



experience  LOURDES

# Patients and Lourdes: *Partnering to Improve Safety*



Thank you for choosing Lourdes for your care.

Patient safety is a core value at Lourdes. It is all

about preventing events of harm to our patients and employees.

We believe that safer healthcare is a result of a collective effort through partnerships among providers, patients, families and communities. So, as part of our commitment to patient safety, we ask that you partner with us to help ensure a quality outcome for you during your stay.

The single most important way you can help to keep your healthcare safe is to be an active member of your healthcare team! The information contained in this brochure provides you with some tips on how we can better partner together for your safety.

We want you to know that the safety of our patients, our visitors and our employees is our priority at Lourdes, and we hope that you have an exemplary experience at Lourdes.

**David Patak**  
*President and CEO*

# Patient Safety at Lourdes:

## *Tips for Preventing Medical Errors and Staying Safe in the Hospital*



**Lourdes** staff works hard to deliver safe and high-quality care to patients. Even with safeguards in place, medical errors can occur.

There are things that you, as a patient, can do to help prevent such errors from happening. By working together with your physician and with hospital staff, and by being involved in your care, you can help lower the risk of accidental injuries and improve safety. One of the most important things you can do is to focus on communicating with the staff involved in your care.

The information in this brochure will provide you with some tips to help you communicate effectively.

The following includes the Five Tips for Safer Healthcare recommended by the American Hospital Association as well as tips from Lourdes for making your hospital stay safer:

### 1. Ask Questions

Ask questions and make sure you understand the answers. Choose a doctor you feel comfortable talking to. Take a relative or friend with you to help you ask questions and understand the answers.

- Share your questions or concerns with your nursing staff, physician staff or any member of the healthcare team.
- Speak up if you are not comfortable with your treatment, or if you have doubts or concerns. Remember, you have the right to ask for a second opinion or to request a transfer to another facility if you feel you are unsafe.
- Bring along a patient advocate, a family member or a friend, who can help to speak up for you, ask questions, clarify instructions or other things that you may need assistance with during this stressful time. Tell staff which family member or friend can act as your patient advocate.
- Double check with nursing and physician staff to be sure that all of your allergies are well-known and documented in your medical chart.
- Request an interpreter or assistance for the deaf or hearing impaired.
- Do not assume that care providers know all of your healthcare needs or medical history.



In the past few years, there's been a sea change in how medicine is practiced across the country. I'm not talking about exciting advances

such as new medicines or new surgical techniques; I'm talking about a new attitude that's directly translating into patient safety. That attitude can be summarized in one simple statement:

#### **Medicine is a Team Sport.**

You, a patient or loved one of a patient at Lourdes are a part of that team, right along with your primary attending physician, your nurses, your consultants, and the many people at Lourdes who will work to make your stay here safe, healing, and comfortable. The old attitude that "Doctor Knows Best" doesn't work when the doctor can't be there to watch over you every minute of every day. Neither can the nurse, doing her best to care for you the way she'd care for a member of her own family. You need to help. This brochure will give you some specific things you can do to make you a contributing member of the Team whose main goal is getting you better.

Welcome to the Team!

**Robert Taylor III, MD**

*VP of Medical Affairs/Chief Medical Officer*

If you or a family member have noticed a change in condition that you are worried about and the healthcare team is not recognizing your concerns, or if after speaking with a member of your healthcare team you continue to have serious concerns about how care is being given, managed or planned, you can call a **Condition H (HELP)**. Condition H (HELP) provides our patients and families with the ability to summon help when they are in need of immediate medical attention. **To access Condition H (HELP), call extension 5408** and a team member will be sent immediately to assess the situation and call for additional clinical support, as needed.



## 2. Manage Medications

- Give your doctor and pharmacist a list of all the medicines that you take. Tell them about any drug allergies you have. Ask them about side effects and what to avoid while taking the medicine. Read the label when you get your medicine, including all warnings. Make sure your medicine is what the doctor ordered and know how to use it. Ask the pharmacist about your medicine if it looks different than you expect.
- Ask your nurse about your medications – what they are and what they do.
  - Keep and bring a current list of your medications, including dosages, to all medical/hospital visits.
  - Let your nurse know if your pills look different than usual or if you feel your medicines are overdue.
  - Tell your doctor or nurse if you have allergies to medicines, latex, food, etc.
  - Do not bring your medicines from home (unless specifically requested.)
  - Tell your doctor and nurse about ALL medicines you are currently taking, including herbs and vitamins.

## 3. Prevent Infection

- Don't be timid! Remind your nurses, physicians or therapists to wash their hands or to put on gloves before examining you or drawing your blood.
- Encourage your visitors to use the alcohol-based hand sanitizers conveniently located inside of your room.
- Ask friends or relatives who have colds, respiratory symptoms or other contagious illnesses not to visit you while you are in the hospital. Be especially careful with visits from children under 12 as they frequently have colds or other infections.
- Consider getting the flu or pneumonia vaccine if it is offered to you during your stay – they are important in preventing illness in elderly or high-risk patients.
- Please let your nurse or nurse assistant know if your linens or dressings are soiled.
- Some patients are placed on “isolation precautions” if they are in a weakened state of immunity or to protect others from something infectious. If you are placed on “isolation precautions,” ask what they mean for you and your visitors. Gown, masks and/or gloves are sometimes required.

## 4. Prevent Falls

- Most falls occur when patients try to get out of bed on their own, most often to go to the bathroom. You can help to prevent falls by remembering the following:
- Don't ever be embarrassed to ask for help! Always ask for assistance from nursing staff or from your nurse assistant, especially at night. Sometimes people take medications or receive fluids that cause them to use the bathroom more often than normal. This cannot be avoided and should never be a cause for embarrassment.
  - Keep your call button near you at all times and be sure that you know how to use it.
  - If you feel weak or uncertain about your ability to walk or get out of bed, ask for a commode to be placed near your bedside.
  - Make sure there is adequate light and keep your glasses within reach.
  - Wear slippers with rubber soles to prevent slipping. If possible, bring in your own shoes or slippers as well as any assistive devices that you normally use at home, such as your cane, walker, wheelchair, glasses or hearing aide.

- If you are a family member of a patient, please talk to our staff if you feel that your presence beyond normally scheduled visiting hours will help to prevent falls and increase the safety of your loved one.

## 5. Request the Results of any Test or Procedure

- Ask when and how you will get the results of tests or procedures. Please do not assume that your test results are fine if you do not receive them. Call your doctor and ask for your results. Ask what the results mean for your care.
- Write down and ask any questions about your treatment, test or results. You may not remember what you wanted to ask when you are feeling slightly anxious or stressed.
  - Make sure hospital staff check your patient ID band or bracelet before any procedure or test and before giving you any medication or blood transfusion for the correct patient name and medical record number. Two patients can have the same name, but no two patients can have the same medical record number.
  - If your ID bracelet comes off, be sure to ask someone to get you another one – you should be wearing your ID bracelet at all times.

## 6. Discharge

When you are being discharged from Lourdes, ask your doctor to explain the treatment plan you will use at home. This includes learning about your medicines and finding out when you can get back to regular activities.

## 7. Other Steps You Can Take

Please remember to continue these safe practices at home. Remember to:

- Communicate with your physicians and pharmacists – voice your concerns, ask questions and communicate important changes in your health status to your physician.
- Understand your medical condition, treatments and medications.
- Get appropriate medical equipment at home and be sure you understand how to use it properly.

## By partnering with your physician and hospital staff,

you can help us to always focus on and improve patient safety. Be an active member of your healthcare team!

For more information on Patient Safety, visit the National Patient Safety Website at: [www.npsf.org](http://www.npsf.org)

If at any time you have concerns or issues that you feel you are unable to express, please feel free to call Lourdes Quality Services at extension 5812.



Our Call to Action promises Healthcare that is Safe. In order to achieve this promise, we have created an environment across our health system that encourages all associates to coach each other on Safety Behaviors and to promote safety at all times. We invite you to ask questions, express your concerns and help us to provide a healing environment, free of patient harm.

At Lourdes, all of our associates have completed a system-wide safety training program called *Smart About Safety*. This empowers any associate to speak up and stop an action that they think may harm a patient or co-worker. An example of this would be our commitment to hand washing to prevent the spread of infection.

Thank you for helping us to achieve our goal!

**Linda Miller**

*Sr. VP Operations/CNO*



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