



Guide for health workers

We are safety! - Together, we take responsibility

10 Rules for health workers not to forget safety *in health services suggestions*

1. Taking care of one's hands

This is necessary to prevent infections (WHO 2006). Hands must be washed before and after any contact with the patient, even if wearing gloves. Jewellery must be removed, along with any other items of hand care, i.e., nail polish, fake nails.

2. Knowing the patient

You should introduce yourself to any new patient and make sure you know who they are. You should always check patients' identity when preparing them for surgery and blood transfusions. Ask for a verbal statement from the patients themselves if possible.

Patients might fail to communicate certain relevant details about their health, to avoid this affecting your assessing their condition, you should encourage them to fill out a questionnaire, this will give you a better understanding as to their actual medical condition and allow you to make proper assessments.

You should ask them to give information about:

- habits and allergies (medicines, food, materials, metals...)
- medicines, homeopathic and herbal remedies taken
- relatives that are allowed to have information about them, also in case of emergencies
- if patient is pregnant (in radiology)

You should make sure you know the patients; checking their needs, their conditions and other particulars. If you feel uncertain and unsure about the patients' mental balance, you should seek to assess their state of mental health and the potential suicidal risk, should there be one, by conducting an interview (see Ministerial recommendation). You can request the presence of a translator, or a cultural mediatory should one be required.

Inform the patients about what they should wear in the hospital and at home (slippers, no belts), this will help eliminate the risk of accidents. Tell the patients how and where they can store their special devices (dentures, prosthesis, hearing aids).

3. Surgery

Always check with the patient where the exact location on the body is to be prepared for surgery. Inform patients of pre and post operative instructions to be followed. Use pre-operation check lists to check medicines, aids, and anesthesia equipment. Counting the haemostatic forceps, sponges and all instruments before and after surgery. Check Ministerial recommendations about this.

4. Collaborating with your supervisor

Make sure that any communication between health workers and operative units are efficient and carried out using great attention. Promote cooperation between anyone who comes in contact with the patient. Supervise the actions of health workers and their students, volunteers, family members and patients, in order to ensure there is synergy between them. Identify and share clinical pathways with the help of protocols and guidelines.

5. Communicating between staff members

Avoid using verbal instruction unless it is necessary, and always check that your instructions have been well understood. Communications among staff members

should be written down, as often as possible They should also be checked to make sure they are comprehensible.

Fill out medical records and other communicative tools carefully (it is encouraged that they are pre-coded and in a computerized format).

6. Taking care of oneself

You should prevent all the errors and risk associated with habits, distractions, boredom, rage, anxiety, fear, hastiness , tiredness. You should face these problems and try to solve them in the appropriate way.

You should wear your uniform in places where required by protocols.

7. Checking the environment

Check the presence of possible barriers and conditions, in the surroundings that prevent the patients from moving freely in their space. Check the positions and the risks connected to lighting (especially the position of the lights during the night, slippery floors). Check all of the instruments are functioning properly. Make sure medical devices function and are maintained well. Ascertain the alarm system is engaged.

8. Teach family members and volunteers

Make sure that family members and volunteers have been instructed on how to help the patient and informed of risk prevention measures to adopt.

9. Report near misses & adverse events

Collaborate in safety promotion activities, to ensure better safety measures and to learn from everyday experiences. It's very important to analyze what happened, trying to identify the causes that provoked them, what went wrong and the areas where one should act in order to prevent incidents and near misses. Thus, it's important to participate in audit analysis and to collaborate when analyzing adverse events.

10. Education

Keep your competences updated, participate in continuous education initiatives, check websites and documentation proposed by your professional association & scientific societies.

Tools and useful publications are available on the Ministry of Health website. Share publications with other members of your staff and students.