



Memorial Sloan-Kettering
Cancer Center

Community MATTERS

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NEWS FROM MEMORIAL SLOAN-KETTERING CANCER CENTER

Resources

Community Matters

212-639-3199

Construction Information

212-639-4444

Physician Referral Service

800-525-2225

Patient Safety Comes First



MSKCC's Patient Safety Advisory Council includes physicians, nurses, patients, and family members.

When you're sick and in the hospital your first concern is to get better and go home. For most patients, hospitals represent the challenge of an unfamiliar environment at a time when they are not feeling well. There is an implicit need to trust that the best quality care will be provided safely and correctly. Yet accidents and errors do occur in hospitals and have contributed to a growing patient safety awareness movement.

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) takes seriously the charge to safeguard patients in our care. The Center's Patient Safety Program strives to maintain a culture of safety across the institution. With more than 400,000 annual outpatient and inpatient visits, spread across nearly a dozen clinical care facilities, achieving the highest level of patient safety requires the input and vigilance of everyone involved. "One way to improve the safety of patient care delivered at MSKCC is to listen to those who deliver and receive our care, and consider carefully their recommendations," says Aileen Killen, Director of the Patient Safety Program.

At MSKCC, staff, patients, family members, and visitors play an active role in the hospital's safety efforts and help to promote the Patient Safety Program's primary message, "It's OK to Ask." A key component of the program is to create an environment that assures patients that hospital staff members welcome questions on a wide range of topics that promote safety. Patients are encouraged to ask whether a staff member has washed his or her hands, for an explanation of medicine and tests given, for a friend or family member to attend appointments with them and be their advocate, for help if they have any special needs, for clarification about what to do at home – and to ask any other questions that may arise during their treatment.

To increase direct dialogue between staff and patients, a Patient Safety Advisory Council (which is co-chaired by an MSKCC patient) was formed in

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No-Smoking Ban Extends to Outside Hospitals

Since 2002, courtesy of the New York City Smoke-Free Air Act, smoking inside workplace buildings, including healthcare facilities, has been prohibited. Beginning November 2009, NYC Local Law 50 extended the ban on smoking to the outdoor areas within 15 feet of healthcare facility entrances. Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed the act into law to help reduce the harmful effects of smoking and second-hand smoke exposure.

While tobacco-use rates in New York City have decreased, there is more to accomplish. Approximately one million New Yorkers are still smoking, and nearly 8,000 die from smoking-related illnesses annually. Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death in New York City. According to the New York City Department of Health, second-hand

smoke is unsafe at any dose and is a major cause of heart disease, stroke, respiratory illness, and lung cancer.

As a cancer center, MSKCC is committed to a smoke-free environment as a matter of policy and as good medical practice. The Center's Tobacco Cessation Program offers counseling and treatment to address tobacco use and may be contacted at 212-610-0507. Individuals seeking help to quit smoking may also contact the New York State Smokers' Quitline at 866-697-8487. Increased signage alerting smokers of the no-smoking ban has been posted at the entrances of all MSKCC clinical facilities. The co-operation of patients, family members, visitors, community members, and staff with the no-smoking ban is greatly appreciated. ☼

Patient Safety *continued from page 1*

2007. A recent and innovative initiative of the council utilizes volunteer patient advisors to survey hospitalized patients about safety-related issues experienced during their care. The Patient Safety Program also participates in hospital quality-of-care committees, publishes a quarterly patient safety newsletter, and co-sponsors an annual Performance Improvement/Patient Safety Fair. During Patient Safety Week, in March, the program will co-host its first patient safety event for the community on the topic of medication management.

For more information about recommended patient safety guidelines, visit www.patientsafety.org. ☼

Basic safety steps for patients and family members to follow at any healthcare facility include:

- **Attend doctor visits with someone you trust**
- **Be aware of the patient safety precautions followed by your care provider**
- **Write down any health questions in advance of your doctor visits**
- **Bring a list of all medications taken and their dose amount**
- **Ask for help if anything the doctor says is unclear**

Free CancerSmart Lectures

Thursday, March 18

Breast Cancer: New Concepts, New Targets, New Directions, New Hope

Tuesday, April 13

The Latest in Lung Cancer Treatment

Wednesday, May 26

Advances in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Thyroid Cancer

All lectures will take place from 6:00 – 7:30 PM in the Rockefeller Research Laboratories building, 430 East 67th Street (between York and First Avenues). Please RSVP to 212-639-3074 or on www.cancersmart.org. To view previous CancerSmart lectures and discussions, please visit www.cancersmart.org/webcasts.

PATIENT SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK FREE LECTURE

Tuesday, March 9 — 10:30 AM to 12:00 NOON

It's OK to Ask. How Do I Manage My Medicines?

A panel of experts will discuss the following topics:

- Why and how to keep a medication list
- Which medications — prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal — you should tell your doctor you take
- What you should ask your doctor about the medications you take
- How to develop a system for taking your medicine

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
1275 York Avenue, Room M107

Co-sponsored by the Patient Safety Program and the 65+ Program.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Work continues on the exterior of the second phase of the Mortimer B. Zuckerman Research Center on East 68th Street between York and First Avenues. Over the next several months the sidewalk in front of the building will be completed as will the street paving. This will be followed by final installation of the glass canopy. Plans to complete finish work on the interior of the site are on hold until construction of the core and shell space is completed. ☼

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Free CancerSmart Lectures (See inside for details!)

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Memorial Sloan-Kettering
Cancer Center
Department of Public Affairs
1275 York Avenue • New York, NY 10065
www.mskcc.org

