Medical Misadventures in the United States and How to Protect Yourself

100 deaths through medical misadventures in US per day

40% of Americans say they have been victims of medical misadventures (Harvard Study)

40,000 people wake up during surgery each year

1,500 patients per year have ‘foreign objects’ (mainly sponges) left behind in their bodies each year

Over 1,000 patients each year have the wrong cite operated on or wrong organ/limb removed

Why: Busy, many interruptions, fatigue with long hours

Ways to help limit this happening to you or a loved one:

- Avoid infection
  - Keep sanitizer at your bedside
  - Avoid flowers at bed as they attract fungi
  - Remove all jewelry
  - Ask medical personnel to clean stethoscope, and men to tuck in ties (In UK, Drs. wear bow-ties)

- Be proactive: mark operation site

- Befriend hospital advocates and staff

- Be a smart proactive patient
  - Check your name and spelling on wrist band
  - Double check all medications
  - Ask questions
  - Know your medical rights
  - Have an advocate with you if you cannot be your own advocate

- Trust your instincts, and do not be afraid to demand a second opinion!

Medical practitioners, including doctors, are well meaning professionals though are human...Often the process gets in the way of patient care.