

MEDICAL SAFETY

Rapid Improvement Resource

INTRODUCTION

Patient Safety is a foundational expectation of the patient experience and an important driver of loyalty. The reality is that the role of the patient is foreign for us as individuals- especially in the outpatient and ambulatory settings where we have more limited time to demonstrate excellent, safe care. PRC measures Medical Safety by asking patients to evaluate the following question on an Excellent to Poor Scale:

- Careful in double checking your identity
- Verifying test to be performed
- Washing hands

WHY DO THESE ELEMENTS OF CARE MATTER?

Medical safety is an important intersection of service, quality and safety. Patients often do not understand the why behind safety measures, the procedural specifics, the importance of name identification. Sometimes, we can unintentionally follow the task, miss conveying the “why,” and cause uncertainty. If we do not communicate our intent, patients can feel like we “don’t know them”.

COMMUNICATION TO CONVEY INTENT

The following talking points can infuse patient confidence in your care. Please use these as discussion starters for your team and make them your own. During Patient Service Excellence Rounding or Discharge Phone Calls:

Checking Identity:

- Ensuring patient safety is our highest priority here and how we deliver Excellent care. We will always check your identity twice (in two different ways) to ensure accuracy
- One of our best practices for patient safety is to confirm/double check your identity twice. Tell me how we are doing with this
- Double checking your identity is essential to excellent care. Have we done this consistently? Can I count on you to speak up if we ever do not check your identity twice?
- We will always check your name and date of birth and identification prior to giving you a medication, a test, or procedure because making sure we have the right patient every time is our priority.



Verify Test to be Performed:

- Ensuring patient safety is our highest priority here and how we deliver Excellent care. We will always verify tests and procedures to be performed.
- Verifying tests and procedures is an important part of our care. We need to ensure we provide our patients with the safest care possible.
- We will always take time to describe the test/procedure you will be having today, its purpose and side effects and concerns we want you to pay attention to.
- Can I count on you to speak up if you have any questions or concerns?

Handwashing

- Ensuring patient safety is our highest priority here and how we deliver Excellent care. We will always wash our hands before and after caring for you.
- I am going to wash my hands now to keep you safe.
- I am going to gel my hands now to keep you safe.

Overall, enlist the patient. If at any time we are not always, we are counting in them to tell us.

VALIDATE CARE EXPERIENCES WITH PATIENTS

Asking patients about their experience of care during Rounding or other encounters is important to 1. Make certain we are meeting/exceeding their expectations and 2. To ensure your staff, physicians, and providers are following service/care expectations. Here are some sample questions

1. Tell me how we are keeping our patients safe.
2. What have you seen as excellence in patient safety?
3. What do you believe we could do better with communicating steps taken to keep you and our patients safe?
4. At any point during your visit, what safety concerns did you have?

Asking these questions will identify individual opportunities to address patient concerns, as well as trends to guide your improvement efforts.

