Practical Guide to the Health Care System: Who’s who in the hospital

Today’s health care system has many specialists, each with a special title. This can be confusing to someone unfamiliar with hospital language. Here is a guide to help you know who’s who and who does what in the health care setting.

Acute care nurse: Cares for patients with acute conditions, often before/after surgery, and may perform advanced procedures.

Clinical nurse specialist: Plans, directs or coordinates the daily patient care activities and collaborates with other health care professionals on behalf of the patient.

Critical care nurse: Provides advanced nursing care for patients in critical or coronary care units.

Family/general practitioner: Physician who diagnoses, treats and helps prevent diseases/injuries that commonly occur. May refer patients to specialists for further diagnosis/treatment.

Internist: Physician who diagnoses and provides non-surgical treatment of diseases/injuries of internal organ systems, mainly for adults who have a wide range of problems associated with the internal organs.

Occupational therapist: Assesses, plans and participates in rehabilitative programs that help build or restore vocational and daily living skills, as well as general independence, to persons with disabilities or developmental delays.

Physical therapist: Assesses, plans, and participates in rehabilitative programs that improve mobility, relieve pain, increase strength and improve or correct disabling conditions resulting from diseases/injuries.

Surgeon: Physician who treats diseases, injuries and deformities by surgical methods, such as using instruments or appliances or by manual manipulation.

Coming in July: The 10 questions you should know

Maintaining a healthy prostate

In a man’s body, the prostate is the number-one cancer spot, but the problems of prostate enlargement, infection and even malignancy can often be avoided. Healthy eating is the way.

Foods can strongly influence sex hormones, including testosterone which impacts the prostate. Eating less meat and dairy products and more vegetables reduces the hormonal stimulation of the prostate and in turn problems with it.

✦ Eating meat daily triples the risk of prostate enlargement.
✦ Regular milk consumption doubles the risk.
✦ Failing to eat enough vegetables nearly quadruples the risk.

Two diets associated with reduced risk for prostate cancer are the traditional Japanese diet and a Mediterranean diet. The Japanese diet is high in green tea, soy, vegetables and fish and low in calories and fat. The Mediterranean diet is high in fresh fruits and vegetables, garlic, tomatoes, red wine, olive oil and fish. Both are low in red meat – and delicious!

Tomatoes in particular are very healthy for men. A study at Harvard University showed that men who had two servings of tomato sauce per week had 23 percent less prostate cancer risk, compared to those who rarely had tomato products.

Warnings of prostate trouble are clear: pain, a burning sensation or blood while urinating. Any of these requires an immediate visit to the doctor. Of course, seeing a doctor regularly is always wise – being proactive is better than being reactive.

Prayer: Dear God, each of the men in my life is so important. Guard their well-being. Help them make healthy choices, and help me support them in living in healthy ways. Amen.

Resources: advocatehealth.com • prostatehealthed.org – PHEN: Learn special Chicago-area events focusing on prostate health and support groups • menshealthweek.org • pcf.org – Prostate Cancer Foundation