

how to TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR HEALTHCARE

Patients Can Partner With Their Healthcare Providers To Ensure a Safe Hospital Experience

Patient safety at Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital is the top priority of every member of our staff, each physician and healthcare professional who practices here, and our Service League of volunteers. It is part of the Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System's commitment to quality care. "Think about the complexity involved in serving hundreds of people each day as inpatients, outpatients and those treated in the emergency room and you can begin to understand the diligence required to keep everything in perfect running order," says President/CEO Sam Downing. From medications and surgical procedures to obstacle-free walkways and secure, accurate records, patient safety is an all-encompassing endeavor.

Patients can play an important role in ensuring a safe experience while in the hospital. By following these guidelines, patients can actively participate in their healthcare:

1. Keep a list of your current medications, how much and how often you take them and what they are for.
2. Be certain to inform your doctors and nurses if you have any allergies and/or if there are some medications you do not like to take.
3. Be sure to tell your doctors and nurses about any conditions you have that might affect their decisions about your care.
4. You have the right and responsibility to have all your questions answered before you authorize any medical care.
5. If you have an Advanced Directive be sure your doctor has a copy of it.

Because patient safety is so important, Salinas Valley Memorial is particularly proud of being named in

an independent national research study as a recipient of the Distinguished Hospital Award for Patient Safety, according to HealthGrades, an independent healthcare ratings company. This distinction ranks Salinas Valley Memorial among the top five percent nationally for patient safety outcomes. Salinas Valley Memorial is one of only 16 hospitals in California to receive this recognition this year, and one of only three California hospitals to receive it three years in a row.

"Patients simply expect their healthcare to be safe," said Sam Downing, President/CEO of Salinas Valley Memorial. "The findings of this national research are a testimony to the skill and dedication of our patient care teams, and serve as peace of mind for the patients who walk through our doors every day."

In its Third Annual Patient Safety in American Hospitals Study, HealthGrades independently analyzed nearly 40 million patient records from fiscal years 2002 to 2004 using 13 patient safety indicators developed by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The patient records were obtained directly from the U.S. government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. More than 5,100 teaching and non-teaching hospitals were analyzed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This year, a total of 238 hospitals received the prestigious award. This translates into the top five percent nationally for patient safety outcomes, when all U.S. hospitals are considered.

"Everyone has responsibility for patient safety," says Diana Fourney, Senior Administrative Director Quality & Risk Management for Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System. "As a

patient is admitted to the hospital, we screen him or her for various types of safety risks and then do everything necessary to ensure safety." A patient at risk for falls is protected with an alarm that alerts a nurse when he or she gets out of bed. When a patient must remain in bed and may be at risk of skin irritations and infection, there is a special bed that eliminates pressure points on the body, and the patient is moved and turned frequently. These examples offer only a glimpse into the seriousness and detail with which the safety of each patient is protected.

Patient safety efforts at Salinas Valley Memorial have led to the implementation of innovations such as automated pumps that precisely regulate the flow of medications and other fluids intravenously; retractable scalpels and syringes to prevent needle sticks for patients and healthcare professionals; and rigorous, ongoing training programs for hospital staff. "Our safety program is the result of thousands of staff hours, meticulously developed procedures and around-the-clock monitoring," says Bev Ranzenberger, RN, Senior Vice President/Operations.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. "We actively encourage comments from our patients on how safe they felt in the hospital and welcome suggestions for improvement," says President/CEO Sam Downing. "Employees, medical staff, volunteers and members of our Board of Directors are also invited to share ideas and concerns at any time."

With the dedication, commitment of resources and ongoing participation of each member of the healthcare team, Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital will continue to provide a safe and healing environment for our patients. ■



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