

Your Hospital Survival Guide

5 things to do when you check-in

In addition to taking care of financial and insurance questions, make sure you take these steps at your hospital check-in:



1 Hand over your drug list. Make a list of all the drugs and supplements you take before you get to the hospital, and then make sure you give it to the hospital staff when you check in. Give a copy to a person who's in charge on your floor, too.

2 Introduce your hospital helper. Assign a friend or family member to act as your advocate while you are in the hospital, and make sure someone in authority has his or her contact information, including home and cell phone numbers and e-mail address.

3 Ask about a patient rep. Many hospitals have someone on staff whose sole job it is to help patients who have problems or questions. Find out the person's name and contact information.

4 Find out who's in charge. The admitting doctor usually coordinates care but might not always be around or reachable. Some hospitals now use hospitalists, doctors who oversee a patient's care while he or she is in the hospital. If your hospital doesn't, ask who you should contact and how.

5 Check your wristband. Look for misspelled names and missing information, such as drug allergies. Hospital staff should check the band each time they give you a drug, take a blood sample, or perform a test. If they don't, mention your name and your allergies.

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