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Contact: Jill Siegel, 212.698.1252
Jill.siegel@simonandschuster.com

From the Authors of the #1 *New York Times* Bestseller
YOU: The Owner's Manual

YOU: THE SMART PATIENT
An Insider's Handbook
for Getting the Best Treatment

By Michael F. Roizen, M.D., and Mehmet C. Oz, M.D.,
with Joint Commission Resources and the Joint Commission, The Patient's
Safety Champion

It's a scary statistic, but it's true: You have a 2 in 5 chance of being affected by a major medical complication in your life. And even the best doctors using the most cutting-edge technology can't prevent it. Yet that's the unrealistic expectation that most of us have. The same smart people who would never let a stranger make all their decisions about money for them (not even let Warren Buffet make all their decisions), or put complete faith in an unknown travel agent to handle every detail of a trip, willingly cede all control of their personal safety to others during one of the most vulnerable times they'll ever have: a routine hospital visit.

What happens? Doctors and nurses work very hard to provide safe, quality care; however, according to the Institute of Medicine, 44,000 to 98,000 deaths occur a year. You can see what a slippery problem this is as we can't even nail down the exact number. Even if you take the lower figure, medical mistakes cause more deaths than breast or prostate cancer. Nonfatal but damaging mistakes number in the hundreds of thousands for typical patients. But Doctors Roizen and Oz do not want you to be typical. Seventy-five percent of all these complications are preventable. Despite stunning gains in technology, the unsettling reality is that health care has become so complex it is no longer possible for any one person in the system to manage the whole process...unless they have a partner.

There's only one person who can ensure that you get the safest, best care. And that's YOU. And you can do it by using many of the same techniques and strategies employed by detectives. Just as a detective uses clues and insider know-how to crack a case, you can best navigate the health care system—for your own care, and in helping a spouse or relative—by learning how to gather evidence, analyze a scene, and assemble a team to ensure you receive superior treatment. Once you're armed with the right insider info and the tools to develop your detective instincts, you'll join the ranks of an elite force. You'll be a Smart Patient.

It's not just an honorary title. Being a Smart Patient means you've passed a stringent exam (well, a fun but informative quiz, anyway), and you know things that the vast majority of other patients do not. You'll know why you need to include your spouse in your health history, even though there's no blood

relation. You'll know why you should always be one of your doctor's first appointments of the day. You'll know which hospital staffer you should always talk to before choosing a surgeon (hint: it's the anesthesiologist). And you'll know why you should never touch the TV remote control in your hospital room.

Being a Smart Patient is critical today. With managed care networks, busy surgery schedules, and complicated insurance plans, you can't necessarily assume that X-rays from Dr. A will make it to Specialist B in time for Surgery C. In fact, the best way to navigate the complexities of the health care system is to be a Smart Patient.

In **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT: An Insider's Handbook for Getting the Best Treatment** (Free Press; February 14, 2006; Trade Paperback Original; \$14.95), America's trusted doctors—Michael F. Roizen, M.D., and Mehmet C. Oz, M.D.—show how every patient can take charge of their own health care and get the best treatment available. Just as they did in their #1 *New York Times* bestseller **YOU: THE OWNERS MANUAL**, Drs. Roizen and Oz provide the information patients need to know in a way that they can “digest” it. For **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT**, Drs. Roizen and Oz joined forces with Joint Commission Resources.

Independent and not-for-profit, the Joint Commission has been in existence since 1951 and accredits more than 15,000 health care organizations in the United States and more around the world, including hospitals, home health agencies, and health care clinics. Together, Drs. Roizen, Oz, and Joint Commission Resources provide the questions everyone needs to ask to become a Smart Patient. The book is filled with clear, definitive information on important topics such as:

CREATING A HEALTH PROFILE

Drs. Roizen and Oz say the first sign that you are a Smart Patient is that you bring to your appointment that telltale square of paper called a “health profile.” Gathering your entire health history into a single place can be daunting, but **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** walks readers through the process, with detailed checklists and examples of what you really need to communicate to your doc about your previous or current conditions, genetic predispositions, and lifestyle.

DOCTORS

As a Smart Patient, you will choose your primary care physician wisely and know it's one of the most important decisions you will ever make. While there is a shortage of physicians in this country, 700,000 is still a lot to choose from, so **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** advises how to weigh their different backgrounds, approaches to care, specialties, and levels of skills, with information on:

- How to find that gem of a doctor who will make your life easier—and longer (and why the Big Kahuna may not always be your best choice).
- What to look for and the questions to ask.
- The 1-2-3s of second opinions (and why they change treatment plans in about a third of all cases).
- How to choose a health care advocate—your detective partner who will accompany you to doctor visits, ask questions that you may overlook, and act as your essential backup person.

HOSPITALS & SURGERY

A Smart Patient prepares for a hospital stay with the same focus and dedication to detail as combat pilots preparing for a mission. You leave nothing to chance that you can control and accept no risk that isn't necessary. **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** provides details on:

- Finding the Joint Commission-accredited hospital near you, which bears the Gold Seal of Approval™.
- Finding the best hospital for your specific ailment or condition.
- Finding the best surgeon (Hunt for the specialist's specialist; use your doctor's referral as a starting point; make sure the doctor is board-certified in the specialty involving your operation; find the top specialist leading the medical research on the surgical technique for your condition; ask nurses and anesthesiologists in the hospital).
- Questions to ask your surgeon (How many of these specific surgeries does this hospital do a year? How many times have you performed this procedure, and what kinds of complications do *your* patients most frequently experience?)
- The benefits and drawbacks of teaching hospitals. (Hint: Avoid early July, when a fresh crop of residents fill their corridors. Let them get the hang of it first.)
- Insider tips for sailing through surgery.

PHARMACISTS & MEDICATION

Estimates are that 40,000 people die and 1.3 million are seriously hurt every year from medication mishaps. Smart Patients cuddle their pharmacists (well, so to speak) whenever possible; they know that building a relationship with this person is second only in importance to finding a great primary care doctor. Smart Patients also screen every single pill, lozenge, liquid, or needle before they put it into their body. **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** provides:

- Specific questions to ask your doctor and pharmacist whenever a medication is prescribed.
- Tips to make sure you get the correct medication and dose.
- How to save money on your prescriptions.
- Information on side effects, drug interactions, and ADRs (adverse drug reactions), with resources for finding more detailed information on the Web.

HEALTH CARE ADVOCATES AND PROXIES

The only thing that's potentially harder than facing your own life-threatening illness is helping a family member or close friend engaged in that battle, and being the person they're entrusting to make sure their wishes are completed. **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** provides information on how to be the best health care advocate or proxy, including:

- A checklist with all the information needed to mobilize a health care team to fight a serious illness.
- How to make tough decisions that could bring peace of mind later on.
- Samples of living wills, durable health care powers of attorney, and do-not-resuscitate orders.

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

From drugstore vitamins to chiropractors, acupuncturists to herbal remedies, massage therapy to hypnosis, Americans spend 50 billion dollars each year on complementary and alternative treatments. Three out of four patients use some form of alternative treatment, but less than one in five patients tells their doctor about it. Not good. Doctors need to know about anything you

swallow, inject, absorb, or undergo. **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** shows patients how to work with their doctors to integrate alternative therapies safely and effectively.

INSURANCE

Nearly 46 million Americans (almost 16 percent of our population) have no health insurance. Being uninsured endangers your life more than having diabetes (about 18,000 Americans aged 25 to 64 die every year as a result of being uninsured, slightly more than the number killed by diabetes). **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** offers:

- Information for low-income residents on how to obtain insurance.
- Criteria for determining if your health plan is healthy (and credible).
- Information on the four broad categories of health insurance (indemnity; point of service; HMOs, and PPOs).
- Questions to ask a potential insurance provider, including: How quickly do they pay claims? By what criteria do they choose your doctors and hospitals? What kinds of treatments do they consider experimental? Will you have continued care on your pre-existing conditions? If you get extremely sick, how much freedom does your doctor have in coordinating care, and can you see any specialist at all? What is the yearly out-of-pocket limit? What's the maximum lifetime benefit?
- Details on health savings accounts to pay for out-of-pocket costs.
- Practical advice on fighting insurance claim denials.

Because the safest patient is the educated patient, **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** lists some of the best health research web sites available on the internet, from sites for investigating hospitals such as the Joint Commission's Quality Check™ to sites about chronic diseases and conditions. It also provides resources for checking if a doctor is board certified (such as ABMS.org), and a glossary that explains the myriad of medical jargon, such as AMI (acute myocardial infarction) and algia (when used in a word, it means "pain" or "ache" but it's never used metaphorically, i.e. "That insurance company is a real algia in the neck"). And that's just the A's.

An indispensable resource for all medical patients and their advocates, written in an accessible, humorous style that everyone can understand, **YOU: THE SMART PATIENT** provides the tools you need to take charge of your health in the 21st century.

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About the Authors

Michael F. Roizen, MD, is the author of several bestselling books including the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *RealAge*. He is a professor of medicine and anesthesiology, and chair of the Division of Anesthesiology, Critical Care Medicine, and Comprehensive Pain Management at the Cleveland Clinic. He also founded a healthcare program first launched at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago aimed at helping its members reverse biologic aging and live longer, more vibrant lives. **Mehmet C. Oz, MD**, is the author of *Healing from the Heart*. He is professor and vice chairman of surgery, Columbia University. Dr. Oz is also medical director of the Integrated Medicine Center and director of the Heart Institute, New York Presbyterian/Columbia Medical Center.

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