



## St. Francis Memorial Hospital News Release

Patient safety is in everyone's job description at St. Francis Memorial Hospital and it should be at the top of your priority list as soon as you enter the hospital doors. To help us work together, we have developed some new documentation to clarify some key safety messages to patients. "While we were preparing for our 2010 accreditation, there were many required organizational practices for patient safety that had to be met. One of the key requirements was patient understanding related to their role in patient safety," explains Joan Kuiack, Director of Patient Care Services.

Kuiack says staff worked hard on developing and implementing new discharge instructions, patient booklets on admission, handouts in the emergency department, and safety brochures to go along with the new *Eight Steps to a Safer Hospital Visit* posters. "That was the purpose of the focus group held with patients. We developed signage about eight steps to patient safety to highlight this awareness to both patients and families coming to SFMH," she adds.

By becoming familiar with your role in safety, you and your family can play an active part during your hospital stay. A key component is knowing your current list of medications and allergies. Have this information written out and kept with you at all times, suggests Kuiack. Above all, if you have a question about your care, please do not hesitate to ask any one of the members of our health care team.

Proper hand hygiene is very important as it helps to prevent the spread of germs to you and to those around you.

Gwen Brown, SFMH Infection Control Coordinator, points out that staff should always be cleaning their hands before they enter your room and when leaving. This helps to ensure that germs are NOT transferred between patients or staff.

Hand washing or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers both in the hospital and at home, especially now that cold and flu season is upon us, is extremely important to reduce the risk of spreading infections. When you cough or sneeze, use a tissue or raise your arm up to your face and aim for your sleeve. Do not sneeze into your hand. Throw away tissues as soon as you use them

There are some key times to be sure that you clean your hands such as **after** coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose and using the washroom as well as **before and after** preparing meals and eating.

To wash your hands properly, use regular soap (anti-bacterial soaps are not necessary). Remove any hand or arm jewellery you may be wearing and wet your hands with warm water. Add regular soap and rub your hands together, ensuring you have lathered all surfaces for at least 15 seconds. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails. Rinse your hands well under warm running water, using a rubbing motion. Pat your hands dry with a paper towel or a clean towel. If you use a vigorous motion to dry your hands it can cause irritation. When using a public bathroom, turn off the tap using the paper towel so that you do not re-contaminate your hands and use the same paper towel to open the door when you leave. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can also be used unless your hands are visibly dirty. In those situations, it is always best to wash your hands with soap and water.

If you have children, teach them good hygiene and how to wash their hands properly. Young children should be supervised while washing their hands.