

5. Make sure you understand what will happen if you need surgery. Ask your doctor and surgeon:

- Exactly what will you be doing?
- What are the risks and benefits of the procedure?
- How long will it take?
- Who will take charge of my care while I'm in the hospital?
- What will happen after the surgery?
- How can I expect to feel during recovery?

Tell the surgeon, anesthesiologist and nurses if you have allergies or have ever had a bad reaction to anesthesia. Make sure you, your doctor and your surgeon all agree on exactly what will be done during the operation.

Patient safety depends on awareness, care and communication between the patient, family and health care team. It is our goal to provide the safest environment possible for you as a patient or for a loved one.



If you have safety concerns:

Contact our Patient Relations Coordinator at 715-847-2275 or Quality Services at 715-847-2280.

If your concerns are not resolved, or at any time you may contact:

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization

One Renaissance Blvd.
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

Complaint Hotline

800.994.6610
complaint@jcaho.org

Remember you are the center of your health care team!

333 Pine Ridge Blvd
Wausau, WI 54401
715.847.2160

aspirus.org



Be Involved in Your Health Care

Taking the lead in patient safety



5 Steps to Safer Health Care

Everyone has a part in making health care safe. The single most important way you can help to prevent medical errors is to be an informed and active member of your health care team.

1. Speak up if you have questions or concerns.

Choose a doctor who you feel comfortable talking to about your health and treatment. Take a relative or friend with you if this will help you ask questions and understand the answers. It's okay to ask questions and to expect answers you can understand.

2. Keep a list of all your medications.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about the medicines that you take, including over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin, ibuprofen and dietary supplements like vitamins and herbals. Tell them about any drug allergies you have. If you do not have a listing of all your medicines, ask your doctor to provide you with one.

Talk to your pharmacist about side effects and what foods or other things to avoid while taking your medicine. When you get your medicine, read the label, including warnings. Make sure it is what your doctor ordered and you know how to take it. If the medicine looks different than you expected, ask the pharmacist about it. Do not take medications from home while hospitalized. Do not be afraid to question members of your health care team.



3. Make sure you get the results of any test or procedure.

Ask your doctor or nurse when and how you will get the results of tests or procedures. If you do not get them when expected - in person, on the phone or in the mail - don't assume the results are fine. Call your doctor and ask for them. Ask what the results mean for your care.

4. For all hospital stays, pay attention to the care you are receiving.

Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medications by the right health care professionals. Don't assume anything.

- Expect health care workers to introduce themselves when they enter your room and look for their identification badges. A new mother, for example, should know the person to whom she is handing her baby. If you are unsure, ask.
- Tell your nurse or doctor if something doesn't seem quite right.
- Make sure your caregiver confirms your identity by checking your wrist band and asking your name and date of birth before giving you any medication or treatment. A gentle reminder to your caregiver to do so is always appreciated.



- Expect your caregivers to clean their hands before and after contact with you. Hand hygiene is the most important way to prevent the spread of infections. Don't be afraid to remind a doctor or nurse to do this.
- Know what time of day you normally receive a medication. If it doesn't happen, bring this to the attention of your nurse or doctor.
- If you receive medications while in the hospital, notify your nurse or doctor if your medicine is not the same color, shape or size as the medicine you take at home.
- Thoroughly read all medical forms and make sure you understand them before you sign anything. If you don't understand, ask your doctor or nurse to explain them.
- When you are being discharged from the hospital, ask your doctor or nurse to explain the treatment plan you will use at home.