



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Staying Safe in Hospital



Patient**First**



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Staying Safe in Hospital

This guide is designed to make your stay in hospital as smooth and comfortable as possible.

Your rights and responsibilities

You have the right to health care that is:

- **Respectful**
- **Responsive**
- **Safe**

You also have a duty to treat the hospital, staff, and other patients with respect and provide healthcare staff with information about your health.

Be involved in your care

During your stay, you will be cared for by different healthcare staff at different times, who will keep each other up-to-date about your care and treatment. You and your carer or family members should be involved in this process so you'll know what is going on with your care and treatment.

If at any time you don't understand what is being said to you, ask the staff caring for you to repeat or explain the information in another way.

Identification: right person, right place, right procedure

Before starting any medical procedure, medical staff will make a final check to confirm:

- your full name and date of birth
- any allergies or bad reactions you may have to any medicines, food, or other
- the procedure you are having
- the part of your body where the procedure is being performed (if applicable)
- Your consent form is complete and correct.



You will be asked the same questions a few times. The healthcare team need to be sure they have everything correct, and that you know what is happening to you.

Prevent yourself from falling

Falls can happen easily when you are unwell, taking new medicines, and in unfamiliar places.

Healthcare staff will discuss your risk of falling and put actions in place to reduce your risk, such as:

- wear suitable clothing and non-slip footwear with good support
- get up slowly after sitting or lying down
- be aware that you may need more assistance than usual to move around
- call staff for help if you need help moving, if you are feeling unwell, dizzy, or there are hazards in your way
- have the call bell within reach and use it to call for help
- get to know your hospital room, furniture, and bathroom location
- use your glasses, walking and hearing aids and keep them within easy reach
- be extra careful in wet areas.

If you do have a fall:

- don't try to get up by yourself
- always call for help from staff.

Families and carers can help by:

- letting nursing staff know when they have finished their visit
- helping keep the hospital room/bed area free of clutter
- removing belongings that are no longer required.

Prevent pressure injuries

A pressure injury is a redness, break or blister of the skin caused by constant pressure on an area of the body. They are commonly called 'bed sores'.

They can be very painful, take a long time to heal or may never heal and may affect your ability to move.

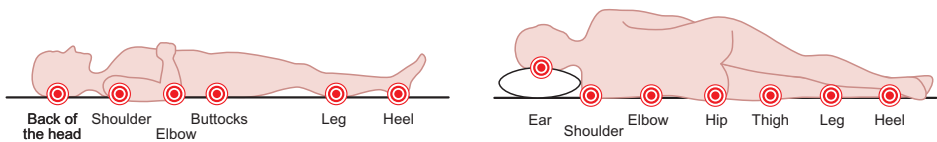
To lower your risk of getting a pressure injury, you can:

- change position in bed every 30 minutes (ask a nurse if you need help to move)
- walk around the room or ward if staff have told you it is okay to do so
- drink plenty of water and eat healthy food
- keep good posture when sitting
- check your skin for signs of redness or blistering
- moisturise your skin well.

Let nursing staff know straight away if you notice these early signs:

- redness that does not go away
- broken or blistered skin
- pain in a fixed area of your body such as heels or bottom
- tingling or numbness.

If you cannot check all of your body, ask a nurse, family member or carer to check regularly for you.



Location of pressure sores



Prevent infection

An infection could slow your recovery and make you feel worse.

Bacteria or germs that cause infections are most commonly spread through hand contact.

Practising good hand hygiene is one way to avoid infection. This means:

- wash your hands before eating or touching food, and after going to the toilet
- use running water and soap or an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands
- ask your visitors to clean their hands before visiting your room.

Remember – you can remind healthcare staff to wash their hands before they examine you.

Other ways to prevent infection include:

- avoid close contact with people who may have a spreadable illness, and ask people not to visit if they are sick
- always cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and wash your hands straight after
- follow instructions on how to treat and care for any surgical or open wounds.

Your medicines

It's important you keep track of your medicines – taking the right medicine at the right time will help you get well.

Using medicines in the wrong way may cause unwanted side effects.

Medicines may be:

- tablets, capsules or liquids, patches, creams and ointments
- drops and sprays for eyes, nose, ears and mouth
- inhalers and puffers
- injections or implants
- pessaries or suppositories
- vitamins and dietary supplements
- natural or herbal remedies.



Ask your nurse
before taking any
medicine on your own
during your stay

To be medicine-wise in hospital:

- tell staff if you have had an allergic or bad reaction to any medicines or if you have trouble swallowing medicines
- tell staff straight away if you feel unwell after taking any medicine
- ask the staff caring for you if you think you should have received some medicines, or the medicines appear different
- make sure all medicines are explained to you before you leave hospital to go home or to another care provider
- ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you don't understand your medicine instructions.

Questions to ask about your medicines in hospital:

- What is this medicine for?
- Are there any possible side effects?
- Can they be taken safely with other medicines?

Speaking up if you feel unwell

Nobody knows your health like you do. You are the best person to notice any changes in your health.

Your family or carers who spend a lot of time with you may also notice changes in how you look or act, before healthcare staff notice these changes.

If you or your family or carer notice changes in your health, it's important to let the staff looking after you know as soon as possible.



If you think it's urgent,
press the call bell

Examples of things to alert staff to may include (but are not limited to):

- changes in how fast you are breathing
- noticing that you are more pale than usual
- hands or feet unusually cold or warm
- feeling unusually hot and clammy
- acting or feeling out of character
- having more pain than usual
- feeling confused, anxious, distressed or angry
- concerns that you have had different medicines to usual
- feeling dizzy, extra drowsy or sleepy
- feeling like you are going to be sick.



If you are still concerned
after speaking with the staff
press the call bell again

Tell us about your experience

Letting us know what is good and what is not good about your care helps us to improve our services for everyone.

Every hospital has ways for you provide feedback on your care. You can:

- talk to one of the healthcare staff that are caring for you
- talk to the patient liaison officer/Aboriginal liaison officer
- ask a family member, friend, or carer to help you raise your concerns or speak on your behalf
- provide online feedback on the hospital website
- complete a compliments and complaints form.

You can provide feedback during and after your hospital stay.



**PATIENT
OPINION** AUSTRALIA
BE HEARD.

www.patientopinion.org.au

Share your story on Patient Opinion so we know what we're doing right, and where we can improve.

If you are not happy with how your feedback has been addressed, please contact:

Health Consumers Council of WA provides free advice and can help you make a complaint.

Phone: 9221 3422 or Freecall 1800 620 780

Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) can help you if you are not happy with what happened with your complaint. **Phone 6551 7600 or Freecall 1800 813 583 or**

Email mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au

Notes

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Endorsements



HEALTH CONSUMERS'
COUNCIL
YOUR VOICE ON HEALTH



Carers WA
Australia



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in alternative formats on request for
a person with disability.

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