Record keeping tips

- Carry a list of all medications, allergies, and health conditions at all times. Update your list when there are changes.
- Keep a record of doctor(s)’ names and specialties who give care to your loved one. Names may be difficult for you or family to recall when being asked by medical staff.
- Keep all medical information together, along with the medical directives. A book or binder works well. Tell a close relative or family member where you keep it.
- Most health care organizations now have an electronic way of keeping track of your medical information and viewing your lab and other test results. BJC has myBJC. Ask the primary care doctor or hospital attendant for information on what electronic records are available.
- Take notes at the doctor’s office and write down the doctor’s answers. If you have questions to ask the doctor, write them down before coming to the visit and give them to your nurse when she comes in the room. This will help the doctor to be prepared for your questions.
- If you are receiving home health care, write down your questions for your home health team during the week and review them with the team during a visit.
- List your emergency contacts under “ICE” in your cell phone contact list. This stands for “In Case of Emergency” and is easy for emergency workers to find if needed.

Personal Care

- If your loved one is too weak to drink, try using a small juice glass and straw. Cut the straw shorter to fit the glass and use the bendable side to drink from.
- If your loved one is having difficulty swallowing pills, try crushing them and add to applesauce, yogurt, pudding or ice cream. Check with your pharmacist first to see which of the medications can be crushed.
- Take good care of your loved one’s feet. If their heels are getting sore, keep them off the bed or chair with a pillow and check often for a mushy feeling or redness. Wash between each toe and pat dry. Never apply powder between toes. Give their feet some air time to help prevent growth of fungus and bacteria that may cause sores. Use lotion on feet and massage daily.
• If you are using oxygen, comply with oxygen safety rules. Check behind your loved one's ears often to make sure the tubing is not causing sores. A little bit of cotton around the tube can help prevent sores from forming.

• Thin skin may cause tears on arms. Try cutting the foot part out of pair of tube socks and covering arms. Don't place watches or bracelets on your loved one's arms. Elbow pads can also be made from socks and stuffing. If a wheelchair is used, pad arms with sheepskin or soft towels.

Trouble sleeping
• Start a bedtime routine.
• Warm milk at night can help promote sleep.
• Bathing and massaging your loved one before bedtime may help them sleep better.
• Consider shortening daytime naps.
• Don’t offer drinks with caffeine after 3 p.m.

Other suggestions
• Bed sheets folded in half can be used as a “draw sheet” for turning and repositioning your loved one while in bed.
• Extra long twin sheets fit hospital beds the best.
• Large size garbage bags can be used under your sheets to help protect your mattresses from wetting. Also, twin-sized, washable bed pads can be purchased online from various medical supply companies.
• Products such as OdoBan can be added to your wash to disinfect and eliminate odors.
• Be prepared. Keep an extra set of your loved ones clothes and a trash bag in your vehicle for “accidents” when out.
• If nausea or vomiting is a problem while out, keep a coffee can with a lid and plastic grocery bags in your vehicle.
• Did you know that some medical equipment that we use for safety in the hospital, such as bed and/or chair alarms, oxygen monitors and blood pressure monitors, can be purchased online by patients and family? Start by googling your subject and search from there. Brands and prices vary. Talk with your doctor prior to purchasing. He or she may have some suggestions.
• Have you heard of LifeLine? This system can help alert emergency responders if your loved one falls or needs help. This can be set up through BJC Home Care Services by calling 878-419-5567.

Compliments of the Caregiver Class from BJC hosted by BJC Hospice.
Contact us at 636-916-9830.