

# Avoiding Medical Errors

The hospital can be a busy place. Doctors, nurses, patient care technicians and other hospital personnel have many patients to care for and jobs to get done.

While you are in the hospital, you can be an active member of your own healthcare team to avoid medical errors.

When you are admitted you will be given a wrist band. The information on this wrist band is important – double check it to make sure your name and birth date are correct.

Wear it at all times. Your healthcare team will check your wrist band every time you get medication or receive treatment so it is important to have it on at all times.

Some hospitals use color-coded wrist bands to indicate different medical conditions like allergies or fall risk, as well as healthcare wishes like the wish to refuse certain medical treatments.

Make sure the bands you are wearing are correct to avoid any medical mistakes. If the band you have is incorrect, have it changed immediately. It is for your safety.

While you are in the hospital you may be prescribed new medications. Make sure you understand the purpose of any new medications you will be taking.

Sometimes the pills you are given in the hospital may look different than the ones you are used to taking at home.

It's ok to ask what medications you are taking to make sure they are the right ones for you.

For your safety it is also important that you understand any medical treatments or tests you are scheduled for. If you don't understand the purpose or goal of a treatment, ask.

Your healthcare provider will be happy to explain the procedure to you and help you understand why you need it.

Everyone is nervous before surgery. One thing you can do to help avoid medical mistakes is to make sure the correct surgical site is identified to the surgeon.

This way you can feel confident about your surgery and focus on your recovery.

When you are in the hospital you should not feel out of control or that there is nothing you can do to avoid medical mistakes. Remember to wear the correct wristband at all times, ask about your medications, and ensure the correct surgical site is marked.

These simple steps can go a long way to avoiding errors in the hospital.