

## 9. Medication Safety

**Be honest**- tell your doctor, nurse and pharmacist about everything you take-including herbal, vitamin supplements and over the counter medications.

At least once a year bag up your medications and take them with you to your doctor's appointment.



### Be familiar with your medications

- Try and fill all prescriptions at the same pharmacy. It is helpful to develop a relationship with the pharmacist.
- Check expiration date(s). Discard all the expired medications safely.
- Does it need to be refrigerated?
- What is this medicine for?
- How am I supposed to take it and for how long?
- Is this medication safe to take with other medicines, herbs or dietary supplements?
- What food, drink, or activities should I avoid while taking this medication?
- What are the side effects?



## SPEAK UP™ INITIATIVES

**S**peak up if you have questions or concerns. If you still do not understand, ask again. It's your body and you have a right to know.

**P**ay attention to the care you get. Always make sure you are getting the right treatments and medicines by the right health care professionals. Don't assume anything.

**E**ducate yourself about your illness. Learn about the medical tests you get, and your treatment plan.

**A**sk a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (advisor or supporter).

**K**now what medicines you take and why you take them. Medicine errors are the most common health care mistakes.

**U**se a hospital, clinic, surgery center, or other type of health care organization that has been carefully checked out.

**P**articipate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team.

[www.jointcommission.org/speakup.aspx](http://www.jointcommission.org/speakup.aspx)



**DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG**

Health Care Ministry  
(717) 657-4804



Your  
Checklist

**WHEN ENTERING THE**

hospital  
or

**Undergoing Outpatient  
Procedures and Surgery**



**1. Inform the parish office before entering the hospital.**

**2. Request Anointing of the Sick at the parish prior to hospitalization.**

*The Anointing of the Sick is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. It is fitting to receive the Anointing of the Sick prior to a planned hospitalization. This sacrament may be received on more than one occasion.*

**3. Make sure all health professionals involved in your care have all important health information about you.** Develop a folder, which contains all your medical information, including medications, as well as known allergies and keep it in an easily accessible spot. Let several people know where it is located.

**4. During the hospital stay:**

- **SPEAK UP**, if you have questions or concerns. Be aware. . . understand.
- **BE AWARE**, if surgery is planned, that nail polish and jewelry are not permitted as well as body piercing. If you are unable to remove a wedding band, it can be taped.
- **BE PREPARED** by taking paper and a pen to jot down questions for the hospital staff/doctor during the hospital stay.
- **HAVE SOMEONE WITH YOU**, a family member or advocate to hear the physician's assessment or treatment plan. You may have difficulty taking in and processing all the correct information.

- **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT** you let the nursing staff know when you are experiencing pain. Pain management is essential for your recovery.

- **TO AVOID INFECTION**, make sure all medical personnel use proper hygiene, hand washing, gloves and masks when providing direct care to you. If not, please ask.



**5. Get written or recorded information.**

Ask for pre-printed instructions or information whenever possible. If instructions are hand-written, be sure they are legible before you leave the office or hospital.

**6. If you have a test done**, don't always assume that no news is good news. Ask about results, including, what they mean, and if you need any type of follow-up care.

**7. Know the requirements of the admissions process, such as:**

- Bring your Durable Power of Attorney regarding health care and your Living Will.
- Bring a list of all your current medications as well as the dosages.
- Be aware of required screening.
- During admission, identify your parish and ask them to notify your parish of your hospital stay, location and room number.
- Notify the hospital's Pastoral Care Department of your admission and if you desire to receive the Eucharist.
- Identify your family spokesperson or advocate and who is to have access to your medical information.

**8. Preparing for Discharge**

A social worker may visit to do an assessment on care required when returning home.

Please notify the nurse or advocate if there is a medical concern that you feel would prevent you from being discharged.

Receive a list of instructions and restrictions after discharge from the hospital.



Notify the parish office after your hospital stay especially if you are in need of some services, i.e. meals, home visitation with Holy Communion, transportation, etc. They may have programs in place to assist you, if needed. It may be helpful to check in advance of your hospital stay, just what assistance your parish may be able to provide.

