

**NURSES TAKE POWERFUL STEP TO GET
PATIENTS UP AND MOVING**

**New Program At St. Joseph Hospital Looks to Reinvent Current Hospital
Ambulation Policy to Promote Patient's Overall Wellness Throughout The
Community, Decrease Risks of Blood Clots**

ORANGE, Calif. (June 00, 2007) – If you are hospitalized at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange, you're going to want to bring a pair of walking shoes to go with your hospital gown, thanks to a new initiative that is getting patients out of their beds and walking the halls.

Nurses at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange have instituted an innovative system change that seeks to help minimize the risk of blood clots and deep venous thrombosis (DVT), deconditioning and immobility in hospitalized patients while also promoting overall wellness in patients, family members and staff. While a few hospitals have developed pilot walking programs that get patients up and moving, this is the first time a hospital has adopted the program throughout an entire facility.

Studies have shown that lack of movement and ambulation can lead to immobility and deconditioning even in patients hospitalized for a short period of time. The purpose of the new policy is to support ambulation of all patients by allowing the nurses to determine a patient's ability to ambulate based on certain established criteria. The current ambulation protocol requires a doctor's order, which is not often provided for many patients. The new policy will allow all patients to walk with a nurse or family member to ensure safety without a doctor's order.

“It is our hope that this change will have a remarkable impact in decreasing the risks associated with DVT, deconditioning and immobility due to hospitalization,” said Cherri Salesky, a nurse who is department manager of medical surgical gynecology services at St. Joseph Hospital. She was motivated to start the program after suffering herself from DVT after a plane flight following her gall bladder surgery.

The new policy would not only help minimize the risk of DVT, deconditioning and immobility, but also provide patients with an experience that would more closely resemble their daily routine at home such as eating meals while sitting in a chair rather than in bed. The new guidelines also encourage family members to participate in ambulating the patient and ensuring that patients meet their personal walking goals while in the hospital.

Every nurse will be equipped with a pedometer to not only help patients keep track of their progress but also to encourage the hospital’s nursing staff to participated in the 10,000 Steps Campaign, the recommended daily walking distance by the Surgeon General. Walking 10,000 steps per day is about five miles.

“While we work in health care trenches each and every day, nurses sometimes don’t take their own advice,” she said. “We all need to walk more for ourselves as well as the health of our patients.”

Throughout the hospital, nurses are decorating the hallways with distance markers and other designs to encourage patients and help them keep track of their progress.

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