



## spotlight on health care

### Tips For Having A Positive Hospital Stay

(NAPSA)—Imagine being in the hospital and bedridden...you need to go to the bathroom...you're thirsty or, worse yet, in a lot of pain and you push the call light and no one answers.

Unfortunately, this scenario is all too common in hospitals today. While the call light can be a lifeline for hospitalized patients, it can also impose considerable demands on nurses' time, which may be already affected by staffing shortages. To address this problem, a nationwide study, published in the *American Journal of Nursing* (AJN), was conducted to determine the frequency of and reasons for patients' call light use, and the effects of one-hour and two-hour nurse rounds on patients' use of the call light and patient satisfaction and safety.

The study revealed that one- to two-hour nurse rounds significantly improved overall patient satisfaction and produced a significant reduction in call light use and patient falls. Of the units that participated in rounding, 85.7 percent continued the practice. Data analyzed one year following the study showed that 92.8 percent expanded rounding in their hospital. Patient satisfaction scores also increased as much as 88.8 percent and patient falls were reduced by up to 60 percent.

"We know that a patient can deteriorate when no one is available to respond to call lights or to assess changes in the patient's condition proactively," said Diana Mason, RN, PhD, editor in chief of AJN. "The results of this study suggest strategies for operational changes in hospitals that emphasize taking a more proactive approach to ensure effective



**If you're hospitalized, ask how often the nurses make rounds; studies show hourly rounds increase patient satisfaction.**

patient care management, better patient satisfaction and safer care."

If you or someone you know will be entering the hospital, Christine M. Meade, PhD, lead author of the study and executive director of the Alliance for Health Care Research, a subsidiary of the Studer Group, a health care consulting firm, recommends the following tips to ensure you have a safe and positive hospital experience:

- Get to know the staff who will be caring for you;
- Ask the people caring for you to write down their names and roles (RN, LPN or nurse's aide); remember, you'll probably need the RN to give you pain medication;
- Ask if the nursing staff make rounds routinely and how often;
- Ask for pain medication when you start to feel the pain; don't wait until it's unbearable.
- Make sure the call light, bedside table, water and other essentials are within your reach.

For more information, visit [www.nursingcenter.com/CallLight](http://www.nursingcenter.com/CallLight).