

Making the Most of Your Hospital Stays

BY DR. DAVIDICUS WONG

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PREPARING FOR YOUR HOSPITAL VISIT

1. Always wear clean underwear but don't count on it staying clean if you're surprised by an accident.
2. Don't miss an opportunity to use a washroom.
3. Remember to wash your hands!

WHAT TO PACK

ESSENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION

1. **Your Medical History:** A one-page summary should include: allergies, chronic conditions, past illnesses and surgery, and family medical history
2. **Your Medications:** drug name, dose, directions and reason for taking it. For example:
 - o Brand name: Tylenol
 - o Generic name: Acetaminophen
 - o Dose: 325 mg
 - o Directions: one tablet twice daily
 - o Reason: for knee pain
3. **Your Preferences:** An [Advance Directive](#) is a statement of what kind of medical care you would want in the event that you are unable to make your own decisions.

What procedures do you want?

What procedures do you refuse?

Under what conditions?

Who do you choose to make decisions for you?

For example:

- You may not wish to have CPR (chest compressions, assisted breathing, a tube down your throat, electric paddles on the chest) if you had an irreversible, terminal condition with no hope for a return to an acceptable quality of life (by your standards).
- You may not wish to be kept alive on machines if you were in a persistent coma with no hope of recovery

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- Always plan in advance.
- Review with your family doctor your overall health and consider completing or updating a **MOST** form
- Talk it over with your family and friends (to avoid difficult family conflicts).
- Choose someone you trust to respect your wishes.
- Inform your doctor.
- Put it in writing.

Look up [My Voice: Advance Care Planning Guide](#) for more tips!

TIPS

WHAT ELSE TO PACK COMFORT ITEMS

Ear plugs, music, reading, word puzzles, eye mask for sleeping, toothbrush and paste, warm socks, non-slip slippers, a sweater.

TO KEEP YOU ORIENTED

A calendar, a quiet inexpensive clock

FOR COMMUNICATION

A pad of paper, pens, your glasses, hearing aid and teeth.

WHAT NOT TO PACK

DO NOT BRING

Expensive jewelry, watches, electronics, wallets, purses, credit cards, your nicest clothes and shoes, and other prized possessions.

NO PERFUME OR COLOGNE

Your neighbours may have allergies and respiratory problems



MEDICAL ORDER FOR SCOPE OF TREATMENT (MOST) FORM

- [Blank MOST form](#)
- [A patient's pamphlet on the MOST form](#)

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3 KEYS TO A BETTER HOSPITAL VISIT

1. Stay in control (and informed)

Four things you need to know about every test, procedure and treatment:

- The purpose or reason
- Common side effects or risks
- Serious side effects or risks
- Alternatives (e.g. other treatments)

2. Know your team

- Ask for each person's name and role (e.g. nurse, respiratory technician, dietician, physiotherapist, occupational therapist) or specialty (e.g. family physician, hospitalist, surgeon, internist)
- Ask who is your attending or most responsible physician

3. Set up a channel of communication

Prepare your list of questions.

Find out when your attending doctor will visit.

Key questions:

- What is the plan?
- The working diagnosis?
- The schedule of tests or procedures?
- The results of tests?
- The expected day of discharge?

This information could be shared on a WHITE BOARD in your room or a large pad of paper at your bedside.

Make sure your family doctor knows you are in hospital and that hospital reports are sent to the office. Your doctor can provide important medical information to your hospital care team.



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