

# SAFETY FIRST!

## **The Resident's Role in Patient Safety**

Residents have an important role to play in their health care and their involvement and participation in their care should be encouraged.

Throughout the entire continuum of care, there are many opportunities for residents to be involved in decisions about their care. Through an active dialogue between resident and provider, residents can be equipped with information to manage their condition, suggest a change in care plan and identify potential or actual adverse event.

This involvement is dependent on health care providers' encouragement and support of as more active and involved resident/family. Residents are half of the equation in patient safety. The way the health care providers interact with a resident can encourage them to be active in their health care decisions, and residents who are involved in the decision process have better outcomes than passive residents. The degree of resident involvement varies depending on the extent to which the residents feel willing and able to play a more active part. Clearly, resident safety is inextricably linked with resident centred care approach to care. Embracing residents as full partners in the health care team will ensure the delivery of safe, effective, quality care.

### **What residents' roles are in patient/resident safety?**

Residents/families have the important role of asking questions so that they can try to understand as much as they can about the procedure, treatment, diagnosis, and medication they will receive. Residents should not be afraid to ask questions and if they do not understand something, they should be encouraged to ask again or ask another member of the health care team until all questions or concerns have been addressed.

For example, residents can ask their providers:

**What** is this medication and what is it for?

**Why** do I need this medication?

**Who** prescribed this medication?

**When** and how often do I take this medication?

**Where** will I receive this medication? Will I receive it orally, through injection or through intravenous?

**How** will it affect me; what are the side effects and how will I feel after the medication is administered?

Residents can also play a role in ensuring that all of the providers involved in their care have important and consistent information about them. Communication barriers can develop when information is not exchanged between resident and all of their health care providers. Since there can be many different people involved in a resident's care, it is important for residents to talk to all their providers to help ensure that the right information is being provided at the right time to the right people. The resident's role in patient safety and their involvement in their own care can be enhanced through the encouragement from their health care providers.