



## Guide for family

Together in healthcare

**10 suggestions**  
*to help family and dear ones to receive  
better healthcare*

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## **1. Documents**

Keep health documents all in the same place and remind your family and dear ones to bring them along when going to a doctor or health facility. Don't throw away medicine boxes, herbal or homeopathic product boxes and bring them with you.

## **2. Be of assistance if you accompany a family member to take a test, a medical examination or undergoes hospitalization**

Ask the nurse or the clinician if you can be helpful by answering some of the questions (more people remember better than just one person). Never forget to tell about previous illnesses that your dear one or other family members might have had in the past. Report any known allergies or intolerances to food, material, metals or other.

## **3. Medicines**

Remind you dear one to ask the clinician for a list of the prescribed medicines and the instructions (making sure they're written in a comprehensible manner), about how and when to take them. Remind your dear one to take them in the right way, at the right time and be careful about the dosages. It's very important to store medicines in the correct way (ask the clinician or the nurse). Keep an eye on the expiry dates!

If you think any medicine cause strange reactions, tell your clinician and/or nurse immediately.

## **4. If you are the caregiver for a dear one or family member in a hospital**

Always remind your dear one's name to every member of the staff that comes to assist him/her in order for them not to mistake your dear one with someone else.(at times this has occurred so it is always a good practice to remind the medical staff your dear ones name and health issues).

Ask the staff to introduce themselves in order to know more about them.

Ask the nurse/clinician what you should do for your dear one and what you should be careful about. Don't hesitate to ask for information about what to do and the reasons to do it. If you notice any reaction that you were not expecting, always tell a member of the staff.

## **5. Washing one's hands**

Always wash your hands with soap and ask for soap in case it's missing. Don't feel embarrassed to ask your family members and dear ones as well as clinicians and nurses, to wash their hands before examining or assisting them. This is necessary to prevent infections.

## **6. What to wear**

In order to prevent people from falling, it's better not to wear flip flops but slippers. It's also better to fasten belts ( pajamas and robe belts), to prevent your dear one from falling.

Always make sure there's enough light. Remove carpets from the house. Tell the nurse whether your dear one has ever fallen in the past.

## **7. Mood**

Always tell the doctor and the nurse whether your dear one has changed her/his mood lately and has obsessive thoughts about death or if he/she is depressed because of his/her diagnosis or of the pain associated.

## **8. Side effects**

Every member of staff has your dear one's health at heart, nevertheless, medicine can't solve every problem and can also be risky. Remind that your dear one always has to consent to be treated. Ask your clinician to explain possible medicinal side-effects and potential risks of therapies and surgery. If you don't feel sure about the diagnosis, you can ask another clinician for a second opinion. If you found any information on the internet, make sure that the website is accredited, because not every website is a reliable source of information. Ask your clinician about it.

If something goes wrong during a test or surgery, clinicians and nurse will give you a detailed possible explanation and help you in looking for possible solutions. Members of the staff could also involve you in looking for a possible explanation of what happened in order to better understand the reasons and responsibilities behind the matter and to prevent these kind of incidents of reoccurring in the future.

## **9. Hospital visits**

Never visit family and dear ones in hospital if you have any transmittable disease (e.g. flu), because it could be harmful for them, for yourself and for other patients. Always ask the nurse what kind of food your family member is allowed to eat in order not to cause him/her any problems.

## **10. Discharge from the hospital**

Make sure that your family member or dear one has been informed accurately before he/she leaves the hospital about: medicine to take (list of the medicines and instructions about how to use them), what and how much to eat, things to do and not to do. If possible ask a member of the staff to write everything down for you to remember.

Make sure he/she has been given:

- a) name of the person he/she should turn to in case they need anything
- b) when (day and time of the day), and where to go for follow up checks.