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Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at Alan Benoy Insurance Services

Reduce Medical Mistakes

Take an active role in your care

Patient safety is one of today's most pressing health care challenges. Improving health care quality and reducing medical mistakes are of serious concern to doctors, but patients need to do their part, too.

Your role

The most important thing you can do to improve your health care is to take an active role in your care. You can enhance the quality, safety and effectiveness of your health care by asking questions about your care, diagnosis, treatment and any medications prescribed to you.

The answers you get can help you make better health care decisions, receive a higher level of care, reduce medical mistakes and feel better about your overall care.

Tips to get started

These suggestions can help you play an active role in your care during your next doctor visit:

- Don't be afraid to talk to your doctor and ask questions. Make sure he or she understands your symptoms and concerns, and that you understand his or her instructions.

- Write down any concerns or questions you have prior to the appointment.
- Keep a list of all your current medications, including prescription, over-the-counter and vitamins.
- Take notes during the appointment.
- Bring a family member with you.
- Make sure your doctor knows about any allergies to medicines you have.
- Be involved in every decision about your care and treatment.

Basic questions

During your appointment, be sure you understand everything your doctor tells you. These questions can help you get started:

- What is the test or procedure for?
- How many times have you done this procedure?
- When will I get the results?

(If you don't get the results, do not assume it means the results are fine. Follow up by phone.)

- Why do I need this treatment or prescription?
- Are there any alternatives?
- What are the possible complications?
- Which hospital is best for my needs?
- How do you spell the name of that drug?
- Are there any side effects?
- Will this medicine interact with medicines I'm already taking?



Did You Know...?

Medical errors cause tens of thousands of deaths each year. You can help avoid errors for you and your family by getting more involved in your own health care.