

Home Devices

*Can I bring
my own
medical device
with me to
the hospital?*

We reviewed many sources of information while preparing this document. Here are some of the most important sources we used:

The risk of patient-care devices brought from home, in: Baretich, M. (ed.) Medical Device Incident Investigation & Reporting, 2005;p10-29 to 10-33

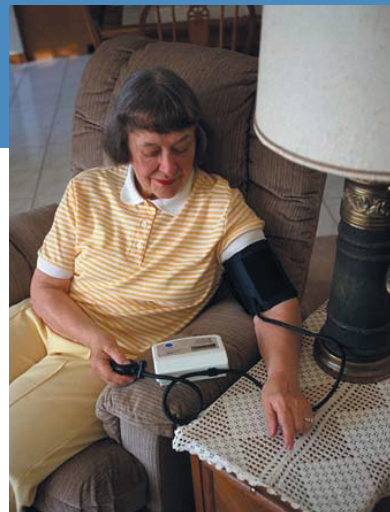
Patient-owned equipment poses considerable risks, ProActive Risk Mgnt, 1998; 4:1-7

Liability begins as patients bring their own equipment, Healthcare Risk Management, November 2004

Use caution when readmitting former home-care patients, Hosp Risk Mgnt, 1986; 8:

ECRI. Patient-owned equipment, Healthcare Risk Control, 2004; 5:1-14

Shepherd, M. Medical devices brought from home: an emerging problem, J Clin Eng, 1997; __: 276-277



You may be one of the many people who rely on a medical device at home. Examples are infusion pumps, apnea monitors, and CPAP machines. Hospital personnel understand how important these devices are to you. However, hospitals must be sure that all medical devices used in the hospital are safe and work well. Also, doctors and nurses need to know how to use the devices correctly. For these reasons, most hospitals have rules about bringing medical devices from home.

Here are some answers to questions you may have about bringing a medical device to the hospital:

Will the hospital accept my medical device?

Most hospitals will work with you on this. If possible, call the hospital before going there. The Admissions Department can answer your questions or refer you to someone who can. When you arrive at the hospital you will get a packet that may include information this topic.

What is the process for accepting my device?

The hospital will want to know what kind of device you have. You will need to tell them the manufacturer and model of the device. They will decide if it is a device that can be used safely in the hospital. If it can't be used, the hospital will tell you what options you have. They may have a similar device available for you to use.

Will I need my doctor's permission? It's a good idea to talk to your doctor about your concerns. Your doctor will help you get the care you need while in the hospital.

What should I bring to the hospital with the device? Make copies of anything you have that

explains how to use and maintain the device. Bring the copies but keep the originals at home in a safe place. Bring any accessories you will need. Also bring any supplies you use with the device, including spare batteries. If the hospital is not familiar with your device they may not have everything you need to use it.

Will I have to sign a waiver of liability? You will probably be asked to sign a waiver of liability. It may say that you will not hold the hospital responsible for problems related to your medical device. You may wish to have someone you trust help you review the waiver before signing it.

Will the hospital maintain my device? In some cases, nurses may be able to clean the device, set up accessories, change batteries, and so on. Some hospitals may have the supplies you need on hand. Some hospitals may also provide maintenance and repair when needed. However, you need to check with the hospital. You should be prepared to do all maintenance yourself or with the help of your family and others.

Will the hospital reject my device so they can charge me to use their device? Hospitals must follow laws and regulations designed to keep patients safe. Devices that are safe to use at home may not be safe in a hospital. If your personal medical device is not approved it is probably for safety reasons.

What about non-medical devices? You may also want to bring non-medical devices from home. Examples are hair dryers, radios, heating pads, and computers. These devices may be safe to use at home but not designed for hospitals. Most hospitals have similar devices available for you to use. Check with the hospital ahead of time if you have questions.