

# 2008 Hospital National Patient Safety Goals

The purpose of The Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals is to promote specific improvements in patient safety. The goals highlight problematic areas in health care and describe evidence and expert-based consensus to solutions to these problems.

## Identify patients correctly

Use at least two ways to identify patients. For example, use the patient's name and date of birth. This is done to make sure that each patient gets the medicine and treatment meant for them.

## Improve staff communication

Read back spoken or phone orders to the person who gave the order.

Create a list of abbreviations and symbols that are not to be used.

Quickly get important test results to the right staff person.

Create steps for staff to follow when sending patients to the next caregiver. The steps should help staff tell about the patient's care. Make sure there is time to ask and answer questions.

## Use medicines safely

Have on hand a small supply of the medicines that are used in the hospital.

Create a list of medicines with names that look alike or sound alike. Update the list every year.

Label all medicines that are not already labeled. For example, medicines in syringes, cups and basins.

Take extra care with patients who take medicines to thin their blood.

## Help patients to be involved in their care

Tell each patient and their family how to report their complaints about safety.

## Prevent infection

Use the hand cleaning guidelines from the World Health Organization or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Report death or injury to patients from infections that happen in hospitals.

## Check patient medicines

Find out what medicines each patient is taking. Make sure that it is OK for the patient to take any new medicines with their current medicines.

Give a list of the patient's medicines to the patient's next caregiver. Give this same list to the patient before they leave the hospital.

## Prevent patients from falling

Find out which patients are most likely to fall. For example, is the patient taking any medicines that might make them weak, dizzy or sleepy. Take action to prevent falls for these patients.

## Identify patient safety risks

Find out which patients are most likely to try to kill themselves.

## Prevent errors in surgery

Create steps for staff to follow so that all documents needed for surgery are on hand before surgery starts.

Mark the part of the body where the surgery will be done. Involve the patient in doing this.

## Watch patients closely for changes in their health and respond quickly if they need help

Create ways to get help from specially trained staff when a patient's health appears to get worse.