

# Your healthcare, safety and rights

Your safety and healthcare goals are our highest priority. By sharing your needs and what's most important to you, together we can make the best healthcare decisions.



Let staff know if you need an interpreter, or if you need this information in your preferred language.



**☎ 9496 6888**

口译员 傳譯員 INTERPRETE TERCÜMAN ΔΙΕΡΜΗΝΕΑΣ  
THÔNG DỊCH VIÊN ПРЕВЕДУВАЧ PREVODILAC مترجم فوري

Thank you to our consumer partners who participated in the development of this brochure.

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# Making decisions together

We want you to feel comfortable openly sharing your needs, goals, values and preferences. Together we can make decisions about your healthcare that's tailored to you.

To help us provide you with the best care possible:

- Let us know what's most important to you, your goals and preferences
- Let us know if you need an interpreter, Auslan or other communications supports
- Let us know if you have any concerns about your safety or care
- Let us know if your condition is getting worse
- Tell us who you would trust to make decisions for you if you were unable to
- Tell us if you have an advance care plan
- Ask questions about your tests, treatments and procedures to help better understand your health care options
- Ask what other treatment options are available to you
- Ask us to explain any information you don't understand
- Ask for a Patient and Carer Escalation Call (PACE) if you're worried about a loved one (see page 6 for more information).

During your stay we'll provide regular updates on your condition and treatment. We will make all decisions about your health care with you.

We encourage you to be as involved as you like in your own care and decision making.



## Communicating with us

You have the right to know everything about your health.

Your medical team will discuss your care with you. You may hear something that is incorrect or that you don't understand. If this happens, please let us know so we can fix it.

At times, instructions may be unclear or confusing. If you are unsure, please ask:

- To have information written down for you
- To have information repeated when you have a family member or carer present
- Your family members or carer to ask questions for you
- For an interpreter to be present if you do not understand what is being said in English or if you are deaf or hearing impaired.

### My communication board

Write any questions or messages you have on your communication board.  
The board is by your bed.



## Identification

It's important that we know a little bit about you so we can provide you with appropriate care.

- When you arrive, staff will check your information - such as your name, date of birth and address - to help us identify you
- We will ask you to wear an identification band during your stay. Please check that the information on your name band is correct. If it is wrong, please let staff know
- We will ask you if you have an allergy. If you do we will give you a red band to wear
- We will check your identification before giving you medications, tests, procedures or blood transfusions
- We will ask who you are many times during your stay to make sure we don't make a mistake.

We will ask if you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This helps us to provide you with culturally safe care. We can put you in touch with our Ngarra Jarra Program while you are here.

## Medication safety

We need to know about your usual medications.

To use medicines safely:

- Tell us about allergies or side effects to any medicines
- Tell us what medicines you take at home including:
  - Prescription medicines
  - Medicines from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food store (for example, vitamins or supplements)
- Ask us about new medicines you are taking in the hospital
- Ask us about side effects of new medicines.

We will safely store any medicines you bring to hospital.

## Preventing blood clots

Your risk of a blood clot is much higher while you're in hospital.

To avoid blood clots forming:

- Keep moving where possible
- Ask what basic exercises you can do in your bed or chair to maintain your strength. Even small ankle rotations may help
- Drink fluids as recommended
- Ask the medical staff what steps are being taken to prevent blood clots during your stay
- We may give you an injection or medication to prevent blood clots
- We may ask you to wear compression stockings or an air-compression device.

Tell staff immediately if:

- You feel pain, swelling, heat or redness in your leg
- The veins near the surface of your leg appear larger than normal.

**If you develop chest pain, shortness of breath or cough up blood call for help immediately.**

## Preventing bed sores (pressure injuries)

A bed sore is an area of skin damage caused by lying or sitting in the same position for too long.

To prevent bed sores:

- Don't sit or lie in the same position for too long
- Ask us to help you move if you are uncomfortable
- Keep weight off bony parts of your body (for example your heels or tail bone)
- Avoid lying on a bed sore
- Dry your skin thoroughly after showering
- Moisturise your skin with a non-perfumed skin cream or lotion twice a day
- Tell us about areas of redness on your skin.

**We may ask you to use a pressure relieving device, such as an air mattress, cushion or specialised shoes, to help prevent bed sores.**

## Preventing falls

Falls can cause serious injuries and disability.

To prevent falls:

- Bring your walking frame or stick with you to hospital
- Bring your glasses or hearing aids from home
- Wear comfortable firm fitting flat shoes with a broad heel and sole with grip
- Make sure you know where the toilet is
- Never climb over bed rails
- Make sure you can reach the call bell
- Turn on the light so you can see.

Ask for help when getting out of bed, walking or going to the toilet.

## Preventing infection

There are simple things you can do to reduce your risk of infections.

To help stop the spread of infection:

- Wash your hands with soap after going to the toilet
- Use the green soap when showering
- Ask staff to wash their hands
- Ask visitors to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser when arriving and leaving
- Use the hand wipe from your meal tray before eating
- Do not touch bandages or tubes
- Ask friends or family who are unwell not to visit you.



# Delirium

Delirium is a change in mental state that can cause confusion and reduced awareness of your environment.

Ways to help prevent delirium:

- Bring in familiar items like glasses, hearing aids, clothing, shoes, books, playing cards, photos or foods
- Have regular visitors
- Use a clock and calendar to help remember the time and date.

How families can help if delirium develops:

- Provide comfort for your loved one, as they may be afraid
- Turn off the radio or TV as the noise can make confusion worse
- Spend time with your loved one
- Do not turn off the bed or chair alarm when you are with your loved one
- Tell your nurse when you are leaving
- Move chairs and clutter out of the way
- Do not put the bed rails up.

**Is your loved one confused? They may be experiencing delirium. Let us know if you notice any changes in the behaviour of a loved one.**

# Changes in your condition

We are trained to notice changes in your health, but no one knows your body better than you do.

- Tell us if you do not feel well
- Tell us if you feel your condition is getting worse
- Speak with the nurse in charge or your doctor if you or your carers are worried.

If you still need help, call 90 from your bedside phone or 9496 5000 from an external phone to speak with switchboard. Ask for a PACE call (Patient and Carer Escalation). A specialised healthcare team will look into your concerns and check on you.

## Your nutrition

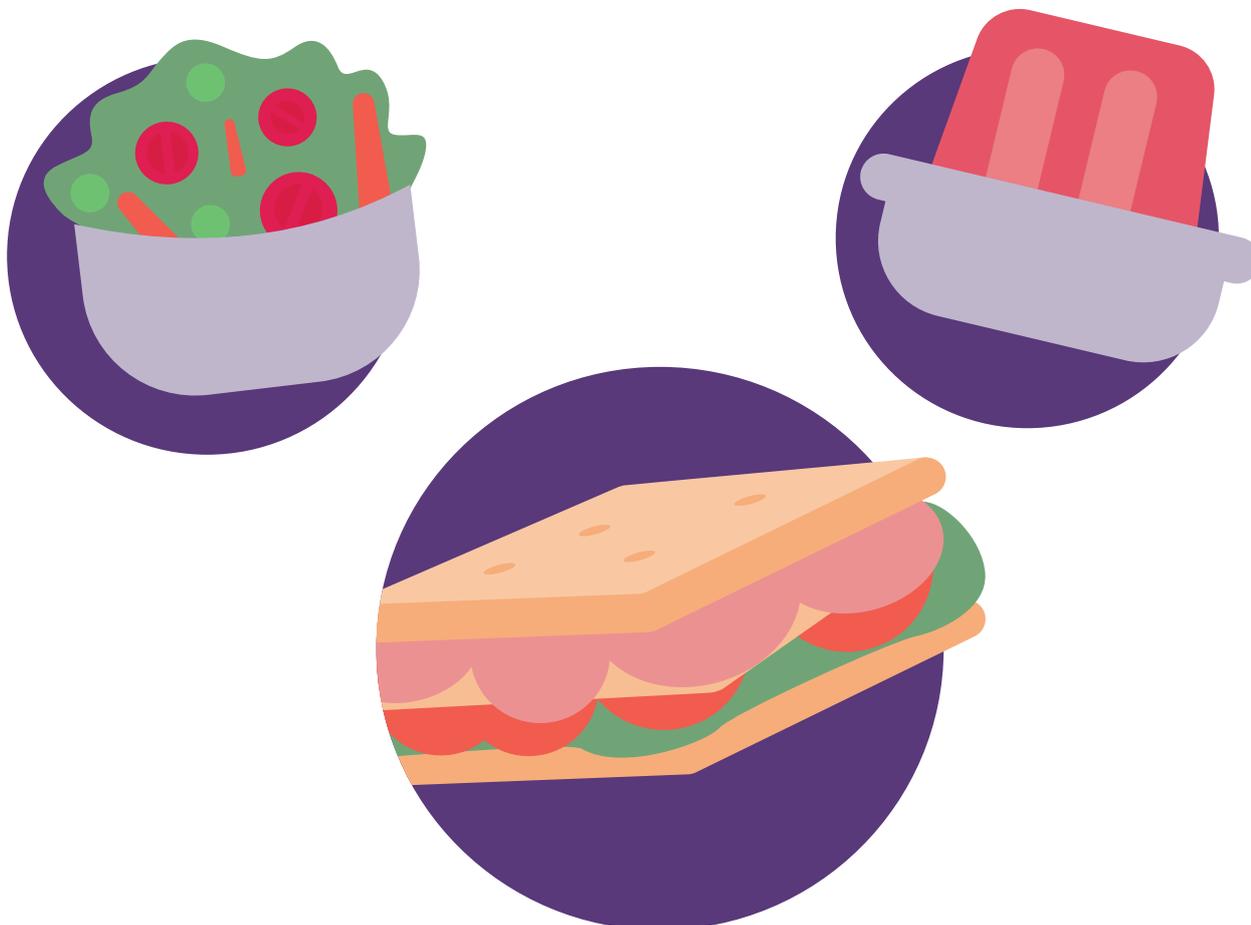
Eating well can help avoid malnutrition and other complications such as bed sores and falls.

Tell your nurse if you:

- Have food allergies and special dietary needs
- Have eating difficulties, such as trouble swallowing
- Need help to complete your menu, eat meals or to open food and drink packaging
- Have lost weight without trying. Ask to be weighed weekly
- Have been eating less than half of your usual food.

To ensure good nutrition during your stay:

- Fill out your menu on time each day, so you get your chosen meal
- Keep your over-bed table clear for meals
- Bring dentures to hospital and make sure you're wearing them
- Check with your nurse before having food brought in from outside. There are food safety rules in hospital.



# Your rights and responsibilities as a patient

The *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* describes the rights of patients. We're committed to providing safe and high-quality care.

To help us, it's important you tell us about:

- Your medical history including medications
- Your symptoms
- Any allergies you may have
- Any religious or cultural requirements
- Anything else that might assist with your care.

We ask you treat everyone you meet with respect and courtesy. Please respect other people's rights and property and the property of the hospital. Please notify staff if you would like to leave the hospital grounds.

**We are a teaching hospital.** This means that students may deliver some of your care. We will always tell you if a student will be involved in your care. Please let us know if you would prefer not to have a student involved.

**Austin Health is smoke free.** Do not smoke anywhere within the hospital grounds. Speak to your doctor about strategies to help you quit smoking while you are in hospital.

**We prohibit use of alcohol or drugs** (unless under medical supervision).

**Austin Health does not accept responsibility for items lost during your time with us.** Keep only small amounts of money with you. Leave valuable items including jewellery at home.

**We will not tolerate aggressive or threatening behaviour towards our staff or patients.** If you behave in an aggressive or threatening way we may ask you to leave and report you to the police.

## What can you expect from Austin Health?

Your rights	What this means
<b>Access</b>	You can access healthcare services to meet your needs.
<b>Safety</b>	You receive safe and high-quality health services in an environmental that makes you feel safe.
<b>Respect</b>	The care provided shows respect to you and your culture, beliefs, values and personal characteristics.
<b>Partnership</b>	You have open and honest communication about your care. You make decisions with your healthcare team to the extent which you choose.
<b>Information</b>	You receive open, timely and appropriate communication about your healthcare in a way that you can understand. This includes information around treatment options, risks, benefits, outcomes and costs to make an informed decision for you. If a mistake is made, we will tell you and give opportunity for feedback.
<b>Privacy</b>	Your personal privacy is maintained and proper handling of your personal health and other information is assured.
<b>Give feedback</b>	You can comment on or complain about your care and have your concerns dealt with properly and promptly, this will not affect the care you are provided.

## Carers' rights and responsibilities

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends.

With consent of the patient or Medical Enduring Power of Attorney carers have the right to:

- **Inclusion** – being recognised as part of the care team
- **Make decisions** – taking part in decisions about the patient's care
- **Information** – knowing about the patient's condition and care plans
- **Care** – helping care for the patient if you would like
- **Advocate** – support or recommend for the patient if needed.

As a carer you have the responsibility to:

- Tell us what your relationship is with the patient
- Give us a detailed history of the patient if they can't
- Tell us things about the patient that will help us care for them better
- Work with and support the patient's agreed care plan
- Let us know if you notice a change in the patient's condition
- Help us plan for the patient's discharge by letting us know what needs to be set up at home before the patient leaves hospital
- Respect and listen to the views of the staff caring for the patient.



## Leaving hospital

To continue your care after you leave us, we need to work closely with your General Practitioner (GP) and other health care providers.

It is important that you give us the correct contact details of your GP and any other health care providers you use.

- Your health care team will discuss your plan for discharge with you and your family/carers
- Your plan will include the agreed date and destination for your discharge (for example, home or other). This will depend on your individual situation and ongoing care needs
- Discharge discussions may start early during your hospital stay. The earlier we can start planning the smoother the process will be for you and your family/carers
- It is important that you have the right support and care when you leave hospital. Speak with your nurse if you have any concerns about managing at home
- We will aim to send your discharge summary to your GP within 24 hours
- Please talk to a staff member as early as possible if you have any questions or concerns.

## Your information

Austin Health respects your privacy. We comply with relevant laws to protect your confidentiality and the privacy of your information.

- We only collect the information we need to provide you with good health care or to organise services for you when you go home
- We may share information about you with external organisations. We will only do this if you have provided consent or where there is a law that permits or requires us to do so. For example, we may share information with your GP, the Department of Health, or a court of law if your record is required
- In some situations, by law, you have the right to refuse sharing of your information. This may affect our ability to organise services for your ongoing care
- You can apply to access your information under the Freedom of Information Act. Your request must be made in writing. For more information and the application form go to [www.austin.org.au/FOI](http://www.austin.org.au/FOI) or phone 03 9496 3103
- If you feel that we have not respected your privacy, you can contact our Patient Experience Unit. Email [feedback@austin.org.au](mailto:feedback@austin.org.au) or phone 03 9496 3566.

## Providing feedback

We're committed to providing you with reliable, safe, person-centred care. We think we do a good job, but there's always room for improvement.

We value your feedback because it helps us to improve the care we provide. The first step is to provide feedback to the person providing your care such as your nurse or doctor. They will help resolve your issue and share your feedback with the right people.

You can also provide feedback by:

1. Completing the 'We welcome your feedback' form
2. Emailing [feedback@austin.org.au](mailto:feedback@austin.org.au)
3. Calling the Patient Experience Unit on 03 9496 3566.

For more information about providing feedback visit [www.austin.org.au/feedback](http://www.austin.org.au/feedback)



**Austin Hospital**

**Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness  
and Research Centre**

145 Studley Road  
Heidelberg Victoria 3084  
P. 03 9496 5000  
F. 03 9458 4779

**Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital**

300 Waterdale Road  
Ivanhoe Victoria 3079  
P. 03 9496 5000  
F. 03 9496 2541

**Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre**

1 Yarra Boulevard  
Kew Victoria 3101  
P. 03 9490 7500  
F. 03 9490 7501

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays its respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Austin Health celebrates, values and includes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

