Taking part in your care:
A guide to patient safety and well-being
At Baptist Health, your doctors, nurses, technologists and others work hard to provide you with safe, quality medical care. As a patient, you have a role to play in making your care safe by being an active, involved and informed member of your healthcare team.

This brochure is a guide to help you take charge of your care and take part in the decisions that affect your health and well-being. This information is important whether you are a patient staying in the hospital, visiting an emergency or urgent care center or going to an outpatient center or your doctor’s office.

Baptist Health encourages you to get involved and to “speak up” about any concerns or questions you may have about your care. To help you remember how to make your healthcare experience as positive as possible, use this simple motto:

**Always Remember to Be SAFE.**

**Safety first:** Make sure you and your family know your allergies and medications. Ask a trusted friend or family member to be your advocate — someone who will be there to support you as needed.

**Ask, ask, ask:** Know all the who, what, when, where and why about the care and treatment you are to receive. Expect everyone involved in your care to introduce themselves by name, and to wear an identification badge. Make sure to tell your healthcare professional if you think he or she has you confused with another patient. Tell the nurse or doctor if you think you are about to receive the wrong medication or if something doesn’t seem right. Don’t assume anything.

**Feel respected:** You and your family have a right to be treated with respect, dignity and confidentiality. Never forget that your opinion matters.

**Educate:** Educate yourself and your family in partnership with your healthcare provider. Learn all you can about your illness and treatment options. Good sources include your doctor, your library, respected websites and support groups. Ask your doctor about the specialized training and experience that qualify him or her to treat your illness. Medical terms can be confusing; make sure you understand the words used by your caregivers. Be sure to ask any questions you may have before signing any forms. Write down important facts your doctor tells you.
Patient Safety Tips

Identification: While in the hospital, wear your wrist ID band (provided to you on admission). This band gives the staff information that is critical to your safety and verifies that you are the patient that they should be caring for. Make sure your nurse or doctor asks your name and date of birth and matches both with the information on your ID band before he or she administers any medication or treatment.

Call buttons: Your hospital bed and bathroom are equipped with call buttons. Your nurse will show you how to use these. Always stay in reach of a call button to call your nurse when you need help.

Questions: Write down any questions you have for your doctor or other healthcare provider. Take notes on their answers so you will remember later on.

Code HELP: If you or your loved one are concerned that you are getting worse and feel that no one is there to respond to your medical needs, you may call a Code HELP. Available in most inpatient units, Code HELP is initiated by dialing a special phone number and requesting a Code HELP. This activates an immediate response from a team of medical professionals. Your nurse will tell you more about this important emergency safety program.

Invasive Lines and Tubes: Patients are sometimes confused because of illness, injury, unfamiliar settings, effects of medication or other reasons. This confusion may lead to trying to pull out intravenous (IV) lines or other tubes. For your safety and comfort, the staff will do everything possible to help make you more comfortable, including explaining what is happening, keeping the tubes covered and assisting with visits to the bathroom.

Restraints: Sometimes, restraints are used when other methods have failed and when needed to prevent injury to a patient. These devices will be used only after consulting with a supervising nurse and physician. Your family will be notified if restraints are necessary.

Tobacco-free campuses: To ensure everyone’s health and well-being, Baptist Health facilities are tobacco-free. This means smoking or use of any type of tobacco is not allowed inside or on the grounds of any of our locations.
Preventing Infections

The staff takes many measures to reduce the risk of patients developing an infection during the hospital stay. Hand washing is important for everyone to do, including patients, physicians, family and friends. You and your loved ones should feel comfortable asking your caregivers, including your doctors, if they washed their hands before touching you. Most patient rooms have soap dispensers at the sink, as well as an alcohol-based hand rinse that cleans hands without water.

Preventing Falls

Some patients may be at risk for falling. If the staff believes you may be at risk, they will take steps to try to prevent a fall. One of the steps is putting a blue star on the outside of the door to your hospital room to let the staff know you are at risk, or a red star if you already have had a fall.

Moving about helps your recovery, and prevents such complications as deep vein thrombosis, skin sores and other ailments. If your doctor says that you can walk around, here is what you and your loved ones can do to prevent a fall:

- Keep the telephone, call button and bedpan or urinal within your reach at the bedside. If walkers, canes or other assistive devices need to be kept close by, let the staff know.
- Keep the room clear of unneeded items. If oxygen or other equipment is in use, or if tubing is in the way, ask the nurse for help before getting out of bed.
- Call for help if needed when going from the bed to the chair or bathroom. Move slowly.

Medication Safety

Make sure to ask questions about your medications, such as what each medication does and how you might feel after taking it. If you have any concerns about the medications, ask your nurse about them. Report any allergies or bad reactions. Here are some tips for safe medication use:

- Tell us about all medications you are taking and how you take them. Include prescription drugs, medicated creams, birth control pills and hormones, as well as nonprescription medicines such as aspirin, antacids, laxatives, eye drops and cough medicine. Also include herbs, vitamins, minerals, diet pills and dietary supplements. If you don’t have the information, call someone at home who can read the labels
on your medicine bottles or call your doctor’s office or pharmacy.

- While in the hospital, don’t take medications from home, including vitamins, herbs or products such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil).

- When you go for a follow-up visit to your physician, take a list of the medications given to you when you left the hospital. Call your doctor if you have any problems with the medications.

- Keep a written record of your medications, including the name, the dose and when you take it. Carry a copy in your purse or wallet. (Ask your nurse for a Health Passport from Baptist Health that lets you keep this record with you.)

**Surgery and Procedures**

When having surgery or other procedures, be sure to ask questions before signing consent forms. You and/or your family will be asked to verify what type of surgery is planned for you. You may also be asked to confirm the correct marking of your surgical site so that there is no confusion in the operating room.

**Patient Pain Tips**

Managing your pain is an important part of treatment. Pain makes it hard for the body to heal. You have a right to have your pain controlled. Your opinion about how to relieve your pain is important. In order for your nurses and doctors to help you, they will ask you how bad it is on a scale of 0 (no pain) to 10 (worst possible pain). They’ll also want to know where it’s located, how often you have it, how it feels, when it started, and anything else you think they need to know. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you feel your pain is not being properly controlled.

Although medications are frequently used to treat pain, there are other pain-reducing methods, such as massage, relaxation techniques and application of heat or cold.

**In Closing**

It’s important that you participate in your care and agree with what will be done. The more information you have, the more confident you will be in making decisions.

While the physicians, nurses, technologists and others at Baptist Health are focused on doing everything possible to make healthcare safety a priority, you are key to the overall success of these efforts. Patients who take part in decisions about their healthcare are more likely to have better outcomes. Please let us know if you have suggestions about how we can better assist you in participating in your healthcare.
For more information, call the Patient Safety Officer at these locations:

- Baptist/Baptist Children’s Hospitals 786-596-6526
- Doctors Hospital 786-308-3181
- Homestead Hospital 786-243-8299
- Mariners Hospital 305-434-1623
- South Miami Hospital 786-662-5018
- Baptist Outpatient Services 786-596-4043