

SAFETY CHECKUP

Campaign Urges Patients To Speak Up For Safer Surgery

(NAPSA)—There are five questions every patient should ask before surgery—and knowing the answers to these questions could save your life.

Government reports show surgical infections and medical errors occur at alarming rates in hospitals across the U.S. A new educational initiative called the Smarter Patient Campaign is encouraging patients to become more actively involved in the decisions that impact the safety of their health care. The campaign is arming patients with critical questions to ask before surgery and with resources to get accurate health information.

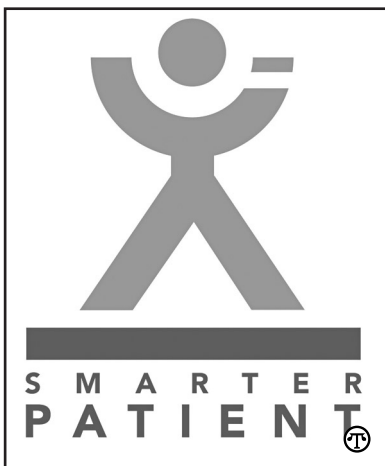
“More informed patients are more positive patients and have better outcomes,” said Sheila Allen, a registered nurse and spokesperson for the Smarter Patient Campaign. “Unfortunately, many patients do not get the information they need. The Smarter Patient Campaign is a great way to encourage patients to become active partners in their medical care, right alongside their doctor and nurse.”

Here are the questions every patient should ask before surgery:

1. Are There Other Treatment Options for My Condition? Your surgeon should be able to tell you what all of your treatment options are, and why he or she is recommending a certain procedure.

2. Will a Registered Nurse (RN) Be Present in the OR During My Surgery? The role of a registered professional nurse in the operating room is an important part of health care.

3. Will Reprocessed Disposable Instruments Be Used In My Surgery? Some hospitals reprocess and reuse disposable instruments on multiple patients,



A new campaign helps empower patients to ask critical questions before surgery.

even though they were made for use on one patient only. Every patient has the right to insist that only new instruments are used during their surgery. Patients can download a patient declaration form to take to their doctor at www.smarterpatient.com.

4. Am I Receiving the Right Medication? Make sure your physician knows about all of the medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter drugs, herbs and supplements.

5. How Will The Surgeon Verify He or She is Performing the Right Surgery On the Right Place On My Body? Wrong-site surgery accounts for nearly one-fifth of undesirable events in the hospital setting. Ask the operating surgeon to mark the area that is to be operated upon on the day of surgery.

Find out more information about these critical questions, preparing for surgery, choosing a surgeon and what to expect during recovery by visiting www.smarterpatient.com.