

## Health Facts

### Quality of Care in Hospitals

As many as 98,000 people are dying each year in hospitals due to preventable medical errors, including misdiagnoses, inappropriate prescribing, and infections that could have been avoided with proper care.



If you want to stay safe in the hospital, it makes sense to understand a little about what quality means in hospital care. That begins with understanding that not all hospitals are the same. Instead, quality of care varies significantly between hospitals. For example, some hospitals do a much better job than others in administering the appropriate drugs to patients who are admitted for heart attacks. As another example, some hospitals do a better job than others in screening elderly pneumonia patients and administering necessary vaccinations.

Of course, if you have to go to a hospital, you'd like for the facility to provide high quality care to you. But what exactly does this mean? Broadly, it means that:

- ❑ **Results.** You're more likely to see favorable results from the treatment you have, for example, to experience a quick recovery from surgery.
- ❑ **Your Understanding.** You understand what's happening to you, and you know what you need to do – both at the hospital and when you get home.
- ❑ **Respect.** The hospital staff pays attention to you and responds to your needs – and generally treats you with dignity.
- ❑ **The Right Care.** The health professionals treating you know what they're doing, have treated the condition before, and follow the right treatment protocols. Also, they work with each other to provide coordinated care.
- ❑ **Safety.** The hospital takes appropriate precautions to avoid medical errors.

If these conditions are met – and they should be – you're more likely to get the right kind of care, to feel satisfied with the treatment you've received, and to make a quick recovery. If you or a family member has to go into the hospital, keep these points in mind. If you have a choice of facilities (for example, you are having elective surgery), these can help guide you as you make a choice. Even if you don't have a choice, these points can help you know what you should expect – and demand.

For more information about hospital quality, visit [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com).