Need to Know for Patients and Families

What patients and their families need to know before hospitalization or a nursing home admission

Emergency Department

Why Is It Important? The Emergency Department handles urgent and sudden health problems. However, it can be a hazardous place if you are not well equipped, informed and prepared. You and your family should be active participants in your care to ensure a positive experience.

What You Can Do:

1. Describe what brought you to the Emergency Department and why.
2. Tell staff your medications, your health care providers’ names and your medical and surgical history.
3. Ask the names of staff taking care of you and their role in the healthcare team.
4. Ask questions about your care:
   - What procedure or test is this?
   - Why do I need to have this procedure or test?
   - What is this medication and why do I need it?
   - Please explain what is happening
5. Let staff know immediately when your symptoms change, worsen or if you have new symptoms.
6. You and family should take notes on what happened during your Emergency Department visit and what information was provided.
7. Ask if your health care providers will get information on your Emergency Department visit.
8. Ask for your diagnosis and add that to your medical history whether this is new or a recurrent problem.
9. Make sure you understand your discharge instructions, what you have to do when you get home and whom you should call with any questions or concerns.
10. If you are being admitted to the hospital, ask for the diagnosis and what treatments you will receive.
11. When leaving the Emergency Department find out when to call your health care provider or return to the Emergency Department for worsening symptoms, new symptoms, complications, etc.
12. If English is your second language, bring someone with you who can help communicate with the healthcare team.
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Things you should bring to the Emergency Department or have available at all times

__ Medication list
__ Names and phone numbers of all of your health care providers and what their specialties are
__ Medical history (surgeries, procedures, etc. and dates)
__ Family phone numbers — home and cell
__ Allergies or adverse reactions to medication, food or your environment
__ Power of Attorney and/or Living Will papers
  __ MOLST, HCP, DNR
  __ Advance Directives
__ Insurance cards or information
__ Pharmacy phone number

If you are staying in the hospital, you may want to have your family bring in the following:

__ Health Care Proxy, Power of Attorney and/or Living Will papers
  __ MOLST, HCP, DNR
  __ Advance Directives
__ Insurance cards, Medicaid card and/or Medicare card
__ Glasses, hearing aids if you did not bring them
__ Assistive devices, such as a walker or cane
__ Dentures if you didn’t bring them
__ Toothbrush and toothpaste
__ Comb or brush
__ Notebook and pen
__ Other items you feel would make you more comfortable (robe, slippers, etc.)
__ Soothing entertainment items such as music, radio, books, magazines or puzzle books
__ Favorite blanket