



# PARTNERING FOR SAFETY

## STAYING SAFE IN HOSPITAL



## TOP TIPS FOR SAFE HEALTH CARE

What you need to know for yourself, your family, or someone you care for.

- ✓ **Ask questions.** You have the right to ask questions about your care.
- ✓ **Find good information.** Ask your healthcare team for guidance.
- ✓ **Understand the risks and benefits.** Find out about your tests and treatments before they happen.
- ✓ **List all your medicines.** Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you need more information about your medications.
- ✓ **Confirm details of your operation.** Ask who will be doing your procedure and what you should expect.
- ✓ **Ask about your care after leaving hospital.** Ask for a written outline of your treatment and what should happen after you get home.
- ✓ **Know your rights.** You have a number of rights as a patient (please see "Healthcare Rights" section).
- ✓ **Understand privacy.** Your medical information is confidential. You can ask to see your medical record.
- ✓ **Give feedback.** Feedback helps health professionals spot when improvements can be made.

For more information, go to: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips)



## WELCOME TO ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL

Your safety is our priority. Our goal is to provide our patients with the safest possible care. 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 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 to make sure that you and your family feel welcome, valued, and safe throughout your stay.

It is our pleasure to care for you.

Warm regards,

**A/Professor Anthony M. Schembri AM**

Chief Executive Officer

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

## INTERPRETER SERVICES

We can arrange professional interpreters if you need help understanding or speaking English. Interpreter services are free and confidential. If you need to call us through an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PATIENTS

St Vincent's recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of our lands. We want all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families to feel safe, respected, and welcome in our hospital. St Vincent's has Aboriginal Health Workers to support Aboriginal patients, families, and carers whilst in our hospital. You can speak with Aboriginal Health staff by phoning **(02) 8382 3036**.

## PRIVACY

We will keep your personal information safe by following privacy laws. To help us to look after you, your personal health information will be shared with staff involved in your care. For more information on how we collect, use or disclose your personal information, please go to:

**[www.svhs.org.au/privacy-policy](http://www.svhs.org.au/privacy-policy)**

## KEEPING YOUR BELONGINGS SAFE

St Vincent's Hospital does not take responsibility for personal belongings. Please leave your valuables at home or have someone take them home for you.

## CONNECTING INTERNET (WI-FI)

Stay connected with family and friends, via FaceTime and social media with our free hospital internet.

- Select **MA\_Ministries** and click on **Connect**
- Select Patient Wi-Fi Access

**Username:** Your patient ID number

**Password:** Your Date of Birth reversed - yymmdd



## MY 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.



## RESOLVING YOUR CONCERNS

During your stay at St Vincent's, we want you to feel welcome, valued, and safe. If you have any concerns, please speak up.

- Talk to your nurse about your concerns or questions.
- If you are still not satisfied, ask to speak with the Nursing Unit Manager (NUM) and/or Team Leader of the ward.
- If you remain unsatisfied, you can contact the hospital's Consumer Feedback Manager by phoning **(02) 8382 2663**.

### Making a Formal Complaint

- If you have tried to resolve your concerns using this process and you are still unsatisfied, you may make a "formal complaint".
- Scan this QR code, or visit our website: **[www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/feedback](http://www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/feedback)**



## PLANNING AHEAD (ADVANCE CARE PLANNING)

Planning ahead is important because a time may come when you are not well enough to manage your needs or you are not able to speak for yourself. It can help to be sure that someone - family, friend or carer - knows how they can help you.

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, and will help to make sure your choices are respected. For more information, go to: **[www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/being-involved-in-your-care/planning-for-the-future](http://www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/being-involved-in-your-care/planning-for-the-future)**

## PREPARING FOR SURGERY

We will call you the day before your surgery and tell you what time to arrive, where to go, and any other instructions. For more information, go to **[www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/your-hospital-stay](http://www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/your-hospital-stay)**

## MANAGING YOUR PAIN

We want to make you comfortable during your stay, and keep your pain to a minimum. To help us understand we may ask you to rate your pain out of 10, with zero being no pain and 10 being the worst pain ever. This is called your "Pain Score". We will ask for your Pain Score while you are resting, and also after moving or coughing, which helps us to understand what makes your pain worse, and how much it increases when you move or cough. Tell us where your pain is (location), and how it feels (e.g. "aching", "burning", "dull" or "sharp" pain).

- Your pain may be treated in several ways, depending on the type of pain, the cause, and the location.
- Ask for pain relief before your pain becomes too strong, or before physical activity (such as showering or physiotherapy).
- Your pain can be helped with regular pain relief, such as paracetamol, which can stop you from needing stronger pain relief, which may have more side effects. Remember to tell your nurse or doctor about any pain that does not get better, even if this is after having pain medicine. If you have any questions about managing pain, ask your nurse or doctor.
- Short-term use of pain medications is not addictive if taken as directed. However, all medications may have side effects, so you must tell your nurse or doctor if you feel sick or very sleepy after taking pain medication.

## ARE YOU WORRIED? (REACH OUT)

Are you worried about a recent change in your condition or that of your loved one? If YES... REACH out.

- R.** You may **recognise** a worrying change in your condition or in the person you care for.
- E. Engage** (talk) with the staff and tell them your concerns.
- A. Ask** for a clinical review.
- C.** If you are still worried, use a phone to **call** (02) 8382 3666
- H. Help** is on the way.



For more information, go to [www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/your-hospital-stay/are-you-concerned-about-a-patient](http://www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/your-hospital-stay/are-you-concerned-about-a-patient)

## PREVENTING INFECTIONS

We use a range of strategies to reduce the risk of infection. Our staff are trained in these strategies and 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 the nursing staff can help you.
- Use the alcohol hand rub, which is available in each room.
- Encourage your visitors to use the hand sanitiser on arrival to and departure from your room.
- All healthcare workers 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 the dressing becomes loose or soiled, or if any insertion site becomes painful.

## VISITORS

We understand that visitors are a great comfort and support during your stay. We request that all visitors:

- Only come to the hospital if they are well (to prevent the spread of infection).
- Visitors should not touch any dressing, devices or equipment. If they have any questions or concerns then they can speak with your nurse.
- We might need to change our visitor rules because of community infection (like COVID). We will display signs for visitors at the hospital entrance, and will explain to you if we change our visitor policy.
- For the latest information about visitor times and restrictions, please see our website: [www.svhs.org.au](http://www.svhs.org.au)



## PREVENTING FALLS

During your hospital stay, you may find that you have difficulty moving around. For example, you may have pain, and feel unsteady on your feet. To help keep you and our staff safe, we use equipment to help people move around while they are in hospital. You can watch videos about this at: [www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/your-hospital-stay/keeping-you-safe-in-hospital](http://www.svhs.org.au/patients-visitors/your-hospital-stay/keeping-you-safe-in-hospital)

If you fall in hospital, it can lead to injury, resulting in a longer stay. Most people fall near the bed and while going to the toilet. Because of this nursing staff may need to stay with you in the bathroom to help keep you safe.

There are various causes for falling in hospital, including: being unwell and in an unfamiliar place, difficulty walking and balancing, loose-fitting footwear and clothing, urgent need to go to the toilet, and medications that cause drowsiness and/or dizziness.

### What you can do to help:

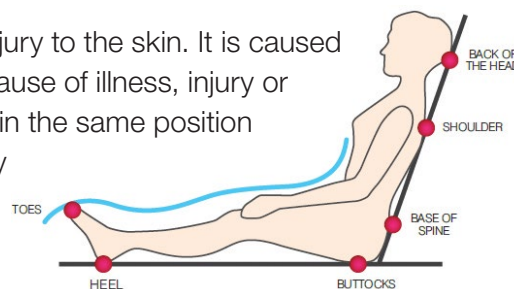
- **Use your call bell.** Keep it in easy reach, and ring early for help. Please wait for staff to assist you to walk safely.
- **Familiarise yourself with your room and bathroom.** Be aware of any hazards (e.g. spills and clutter) and tell staff when you see them.
- **Allow staff to stay with you** in the toilet and shower to help keep you safe.
- **Take your time when getting up from sitting or lying down.** Let staff know if you feel unwell or unsteady on your feet.
- **Only use equipment** staff 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 your walking aid.** Always use your own walking aid and keep it within reach.
- **Wear safe footwear.** Wear shoes or slippers with a firm, thin slip-resistant sole, laces or Velcro 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 staff for help.
- **Keep your curtains open** so staff 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.

Source: Clinical Excellence  
Commission©2012 Version 1,  
SHPN: (CEC) 120263



## PREVENTING PRESSURE INJURIES

A pressure injury (also called a pressure injury or bed sore) is an injury to the skin. It is caused by constant pressure, and may happen when you can't move because of illness, injury or surgery. Pressure injuries can happen quickly, from lying or sitting in the same position for too long. They can be painful, take a long time to heal, and may lead to other complications. Staff will assess your level of risk of developing a pressure injury, and may provide pressure-relieving equipment (like mattresses).



### What you can do to help:

- **Check your skin for signs of a pressure injury.**  
Let staff know if you have any warning signs, including: redness/skin discoloration; tenderness, pain, or itching in affected areas; blistering, and/or broken skin.
- **Change your position frequently.** If you can't move yourself, staff will help you change your position frequently.
- **Ask for help if you have a weak bladder or bowel,** and if your clothes or bedding are damp.
- **Keep your skin clean and dry,** using a cleanser and moisturiser.
- **Drink fluids regularly,** unless you are on a fluid restriction.
- **You may be offered nutritional supplements** if you are underweight or have had been eating poorly.

Source: Pressure Injury Prevention: Information for Patients and Families Released March 2014, © Clinical Excellence Commission 2014. SHPN (CEC) 130169

## DELIRIUM

### What is delirium?

Delirium is a common medical problem with changes in mental function. 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 an underlying physical illness or infection. Delirium and its symptoms develops over a short period of time, within hours or days, and usually lasts for a few days. Delirium occurs more often in older people, but it can occur at any age. Staff will do a thorough assessment to look for and treat the underlying cause of the delirium. If a physical problem is identified, appropriate treatment will be given (for instance, antibiotics to treat a urinary tract infection). Treatment is sometimes aimed at lessening symptoms and reducing the risk of complications.

### Role of family and carers

It is reassuring for someone with delirium to see familiar people, so family and carers may be encouraged to stay with their loved one. **Please tell staff of any sudden change in a person's mental or physical condition.**

### What family members/carers can do to help:

- To help someone who is confused, talk slowly in a clear voice. You may remind the person about your name and their name. Orientate them by reminding them about their location, date, and time.
- If the person is not calm, do not argue with them. If they want to walk around, let them but make sure that they are safe from falling and there are no hazards in the area.
- Tell staff 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.

Source: This has been produced as part of the Care of Confused Hospitalised Older Persons Program and funded through the NHMRC Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre, 2018. 2HACI08 March 2020 0061 03/20





# OUR VALUES

COMPASSION | JUSTICE | INTEGRITY | EXCELLENCE



For more information about your hospital stay, go to [www.svhs.org.au](http://www.svhs.org.au)



To support St Vincent's, go to [www.supportstvincents.com.au](http://www.supportstvincents.com.au)



**ST VINCENT'S  
HOSPITAL**  
SYDNEY

390 Victoria Street  
Darlinghurst NSW 2110  
Tel: 02 8382 1111



**SACRED HEART  
HEALTH SERVICE**

170 Darlinghurst Road  
Darlinghurst NSW 2110  
Tel: 02 8382 9444



**ST JOSEPH'S  
HOSPITAL**

2A Normanby Road  
Auburn NSW 2144  
Tel: 02 9649 8941