



# Patient Safety & You

[www.sschs.ca](http://www.sschs.ca)



## Table Of Contents

---

Patient Rights and Responsibilities	3
Identify Yourself	3
Familiarize Yourself	4
Personal Items	4
Preventing Falls	4
Medication Safety	5
Preventing Infections	7
Making Healthcare Decisions	8
Help Us Keep You Safe	8
Scent-Free and Smoke –Free Policy	9
What is Consent to Treatment?	9
Your Personal Health Information	9
Patient Suggestions or Concerns	11
Before You Go Home	12

## Patient Rights and Responsibilities

### Be Safe In Hospital

**Know your caregivers.** All staff are expected to wear patient identification badges. If at anytime during your stay, you are unsure about any person with whom you are interacting, the hospital encourages you to ask for identification. During your hospital stay, if you or your family member thinks that there has been a change in your medical condition and feel that immediate action is needed, or if you believe part of your care has not been addressed, we want to know. Make sure you know who is in charge of your care. This is especially important when many people are involved in your treatment, or when you have many health problems.

If you think of questions when your doctor or nurse is not present, write down your questions so that you can ask them at a later time.

We need to make sure we give the right care to the right person. **Speak up** if you think we have you mixed up with someone else.

**Speak up if you have questions or concerns.** If you don't understand, ask again. We encourage you to discuss your questions and concerns with your doctor or any member of your health care team.

**Ask questions.** Question anything that seems unusual or different from what you were told.

If you are hard of hearing or hearing impaired, or if English is not your primary language, ask for an interpreter to assist you with communication.

### Identify Yourself

Wear your hospital identification (I.D) bracelet at all times. If your bracelet comes off, ask the nurse to get you a new one. Make sure the spelling of your name is correct.

Health team members must check your ID Band, date of birth, or hospital ID number before:

- Giving you medicine or blood,
- Drawing your blood,
- Doing an X-ray, test, or treatment.



## **Familiarize yourself with your room, its furniture and the bathroom**

- Know how to call your nurse using the “nurse call bell”. Always call for help if you need it.
- Ask for any assistance on how to raise and lower your bed.
- Know where the light switches are located and ask for help turning them on and off when necessary.
- Call your nurse if your equipment alarms or beeps.
- Advise staff if there is any clutter or spills that may cause you to fall.
- If the fire alarm rings, stay in your room and wait for staff instructions.
- Tell your nurse if you need to leave the area.
- Report any unusual or suspicious activities or people.

### **Personal Items**

Pay careful attention to where you place your dentures, hearing aids, and eye glasses, as they are all important to your comfort and well-being.

Dentures are best stored in a cup.

Glasses and hearing aids are best kept in a case with your name on it when you're not wearing them. These items should be placed in the top drawer of your bedside table.

### **What can you do to prevent a fall?**

When you are already feeling unwell, having a fall can cause further injuries and may also lead to a lack of confidence and independence. Many things can increase your risk of falling, including poor balance, low blood pressure, some medications, physical inactivity, unfamiliar environments, poor eyesight and unsafe footwear. There are things you can do to lower your risk of falling.

You can take the following steps to lower your chance of having a fall in hospital:

- Don't hesitate to use your call bell or ask for help before getting up or reaching for belongings.
- If staff recommends that you need assistance or supervision when walking, always ask for assistance, especially at night, and wait for them to help you.
- When walking in the room, make sure there is adequate light and keep your eyeglasses within reach.
- Tell your health team if you have trouble walking, feel dizzy, light-headed, have blurred vision or have fallen in the past.
- Get up slowly after eating, sitting or lying down. Patients often fall when rushing to the bathroom.

- Bring any walking aids you already have with you to hospital and use them rather than the walls or furniture for balance.
- Bring a pair of non-slip footwear to the hospital.
- Bring your glasses with you to hospital. If you wear more than one pair, use the correct pair for walking. Be especially careful using bi-focal or multi-focal lenses.
- Familiarize yourself with your room, its furniture and the bathroom.
- Keep all personal items within your reach.
- Advise staff if there is any clutter or spills that may cause you to fall.
- Report unsafe hazards, such as wet floors
- Use the wall-mounted grab bars beside the toilet or the bathtub/shower.
- If the health team recommends new assistive devices and/or equipment, please ensure that you follow instructions provided and ask for additional information if needed
- Apply brakes when you are getting into or out of a wheelchair.

### **Help Us Make Sure Your Medications are Safe for You**

On admission your nurse will complete a Best Possible Medication History (BPMH) for the physician to review. A BPMH is a detailed list of all of your medications including dose, how often you take the drug, administration times, etc. To safeguard your health it is important that you inform your nurse of every drug that you are taking as well as any drug allergies you might have. Your medication list includes the medications prescribed by your physician and over the counter medications, such as:

- Vitamins
- Herbal remedies
- Food supplements
- Non prescription drugs or “over the counter” medication (e.g. gravol, cold medications, pain medications)

Always keep your medications in the bottle they were dispensed in at the pharmacy and bring them with you when you go for medical appointments. If you cannot bring the medications with you, it is recommended that you make a list of all the medications you are taking. Your pharmacist can help you make the list.

Upon discharge your nurse will complete a Discharge Medication Reconciliation for the physician to review and sign. This form will detail which medication you are going to continue taking, stop taking and new ones you will start taking. It is important to review this document with your physician or nurse prior to leaving the hospital. Please refer to the Medication Safety brochure for additional information.

Tell us if you have any **allergies** or bad reactions to medicines, foods or latex (rubber). Reactions can include rashes, headaches, breathing trouble, and feeling sick. Because some medicines have food in them (such as the eggs used in the flu shot), be sure to talk about your food allergies too.

Because some inhalers, eye drops, and other medications are not readily available in the hospital, you may be required to use your own supply during your hospital stay. Once it is confirmed that all of your drugs are available in hospital, your own medications can be taken home by a family member.

Do not take any of your own medicine while in the hospital without the permission of your physician. Some medicines combine with each other in your body and produce bad reactions. To protect you, your health care team must know about everything you take. Your doctor will order what s/he wants you to take.

Speak to hospital staff about any medications you believe you have been refused or if medications are delayed.

Tell hospital staff immediately if you do not feel well after taking a medicine. Tell us when you feel pain. Controlling your pain will help you recover sooner.

Ideally, you should get your medications from the same drug store every time so the pharmacist can keep a record of your drugs and alert you to any dangerous interactions.



## **What can you and your family do to help prevent infections?**

When you are unwell or recovering from an illness, the last thing you want is to get an infection which will make you feel worse and could delay your recovery.

Below are some ways you can reduce your risk of getting an infection:

Wash your hands before eating, after using the toilet or blowing your nose. You may wash your hands using soap and water or alcohol based sanitizers. Hand-washing is the best way to prevent infection, like the common cold or the flu. Germs and infections can be spread through coughing, sneezing, and touching. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or into your sleeve.

Avoid close contact with people who have an infectious condition, and ask people not to visit you if they are sick. Advise family members to wash their hands before and after visiting.

If you are sick you should avoid contact with other patients.

Doctors, nurses and other health care professionals come in contact with viruses and bacteria, and it is essential that they clean their hands properly before they treat you. If you are concerned, ask your health practitioner if they have washed their hands before they touch you.

If you have an open wound, be careful to follow instructions from your health practitioner on treatment and care.

Ask us if you need to follow special precautions to prevent infection to yourself or others. You may need to be in an isolation room if there are concerns with germs or infection. Everyone entering the room must wear special gear to protect you and them. Visitors need to ask the health team for instructions on how to apply and remove the gear prior to the first time entering and leaving the room.

Some of your personal items should not be in an isolation room. Feel free to ask us if items can or cannot be taken into the room.

Check with your health team before you have visitors, especially when you are in isolation. Young children should not enter an isolation room without approval. Don't hesitate to ask if you have further questions.

Get vaccinated, if it is recommended. Flu and pneumonia vaccines can help prevent illnesses in elderly and high-risk patients.

## **Making Health Care Decisions**

One of the keys to getting the best health care is to be an active member of your health care team. This means taking part and being involved in every decision about your care. This also means asking a member of your health care team if you have questions so that you can make informed choices. It means coming prepared for your medical treatment and knowing what to do when you go home. And it means getting support from friends and family if you need it. It is often helpful to bring a family member or friend with you when you talk to your health care team. If you need an interpreter, ask in advance if there will be one there, or bring someone who can interpret for you.

## **Help Us Keep You Safe**

Get the information you need to make informed choices by asking the following:

- What is my health problem (or diagnosis)?
- What tests or treatments do I need? Why? What are the risks?
- What are my test results?
- What are my options?
- What choices do I have between various treatments?
- What is the next step in my treatment?
- What are my new medications and why do I need them?
- What are the side effects to watch for?

## **Scent-Free and Smoke-Free Environment**

To protect the comfort, and well-being of patients, staff, and visitors, we ask that you do not wear or use any scented products on the premises such as perfume, aftershave, perfumed body wash, etc.

Smoking is not permitted on the premises. If you feel the need to go outside to smoke, please let your nurse know that you will be leaving the building.

Speak to your health team about alternatives to smoking such as nicotine replacement therapy.



## What is Meant by Consent to Treatment?

Every patient has the right to participate in any decision about their health care or medical treatment. As a rule, health practitioners are required to inform you of the nature of the proposed treatment and to gain your consent for all treatment, before it starts.



Consent is a patient's agreement for a health practitioner to provide treatment, including any medical or surgical management, care, therapy, test or procedure.

The process and requirements for obtaining consent may vary depending on the competency and age of the patient. However, it will involve the following steps:

- A discussion about the pros and cons of each treatment option.
- The patient decides what course of action to take.
- The health practitioner gains the patient's consent for a specific treatment, having appropriately disclosed any material risks for that specific treatment.
- The health practitioner records and documents the consent process.

Health care and medical treatments are often complex and you may receive information that you do not understand at a time when you may be distressed by your condition and diagnosis. Understanding this complex information is crucial to the decisions you make.

When making your decision about whether or not to undergo a treatment, you should ask your health practitioner the following questions:

- Why do you think this procedure is appropriate for me?
- Is this procedure new or uncommon and is there sufficient research to support your recommendation?
- Do you have any other information that will help me to make an informed decision?

When the treatment is not urgent, you should take your time to consider the information you have been given by your health practitioner. If you do not understand the information you have been given, ask questions. If you still do not understand, ask more questions.

Whether or not medical treatment is to take place is your decision. Although health practitioners have extensive knowledge of the treatments that are proposed for you, only you know about your lifestyle and preferences and only you can decide which risks are acceptable to you and which risks are not acceptable. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time prior to the start of the procedure.

## Personal Health Information – Answering your questions

### What health information do we have about you?

Your health record includes your full name, sex, date of birth, address and phone number, and Health Insurance Number. It also contains your medical history and reports from your doctors and specialists. Your record may include personal or family information that you (or your family) have told your doctor or nurse. Your record may be on paper or in a computer, or both.

### Who can look at your personal health information?

Doctors, nurses and other health care workers who are treating you can look at your health record on a 'need-to-know' basis. This is true if the treatment takes place here, or somewhere else. Reasons we would share relevant parts of your record include:

- **If you are referred to another specialist. *Why?*** Because he or she will need to see what services you have already had before recommending a plan of care.
- **If you have home nursing services. *Why?*** Because the nurse or case manager may need to check your records to find out about your condition and what medicines you are taking.
- **If you have a test. *Why?*** Because a doctor could use information in earlier reports to help him or her interpret the results of the test.

We will send your family doctor a copy of your discharge summary and medications.

### Are there other reasons why we may use or share your personal health information?

We use the information from your health record to help us plan and manage services and for quality of care audits.

We may ask you to share your opinion of the care you have received by completing a survey. The survey will be mailed to your home and is anonymous so if you decide to complete and return the survey, we will not know who you are.

### How do we protect your personal health information?

#### Can you see the personal health information that we have about you?

Yes. You can ask to look at your health record. Your health care provider will help you.

### **Can you correct the personal health information that we have about you?**

If you find any inaccuracies in your health record, you can ask us to correct them.

### **Can you ask that your personal health information not be shared?**

You can ask us not to share certain parts of your health information with certain people. For example, you can ask us not to share the notes made by your health care workers with your family doctor.

### **Will you be asked for consent to use any of your personal health information?**

**Yes, in most cases.** But there are some exceptions. Under provincial legislation we are allowed to use your health information for research, surveillance or administration. In these cases, clear rules restrict how we use your information and names are never identified in any reports.

If you have any questions, comments or requests, please contact the SSCHS Privacy Officer at 705-864-3061.

## **Patient Suggestions or Concerns**

Our goal is to help every patient in any way that we can, so we are always interested to know if you feel that you have had excellent care from our staff. If you are not satisfied with your care, are aware of something that seemed unsafe or you would like to make suggestions about how we can improve, please let us know. You can give us your suggestions or complaints in the following ways:

- **Verbal concerns** can be made to nursing staff, physicians or other health care professionals
- **Suggestions** can be written on a complaint form or online at [www.sschs.ca](http://www.sschs.ca)
- **Written complaints** can be made by filling out a Patient Complaint Form available from staff at the nursing station, main entrance or online.
- **Fill out and return** the patient survey which will be mailed to your home address after your stay

We are keenly interested in what you have to say and are committed to following up any patient suggestions or complaints. We see them as important learning opportunities to improve patient care.

If you have submitted a complaint or suggestion, the manager most directly involved with your care will follow-up with you to discuss your concern. A review will occur with all relevant stakeholders until resolution or closure is achieved.

## Before you go home

When you are getting ready to go home from the hospital ask as many questions as you can to make sure you understand:

- What treatment you received?
- What type of care you will need at home?
- What symptoms to look for and what to do if they happen?
- What you should avoid doing or eating?
- How to use any special equipment (e.g. mobility aides) supplies (e.g. bandages) or tubes (e.g. catheters)?
- Date and time of your next clinic visit?
- Date and time of any specialists' appointments or for diagnostic tests?

Make sure that you understand all of the instructions you have been given about your medications before you leave hospital. This includes any instructions about whether you should continue to take the medications you were taking before you came into hospital.



### Contact Us:

Chapleau Health Services  
PO Box 757  
6 Broomhead Road  
Chapleau, Ontario  
P0M 1K0  
705-864-1520  
[www.sschs.ca](http://www.sschs.ca)