Medication Safety in the Hospital and at Home

Aussi disponible en français : La prise de médicaments sécuritaire à l'hôpital et à la maison) (FF85-1810)
Filling your prescriptions
The hospital pharmacy will receive the prescriptions (orders for medication) that your health care provider has ordered for you. Your prescriptions will be filled and your nurse will give you your medications.

The “rights of medication”
The rights of medication is a checklist that nurses use to make sure you are getting the right medication.

These rights are:
- right patient
- right medication
- right dose
- right time
- right route
- right education
- right to refuse
- right assessment
- right evaluation
- right documentation
Tips to stay safe
You can help make sure that you get the right medication the right way while in the hospital by doing these things:

• Tell your nurse and other health care providers about any allergies or side effects you have had to any medication in the past.

• Make sure your health care providers know all of the medications you were taking before coming to the hospital. These include:
  › pills
  › injections
  › vitamins
  › minerals
  › eye or ear drops
  › medicated patches, lotions or ointments
  › natural or herbal products
  › any other over-the-counter medications

• Make a list of all of the medications that you use and keep it in your wallet or purse.

• While you are in the hospital, do not take any medications that you brought with you unless your doctor tells you it is OK to do so.
• Make sure to tell your nurse if you take any of your own medication.
• Know the names of the medications that you are taking and what time you should be getting them.
• Ask what each medication is for and what some of the common side effects are. This way you will know what to watch for so you can tell your nurse right away if you have any side effects.
• Tell the nurse if you think you are getting the wrong medication or are getting it at the wrong time.
• Containers that have medication in them should have a label with the name of the medication on it. This includes syringes, tubes, bags and pill bottles. If you do not see a label, ask the nurse what the medication is.
• If the medication that you need is not available in the hospital, you may have to take your own supply of medication.
High-alert medication
Ask your nurse if you are taking any “high-alert” medication. High-alert medications may be harmful if they are not given the right way, even if they are given for the right reason. High-alert medications include blood thinners, insulin and narcotic pain medications. Ask your nurse what extra safety steps are being taken if you are taking a high-alert medication.

When you are discharged
Ask for a list of medications that you need to take at home. Some of your medications may have been stopped while you were in the hospital, and you may have been started on new ones.

It is important that you understand any medication changes so that you can take your medications safely at home.

If you do not understand what medications you should be taking at home, be sure to ask your nurse. A pharmacist may be consulted as well, if needed.
If you have medication-related questions once you are at home, please talk with your community pharmacist.

What are your questions?
Please ask.
We are here to help you.

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