



Empowering Patients: How to Have the Best Hospital Stay

Preparing for Your Hospital Stay

- Always wear clean underwear but don't count on it staying clean, if you're surprised by an accident.
- Don't miss an opportunity to use a washroom.
 - ✓ Remember to wash your hands!

What to Pack?

Essential Medical Information

1. **Your Medical History:** A one-page summary should include: allergies, chronic conditions, past illnesses and surgery, and family medical history
2. **Your Medications:** drug name, dose, directions and reason for taking it e.g.:
Brand name: Tylenol
Generic name: acetaminophen
Dose: 325 mg
Directions: one tablet twice daily
Reason: for knee pain
3. **Your Preferences:** An **Advance Directive** is a statement of what kind of medical care you would want in the event that you are unable to make your own decisions.

What procedures do you want?

What procedures do you refuse?

Under what conditions?

Who do you choose to make decisions for you?

For Example:

You may not wish to have CPR (chest compressions, assisted breathing, a tube down your throat, electric paddles on the chest) if you had an irreversible, terminal condition with no hope for a return to an acceptable quality of life (by your standards).

You may not wish to be kept alive on machines if you were in a persistent coma with no hope of recovery.

TIPS:

- Always plan in advance.
- Talk it over with your family and friends (to avoid difficult family conflicts).
- Choose someone you trust to respect your wishes.
- Inform your doctor.
- Put it in writing.

For more information: google "My Voice"
<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2013/MyVoice-AdvanceCarePlanningGuide.pdf>

What to Pack Cont'd

- Comfort Items, ear plugs, music, reading, word puzzles, eye mask for sleeping, toothbrush and paste, warm socks, non-slip slippers, a sweater
- To Keep You Oriented - bring a calendar and a quiet inexpensive clock.
- For Communication -bring a pad of paper, pens, your glasses, hearing aid and teeth.

What NOT to bring: expensive jewelry, watches, electronics, wallets, purses, credit cards, your nicest clothes and shoes and other prized possessions.

Don't bother with perfume or cologne. Your neighbours may have allergies and respiratory problems.

3 Keys to a Better Hospital Stay

1. Stay in control (and informed).

Four things you need to know about every test, procedure and treatment.

1. The purpose or reason
2. Common side effects or risks
3. Serious side effects or risks
4. Alternatives (e.g. other treatments)

2. Know your team.

1. Ask for each person's name and role
2. (e.g. nurse, respiratory technician, dietician, physiotherapist, occupational therapist)
3. or specialty (e.g. family physician, hospitalist, surgeon, internist)
4. Ask who is your attending or most responsible physician

3. Set up a channel of communication.

1. Prepare your list of questions
2. Find out when your attending doctor will visit
3. Key questions: What is the plan? The working diagnosis? The schedule of tests or procedures?
4. The results of tests? The expected day of discharge?

This information could be shared on a WHITE BOARD in your room or a large pad of paper at your bedside.

Make sure your family doctor knows you are in the hospital and that hospital reports are sent to his/her office so they can provide important medical information to your hospital care team.

More articles on Empowering Patients can be found at [FETCH \(For Everything That's Community Health\) sc.fetchbc.ca](http://sc.fetchbc.ca)

Note: This article was written by Dr. Davidicus Wong and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sunshine Coast Division of Family Practice

Please share this information with your family, friends and anyone else who may find it helpful.

Together we'll create a healthier community and a healthier future.