



Healthcare information you can trust

Maine Health Management Coalition

How do I get quality care? Ask. Learn. Decide.

Avoid Medical Mistakes in the Hospital

Ask: How do I choose a hospital working hard to prevent mistakes?

Learn: When you need to use a hospital and it's not an emergency, you can choose a hospital likely to provide safe, high quality care. Find out about hospital efforts to prevent common medical mistakes that cause patient injury and death. Ask your doctor

- Is preventing medical mistakes a hospital priority? Do leaders and caregivers admit when mistakes happen? Do they take steps and set up systems to prevent the same mistakes from happening again?
- Are patients asked to speak up about their medicines and their care to help prevent mistakes?
- Does the hospital double-check all medicines when a pharmacist is on duty and when a pharmacist is not on duty?
- What is the hospital doing to prevent infections, especially in surgical patients and patients coming in with pneumonia?

Use the MHMC web site:

To find data about Maine hospital safety measures - www.mhmc.info/hospitals

To get 5 tips to avoid mistakes from a Maine hospital safety expert - www.mhmc.info/safety

To learn what national experts recommend - www.mhmc.info/experts

Ask: Is the hospital an active member of the national campaign to save 100,000 lives?

Learn: 100,000 is the estimated number of people killed by medical mistakes each year in U.S. hospitals. The 100,000 Lives Campaign, sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Boston, works to prevent 6 types of serious medical mistakes. Ask your hospital about what they do and how well they're doing with these 6 actions:

- Treat patients who come in with heart attacks according to national guidelines
- Prevent central line infections
- Prevent medication mistakes
- Use a Rapid Response Team for patients who get suddenly worse
- Prevent infections after surgery
- Prevent pneumonia in patients on ventilators

To get these 6 fact sheets from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, go to:
www.mhmc.info/facts

Decide: Am I willing to get information and talk to my doctor about medical mistakes before I use a hospital? Am I confident that the hospital will work hard to prevent medical mistakes in my care? Will the hospital encourage me or someone close to me to speak up about my care to help prevent mistakes?