

10 tips for safer health care

A new booklet and brochure entitled “*10 tips for safer health care: what everyone needs to know*” has been developed by the Australian Council for Safety & Quality in Health Care and is being distributed to assist consumers to become more actively involved in their health care. How and why things can go wrong is explained together with ways people can work in partnership with their health care professionals to get the best possible care.

Health care is becoming more complicated every day. Even a small oversight in one area can have a big flow-on effect in another area. Things may go wrong, mistakes and accidents may happen – and sometimes things don’t work out as expected and harm results from our health care.

Research has found that this happens in about 1 in 10 hospital admissions before, during or after a hospital stay. The results can be relatively minor and easily fixed, or they can be more serious.

Systems in health care need to be improved so that problems are less likely to occur in the first place. If problems do happen, they need to be noticed quickly and fixed before they cause harm to patients. When things do go wrong, it is important that health care services find out exactly what happened and actively look for ways to stop it happening again. They should also let the patient and their carers know what happened and what will be done about it.

No single person or group can improve health care systems on their own. Improving safety in health care is not the business of only doctors, nurses or other health care professionals. Everyone has a part to play – from governments who make high level decisions to patients receiving care.

The Australian Health Ministers have set distribution of the “*10 tips for safer health care: what everyone needs to know*” to all public hospital admitted patients as one of several major national targets for safety & quality in the next eighteen months.

The *10 tips* encourage people to talk to their health professional and suggest questions to ask. The information also outlines what to expect from health professionals, lists sources of further information and processes to use if people are concerned about their health care.

Queensland Health adapted a pamphlet from the “*10 tips for safer health care: what everyone needs to know*” booklet produced by the Australian Council for Safety & Quality in Health Care. The pamphlet will be given to each admitted patient. The complete booklet and 21 translations of the pamphlet and booklet will be available in hard copy or via the internet site: www.health.qld.gov.au/quality/publications.asp.

Booklets are available in the following languages:

- Arabic
- Cantonese
- Croatian
- English
- Filipino
- German
- Greek
- Hindi
- Italian
- Macedonian
- Mandarin
- Polish
- Serbian
- Spanish
- Turkish
- Vietnamese

Pamphlets are available for:

- Aboriginal
- Bosnian
- Dutch
- English
- Hmong
- Laoatian
- Samoan
- Torres Strait Creole

Should you require further information, please visit the above web address to contact the Queensland Health Safety & Quality Strategy Team.