

## 4. PATIENT IDENTIFICATION

Proper identification of the patient is a critical safety factor. No specimens should be collected or procedure performed without properly identifying the patient. Studies have confirmed that an adequate level of correct patient identification can be achieved by using at least three approved patient identifiers\*, i.e. patient's full name, patient's date of birth and/or record number, gender (as identified by the patient themselves), and address. In asking for patient identifier information, staff need to be mindful of privacy and confidentiality issues.

Usually, the conscious patient is asked to state and spell his or her full name, the date of birth, and address. The name, date of birth, and address should be verified by checking the identification band and requisition slip. The identity of an unconscious patient should be verified by family or friends.

Confusion can occur when patients with the same name are on the same nursing unit. Most units have some type of warning or "name alert" to address this concern.

Identifying patients consistently and correctly is a key element in reducing the risk of adverse events and enhancing patient safety. Costly tests on the wrong patient are useless and may instigate legal action.

It is also important to ensure correct patient identification when a patient telephones for a test result. In this case, patients should be asked to provide identifying information rather than asked to confirm information provided by the staff member.

### Task 21

**The sentences below are from Section 4. Match the underlined words or expressions with their equivalents from the list.**

a) alert; b) unfavourable; c) urgently important; d) incite, initiate; e) happen, take place; f) suitable

1. Proper identification of the patient is a critical safety factor.
2. Studies have confirmed that an adequate level of correct patient identification can be achieved by using at least three approved patient identifier.
3. Usually, the conscious patient is asked to state and spell his or her full name, the date of birth, and address.

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\* Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. Draft National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards. Sydney: ACSQHC, 2009

4. Confusion can occur when patients with the same name are on the same nursing unit.
5. Identifying patients consistently and correctly is a key element in reducing the risk of adverse events and enhancing patient safety.
6. Costly tests on the wrong patient are useless and may instigate legal action.

## Task 22

**Read through the text and complete the blanks with missing words.**

**Missing words:** identical, mismatching, routinely, uncommon, up-to-date, nonsensical, familiar

When a patient is very a) ..... to the practice team, it may appear almost b) ..... to check their identity, but most practices have patients with c) ..... names and the d) ..... of patients and patient health records is not e) ..... . Some practices overcome this by f) ..... asking patients to verify their address and other particulars each time they attend. This approach has the added benefit of ensuring patient contact details are g) .....

## Task 23

**Put the elements below in order to form sentences.**

**A**

| each patient. | Use | approved identifiers | at least | for | three |

**B**

| Correct | of patient confidentiality. | patient identification | vital | and | the maintenance | is | for patient safety |

**C**

| Don't | you | the correct patient record | have | treating familiar | patients. | assume | when |

## Task 24

**Read the questions so you know what you need to read for. Then read the text below (Section 5) and give answers to these questions.**

1. Why is it important to provide patients with information about lab tests?
2. What should patients know about lab tests?
3. How should the information be provided?