



For Immediate Release

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Children's Hospitals Offer Safety Tips for Patient Families During National Patient Safety Awareness Week

March 1, 2013 -- As National Patient Safety Awareness Week kicks off (March 3 – 9, 2013) children's hospitals around the country are affirming the critical role patient families play in making hospital stays as safe as possible for their children.

A national learning network of children's hospitals – [Ohio Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety](#) (OCHSPS) and the [Children's Hospital Association](#) are collaborating to offer safety tips for families to follow when visiting the hospital with their child.

"We are taking steps to ensure that we provide the safest possible care in children's hospitals, and there are things that families and patients can do to help us," said Michael Fisher, president and CEO, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and chair of OCHSPS. "The family is the most critical part of a patient's caregiving team. So we are encouraging patients and their families to follow some simple, yet potentially life-saving, tips during National Patient Safety Awareness Week and each time that they visit a children's hospital."

OCHSPS involves more than 70 hospitals across the nation working together to improve safety for all pediatric patients. The OCHSPS National Children's Network's goal is to eliminate serious harm in children's hospitals across the country. The participating hospitals are working together to achieve three specific goals by the end of 2013: reduce serious harm by 40 percent; reduce readmissions by 20 percent; and reduce serious safety events by 25 percent. The national network is funded through a multi-million dollar contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Initial funding for OCHSPS came through a partnership with the Cardinal Health Foundation, which has provided \$3.25 million to-date to support these efforts.

"We want to recognize OCHSPS for its groundbreaking effort to advance patient safety which perfectly reflects the theme of National Patient Safety Week which is Patient Safety 7/365: 7 days of recognition, 365 days of commitment to safe care," said Mark Wietecha, president and CEO, Children's Hospital Association. "Every day, children's hospitals nationwide are committed to working to provide safer care."

Tips for patient families include the following:

1. BE A PATIENT ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD. Don't be shy. Ask questions about your child's care, raise safety concerns you have or ask the caregiver to double check their chart before they

act. You might say, "Excuse me, I have a few questions before you start treatment, would you mind answering them, please?"

2. **WASH.** Wash your hands and your child's hands when entering and leaving the hospital, your patient room, the bathroom and any treatment rooms (such as x-ray); and be sure to wash if you have handled any soiled material.
3. **ENSURE THEY WASH TOO.** Since you are part of your child's health care team, do not be afraid to remind doctors and nurses about washing their hands before working with you – even if they are wearing gloves. You might say, "Excuse me, I didn't see you wash your hands. I'd like to be sure everyone's hands are clean. Please wash them before caring for my child."
4. **STAY CLEAN & DRY.** If your child has an intravenous catheter or a wound, keep the skin around the dressing clean and dry and let your caregiver know if it gets wet or loose.
5. **KNOW THE MEDS.** Ask for the names of the medications your child is receiving in the hospital and how it is expected to help your child. Caregivers will check your child's identification band before giving a medication to make certain the correct medication is being given. If you don't see this, ask staff to double check that the medication is for your child. You might say, "Excuse me, that medication is not familiar to me. Can you please double check it against my child's chart?"
6. **BE PREPARED WHEN GOING HOME.** When your child is ready to go home from the hospital, make certain you know what medications and/or treatments your child will need once home. Ask what you should watch for that will require a call to your child's doctor and which doctor to call if questions come up. Also ask when your child will need to follow up with a physician appointment.

More information about patient safety, results from OCHSPS's efforts to date and ongoing efforts is available at www.solutionsforpatientsafety.org. More information about the Children's Hospital Association is available at www.childrenshospitals.net. National Patient Safety Foundation has an online resource center with tips and tools for patients and their families available at: <http://www.npsf.org/for-patients-consumers/tools-and-resources-for-patients-and-consumers/>

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