

TEN PATIENT SAFETY COMMANDMENTS

How Patients Can Contribute to Their Safety in the Health First Healthcare Environment

1. **Speak Up:** If at any time you have concern for your safety or the safety of those around you, please tell us. Don't hesitate to ask questions about your care.
2. **Accurate Health Status:** Provide us with up-to-date information of your past and present health history because this helps us take better care of you.
3. **Medications:** We want you to be knowledgeable about the medications you are taking. If you do not understand your medications or want more information about them, please speak up and ask your nurse or your doctor. Also, we must know your current medications—name, dosage, frequency, and route when possible. When you can, bring your medication bottles or packages with you to the hospital, including any herbal medications or supplements, for verification. When you leave the hospital, you should receive a list of medications to be continued at home after discharge. If you do not receive this list, please tell your nurse and don't leave until that list has been given to you.
4. **Minimizing Falls:** Our clinical staff assesses every patient for risk of falling while in the hospital. You may be identified as a fall risk and the Nursing staff will give you specific instructions to help keep you safe. It's very important for you to follow these instructions. Be sure to call for help before getting out of bed, getting up from a chair, or going to the bathroom.
5. **Identification Required:** Expect all caregivers to ask your name, date of birth, and check your ID band frequently. This will happen before administering medications, blood or intravenous (IV) fluids, drawing blood, performing procedures, or transporting you for care from one area of the hospital to another. This may become repetitious, so we appreciate your patience. Proper identification is the primary factor in preventing medical errors.
6. **Healthy Hygiene:** We expect you and your visitors to maintain the highest personal hygiene in our hospital environment and you should require the same from us. Health First is committed to care that minimizes the possibility of you getting an infection. Our standards require hand washing before and after direct hands-on care. If you're concerned that this has not occurred, we expect you to speak up and remind us about the importance of hand washing in infection prevention. It's also very important that you wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the bathroom, plus don't touch any wound or IV site. For good respiratory hygiene (cough etiquette), cover your nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing. Use tissues when coughing/sneezing and throw them out in the wastebasket. Use good hand washing techniques or use hand sanitizer after coughing/sneezing. If you're placed on any precautions while in the hospital, such as contact precautions, ask your nurse to explain what this means and what you can do to help yourself get well.
7. **Understanding Each Procedure:** When you'll be undergoing an operation or procedure, make sure that your doctor has explained how it will help you, what the risks and possible outcomes are, and what other types of treatment may be available.
8. **Surgical Safety:** Before an operation or procedure, expect your caregivers to check your identity, the specific operation or procedure planned, and the site of the operation/procedure. The site will be marked to avoid confusion. For certain operations, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics to prevent infection. Also, remember that proper hand washing is very important for preventing infections. Wash your hands or use the hand sanitizer frequently, encourage your visitors to wash their hands, and speak up if hand washing or use of the hand sanitizer has not been done by your care providers.
9. **Safe Activity:** Your doctor will determine a specific level of activity that's appropriate while you are a patient in one of our hospitals. You are, of course, safest staying either in your room or on the clinical unit where our staff is readily available if needed. We discourage unsupervised movement beyond the clinical unit, such as going to the cafeteria or outside the hospital. Leaving the clinical unit with any types of drains, IV catheters, or portable oxygen equipment could present a safety hazard and should be avoided.
10. **No Smoking:** Health First is proud to be tobacco-free on all hospital campuses and facilities (inside and on all our campus grounds). It is well established and generally accepted that smoking, or any type of tobacco use, is detrimental to your health. Health First provides a smoke/tobacco-free environment as a proactive measure to protect the health of our associates, patients, visitors, volunteers, and other individuals on our campuses. We'll assist you with quitting, if desired, or with counseling and pharmaceutical resources while you're in the hospital. Please discuss your specific questions or needs with your nurse or doctor.

We encourage you to share your concerns about safety. Please discuss these with your nurse or doctor. There's always a charge nurse, nurse manager/director, or supervisor on duty at all times who can assist you. Please ask to speak with one of the Nursing supervisors if you have any concerns.