

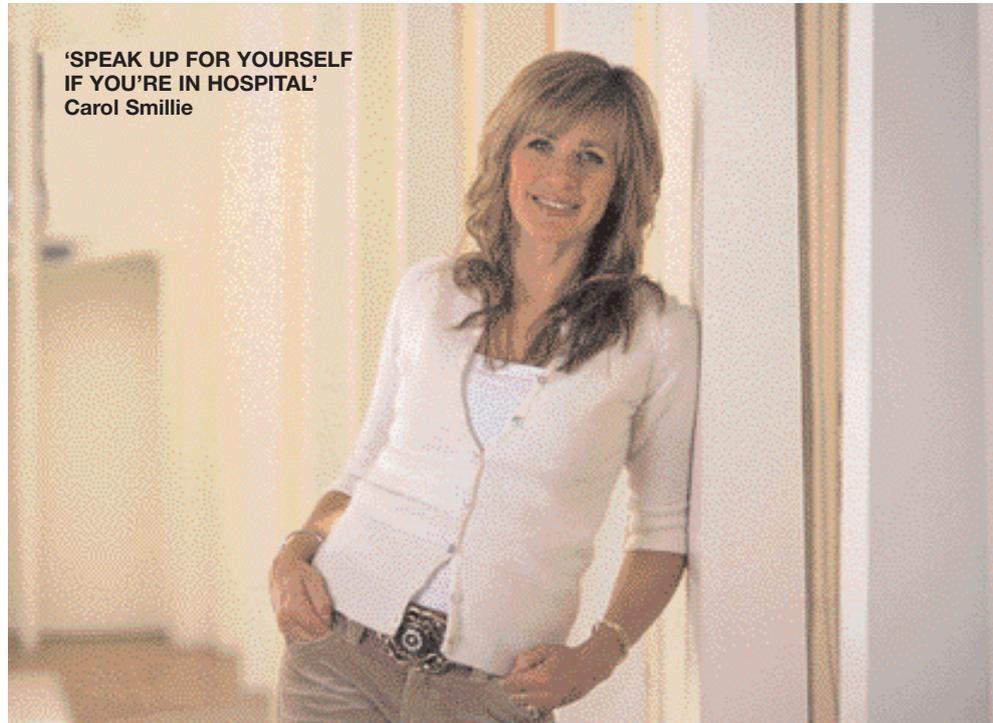
TOP TEN TIPS FOR SAFER PATIENTS

■ Find out all you can about your condition or treatment. Ask questions and look for other sources of information, such as on the internet or at the library.

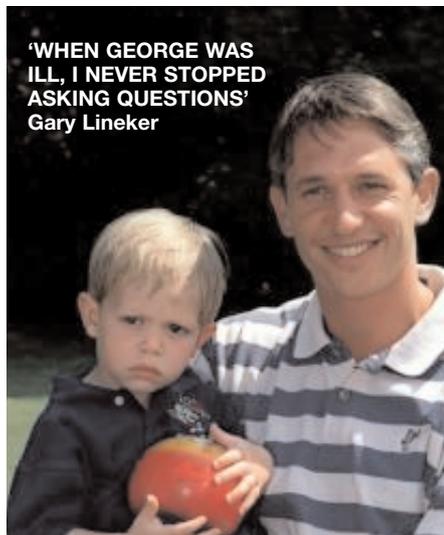
■ Ask the doctor or nurse to explain all the treatment options that are open to you, including any potential risks.

■ If you're not quite sure what a doctor or nurse is saying, ask them to repeat it. Staff are always happy to explain medical terms in everyday language.

■ If you're allergic to anything – or have reacted to a medicine or anaesthetic in the past – make sure your doctors, nurses and pharmacist know about it.



'SPEAK UP FOR YOURSELF
IF YOU'RE IN HOSPITAL'
Carol Smillie



'WHEN GEORGE WAS
ILL, I NEVER STOPPED
ASKING QUESTIONS'
Gary Lineker

■ Always read the instructions. Medication comes with a leaflet that explains how to take it and possible side-effects to watch out for. If it's not clear, ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

■ If you or your child are going to have an operation, check all the details on the consent form are correct before you sign it.

■ When a family member or friend is in hospital and has trouble speaking for themselves you can ask questions for them.

■ It's very important to make sure that the staff have the correct information about you. There could be other patients with similar names to yours, so you may be asked to confirm your name a number of times.

■ If you're pregnant, or think you might be, make sure you tell the doctor or nurse before you have any treatment or X-rays.

■ It's OK for you to ask doctors and nurses if they've cleaned their hands before they treat you.

▶ The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) helps the NHS learn from its mistakes so that it can improve patient safety. It does this by collecting reports on errors and other things that go wrong in healthcare so that it can recognise national trends and introduce practical ways of preventing problems.

The NPSA doesn't investigate individual cases or complaints, but it does listen to public concerns and

use what you say to improve safety – so your story could help to prevent the same thing from happening to other people.

Visit www.npsa.nhs.uk/pleaseask to find out how you can help the NPSA to make the NHS a safer place for patients. You can also find out about other organisations that can help if you want to make a complaint about your specific case.