

# Tips for Becoming More Involved in YOUR Health Care



*You owe it to your health to establish and maintain good lines of communication. The following are helpful tips to keep in mind as you speak with all of your health care providers.*

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The single most important way you can help to prevent errors is to be an active member of your health care team.

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Make sure that all your doctors and nurses know what medications you are taking. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs.

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Speak up if you have any questions or concerns. You have a right to question anyone who is involved with your care.

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Ask for written information about the side effects your medicine could cause.

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Take an active role in your health care decisions, we encourage and want you to become an active participant in your health care.

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Make sure your doctors and nurses know about any allergies and adverse reactions you have had to medications.

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Make sure that someone is coordinating your care, either your personal doctor, a family member or a designated advocate.

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Get the results of any test or procedure from your physician or a designated advocate.

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Learn about your condition and treatments by asking your doctor or nurse and by using other reliable sources.

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When you are in the hospital, wash hands frequently especially before eating and after using the restroom. Consider asking all health care workers who have direct contact with you whether they have washed their hands. Hand washing is an important way to prevent the spread of infections in hospitals.

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Cover your nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent the spread of infection to others. Be sure to throw away used tissues and clean your hands after coughing or sneezing.

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*In addition if you are having surgery:*

Make sure that you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree and are clear on exactly what will be done.

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If you are in isolation precautions, make sure that all health care workers are wearing protective clothing (i.e. mask, gown or gloves) for all direct patient care with you or your environment. Family members are expected to wear the same protection when visiting. This helps to prevent the spread of infection to you or others within the hospital.

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A nurse may ask you or your guardian to confirm your identity. This will help to make sure we have the correct patient. We will continue to confirm your identification throughout your hospital visit.

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When you are being discharged from the hospital, ask your doctor or nurse to explain the treatment plan you will use at home and who to contact for follow up or questions.

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We will review with you the correct surgeon and the correct procedure. If the procedure is on the right versus left side, then the correct side will be marked. If you do not understand the procedure, you have the right to talk to your surgeon before your surgery.

Stormont Vail HealthCare is eager to provide health care resources for you and your family. For more information please refer to your Patient Handbook or our website at [www.stormontvail.org](http://www.stormontvail.org)

**Stormont-Vail**  
**HealthCare**

1500 S.W. 10th Ave. • Topeka  
(785) 354-6000  
[www.stormontvail.org](http://www.stormontvail.org)