Patient Safety, It Is Everyone’s Responsibility

At Providence Health Care, we want to give our patients the best care. Patients who take part in their own care do better and stay safer.

Please take a few minutes to review these simple tips that will help make your hospital stay a safe and positive experience.
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Keep clean

Cleaning your hands is the best way to stop the spread of germs. Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer).

**Clean your hands before:**

1. Eating and drinking.
2. Touching any cuts, sores or bandages.
3. Touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
4. Leaving your room.

**Clean your hands after:**

1. Using the toilet.
2. Blowing your nose.
3. Touching any cuts, sores or bandages.
4. Touching garbage.

- Ask your nurse, doctor, or other healthcare staff if they have cleaned their hands. It is ok to ask – “Did you just clean your hands?”
- Do not share food, personal care items (such as combs, brushes, and razors), or with other patients.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your elbow, not your hand.
- Do not go into other patient’s rooms.
- Keep your bedside area tidy.
Maintain good hygiene while you are in the hospital. Ask for a clean hospital gown, pajamas when they are soiled. You can also ask for personal hygiene items such as a comb, toothbrush, razor and face cloth.

Poor hygiene can cause discomfort, skin complaints and infections, and can lower self-esteem.

If isolation measures are needed (for example if you have an infection that can be spread to others, or you are vulnerable to getting an infection from others), you and your family will receive specific infection control instructions.

**Understanding your care**

**Know your medicines**

Medication safety is an important part of your care. Some things your care team does to keep you safe:

- Review all medications you are taking, including all prescription and non-prescription medications.
- Ask you about any allergies you have.
- Check your identification each time you are given a medication.

Some things you can do to help stay safe:

- Tell your care team about all medications that you are taking, including samples from your doctor, vitamins, herbal medicines, diet supplements, natural remedies, and other medications you buy without a prescription like laxatives, pain medication, antacids or recreational drugs.
- Inform your care team of any allergies you have.
- Inform your care team if you think you might be pregnant.
- Ask questions about your medications and express concerns if you have them.
To allow your care team to provide you with the safest care possible, please do not take your own medications from home. Your care team will provide your medications during your stay.

**Agreeing to treatment**

We will explain any treatment or procedure that you need and any risks or possible complications. Please ask questions if you don’t understand.

You have a right to choose to agree (or disagree) to:

- a treatment
- a medicine
- a stay in the hospital

You can change your mind and stop any treatment at any time.

**Keep moving with caution**

Staying active is a good way for you to recover and maintain your strength and independence while in the hospital. Activities can include walking, sitting up for meals and when reading, getting dressed and doing bed or chair exercises.

**Prevent slips and falls**

- Wear slippers with rubber soles or non-skid socks. Your care team will provide you with non-skid socks.
- Use your call bell to ask for help when you are not feeling steady on your feet.
- Inform your care team if you need help to use the bathroom.
- Turn on your bedside light when getting up in the night.
• Keep the area around your bedside clear.
• Keep your bed at the lowest position (your nurse can help you with the bed controls).
• Ask your nurse for help if you are finding it hard to walk with equipment (for example an Intravenous (IV) pole).
• Ask to see a physiotherapist if you need a walking aid such as a wheelchair, walker, cane or crutches.

**Lower your risk of blood clots**

Sometimes, patients can get a blood clot in the veins in their legs just from lying in bed for too long. The risk of getting a blood clot can last for at least a month after you leave the hospital.

It is important that you recognize the signs of a blood clot. Ask your care team about the signs and symptoms of clots.

To prevent blood clots you should drink as much water as recommended and move around as much as you can safely.

We might give you medication to help prevent blood clots while in the hospital, and/or give you a prescription for medication to take when you get home.

**Prevent pressure injuries**

A pressure injury is a wound that occurs when you sit or lie in one spot for too long.

Here are some things you can do to avoid developing a pressure injury:

• Move or walk as much as you can once the care team says that it is safe.
• Turn your body every 2-3 hours when you lie in bed or when you feel discomfort.
• Let your nurse know if you have any sore spots. They will monitor and support the sore spot to prevent it getting worse.
• Avoid scraping or dragging your skin when moving into bed or into your wheelchair.
• Keep your skin clean and free of moisture.
• Maintain proper nutrition.

Ways to be safe

We work to create an environment that is safe for all patients and families. If you are concerned about the safety in your room, please speak to your nurse.

If you have concerns regarding your substance use, there are options available to support you. Speak with your nurse.

Code Help (Code H)

Code H is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for patients and families.

While in hospital, call the Code H Team at (604) 329-3752 if you:
• Have noticed a medical change that is not being addressed.
• Feel that a matter is not getting the attention you need.
• Feel confused about the treatment plan, and have already talked to your nurse or doctor but feel the issue is not resolved.

If your concerns are not addressed to your satisfaction, you may contact the Patient Care Quality office at 604-806-8284.
Wear your identification band

Make sure the information on your identification band is correct.

Before we do any procedures or tests, we will ask to see your identification band or ask you to identify yourself.

Keep your belongings safe

A hospital is a public building and we cannot ensure the safety of your belongings. Please send your jewelry and important belongings home. If you do not have anyone to give your belongings to, we can lock up small items in the hospital safe.

For valuables that you need to keep with you, we suggest you get insurance.

Keep your glasses, hearing aids, and dentures in a case. Label the case with your name. When not using these items, place them in their cases.

Please note that compensation will not be made for missing belongings that were not given to the staff for safe-keeping.

Plan for going home

When you are getting ready to leave the hospital your care team will work with you to make sure you understand your discharge plan.

Here are some questions to ask to make sure you feel prepared to leave the hospital:

- What was my diagnosis and what treatment did I get during my stay?
• Has my family doctor received any reports from the hospital?
• What was the name of my primary doctor while in the hospital?
• What follow-up appointments or visits do I have?
• Are there any education materials I can take home for my care at home?
• What are my new medications? Are there any side effects?

Tell us about your experience

We may ask you to complete a survey about your experience in the hospital. A staff member may approach you with an iPad in the days leading up to your discharge and offer the survey. This anonymous and confidential survey allows us to understand and learn from your experiences.

You can also complete this survey using this URL or QR code.

Type this link directly into your internet browser: https://bit.ly/3a2qivq

To use the QR code, open the camera on your phone and point it at the square QR code. You will see a link pop up at the top of your phone screen. Open this link to go to our online survey.
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