

Patient & Family Safety Information



Safety First!

Patient & Family Safety Information

Safety is everyone's responsibility.

This booklet explains the role that patients and their families play in terms of safety within NSHA.

Infection Control

Hand washing

Hand washing with soap and water is the best way to avoid infection for you, your family, visitors, and staff.

Please wash your hands before and after meal times and after going to the washroom. Encourage anyone entering your room to practice good hand hygiene. You will find alcohol hand sanitizer stations throughout the unit and building to support good hand hygiene practice.



Flu season

Flu season generally runs from November to March. Each year all patients are offered the flu vaccine while in hospital. Staff will talk with you about why the flu vaccine is important.

Coughing and sneezing

Coughing and sneezing into your sleeve or a tissue is the best way to keep from spreading germs. Wash your hands after putting the tissue in the garbage.

Responsible visiting

Family members, friends, and other visitors should not visit if they are feeling ill (vomiting, diarrhea) or have symptoms of the flu (such as fever, cough, sore throat, or generalized aches and pains).

Bringing food from home

Food from home **may not be shared** with other patients. Other patients may have problems with some foods or drinks. Patients or their families are responsible for heating up or preparing any food brought in from home.

Giving food to other patients

If another patient asks you for food or beverages, always check with staff before giving it to them as they may have allergies or other problems.

Fall prevention

Our goal is to balance personal safety with independence and mobility. We try our best to lessen the risk of patients falling. Everyone can help make our shared spaces safer by taking care.

- Keep hallways, rooms, and care areas clear of clutter or any hazards.
- Use the handrails in the halls.
- Get up slowly if you have been sitting or lying down.
- Get daily exercise and good sleep, and eat well to lessen your risk of falling.
- Have someone turn on the light when going to the bathroom at night or ask for help if you need it.

Tripping hazards

Secure cords to prevent tripping hazards.

Bed alarms

Some patients are at risk of falling when getting out of their bed, chair, or wheelchair. Please call staff for help. There are also bed alarms that can be used if needed to warn staff that a patient is trying to get up by themselves.

Footwear

It is important to wear appropriate footwear. When shoes fit well and provide good ankle and foot support, balance and stability is better. Please wear shoes both on and off the unit. Please do not go around the unit in your bare feet or socks.

Personal furniture

To help you feel at home, families may bring in small personal items such as small pictures, radios, portable DVD players, etc. For safety reasons and comfortable movement, please keep in mind that space is limited. Keep all rooms clear of clutter so everyone can get out quickly in case of an emergency.

If your family member has to sleep in the room with you on a cot or chair, we ask that they fold it up and place it out of the way by 8 a.m. so that staff may care for you with ease.

Medication safety

You and your family members are encouraged to ask nurses, doctor(s), or pharmacist(s) any questions about the medications you are taking.

Patients and family members should check with staff before bringing in any over-the-counter or other medications. These may be harmful when taken along with other medications and foods.

If a patient has permission to keep medications in their room, **they must be locked up.**

Fire safety

Fire drills

The hospital has a Fire Safety Plan. There are monthly fire drill practices. During these drills, you will hear the fire alarm and messages over the overhead paging system. It is very important to stay calm and follow the directions of the staff.

Evacuation routes

Patients and families should check the locations of fire alarm stations and emergency exits. Fire alarm stations are located near exit doors.

Smoking

There is no smoking or vaping on hospital property. Anyone smoking on hospital property will be fined and escorted off the property by security personnel. Programs are available to help you in your efforts to stop smoking. Please ask staff for more information.

Equipment inspection

If you notice anything that may be a safety hazard or cause concern or risk, please talk to the nursing staff.

All electrical items brought in for patients' rooms must be CSA-approved. Electric blankets, extension cords, and small space heaters are not allowed. Please use power bars instead of extension cords.

General safety

Scent-free policy

In consideration of those who have allergies or breathing problems, visitors and staff are not allowed to use scented products including perfumes, colognes, soaps, and deodorants. Flowers may also be a concern. Please check with staff on the unit before bringing in very perfumed flowers such as lilies, lilacs, etc. Tell staff if you have any allergies/sensitivities to scented products.

Call bells

Call bells are available in every patient room to call staff when needed. Emergency call bells are located in every bathroom. Please make sure your call bell is always within reach.

Sign out when leaving facility

Please stop by the unit desk to sign out before leaving the building for any length of time. Staff need to know where all patients are at all times.

Helping other patients

For your safety and the safety of other patients, please **do not** try to help other patients move from their bed or wheelchair. Please ask staff for help. **Do not** help other patients eat their meals. Some patients need to eat their meals in a special way and need help from staff to stay safe.

Some patients are not safe to leave the unit alone. Outside doors are locked at night. Security staff will let you in when needed.

We appreciate your help in following these safety measures. They will help keep you and other patients, staff, and volunteers safe.

**What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Nova Scotia Health Authority

www.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: P. Simms, Nurse Educator; adapted with permission from
Camp Hill Veterans Memorial, QEII site ©

Designed by: NSHA Library Services

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

WD85-1507 Updated February 2017

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.