

CANADIAN PATIENT SAFETY WEEK
Patient Safety: Be Involved
Ask Talk Listen
October 8 – 13, 2007

**CANADIAN PATIENT SAFETY WEEK 2007 IDEAS FOR HEALTH
CARE PROVIDERS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

For more ideas, see www.patientsafetyweek.ca.

Share your plans for Canadian Patient Safety Week with MIPS, so that we may highlight them in our promotion of events occurring during the week. Contact admin@mbips.ca

Patient Safety Week Activities and Ideas for Patients & Families

-Use the “It’s Safe to Ask” brochure when you visit your doctor, nurse or pharmacist – go to www.safetoask.ca

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist:

- what medications you should be taking
- why you are taking your medication
- how and when to take your medication
- what the side effects are of your medication
- how to store your medication
- how the medication will help

-Before you leave your doctor, nurse or pharmacist, review your prescription and make sure you can read and understand the prescription information. Open the pill bottle. Show the pharmacist the number of pills you plan to take, when, and how, based on what you understand from the instruction on the bottle.

-Clean out your medicine cabinets of old or expired medications and take them to your pharmacy so they can destroy them.

-Bring your medications to your doctor or pharmacist for review.

-Get copies of all of your healthcare records and keep them in a safe place.

-Write down and carry with you all of your prescription and over the counter medications (including doses), as well as any allergies.

-Write down and carry with you the names and numbers of all of your healthcare providers and pharmacies.

-For visits to the doctor, nurse, pharmacist or hospital, Identify an advocate (either family member or friend) who can accompany you and ask questions/get information on your behalf.

-Talk with your family or other close individuals about what your preferences are for your healthcare, in case you are unable to speak for yourself.

-Ask your hospital or healthcare professional about patient safety, and how communication and partnership between you and your providers can be improved.

-Ask your hospital or healthcare organization what they are doing for Patient Safety Week, and attend events to learn more about patient safety.

-Communicate with your provider about what your healthcare safety concerns are, and how you believe they may be able to help.

-Let your healthcare provider know who they should talk with in the case that you are unable to speak for yourself.

-Get involved! Join a District Health Council or Patient Safety Advisory Committee to improve patient safety.

Patient Safety Week Activities and Ideas for Providers and Health Care Organizations

Providers

Try these suggestions in your patient meetings:

-Assess the patient's baseline understanding before providing extensive information: "Before we go on, could you tell me what you already know about (for example) high blood pressure?"

-Use plain language, not medical jargon, vague terms and words that may have different meanings to a lay person. For example, say "chest pain" instead of angina, "hamburger" instead of red meat and, "You don't have XX" instead of "Your XXXX test was negative."

-To encourage patients to ask questions, ask, "What questions do you have?" rather than, "Do you have any questions?" and use It's Safe to Ask material as a guide.

-Confirm the patient's understanding by saying, "I always ask patients and families to repeat things back to make sure I have explained them clearly." Or, if a new skill like using an inhaler was taught, have the patient demonstrate the action.

-Provide written instructions in plain language for the patient and family to review at home.

Organizations

-Host sessions for teaching/reviewing effective communication skills for providers, patients/families – use It's Safe to Ask as a guide

-Post It's Safe to Ask posters in patient/resident rooms

-Introduce "SBAR" (Situation-Background-Assessment-Recommendation) technique, which provides a framework for communication between members of the health care team about a patient's condition.

-For point of care handoffs – develop a check list for communication

-Promote It's Safe to Ask to providers and public (see www.safetoask.ca for implementation suggestions)

-Audit who is using It's Safe to Ask or other communication tools

-introduce It's Safe to Ask during Staff Walkabouts

-Role Play with patients on ways they can ask providers for information

-Post Patient Safety Week information on Organizational Websites, and share information about activities internally and externally.

- Create Patient Safety / Safety Tips displays with posters, tent-cards, free information in cafeterias, lobbies, patient rooms, washrooms and common areas.

-Hold Executive Leadership walkrounds every morning during Patient Safety Week.

-Create Staff Patient Safety awards and contests (with pizza lunch as prize).

Ex. What does culture of safety mean to you?
EX. Are you using It's Safe to Ask?
Ex. What good catch has happened in your unit?
Ex. Create displays of patient safety activities in your unit.

- Encourage group presentations by staff to peers on a patient safety topic.
- Share educational Patient Safety tools and resources with staff.
- Host patient safety info sessions, grand rounds or conferences for staff on patient safety topics with experts or staff presenting on topics such as: culture of safety, communication with patients, medication reconciliation, discharge planning, infection prevention and control, adverse drug events, etc.
- Give recognition of patient safety champion stories provided by staff.
- Write a mission statement on patient safety and share with staff and the public.
- Provide a drop box for suggestions from staff to improve communication and patient safety.
- Hold a round table discussion with staff, patients and families to discuss safety concerns, particularly involving communication.
- Bring in a patient/family speaker to speak to staff about an experience with a medical error involving communication.
- Establish a Patient and Family Advisory Council in your region, hospital, or organization.
- Tape a radio show on your local station about patient safety.
- Include a reminder about Patient Safety Week and Safety Tips with paychecks
- Distribute pins, pens and other give-away items to "celebrate" your commitment to patient safety.
- “Rounds” can be made throughout the hospital, giving staff Patient Safety Week buttons and encouraging them to be spotted wearing the button. Several days later, follow-up rounds can be done, and prizes and rewards were given to staff seen wearing the buttons.
- Create a Patient Safety presentation on that travels throughout the hospital on a festive cart for evening and night shift staff.

- Discuss regional safety reporting systems, including how to report, what to report, why to report, as well as improvements already made based on reports
- Promote patient safety initiatives with a colorful newsletter for staff and the public.
- Plan interactive activities for employees, patients, and visitors
- Offer a patient safety suggestion box for patients and families.
- Hold an open house, brown bag lunch, or round table discussion (with refreshments) for patients and families with a patient safety topic of discussion.
- Invite speakers to come and speak about healthcare issues in facility lobbies.
- Have a pharmacist available to answer questions in the lobby. Invite patients to bring their medications for review by a pharmacist.
- Distribute medication safety pamphlets.
- Empower patients by providing information on what they can do if they experience an error.
- Distribute pillboxes with the days of the week, imprinted with a safety message and the name of the organizations.
- Introduce departments and services within your hospital to the patient and family population (such as ethics committees, social work, ombudsman programs, etc.).
- Hold an open house for civic groups and local residents to meet the staff, visit emergency rooms and see your facility BEFORE they need it.
- Update staff and community about progress on Safer Healthcare Now!