

English

Your Healthcare

Rights and Responsibilities

**A guide for patients,
carers and families**



Health

South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

Contents

Your Healthcare

Your rights & responsibilities.....3

Access

You have the right to health care.....3

Safety

You have the right to safe and high quality health care.....4

Respect

You have the right to respect, dignity and consideration.....4

Communication

You have the right to be informed about services, treatment,
options and costs in a clear and open way.....5

Participation

You have the right to be included in decisions and
choices about care.....6

Privacy and Confidentiality

You have the right to personal information, condition and
treatment being kept private and confidential.....7

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

You have the right to comment on your care and
have your concerns addressed.....8

Further Information.....8

Your Healthcare

Your rights & responsibilities

Everyone seeking or receiving healthcare in Australia has certain rights and responsibilities. They include the right to access health care, to safety, respect, communication, participation, privacy and to comment on their care.

Genuine partnerships between those receiving care and those providing it lead to the best possible outcomes.

Access

You have the right to health care

In NSW, the public health system offers high quality services for a range of health care needs. You will be given access to services on the basis of a medical assessment of your condition and the urgency of your need for treatment.

Health care services are open to everyone regardless of gender, marital status, disability, culture, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age or where you live in NSW. If the care required is not available locally you will be transferred to another service. Under Medicare, some of these services are free or partially paid for by the government.

Emergencies

Highly qualified health care professionals will determine the urgency and seriousness of your condition, and the type of treatment you require. Patients are treated according to who is the sickest and need the most immediate attention, not on the basis of who arrives first.

Non-urgent Health Care

If you have a minor illness or injury you should visit a general

practitioner or an after hours medical centre.

Access to Surgery

If your treatment requires surgery but is not urgent, you may need to wait.

Public and Private Health Care

Whether you are a public or private patient, you have the right to use public services. If you are admitted through the Emergency Department you can choose to use your private health insurance during your stay and obtain benefits at no cost to you. If you choose to be treated as a private patient for general admissions you are responsible for the cost.

Please be aware that some items such as TV hire, particular prescription drugs and appliances, are not covered by Medicare or private insurance.

Safety

You have the right to safe and high quality health care

Open Disclosure

If something goes wrong with your treatment or care, we will tell you about it as soon as possible. We will apologise, explain what happened, tell you about the possible effects and what we are going to do to prevent it happening again.

Respect

You have the right to respect, dignity and consideration

You will be treated with courtesy and consideration for your culture, beliefs, values and any personal characteristics, such as gender or disability.

Visitors

Your right to receive visitors will be respected and you will be given privacy. You have the right to have visitors with guide dogs.

Respecting Others

You have the right to be treated with respect and we ask that you show this courtesy to others. We ask that you respect all policies and practices, such as visiting hours, infection control measures, smoke-free zones and limitations on the use of mobile phones around medical equipment.

NSW Health has a 'zero tolerance' approach to threatening, abusive or violent behaviour by any person. We will take appropriate action to protect people and property.

Communication

You have the right to be informed about services, treatment, options and costs in a clear and open way.

Interpreter Services

Interpreters are available if you speak a language other than English. This is a free service available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Ask staff to arrange an interpreter for you. AUSLAN interpreters are also available.

Support People

You can have a relative, carer or other support person to help you communicate with health professionals but you must agree to that person being involved in your personal affairs.

Providing information

We ask that you give your health care provider as much information as possible about your health, including: allergies, medical conditions or disabilities. Tell them which medicines or remedies you are using

and whether you smoke, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs.

Tell your health care provider:

- About any changes to your condition and any reactions during treatment
- If you are being treated for the same problem by someone else
- If you do not understand any of your tests or treatments
- If you have any specific religious or cultural needs
- If you want to be treated as a private patient
- If you have made a decision not to follow treatment advice and not attend appointments

You will be regularly asked to confirm your name, date of birth and other details before any procedure or surgery and whenever you are transferred to another service for care. This ensures that you are correctly booked in for the right procedure by the right person at the right time throughout your treatment.

Participation

You have the right to be included in decisions and choices about care

Throughout your visit, health care providers will discuss treatment plans with you. You are encouraged to take part in these plans, such as transfers to other services and your discharge from hospital.

You are encouraged to ask questions and talk with your other health care providers, carers, family and support people before making decisions.

You have the right to seek a second opinion on treatment that has been recommended for you.

Consent

You must give consent before receiving treatment. In most cases

this will be verbal consent. Written consent is required for some procedures, such as surgery.

You have the right to withhold consent. In this case you will not receive treatment.

If you are unconscious or too ill to give consent yourself, a relative, carer or other person close to you will be asked to give consent for any necessary treatment. If this person is unavailable the Guardianship Tribunal can give consent.

In a life-threatening emergency where you are too ill or unconscious, giving your consent is not required.

Research and Education

You may be asked if students or health employees in training may be present while you are receiving care or treatment. This practice contributes to the development of professional skills. You may also be asked to participate in medical research. You have the right to say no to these requests. Your decision will not be put in your records and will have no impact on your treatment or access to services in the future.

Community Involvement

NSW Health seeks to involve the local community in the planning and delivery of local health services. If you would like to be involved contact the consumer and community participation office at your local health services.

Privacy and Confidentiality

You have the right to personal information, condition and treatment being kept private and confidential

You have the right to speak to a healthcare worker about the information contained in your medical record. You can also request a copy of your medical record.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

You have the right to comment on your care and have your concerns addressed

NSW Health wants to hear your comments on health care. It is important to know when things require improvement and when they are going well.

Complaints

It is best to resolve complaints with your health care provider in the first instance. Try to remain calm and be as clear as possible about what happened and how you would like it to be resolved.

Alternatively you can contact the health manager or complaints coordinator during business hours. Outside of these hours you can contact the senior nurse on duty. These people will ensure your complaint is treated confidentially as well as answer questions and keep you informed.

Further Information

More information is available in the brochure, **Your Healthcare: Rights and Responsibilities** available from:

- Health care providers
- www.health.nsw.gov.au

Or contact:



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