

Post Operative

Information for Patient Families

Welcome to St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center. We know that the presence and participation of loved ones are an important part of the healing process for our patients. We also know you are concerned about your loved one's well being and want to do as much as you can to help.

We want you to know that we have the same goal: to get your loved one back to health as soon as possible.

We are often asked by families how they can help. Here are some guidelines of how you can help us best serve your loved one and keep them safe, as well as a few things you can expect to observe while you are here.



Quiet, please

If your loved one has had surgery or is on pain medication, he or she is probably feeling sleepy and drowsy. The best thing to aid recovery right now is sleep. If family or loved ones are in the room, we ask that the noise level be kept to a minimum.

Getting back to normal

As your loved one comes out of anesthesia, he or she may seem sleepy for several hours. Depending on medication, it is not uncommon to become confused and disoriented. They may experience changes in their usual bowel and bladder patterns. Know that this is normal following surgery and it may take a day or two for things to return to normal.

Appoint a spokesperson

Having one or two people designated whom we can update on the status of your loved one helps us focus on caring for the patient. The designated spokesperson can update visiting family members and friends and can even create a Web page on our Web site to keep everyone up to date.

A CarePage can be created and accessed by going to www.stjosephs-phx.org, and finding the CarePages link under the About Us section. Follow the simple instructions to create your page, and send the link to friends and family.

Beeps and whistles

Your loved one will very likely be hooked up to one or more monitors that will keep tabs on vital signs, such as heart rate, blood pressure, blood oxygen levels, etc. You may hear beeps and alarms while visiting your loved one. These monitors are connected to the nurses' station, and our ears are closely attuned to the various beeps and alarms. We will respond accordingly.

Visiting

While our patients' loved ones are welcome to visit virtually any time of day, please be aware that you may be asked to leave the room under certain circumstances. Some units do have posted visiting hours, so check with your nurse to determine when you can visit. Depending upon the unit your loved one is in, the number of visitors allowed at one time may be limited. Please be sure to supervise visiting children at all times.

It's OK to ask

We don't want this experience to feel scary to you or your loved one. Sometimes we are focusing



so much on the patient that we overlook his or her loved one's concerns. Please feel free to ask us any questions, even if you think we are too busy. Our first concern is caring for your loved one, and we know you can better help us if you are well informed and comfortable.



Nurses' rounds

The nurse will visit your loved one's room every hour to check on any needs: pain medication, restroom trips, comfort level etc. We encourage you to ask questions at this time. Please be aware that during shift changes (7 to 8 a.m. and 7 to 8 p.m.) the nurse will be briefing your next nurse on your status, and may not be readily available.

Stay ahead of the pain

Often our patients hesitate to ask for pain medication and try to "tough it out" before asking for another dose. You know your loved one better than we do, and you can help by reading the signs we might miss to determine if your loved one is in pain. Notify us before the pain gets bad; it's easier to head it off than to make it go away.

Comforts of home

Feel free to bring comfort items for your loved one if the hospital stay will be a prolonged one. But be sure to leave valuables at home.

Keeping them safe

Patients and their loved ones have as important a role in patient safety as the healthcare team.

You can help keep them safe by

- Washing your hands or using hand sanitizer before entering the room. You can bring dangerous germs when you visit.
- Be careful about bringing in food or other items that can carry airborne diseases.
- If you or another loved one have a cold or other illness, please wait until you are better before visiting. Patients can have weakened immune systems and something as simple as the common cold can be very harmful.
- Encourage your loved one to stay in bed until a nurse has determined him or her stable enough. Patient falls are the most common safety hazard in the hospital and are arguably the most preventable. If your loved one wants to get out of bed, please encourage him or her to wait for help and notify the nurse.



What we will do to keep patients safe

- In order to ensure our patient is receiving the proper medication in the right dose at the right time, we will check the patient's wristband prior to administering any medication. This provides an additional check and balance to avoid mis-medication.
- We will also check the patient's wristband to identify the patient prior to any treatments and tests.
- We will wash our hands prior to entering the patient room.
- At shift change time, we will discuss the status of the patient and go over any changes or updates that have been made to his or her treatment plan. This helps ensure seamless care for each patient.
- We will do our best to explain the patient's treatment plan in terms that you understand. If you do not understand, ask us to write down our explanation.

Get some rest

You will be of most help to your loved one if you are well rested and alert. We encourage family members to go home to sleep.

