



- 4.** Tell a member of your health care team if you have ever had an allergic or bad reaction to any medicine or food.

If you get sick, your health care team may have to act fast. Before they give you any medicine, they need to know if you could have a bad reaction to it. That's why you should tell them in advance about any allergy or reaction you have ever had to any medicine or food.

Reactions can include rashes, headaches, breathing trouble, and feeling sick. Because some medicines have food in them (such as the eggs used in the flu shot), be sure to talk about your food allergies too. Tell a member of your team right away if a new medicine makes you feel unwell. If you do not know if you have allergies, you can get tested.

Don't wait until you get sick to tell people about your allergies. Some people wear an ID bracelet such as MedicAlert™. This tells the health care team about your allergies when you can't tell them yourself.

- 5.** Make sure you know what to do when you go home from the hospital or from your medical appointment.

When you are getting ready to go home from the hospital or after a medical treatment, ask as many questions as you can to make sure you understand what you need to do when you go home. You can write this information down or it may be helpful to have a family member or friend with you to write it down.

Funding for this project was initially provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

This brochure has been prepared as a general information and reference guide on the subject matter contained herein. It is not intended to be and is not a comprehensive or definitive statement or review regarding the subject matter contained herein, nor is it intended to provide any legal or medical advice. You should not adapt or change any medical treatments or practices without consulting with your doctor. Copyright 2006 The Ontario Hospital Association. All rights reserved. This brochure may not be modified, adapted, published or sold in whole or in part without the prior written permission of, and with express attribution to, OHA. However, this brochure may be downloaded, distributed, reproduced and displayed for non-commercial personal use or use at or by Ontario hospitals without the prior written permission of the OHA.



Your Health Care Be Involved



OHA Patient Safety
Support Service

www.oha.com/patientsafetytips



1. Be involved in your health care. Speak up if you have questions or concerns about your care.

One of the keys to getting the best health care is to be an active member of your health care team. This means taking part and being involved in every decision about your care. This also means asking a member of your health care team questions, so that you can make informed choices. It means coming prepared for your medical treatment and knowing what to do when you go home.

What you should know

You should understand as much as you can about any:

- medical problem you have (your diagnosis)
- treatment or procedure that you will have
- medicine you should take and how to take it

Here are some good ways to ask questions:

- “What should I do when I go home?”
- “What should I tell my family about my care?”
- “Can you tell me more about my medical problem?”
- “What does this test or treatment involve?”
- “What is the purpose of this test or treatment?”
- “Are there any other options?”
- “What should I do to get ready?”



2. Tell a member of your health care team about your past illnesses and your current health condition.

You are the one who knows the most about your health. Tell the members of your health care team everything you can, even if you think they already know, and even if you think it is not important.

Tell them if:

- you are not feeling well right now or have been sick lately
- you are taking any medicine
- you have had surgery or recent visits to the hospital
- you have seen another doctor or gone somewhere else for health care
- you have an ongoing illness like diabetes or heart disease
- there is an illness that runs in your family, such as high blood pressure, asthma, or cancer
- you have a history of tobacco, drug, or alcohol use



3. Bring all of your medicines with you when you go to the hospital or to a medical appointment.

Some medicines combine with each other in your body and produce bad reactions. To protect you, your health care team must know about everything you take. This includes the drugs you take with a doctor’s prescription. It also includes other medicines you buy, such as:

- vitamins
- herbs and herbal remedies
- food supplements
- “over the counter” or non-prescription medicine you buy at the drugstore

When you are going to the hospital or to a medical appointment, put all of your medicines in a bag and take them with you. Always keep your medicine in the bottle it came in.

If you cannot bring the medicines with you, another good thing to do is to keep a list of everything you take. Keep this list up to date and bring this list with you when you go to the hospital or to a medical appointment. Your doctor and pharmacist can help you make this list.