



ST VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL
SYDNEY



Patient Information Booklet

All the things you need to know.

Better and
fairer care.
Always.

Welcome

Welcome to St Vincent's Hospital Sydney.

Your safety and wellbeing is our priority. At St Vincent's our goal is to provide the best possible health outcomes and experience for our patients.

Health care in Australia is among the best and safest in the world, but there are still risks when spending time in hospital. Find out how we keep you safe during your hospital stay, and what you and your family and friends can do to help.

Please speak up if you have questions or concerns, or if you've noticed an unexpected change in your condition. We want all patients, families, visitors and staff to feel welcome, valued and safe at our hospital, including people of diverse cultures, sexualities and genders.

It is our pleasure to care for you.

*Anna McFadgen,
Chief Executive Officer
St Vincent's Health Network Sydney*

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Always.



Bujari Gamarruwa

We acknowledge the traditional and spiritual lands on which our facilities stand, the land of the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation.

We pay our respects to Elders both past and present, who have cared for these lands for countless generations.

Helpful Numbers

St Vincent's Hospital Switchboard	To connect to wards and departments	8382 1111
Sacred Heart Health Service	To connect to Rehabilitation and Palliative Care	8382 9444
Aboriginal Health Unit	For advice and support for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander patients and families	8383 3036
Patient Feedback Team	If you would like to leave a compliment, complaint or suggestion	8382 3663 svhs.feedback@svha.org.au
REACH	If you or your carers are concerned about a change in your condition	8382 3666
Transit Lounge	To ask about a patient waiting in the Transit Lounge	8382 3330
Your Nurse Unit Manager	To escalate any concerns or requests	

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Safe environment for all

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Patients

We want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families to feel safe, respected, and welcome in our hospital.

We have Aboriginal Health Workers to support Aboriginal patients, families, and carers whilst in our hospital.

If you want to speak with an Aboriginal Health Worker tell your nurse. You can speak with Aboriginal Health staff by phoning **(02) 8382 3036**.

Sexuality and gender diversity

All patients should feel safe, respected and cared for at our hospital, including people of diverse sexualities and genders.

We are always seeking to improve in making our healthcare services inclusive through undertaking training, creating safe spaces and ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities under the NSW LGBTQIA+ Health Strategy.

Staff will respect your gender identity, including your pronouns, and your sexuality.

We understand that visiting hospital can be a stressful experience and we encourage you to speak to your healthcare team if you have concerns.

Keeping our staff safe

Our staff are here to help, not to be hurt. Action will be taken against anyone who behaves in a violent or aggressive way. Verbal or physical abuse of hospital staff could result in refusal of treatment and/or prosecution.



Your Hospital Stay

Interpreter Services

Professional interpreters are available if you need help understanding or speaking in English. You may have a family member or friend present, but all communication about your treatment should be through a professional interpreter.

Interpreter services are free and confidential.

It is your right to ask for an interpreter if one is not offered to you. The staff will book the interpreter for you.

If you need to use an interpreter to contact us, please call the telephone Translating and Interpreter Service on 131 450.

Español / Spanish

Servicios de intérpretes

Hay intérpretes profesionales disponibles si usted necesita ayuda para entender o hablar inglés. Puede tener con usted a un familiar o amigo, pero toda la comunicación sobre su tratamiento debe ser por intermedio de un intérprete profesional. Los servicios de intérprete son gratuitos y confidenciales.

Usted está en su derecho al pedir un intérprete si no se lo ofrecen. El personal le reservará un intérprete.

Si necesita un intérprete para contactarnos, llame al Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación al teléfono 131 450.

廣東話 / Cantonese

翻譯服務

如果您需要幫助理解英語或說英語，可以安排專業口譯員。您可以有一個家人或朋友在場，但所有關於您的治療的溝通都應經過專業口譯員。口譯服務是免費和保密的。

如果沒有為您安排口譯，您有權要求安排。工作人員將會為您預約一名口譯員。

如果您需要用口譯員與我們聯絡，請致電全國翻譯與口譯服務處 (TIS)，號碼是 131 450。

普通话 / Mandarin

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Русский / Russian

Услуги устного переводчика

Если вам нужна помощь в общении на английском языке, вы можете воспользоваться услугами профессиональных переводчиков. Вы можете попросить своего родственника или друга, знающего английский язык, присутствовать, но всё общение касательно вашего лечения должно происходить с помощью профессионального переводчика. Услуги переводчика бесплатны и конфиденциальны. Вы имеете право просить предоставить вам переводчика, если вам это не предложили, и для вас будут организованы услуги переводчика. Если вам нужны услуги переводчика для того, чтобы связаться с нами, пожалуйста, позвоните в Переводческую службу по телефону 131 450.



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Your Hospital Stay

Connecting to internet (wi-fi)

Inpatients can access free hospital Wi-Fi:

Network: Stv_Guest

Password: SVHAG2022.

Keeping your belongings safe

Please leave your valuables at home or have someone take them home for you if possible.

There is a safe for valuables if needed. Ask your nurse if you are concerned.

St Vincent's Hospital does not take responsibility for personal belongings.

Smoke free environment

We are a smoke and e-cigarette free environment. Smoking is strictly prohibited within hospital grounds.

If you smoke, you may want to discuss the use of nicotine patches with your doctor.

Visitors

Visitor times and restrictions are on our website: www.svhs.org.au. Visitors may be asked to wear a mask or other protective equipment.

Visitors should:

- Only come to the hospital if they are well (to prevent the spread of infection).
- Not touch any dressing, devices or equipment.
- If they have any questions or concerns please speak with your nurse.

Finding your way around

You can use a free app called BindiMaps to find your way around St Vincent's Hospital and Sacred Heart Health Service.

Scan this QR code to download BindiMaps or search on the App Store or Google Play Store



Open the BindiMaps app and browse locations or search for a destination. BindiMaps will guide you with a map, text or audio directions.

Your Rights & Responsibilities

We believe staff, patients, families and carers all have a mutual right to expect, and a responsibility to provide, respect and dignity to each other. The following Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights outlines your healthcare rights and what you can expect when receiving care.

My healthcare rights

This is the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.

These rights apply to all people in all places where health care is provided in Australia.

The Charter describes what you, or someone you care for, can expect when receiving health care.



I have a right to:

Access

- Healthcare services and treatment that meets my needs

Safety

- Receive safe and high quality health care that meets national standards
- Be cared for in an environment that is safe and makes me feel safe

Respect

- Be treated as an individual, and with dignity and respect
- Have my culture, identity, beliefs and choices recognised and respected

Partnership

- Ask questions and be involved in open and honest communication
- Make decisions with my healthcare provider, to the extent that I choose and am able to
- Include the people that I want in planning and decision-making

Information

- Clear information about my condition, the possible benefits and risks of different tests and treatments, so I can give my informed consent
- Receive information about services, waiting times and costs
- Be given assistance, when I need it, to help me to understand and use health information
- Access my health information
- Be told if something has gone wrong during my health care, how it happened, how it may affect me and what is being done to make care safe

Privacy

- Have my personal privacy respected
- Have information about me and my health kept secure and confidential

Give feedback

- Provide feedback or make a complaint without it affecting the way that I am treated
- Have my concerns addressed in a transparent and timely way
- Share my experience and participate to improve the quality of care and health services

For more information ask a member of staff or visit safetyandquality.gov.au/your-rights

The content of this resource has been informed by the *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* (second edition), developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health (ACSQHC) for use exclusively in Australia. ACSQHC: Sydney, 2022.

Communicating with us about your care

Please tell us the contact details of a family member/carer so we can update them about your care.

A doctor will call your nominated family member/carer when there is a significant update about your medical condition.

If you or your family want to speak with staff:

- Check the **Welcome Poster** near your bed. It has information on how you can contact staff for updates.
- Ask your doctor questions during **Medical Rounds**. Medical rounds are when doctors go to the wards to see patients. You can ask your nurse when the medical round will be. You can also contact medical staff via the hospital switchboard.
- **Bedside Handovers** happen every time a nursing shift finishes and starts (3 times a day). You and any family members/carers who are present can be involved in this handover. You can ask nursing staff what time they do bedside handover.
- **Patient Care Boards** are located close to each patient's bed. You (and your family/carer) and nurse can use these boards to talk about your care. You (and your family/carers) can write questions on this board for your care team and set goals, review the predicted date for your discharge and any other information.

Privacy

We will keep your information safe by following privacy laws. To help us to look after you, we will share your personal health information with staff involved with your care.

For more information on how we collect, use or disclose your personal information, please go to: www.svhs.org.au/privacy-policy

Planning ahead (advance care planning)

There might be a time may come when you are not well enough to manage your needs or you are not able to speak for yourself.

Advance Care Planning is thinking about and writing down what you would like for your future health care. This includes health care you would (or would not) like to receive if you were to become seriously ill or injured

This can help your family, friend or carer know what you would like and how you they can help you.

For more information, go to:
www.svhs.org.au/planningahead

Partners in Safety

What You Need to Know When You Are in Hospital

Your wellness and safety is our top priority and we encourage you to become an active partner of your healthcare team. We will work with you to develop a plan of care.

Please tell us about your health, what matters to you and feel free to ask questions. Speak up often so you remain safe in hospital and recover faster.

For more information see: www.svhs.org.au/keepingsafe



Patients Come First

- It is important that you feel comfortable during your stay, and have your questions and concerns addressed. Whenever staff members enter your room, they should identify themselves and explain what they are planning to do. If someone does not introduce themselves, please ask them to do so.
- Make sure you understand how to use your call bell to alert your nurse. Your nurse will check on you regularly throughout the day and night.
- Please don't feel embarrassed to ask any questions. If you are still unsure about something, feel free to ask us to explain in another way. We want to work together with you – and your family – to plan your care and assist with your recovery. Effective communication is essential.
- We recognise the unique status Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold as First Nations people.
- Ask your nurse if you would like cultural support from our Pastoral and Spiritual Care Team.



Identification

We need to know who you are!

- Your identification helps us give you the right care.
- Always wear an identification band on your wrist or leg. If it comes off ask the nurse immediately for another one.
- Make sure the information on this is correct.
- Staff members will check your identification before giving you medication or before you have any tests or procedures.

You need to know who we are!

- Ask who your nurse is for each shift.
- All staff should wear an identification badge.
- If you are not sure who someone is, please ask.



Preventing Falls

Falling is the main cause of injury in hospital

When people are not feeling well, their risk of a fall increases. In hospital this is most likely to occur near the bed or while going to and from the toilet. To reduce your risk of a fall, our nursing staff may stay with you in the bathroom, or provide support equipment for you to use.

What you can do to help:

- Use your call bell. Keep it in easy reach, and ring early for help.
- Please wait for us to help you walk safely.
- Familiarise yourself with your room and bathroom. Be aware of any hazards (e.g. spills and clutter) and tell us when you see them.
- Allow us to help you with using the toilet and shower to keep you safe.
- Take your time when getting up from sitting or lying down. Tell us if you feel unwell or unsteady on your feet.
- Only use equipment we have given you for support.
- Sit down to shower. Use the rails to get off the chair or the toilet.
- If you feel unsafe in the bathroom, remain seated, use the call bell and wait for help.
- Use a walking aid if one has been suggested and keep it within reach.
- Wear safe footwear. Wear shoes or slippers with a firm, thin slip-resistant sole, laces or quick fastening, and support around the heel. If you do not have shoes with you, wear non-slip socks. Do not wear slip-on shoes or thongs.
- Wear your glasses, and keep them clean and within reach. Ask us for help.
- Keep your curtains open so we can see you and the patients next to you.
- Do not walk around in the dark. At night, use the light button on the call bell to turn on the light before getting out of bed. Turn the light on in the bathroom. Call us to help you at night.

Families can help by:

- Spending time with the patient in hospital.
- Notifying nursing staff when you are leaving, especially if the patient is confused.
- De-clutter the area prior to leaving the patient's room (chairs especially) for safe movement.
- Ensure the patient can reach the call bell.



Managing Your Pain

We will treat your pain to keep you comfortable.

- Ask your nurse for pain relief before your pain becomes too strong, or before physical activity (such as showering or physiotherapy).
- If you have any questions about managing your pain, ask your nurse or doctor.
- Tell your nurse or doctor about any pain that does not get better, even if this is after having pain medicine.
- Medications may have side effects.
- You must tell your doctor if you feel sick or very sleepy after taking pain medication.



Stop Pressure Injuries

A pressure injury is often called a 'bedsore'. It is caused by unrelieved pressure (e.g. from lying in bed or sitting in a chair for prolonged periods) and can damage the underlying skin, muscle and bone. What you can do:

- Keep moving! Change your sitting and lying position as much as possible.
- Keep weight off bony parts of your body, e.g. heels, tail bone.
- Don't lie on a sore if you already have one.
- Keep skin clean and moisturise skin to prevent flaking. Let staff know if you need help.
- Eat a healthy balanced diet (including fruit and vegetables).
- Talk to a member of your treating team if you notice any areas of your skin showing changes or areas you are concerned about.



Good Nutrition

Eating well in hospital is important. It can help you recover from illness quicker and allow you to go home sooner. Let staff know if you:

- Have any special dietary needs.
- Need assistance at mealtimes.
- Are not managing the meals or your appetite is poor.

If you are having problems eating, or have concerns about your diet, please speak to your nurse. You may be referred to a dietitian if necessary.



Blood Clots

Blood clots can form in large leg veins causing pain and impacting blood flow. Please tell us immediately if you have leg pain or swelling, pain in your lungs or chest, or difficulty breathing.

What you can do to help:

- Drink water
- Stay as active as possible and safe
- Wear compression stockings if these have been recommended for you

Your doctor may recommend anti-clotting medicine.



Understanding IV Drips

If you need medicines or fluids delivered directly into your bloodstream, you may require a small flexible tube inserted into a vein. This is called a peripheral intravenous catheter (PIVC) or 'drip' and you will receive information and education about the device.

What you can do:

- If you have previously had a drip inserted, tell staff about that experience.
- Protect the drip from knocks and being pulled out.
- Keep your hands clean and do not touch or move the device.
- Tell staff if you have redness or pain at the site, if you feel hot or shivery or if there appears to be leakage, e.g. the dressing is wet or bloodstained.



Preventing Infections

We will work with you to minimise the risk of an infection in hospital.

What you can do to help:

- Wash your hands with soap and water before eating, and after toileting. If you are unable to get out of bed, then we can help you.
- Use hand sanitiser available in each room.
- Ask your visitors to use hand sanitiser when they come into and leave your room.
- Staff should clean their hands before and after they touch you. If you are unsure if a staff member has cleaned their hands, it is ok to ask them.
- Avoid touching or adjusting any devices, like your IV drips, drains or catheters. Tell your nurse or doctor if your dressing becomes loose or dirty, or if any insertion site becomes painful.



Are You Worried About Your Medical Condition?

At any time you, or your family, can reach out for help with your care. Our staff are trained in noticing changes in your health but you can help us by letting staff know:

- If you do not feel well or are worried.
- If you think your condition has changed.
- If you think that something has been missed.
- If you have any other concerns.

Your nurse will contact your doctor if required. All patient rooms have a R.E.A.C.H poster and our staff will discuss it as part of your care.

The R.E.A.C.H. model is a way of supporting you (the patient) and your family and carers to seek assistance if you notice a worrying change in your condition. For more information, see svhs.org.au/reach. If you are still worried, call **(02) 8382 3666**.



Delirium

What is Delirium?

Delirium is a common medical problem of sudden confusion and changes in a person's behaviour and alertness. This includes confusion, changes in emotions (feeling fearful, upset, irritable, or sad), experiencing hallucinations, and acting differently from their usual self. Delirium is often associated with physical illness or infection.

Delirium can develop within hours or days, and usually lasts for a few days. It occurs more often in older people, but it can occur at any age.

What family members/carers can do to help:

- Tell us of any sudden change in a person's mental or physical condition.
- Stay with your loved one as it is reassuring for someone with delirium to see familiar people.
- If the person is confused, talk slowly in a clear voice. Remind them about your name and their name, where they are, the date, and time.
- If the person is not calm, do not argue with them.
- If the person wants to walk around, let them but make sure that they are safe from falling and there are no hazards in the area.
- Tell us about any personal information that may help soothe and orient the person if they forget who they are or what's going on. You can bring items that help remind the person of home, such as photos.



Medication Safety

Medicines are an important part of your treatment

- The pharmacist will ask you which medicines you take at home (prescribed either by your doctor or from the pharmacy or health store).
- Let us know if you have allergies or reactions to any medicines. You will then be given a red identity band rather than a clear identity band as an alert to staff.
- Before going home, ask the pharmacist for printed information about your medicines and check you understand.

During your admission:

- **Every time** you are given medication, your nurse will:
- Check your identity band
- Ask your name and date of birth (to make sure we are giving the correct medications to the correct person).
- Ask if you have any allergies to any medications, drugs, or substances (eg penicillin, shellfish, or tapes).
- Explain what medication is being given and why.

If you feel this medication is incorrect (for example, wrong amount, wrong time, wrong medication, or you don't need it), or you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your nurse.



Consent

We will ask for your consent before all procedures and treatment.

We might ask for your verbal consent or to sign a consent form. It is important that you understand all information about what is recommended, including what options are available.

If you are unable to provide consent, your nominated decision maker is able to do this on your behalf. Eg, Guardian.



Discharge (leaving hospital)

DISCHARGE TIME IS 10AM

Discharge is when you leave hospital. We will start planning your discharge when you first come to hospital.

To help us plan, you should tell us about anything that might affect your ability to go home.

There may also be the option to continue your treatment at home or in the community with our Hospital in the Home (HITH) service.

Managing at Home After Discharge

After you go home from hospital, your main contact for your healthcare is your General Practitioner (GP).

If you do not have a GP please ask us to help you find one before you are discharged home. We will send information about your hospital stay to your GP. This will help them look after you.

Medication

If you need medicine when you go home, we will give you up to four days' supply. If you have a valid Medicare card then you will not have to pay for this.

Contact your GP to organise more medication to be supplied. If you think you will have difficulty seeing your GP within four days, please ask to speak with a Pharmacist.

Medical aids and appliances

We will help you organise any medical aids or appliances that you need. We will tell you know if there are any costs for these.

Need extra help at home?

There are support services to help you recover, such as home care services, transport and/or home delivered meals. Please ask us for more information.

St Vincent's Transit Lounge

St Vincent's Transit Lounge is a quiet space where patients can wait for family/transport to pick them up. It is open Monday to Friday.

The Transit Lounge is managed by nursing staff. A Ward's Person (hospital porter) will escort you and your belongings from the ward and down to the Transit Lounge, located on Level 3 (the ground floor) near the hospital's main entrance.

The day before your discharge:

Someone from the Transit Lounge will visit you to check your travel arrangements for the following day.

On the day of your discharge (or transfer to Hospital in the Home (HITH)):

We will escort you and your belongings from the ward to the Transit Lounge by 10am where possible. If you are waiting for medicine or medical documents we will bring them to you in the Transit Lounge. Your family/transport will need to collect you from the Transit Lounge by 4.45pm.

Hospital in the Home (HITH)

HITH is a continuation of your hospital care but at your home, workplace or in our onsite clinic.

This means you can get care without needing to stay in hospital. HITH has doctors, nurses and allied health staff.

They will review you every day at home, the HITH clinic, or sometimes by phone or computer.



Patient Experience

We Value Your Feedback

Whilst in our care please let our team know if there is anything we can do to support you during your time with us. Each Department has a Nurse Unit Manager and Nurse In Charge who we encourage you to speak to.

We want to ensure all our patients feel welcomed, valued and safe. By letting us know what matters to you we can ensure your expectations are met.

When you go home, you will receive an email from our surveying partner Insync. If you do not have an email the survey will be sent via SMS.

It will ask two (2) questions, which formulate a Net Promoter Score (NPS):

1. *Would you recommend this hospital to friends and family? (0-10)*
2. *A free text box where you can comment on the care you received.*

We also distribute a more detailed survey to patients twice yearly, we appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey if received.

A guide to your NPS scoring:



If You Have Any Concerns

If you have any concerns or experience any issues, we would like the opportunity to resolve them. Please notify our staff so we can provide immediate assistance.

Step 1: Alert your nurse about any concerns or questions you may have as they arise.

Step 2: If you are not satisfied with the response, please ask to speak with the Nurse Unit Manager or Nurse in Charge who will be happy to assist you.

Step 3: If your concerns are still not resolved, please contact the Patient Feedback Manager on 02 8382 2663.

Complaints

If we have been unable to resolve your concerns whilst in hospital, you may like to speak with our patient feedback team. All feedback provides us with an opportunity to improve and we encourage you to advise of any matters that you feel we need to address.

Send your complaint letter to:

Patient Feedback Manager

Executive Office
St Vincent's Hospital
390 Victoria Street
Darlinghurst NSW 2010

or email: svhs.feedback@svha.org.au



You may wish to call our Patient Feedback Manager for further information on 02 8382 2663 between 9am- 5pm Monday - Friday



To complete our online feedback form see www.svhs.org.au/feedback

Health Care Complaints Commission

You also have the right to request further follow up by an external body including the:

Health Care Complaints Commission
LMB 18, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
www.hccc.nsw.gov.au

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Our Hospital

Our Values

St Vincent's Health Australia's four core values are:

Compassion

Our care is an act of love.

We are present and accompany people when they are most in need.

Justice

To act with courage and speak in pursuit of what is right and just.

Integrity

Ensuring our actions and decisions are transparent.

Excellence

Our care is safe, evidence based and continually seeking to improve.

More Information

For more information about St Vincent's and Sacred Heart, see www.svhs.org.au

To support St Vincent's, please go to www.supportstvincents.com.au

Our Care

For those entrusted to our care it is:

- Provided in an environment underpinned by our Mission and Values.
- Holistic and centred on the needs of each patient and resident.
- High quality, safe and continuously improved to ensure best practice.
- Innovative and informed by current research, using contemporary techniques and technology.
- Delivered by a team of dedicated, appropriately qualified people who are supported in the continuing development of their skills and knowledge.
- Committed to a respect for life within the tradition of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity.



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HOSPITAL**
SYDNEY



**This information was developed in consultation with our consumers.
Responsible: Quality, Performance & Improvement Directorate.
This version developed July 2024. To be reviewed: July 2025.**