

*Ukiah Valley
Medical Center*



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Important Steps for Better Health Care

What can you do to get the best quality health care possible?

Take five.

No, that doesn't mean relax (although that's good for you too). It means taking five steps toward becoming a better advocate for your health.

People who are more involved in their care tend to get better results according to a recent report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Being an involved patient can also help you avoid problems such as dangerous drug interactions.

So, consider taking these steps:

1. Speak up. Ask your doctor any questions you have about symptoms, medicines, tests or treatments.

You should continue asking your doctor questions until you fully understand the tests or treatment options they are recommending.

2. Monitor your medications. Prescribed drugs can be dangerous when combined with certain other drugs, foods, herbal remedies or over-the-counter medicines.

To guard against such problems, show your doctor a list of all the medicines, vitamins and herbal products you use. Plus, when you pick up a new medicine at the pharmacy, check the label and ask the pharmacist to confirm it's the correct drug.

3. Get results. If your doctor orders medical tests, be sure you learn the findings and what they mean to your health.

Call if you don't hear back from your doctor or the lab when expected. Don't assume results are fine if you don't hear anything.

4. Be sure. If your physician recommends a particular medicine or surgical procedure, make sure you know why.

Ask if you have other options. What are the benefits or drawbacks of the treatment? Are there risks?

If you go through with a treatment, make sure everyone taking care of you knows important facts about your health, such as any allergies or sensitivities you have to medicines.

5. Follow up. Care doesn't end once you leave a doctor's office or the hospital. Call your doctor if:
 - Symptoms get worse.
 - Medicines cause side effects.
 - You develop complications recovering from a procedure.

In addition, Ukiah Valley Medical Center (UVMC) recently launched a new patient safety video on its website: www.uvmc.org. The new 5-minute video focuses on patient safety while in the hospital.

"We are delighted to communicate our commitment to patient safety through this very easy to understand, yet highly effective tool on how patients can keep themselves safe while in the hospital," said UVMC President and CEO Mark E. LaRose.

The video reviews several key tips that patients and their families should keep in mind before coming to the hospital and questions to ask their caregivers during a hospital stay. "The 5-minute program is a very engaging tool that can help remind patients to give important information to their caregivers as well as get information about their care," said LaRose. "The program also provides simple tips for a safer hospital stay."

Tips on the video include openly sharing health history including medication taken, mentioning every operation that a patient has undergone, and listing any allergies a patient may have. The video also recommends patients to ask about the care they're receiving and ask detailed questions about treatment options. Other items on the video include a reminder to wash hands frequently and to ask about medication a patient is given during a hospital stay.

"We want to give every tool we can to our patients and their families so they have the best hospital experience possible," said Dee Patrick, RN, UVMC's Director of Quality and Risk Management. "This video is just one of several programs we've adopted to demonstrate our commitment to patient safety," said Patrick.

To view the new video, simply log onto the hospital's website at: www.uvmc.org then click the button titled "We care about your safety."

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Ukiah Valley Medical Center is part of Adventist Health, a not-for-profit, faith-based health system operating in California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. Founded on the Seventh-day Adventist heritage of Christian health care, Adventist Health is comprised of 20 hospitals with more than 3,100 beds, 18,800 employees, numerous clinics and outpatient facilities, 16 home care agencies and three joint-venture retirement centers. For more information, visit www.uvmc.org or www.adventisthealth.org.