

# My Hospital Safety Checklist: Be an Active Partner in Your Care

Use this guide during your hospital stay to ensure you are an informed, engaged, and safe patient.

## Part 1: Before You Go (If Possible)

- **Prepare Your List:** Write down ALL medications you take (prescriptions, over-the-counter, vitamins, and supplements) and their dosages.
- **List Allergies:** Clearly list all allergies (medications, food, latex, etc.) and the type of reaction you have.
- **Pack Essentials:** Bring your ID, insurance card, medication/allergy list, and personal comfort items. Leave valuables at home.
- **Assign an Advocate:** Choose one trusted friend or family member to be your "patient advocate"—your main point of contact and second set of ears.

## Part 2: During Your Stay – Every Day

- **Identify Your Team:** Ask for the name of your attending doctor and your primary nurse for the shift. Write them down.
- **Understand the Plan:** Ask these questions every morning:
  - What is the goal for me today?
  - What tests or procedures am I having today?
  - When can I expect the doctor to visit?
  - What do we need to achieve for me to go home?
- **Wash Your Hands:** Keep hand sanitizer by your bed. Use it often. Ask *everyone* (doctors, nurses, visitors) who enters your room, "Did you wash your hands?"
- **Prevent Falls:**
  - Use the call light EVERY time you need to get up.
  - Wear the non-slip hospital socks.
  - Ensure the path to the bathroom is clear.
  - Ask for help if you feel dizzy or weak.

## Part 3: Medication Safety (Crucial!)

- **Verify Your Identity:** Ensure the nurse checks your armband and asks for your name and date of birth *before* giving you any medicine.
- **Ask "What" and "Why":** Before you take a new medicine, ask:
  - What is the name of this medication?
  - What is it for?
  - What are the common side effects I should watch for?
- **Speak Up:** If a pill looks different from what you expect, or if you don't recognize it, DO NOT take it. Say, "This looks unfamiliar. Can you please double-check this for me?"
- **Review Your List:** Make sure the hospital team has your correct home medication list.

### Part 4: When Something Feels Wrong

- **Trust Your Gut:** You know your body best. If you feel "off," have new pain, or feel confused, tell your nurse immediately.
- **Use the Chain of Command:** If you feel your concern isn't being heard:
  1. Speak to your primary nurse.
  2. Ask for the "Charge Nurse" (the shift supervisor).
  3. Ask for the "Nurse Manager" (the unit director).
  4. Call the hospital's "Patient Advocate" or "Patient Relations."

### Part 5: Preparing for Discharge

- **Review Instructions:** Have a nurse or doctor explain your discharge instructions to you *and* your patient advocate.
- **Check Prescriptions:** Make sure you understand all new prescriptions—what to take, when, and for how long.
- **Schedule Follow-ups:** Confirm who you need to see for follow-up appointments and when.
- **Know Who to Call:** Get a specific phone number for questions or problems once you get home.