

Hospital Happenings

June 2008

TIME OUT for Safety

I'm sure as parents and grandparents we are aware of the term "time out" and what it means. We've also observed sporting events when the teams call a time out to talk about strategy and for the team members to stop and catch their breath. Did you know that the healthcare providers involved in your surgery also take a time out to help ensure your safety?

The "time out" is a review designed to prevent medical errors involving surgery on the wrong patient or the wrong body part. Just like a team huddles before a game to determine their game plan, operating teams take a time out, in the operating room, before the procedure to review objectives, patient information, equipment readiness, supply availability and roles and responsibilities of each member of the team. They also double check that the X-rays being used are turned the right way and belong to the patient on the operating table.

On Wednesday, June 18, the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses, the Council on Surgical and Perioperative Safety, and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations are partnering together to recognize *National Time Out Day*. Time Out is a practice we have had in place at Montrose Memorial Hospital for over three years and have found that the surgeons, nurses and technicians are happy to take an active role to help eliminate the possibility of an error occurring during your operation. Sharon Eshelman, RN, who is the Director of Surgical Services said, "I am convinced that this can help prevent a tragedy and it will definitely help ensure patient safety."

Remember, it is important for patients to take an active role in decisions about their healthcare. Make sure you discuss with your surgeon exactly what will be done before, during, and after your operation. Before your surgery, the surgical team should involve you in clearly marking the operative site with a permanent pen or marker. They should verify your name and check your arm band as well as confirm that all of your allergies to medication and your medical history are well known among the members of the surgical team. Be sure to keep asking questions about anything you or your family wants to know until you fully understand everything that has been planned. We encourage you and your family to be well informed and to get the information you need to make your surgery and recovery as successful and rapid as possible.