



HEALTH AWARENESS

A Partnership Approach To Patient Safety

(NAPSA)—Everyone plays a part in ensuring patient safety: you, your doctor, your health care team and your pharmacist. In playing your part on your health care team, you become an active and informed patient.

Unfortunately, errors happen in health care. Humans are not perfect and technology is complicated. While great strides have been made in improving patient safety, there is more to be done to make health care even safer. The National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF), the leading organization in advancing the safety of patients, encourages you to become better informed and proactive when interacting with your health care team.

Be Active And Informed

These important tips from the NPSF can be helpful:

• Share your health history.

Share your medical history with your health care team. This includes the medicines you take, health conditions and treatments.

✓ Keep a folder for yourself and each family member (list of medicines, etc.).

✓ Bring folder to first visits with new doctor or health care team.

✓ Request copies of important health records.

• **Be aware and ask questions.** It's okay to ask. Communication with your doctor and health care team is vital to understanding your health status.

✓ Ask the doctor and nurse to wash their hands before examining you.

✓ Ask for more information about anything related to your health.

• **Take a family member or friend to your appointment.** It is helpful to have another person along for practical as well as supportive reasons.

✓ Update your family member or whomever takes you.



Patient Empowerment: An involved patient is a safer patient, which can make a difference in the quality of one's health care.

✓ Ask them to ask questions of the doctor or nurse.

✓ Make sure you both understand the information and instructions given by the health care team.

• **Follow through with directions.** Have the information explained out loud and follow the instructions to take medication exactly as prescribed.

✓ Bring a notepad to take notes.

✓ Have your doctor review your notes.

✓ Ask the health care team to explain anything given to you in writing.

• **Double-check.** Make sure you receive the right medicine and treatment instructions.

✓ Write down the name of the medicine and dosage.

✓ Check the name, spelling and dosage of medicine at the pharmacy.

✓ Make sure you've received the right medicine at the pharmacy.

✓ Ask your pharmacist or doctor about any side effects or interaction(s) with other medicine you are taking and with food or drink.

For more information, as well as a free booklet on patient safety, visit www.npsf.org.