

# Your Rights and Responsibilities

## Feedback

If you have questions, compliments and/or concerns, call our Patient Relations team:

- › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177
- › [www.nshealth.ca/contact-us/patient-feedback](http://www.nshealth.ca/contact-us/patient-feedback)

متوفر أيضاً باللغة العربية.

Also available in Arabic: AR85-2205

Aussi disponible en français : FF85-1739



# Your Rights and Responsibilities

You are an important member of your health care team. It is important to understand your rights and responsibilities as a patient.

- Your rights are:
  - › How you should expect to be treated
- Your responsibilities are:
  - › How you can be an active member of your health care team
  - › How you can help us give you the best and safest care possible

We encourage you and your essential care partners to talk openly about your care. Your **essential care partners** are people you have chosen to give you physical, psychological, and emotional support (like help making decisions, coordinating your care, and communicating with your health care team).

If you have questions or want to talk more about your rights and responsibilities, please talk with a member of your health care team or with the Patient Relations team.

# Quality care and safety in the hospital

## **Rights:**

- You have the right to have the best and safest health care possible.
- You have the right to have the most comfort we can provide.

## **Responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for being an active, involved, and informed member of your health care team. If you have questions, please ask a member of your health care team.

## **Before your hospital stay**

- When you come to the hospital or health centre, give your health care team as much information as you can about your health. This will help us give you the best possible care.
- Bring a list of all your medications (including prescription and over-the-counter medications, herbal medications, vitamins, and supplements). Tell your health care team how much you take and when you take them.
- **Tell all your health care providers if you have allergies or reactions to medications or food.**

- If you are coming to the hospital or health centre for an appointment and will need help getting around, bring your essential care partner with you. If this is not possible, ask a staff member as soon as you arrive.

## During your stay

- ☒ Ask questions
- ☒ Ask for help
- ☒ Listen carefully and seek clarification when needed
- ☒ Talking about any concerns you have if they arise
- **Make sure that a health care team member checks your full legal name and birthdate any time they give you tests (like blood tests), treatments, or medications.** Feel free to ask them to do this.
- Ask a member of your health care team if you do not understand what treatment, procedure, or surgery you are having. This is important so you know what symptoms or side effects to watch for and how to help your recovery.

- Ask a member of your health care team about any new or different medications. Ask what the medications are and why you are getting them. We want you to understand your medications and how they can help you.
- Tell a member of your health care team if you think you are about to get the wrong treatment or medication.
- Help prevent infections by washing your hands often. Tell your essential care partners, visitors, and members of your health care team to do this, too. For more information, please use the QR code or the link below, or ask a member of your health care team for pamphlet 1441, *Infection Prevention and Control*:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1441](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1441)



## Staying safe in the hospital:

### Avoiding falls

- You may be at a higher risk of falling while in the hospital because of your illness, the medications you are taking, or because of surgery.
- Falls are a common cause of hip fractures in older adults. How to lower your risk:
  - ☑ If we ask you not to get up without help, please wait for staff to help you.
  - ☑ Make sure your call bell and personal items are within arm's reach.
  - ☑ Using the washroom: Please let us know if you need help.
  - ☑ Wear shoes and clothes that fit and will not cause you to trip. Rubber soled slippers are best.
  - ☑ Avoid long pants and bathrobes.
  - ☑ If you use a walker or cane at home, please bring it to the hospital. If the health care team has asked you to use a walking aid while you are with us, please keep using it. We encourage you to ask your health care team any questions you may have about how to use your walking aids properly.

- ☑ Keep the bed at knee height. If the health care team have asked you to use bedrails, please call for help before getting out of bed.
- ☑ Tell us if you have fallen before (at home or in the hospital) or think you may fall easily.

### **Understanding your medication(s)**

- Knowing what medication(s) you are taking and why you need them can help keep you safe not only while you are in the hospital, but also when you go home.

### **Reducing risk of pressure injuries (bedsores)**

- A pressure injury is an injury to the skin and tissue under the skin. Skin over bony areas are at higher risk (like on the heels, elbows, hips, or bum). The skin gets red at first and may turn into an open sore.

## How to lower your risk:

- ☑ Tell us if you have any reddened or open areas on your skin.
- ☑ Get out of bed, turn, and change positions often to make sure you get good blood flow. If you need help, let us know.
- ☑ Eat as healthy as you can, making sure to eat high in protein as it helps with recovery.
- ☑ Use pillows to help protect bony areas from pressure.
- ☑ Drink 8 cups of fluid every day. Talk to your dietitian about specific restrictions.
- ☑ If you have a bowel (poop) or bladder (pee) accident, tell your nurse right away so moisture does not stay on your skin. This prevents pressure injuries.

## **Questions to ask yourself before you go home:**

- Do you have all the information you need?
- Do you understand the instructions your health care team gave you, including how to take your medications (if you were given new ones)?
- Do you understand who is responsible for making any follow-up appointments and when?

If you have questions or concerns about your care, talk to a member of your health care team or ask to talk to the unit manager right away.

## **After your stay**

- Tell your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) that you were in the hospital. If you do not have a primary health care provider, you can add your name to the Need a Family Practice Registry provincial waitlist:
  - › Phone: 811
  - › Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
**or**
  - › Register online:
  - › <https://needafamilypractice.nshealth.ca>

- When a spot is available, a primary health care provider's office will call you at the phone number you gave when you registered.
- While you are waiting, registry staff may email you to check if you still need a primary health care provider.

Keep the phone numbers for your primary health care provider, other health care providers, and your pharmacy in your wallet or bag, or saved in your cell phone. Share with your essential care partner or keep a copy by your home phone.

## **Dignity and respect**

### **Rights:**

- You have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration.
- You have the right to get care in a safe, respectful environment.

### **Responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for treating all staff, volunteers, and other patients with dignity, respect, and consideration.
- You are responsible for talking and acting respectfully toward all staff, volunteers, and other patients.

# Information about your health care

## Rights:

- You have the right to ask questions and to get information about your health care, in words you understand.
- You have the right to know the names, positions, titles, and professional title of everyone on your health care team.
- You have the right to share what you think and notice about your health care experience, and to express your concerns.
- You have the right to an explanation and list of any fee for service not covered by a provincial or private health care plan.
- You have the right to review or get copies of your health record (there are some exceptions). There may be a fee. For more information, contact:
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-833-213-1634
  - › Email: [Privacy@nshealth.ca](mailto:Privacy@nshealth.ca)

## **Responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for giving your essential care partners clear and correct information about your health.
- You and your essential care partners are responsible for telling us as soon as possible if there is a change in your condition.
- You are responsible for asking questions until you feel you have all the information you need to make informed health care decisions.
- If a service is not covered by Nova Scotia's health insurance program (MSI), you are responsible for knowing what your private health care insurance covers. You are also responsible for paying any fees. For more information, visit:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/fees-and-bill-payments](http://www.nshealth.ca/fees-and-bill-payments)

# Partnership and participation

## Rights:

- You have the right to be included in your health care experience by sharing what you think and notice about your care.
- You have the right to express your concerns.
- You have the right to be involved in planning for your discharge.
- You have the right to know and understand the risks and benefits of any medication, treatment, or decision about your health.
- You have the right to not accept any medication or treatment (there are some exceptions).
- You have the right to not take part in a research study, if you are offered the chance to do so. Your decision will not affect the quality of care you get.
- You have the right to leave the hospital against the advice of your doctor or nurse practitioner (there are some exceptions).

## **Responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for telling your doctor or a member of your health care team about any changes in your health.
- You are responsible for following your treatment plan, as agreed with your doctor, nurse practitioner, or health care team.
- You are responsible for keeping or cancelling appointments.

## **Essential Care Partners**

### **Rights:**

- You have the right to:
  - › Name up to 2 people who will be your essential care partners
  - › Decide how your essential care partners will take part in your care and decision-making
  - › Limit or deny visits from certain people

## **Responsibilities:**

- Your essential care partners are responsible for:
  - › Caring for themselves without support or supervision
  - › Providing their own food and personal care items
  - › Being sensitive to the needs of other patients and their loved ones
  - › Limiting noise and disturbances
- We may interrupt visits to give patient care or to protect the privacy of other patients. Essential care partners are responsible for respecting these interruptions.

## **Privacy**

### **Rights:**

- You have the right to have your health information kept confidential (private).
- For your ongoing care, your health information is shared among the health care team. With your consent, we can also share this information with others.
- You have the right to as much privacy as we can give.

## **Responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for respecting the privacy and confidentiality of others, including patients, visitors, and staff.
- We encourage you and your essential care partners to talk openly about your health care. If you have questions or want to talk more about your rights and responsibilities, please talk with a member of your health care team or the Patient Relations team.

## **More information about your hospital stay**

- We will do our best to give you the accommodations you ask for.

**Note:** Private and semi-private rooms are not always available.

- We make every effort to place people in same-gender rooms. There are times when the number of hospital admissions means we must place people in a room with others who are not the same gender. If you have concerns about this during your admission, please talk to the unit charge nurse.

- During your care, you may be transferred to another Nova Scotia Health site. Each site gives different levels of care. We want to make sure all patients get the level of care they need.
- All Nova Scotia Health sites are smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free. **Please do not wear scented products.**

## Resources

### Patient Education Resources

- Find patient information pamphlets:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

### Subject guides

- A collection of health care information created by health care professionals to help patients and the public better understand their health:
  - › <https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

## **811**

- You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to talk with a registered nurse about your non-emergency health care questions.
  - › Phone: 811
- While in the hospital or after you go home, if you have questions or comments, please talk to your health care provider or the manager of the department where you are being cared for.

## **Patient/Family Feedback**

- When you are at home, if you have questions or comments, please call the Healthcare Experience team:
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177 for any of our locations
- Annapolis Valley, South West, and South Shore areas
  - › Email: [WZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca](mailto:WZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca)
- Colchester, Cumberland, Pictou County, and East Hants areas
  - › Email: [NZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca](mailto:NZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca)
- Cape Breton, Antigonish, and Guysborough areas
  - › Email: [EZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca](mailto:EZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca)
- Halifax Regional Municipality, Eastern Shore, and West Hants areas
  - › Email: [CZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca](mailto:CZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca)

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

*Prepared by:* Quality Improvement and Safety  
*Designed and Managed by:* Library Services

WX85-0466 © November 2025 Nova Scotia Health Authority  
To be reviewed November 2028 or sooner, if needed.  
Learn more: <https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources>

