

*Your Partners
in Safe Care*

We Care About Your Safety



Patient safety is a team effort. Patients who take an active part in decisions about their healthcare tend to get better results. Here are some tips to help you protect your safety:

Brigham and Women's Hospital

Patient Safety Office
617-732-7543

Patient & Family Relations
617-732-6636

Faulkner Hospital

Patient Safety Office
617-983-7449

Patient & Family Relations
617-983-7425

Additional resource:

The Joint Commission
800-994-6610

Updated: July 2009

1. Patient Identification

- We will ask you who you are each time you come in for appointments, receive care, or have a procedure.
- For example: Before you have a blood test or before a nurse gives you medication.

2. Staff Identification

- Is the staff person wearing a badge?
- Can you read it?
- If you cannot see a badge, ask the staff person to tell you who they are and what they do.



3. Patient Involvement

- Involve your family or a friend in your care.
- Do not be afraid to speak to your healthcare team if you have concerns about your care or safety.
- Tell your healthcare team if you are having pain.
- Either you or your family can tell your healthcare team if your condition worsens so that they can quickly respond.
- Ask for results of tests or procedures.
- Be sure you understand all instructions.
- Ask questions about your care at home.
- Know who to call if you have any questions or problems once you leave.
- Call Patient Family Relations or the Joint Commission to express any concerns.

4. Preventing Medication Errors

Medication Safety at Home

- Keep a list of ALL the medicine you take:
 - Prescribed medications
 - Aspirin
 - Herbal supplements
 - Vitamins
 - Others you buy at a drugstore
- Bring your list of medications and allergies every time you visit your doctor's office or hospital.



Immunizations

- Influenza (flu) and pneumonia can cause serious illness. There are safe vaccines available.
- While in the hospital or at your next doctor's visit, ask your doctor if you need a flu and/or pneumonia shot.

Medication Safety at the Hospital

- Your medications and your ID bracelet may be scanned to make sure you receive the right medicine. (Coming this Winter to Faulkner Hospital)
- We use a computer to track all your medications.
- Before you are given a medication, ask what it is and why you need it.
- You will receive an updated list of all your medications before you go home.
- Be sure you understand which medications you will be taking at home.



5. Preventing Falls

Fall Prevention at Home

Falls can happen any time, to patients of any age. Following these simple tips can help prevent falls.

Make your home "fall" safe

- Get rid of throw rugs
- Use a night-light
- Use high watt light bulbs in hallways, bathrooms & stairwells
- Use stair railings

Always wear non-skid footwear

Adopt a healthy lifestyle

- Stay active
- Limit alcohol
- See your doctor
- Have your medications checked



Fall Prevention at the Hospital

Call for help

If you are told not to get up by yourself, please use the call light and wait for a staff member to assist you.

Keep personal items within reach

- Call light / TV remote
- Telephone
- Tissues
- Eye glasses

Take your time; sit up for a few minutes before standing to avoid getting dizzy



6. Preventing the Spread of Germs

Germ Prevention at Home:

Hand Washing

- Hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub, like Purell, is the best way to prevent spreading germs and illness.
- Wash your hands before & after:
 - Eating
 - Using a tissue for cough
 - Changing a child’s diaper
 - Going to the bathroom



Cover Your Cough:

- To prevent spreading germs when you cough/sneeze, use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your mouth/nose.
- Always dispose of the used tissue in the trash and wash your hands.



Germ Prevention at the Hospital:

Hand Washing

- Your healthcare team takes hand washing very seriously and follows strict guidelines.
- Do not be afraid to remind your healthcare team to wash their hands before caring for you.

Gown and Gloves

- Your healthcare team, and sometimes family members, may be asked to wear a gown and gloves to help prevent the spread of germs.

7. Preventing Surgical Infections

Before Surgery:

- Tell your doctor about any other medical problems (e.g. allergies, diabetes, and high blood pressure).
- Quit smoking
- Do not shave near your surgical site.
- Ask your surgeon whether you will receive antibiotics before surgery.

Infection Prevention at the Hospital:

- The surgery team will wash their hands and arms to their elbows with an antiseptic soap before surgery.
- They wear hair covers, special gowns, masks, and gloves to keep the surgical area clean.



8. Preventing Surgical Infections

Wound Care at the Hospital:

- Do not be afraid to remind your healthcare team to wash their hands before caring for your wound.
- Make sure you know how to care for your wound & drains.



Wound Care at Home:

- Wounds tend to feel itchy as they heal, but do not scratch.
- Always wash your hands before & after caring for your wound.
- Call your doctor immediately if you have:
 - Fever
 - Pain at wound site
 - Redness at wound site
 - Drainage from wound



9. Surgical Procedures

At the Hospital:

We will check your identification many times.

- We will ask your full name and date of birth.
- We will check your ID bracelet many times and ask you to say who you are.

We will ask you to tell us what you know about your condition.

- You may be asked why you are having surgery or a procedure.

We may mark your body.

- (If you are having surgery or a procedure,) Your doctor may mark your skin to make sure we are using the correct site for the operation or procedure.

Ask your doctor about the Safety Pause or Time Out.

- Your doctor and care team will take a “Safety Pause” or “Time Out” just before the procedure begins –to make sure that all the information about you and your procedure is correct.

