

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

YOUR ROLE IN MEDICATION SAFETY

There has been much reported lately about patient safety and medical errors, and in particular medication errors. A medication error can be the correct medication, but one that is taken in the wrong amount or at the wrong time, or it can be the wrong medication.

Here at (INSERT HOSPITAL NAME) we are working to assure that a medication error does not occur. We ask you to be our partner in helping prevent medication errors from occurring in our hospital. Some tips to help you help us be sure you receive the correct medication include:

- Share with your doctor a list of all your current medications, vitamins, herbs and supplements.
- Make sure your doctor or nurse checks your wristband and asks your name before giving you medicine.
- Ask your doctor or nurse how a new medicine will help. Ask for written information about it.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about possible side effects of your medicine.
- Don't be afraid to tell the doctor or nurse or pharmacist if you think you are getting the wrong medicine or if the medicine looks different than what you are used to taking.
- Before you leave the hospital or clinic, make sure you understand all of the instructions for the medicines you will need to keep taking. Ask if you should continue to take your previous medicines.

An important part of ensuring that you get the right medication in the right amount at the right time is a process called "medication reconciliation." Reconciling medications helps verify that an accurate, up to date medication list is developed for patients at admission. That list is then compared to the physician's admission orders. Differences in types of medicine or amount of medicine are brought to the attention of the physician and, as appropriate, your doctor makes changes to the orders. Any resulting changes in orders are documented in your medical record. The process is designed to promote communication among your caregivers. Medication reconciliation is important at discharge, too. Make sure you know what new medications you are supposed to take, and if you are to continue the medications you were taking before your admission to the hospital.

Reducing medical errors is a top priority for (INSERT NAME OF HOSPITAL) and other hospitals across Nebraska. Recently, (INSERT NAME OF HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE) attended a conference on medication reconciliation sponsored by the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the Nebraska Hospital Association. This conference provided the latest information and techniques for eliminating medical errors through effective medication reconciliation procedures.