

HEALTH MIND BODY

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Tips for a safer hospital stay

(BPT) - Each year, millions of Americans seek hospital care to treat a wide range of medical problems - from accidental injuries to chronic or life-threatening illnesses. While the majority of patients have positive outcomes, it is imperative to remember patient safety should be a top priority for everyone.

In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) notes patient safety is a serious global public health issue. Even in developed countries such as the United States, as many as one in 10 patients may be harmed while hospitalized. Injury rates are even higher in developing countries, making patient safety a high priority around the world.

You can take steps to help ensure your safety whether in the hospital for a planned or unexpected circumstance. Here are three things to keep in mind to make your hospital stay as safe as possible:

Reduce infection risks:

Hospital infections are a top concern, especially for surgical patients. According to WHO, hand hygiene is the single most important measure to reduce health-care-related infections. Patients should keep hand sanitizer at their bedside and use it often. Additionally, the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) recommends:

- * Reminding your care team about hand-washing before any direct interaction.
- * Keeping an eye on intravenous catheters and wound dressings, and notifying your health care provider right away if something looks wrong.
- * Taking charge of health problems such as diabetes, excess weight and smoking, which can increase infection risk in the hospital.
- * Following doctors' directions about breathing treatments to avoid lung infections.

Understand anesthesia:

Over the past century, anesthesiologists have advanced patient safety through innovative research, science and technology advancements. Whether in the operating room, procedure room,

intensive care unit or pain clinic, anesthesiologists are committed to patient safety. Today, anesthesia-related fatalities only occur in less than one in every 200,000 procedures.

To help ensure the highest quality and safest care, anesthesiologists lead Anesthesia Care Teams to supervise non-physician providers during the administration of anesthesia to make critical life decisions when there are only seconds to make them. According to the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), anesthesiologists have more than 10,000 hours of related medical training and education to diagnose, treat and respond to any medical complications that may occur.

In addition to making sure a physician supervises your anesthesia care, it is important to follow all pre-operative instructions from your doctors and get plenty of rest before surgery. Also, be sure your anesthesiologist is aware of your prior anesthesia history and any medications you take. For more information about anesthesia and preparing for surgery, please visit LifelineToModernMedicine.com.

Be aware of setbacks:

While unpredictable progress in recovery is not unusual, it's important to minimize the risk of avoidable setbacks such as falls and readmissions.

Tumbles are a major concern for the elderly, but even younger patients are at risk of falling in the hospital. NPSF often points to research indicating more than 500,000 falls occur in U.S. hospitals each year, causing 150,000 injuries. Muscle weakness, medication-related impairment and age can increase a patient's risk of falling. Follow your physician's directions and the hospital's procedures for surer footing.

Before you leave the hospital, make sure you understand the doctor's after-care instructions to reduce your risk of readmission. Bring any questions or suspicions of complications to follow-up appointments to help your physician assess your recovery.



Nearly 1 in 10 Americans lives with a rare disease

(BPT) - Did you know that the same number of people die each year from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, or IPF, as breast cancer? And yet IPF, a rare and debilitating disease that causes permanent scarring of the lungs, is still relatively unknown.

Fortunately, the focus on rare diseases like IPF is growing because they're more common than we think: when combined, they affect nearly 30 million, or about one in 10 Americans.

The National Institutes of Health says there are nearly 7,000 such conditions and many are difficult to diagnose. As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Orphan Drug Act, a federal law to encourage the development of new treatments for rare diseases, progress has been made, but patients with most rare diseases are still without an FDA-approved treatment.

One such rare disease is IPF. This debilitating and often fatal lung disease which gets worse over time, causes lung tissue to scar and thicken. Breathing is difficult for IPF patients, which can make everyday tasks, like walking up stairs or doing errands, a challenge.

Like many rare diseases, IPF is difficult to diagnose particularly because the cause of the disease is unknown.

For this reason, organizations like the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation, American Thoracic Society and Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals are working to raise awareness of this deadly disease. Observances like Rare Disease Day, an international advocacy day aimed to raise awareness of rare diseases, are opportunities to further this mission and recognize the challenges faced by patients.

"This is a milestone year for rare disease awareness and we are excited to see continued progress for patients with IPF," says Dolly Kervitsky, of the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation. "We are encouraged by the accomplishments of the research community, as we continue our efforts to spread awareness about the disease through forums like Rare Disease Day."

The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation believes it is imperative that patients and those that treat them become more knowledgeable of IPF in order to better address patients' needs.

With no FDA-approved therapies, a lung transplant is often the last resort for people with IPF. However, a lung transplant is rare - about 30 percent of IPF patients who are waiting for a lung transplant don't survive long enough to have the surgery.

The risks for type 2 diabetes

(BPT) - Understanding your risk for developing type 2 diabetes, or getting an early diagnosis, is critical to successful treatment and delaying or preventing some of its complications such as heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, stroke, amputation and death.

Tuesday, March 26, 2013, is American Diabetes Association Alert Day(R) which is a one-day "wake-up call" asking the American public to "Take It. Share It." by taking the Diabetes Risk Test to find out if they are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes and sharing the test with their loved ones.

The Diabetes Risk Test asks users to answer simple questions about weight, age, family history and other potential risks for prediabetes or type 2 diabetes. Preventative tips are provided for everyone who takes the test, including encouraging those at high risk to talk with their health care provider.

Talking to your health

care provider can be crucial. When elementary school teacher Tony Castillo moved to Odessa, Texas, in the fall of 2011, he had to find a new doctor. Switching doctors, it turns out, changed his life. Castillo was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Since his diagnosis, Castillo has worked hard at his weight loss through exercise and other lifestyle changes. He rode in the American Diabetes Association's Tour de Cure cycling fundraiser in Dallas last year and will do so again this year. Training for the Tour helped him lose a substantial amount of weight and lower his blood glucose levels dramatically. His total weight loss has been nearly 40 pounds.

"Having diabetes isn't a curse, but it does mean I have to be more careful," Castillo says. "I now watch my carbohydrate intake and try to exercise daily for at least 30 minutes."

Castillo says his greatest success since his diagnosis



has been in speaking about his disease to the students in his fourth grade class.

"I noticed some of them started changing the way they ate as a result of sharing my story," he said. "I showed them how to read labels and explained portion sizes. They started watching what they were eating

in the cafeteria, choosing more vegetables and not going straight for the desserts."

Everyone should be aware of the risks for type 2 diabetes. People who are overweight, not active (live a sedentary lifestyle) and over the age of 45 should consider themselves at risk for the disease.

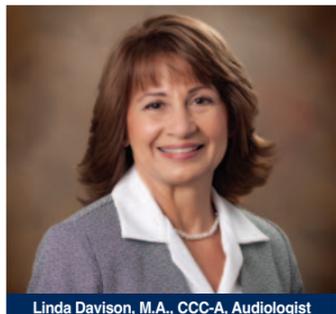
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