

HOSPITAL  
FOR  
**SPECIAL  
SURGERY**



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# Patient Safety

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## Patient Safety While You Are at Hospital for Special Surgery

Hospital for Special Surgery is always committed to your well being and safety. As a leader in orthopedics and rheumatology, our mission is to provide the highest quality patient care, and to improve your mobility and quality of life. One of the ways in which we achieve these goals is by making you an active partner in your care. The purpose of this brochure is to explain ways in which you, your friends and family, and your healthcare team can all play a vital role in providing you with the best care and the best outcomes.

**DO share this brochure with your family and friends while you are at Hospital for Special Surgery, and remember that we welcome your questions and concerns. Please refer to the Patient Information Guide for important telephone numbers.**

### What Should I Know About Patient Safety?

#### ***Be an active partner in your care***

Together with The Joint Commission, we urge patients to become involved in their care through a program called “Speak Up.” “Speak Up” offers simple advice on how you can make your care a positive experience. Research shows that patients who take part in decisions about their healthcare are more likely to have better outcomes.

### ***“Speak Up” means:***

- ◆ Ask questions if you have concerns or do not understand something about your care.
- ◆ Let us know if English is not your primary language - we will gladly get you an interpreter.
- ◆ Say something if you think you are about to receive the wrong medication or if you think the healthcare professional has confused you with another patient.
- ◆ Ask the member of the healthcare team if they have washed their hands prior to delivering care.
- ◆ Share your medical history with your healthcare team.
- ◆ Tell us if you have any allergies.
- ◆ Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate.

Seeking education about your medical issues and your treatment allows you to be a better partner in your care.

Good communication with your healthcare team benefits everyone. Letting us know your issues and concerns helps us in your care and also keeps you involved as an active partner. Feel free to ask your nurse and other members of the healthcare team to address your concerns.

***Rapid Response Team (RRT)*** is a special team of clinicians who are available to assist the primary care team if or when a patient’s condition starts to worsen. Staff, patients, and family and friends may activate the RRT by dialing extension “8911” on any house phone, when it looks like a patient is getting sicker. The purpose of calling the RRT is to help ***before*** a patient’s health status becomes a medical emergency

### ***Know what medications you take and why and when you take them***

- ◆ Have your list of all the medications you are currently taking, as advised prior to admission. This includes prescriptions and over-the-counter items like vitamins, herbal supplements, pain relievers, antacids, and allergy medications.
- ◆ Also have your contact information for your primary care doctor, or the doctor who will be following your care once you leave HSS, including their name, telephone number, and fax number.
- ◆ Always ask about any medication that is given to you and know why you are taking it.
- ◆ Carefully review the medications you are to take once you leave the hospital, be sure you have the prescriptions, and that you understand the discharge and follow-up instructions.
- ◆ Please throw away any old medication lists and update your records with any retail pharmacies or providers.
- ◆ Should you be discharged on medications such as Coumadin or Lovenox, which are anticoagulants (medications to prevent blood clots), our nurses will provide careful teaching to you and your family or caregivers as to dose, time, diet, and follow up instructions that are all very important for your safety.

### ***Check and double check identification***

- ◆ Patient identification: You are given a hospital identification (ID) band when you arrive at HSS. This ID band has your name, date of birth (DOB), and medical record number which helps us to identify you and ensures that we are

giving you the proper care and treatment. You will find that your healthcare team will check your ID band and ask for your name and DOB throughout your stay. Please know that this is for your safety. If your ID band falls off or is not easy to read, please ask us for another one.

- ◆ **Surgical site identification:** You will be asked to identify the correct surgical site by pointing to the area where you are due to have surgery, at which time your surgeon will initial the correct surgical site using a special marker. Another safety measure that happens right before your procedure is a “Time Out,” in which the healthcare team will confirm patient identity, surgical site, correct procedure, and surgery consent form.

### ***Preventing infections***

Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infection. HSS staff is aware of this and will clean their hands with either soap and water or a sanitizing solution (Purell) before and after they provide care for you. If you have not seen someone on your healthcare team wash their hands, we suggest that you ask them to do so. You should also ask any visitors you have to use Purell before entering your room. There are Purell dispensers throughout the hospital. If anyone planning to visit you is not feeling well and has signs of a rash, cold, or cough, please ask them to wait until they are well before coming to see you.

### ***Avoid falls***

- ◆ Always press the call bell for help before getting out of bed or while in the bathroom. Your room has many things like foot stools and tray tables that may need to be moved for you to walk safely.

- ◆ Always check to see what tubing is connected to you before getting out of bed – for example, IV, pain pump, catheter, or airflow foot pumps.
- ◆ Use your cane, crutches, or walker as directed by your physical therapist.
- ◆ Follow your hip or back precautions if you have them.
- ◆ Use the handrails in the bathroom as needed.
- ◆ Wear your eyeglasses or contact lenses to clearly see your surroundings and to help you with balance.
- ◆ Wear non-slip footwear.
- ◆ Do not self medicate while you are in the hospital – your doctor or nurse will give you your medications at HSS.
- ◆ Be aware if you have been given a nerve block, most often given to patients having a total knee replacement, that it can take a long time to wear off and may have an effect on your ability to stand or walk safely.
- ◆ Be sure to tell us if you feel dizzy or drowsy for any reason.

**Remembering these things and making sure to press the call bell when you want to move about will help you to stay safe and have a good recovery.**

## **Your Partners in Care and Safety**

Now that you have reviewed this brochure you have learned many ways to keep yourself safe throughout your stay at HSS. Of course, you are not alone in this effort. Your healthcare team and the entire staff at HSS are committed to excellence in all

that we do. As such, it is our goal to ensure the highest level of safety for our patients. Remember, “*Speak Up*”, ask questions, share concerns, and be mindful of your surroundings. We welcome you as partners in your care and we look forward to getting you up and moving, *safely*, to a better quality of life.

**PLEASE USE THIS SPACE TO JOT DOWN ANY PATIENT SAFETY CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE**

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