

Speak Up! A Team Effort

Your right to speak up during your inpatient stay



Your Right To Speak Up!

You have the right to be well-informed about your illness, treatments, and outcomes. Don't hesitate to discuss these matters with your physician or other health care professionals.

Your Safety

A major way to help assure your safety as an inpatient is to ask questions when you do not understand what is happening, if you believe something is not right, or if you have concerns about your care. Although your health care providers are hard working, highly skilled and competent medical professionals, you can add to your safety by being knowledgeable about all aspects regarding your care. Another safety measure is to make sure that your doctors, nurses and other health care providers confirm your identity by checking your wristband, and by asking your name and date of birth before procedures or treatments are performed or medications are given. It is standard procedure to ask for two patient identifiers, even if your caregiver knows you. You may also be asked the same question more than once. Please be understanding, as these questions are designed to assure that each caregiver has accurate information about you. To avoid the spread of infections, we encourage hand washing for you, your visitors and your caregivers. Wash your own hands often. Feel free to ask your caregivers if they have washed their hands or scrubbed their hands with sterile gel.

Your Medical History

Please be as thorough and accurate as possible when providing your medical history to your caregivers, including all current complaints and symptoms, past illnesses and hospitalizations, family medical history, current medications and dosages, dietary supplements, herbal preparations, drug allergies and any adverse reactions that you may have experienced in the past. Ask for one of our complimentary wallet-sized Medication Cards to help organize your medical information. Remember to update it and present it each time you seek medical care.

Your Medications

While you are a patient in the hospital, your medications will be given on a set schedule, which may differ from your home routine. Always verify that the medications being given to you are intended for you. Ask your caregivers to provide you with medication information in easy-to-understand language. You should feel free to ask questions when the doctor prescribes the medication as well as when you receive it, such as:

- What is the medicine for, when will it be given, and how long will I need to take it?
- What are the possible side effects, and what should I do if they occur?
- Is this medication safe to take with my other medications?
- Are there any foods or beverages to avoid while taking this medication?
- Should this medication be taken before, after, or with food?
- Is a Pharmacist available for discussion?

While you are a patient with us, we encourage you to actively participate in decisions about your treatment and ask questions or express concerns about your care.

The following suggestions are designed to help you become a more informed patient so that you can play a significant role in your care and safety. Therefore, do not be afraid to "SPEAK UP"!



Your Surroundings

During your hospitalization, you may be given medications to relieve your pain and help you sleep, that may cause you to be disoriented. Please use the call bell to notify the nurse when you need to get out of bed until it is determined that it is safe for you to move about without assistance. Should you have any concerns about how equipment functions (such as lights, toilets and television), and the types of meals you are receiving, please contact your caregiver. We will address those concerns as quickly as feasible to ensure that your stay is as pleasant and comfortable as possible.

Your Procedure And Your Care

You have the right to be involved in your plan of care, which include procedures, tests or surgery. Ask the doctor to explain what will occur and what can be expected during and after recovery. Just prior to surgery, you will be asked to state your name, date of birth, the type of surgery you are having and the part of your body on which surgery will be performed. You may be asked to mark the correct location on your body.

Your Recovery

During your hospitalization, it is important to tell a doctor or nurse if you start to feel worse than you felt earlier in the recovery process, or if you feel something significant has changed. During your stay, if you or your family feel that your condition is deteriorating, notify

your caregiver and as appropriate. The Rapid Response Team may be called to come to your bedside to check on you. The Team includes a physician, a Critical Care nurse and a respiratory therapist.

Your Discharge

Discharge planning begins at the time of your admission, including making provisions for outpatient rehabilitation, home care or home health assistance, and nursing home or rehab facility placement. Ask your doctor to explain what will happen once you return home, especially dealing with wound care, bandages and casts, and if there are any specific activities, dietary modifications or medication changes that you need to be aware of, as well as any follow-up visits. If your doctor prescribes medications to take following discharge, review the names of the medications and the dosage, as well as potential side effects. If you don't understand your discharge instructions, we encourage you to ask questions.

Our Commitment!

ECHN is committed to providing you with the best medical care possible, offering the highest standards of care and service to every patient.

Your well-being is important to us, so if you have a concern during your stay, please speak to your nurse or ask for the Nurse Manager. If you have additional concerns that cannot be answered or addressed by staff on the unit, please contact one of ECHN's Patient Representatives:

Manchester Memorial Hospital

860.647.6886, or ext. 6886 (if calling within the hospital)

Rockville General Hospital

860.872.5205, or ext. 5205 (if calling within the hospital)

