How are you a #BravePatient?
Let us know!

When healthcare professionals, patients and family members courageously engage with each other as partners, healthcare interactions are more constructive, experiences are more positive and outcomes improve. Below are some suggestions of how patients and family members can courageously engage in their own healthcare:

50 Ways to be a #BravePatient

1. Be your own quality and safety officer! Ask your caregivers if they have washed their hands.

2. Ask for care instructions to be provided to you in writing.


4. Encourage your loved ones to document their end-of-life care preferences.

5. Ask to see your medical record.

6. If you don’t understand what you read in your medical record, ask questions until you do.

7. Ask to contribute to your medical record.

8. Sign on to your medical center’s patient portal. When you read something you know is not right, ask to have it corrected.

9. Request a second opinion.

10. When you receive exceptional care, write a note to the highest levels of the organization letting them know. If you know them, use the names of those individuals who made you feel cared for.

11. When you have concerns about your care, speak up in the moment.

12. Find out whether your local hospital or care center has a patient and family partnership council. Ask how you can become involved.

13. If your care provider uses language you don’t understand, ask them to repeat themselves using different words.

14. When your caregiver is entering information about you into the electronic medical record, ask what is being input.

15. Complete patient satisfaction surveys honestly and constructively. Take the time to answer open-ended questions.

16. When you are in the hospital, notify your care team that your loved one will be staying overnight.

17. If having visitors when you are in the hospital is not beneficial to your healing process, enlist the support of your care team to set parameters for guests.

18. Enlist a loved one to be your Care Partner. During a hospitalization, ask that they be provided education on your aftercare needs and that they be notified of the plan for your discharge.

19. Invite a loved one to accompany you to appointments, procedures and consultations to provide support, but also an extra set of eyes and ears.

20. Come to doctor’s appointments prepared. Bring a notepad with questions, your medication list and any other pertinent personal healthcare information.

21. Wear the “I Am An Expert About Me” sticker…and embrace its spirit!

22. Use your cell phone to record important discharge/follow-up instructions.

23. Articulate to your care provider how you would define a quality outcome – in your own terms (for instance, being able to walk up a flight of stairs, being able to play with your grandchildren without getting winded, etc.)

24. Ask your Doctor these “Questions about Patient-Centered Care.”

25. Ask your hospital these “Questions about Patient-Centered Care.”

26. Proactively explore with your care team alternative solutions/remedies.

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27. Keep a written record of all your care appointments, procedures, medications and therapies. Bring it with you to all your healthcare appointments.

28. If you are hospitalized and are having trouble getting the rest you need to heal, ask for ear plugs, soothing music, or to have the door to your room closed.

29. Volunteer at your local hospital.

30. Take advantage of community resources such as consumer health resource libraries, health and wellness fairs and free screenings to take the reins of your own healthcare.

31. Download a healthcare app to help you manage and monitor vital aspects of your personal health, such as diet, exercise, sleep patterns, blood pressure, etc.

32. Fill out a Patient Preferences Passport and share it with your care providers.

33. Engage a patient advocate or patient liaison if concerns are not being addressed to your satisfaction.

34. If you notice a concerning change in a loved one’s condition while hospitalized, initiate a rapid response team.

35. Embrace all of the options. Palliative care is a sign of strength.

36. Let your care team know how you best receive information.

37. Make your care team see YOU, not your diagnosis.

38. When instructions are being conveyed, ask your care team to SHOW you, not just tell you, so you are empowered to more confidently and competently care for yourself.

39. Act like you belong. Be a teammate, not a subject.

40. “Break up” with your doctor if s/he is not meeting your needs.

41. Be an informed healthcare consumer. Subscribe to RightCare Weekly

42. Insist that your Care Partner is documented in your medical record.

43. Don’t like the food you’ve been offered while in the hospital (or in a long-term care community)? Ask what other options are available to you.

44. During a hospital stay, ask if you can have input into when your blood will be drawn.

45. Don’t hesitate to let your care team know if you’re uncomfortable.

46. Make your preferences known about when you will receive a bath.

47. Become informed of when hospital rounds will occur so that you can make arrangements for family to be present.

48. Ask about your provider’s experience with your condition.

49. State your feelings. They matter just as much as your physical condition.

50. Get involved in patient-centered outcomes research opportunities.