

**Staying Safe:**

# In Hospital

**Easy Read**





This document was written by the [Health Care Consumers Association](#).



We speak up for people in the ACT.

We work on health care issues.



This guide tells you how to stay safe in hospital.



We also have guides for Staying Safe:

- Going to Hospital
- At Home

## Your Rights in Hospital

Rights say how you should be treated by hospital staff.



Health care should be:

- **Respectful**

Staff should care about you and your needs



- **Responsive**

Staff should listen and help you and not take too long.



- **Safe**

You should feel safe while in hospital.

You should feel like you can trust the staff that care for you.



- **High Quality Care**

The hospital staff should give the best care they can.



- **Care You Need**

You should have a say in your care.

Each person should get the care they need.

## Being involved in your own care



Each day hospital staff will do a **hand over**. This is when they share information about your care with each other.



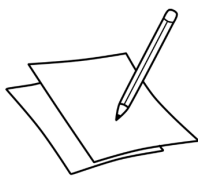
They do this when current staff start and finish work.

This happens at least once a day.



You can talk to staff at any time to:

- Ask questions
- Share information about yourself.



You can ask staff:

- to tell you what words mean
- to write or draw an answer
- to explain it differently



You can ask for a free interpreter or information in your own language.

## Hospital staff will ask you questions



Staff will ask you the same questions many times.



This is to make sure they get everything right.

They might ask:

- Your name and date of birth
- If you have any **allergies**.



An allergy is when your body reacts badly to something that is usually safe.

For example, parts of your body might itch, swell or go red.



- About the treatment you are having

This is to make sure you know what will happen to you.

## Giving consent



Consent is when you say yes to something.

**Informed consent** is important.



This means that you are given all the information you need to make the best decision.

You or your **decision-maker** can choose to say yes or no to treatment in hospital.

A decision-maker is a person who makes decisions for you if you cannot.



You can ask staff questions to help you decide to say yes or no to treatment.



**You should be a part of decisions about your treatment and care.**

## Falls in Hospital



You are more likely to fall over when you are unwell.



If you fall in hospital you should always call for help.

Staff are there to help you.

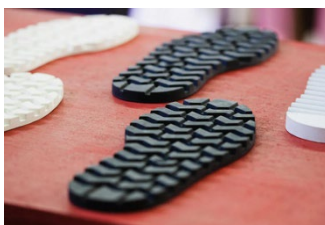
These tips can help you to stay safe.



Keep the call button where you can reach it. Press it to ask staff for help:



- To go to the toilet
- If you feel dizzy
- If you need to leave the room.



Wear shoes that are not slippery.

That means they have good grips on the bottom.



**Aids** are things that help you do things in your life. Such as:

- Glasses to see
- Hearing aids to hear
- Walker to move around.

Remember to use your aids:



- Wear your glasses
- Put in your hearing aids
- Use other aids if you need to.



## Stop Bed Sores



Bed sores are also called pressure injuries. This is when your skin gets red, sore or broken.



They come from lying in the same position for too long.

They can be very painful and take a long time to heal.

Follow these tips to help you stop getting bed sores.

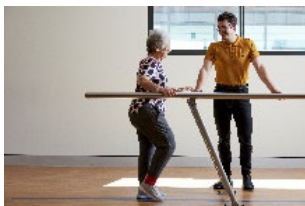


Move positions on the bed:

- Roll onto different parts of the bed
- Try sitting up.

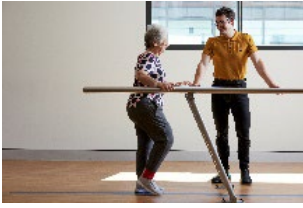


Sit in a chair when you can.



Stand and walk when you can.

## Staying Safe: In Hospital



Do the exercises a **physiotherapist** asked you to do.

Physiotherapists help people who have trouble moving their body.



Eat healthy food.

Drink enough water.



Use skin cream or moisturiser on your skin.



Look at your skin.

Tell hospital staff if your skin is red, sore, broken, tingling or numb

## Stop Infection



An infection is when germs enter your body and make you sick.

Infections can make getting better harder and take longer.



Germs can spread:

- From dirty hands
- From the breath of people who are sick.



Washing your hands helps stop infection.



Wash your hands:

- After the bathroom
- After coughing and sneezing
- Before eating

## Staying Safe: In Hospital



Staff should wash their hands before touching you.



Visitors should:

- Wash their hands before coming into your room
- Stay home if they are sick
- Wear a mask if you need them to.



You can also wear a mask if you want.  
Ask staff for masks.

## Cannula and Catheter Safety



A cannula is a small tube that is put into your skin with a needle.

It is usually used to put medicines into your blood.



A catheter is a small tube that takes urine from your bladder into a bag.



Cannulas and catheters sometimes give you an infection.

What you can do:



- Be careful not to knock or pull your cannula and catheter
- Wear loose clothing that does not pull on the cannula or catheter
- Keep the cannula dry and keep the dressing on

## Staying Safe: In Hospital



Ask staff for help if you are worried about your cannula or catheter.



Tell staff if:

- You notice redness, pain or swelling
- You feel hot or are shivering
- You notice any problems
- You notice leaking or blood

Your cannula or catheter needs to come out before you go home.

Tell staff if you still have it.

## Your Medications

We take medications to make us feel better, like:



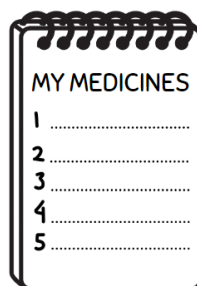
- Medications your doctor told you to take
- Medications you can buy yourself, like Panadol
- Vitamins
- Herbs or natural medicine.



Medication comes in different forms, like pills, creams, inhalers or injections.



In hospital they should give you all the medications you need.



You should tell staff:

- The medications you usually take
- About any medications you brought with you

## Staying Safe: In Hospital



- Any allergies to medication you have
- If you feel unwell after taking medication



You can ask staff any questions about your medications.

You can ask them:



- If you think there is a mistake
- How and when to take them
- About their side effects.



## Tell Staff If You Feel Worse



Tell staff if you or your family notice changes in how you feel.



Tell staff if you notice:

- Breathing changes
- **Symptoms** you did not have before coming to hospital.

Symptoms are signs of an illness or condition that you can see or feel such as:



- Swelling or redness anywhere
- You need to vomit
- Pain that is new.



- Being hot or clammy
- Feeling confused or upset
- Anything you are worried about.

**If you are worried, follow these 3 steps:**

- 1.** Press the buzzer and tell your nurse why you are worried.
- 2.** If you are still worried ask to talk to the nurse in charge.
- 3.** If you are still worried after you have done these steps, call the **CARE team**:
  - (02) 6244 3337 at The Canberra Hospital
  - (02) 6245 3111 at North Canberra Hospital.

A senior nurse will come to you and help as needed.

## Getting Ready To Go Home



If you will need help at home, talk to staff. They will find someone to help you get support.



Plan how you will get home. Make sure:

- Someone helps you to get home
- Your home has food.



Make sure any follow up visits are booked with your usual doctor (GP) or community nurses.



Ask for things you brought to be given back including:

- X-rays and scans
- Your medication from home.



See our booklet **Staying Safe – At Home** for more information about planning for when you come home.

## Staying Safe: In Hospital

You will get a **discharge summary**.



A discharge summary has all the important information about your stay in hospital.

It also says what you need to do after hospital.

You can ask questions about it.

Your GP will also get a copy of your discharge summary.



## Word list

**Hand over:** This is when hospital staff share information about your care with each other.

**Allergies:** An allergy is when your body reacts badly to something that is usually safe.

**Decision-maker:** A decision-maker is a person who makes decisions for you if you cannot.

**GP:** The doctor you usually see when you feel unwell.

**Informed consent:** This means that you are given all the information you need to make the best decision.

**Physiotherapist:** Physiotherapists help people who have trouble moving their body.

**Symptoms:** Symptoms are signs of an illness or condition that you can see or feel.

**Discharge summary:** A discharge summary has all the important information about your stay in hospital. It also says what you need to do after hospital.

**Medications:** This includes things you take to feel better. They might be pills, creams or injections. They might be from your doctor or your pharmacist.

## For more information you can:



Read the [other Staying Safe guides](#) on our website.



Read our [other resources on health care](#).



Read information about staying at:

- [The Canberra Hospital](#)
- [North Canberra Hospital](#)
- [University of Canberra Hospital](#)

**Our next booklet is called  
Staying Safe – At Home**

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