be sure they have all the important health information about your child.
- Be sure all of those with direct contact with you have washed their hands.
- Ask about anything and everything you don't understand.
- Speak up if you have questions or concerns.
- If you are leaving your room let your nursing staff know and wear shoes or safety skid slippers.
- Use the call light if you need help.

CONTROL THE SPREAD OF GERMS

- Good hand washing will prevent spreading germs that may cause infection or make your child's condition worse. Wash hands with soap and water or use the hand sanitizer gel frequently especially after your child has gone to the potty, after diaper changes, and before eating. Remind caregivers to wash their hands or wear gloves when caring for your child.
- Do not allow friends and relatives with colds or other infections to visit. Your child may be on "isolation precautions". These are rules that must be followed to stop disease from spreading to or from your child. For example, everyone may have to wear gloves, masks, and gowns around your child.
- Ask if your child should be vaccinated. If your child has diabetes, heart, lung, kidney or other major organ problems, ask about vaccines (shots). Your child's caregiver may want to give your child a flu or pneumonia vaccine to help fight those infections.
- Let caregivers know if your child's bedding, gown, or other linens are dirty. They will change the bed or give your child a clean gown or towel. Wash toys, pacifiers, or bottles that drop to the floor. Wash plastic or rubber items using hot water and soap in the sink. Take stuffed animals or objects made of cloth home to wash.

PREVENT FALLING

- Let your child's nurse know if you think your child is at risk for falling. They will place a special pink identification bracelet on your child to alert caregivers and help make sure your child does not fall.
- Provide safe clothing. Your child should wear slippers with rubber soles and pajamas that do not drag on the ground. This way, your child will not slip or trip while out of bed. Your caregiver can provide gowns and slippers for your child.
- All children under age 3 years will be placed in a crib with side rails up for safety reasons. Side rails must be up if your child is in bed. Infants and small children can roll out of bed quickly, even when you are watching them closely. If you have an infant in an incubator, always shut sides and portholes (doors) tightly before walking away from the bedside.

- Tell your child to always ask for help when getting out of bed. Trying to get out of bed without help is the most common cause of falls in the hospital. If you are not there to help your child out of bed, show your child how and when to use the call button. This will call a caregiver to come help. Make sure the bed is at a low enough level for your child to get out of bed comfortably. Ask a caregiver to lower the bed if it is too high.
- Keep a clear path for your child. Use enough overhead lighting to make it easy for your child to see while moving around the room.
- Please be sure to bring any special items such as eye glasses, hearing aids, wheel chair, Feeding tubes/extensions, and car seats.
- If your child wears glasses, please bring them.
- Always stay close to help your child while walking with an IV pole or other equipment or if weak or sleepy.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S CAREGIVERS

- If you have any questions about your child's health problems or care, ask a caregiver. If a caregiver is not available, write down your questions so you will not forget them.
- Ask for an interpreter if you do not speak or understand English very well or if you or your child are deaf.
- Always tell caregivers if your child is allergic to any drugs or foods, or has any other types of allergies.
- You will receive written discharge instructions and medication instruction sheets to take home with you. This way you will have phone numbers and home care and medication instructions written down in case you forget them. Please bring your discharge instructions with you to your follow up appointments.
- We encourage family centered care. We encourage you to stay with your child. Please let us know when you leave and how to contact you.

DECREASE THE CHANCE OF MEDICATION ERRORS

- Your child must wear an identification (ID) band at all times.
- Learn about your child's medications. Know when and why they must taken them, and learn how and when to give them. If a caregiver has a medicine that you do not know about, ask about it before it is given.
- Do not give your child medicines without first asking your child's nurse. These include outpatient prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, herbs, or food supplements. Do not bring in medications from home unless your child's caregiver asks you to.
- Tell your child's caregivers if you think a medicine is not helping or is causing side effects. Tell caregivers right away if you think your child is having an allergic reaction to a medicine.

KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S TREATMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

- Make sure bed and wheelchair wheels are locked while transferring your child in or out.
- Know about the equipment attached to your child. Ask about equipment alarms and what you should do if the alarm sounds.
- Learn about any treatments your child will receive while in the hospital. Ask why the treatment is being given, how you can help, and what to expect after it is over. Tell caregivers if your child's tubes or dressings become loose or wet. Caregivers will check if IVs, catheters, or other tubes are still in the right place.
- For more information about patient safety in the hospital, you may contact the following foundation: National Patient Safety Foundation, 515 N. State Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610, Phone: 1-312-464-4848, www.npsf.org