

### Introduction

If you have ever spent any time in a hospital, you may have noticed patients wearing wristbands in various colors. These are medical alert bracelets, which keep caregivers aware of special needs that a patient may have. There are 5 different colors of medical alert bracelets, each with a different meaning instantly recognized by hospital staff. Most states have this system partially in place already, and the rest are working on initiating it via their state's Hospital Association.

### Red

Red-labeled color-coded medical bracelets feature the letter "A", which stands for "allergy". This is a non-specific label that encompasses all types of allergy, so a patient wearing a red "A" bracelet could have an allergy to a medication, food, dust, pets, or more. Currently, 26 states have adopted the red "A" color-coded medical bracelets as standard protocol for the safety of patients with allergies. The patient or family members should notify the caregiver of any allergies.

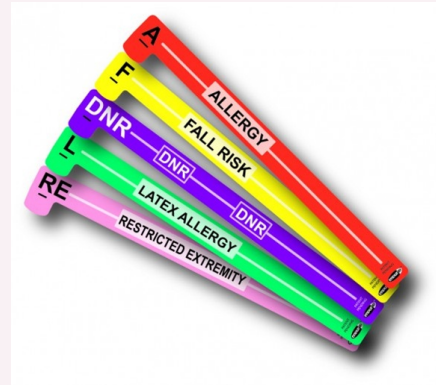
### Yellow

A yellow wristband with the letter "F" signifies a Fall Risk. Some elderly patients and those who are injured or weakened by illness may be susceptible to falling, and the yellow label can show the doctors and nurses that their patient needs extra care and attention while walking or getting out of bed. The patient or family members should notify caregivers if they are prone to losing balance, slipping on flooring, or weakened by a medical condition. 26 states so far have implemented the yellow fall-risk wristbands for their hospital patients..

### Purple

A purple wristband with the letters "DNR" stands for "Do Not Resuscitate" and shows that a patient has made the decision for his or her end-of-life care to not be resuscitated. Wearing the purple DNR wristband helps the patient's caregivers to be aware of his or her desires and confirms them for friends and family members. In this situation, it is especially important to remember that in some states, hospitals can choose whether or not to use this system, so patients should never wear color-coded wristbands that were not issued by the hospital where they are currently staying..

### Patient Bracelet Colors



### Pink

A pink-labeled bracelet featuring the letters "RE" alerts hospital staff to a "Restricted Extremity", which usually means that an injury or medical procedure has cause a patient's arm to be swollen or in pain, and applying blood pressure cuffs or IVs should be avoided. Pink bands should be worn by the patient on their affected extremity, and a nurse should be notified immediately if it breaks, falls off, or becomes unreadable at any time so that a replacement bracelet can be quickly applied. At this time, 7 different states have adopted this standard for hospital patients with restricted extremities..

### Green

Green-labeled bracelets have the letter "L" and show that the patient has a latex allergy. Since disposable gloves and many other hospital tools contain latex, a green alert notifies hospital staff to take precautions with their equipment and use substitutes when possible to avoid giving the patient an allergic reaction. Only 6 states currently have adopted this practice of branding their patients with latex allergies with green bands.

### About Standardization

When one standard system of color coded medical bracelets is practiced countrywide, patients will have the comfort of knowing that their caregivers will be able to be sensitive to their special needs after a single glance. More are expected to follow in the future to comply with the countrywide initiative to eliminate potentially dangerous confusion caused by different hospitals using different colors for medical alert bracelets.

