

Tips for Patients

Be Involved and Ask Questions

Always be involved and informed about your healthcare. Part of being involved is asking questions. It's acceptable to ask questions about your care and to expect answers you can understand.

For example, if you have questions about your plan of care or alternatives, please discuss them with your physician or a healthcare professional.

It is very important that you share your health history with your healthcare providers. Be specific about medications and dosages as well as any chronic conditions or health concerns you have had in the past – even if you think they may be unrelated to your current condition.

You should have received a Universal Medication Form to complete from Fairfield Memorial Hospital Registration. If properly completed, this form will tell your physician everything you are taking including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines and herbals as well as any allergies to medications.

In the Hospital

If individuals enter your room without properly or clearly identifying themselves, ask them to identify themselves and to state why they are there. All Fairfield Memorial Hospital employees wear name badges with a photo, their name, title and department.

Prior to any procedure, staff members are to identify you by asking your name and date of birth, verifying information on your armband.

Insist that staff check your armband before they take you for tests, give you medications, or put anything in your intravenous fluid. All patients also wear a red allergy band listing all allergies, if any. (If there are no allergies, the armband will have the letters NKA to indicate “no known allergies”.)

Pay attention to any symptoms like pain, nausea, drowsiness or dizziness that may be related to medication or treatment. Please report these symptoms to your health care professional immediately.

Always ask for help when something just does not feel right. It helps your physician and nurses to know how you are feeling.

Insist on clarification if you feel you are receiving conflicting or confusing information from the staff taking care of you.

Medications

When you come to the hospital, bring your Universal Medication Form and all of your medicines in the original bottles, to include over-the-counter medicines and herbal supplements.

After identifying the medications you take at home, your medications will be returned to your family to take home or secured for you until you are discharged.

Tell your doctor or nurse about any allergies or reactions you have had in the past.

Discharge Instructions

When you are discharged from the hospital, your nurse will review instructions for your care at home and the medications you are to take.

It is critical that you ask questions if anything about your care at home or medication is confusing.

When you get your prescriptions filled, ask the pharmacist for the name of the medication and how to take it. Make sure this information matches what your doctor/nurse told you. If not, please call your doctor.

Do not stop taking medicine just because you feel better unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it. When in doubt, please ask your

doctor or nurse.

Things to Remember

- Your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or any health care professional is there to help you and answer your questions. You have a right to question anyone who is involved in your care.
- Keep your Universal Medication Form in your wallet/purse, so you will have it when you need it when you go for follow-up visits.
- Taking an active role in your care can help prevent medicine errors.
- You are important to us, and we want you to feel comfortable asking questions about your health. ALL questions are important, so SPEAK UP.
- Notify hospital personnel if you have an advance directive or living will.
- After you go home – if you need to contact the South Carolina Suicide/Crisis Intervention Information hotline, call 2-1-1 or (803) 733-5408. Toll Free 1-866-892-9211.
- If you have safety concerns, please notify your nurse right away. You can also use the phone in your room to call Customer Service at extension 2430 with any concerns.
- Ask a family member or friend to stay with you in the hospital to assist you in understanding your care.
- Ask about prescribed tests or treatments – why they are needed and how they can help.
- Ask about test results.
- Learn about your condition and treatment by asking your physician and healthcare professionals for information and resources.
- Ask persons who come to your room if they washed their hands and if they have not, request that they do so, prior to caring for you in any way.
- Thoroughly read all medical forms/consents and make sure you understand them before you sign anything.