

Review Your Patient Chart



Guess what every patient in a hospital has? No, we're not speaking of those less-than-attractive hospital gowns or the plastic ID bracelets. The answer is a patient chart. Although the chart is legally the property of the hospital and generally kept at a nursing station, the patient should be aware of its content. Ask your doctor for an explanation. The chart may contain the following:

- Your medical history.
- Hospital laboratory results.
- Lists of medications (doses and schedules).
- Special treatments or therapy.
- Dietary restrictions or recommendations (low-sodium diet, for example).
- Scheduled diagnostic procedures (such as X-rays).
- Surgical notes (length of operation, assisting medical staff, type of anesthesia administered, recovery notes).

If you suspect a problem or error—in how often you are being given medication, for instance—ask a nurse or your doctor to show you your chart and explain what is written there.