

Letter from Administration

Welcome to your community hospital. It is our desire that you always receive the highest level of care possible and that your stay be a healing experience.

Thank you for putting your trust in Columbus Community Hospital. It is our goal to exceed your expectations and we need your feedback. If at any time during your stay you feel your expectations are not being met, please share with us any concerns by calling the Quality Coordinator at Ext. 7565 or by requesting to speak with the nurse in charge. In addition, after you are discharged from the hospital, you may receive a phone call from JL Morgan. JL Morgan is a company we use to conduct our patient satisfaction surveys. Please take the time to speak to the surveyor to enable us to improve the services we provide to you and your family.

Thank you for choosing Columbus Community Hospital.

Sincerely,

Administration



YOUR Satisfaction

We Encourage Your Feedback to Improve Care.

Your health matters! To determine where improvements are needed, this hospital takes part in the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey. The HCAHPS survey is backed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and measures your satisfaction with the quality of our care. This assessment is designed to be a standardized tool for measuring and reporting satisfaction across all hospitals in the U.S.

The survey is made up of simple questions on key care topics such as:

- Doctor and nurse communication
- Medicine and discharge information
- Pain management and responsiveness
- Overall quality of the hospital environment

If you are selected to participate in this brief survey, please take the time to speak to the surveyor, as this is your opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the care you received. The feedback will help us know what we are doing right and where we can improve.

your feedback is

MUSIC

to our ears



We strive to continuously improve - and you can help us.

You may receive a phone call from J.L. Morgan & Associates, Inc. (area code 205)
asking about your recent hospital visit.
This is your opportunity to tell us what we did well,
and where we could use improvement.

We value your input.
If you have any questions, please ask us.

J.L. MORGAN & Associates, Inc.

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On Our Cover

Phone Directory

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Wifi Access

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I operate the television?

To power the TV on or off, press the POWER button on the Pillow Speaker or on the TV. You can scroll or type in the number for the channel you want to watch. TV Channels are listed on a separate page.

How can my family and friends call me while I am in the hospital?

Your direct line to your room is available in your room on the white board in front of your bed. The telephone number is 979-493- 78 (plus the last 2 digits of your room number). OB telephone number is 979-493-784 (plus your room number).

What if I bring my home medication in with me?

Home medications brought into the hospital will be inventoried and placed in the Pharmacy Department for safe storing. As a medication safety practice, medications are not allowed to be stored in your room. Medications will be returned to you upon discharge from the hospital.

Who do I contact if concerns arise during my stay?

If at any time during your stay you feel your expectations are not being met, please share your concerns by calling the Quality Coordinator at Ext. 7565 or by requesting to speak with the nurse in charge. It is our goal to resolve your concern as quickly as possible.

Who is JL Morgan?

JL Morgan is a company selected by the hospital to conduct satisfactions surveys via telephone. You should expect to receive this call within three to four weeks after you have been discharged.

How do I get access to my medical records?

The Health Information Department can assist with copies of your medical records. Please call 979-493-7554 or extension 7554.

FAST FACTS ABOUT YOUR STAY

VISITOR GUIDELINES

Visitors are an important part of your hospital stay and recovery. However, rest and unhindered medical care and treatment must be given priority over visiting. We ask all visitors to abide by the following rules:

- Please be sensitive to the needs of other patients when visiting.
- Children or adults who have been exposed to communicable diseases or who are obviously ill are not permitted in the patient care areas.
- Visitors are limited to 2 per patient, 30 minutes per visit. Keep the conversation cheerful and light.
- Children, accompanied by an adult, may visit any patient on the medical/surgical unit during visitation hours. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED.
- Visitors should not loiter in halls and must leave immediately upon the request of hospital personnel.
- Visitors should seek permission from the Charge Nurse before bringing food or household items into the room.
- Ministers may visit anytime, upon the request of the patient.
- At the discretion of the physician or staff, visitors may be asked to leave for reasons of patient privacy, patient care and/or ongoing treatment.
- Smoking and/or the use of any tobacco products is not permitted anywhere in the hospital or on hospital grounds.

CONDITION REPORTS

Personal information about your diagnosis and treatment must come from your physician and this information is only available to members of your immediate family designated by you to receive it.

PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Public restrooms are located near the front lobby of the hospital and across from the cafeteria.

Visitors: Please do not use bathrooms in patient rooms. They are reserved only for patients in order to protect their health.

HOSPITAL BEDS

Hospital beds are electronically operated and your nurse will show you how to adjust the bed for your comfort. Your hospital bed is probably higher and narrower than your bed at home. Attached to your bed is the Pillow Speaker which you will use to call the nurse (red button), turn on/off over bed light (yellow light symbol) and to turn the TV on/off, control volume and change channels. These are very similar to any standard TV remote.

ROOM TEMPERATURE

All rooms in the hospital are centrally heated and cooled and all patient rooms have individual thermostats. Please call your nurse to regulate the thermostat so the temperature in your room is comfortable to you.

INTERPRETERS

The hospital maintains a contract with The Language Link for all interpretation needs. Check with your nurse for additional information.

TELEPHONE

Patients can be reached by phone in their room. Patients may receive calls in their rooms from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Local and toll-free calls may be made at any time from the room by dialing "9" and then the number, including the area code. Please see the whiteboard in your room for your direct dial number.

GIFT SHOP

The Pink Angel Gift Shop, located in the front lobby of the hospital, offers a wide selection of gifts, cards, snacks, and jewelry. Items handmade by our volunteers are added weekly. Stop by and see the variety available.

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

FAST FACTS ABOUT YOUR STAY

MEDICATIONS FROM HOME

Patients are not allowed to administer their own medications or to keep personal medications, unless approved by their physician. All medications administered while you are a patient at CCH have been prescribed by your physician, dispensed by the hospital pharmacy and administered by a trained professional. If you do bring your medications from home, they must be inventoried and locked in the pharmacy until you are discharged.

VALUABLES

We request that you send your valuables home with your family. The hospital does not accept responsibility for loss of personal or valuable items.

FIRE SAFETY

For your protection, the hospital regularly conducts routine fire and disaster drills. If a drill occurs while you are here, please remain in your room and do not become alarmed. Our staff is trained in fire protection and will assist patients accordingly.

TV

Television is provided free of charge in each patient room. To power the TV on or off, press the POWER button on the Pillow Speaker or on the TV. You can scroll or type in the number for the channel you want to watch. Please be considerate of others by keeping the volume down and turning off your TV at bedtime. Channel listings are provided on a separate page.

INTERNET

Portable devices such as smart phones, tablets and/or laptops can access the internet by choosing the network titled *cchguest*. The password is *cchguest*.

CAFETERIA SERVICES

PATIENT MEALS

Your meals are prepared fresh daily to ensure the highest quality. We strive to make your mealtime a pleasant experience. Breakfast will arrive on patient units at approximately 8:00 a.m. Lunch will arrive at approximately 12:00 noon. Dinner will arrive at approximately 5:00 p.m. Trays will be distributed by the nursing staff. Menu selections for the next day will be on your tray. Please select preferences and leave on the tray for dietary personnel. If you have any questions concerning your menu options, or if you need to inform us of your food preferences or allergies, please advise nursing or contact the dietary department by dialing ext. 7624. Visitors are asked to refrain from eating from patient trays. Patient meal intake is documented as part of patient care.

GUEST MEALS

Guest trays are available for sale and may be eaten in the patient's room or in the dining room. To order guest trays, contact the dietary department by dialing ext. 7624. The cafeteria is open to visitors at the following times:

Breakfast

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Lunch

Monday - Friday 11:15 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Complimentary tea and coffee are provided for patients and visitors in the dining room.

Vending machines are located in the snack area across from the surgery waiting room.

SPIRITUAL CARE

A chapel is located next to the surgery waiting room for use during your stay. We do not have a chaplain on staff but you may contact your own minister or advise the nursing service or case management of your desire for a pastoral visit. Our staff will be happy to notify one of the local pastors or priests of your request.

HOSPITAL SERVICES



Labor & Delivery

Columbus Community Hospital makes birthing a family-centered event. Combining individualized care with warm and comfortable surroundings, the mother and newborn are our biggest priority. CCH encourages family bonding by keeping the mother and newborn together in the same room. The labor suites are designed for the mother to labor, deliver, and recover in the same room. Special emphasis is given to allow the expectant couple to plan for and make decisions regarding their birth experience. The obstetrical staff makes a special effort to make all family members feel a part of the joyous event.

Six patient rooms feature a home environment for maximum comfort and privacy while the mother and new arrival receive top quality postpartum and newborn care. To continue family bonding, the new father and siblings are encouraged to spend extended time with the mother and newborn.

CCH Labor and Delivery Services are supported by the latest in birthing technology, including birthing beds, fetal monitors and ultrasound. A fully-equipped nursery is available to care for the newborn. To prepare the family for the new arrival, education classes are offered on a variety of topics by instructors from the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Visitors are asked to remain in the waiting area during labor and delivery and not in the hallways.

Surgery

Columbus Community Hospital has a broad offering of surgical services including: General, Endoscopy, Ophthalmology, Orthopedics, Gynecology, Urology, Ear/Nose/Throat and Podiatry.

Should the need arise for you to have surgery during your hospital stay, several things will occur: surgical staff will interview you and ask questions pertaining to your health history, you will be given the opportunity to ask questions of the anesthesia and surgical team and a member of the surgical team will escort you by stretcher to the surgical department. We ask that your family remain in the hospital while your procedure is being performed. They will receive updates from the surgical staff during the procedure and your surgeon will speak to them when your procedure is completed.



As each patient, situation and procedure is unique, the process may vary, as well as the time estimates for surgery and recovery. Your questions and concerns are important to us, we will strive to always keep you and your family informed.

Medical Surgical Unit

The Medical Surgical Unit is where a majority of patients spend the night at Columbus Community Hospital. On the unit, we serve adults and children who are hospitalized to receive medications and treatments or who are staying for recovery from surgical procedures. The unit consists of 34 beds and is a combination of semiprivate and private rooms. The goal of the Medical Surgical Unit is to effectively meet the needs of the patient and their family.

SHORTEN THE ROAD TO RECOVERY WITH SWING BED

Swing Bed

Columbus Community Hospital is committed to the recovery of patients who no longer require acute care hospitalization, but still need additional therapy before going home. Swing Bed incorporates skilled nursing with rehabilitation therapies to help our patients meet their maximum potential prior to leaving our facility.

Who needs Swing Bed?

When a patient reaches the point in recovery where acute care hospitalization is no longer necessary, Swing Bed is a positive intermediate step. Swing Bed Care can be provided for:

- Special needs after an acute illness
- Recovery after major accident or stroke
- Wounds which are not healing or need special care
- Pain Management
- Nutritional Therapy
- Recovery from major surgery, joint replacement, etc.

What services are available?

Each patient's needs during recovery are unique and treatment plans will be tailored to the individual. The following departments/services may be part of the Swing Bed Team:

- Skilled Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Dietary
- Occupational Therapy
- Social Services
- Patient/Family Education
- Religious Visits on Request

Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy

Illness and injury often lead to a decline in mobility. One of the top priorities of our Rehabilitation Team at Columbus Community Hospital is to ensure that our Swing Bed patients are at their best possible functional level before being discharged from our facility. Our Rehabilitation Staff consists of highly trained, compassionate and experienced therapists. Therapy programs are tailored to each individual patient and may include Physical, Occupational and/or Speech Therapy, manual techniques, use of exercise equipment, education on use of adaptive equipment or skilled training on activities of daily living (dressing, bathing and hygiene).

Medicare and Insurance

Medicare pays for days 1 thru 20 of Swing Bed as long as the patient continues to meet Medicare criteria. Insurance and HMO coverage of Swing Bed depends on individual benefits. The length of stay is based on each patient's particular diagnosis and individual needs.

Skilled Care, Home Health or Outpatient Therapy

Prior to discharge from Swing Bed services, our Rehabilitation Team can help patients decide the appropriate discharge plan.

For those whose recovery will take longer, rehabilitation may be indicated in a Skilled Nursing Facility. Locally, there are a number of Nursing Care Centers which provide Skilled Care. If this type of care is needed, a list of these facilities is available upon request. Other ways to continue therapy after discharge are through Home Health or Outpatient Therapy. These arrangements will be made prior to discharge from our Swing Bed program.

Our Case Managers will answer any questions concerning our Swing Bed program and help to arrange a plan of care to help our patients meet their recovery goals.

SPEAK UP!

Take charge of your care.

During your stay, the doctors, nurses and staff of the hospital will treat you and your family as partners in your own care. One important way you can be involved is to **SPEAK UP**. Ask questions, voice your concerns and don't be afraid to raise issues relating not only to your care and treatment, but also to overall hospital services.



REMEMBER

- Write down any questions you have
- Choose a family member to communicate with doctors and staff
- Keep a list of doctors you see and the medications they prescribe

Speak Up & Step Up

Speak Up

Ask questions and voice concerns. It's your body and you have a right to know.

Pay Attention

Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medicines.

Educate Yourself

Learn about the medical tests you get and your treatment plan.

Find an Advocate

Pick a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate.

What Meds & Why

Know what medicines you take and why you take them.

Check Before You Go

Use a hospital, clinic, surgery center or other type of healthcare organization that meets quality standards.

Participate In Your Care

You are the center of the healthcare team.

And Remember, Take Charge of Your Communication

Ask About Jargon: If you hear a medical term you don't understand, ask what it means.

"Teach Back": After you get instructions or an explanation, repeat back what you thought you heard so you can double-check that you understood correctly.

Take Notes: Write down any key facts your doctor tells you so you won't forget.

PATIENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

AS A PATIENT, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

- To have impartial access to professional and high quality healthcare.
- To have healthcare provided with respect, dignity and privacy, taking into consideration your personal values and beliefs, and cultural/spiritual preferences; including end-of-life decisions.
- To have a reasonable response to your requests and needs for treatment or service, within the hospital's capacity, its stated mission, and applicable law. This right must not be construed as a mechanism to demand treatment or services deemed medically unnecessary or inappropriate.
- To have a family member/representative of your choice and your primary care physician notified promptly of your admission to the hospital.
- To collaborate with your physician, be informed of your health status, participate in your plan of care and make informed decisions involving your healthcare, OR to have your representative act on your behalf in making decisions, within the limits of the law.
- To participate or have your representative participate in ethical issues that may arise during your course of treatment.
- To accept or refuse treatment to the extent permitted by the law, and to be informed of the medical consequences of such a refusal.
- To formulate Advance Directives and to appoint a surrogate to make healthcare decisions when you are unable to do so for yourself, and to have hospital staff comply with these directives.
- To be assured of confidentiality of your medical record, and for you or your legally designated representative to access this information within the limits of law.
- To be free from any form of restraints which are not medically necessary to promote healing or prevent injury to yourself or others.
- To receive care in a setting free from all forms of abuse or harassment.
- To have your pain assessed and managed throughout the course of your treatment.
- To have a support person present and to receive visitors while hospitalized, according to hospital visitation policy.
- To be provided care in a safe physical environment by qualified healthcare personnel.
- To receive at the time of admission, information about your rights as a patient and the mechanism for filing a complaint or grievance (numbers listed below).

PATIENTS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY:

- To provide accurate and complete healthcare information.
- To demonstrate consideration for the rights of others (patients, staff, and visitors).
- To inform your doctor or nurse if you do not understand your plan of care or what is expected of you.
- To follow hospital rules and regulations regarding patient care and conduct.
- To be accountable for your financial responsibilities.

If at any time, you and/or a family member have a complaint or grievance regarding care at Columbus Community Hospital, you may contact the Risk Management Dept. at 979-493-7565. We will make every effort to resolve the issue. If not resolved to your satisfaction, you have the right to call or write the Health Facility Compliance Group (MC1979) Texas Department of State Health Services, PO Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347. Complaint Hotline: 888-973-0022 Fax: 512-834-6653.

PRIVACY & YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

You have privacy rights under a federal law that protects your health information. These rights are important for you to know. Federal law sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive your health information.

WHO MUST FOLLOW THIS LAW?

- ✓ Most doctors, nurses, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and many other healthcare providers
- ✓ Health insurance companies, HMOs and most employer group health plans
- ✓ Certain government programs that pay for healthcare, such as Medicare and Medicaid

WHAT INFORMATION IS PROTECTED?

- ✓ Information your doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers put in your medical records
- ✓ Conversations your doctor has with nurses and others regarding your care or treatment
- ✓ Information about you in your health insurer's computer system
- ✓ Billing information about you at your clinic
- ✓ Most other health information about you held by those who must follow this law

YOU HAVE RIGHTS OVER YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

Providers and health insurers who are required to follow this law must comply with your right to:

- ✓ Ask to see and get a copy of your health records
- ✓ Have corrections added to your health information
- ✓ Receive a notice that tells you how your health information may be used and shared
- ✓ Decide if you want to give your permission before your health information can be used or shared for certain purposes, such as marketing
- ✓ Get a report on when and why your health information was shared for certain purposes
- ✓ File a complaint

To make sure that your health information is protected in a way that doesn't interfere with your healthcare, your information can be used and shared:

- ✓ For your treatment and care coordination
- ✓ To pay doctors and hospitals for your healthcare and help run their businesses
- ✓ With your family, relatives, friends, or others you identify who are involved with your healthcare or your healthcare bills, unless you object
- ✓ To make sure doctors give good care and nursing homes are clean and safe
- ✓ To protect the public's health, such as reporting when the flu is in your area
- ✓ To make required reports to the police, such as reporting gunshot wounds

Without your written permission, your provider cannot:

- ✓ Give your health information to your employer
- ✓ Use or share your health information for marketing or advertising purposes
- ✓ Share private notes about your mental health counseling sessions

For questions or concerns, you may contact the privacy officer at 979-493-7550.

PATIENT PORTAL- EASY, PRIVATE ACCESS TO VITAL HEALTH INFORMATION

What is a Patient Portal?

A patient portal is a secure online website that gives you convenient 24-hour access to personal health information from anywhere with an internet connection. Using a secure username and password, you can view health information such as:

- Your account (you can change account information)
- Lab and radiology results
- Visit summary
- Discharge instructions

Upon admission to the hospital, you will be asked for your email address if you wish to enroll in the patient portal. A temporary username and password will be generated for you and will be provided to you. This information will also be emailed to the email address you provided. To access the portal, go to www.nextmd.com. You will be asked to change your username and password.



The screenshot shows the NEXTGEN Patient Portal enrollment interface. At the top, the logo "NEXTGEN® Patient Portal" is displayed. Below it, a white box contains the following information: "Do you wish to enroll in Patient Portal? Yes", "Email Address: emedina@nextgen.com", "Temporary User Name: CTEST838893", "Temporary Password: R537oQ09K", "Temporary Security Question: What is your mother's maiden name?", and "Temporary Security Question Answer: R537oQ09K". At the bottom of the white box, there is a "Print To:" label followed by a text input field. Below the white box, there are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Print".

After you are discharged from the hospital, a summary of your care will be sent to the portal. This information is important to share with your primary care physician or other physicians you may visit with after your hospital stay. This summary will display important information such as:

- Medications, including home medications and medications prescribed at discharge
- Immunizations received
- Tests performed during your hospital stay and more

If you have any questions about the patient portal please contact the IT Department at 979-493-7550. Thank you for allowing us to participate in your care.

A SIMPLE AND SMART WAY TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR CARE

Living Will or Advance Directive, Medical Power of Attorney, Organ Donation

You are responsible for notifying your primary practitioner if you have a signed living will, advance directive, medical power of attorney, organ donation designation, out-of-hospital do-not-resuscitate order and/or mental health treatment declaration.

If you are
interested
in any of

these services, please ask to speak with a Case Management Representative or call ext. 7587

The Case Manager is the patient's advocate.

They provide the following services:

- *Information and assistance with completion of Directives to Physicians (Living Wills)*
- *Information and assistance with completion of a Medical Power of Attorney*
- *Assistance with obtaining medical equipment*
- *Referrals for Hospice Care*
- *Referrals to nursing homes and assisted living facilities*
- *Referrals to Swing Bed and other rehabilitation services*
- *Referrals to the Home Health Agency of patient's choice*
- *Facilitate transfers to other hospitals or medical facilities*

PREVENTING FALLS



Hospital patients may fall because they are weak or unsteady due to illness, medical procedures or medications. Columbus Community Hospital cares about our patients' safety and at times staff may ask family to provide assistance to prevent a fall. If requested, a sitter list can be provided.

Please help us keep you safe by following these guidelines during your hospital stay:

- ⚠ Do not get out of bed by yourself. Your hospital bed is probably higher and narrower than your bed at home and you can easily fall while trying to get in or out of it. Please use your nurse call button and ask for assistance.
- ⚠ Keep often used items within reach—call button, tissues, water, eyeglasses, telephone, TV remote.
- ⚠ Do not walk in bare feet. Wear non-skid socks or slippers.
- ⚠ Make sure your robe or pajamas don't drag on the floor; they can cause you to trip or fall.
- ⚠ Use the handrails in your bathroom and throughout the hospital at all times.
- ⚠ Ask your nurse to show you how to properly walk with your IV pole, drainage bags or any other equipment.
- ⚠ Be sure your wheelchair is locked when getting in or out of it. Never step on the footrest.
- ⚠ If you see a spill on the floor, report it at once.

⚠ ***PATIENTS OF ALL AGES MAY BE AT RISK OF FALLING BECAUSE OF MEDICATION THAT MAY MAKE THEM DIZZY, WEAK OR UNSTEADY.***

YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTHCARE SAFETY

While you are in the hospital, many people will enter your room, from doctors and nurses, to aides and orderlies. The following information will help make your hospital stay safe and comfortable.

Patient Identification

Any time staff enters your room to administer medications, transport you or perform procedures and treatments, they must check your birth date and name before they proceed. At times, you may be asked the same question repeatedly. Please understand that this verification process is a critical component in patient safety. It ensures that all of our patients receive the correct medications and treatments.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK...

A number of people may enter your hospital room. Be sure to:

- **Ask for the ID** of everyone who comes into your room
- **Speak Up** if the hospital staff doesn't ask to check your ID
- **Ask** if the person has washed his or her hands before they touch you
- **If you are told you need certain tests or procedures, ask why you need them, when they will happen and how long it will be before you get the results.**

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION

FIGHTING INFECTIONS

While you're in the hospital to get well, there is a possibility of developing an infection. The single most important thing you can do to help prevent infections is to wash your hands and make sure that everyone who touches you—including doctors and nurses—wash their hands, too.

YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
SHOULD WASH HANDS:

1. After touching objects or surfaces in the hospital room
2. Before eating

NO SOAP?! No Problem!!

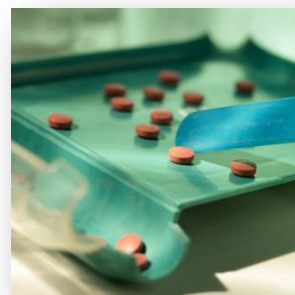
Alcohol-based hand cleaners are very effective for killing germs. To use, apply the cleaner to the palm of your hand and rub your hands together. Keep rubbing over all the surfaces of your fingers and hands until they are dry. Dispensers are located in the hallways throughout the hospital.

KNOW YOUR MEDICATIONS

While you are hospitalized, your doctor may prescribe medications for you. Be sure that you understand exactly what they are and why they are being prescribed.

Use this checklist to help you get the information you need from your doctor:

- ☐ What is the name of the medicine? What is its generic name?
- ☐ Why am I taking this medication?
- ☐ What dose will I be taking? How often, and for how long?
- ☐ When will the medicine begin to work?
- ☐ What are the possible side effects?
- ☐ Can I take this medicine while taking my other medications or dietary supplements?
- ☐ Are there any foods, drinks or activities that I should avoid while taking this medicine?
- ☐ Should I take my medicine at meals or between meals?
- ☐ Do I need to take the medicine on an empty stomach or with food or a whole glass of water?
- ☐ What should I do if I forget to take the medicine and miss a dose?



Preventing Medication Errors

By taking part in your own care, you can help the members of your healthcare team avoid medication errors.

HERE'S HOW:

Be sure that all of your doctors know what medication you have been taking, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, herbal and vitamin supplements, natural remedies and recreational drugs.

Be sure that all of your doctors know of any allergies you may have---to medications, anesthesia, foods, latex products, etc.

When you are brought medications or IV fluids, ask the person to check to be sure you are the patient who is supposed to receive the medications. Show that person your ID bracelet to double-check.

****Remember – YOU play an important role in helping to reduce medication errors**

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

Be informed: You and your caregiver need to stay informed about your medical condition and treatments while you are hospitalized. Once you are released from the hospital, it is important to have this information

available so you can share it with your primary care physician during your next visit. These checklists will help you ask questions while in the hospital and keep track of vital health and medication information.

About MY CONDITION

- ☐ What effect did my hospitalization have on my condition? Is it cured or just under control for now?
- ☐ How can my condition be treated, managed, or made better?
- ☐ How will this condition affect me? Will I need to change some of my activities?
- ☐ Are there long-term effects of my condition?
- ☐ How can I learn more?

About MY MEDICAL TESTS

- ☐ Why do I need this test?
- ☐ What will this test show about my health?
- ☐ What will the test cost? Will my insurance cover the costs?
- ☐ How is the test done? What steps does the test involve?
- ☐ Are there any dangers or side effects?
- ☐ How will I find out the results of my test? How long will it take to get the results?
- ☐ What will we know after the test?
- ☐ Will I get a written copy of the test results?

NOTES:

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

When it's time to be released from the hospital, your physician will authorize a hospital discharge. This does not necessarily mean that you are completely well—it only means that you no longer need hospital services. If you disagree, you or your caregiver can appeal the decision. (See "If You Disagree" below)

On the other hand, you may be pleased to learn that your doctor has approved your discharge. Before you can leave the hospital, there are several things that you or your caregiver must attend to.

Know who will be involved in your discharge process which will begin with the discharge planner and/or your nurse. You and your caregiver should meet with this person early in your hospital stay. If discharge plans have not been discussed, please inform your nurse.

5 things you should have before you leave the hospital:

1. **Discharge Instructions.** This is an overview of why you were in the hospital. It lists your diagnoses, what procedures or tests that were done in the hospital, activities following discharge, and what medications were prescribed.
2. **Medication List.** This is a listing of what medications you are taking, why, in what dosage and who prescribed them. Having a list prepared by the hospital is a good way to double-check the information you should already have been keeping track of.
3. **RX.** A prescription for any medication you need. Be sure to fill your prescriptions promptly, so you don't run out of needed medications.
4. **Follow-up Care Instructions.** Make sure you have paperwork that tells you:
 - a. What, if any, dietary restrictions you need to follow and for how long
 - b. What kinds of activities you can and can't do, and for how long
 - c. How to properly care for any wounds or incisions you have
 - d. When you need to see your physician
 - e. Telephone numbers to call if you or your caregiver have any questions pertaining to your after-hospital care
5. **Other Services.** When you leave the hospital, you may need to spend time in a rehabilitation facility, nursing home or other institution. You may need to schedule tests at an imaging center, have treatments at a cancer center or have in-home therapy. Be sure to speak with your nurse or physician to get all the details you need before you leave.

IF YOU DISAGREE

You or a relative can appeal your doctor's discharge decision. If you are a Medicare patient, be sure you are given "An Important Message from Medicare" from the hospital's discharge planner or case manager. This details your rights to remain in the hospital for care and provides information on who to contact to appeal a discharge decision.

How do I get copies of my Medical Records?

To receive copies of your medical records, please call our Health Information Management office at 979-493-7554.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BILL

Take Charge of Your Payments



The hospital billing process may seem complicated, but you can feel more in control by knowing exactly what your bill covers. For example, if you stay overnight, you can expect to see charges for your room, meals, 24-hour nursing care and medicines. The bill will also show charges for any special services, such as X-rays and lab tests. You'll receive bills for doctors, surgeons and specialists, like radiologists, separately from the hospital bill.

Medicare, Medicaid and Commercial Insurance Providers

If you use Medicare, Medicaid or a Commercial Insurance Provider, then the hospital forwards your claim based on the information you provide at registration. You'll receive an explanation of benefits (EOB) statement from your insurance provider. This isn't a bill.

EOBs show:

- The amount billed by your doctor or hospital
- How much of that cost is covered by your insurance
- How much you owe

Review this and all other bill-related documents carefully. If you have questions, contact the customer service number listed on the statement.

Self-Pay Patient and Payment Arrangements

If you're planning to pay your bills without help from Medicare or a commercial insurance provider, then you will get bills directly from the hospital. When the first bill arrives, call the hospital's financial services department to set up a payment plan.

Commonly Confused Terms

- *Deductible: The amount you owe each year before your insurance begins making payments.*
- *Copayment: A flat fee you pay for a specific service, usually due at the time of service.*
- *Co-insurance: The portion of your medical expenses that you're personally responsible for paying. For example, your insurance may cover 80 percent of a bill, while you have to pay the remaining 20 percent.*

Communicate with the business office as soon as possible. If you don't set up a payment plan, or if you stop making payments, your account may be placed with a collection agency. The hospital wants to work with you, so reach out with any questions or concerns you have.

Heart Attack Warnings

The main symptom of a heart attack is **chest pain or discomfort**. It can also feel like **pressure, fullness or squeezing in your chest**. These feelings may start gradually and get worse, or may come and go. Women are more likely than men to experience other symptoms with chest pain including:

- Discomfort in your upper body including arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling lightheaded or nauseous

The symptoms of a heart attack can be different for women. Women may also have **unusual heartburn, feel tired or anxious** weeks before a heart attack.

Stroke Warnings

Think **F.A.S.T.** when it comes to recognizing a stroke:

- **FACE DROOPING:** Does one side of your face droop or is it numb? Try to smile.
- **ARM WEAKNESS:** Is one arm weak or numb? Raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **SPEECH DIFFICULTY:** Is your speech slurred? Are you unable to speak? Try to say simple sentences like “The sky is blue.”
- **TIME TO CALL 911:** If you notice any of these symptoms, even if they go away, call 911 right away.

Stop Smoking

No matter how long you’ve been a smoker; it’s never too late to quit this unhealthy habit.

The benefits start right away and last a lifetime:

- **20 MINUTES** after quitting, your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- **2 WEEKS TO 3 MONTHS** after quitting, your circulation improves and your lungs work better.
- **1 YEAR** after quitting, your risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker’s.
- **5 YEARS** after quitting, your risk of mouth, throat, esophagus and bladder cancers is cut in half.
- **10 YEARS** after quitting, your risk of lung cancer is half that of a smoker’s.
- **15 YEARS** after quitting, your risk of heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker’s.



3 Tips to Help You Quit

1. **Fight the Urge** - Don't let yourself think that you can have just one cigarette, but if you do slip, start again and make tomorrow your first new day to quit.
2. **Get Moving** - Exercise is a good way to keep your mind off cigarettes. The longer you go without smoking, the better you can breathe and the easier it will be to exercise.
3. **Keep Your Mouth Busy** - Try toothpicks, celery, sugarless gum or sugar-free lollipops.