

# Health Literacy Tips for Patients

**You are the centre of your healthcare team.** Below are some ways you can help prevent errors with your medicines:

## 1. Talk with your health care team:

Give your doctors, pharmacists and other caregivers a list of your medicines. This list should have your:

- prescriptions
- over-the-counter medicines (for example, aspirin)
- vitamins, herbs, and supplements

## 2. Tell your doctor:

- if you have any drug allergies
- how much alcohol you drink
- if you use any illegal drugs

## 3. In the hospital or clinic:

Make sure your doctors and nurses check your wristband and ask your name before giving you medicine.

## 4. Speak up if:

- you think you are about to get the wrong medicine
- you don't get your medicine on time
- you don't feel well after taking a medicine or if you think you are having a reaction
- the IV pump beeps or alarms

*Adapted from Fox Chase Speak Up pamphlet series*

For more information on health literacy, visit the Patient & Family Library in your hospital:

<b>Toronto General</b>	Ground Floor, Eaton Lobby
<b>Toronto Western</b>	1st Floor, West Wing
<b>Princess Margaret</b>	Main Floor, Atrium



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**You are the centre of your healthcare team.** Take part in all decisions about your treatment and pay attention to the care you get. Below are some ways you can do this:

## 1. Ask...

- About any medicines you are about to get. If you don't recognize the medicine, double check that it is the right one for you.
- If you're getting the right test or treatment and how safe it is.
- If you think the nurse or doctor has you confused with another patient.
- A family member or friend to be your advocate or support person.
- If you have any questions or concerns. If you still don't understand, ask again.

## 2. Care at Home and Follow-up

- Make sure you know how to work any equipment that you will need to use at home. Ask your doctor or nurse for written instructions.
- Before you leave the hospital or other health care centre, ask about follow-up care. Make sure that you understand what you are told to do at home.

## 3. Records of Care

- Keep copies of your medical records and test results.
- Make sure you know who will be taking care of you at different points in your care.

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