

Keeping Our Patients Safe

Reconciling Medications

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The magnetized Vial of Life contains critical information such as, a list current medications, medical conditions and emergency contacts.

Whenever the paramedics are called, or when a person is admitted to a hospital, one of the challenges facing them, their families and the medical workers is the need to correctly — and immediately — communicate a list of current medications. This may present a problem when any information is missing: the patient's name, dosage, frequency of dosage and the reason for the medication.

It is a fact that patients are often inundated with information when given the initial medication, and there is further confusion when substitutions are made. It is difficult to sort through this accumulation of information, which may pave the way for serious misinformation and problems.

In 2005, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations implemented a National Patient Safety Goal addressing the need to communicate all medications: from patients to hospital workers on admission to the hospital, and from hospital workers to patients on discharge. Eisenhower Medical Center proactively began using standardized patient and family education materials. Accessing a new computerized program, staff can now provide important, concise, yet comprehensive, information on the many topics patients and families need when being discharged from the hospital.

Another way Eisenhower is keeping patients safe is through the Vial of Life.

A grassroots initiative, often promoted by local fire and police departments, Vial of Life provides life saving information right when you need it most — in a life-threatening emergency. Attached magnetically to your refrigerator, where emergency personnel know to look, the Vial of Life contains critical information such as, what medications you use, what medical conditions you have, any allergies you may have, your normal blood pressure, and emergency contacts to support you.

Simply put, the Vial of Life speaks for you when you can't. In the event of an emergency, paramedics have immediate access to critical health care information allowing them to provide the best, immediate and appropriate emergency medical treatment.

In addition, the Vial of Life can provide vital patient information and medications during the hospital admission process. Simply give the Vial of Life to hospital admitting staff at the time of admission. Information contained in the Vial of Life is significant to your health and critical to your care. You might also use the Vial of Life packet for your advance directives or important medical test, labs, or reports. Remember, providing medical information and a medication list, in any clear and accurate format, is helpful.

It is Eisenhower Medical Center's goal to improve patient safety and continue to be proactive in its efforts to provide patients and their families, as well as hospital personnel, with the tools for optimum communication and care.

Protect yourself! For a FREE Vial of Life, call Eisenhower's Center for Healthy Living: 760-568-1234.

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