A Patient’s Guide to Safety
The staff of Providence Hospitals is committed to meeting your health care needs.
Welcome

Dear Patients and Families,

Welcome to Providence Hospitals. We are pleased that you have chosen our hospital for your care. As a patient, you have the right and responsibility to have a full understanding of your illness and the procedures your doctor may order for you. We have a strong commitment to helping you learn everything you need to know, so please ask questions as they arise. You may find it helpful to write down any questions you have before the doctor arrives for morning rounds.

This booklet includes important information on the following issues:

We’ve created this safety booklet to be a reference for you while you are in the hospital and once you are discharged. The staff of Providence Hospitals is committed to meeting your health care needs. Please let us know how we can serve you better.

Advance Directives
Advance directives you establish and the information you provide in them help the hospital staff know your wishes in the event you are unable to communicate your health care decisions.

Medications
We need to know what medications you were taking before your hospital stay. Please be sure to tell us all medications you were taking, including over-the-counter and herbal medications.

Patient Safety
We have implemented processes to ensure your safety while you are a patient in our hospital. Please review the safety measures and let us know if you have any questions or concerns during your stay with us.

Rapid Response Team
We offer patients and families a call line to use in an emergency. This call line will give you immediate access to medical attention.

Our Mission
In the spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Providence Hospitals extends the healing ministry of Jesus Christ to God’s people.

Our Vision
As a Catholic, faith-based organization, Providence Hospitals will be nationally recognized for quality and service.

Our Core Values
• Respect
• Compassion
• Collaboration
• Courage
• Justice
These values are integral to our mission and are exemplified in our behavioral standards.
To prevent health care errors, patients are urged to SPEAK UP!

Everyone has a role in making health care safe. That includes doctors, health care executives, nurses and many health care technicians. As a patient you can make your care safer by being an actively involved and informed member of your health care team. Providence Hospitals wants you to speak up to help prevent errors in your care!

Speak up if you have questions or concerns. If you still don’t understand, ask again. It’s your body and you have a right to know.

• Your health is very important. Do not worry about being embarrassed if you don’t understand something that your doctor or health care provider tells you. Ask the question.

Pay attention to the care you get. Always make sure you’re getting the right treatment and medicines by the right health care professional. Don’t assume anything.

• Tell your nurses or doctor if something doesn’t seem right.

Educate yourself about your illness. Learn about the medical tests and your treatment plan.

• Look for information about your condition. Good places to get that information are from your doctor, your library, good websites and support groups.

• Write down important facts that your doctor tells you. Ask your doctor for any written information you can keep.

Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (advisor or supporter).

• Your advocate can ask questions that you may not think about when you are stressed.

Know what medicines you take and why you take them. Medicine errors are the most common health care mistakes.

• Ask about why you should take each medication. Ask about the side effects of all medicines.

Use a hospital, clinic, surgery center or other type of health care organization that has been carefully checked out.

• Before you leave the hospital or other facility, ask about follow-up care and understand the instructions.

• Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team.

• Know who will be taking care of you. Know how long the treatment will last. Know how you should feel.

If you have concerns or questions about the safety or quality of care provided at Providence Hospitals, please contact our Patient Advocacy department at (803) 256-5681. At any time you may ask to speak to a representative of Administration/Nursing Supervisor. You may also reach us by email at quality@providencehospitals.com. Providence Hospitals are accredited by DNV, who can be reached at hospitalcomplaint@DNV.com or call toll-free at (866) 523-6842. You may also contact the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) by calling (803) 545-4370.
What is the Patient Experience?

The “Healing Ministry of Jesus Christ” is the guiding principle of Providence Hospitals. We strive to provide outstanding and compassionate care and service, every step along the way. Putting patients first requires more than national caliber clinical care – it requires care that addresses every aspect of a patient’s encounter with Providence Hospitals, including the physical environment as well as the patients’ emotional and spiritual needs.

What is a Patient Advocate?
A “Patient Advocate” is someone who works on the behalf of patients and their families during their stays within a hospital. A Patient Advocate deals with the daily needs of our patients, investigates reported complaints, reports findings and helps to achieve equitable resolution of concerns.

We Can Help
Ninety-seven percent of dissatisfied patients do not register their complaints because they do not know how or because they feel it will not do any good. However, if you call us, two things will happen. You give us an opportunity to solve your problem and in solving your problem, we also learn to provide better care and service to others. The information that you provide is communicated to top administration and is used to provide data for the annual review of physicians and departments and to propose policy and systems changes. We value your opinion, and we welcome your call.

Our office can help:
- if you have a problem with medical service;
- if you have concerns about the quality of your care;
- if you have a problem with any of our employees.

These are examples of problems patients have brought to our attention:
- “I think I had to wait too long before I could be seen by a doctor at Providence.”
- “I didn’t get all the answers I wanted about my condition.”
- “I did not like the way that I was treated.”
- “I was not informed that this would happen.”

How Issues are Resolved
The Patient Advocacy Office is the liaison between Providence Hospitals and the patient in resolving problems that may arise during the course of treatment. We recommend that patients first attempt to address their concerns with the department in which the problem occurred. If you don’t reach a resolution with the person providing your care, we encourage you to contact the department manager or supervisor. If these attempts are unsatisfactory, call our Patient Advocacy office at (803)256-5681 from 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, or you can leave a message anytime. A Patient Advocate has the authority to investigate your concern. Presenting a complaint does not in itself compromise a patient’s future access to care. We thank you for sharing concerns with us as your input helps Providence Hospitals continually improve the care we deliver to our community.
We Use the Following Process to Resolve Complaints

• We obtain permission from our patients before beginning any investigation.
• We begin the investigation by interviewing you to identify your main concerns.
• We contact and interview the appropriate individuals.
• All appropriate documents, such as medical records, are reviewed.
• A resolution of the problem is reached and all appropriate individuals are told about the resolution.

Billing or Insurance Related Problems.

Billing or insurance related problems are handled by the Patient Financial Services Office at Providence Hospitals:

• First, contact the telephone number listed on your billing statement.
• Please have the billing statement available.
• If the representative at that number is unable to solve your problem, request the supervisor for the department.
• If you are in need of or require further assistance, contact the customer service areas of Patient Financial Services at (803) 865-4700.

How do we measure the Patient Experience:

We collect and analyze inpatient and outpatient feedback throughout the organization to provide greater insight about how our patients perceive their experience. Our office maintains a Patient Experience Stoplight report that monitors feedback trends to prioritize improvement initiatives.

HCAHPS: Our inpatient data analysis efforts are driven by the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey, a national program established by the Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Foreign Language & Sign Language Interpreters:

A limited number of foreign language interpreters are available. Nursing units have access to an on-demand telephone interpreting service 24 hours a day. To schedule a foreign language or sign language interpreter, please discuss your needs with your care team and/or call the Patient Advocacy Office at (803) 256-5681.

Pastoral Care

Chaplains are available 24-hours-a-day / 7-days-a-week to walk with you on your spiritual journey as you cope with illness, stress, grief, loneliness, emotional highs and lows, prayer needs or anxiety.

• Downtown: (803) 256-5305
• Providence Orthopedic Hospital (803)865-4516
• After hours, please contact the hospital operator or ask your nurse for assistance.

Wireless internet Access & Cell phone use

• You may use your cell or mobile phone in most public areas at Providence Hospitals, while respecting the rights of patients and others to quiet and privacy. Please observe the signs that restrict cell phone use in certain clinical areas to avoid interference with medical equipment.
• Wireless Internet Access: select “Guest Internet,” complete the disclaimer and enjoy.
Proactive Patient Safety

Patient safety is a priority at Providence Hospitals. We strive to provide the safest environment possible. We need you to be actively involved in your safety as well. Don’t be afraid to ask questions about your care.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent infections. Did you see your physician or caregiver wash their hands? Health care workers should wash their hands before and after each patient contact. Don’t be afraid to ask your physician or caregiver to wash their hands! Each patient room is equipped with alcohol-based hand sanitizer. If hands are visibly soiled they should be washed with soap and water for 15 seconds. Good hand hygiene can help stop the spread of infection.

Patient Identification

Proper patient identification is a key component of patient safety. Prior to receiving treatment, you’ll be identified using your name and date of birth. You’ll receive an armband with this and other identifying information on it. As part of our medication verification process, your armband and medication will be scanned to ensure that it’s the correct prescription. This scanning technology is part of our commitment to providing you with safe care.

MRI Safety

If you are scheduled to have an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) test, be sure to answer all of the screening questions accurately and completely. You may not be able to have an MRI if you have one of the following magnetic things in or on your body: aneurysm clips, artificial or prosthetic limbs such as artificial knees or hip joints, bullets or pieces of shrapnel, ear implants, heart pacemakers or artificial heart valves, implanted artificial cardiac defibrillators, implanted IV ports, implanted spinal stimulators, insulin pumps, intrauterine devices (IUDs), metal pins, plates, screws or surgical staples, medication patch, tattoos and permanent eyeliner. In most cases these things will not cause an MRI problem if they have been in your body for more than four to six weeks. If your physician requests an MRI for you and you have any of the above in or on your body, be sure to tell your nurse or caregiver.

Diagnostic Radiation Safety

Diagnostic imaging tests can provide enormously useful information for the diagnosis and monitoring of many varied medical conditions, which has revolutionized the practice of medicine. Increasing use of diagnostic imaging tests that use ionizing radiation-especially CT scanning, nuclear medicine studies and fluoroscopy—may eventually result in an increased incidence of cancer in the population undergoing these examinations. That’s why we welcome the recent attention to both the importance of ensuring these scans are performed only when indicated and at a facility where there is careful attention paid to monitoring and minimizing the radiation exposure associated with these examinations. We perform only those examinations ordered by a physician who has determined your need for the requested examination.

All of our physicians are certified by the American Board of Radiology, and all of our departments have
Preventing Pressure Ulcers

What You Need to Know

What is a Pressure Ulcer?

Also known as a “decubitus ulcer” or “bedsore,” a pressure ulcer is caused by unrelieved pressure between skin and bone. Pressure ulcers can develop rapidly if a person is bedridden, unconscious, unable to sense pain, immobile or wearing a cast for a prolonged period.

How Does a Pressure Ulcer Develop?

A pressure ulcer develops when blood supply to the skin is cut off for a period of time and can begin quickly if the person is very sick and/or malnourished. The tissue may be damaged as far down as the muscle and bone but not show skin changes that can be seen for a few days. Once a pressure ulcer develops, it is often very slow to heal.

What Areas are Susceptible to Pressure Ulcers?

Pressure ulcers often occur in the buttocks area (on the sacrum or iliac crest) or on the heels of the feet. The spine and back of the head are also prone to developing pressure ulcers.

How to Prevent Pressure Ulcers

Pressure ulcers can be prevented by inspecting the skin for areas of redness (the first sign of skin breakdown). Other methods of preventing pressure ulcers from forming and progression of existing pressure ulcers include the following:

- frequent turning and repositioning;
- providing soft padding in wheelchairs and beds to reduce pressure;
- keeping the skin clean and dry, and alerting staff immediately if soiled;
• applying moisturizing emollients to skin daily;
• eating a well-balanced diet;
• alerting staff to changes in skin.

Treatment for Pressure Ulcers
Specific treatment of a pressure ulcer is determined by a physician in collaboration with the Wound Care nurse and is based on the severity of the condition. Treatment may be more difficult once the skin is broken and may include the following:
• removing pressure from the affected area;
• protecting the wound with medicated gauze or other special dressings;
• keeping the wound clean;
• transplanting healthy skin to the wound area;
• medication (i.e., antibiotics to treat infections).

What to Expect at Providence Hospitals
Providence Hospitals is committed to protecting our patients and providing excellent care. If you are considered at risk for pressure ulcer formation, your nurse will initiate a prevention plan during your period of hospitalization. You can expect the following:
• The staff will inspect your skin for signs of pressure ulcer formation or skin breakdown.
• If you are unable to turn in bed on your own, a turn clock will be placed at your bedside and the staff will help you reposition every two to three hours.
• Your heels will be lifted off the bed with pillows or foam devices, if necessary.
• You will be encouraged to increase your activity by moving to a chair and walking in the hall as soon as you are able.
• The staff will help you keep your skin clean, dry and protected.

• The use of diapers while in bed is discouraged. Instead, the staff will assist you with toileting needs. Use of barrier creams to protect your skin from urine or stools will be initiated when needed.
• If you are not eating well, the staff will consult a hospital dietitian for recommendations on ways to increase your protein and calorie intake.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding how you can take a proactive approach to your care or assist with a loved one’s care, please speak with your physician or nurse at any time.
You have a right to know the identity and professional status of those who care for you. Providence Hospitals staff wear badges listing their name, department, job title or trainee title. Although we are a non-teaching hospital, you may have students or other clinical trainees involved with your care during your stay. Students and other clinical trainees give care only under direct supervision. Medical students, interns or resident doctors do not practice medicine at Providence Hospitals.

Your attending physician is the person responsible for your care. Depending on the type of care or service you require, your attending physician may change. If you or your representative would like to talk to your attending physician, your nurse will call your physician or designee and inform them of your concerns. If you or your representative wish to call the attending physician, your nurse will provide you with a telephone and phone number, and will assist you or your representative in making the call. You or your representative may contact the nursing supervisor by calling the hospital operator at any time.

Providence Hospitals contracts with some physician groups. These independent contractors include Emergency department physicians, anesthesiologists, radiologists and pathologists. These contract physicians have separate billing offices and practices.
Your Guide to Patient Rights
Expectations & Responsibilities

At Providence, you have the right to:

• **Prompt notification of a family member** (or representative) and your physician of your admission to the hospital.

• **Know the identity and professional status** of all individuals involved in your care. Except in emergency admissions, you have the right to receive prior to or at the time of admission for inpatient or outpatient surgery, written information describing the general role of clinical trainees, medical students, interns, and resident physicians, if applicable.

• **Make informed decisions concerning your care.** This includes the right participate in the care planning process and to receive information about your medical condition, proposed treatments and prognosis in a manner that is understandable and tailored to your age, language, cognitive ability, and special needs. This right does not include a right to demand medically unnecessary treatment or services.

• **Agree to and refuse treatment** (unless the treatment is legally required through court order or other appropriate legal authorities), you have the right to have or refuse treatment.

• **Advance Directives.** If you are not capable of making your own decisions, advance directives (such as a health care power of attorney or a living will and/or applicable health care consent laws) will identify the person who will make health care decisions on your behalf. You also can make your own decisions concerning organ donations.

• **Request consultation** regarding ethical issues surrounding your care from the Hospital Ethics committee and other appropriate sources.

• **Ask questions** when you don’t understand the explanations and procedures discussed with you by Providence Hospitals’ health care team.

• **Receive impartial access to treatment** or accommodations available or ordered by your health care provider, without concerns about your financial status, race, creed, sex, national origin, religion or sources of payment for care.

• **Designate Visitors** that shall receive the same visitation privileges as your immediate family members, regardless of whether they are legally related to you. Providence Hospitals will not deny visitation privileges on the basis of color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

• **Recognition of your personal dignity,** psychosocial needs, and spiritual and cultural values. You have the right to have your religious and spiritual needs respected. You have the right to reasonable protection of your personal possessions entrusted to the facility for safekeeping and to have access to your possessions.

• **Have your privacy respected** and your confidentiality honored in all interviews, examinations and treatments. You have the right to the confidentiality of your medical records unless you have given permission to disclose information or if disclosure is otherwise required or permitted by law.

• **Medicare Beneficiaries.** If you are a Medicare beneficiary, you have the right to receive a notice of non-coverage and your discharge rights.

• **Be informed of realistic care alternatives** when care at our facility is no longer appropriate. You have a right to receive discharge and/or transfer instructions with a full explanation as to why the discharge or transfer is appropriate and to appeal any discharge you believe to be premature. You have the right to select those who will care for you after leaving the facility. If you are transferred, you have
the right to be provided with the options, benefits and risks associated with your transfer.

- **Inspect, amend, and obtain a copy of your medical record** provided you follow the hospital’s policies (a processing fee may apply). If you do not understand something in your records, you may request that the information in your medical record be explained.

- **Receive discharge and/or transfer instructions** with a full explanation as to why the discharge or transfer is appropriate. If you are transferred, you have the right to be provided with the options, benefits and risks associated with your transfer.

- **Freedom from all forms of abuse, harassment, and exploitation.**

- **Freedom from restraints and seclusion** of any form that are not medically necessary or used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation by staff.

- **Have access to people outside the hospital** through visitors, verbal and written communication. If you do not speak English, all reasonable efforts will be made to provide an interpreter.

- **Communication Assistance upon request**
  You can discuss your needs with your care team and/or call the Patient Advocacy Office at (803)256-5681.

- **Have access to protective services.**

- **Know if Providence Hospitals has relationships with outside parties** that may influence your treatment and care. These relationships may be with educational institutions, other health care facilities or providers

- **Consent or decline to take part in research** that may influence your treatment and care. These relationships may be with educational institutions, other health care facilities or providers

- **Voice concerns about your care** and suggest changes in service, physician, or staff without fear or discrimination. For more information or to address concerns about the safety, service, or quality of care provided please see the contact information at the bottom of page 5 of this booklet.

**At Providence, you may expect:**

**Know the facility’s charges and payment methods.** You have a right to receive a copy of your hospital charges and an explanation about those charges. You have the right to inquire and apply for financial assistance regarding your hospital bill by contacting our business office at (803) 865-4700

**Receive information about pain and pain relief measures.** The following are ways you can communicate your pain management needs to your health care team:

- Discuss pain relief options with your physician and nursing staff.
- Ask your physician or nursing staff about what to expect regarding pain and pain management, and communicate any concerns about taking pain medications.
- Be involved in developing a pain management plan with your physician and nursing staff.
- Request pain relief when the pain first begins.
- Assist your physician and nursing staff in assessing your pain.
- Communicate with your physician or nursing staff if the pain is not relieved.

**Patient Responsibilities**

At Providence, we believe every patient has rights and responsibilities as we work to achieve the best possible care. The following are ways you can best be involved in your hospital care:

- Comply with the treatment plan you have agreed to and be responsible for your actions if you refuse treatment or do not follow instructions.
- Provide accurate and complete information
about your past and present medical history; any existing advance directive, current condition, and any changes during your stay.

• Respect other patients’ and staff’s privacy and quiet requirements by limiting personal visitation.

• Follow hospital rules and show respect for the rights and property of others and the hospital.

• Properly identify yourself to all hospital staff.

• Comply with hospital safety/contagion policies.

• Accept financial responsibility for services rendered, providing necessary information for insurance and assuming payment responsibility for all hospital bills.

• Provide for safekeeping of your belongings not entrusted to the hospital.

• Ask questions if you do not understand your plan of care or its related expectations or instructions.

• Tell your provider if you believe you cannot follow through with treatment.

• Recognize the effects of lifestyle choices on your personal health.

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**Rapid Response Call Line**

Providence Hospitals offers patients and families a rapid response call line. This call line gives you the ability to call for immediate help when you feel you are not receiving adequate medical attention. The rapid response call line was created to address the needs of the patient in an emergency or in the event a patient is unable to get the attention of a health care provider.

**Use the rapid response call line if:**

• A noticeable medical change in the patient occurs and the health care team does not recognize the concern.

• After speaking with a member of the health care team (i.e., nurse or physician), you continue to have serious concerns on how care is given, managed or planned.

Reach the rapid response call line by dialing extension 5511 from a hospital phone or (803) 256-5511 from your cell phone.

The operator will ask for the caller’s name, room number, patient name and patient concern. A team of medical professionals, the rapid response team, will immediately be alerted and will arrive in the patient’s room to assess the situation.

In offering the rapid response call line, we want you to know that you are a partner in your care. You can be your own patient advocate by speaking up when you have a concern.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the rapid response call line, please discuss them with one of our health care providers.
Preventive Health Practices

Providence Hospitals supports preventive health practices. We will provide screenings during your admission process to assess your need for preventive treatment. The following preventive health screenings will be offered.

Pneumococcal (Pneumonia) Vaccine

Pneumonia is a serious disease that causes much sickness and death. Although anyone may get pneumonia, some people are at greater risk from the disease. These include people 65 and older, the very young and people with special health problems such as heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes, alcoholism, HIV infection or certain types of cancer. You will be screened upon admission to determine if you meet criteria to receive the pneumococcal vaccine. If you do, the vaccine will be offered to you.

Influenza (Flu) Vaccine

Influenza (flu) is a contagious disease caused by the influenza virus, which spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. The flu vaccine is recommended for all children 6 months to 5 years of age, anyone over 50 years old, women who will be pregnant during flu season, residents of long-term care facilities and anyone with long-term health problems. Flu season lasts from November through May (most cases usually occur in January or February). A yearly vaccine is recommended to protect you from the flu. You will be screened from October through March upon admission to determine if you meet criteria to receive the flu vaccine.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a condition that occurs when a blood clot forms in a deep vein of the body. The deep veins in the legs, thighs and hips are the most common sites for DVT. You will be assessed on admission to determine if you are at risk for developing DVT. If it is determined that you are at risk, appropriate care will be provided during your stay. This care may include certain medications, compression stockings or foot pumps.

Preventing Adverse Events in Surgery

Providence takes measures to prevent adverse events following surgical procedures. A pre-procedure verification process properly identifies patients. Surgeons mark correct surgical spots to ensure procedures are performed on the correct site. Prior to surgery, all patients must have an updated medical history and a physical examination. Providence also takes precautions to prevent surgical site infections, including using a long- and short-acting skin preparation. We encourage you to actively participate with us as we perform these safety measures.
Advance Directives

The Living Will and Health Care Power of Attorney

You have the right to make decisions about your health care, even if you are unable to communicate them. At Providence Hospitals, we want to make sure that you are aware of your rights and that you receive information that helps you make your health care decisions. We will assist you in any way possible.

Should you become unable to communicate your wishes, how would you tell your health care team what to do? Would your family know what your wishes are?

Advance directives can provide you, your family and your health care providers with information about your wishes in the event that you are unable to communicate them yourself. There are several different types of advance directives including: the living will, the health care power of attorney, and a durable power of attorney that includes powers related to healthcare.

The Living Will

• The living will tells your health care team exactly what your wishes are in the event you have a terminal illness or have been unconscious for 90 consecutive days.

• The living will gives direction about medical procedures, life support, food, nutrition and hydration once your doctor documents your terminal illness in your medical chart.

• The living will goes into effect six hours after your doctor documents the diagnosis of a terminal illness in your medical record.

• You may use the standard South Carolina form to complete your living will or you may have an attorney assist you in writing the document. The living will must be signed by two witnesses, one of whom must be a notary. If you are in a hospital or nursing facility, state law requires that an ombudsman from the governor’s office serves as a witness.

• You must be 18 years old to sign a living will.

Health Care Power of Attorney

• A health care power of attorney is a document that gives you the right to appoint another person (your “agent”) to make health care decisions for you when you are unable to communicate them yourself.

• A health care power of attorney allows you to state what you want and do not want in specific situations concerning your health care.

• You may use the standard South Carolina form to complete your health care power of attorney or you may have an attorney assist you in writing the document which would be a durable power of attorney that includes powers related to health care.

• You must have two people witness your signature. These witnesses may not be your primary agent, your two back-up agents or anyone related to you.

• A health care power of attorney does not have to be notarized, but it is a good idea to do so.
Durable Power of Attorney

• A durable power of attorney that includes powers related to health care is a document that is drafted by your attorney that typically includes multiple other provisions related to financial issues as well as healthcare.

• The durable power of attorney health care powers are described in the document and can vary widely in content.

• This document must state something similar to “This power of attorney is not affected by physical disability or mental incompetence of the principal which renders the principal incapable of managing his own estate.”

• This document must be signed and attested with the same formality as a will and recorded in the same manner as a deed in the county where the principal resides.

Important Considerations When Writing Your Living Will or Durable Power of Attorney or Power of Attorney

Here are a few things to keep in mind when writing your living will or health care power of attorney.

• If you have questions or concerns, talk to your attorney, spiritual leader or the hospital’s patient advocate or pastoral care staff.

• When you are considering a living will, durable power of attorney, or health care power of attorney, talk to your family. Make sure they know your wishes. Be sure your agent is willing to carry out the wishes you have listed.

• When you or your attorney has completed either a living will, durable power of attorney or health care power of attorney, be sure to give a copy to your doctor and your family. Be sure to also keep a copy in a safe place where your family can easily find it. In addition, you may want to give a copy to your attorney or your spiritual advisor.

• If you are pregnant, life support will not be withheld.

Other Resources

Remember, if you do not have a living will, durable power of attorney, or health care power of attorney, you still make all the decisions about your health care. Should you become unable to communicate your wishes, the South Carolina State law regarding health care consent will be used. In most cases, this means the hospital will contact your most immediate family member.

You may obtain the “Declaration of a Desire for a Natural Death” (the form for the living will used in South Carolina), by calling one of the following:

Senior Resources (803) 252-7734
Bureau of Senior Services
(800) 868-9095 or (803) 898-2850

You may also get this form from the hospital’s Admissions department or Pastoral Care department.
At Providence Hospitals, we are dedicated to every aspect of your care.

Pain management is a widespread concern for patients and their families. We hope this booklet will help you better understand how pain works and how you can best communicate your level of pain to your health care team.

What is Pain?

Simply put, pain is an undesired feeling caused by an injury or illness.

- Pain is individual.
- Pain is equal to one’s perception of the pain.

Types of Pain

There are two major categories of pain: acute pain and chronic pain.

**Acute pain:**

- Lasts a short period of time.
- Usually has a cause that can be identified.
- Goes away with treatment or as the body heals itself.

**Chronic pain:**

- Lasts a long period of time — typically longer than three to six months.
- Often has no cause that can be identified.

How Our Body Perceives Pain

Our body perceives pain by first recognizing an illness or injury. The body then sends a pain message to the brain. This pain message causes you to feel pain or discomfort. The body then uses its own resources to reduce the pain.

We Want to Help You

At Providence, we know our patients have pain for various reasons. We will ask you often about your comfort level. That’s because we want to help you manage your pain and prevent you from getting uncomfortable. Often a change in your comfort level will signal to us that your condition is changing.

Using Words to Describe Your Pain

We will ask you often to describe your pain in words. Sometimes this may be difficult for you to do. Here are some words that may help.

- Sharp
- Pinching
- Dull
- Burning
- Radiating
- Stabbing
- Throbbing
- Pounding
- Shooting
- Annoying
- Spreading
- Gnawing
- Tight
- Tender
Working together, we can work through your pain.

How to Communicate Your Comfort Level

Please help us understand if you are having a lot of pain, if you are having no pain or if your pain is somewhere in between.

We use two tools to help our patients communicate their pain level — the pain scale and the Wong-Baker Faces. We often use the Wong-Baker Faces tool with pediatric patients.

The Pain Scale:

We will ask you to rate your pain on a scale of zero to 10. Zero equals no pain; 10 equals the worst pain you have ever had.

Wong-Baker Faces: We will ask you to point to one of the following pictures to describe your pain.

Help Us Understand Your Pain

We will ask you several questions to help create a plan for your pain management.

1. When did you start having pain?
2. Where do you feel pain?
3. Does the pain move from one place to another?
4. What causes your pain?
5. What helps relieve your pain?
6. When do you have pain?
7. What makes your pain worse?
8. Does your pain limit any of your regular activities?
9. Does your pain interrupt your sleep?
10. Does your pain change your mood?
11. Does your pain affect your appetite?

To Treat Your Pain Effectively, Please Tell Us:

• As soon as your pain begins.
• How your pain medicine is working.
• If you begin to have a new or different type of pain.
• What kind of pain you are having.

Which one of the following pictures best represents your pain?

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A Guide to Medications

Everyone needs to know about the medicines they take.

At Providence Hospitals, we are dedicated to every aspect of your care. That includes making sure you know about the medicine you take and how it may interact with food and other medications. So before you take any medicine, whether your doctor gives it to you or you purchase it over the counter, ask some very important questions.

Every time you take medicine, you should be able to answer the following questions about each medication you take:

• Why am I taking this medicine?
• How do I take it?
• How long will I need to take it?
• What should I do if I forget to take a dose?
• What are the side effects?
• What should I do if I have any of these side effects?
• Should I change the way I eat or avoid any foods while taking this medicine?
• Do I need to refill this medicine?
• How do I store this medicine?

If you are in the hospital and the nurses give you medication, be sure to ask the following questions:

• What is the name of this medicine?
• Why am I taking this medicine?
• How often will I take it?
• What are the side effects of this medicine?
• Should I change the way I eat while I am taking this medicine?

List of Medications

It is important that your health care workers have a current and accurate list of all medications you are taking to assist them when prescribing new medications. One tool that you can use to track medications accurately is the Universal Medication Form, available online through the South Carolina Hospital Association at www.scha.org.

Be sure to list all medications you are taking including prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins and herbs. Take this form with you to each of your doctor appointments, diagnostic tests and hospital visits. Update medication changes on the form and carry it with you at all times in case of emergency.

Common Drug Interactions

Some of the medicines you take can interact with each other or with the foods you eat. Be sure your doctor knows every medication you’re taking before getting a prescription for any new medication. Don’t forget to mention any herbs, vitamins or over-the-counter medications you take.

It is a good idea to always use the same pharmacy. Your pharmacy will keep a record of all the prescriptions it fills for you. Ask your pharmacist about any possible interactions before purchasing over-the-counter medications, vitamins or herbal products.

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Please Call — Don’t Fall

You will be assessed for your risk of falling while in the hospital. Medications, unfamiliar surroundings, surgery and changes in your health status are factored into the fall risk assessment. If you are assessed as a fall risk, you will receive yellow slippers to wear during transportation. In addition, a yellow sticker will be placed on your armband and a sign will be hung on your door. These yellow triangles will alert our staff to assist you.

Regardless of your age, how simple your procedure, or if you feel fine, trying to do things by yourself can cause a fall and lead to serious injury.

Please ask for assistance by using the call light every time you need to get out of bed, reach for something, use the restroom, or a similar activity.

Do not attempt to connect or disconnect any tubing, devices or infusions. Ask your nurse or caregiver if you have questions or concerns. PLEASE CALL – DON’T FALL.

Prevent a fall - patient agreement

Please sign below that you have read and understand our Patient Assistance Agreement.

Patient of family member                      Date                      Time

Staff: Please copy and post in room as a reminder to the patient and family.
Patient Discharge Checklist

The Providence Hospitals staff would like to make sure that your discharge proceeds as smoothly as possible. We have developed this checklist of activities that must occur before you can go home. Using this list will help ensure that you are discharged in a timely manner. Your case manager be helping you while you are in the hospital and will assist with planning your discharge while in the hospital.

Please check each task as it is completed:

I’ve told my nurse/case manager:

☐ My emergency contacts
☐ Placement needs for me after discharge (such as assisted living, rehab or long-term care as qualified)
☐ My special mobility needs (such as a walker, cane or wheelchair)
☐ My special needs for leaving the hospital (such as home oxygen, home health care, etc.)
☐ Who will be helping me while I’m in the hospital (this person is called your Case Manager. Your Case Manager will be assisting with planning your discharge while in the hospital.
☐ I’ve provided my complete list of home medications (including over-the-counter, herbal, vitamins and prescriptions)
☐ My whiteboard has been updated daily, including my discharge plans.
☐ My doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant has seen me daily and answered my health questions and questions about discharge.

☐ I’ve asked my nurse all my questions so I’ll be ready to leave the hospital.
☐ I’ve asked my doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant all my questions so I’ll be ready to leave the hospital.
☐ I’ve been told ahead of time about when I will leave the hospital.
☐ My doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant has reviewed follow-up instructions with me.
☐ My nurse has gone over discharge teaching.
☐ I have signed my discharge plan and received a copy.
☐ I have my prescription(s) and complete medication list and instructions.
☐ I know when to make an appointment with my doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant.
☐ If my doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant ordered home health upon discharge, my RN case manager or social worker has discussed those arrangements and/or delivery of equipment with me.
☐ I have arranged for a ride home by 11 a.m.
☐ I have packed my belongings, including my valuables that were kept in the safe.

When all of these items are completed, let your nurse know that you are ready to go and we will call a transporter to assist you to your car with a wheelchair and cart for your belongings.

Questions for my doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant:

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Thank you for the opportunity to allow us to provide very good care to you.
Thank you for choosing Providence Hospitals.