



4. Tell your health care team if you have ever had a reaction to any medicine or food.

If you get sick, your health care team may need to act fast. Before they give you any medicine, they will need to know if you could have a bad reaction to it. That's why you should tell them in advance about any allergy or reaction you have ever had to medicine or food.

Reactions can include rashes, headaches, breathing trouble, and feeling sick. Because some medicines have food in them (such as the eggs used in the flu shot), be sure to talk about your food allergies too. Tell a member of your team right away if a new medicine makes you feel unwell. If you do not know of any allergies, you can get tested.

Don't wait until you get sick to tell people about your allergies. Some people wear an ID bracelet such as MedicAlert™. This tells the health care team about your allergies when you can't tell them yourself.



5. Make sure you know what to do when you are at home.

When you are getting ready to come home from the hospital or after a health care appointment, ask as many questions as you can. Make sure you understand what you need to do when you are at home. Write this information down or have a family member or friend write it for you. Share the information with your other health care providers.

Here are some good questions to ask:

- What support should I have at home?
- Are there safety concerns I should be aware of? (For instance, rugs that might be a falling hazard or poor lighting)
- Will I have trouble moving around?
- When can I return to work?
- What medications do I need to take when I am at home?

This brochure has been prepared for general information and as a reference guide, and is not intended to be and is not a comprehensive or definitive statement or review regarding the subject matter contained herein. This brochure is not intended to provide any legal or medical advice. You should not adapt or change any medical treatments or practices without consulting with your doctor.

This brochure may not be modified, adapted, published or sold in whole or in part without the prior written permission of, and with express attribution to, OHA. Downloading, distribution, reproduction, and display for non-commercial personal use are permitted without prior written permission.

© Ontario Hospital Association, 2009. All rights reserved.

Funding for this project was initially provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.



Home and Community Sector Your Health Care Be Involved



1.

Be involved in your health care. Speak up if you have questions about your care.

Be an active member of your health care team. A member of your health care team is anyone who is assisting you with your care inside or outside of your home. Take part in every decision about your care. Ask questions so you can make informed choices. Come prepared for your health care appointment. Know what to do when you go home. If you don't feel your concerns are being heard, ask again.

What you should know

You should understand as much as you can about:

- your health problem or your diagnosis
- the care you will need
- medicine you should take and how to take it

Here are some good ways to ask questions:

- What is my care plan?
- What should I tell my family or caregiver?
- Can you tell me more about my health problem?
- Are there any other options?
- What can I do at home to help my progress?



2.

Tell your health care team about your past illnesses and your current health condition.

You know the most about your health. Tell your health care team everything you can, even if you think they already know. Tell them even if you think it is not important.

Tell them if:

- you are not feeling well right now
- you have been sick or have fallen lately
- you are taking any medicine
- you have had surgery or recent visits to the hospital
- you have seen another doctor or received other health care services
- you have a chronic illness like diabetes or heart disease
- you have a family history of an illness, such as high blood pressure, asthma, or cancer
- you have a history of tobacco, drug, or alcohol use
- you have been feeling tired or doing less lately
- you are not eating well or not feeling hungry
- you or a family member, have a disease that can spread to others



3.

Have all of your medicines with you at every health care appointment.

Some medicines combine with each other in your body and produce bad reactions. To protect you, your health care team must know about any prescription drugs you take. They must also know about other medicines you buy, such as:

- vitamins
- herbs and herbal remedies
- food supplements
- “over the counter” medicine you buy at the drugstore

Always keep your medicine in the bottle or packaging it came in. If you cannot bring all your medicines with you, keep a list of everything you take. Keep this list up to date. Bring it with you when you go to the hospital or to a health care appointment. Your doctor and pharmacist can help you make the list.