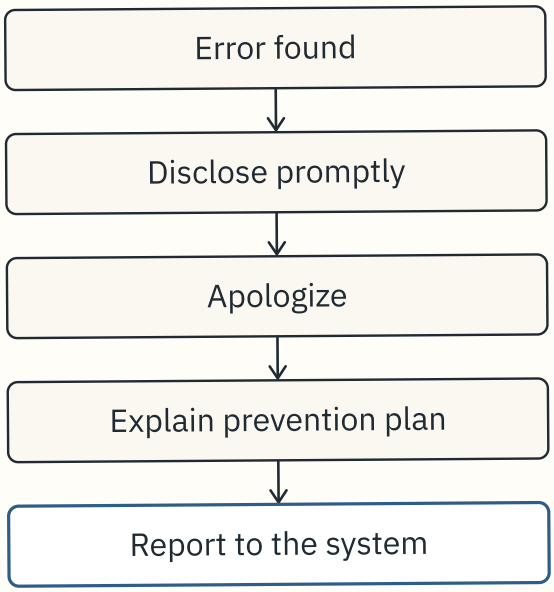
Disclosing medical errors

Disclose, apologize, report



Step by step

1. An error harms or could harm a patient
2. Physician involved tells the patient promptly
3. Apologize and explain the prevention plan
4. Keep caring for the patient
5. Report through the confidential channel

Duty	Key point
Disclose	Physician involved, promptly
Apologize	Acknowledge, explain prevention
Report	Confidential channel, even if no harm

The three duties

Rule of thumb

Tell the patient. Apologize. Report to the system.

Harm is not required: could harm is enough

Exam traps

- Disclose even when treatment will not change and no harm followed.
- Liability worry must not shape honesty.
- The physician involved discloses; do not delegate it.
- Report to fix the cause, not to punish.

Disclosing medical errors: disclose, apologize, report
Video, written lesson, practice question and sources: medservatory.com/usmle-step-2-ck/ethics-law-patient-safety/disclosing-medical-errors

For exam study only, not medical advice. Follow local guidelines and your lab's ranges.
© 2026 Medservatory, a project of ADMR Solutions Ltd. Free to print and share for personal study.