

Top 10 Tips to Avoid Medical Errors

1



Decipher the chicken scratch!

Make sure you can read and understand your prescription, both when prescribed by your doctor and when you actually receive it from the pharmacy. If the two aren't identical, clarify this before taking the medication.

2



Brown bag it.

Keep a record of all medications and over-the-counter drugs you are taking and share this with your doctor or nurse. You can also put your current meds in a brown paper bag and bring them with you to your appointment.

3



Got herbs?

Make sure you share herbal remedies or nutritional supplements you are taking, as well as any allergies you may have. You could be putting yourself at risk for a serious interaction or false test result if you don't disclose this important information with your care team.

4



Every orchestra needs a conductor.

Make sure you have one doctor/nurse that coordinates your care when you see different types of doctors. This can help prevent duplicate tests and prescriptions. Get a primary pharmacist as well.

5



Be proactive.

Ask what common side effects may occur with any medications prescribed, how you should manage symptoms, and who you should call if they do occur. Knowing what to do in advance can help prevent unexpected issues.

6



Don't ask, Don't tell?

You've discussed options with your doctor and decided on a path that's right for you. If there's a reason you don't fill or take a prescription, talk to your doctor or nurse so they can help solve the problem. Don't jeopardize your health by keeping any issues or concerns under wraps.

7



Forget me not.

Everyone forgets things from time to time. Worried you'll forget a dose of your medication? Not sure if you already took it? Sign up for electronic reminders or ask your pharmacist if they have any special packaging that may make it easier to take your medicines.

8



When? Where? How?

Talk to your pharmacist and confirm how and when you should take your medications, and where they should be stored. Don't leave the pharmacy until all of your questions are answered.

9



Turn on the lights!

Although you may think you know exactly what the bottle on your nightstand contains, turn on the lights to be sure. You would be surprised at how many mishaps happen in the dark!

10



Identify me.

If you are hospitalized, don't let anyone give you medicines without checking your identification bracelet. Look at your medicine before you take it, and if it doesn't look like what you normally take, ask why it's needed before you take it.