

Getting the most out of your loved one's doctor:

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Be a good hospital visitor. The staff and doctor will be much more eager to spend time in the room, give information and provide over-the-top care if it doesn't feel like a battle.

Bad visitors: Loud.

Spill over into the room-mate's side of the room.

Act like they are the visitor and the patient is the host who should do the talking and entertaining. Why, oh why do visitors think the role of the patient is to recount every symptom, event and procedure leading to and occurring after hospitalization? Presumably a person is in the hospital because of illness and might not be up to telling the same story over and over.

Complain without helping.

Bring in food in conflict with the diet the doctor ordered.

Bring in drugs (legal or illegal).

Fight with the patient and staff.

Good visitors: Quiet, and considerate of the patient's needs for rest.

Sits quietly, reads to the patient, or does most of the talking & entertaining.

Family provides up-to-date medication list and medical history if it was not available at the time of admission.

Take medications to the hospital only if OK with the doctor and they are not available in the hospital pharmacy.

Brings in food only if OK with the doctor and the patient is having trouble eating and might eat favorite foods not available from the hospital kitchen.

Help, and don't hinder. Let's nursing staff know when something is amiss. Help to keep patient safe.