

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

**P**ay attention to the care you are receiving. Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medications by the right health care professional. Don't assume anything.

**E**ducate yourself about your diagnosis, the medical tests you are undergoing, and your treatment plan.

**A**sk a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate.

**K**now what medications you take and why you take them. Medication errors are the most common health care mistake.

**U**se a hospital, clinic, surgery center, or other health care organization for your healthcare needs.

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

The Northside Hospital healthcare system is an 838 bed, not-for-profit healthcare provider with more than 120 locations across Metro Atlanta, including three acute care, state-of-the-art hospitals in Atlanta, Cherokee and Forsyth. Atlanta consumers consistently voted Northside their "Most Preferred Hospital for Overall Healthcare Needs" in the National Research Corporation's annual Healthcare Market Guide. More than 2,500 physicians and 10,000 employees serve more than 1,000,000 patient visits annually across a full range of medical services.

Please **SPEAK UP**

Discuss any concerns or questions with your:

Nurse or other Caregiver  
Unit Charge Nurse/Supervisor  
Department Manager  
House Coordinator

or

contact a Patient Relations Representative at:

Atlanta 404-851-8904  
Forsyth 770-844-3686  
Cherokee 770-224-2580

**YOUR SAFETY AND WELL BEING  
ARE OUR CONCERN.**



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# PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY

Information Guide



## SURGERY

### PREVENTING WRONG SITE SURGERY

To make sure they are doing the right surgery on the right body part, on the right person, your doctor may mark the spot on your body that is to be operated on.

You can help by making sure only the correct part is marked. Ask your surgeon if they will be taking a "time out" to check information about your surgery just before it begins.

### PREVENTING SURGERY INFECTION

Before your surgery, you may be asked to help clean the area on your body that is to be operated on, and you may be given an antibiotic medication.

### JOIN US IN A PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY

Be an active participant in your care.

To our patients and their families...

*We are committed to treating you with courtesy and respect.*

## HANDWASHING

Handwashing is the single most important thing that you and your caregiver can do to prevent the spread of infection. Use soap and water or alcohol-based foam. Please feel comfortable asking your caregivers if they have washed their hands before starting a procedure. Here are four easy steps you can do to assist us in fighting the spread of infection.

1. Clean your hands.

- Use soap and warm water. Rub your hands really well for at least 15 seconds.
- If your hands do not look dirty, clean them with alcohol based foam. Rub the sanitizer all over your hands, especially under your nails and between your fingers until your hands are dry. Allow to dry.
- Clean your hands before touching or eating food. Clean them after you use the bathroom, change a diaper, or play with a pet.

2. Make sure your health care providers clean their hands before they treat you.

- Don't be afraid to gently remind them.

3. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.

- Use a tissue! Be sure to throw away used tissues and then clean your hands.
  - If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the bend of your elbow or hands. If you use your hands, wash them right away.
4. Follow your nurse's directions if you or your loved one is placed on isolation precautions.

- Being on isolation does not mean that your condition has worsened or changed.
- Isolation is an added measure taken to prevent contagious diseases from being spread from a patient to other patients, healthcare workers, and visitors.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR PLAN OF CARE

This guide is to assist you during your hospital stay and includes important information to prepare you for your discharge. Every time you talk with your doctor, nurse or other caregiver about your daily activities and goals, use the "Ask Me 3" questions to better understand your health.

(1)

What is my main problem?

(2)

What do I need to do?

(3) Why is it

important for me to do this? If you don't

understand something that your caregiver tells

you, just ask them to explain.

## INFORMED CONSENT

If you are having a procedure, make sure that you and your doctors agree and are clear on exactly what will be done.

## PATIENT ADVOCACY

We suggest that you choose a trusted family member or friend to be with you and be your advocate. This is someone who can help get things done and speak for you if you are unable. You and your family are encouraged to seek assistance from any staff member if you have concerns about changes in your condition.

## INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Qualified medical interpretation services are provided free of charge. If you have a special communication need due to vision, speech, hearing or language problems, ask the staff caring for you to provide an interpreter.

## MEDICATION SAFETY

Make sure that your doctors and nurses know about all the medicines you are taking, including:

- Prescription

- Over-the-Counter
  - Dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs
- Bring a list with you to include:
- Name of medicine, dose

- When and how often you take your medicines
- Any allergies or side effects you have experienced

Your nurse or caregivers will correctly identify you by using your name and the medical record or account number from your patient armband before giving you any medication. Your nurse will tell you about any new medications you may receive while in the hospital and their possible side effects.

## DISCHARGE SAFETY

On discharge, you will receive a complete list of the medicines you should take home. The list will include:

- The right combination of previous home medications and any new prescriptions.
- Any new prescriptions your doctor has ordered. Before leaving the hospital, be sure to discuss any questions you may have with your nurse or other health care professional.

## ACCURATE PATIENT IDENTIFICATION

Before giving you any medication or performing any procedure or treatment, we must correctly identify you. We will compare the full name and medical record or account number listed on your hospital forms with the information on your patient armband.

Your armband is the primary means of identifying you. You can help us keep you safe by wearing it at all times during your visit to the hospital. If you are wearing the armband of another healthcare facility, it will be removed by our hospital staff. In outpatient areas, where armbands are not used, we will ask you your full name and date of birth.

### **PERSONAL SAFETY**

A “Risk to Fall” assessment is done for all patients on admission and daily while you are in the hospital. If you have a problem which limits your ability to walk or otherwise care for yourself, please discuss this with your nurse. If you have concerns for your own personal safety or for someone dependent on you, ask your nurse to assist you in contacting someone who can help.

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