

## Need to Know for Patients and Families

*What patients  
and their  
families need to  
know before  
hospitalization  
or a nursing  
home admission*



## Environment

**Definition:** A person's physical and social surroundings

**Why Is It Important?** A safe and comfortable environment for anyone can result in better outcomes. It can reduce the risk of depression and delirium in the hospital or nursing home, thereby leading to a faster recovery. A safe, secure, "healing environment" includes special considerations that encourage mobility, promote socialization, and create a "homelike environment." An atmosphere that relaxes the mind, body, and soul can help speed physical and psychological recovery.

### What You Can Do:

1. A single-person room may provide greater privacy, more opportunities for family/friend interaction and better sleep.
2. Create your home-away-from-home with comfort items like a favorite pillow or blanket and familiar items like photos and books.
3. Bring a personal music system for your stay (iPod, CD player, etc.) with ear phones. Music will reduce anxiety and pain levels and provide comfort.
4. Make sure paths to your bathroom, chair and door are clear to help reduce the risk of falls. Ask your health care team, family or friend for help with this as needed.
5. Open the window curtains during the day for natural light.
6. Have simple conversations with health care team members, family, friends, and others may help provide a relaxing environment.
7. Ask for nice-smelling flowers as gifts for your room.
8. Take walks or have someone help you to the solarium, gardens, family room, or other pleasant areas.
9. Make sure controls for call button, lighting, telephone, television, and radio are within easy reach.