

Remember,
**It's OK to
Speak Up**

About Medication Mix-Ups:

Safety steps are followed each time a patient gets a medicine in the hospital. Still, it's important for you to help, too — there is no such thing as “too safe” for your loved one!

Risk Factors:

Patients tend to get several medications in the hospital. Many look alike and their names sound alike. Nurses can be distracted, especially when others talk or interrupt them while giving a medication.



Use this Checklist to

Help Prevent Medication Mix-Ups

- ✓ **Make sure your loved one's allergies and any bad experiences with medicines in the past are included on the medical record — and highlighted in a bold way.**
- ✓ **Before a nurse ever gives a medicine, ask:**
 - What is the medicine you're planning to give? (If an IV bag is used, read the label to double check it's the right medicine.)
 - What is it for?
 - What is the dose?
 - Who prescribed it?
 - Say: “Let’s confirm that it's for (your loved one's name).”
 - For medicines in an IV bag, ask: “What time do you think this bag will run out?” *If the bag empties completely, get a nurse, especially if you see blood creeping up the IV tube.*
- ✓ **Don't talk to nurses when they give medicines — or distract them.**
 - However, speak up immediately if you sense a mistake is being made. (For example, wrong patient, wrong medicine, wrong time, wrong dose, wrong way.)
- ✓ **Research the pros and cons of every drug prescribed** for your loved one. Make notes about the potential side effects and interactions. Buy a drug guide or look on the Internet. If you have any concerns, bring them up immediately with the attending doctor.
- ✓ **Record every time your loved one gets a medicine.**
 - If your loved one is 65 or older, check the Beers List, too. (It has info about medications considered unsafe or “iffy” for seniors.)



Families for Patient Safety
CampaignZERO.org



Get a Nurse if:

You see — or your loved one tells you about — signs of bad reactions to medications:

Diarrhea

Stomach cramps

Coughing

Wheezing

Difficulty breathing

Difficulty swallowing

Swelling face

Swelling/itchy eyes

Rash or hives

Confusion, anxiety, restlessness

Light-headedness, dizziness

Fainting

Swelling in neck

Bluish lips

Cool, clammy skin

Chest pain

Unusual sweating

Note: *It's OK to simply trust your gut.* You know your loved one best. Every medication — or combination — could affect your loved one in a way that's not expected.

Always get a nurse if you have any worries about anything that "just doesn't seem right."

Notes:

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