

Bellingham Surgery Center encourages patients to Speak^{UP}

Speak up if you have questions or concerns, and if you don't understand, ask again. It's your body and you have a right to know. Don't be afraid to ask about safety. If you're having surgery, make sure the area to be operated upon is marked.

Pay attention to the care you are receiving. Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medications. Don't assume anything. Notice whether your caregivers have washed their hands. Hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infection. Wash your hands on arrival to the facility and frequently after you go home.

Educate yourself about your diagnosis and the surgery planned. Read all medical forms and make sure you understand them before you sign.

Ask a trusted family member or friend to come with you to be your advocate.

Know what medications you take and why you take them. Medication errors are the most common health care mistakes. Before you take a new medication, tell your doctors and nurses about allergies you have, or negative reactions you have had to medications in the past. Make sure your nurse checks your wristband before you are given any medication. Don't be afraid to tell the doctor or nurse if you think you are about to receive the wrong medication.

Use a hospital or surgery center that has undergone a rigorous on-site evaluation against established, state-of-the-art quality and safety standards, such as that provided by the Joint Commission. Bellingham Surgery Center received full accreditation by JCAHO in 2005.

Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team. Don't be afraid to seek a second opinion. If you are unsure about the nature of your condition and the best treatment, consult another specialist.

Bellingham Surgery Center does not honor advanced directives. In the event of an emergency, patients do not stay in an outpatient setting long enough to evaluate the appropriateness of implementing such directives. If you have advanced directives, you may request a copy be added to your chart in the event you would require transfer to an acute care center. Advance Directives forms may be obtained from the Admission Office of St. Joseph's Hospital.

If you have questions or concerns about safety, please tell your nurse or your doctor. If you would like to file a complaint, you may contact: Our facility Administrator, Jeanne Bennetts at 2980 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham, WA. 98225, jbennetts@symbion.com, 360 – 671-6933. Washington State Complaint Hotline at 360-236-2620. Medicare recipients can contact their Ombudsman at www.medicare.gov/publications/pubs/pdf/11173.pdf You may also contact our accrediting organization, The Joint Commission, at 1 – 800 – 994 – 6610.