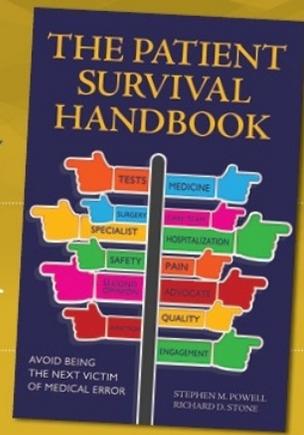




The Patient Survival Handbook

Avoid Being the Next Victim of Medical Error



The Patient Survival Handbook: Avoid Being the Next Victim of Medical Error

Overview

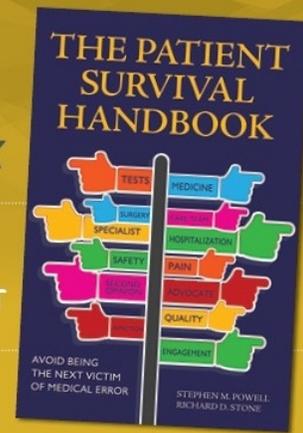
Hospitals are harming patients at enormous rates. One estimate puts the number of preventable deaths at over 400,000 a year, making it the third largest killer in the U.S. next to cancer and heart disease. The number of people who are harmed but don't die from medication errors, or acquiring a preventable infection numbers in the millions annually. The Joint Commission and insurance groups like AIG have found that nearly 70% of this harm is attributable to poor teamwork, communication, leadership, and safety culture. In even the most respected hospitals and healthcare facilities there are serious risks, common errors, and glitches and gaps that can cause harm. While healthcare professionals are tackling these challenges and making some progress, they can't achieve zero preventable harm without the engagement of patients and their families as partners in their care. In fact, when patients and families are included as members of the care team, their safety goes up significantly.

The Patient Survival Handbook, written by industry experts in patient safety and patient engagement, helps patients and families know what they can do to maximize their safety while under the care of a doctor, during a hospitalization, and after they have been discharged. It is filled with concrete, common sense advice that will help anyone facing a serious illness or surgery ensure that the care they receive is focused on meeting their needs and that it fulfills the Hippocratic oath's first maxim: First, do no harm.



The Patient Survival Handbook

Avoid Being the Next Victim of Medical Error



What the Book Contains

The book is divided up into 5 sections of short patient stories: preparing for a visit to the doctor's office, in the hospital, as a surgical patient, communicating with your care team, and as a patient being discharged from the hospital. Each section provides a story illustrating a particular issue related to staying safe, along with Questions to Ask Yourself, Questions to Ask your Care Team, Tips to Protect Yourself and Your Loved One, Terms to Know, and Resources.

Readers can dive in almost anywhere in the book and find useful answers and advice. Here are some examples of some of the key topics that are covered:

- Empowering patients to ask good questions and not to assume anything when it comes to their care.
- The necessity of having an advocate with you during your care, especially while hospitalized to ensure that medications and procedures are what the doctor ordered, and to be vigilant when caregivers make errors. (To err is human, so we can never assume that hospital professionals are infallible.)
- When a doctor provides you a diagnosis, asking, "What else might this be?" and requesting an explanation of how he or she arrived at this conclusion. (Doctors often reach their diagnosis in less than thirty seconds of you sharing your complaint, and are often wrong because they failed to listen fully to the patient's story.)
- The importance of fully understanding prescriptions and discharge directions to optimize your recovery and wellness.
- Teaching patients to adhere to these maxims: Nothing about you without you! And, no what without why!
- See yourself as an integral member of the care team, and when there have been errors in your care, insisting on full transparency.
- After discharge, knowing the signs of not healing well or a possible infection, and what to do about it.