## Safety FIRST Make Safety a Priority in Your Day

Welcome to The Reading Hospital and Medical Center, your partner in health care. Your safety is very important to us. While you are in the Hospital, your healthcare team will help to keep you safe from harm. Research shows that we can improve safety when you, the patient, take part as well. As a part of the healthcare team, you and your family play a part in reaching the goal of safe care. [Use of the term "patient" refers also to the parent or adult responsible for a minor.]

## YOU are a Part of the Healthcare Team

- ✓ Take part in discussions and decisions about your care. Ask your doctor about treatment options. Learn about your condition, activity, diet, and other care needs. There are many resources that can help you learn. Staying informed will help decrease anxiety and concerns.
  - ✓ Ask if there are videos you can watch to understand your diagnosis, treatment, and basic topics about health and wellness.
  - ✓ Ask for printed information about your diagnosis, treatment, and basic topics about health and wellness.
- ✓ **Ask questions** about tests and treatments you are having done. If you don't understand, ask again. It is your life and you have the right to know.
- ✓ Pay attention to the care you are receiving. Don't assume anything! Make sure you are getting the correct treatments and medications, by the right healthcare team members.
- ✓ **Discuss concerns** with your doctor or other healthcare team members.
- ✓ **Involve loved ones** in your care. A friend or family member who cares about you can help support you and, with your permission, can help get information for you.
- ✓ **Tell us** about your health history, allergies, medicines, herbals, and dietary supplements. Give accurate information. This helps the healthcare team decide on the best plan for you. Be sure to let us know if you are part of a research study.
- ✓ Follow doctor's orders. It is very important that you follow the plan for medicines, treatments, and appointments after you leave the Hospital. Please tell us right away if you do not understand or may have trouble following this plan.
- ✓ Report any health changes to your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.

  Your doctor needs to know about any changes in symptoms. Early management of health changes is important. Write down questions when you think of them so you will not forget what you wanted to ask.

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- ✓ Prevent infections. Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after touching anything soiled or using the restroom. Ask everyone who might touch you to clean his or her hands. Don't be afraid to ask us if we cleaned our hands! Your healthcare team may also use a waterless hand gel or foam to stop the spread of germs. When coughing or sneezing, cover your nose and mouth with tissue. Toss used tissues into the nearest container and wash your hands. Wear a mask if asked to do so. Keep your intravenous dressing clean and dry. Ask your friends and family not to visit if they are sick.
- ✓ Pay attention to identification. Look for employee identification badges on your healthcare team members. Look at your own patient name bracelet to be sure that ALL information is correct and easy to read. You will need to give your name, date of birth and show your bracelet to many different people in a day. They may also need to scan your bracelet to identify you. All of these actions are ways to help prevent mistakes and keep you safe. If a healthcare worker fails to check your ID bracelet, STOP them and remind them to do so!
- ✓ Know your medications. Medication errors are the most common healthcare mistakes. Unless asked to do so, you should not bring your medications from home to the Hospital. Instead, carry a list of all of your current medications with you. Any medications you happen to have with you should be sent home or given to your nurse. Know what medications you take and why you take them. If you are getting a new medicine, ask us about it. We will be happy to share with you what you need to know to take it safely. Be sure you know what it is for, when to take it, what its side effects are, and if there are any interactions with other drugs or foods.
- ✓ Help prevent falls. Sometimes patients may become confused or unsteady while walking in the Hospital. Medicines, illness, and unfamiliar surroundings may cause these changes. YOU can help prevent a fall. Tell staff if you notice any confusion or unsteadiness. ALWAYS call the nurse for help with walking. Wear non-skid slippers or shoes that fit well. Ask your doctor about physical therapy if you feel you need more strength to walk on your own. If needed, use a cane or walker to help with walking and change your position slowly.
- ✓ Make sure you understand what will happen if you need surgery.

  Make sure that the procedure has been explained so you understand what will be done. Tell us if you had a bad reaction to anesthesia in the past. Your doctor will ask you to help correctly identify the site of your procedure or surgery. He or she will write a "Yes" on your skin at the correct location. In order to prevent a surgical site infection, you may receive antibiotics as part of your treatment. Tell your doctor or nurse if your incision becomes red, swollen, or painful; has leaking fluid or cloudy fluid; or if you develop a fever. Keep your incision clean and dry. Let your nurse know if any dressings are wet or loose. Follow any instructions that you are given about how to take care of yourself at home.
- ✓ **Share your concerns and ideas** about your safety. Talk to any member of your healthcare team, or call our Patient Representatives at 610-988-8663.

