THE CARE PARTNER PROJECT

ABOUT MEDICATION MISTAKES:

Safety steps are followed each time a patient gets a medication in the hospital. Even so, 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 some names sound alike. Nurses can be distracted, especially when others talk or interrupt them while giving a medication.

TRUST YOUR GUT:

You know your loved one best. Every medication (or combination of meds) could affect your loved one in a way that's not expected.

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

HOW TO HELP

PREVENT MEDICATION MISTAKES:

☐ **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.

☐ **Research the pros and cons of every drug prescribed** for your loved one. Make notes about the potential side effects and interactions at ***MedlinePlus.*** If you have any concerns, bring them up immediately with the attending doctor or nurse.

☐ **Before a nurse ever gives a medicine, ask:**

- What is the medicine you're planning to give?
- 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 and no one responds to the alarm beep in a few minutes, it's okay to get a nurse.

☐ **Don't talk to or distract nurses** when they are giving medicines.

However, speak up immediately if you sense a mistake is being made. For example, wrong patient, wrong medicine, wrong time, wrong dose, or wrong way.

☐ **Record every time** your loved one gets a medicine.

☐ **If your loved one is 65 or older,** check the ***Beers List,*** too. For children, check the ***Kids' List.*** Both have info about medications considered potentially unsafe or "iffy" for these age groups.

GET A NURSE IF:

Your loved one shows signs of (or complains about) the following:

- 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.

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