Keeping You Safe

Your doctor wants you to stay safe by knowing about your care and by understanding what is happening to you.

ABOUT YOUR MEDICINES:

- At each visit, your doctor will **ask about all your medicines**. This is a **check to be sure there are no mistakes with your medicines**. Make sure you tell your doctors, nurses, and pharmacist about all the medicine you are taking including:
  - Prescription medicine.
  - Over-the-counter (non-prescription) medicines.
  - Sample medicines.
  - Vaccines.
  - Herbs.
  - Vitamins.
  - Nutriceuticals.
  - Dietary supplements.
  - Health or energy drinks you are taking.
  - Medicines you breathe in (such as an inhaler or diskus).
- **Bring all your medicines with you to all your visits.**
- Tell your doctors, nurses and pharmacist about any allergies or bad reactions you have had to any medicines or foods.
- Make sure you know about all your medicines. If you have any questions ask before you go home. This is what you should know about **each** medicine:
  - What it is called (brand name and generic name).
  - What it is for.
  - What it looks like.
  - When to take it.
  - How much to take.
  - How to take it and how long to take it.
  - The side effects you might have. What you should do about them.
  - Foods or drinks you should not have while taking the medicine.
  - Things you should not do while taking the medicine.
  - If the medicine is safe to take along with all the other medicines, herbs, vitamins or dietary supplements you are taking.
- If you are home and have any questions about your medicines:
  - Call the number on your medicine bottle.
  - Call the pharmacy where you get your medicines filled.
- If you are getting an IV drip, know how long it should take to run in. Let your nurse know if:
  - It is not dripping.
  - It is dripping faster than before.
  - Your arm begins to swell around the IV needle.

ABOUT THE RISK OF INFECTION:

- Hand washing is the best way to keep infections from spreading. Be sure your doctors wash their hands before and after they take care of you. You can remind them to do this, if you need to.
- If you have a wound that looks like it is not getting better, or is getting worse, be sure to tell your health care provider.

ABOUT MAKING SURE DOCTORS ARE TREATING THE RIGHT PART OF THE RIGHT PERSON:

- Your doctor should always ask your name and check your ID bracelet before:
  - Taking care of you.
  - Giving you medicine.
  - Drawing your blood.

  In some clinics you may not have an ID bracelet, so your doctor should ask your name and date of birth.
- If you are having surgery, make sure you or the doctor marks the place on your body (the site) where the surgery is to be done.

ABOUT THE RISK OF FALLING:

- If you use a walker or need help walking at home, tell your doctor.
- If you have just had surgery, or are feeling weak or faint, or there is any chance of you falling, call any doctor to help you get up and walk.
- If you are in the hospital, talk to your nurse about having a family member or friend stay with you to help keep you from falling.

ABOUT THINKING OF SUICIDE:

- If you have any thoughts about hurting yourself, or that you would be better off dead, tell your doctor right away.

ABOUT YOUR HEALTH CARE:

- Read any medical forms you are asked to sign. If you do not understand something, ask your doctor to explain it. Do not sign until you understand and agree.
- When your doctor comes in to take care of you, they should always tell you who they are. They should also tell you what kind of doctor they are, such as a:
  - Doctor.
  - Nurse.
  - Therapist.
- Before you leave the hospital, make sure you and your doctor knows how to take care of you at home. This means knowing about:
  - Medicines.
  - Treatments (Some examples are: changing your dressing, tube feeding, using oxygen, caring for your stoma).
  - Problems for which you should call your doctor, and problems for which you should call an ambulance to take you to the Emergency Room.
  - How to properly work any equipment you will be using at home.
- If you think you may feel too sick to watch out for your own safety, ask your nurse if a trusted family member or friend may stay to help you out and ask questions for you.
- If, at any time, you feel something is not going right with you or the way you are being taken care of, let your nurse know.

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