

EMPOWERED PATIENT[®]

“Ten Things Patients Should Know” Series

GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED IN THE HOSPITAL

1. **THE BEDSIDE NURSE** is the first resource for patients and advocates. Most issues can be resolved by communicating with your bedside nurse.
2. **THE CHARGE NURSE** makes patient assignments and is the supervisor of the nurses on a particular shift. The charge nurse is the next “go-to” person for both patients and bedside nurses if a problem arises.
3. **PATIENT RELATIONS** staff members are available during business hours to assist with hospital rules and policies and can direct patients to resources for help with specific concerns.
4. **SOCIAL SERVICES** staff members assist patients in communicating with the staff, schedule family meetings and provide support to patients and advocates.
5. **CASE MANAGER/ DISCHARGE PLANNER** is a specially trained registered nurse or social worker who helps coordinate the plan of care and the patient’s discharge needs.
6. **NURSE MANAGER OR NURSE SUPERVISOR** is the most senior nursing staff member or administrator for a particular hospital unit. The nurse manager is the next person to contact after the charge nurse.
7. **ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR HOSPITALIST** is a senior doctor who is ultimately responsible for the care of a patient. This physician is higher up the chain of command than both the residents and the chief resident.
8. **DEPARTMENT HEADS** are supervisors who oversee the doctors working in a particular department such as pediatrics, orthopedics or surgery. If you have a problem with your attending physician, ask to consult with the department head.
9. **ADMINISTRATOR ON CALL** is a hospital executive (nurse, physician or non-medical administrator) who responds to serious emergencies that arise after regular business hours.
10. **THE RAPID RESPONSE TEAM (RRT)** is a group of staff members with training in critical care medicine who respond immediately to the patient’s bedside at the first sign of a serious decline. Calling the RRT is like dialing 911 while in the hospital.