



Guide for Volunteers

10 rules for VOLUNTEERS to collaborate for
the *safety of patients, visitors and personnel*

1. At home

If you're helping the patients in their home environment, you must tell the nurse:

- about slippery carpets or floors, wires that might be dangerous and which could make the patient fall or any other barrier (e.g. on the way from the bedroom to the toilet), and about any absence of adequate lighting in the house.
- whether the patient eats or drinks foods which could be harmful to them.
- whether medicine is not stored in the right way or if it has expired.
- whether aids or medical equipment does not work properly (devices, infusion pumps, oxygen regulator, monitor).
- whether the aids and/or medical equipment are not in perfect conditions (baby walker, walkers, wheelchairs).

2. Medicines

Always tell the nurse if the patient is taking any other medication, herbal shop products, or dietary supplements that is different from what they have been prescribed.

Help the patient to remember to take his/her medicine in the right way and at the right time.

If you ever notice medicines that cause abnormal and unexpected reactions in the patient, always tell the nurse or the clinician.

3. In the hospital

Always collaborate with the nurse to make sure:

- what the patients can and can't do
- how to help them and in the right way, according to their cure plan

Always signal whether devices and aids work correctly and efficiently (electric bells, intravenous drips,).

Never be afraid to ask for more information about what to do and why. If you ever notice anything abnormal, or if there is an unexpected reaction, always tell the nurse about it.

Always tell the nurse about any situation that might, in your opinion, be harmful for the patient.

4. Being a means of communication

If the patient or their caregivers ask you for information or explanations:

- if the information concerns organizational aspects of care, and you know the answers, you should tell them (if possible include an information sheet, you might ask the nurse what kind of information sheets are available).
- if the information you've been asked concerns the illness or any other aspect of care, call a clinician or a nurse to answer it.

You should introduce yourself to any new nurse or clinician, in order to establish a relationship with them, which will be beneficial because it helps to communicate more effectively.

If the patient ever forgets, make sure to tell his/her name to any new member of the staff in order to avoid being mistaken with any other patient.

5. Wash your hands

Always wash your hands with soap and ask for it if it is not available. Don't be afraid to remind patients, visitors, students, clinicians and nurses to wash their hands before doing any procedure. This is absolutely necessary to avoid infections.

6. What to wear

Make sure that the patients avoid wearing belts (dressing gown belts), because wearing them can result in accidents. Advise patients to wear slippers instead of flip flops, both at home and in the hospital in order to avoid falling. Make sure that the clothes they wear are compatible to the room temperature and that they are always clean.

Make sure that the patients store their accessories (i.e., prosthesis, glasses, hearing aid) in the correct way.

All these objects must be put in a little box when the patient is not using them, and on the box must be written the patient's name. Members of the staff should be informed if the patient requires the use of such devices.

7. Mood

Always tell the hospital staff if you ever notice a change in the patient's mood, if they have grown melancholy, or if they have become depressed about their diagnosis.

8. Hospital visits

Report whether there are visitors that have any transmittable viruses (e.g. the flu), because this might be harmful to patients.

9. Side effects

Every health care worker has your loved one's health at heart, nevertheless, medicine does not always cure every illness and also there is a risk involved. If something does go wrong during a test or surgery, clinicians and nurses will assess the situation in order to find an explanation for what happened and adopt methods to prevent such accidents happening again. You might be expected to be asked to tell what you have seen or heard.

10. Better safety

You should share your opinions , regarding ways and methods of improving the care that a patient receives with members of staff.