

May, 2002

PATIENT POWERline from the desk of Marie Savard, M.D.

Re: "Warning: Not Knowing Your Health Information Could Be Dangerous To Your Health"

Dear Friend,

Today I witnessed on national television a man undergoing a minor surgical procedure to implant a computer chip in his shoulder. I couldn't believe my eyes! Although I was trying to get ready for work at the time and missed the introduction, I learned that the chip contained the man's up-to-date health information. I presume he had a complicated medical history and wanted to be sure that in case of an emergency, he would have his health information with him. I just hope if he ever truly has an emergency and is unconscious or confused that he ends up in the right emergency room – one that has the special scanner to read his data. I also hope he keeps his information up to date (apparently he will be charged a fee). After all, how many of us change our medication and medication doses on a regular basis?

The good news is that all of us can keep our emergency health information with us at the ready 24/7, and it doesn't take a surgical procedure, computer chip, special scanner or even money. I have been telling patients for years about the importance of carrying your vital health information with you in your wallet, including a copy of your EKG (electrocariogram) especially if you have a heart condition or abnormal glitch on the EKG. And by carrying a card in your wallet, you can personally keep it up-to-date and show it to every health care practitioner you see. It keeps YOU fully involved and in control of your care.

Information such as allergies (put down NONE if you have none), medical conditions, prescription and non-prescription medication (include the dose for everything), family history, dates of critical immunizations, and who has your living will and who is your family doctor can make a difference to an emergency squad arriving on the scene if you are injured, or to a new specialist you consult for a particular condition. As patients, we are often too scared and forget the critical stuff just when it is needed the most.

I have prepared an emergency health information form for you to keep and give to each doctor that you see. You can print out as many as you like. You may want to start filling it out with a pencil and then having your doctor review the information to see that it is complete. Print an emergency health information form here, http://www.drsvard.com/system_record_excerpt1.htm.

Remember someone you love on Mother's Day by helping them fill out their emergency health information to keep with them and share with their doctor. Click here to print out the form, http://www.drsvard.com/system_record_excerpt1.htm.

I also have small emergency health information cards folded into a plastic sleeve that will fit in your wallet, along with your insurance card. To learn more about these cards for you, your family or friends, write to me at info@drsavard.com.

Many of you may be wondering how my dad is doing. Last winter my dad was diagnosed with a large saccular aneurysm of his aorta. Because of its size and location in his chest, it could only be fixed by a big operation. My dad had already gone through very complicated heart bypass surgery 4 years ago and was not up for another major operation. Fortunately my husband and I learned that a former colleague at the University of Pennsylvania was doing an experimental procedure to fix the chest aneurysms that didn't involve a big operation. So two months ago he had an aortic stent (I think of it as a tiny compressed slinky) placed through his groin into the aorta. When the stent was opened inside, it immediately cut off the blood flow to the aneurysm, fixing the problem. I must admit it wasn't as easy as I make it sound (he required some vascular surgery to get ready for the procedure), but it was a lot less complicated than open-heart surgery. He just learned from his surgeon that the stent is working perfectly and the aneurysm has essentially disappeared!

Next month I may share with you some of my Hospital Health Buddy stories. Once again, I can't tell you how important it is for friends or family to be with their loved ones as much as possible while they are in the hospital.

Warm regards,

Marie
Marie Savard, M.D.

We're happy to announce, we're upgrading our website by adding "*Ask DrSavard*" Insider's Secrets where you can ask your questions and tell your stories, The Savard Health Record, http://www.drsavard.com/system_record.htm, at an incredible price as well as making our Health-at-a-Glance emergency wallet card with plastic sleeve available for purchase and much more.

To learn more about how to get involved more fully in your own health care please visit my web site at <http://www.DrSavard.com>. Please feel free to share this message with your friends and family. I would also welcome your stories and questions, <http://www.info@DrSavard.com>.

Be sure to visit us at <http://www.drsavard.com> to check out upcoming events and press clips.

Click here to download a free office visit form
http://www.drsavard.com/system_record_excerpt2.htm

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