

# GRAFTON BASE HOSPITAL

## Patient Information Guide



GRAFTON  
BASE  
HOSPITAL



Northern NSW  
Local Health District

## Welcome

We know that coming into hospital can be an overwhelming experience for many people. This Patient Information Guide is designed to provide information for you and your family/carers about planning your stay in hospital.

Our team strive to provide the best care for our patients. We encourage your involvement and the involvement of your carers throughout your hospital stay.

We are happy to provide any further information that you may require. Please feel free to speak to your Doctor, Nurse/Midwife, the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager\* of the ward you are in, or the After-Hours Nurse Manager (you can ask a staff member to contact them for you).

Please let us know if this Patient Information Guide does not meet your needs, so that we can make further improvements – you can give your comments to the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager.

\* Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager (N/MUM): Nursing staff member who is in-charge of the ward. A poster with their photo is available at the entry of each ward.

### Our contact details:

#### Grafton Base Hospital

184 Arthur Street, Grafton. Phone – 6640 2222.

#### Community & Allied Health Services

- Grafton – 184 Arthur Street, Grafton. Phone - 6641 8702. (8.00am – 4.30pm).
- Aruma – 175 Queen Street, Grafton. Phone - 6641 8200. (8.00am – 4.30pm).

#### Grafton Mental Health Services

175 Queen Street, Grafton. Phone - 6641 8250.  
(8.30am – 4.00pm).

#### Drug & Alcohol Service (Counselling) - Grafton

184 Arthur Street, Grafton. Phone - 6641 8702.  
(8.30am – 5pm).

#### Northern NSW Local Health District

<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/>



#### VISION STATEMENT

Better Health and Excellence in Health Care

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# Vision, Purpose and Values

## Our Vision

A healthy community through quality care.

## Our Purpose

Work together to deliver quality health outcomes across our communities.

## Our Values



**Collaboration** – is working willingly and actively together to achieve goals and improve levels of service to NSW Health. Collaboration means seeking the input of others, from both within the Northern NSW Local Health District and from external partners, while always considering the impact on our teams.



**Openness** – is a state of mind, enabling colleagues to share ideas and communicate clearly. We strive to be approachable, actively listen and encourage others to contribute and speak up. We offer and receive constructive feedback. This ensures others feel their contribution is valued, even when there are disagreements.



**Respect** – is a reminder to treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves. It is important to be mindful of each other's capabilities, regardless of role or grade. We care about the different perspectives and backgrounds in our workplace, and are thoughtful of our impact on others.



**Empowerment** – enables a sense of purpose in our work. It is achieved through taking responsibility for our performance and behaviour. We celebrate our achievements. We also reflect upon things which may not have met expectations and learn from that experience. In doing so, we create a positive environment in which people are encouraged to grow, develop and succeed.

## The Services We Provide

Grafton Base Hospital includes:

- Emergency Department
- Medical Ward
- Surgical Ward
- Maternity Unit
- Children & Adolescent Ward
- Intensive Care Unit and Coronary Care Unit
- Surgical Services Unit (including Day Surgery Unit)
- Oncology (Cancer) Unit
- Renal Unit
- Medical Imaging / X-ray Department
- Pathology Department and
- Community & Allied Health Services.

We also provide:

- Outpatient Mental Health Service
- Drug & Alcohol Service
- Dental Health Service
- Palliative Care Service and
- Hospital-in-the-Home (HITH) Service.

### Ground Floor / Level 1

The **Emergency Department** is staffed 24/7 by experienced doctors and nurses. Patients are seen in order of need rather than the time they arrive. You may have to wait longer if somebody sicker than you comes in. We appreciate your patience if there is a delay. We provide treatment in the Emergency Department for children. Children may need to be transferred to the Children's & Adolescents Ward or another hospital for ongoing treatment, if they need it.

The **Surgical Services Unit** provides care for all patients requiring an operation. The types of surgery provided include:

- General surgery
- Orthopaedic (joints and bones)
- Gynaecology
- Ear Nose and Throat (ENT)
- Ophthalmology (eyes)
- Endoscopy and
- Dental surgery.

The **Surgical Ward** is a 24 bed unit, located next to the Operating Theatre and Day Surgery Unit. Patients needing an overnight stay after their surgery are admitted to the Surgical Ward.

The **Maternity Unit** is a 12 bed unit including:

- 3 birthing suites
- A Special Care Nursery
- A home-visiting midwifery service
- Birth and parenting groups
- A Midwives pregnancy care clinic and
- A doctors clinic.

The **Medical Imaging Department** provides X-ray, CT scanning and ultrasounds. This service operates 7 days a week and an After Hours service is provided for emergencies only. People with a referral from a private doctor can use this service Monday to Friday during business hours (8.30am – 4.30pm).

The **Pathology Department** provides an inpatient service for all patients who require any pathology to be collected. An outpatients' pathology service is also available at the hospital between the hours of 8am – 5pm (Monday – Friday) and by appointment only on Saturdays.

The **Pharmacy Department** supplies medicines to inpatients. Northern NSW Local Health District does not dispense medicines to patients who are not admitted to hospital. Patients are encouraged to bring their own medicines into hospital in the event that some of their medicines are not available on the Rural Hospital Formulary.

The **Discharge Transit Unit** is a 6 chair unit for patients who meet the required criteria for discharge home or transfer to another hospital. The unit is located in the main corridor next to the front entrance. Patients are cared for by a nurse until they can be picked up from the hospital. The hours of operation are 9am – 6pm (Monday – Friday) and is closed on public holidays.

## Level 2

The **Medical Ward** is a 27 bed unit. There is also a room available for patients and families who need privacy for palliative (end-of-life) care.

The **Children's Ward** is a 10 bed unit. A parent or guardian is welcome to stay whilst their child is a patient at our hospital. Children cannot go home from hospital with anyone other than their parent or guardian. If someone else needs to take a child home, written instructions from a parent or guardian have to be given to the Nursing Unit Manager.

## Level 3

The **Intensive Care Unit** has 4 beds for patients who are critically ill or need help from machines to breathe.

The **Coronary Care Unit** has 4 beds for patients requiring heart monitoring or patients who have suffered a stroke.

Visitors are asked to speak to a staff member at reception before going into these Units.

You may need to be moved to another hospital, ward or room during your hospital stay. We will do our best to avoid this happening, but sometimes this may be required so that we can provide the best possible care for all patients.

### **Visiting hours**

Due to COVID restrictions, there are changes to the visiting hours at the hospital – you can keep up to date on the NNSW LHD website:

<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/covid19/hospital-and-visitor-updates>

### **General Wards**

Visiting hours in the general wards are between 8.00am to 8:00pm, at the discretion of the nursing staff. If patients are critically ill or family/carers want to help with patient care, such as help with meals, times should be arranged with nursing staff.

### **Intensive Care / Coronary Care Units**

Visiting hours are between 10:00am to 1:00pm and 3:00pm to 8:00pm. Visiting is restricted between 1:00pm to 3:00pm for a rest period. Patients do not receive phone calls during this rest period. Enquiries can still be made to reception. Visitors need to go to reception on arrival before visiting patients.

### **Maternity Unit**

Visiting hours are between 8:00am to 8:00pm.

### **Children's Ward**

Visiting hours are between 8.00am to 8.00pm, at the discretion of the nursing staff.

### **Ambulatory Care Centre**

The **Oncology (Cancer) Unit** provides cancer treatments during the day so people do not have to stay in hospital overnight. This includes chemotherapy treatment and blood transfusions. There is a community volunteer who provides support during patient treatments, if needed.

The **Renal Unit** provides haemodialysis (removal of waste from the blood for patients with kidney failure). It operates Monday to Saturday.

**Community & Allied Health Services** – located at the front entrance to the hospital and at Aruma - these services are free and often do not need a referral. Services include:

- Physiotherapy / Occupational Therapy / Speech Therapy
- Fracture clinics
- Community Nursing / Aged Care Assessment Team / Transition Aged Care
- Palliative (end of life) Care
- Cardiac (heart) and Respiratory (lungs) services
- Child & Family Services, including a paediatric clinic
- Aboriginal Health



- Dietetics
- Podiatry (foot problems)
- Diabetes Management
- Social Worker /Counselling Services
- Chronic Disease Management
- Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Services.

For more information: <https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about/community-health/grafon-community-health/>

## Keeping You Safe

We are committed to providing safe and efficient patient-centred care.

All Nursing & Midwifery handovers are at the bedside and we involve you and your family/carer. We understand that you and your carer / family can provide valuable input towards your care in hospital. You are encouraged to be involved in the planning of your care. It is important that we all work together so that your treatment and plan of care meets your needs. We also want to be able to discharge you from hospital (send you home) as soon as possible.

If you or any family member/carer/visitor notices that you are becoming more unwell, please report this to the nursing staff. The REACH Program has been introduced to help this process, see page 15 for further information.

You have the right to ask us to wash our hands if we have not done so. We must wash our hands or use a hand sanitiser in between patients and procedures – if you don't feel comfortable speaking to us, please ask to speak to the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager or After-Hours Nurse Manager.

You will have regular clinical observations recorded (for example, temperature, heart rate, blood pressure) - if these are abnormal for you, then you will be reviewed by a doctor or senior nurse. Some of these observations will take place overnight - please know that if we wake you up it is to make sure you are safely monitored during your hospital stay.

Please bring comfortable, well-fitting shoes for when you are standing or walking around. We also ask that you follow our instructions and please ask for help to move around if you need it. Most falls in hospitals happen when patients do not ask for help. We have non-slip socks available if you are at risk of falling.

# Patient Care Information

## Admissions – Emergency, Booked and Surgery

An admission to hospital means that you have to stay in hospital for treatment or care.

The admission process involves a number of checks and forms to be completed by you and our staff. We will ask you some questions - some of these may be sensitive or personal, however, they help us provide the best care possible.

Emergency admission to hospital takes place in the Emergency Department. If there is no bed available in the ward, your care will continue in the Emergency Department until a bed is available.

Booked admissions are arranged for a certain date. Priority is given to patients with more urgent conditions. Booked admissions may be delayed if other emergency admissions occur.

At times, the demand for short-term urgent care (acute care) beds is high. When patients no longer need acute care, they may be sent to Maclean District Hospital to finish their recovery. Maclean and Grafton hospitals are linked, and the staff there can provide ongoing care for those who need a longer stay in hospital, including rehabilitation.

### What to bring to Hospital?

- Pyjamas / night dress / dressing gown
- Day clothes as required
- Appropriate well-fitting footwear
- Toiletries, including dentures and hearing aids
- Private Health Fund card, if you have one
- Small amount of money (for newspapers etc.)
- Your medications in their original container (these will be returned to you)
- X-rays, CT scans, ultrasounds and other test results
- Suitable reading material, or other activities such as knitting etc.

### What NOT to bring to Hospital

- Valuables, jewellery, credit cards or large sums of money
- Radios without headphones
- Television sets
- Electrical appliances (except for razor, hair dryer)
- Alcohol, recreational drugs, cigarettes.

## Surgery Admissions

Patients who need to have surgery (or an operation) booked at the hospital, will be given a Request for Elective Admission (**RFA Pack**) from their Surgeon. You need to **complete** this RFA Pack as soon as possible and send it to the hospital (either bring the form to the Surgical Services Unit **or** mail to: Grafton Base Hospital, PO Box 269, Grafton, 2460).

A signed consent form is required before you can have an operation. There is a consent form included in the RFA Pack – this should be filled out by your doctor and signed by yourself or someone able to consent on your behalf. More information about consent is on page 11.

Once we receive the RFA Pack from you, we will book your operation date. The date depends on how urgent the surgeon has told us your operation is. Before your operation we will assess you to see if you need to have an appointment with an Anaesthetist. An Anaesthetist gives you medication and makes sure that you are safe during your operation.

We will send you a letter with the date of your surgery and any other appointments you need. If you have any questions about your surgery admission, please call this number – phone 66418380.

The day before your operation, we call you to tell you when to arrive and any special instructions about stopping food or medications.

On the day of your operation, please go to the Surgical Services Unit (Admissions) on the Ground Floor. Following your surgery, you will either be admitted to the Surgical Ward or be discharged from the Day Surgery Unit. You will need to be picked up by a responsible person and you cannot drive for 24 hours after surgery.

The day after you go home from hospital, a nurse will call you. They will check you are recovering well and provide advice if you need it.

## **Advance Care Directive**

We recommend that you fill out an Advance Care Directive. This is a plan of what you want to happen if you become too ill to tell us your health care decisions.

If you already have an Advance Care Directive, please give the nurse a copy for our records. If you would like to complete an Advance Care Directive, we have books available in each ward. Ideally, they should be filled out with your family and GP.

## **Allergy / Adverse Drug Reactions**

Please let your doctor and nurse know if you have any history of allergies or drug reactions. We will include this information in your medical record.

Your doctor and nurse will also check if you have any allergies before they prescribe any new medication and when they give you any medications during your hospital stay. If you receive any medication in hospital and feel you may be having a reaction, let your doctor or nurse know immediately.

You can self-report adverse events to any medicine or vaccine including medicines you get on prescription and over-the-counter medicines to the Therapeutic Goods Administration – visit <http://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-adverse-events>.

## Blood Clot Prevention

You may develop a blood clot if you have a number of risk factors, including:

- Immobility (you cannot move around by yourself)
- Previous strokes
- Family history of blood clotting problems
- Overweight
- Heart failure
- Smoking and
- Taking the contraceptive pill.

We will assess your risk of developing a clot. If you are at risk, we will ask you to wear compression stockings or start you on some medication to prevent blood clots. Your doctor will explain these treatment options with you.

If you have a sudden increase in pain or swelling in your legs, pain in your chest or difficulty breathing, please tell your nurse immediately. If you get these symptoms at home after you have left hospital, please get emergency treatment.

## Blood Transfusions

Some patients need a blood transfusion during their stay in hospital. A blood transfusion is a procedure where you receive blood through an intravenous cannula (IV) inserted into a blood vein. Some patients need a transfusion of other parts of blood e.g. platelets or plasma.

These transfusions can have risks. Your doctor will explain these risks to you and then ask you for your consent before we can give you the transfusion – you will need to sign a consent form. Please see page 11 for more information about consent.

For more information on blood transfusions, please visit our website:

<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about/patient-blood-management/blood-and-blood-product-transfusion/>

## Clinical Handover

Clinical Handover is the transfer of responsibility and accountability for your care to another health professional.

This is usually done face to face at the bedside and, where possible, you are encouraged to be involved. The Nurses/Midwives who cared for you will introduce you to the next shift. They discuss what has happened to you and your plan of care - please clarify information, ask questions and add information you think may be helpful.

This can be done in a number of ways:

- Nurse / Midwife handover to another nurse at the bedside when they change shifts
- Doctor handover to another doctor
- Allied Health handover to another Allied Health professional
- If your condition gets worse and we are asking for a doctor to see you
- During transfer of care to another health professional or health care facility

Patient-led Clinical Handover is a new way for you to provide handover of care to the staff who are looking after you. This may not have commenced in every ward.

## Communication Board

Each bed has a communication board. We will write the name of the Doctor and Nurse/Midwife caring for you. We will write the Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD) to help you and your family plan for when you go home, and write plans for your care (e.g. X-ray appointment).

## Consent

An informed signed consent form is required for any patient having an operation or certain procedures or treatment.

Informed consent is needed for:

- Operations
- Anaesthesia (medication that blocks pain)
- Blood transfusions
- Unusual medications
- Photographs and audio-visual recording
- Other certain procedures where consent is required by law.

You cannot have any of these procedures or medications if we do not have a signed consent form from you or from someone able to give consent on your behalf.

Informed consent means that you understand the details of your operation. Your doctor has a duty to explain:

- Your medical condition
- The treatment you are getting (including any other treatments available)
- The benefits, risks and possible complications of the treatment. This is so you can make the best decision for you.

We also need your consent before you have any other treatments or procedures, but this does not always mean you have to sign a consent form. Your consent can include you saying 'yes' when we ask if it is OK to do these treatments or procedures.

If you do not understand the details of your operation or treatment, ask to speak to your doctor or nurse.

## Discharge Planning

Discharge Planning helps us to arrange your health care needs when you leave hospital. We will help you and your family/carer during this planning process. The Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager can help with concerns about your discharge.

If you think there will be problems for you returning home, speak to the nursing staff well before your discharge date. There are programs available which will help you settle back into the community and reduce the chances of you returning to hospital, for example – Meals on Wheels, Community Nurses, Physiotherapy, Falls Prevention Programs, Diabetes Coordinator and Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

You may be given prescriptions for medication. It is your responsibility to get these filled at your local Chemist.

If you have a wound that needs dressings/bandages, we will arrange for a nurse to visit you at home or we will make an appointment for you to see a nurse at the clinic.

Follow-up appointments will be made at the hospital before your discharge. Community Support Services will not be arranged without talking to you or your family/carer. We will ask for your consent before referring you to any service.

### Patient Empowered Care

Please ask your doctor questions before you are discharged home, to make sure we have covered everything to meet your needs.

You could help us by asking your doctor these questions during your hospital stay and before you are discharged:

- When will my GP get information about my stay in hospital?
- Can I have a written list of my medications to take with me when I go home?
- What do I have to do next? (e.g. follow-up appointments)
- Are there any test results that still need to be followed up? (How do I get my test results, who should I follow them up with?)
- Who should I contact if I have any questions?
- Is there anything else I should know about my stay in hospital?

Your doctor will give you a discharge letter and send one to your General Practitioner (GP) once you are discharged from hospital, so they can provide ongoing care. Please tell your doctor or Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager if you do not want this information to go to your GP. If you are concerned about your condition or treatment when you go home, please contact the hospital (6640 2222) or your GP.

## **Falls Prevention**

There is an increased risk of falling in hospital. The reasons could be:

- Unfamiliar surroundings
- Your medical conditions
- Medications you may be taking
- Impaired mobility or
- Just feeling unwell.

We will try to help reduce the risk of you falling by:

- Familiarising you with your surroundings
- Assessing your risk of falling - the results will be discussed with you and your family
- Putting prevention strategies in place if you are at risk of falling or you were admitted after having a fall
- Providing assistance to help you to move around.

You can help us by:

- Waiting for staff to assist you
- Using mobility aids provided to help you walk around e.g. wheelie walker

- Using non-slip socks or appropriate footwear
- Using your call bell if you are feeling unwell or unsteady so we can assist you.

We have patient information brochures available on each ward. Please ask staff if you would like more information or you can go to the Clinical Excellence Commission website - [For patients carers and families - Clinical Excellence Commission \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.clinical-excellence.com.au)

## Hand Hygiene

We are making every effort to reduce the spread of infection. We take hand hygiene (making sure hands are cleaned properly) very seriously.

Hand Hygiene involves staff, patients and visitors. Hand sanitisers have been placed at entrances, lifts, corridors and in all patient rooms. Visitors are asked to use hand sanitisers before and after visiting patients.

You can also help by washing your hands:

- Anytime they feel dirty
- Before and after you eat
- After you use the toilet or bed pan or urinal
- If you touch a wound dressing/bandage
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- Before and after you leave your room.

## Hourly Rounds

Nursing staff do hourly rounding - at least once each hour a nurse will check:

- Your position in bed/chair
- Your personal belongings are within reach
- Your pain is under control
- Your medications
- If there is anything you need.

## Medicines

We are responsible for providing all necessary medicines during your hospital stay. If you have any medicines prescribed by your own doctor or bought “over the counter” from a Chemist, health food store or traditional medicines, please give them to the nurse - this includes herbal, homeopathic preparations and bush medicine. We will send all your ‘own’ medicines home with your family/carer once you are admitted.

While in hospital it is important that you only take medicines that are prescribed and given to you by us. When we give you your medicines, we will:

- Check your armband with your details on it
- Ask your name and Date of Birth
- Ask you what medicines you think you are having
- Ask if you have any allergies
- Have 2 nurses check any restricted medicines given to you.

Doctors, nurses and pharmacists can discuss your medicines with you/your family or carer. We can also provide written information to help you understand your medicines, especially newly prescribed medicines. If you require this written information, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Your doctor should give you a list of your current medicines when you are ready to go home from hospital. Please ask your doctor if you need this list before you go home.

## Patient Identification

We must correctly identify patients and match your name to the treatment being given. If we do not, there is a risk of us giving the wrong treatment to the wrong person.

We need to constantly check our patients. We understand our checking can be off-putting, but we care about your safety and appreciate your understanding.

## Pressure Injuries (bed sores)

Pressure injuries are areas of damage to the skin or underlying tissue. They are caused by too much pressure in one place. They can develop quite fast.

We will help you to prevent pressure injuries in hospital by:

- Assessing your risk. The results will be discussed with you and your family.
- Putting strategies in place if you have been identified at risk of developing a pressure injury or if you already have one
- Providing equipment, if required (e.g. special bed or mattress).

You can help us by:

- Moving regularly (change your position every 20 – 30 minutes)
- Telling us if your bedding is moist or creased
- Telling us if you have any tender spots or reddened skin areas
- Looking after your skin – put moisturiser on dry skin
- Eating a balanced diet.

We have patient information brochures available on each ward. Please ask staff if you would like more information or you can go to the Clinical Excellence Commission website - [Information for patients - Clinical Excellence Commission \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.clinical-excellence.com.au)

## R.E.A.C.H

Are you worried about a recent change in your condition or that of a loved one? **REACH** is a communication process which will help you share your concerns with us.

What does REACH stand for:

### **R: Recognise:**

You or your loved one may recognise a worrying change in your condition

### **E: Engage:**

If you or your loved one recognise a worrying change, talk to the nurse that is looking after you. Tell the nurse your concerns.



**A: Act:**

If your concern is not responded to, or you or your loved one is getting worse, act. Ask to speak to the Nurse in charge and request a 'Clinical Review'. This should occur within 30 minutes.

**C: Call:**

If you are still concerned you can call an emergency response by calling the hospital number and ask for the 'In Charge of Hospital' to be paged. Clearly say 'This is a REACH call' and tell the operator the name and ward of the person you are concerned about.

**H: Help is on its way**

You will not offend staff if you R.E.A.C.H out. We support patient and family/carer involvement. We also encourage you to raise your concerns with us during times of Clinical Handover between staff shifts.

We have REACH brochures available. Please ask staff if you would like this brochure or you can go to the Clinical Excellence Commission website - [Information for patients - Clinical Excellence Commission \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.clinical-excellence.com.au)

## General Information

### Alcohol and Drugs

Hospital Policy does not allow alcohol and unauthorised drugs in the hospital or on the hospital grounds. Patients may be allowed alcohol only if ordered by a doctor.

### Accommodation for Family

Nearby motels provide accommodation. Grafton post code is 2460 if you need to search for accommodation using the internet.

Relatives of critically ill patients or parents of children in hospital are able to remain in hospital beyond visiting hours. Please negotiate this with the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager.

### Chaplaincy

If you would like a visit from a chaplain, please speak to the Nurse in Charge.

### Clothing

A bedside locker and storage cupboards are provided for your personal clothing and other items.

## Compliments and Complaints

We regard compliments and complaints in a positive way so that we can improve our care for you, your family and/or carers. All complaints are reviewed with confidentiality and fairness. Your satisfaction is important to us.

If you receive a service or care that you feel deserves complimenting, please feel free to register a compliment with us.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a patient/consumer or another person about access, treatment, communication, services or policies.

Compliments and complaints can be made:

- Verbally either over the phone (66402222) or face to face;
- In writing or by email: <https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about/northern-nsw-local-health-district/complaints-and-compliments/comments-queries-and-feedback/> or
- In writing using our compliment/complaint card –ask the receptionist, if required.

## Confidentiality & Privacy

Your medical record remains confidential (private). We must keep your information confidential by law. Please ask us if you require any information from your medical record.

Health care professionals who are treating you can access your medical record, wherever treatment takes place.

Your answers to our questions will remain confidential and your privacy ensured during any examination. Discussions will be discreet and only with staff involved with your care.

A medical discharge summary can be sent to your GP (General Practitioner) when you leave hospital. If you do not wish for this to happen, please inform the Nursing / Midwifery Unit Manager.

There is strict control of access to certain records such as:

- Sexual assault
- Drug and alcohol
- HIV/AIDS
- Domestic violence
- Sexual health
- Mental health
- IVF and artificial insemination programs
- Records of children considered at risk.

Sometimes, information from medical records may be used for teaching or research. Your identity will not be shared if we use your records for these purposes. Where possible we will get your consent for this. Any person who has access to personal health information must legally keep it confidential.

If the NSW Ministry of Health extracts information about you, most of the time names are removed from the record before reporting. Other authorities are legally allowed to see information about:

- Medicare eligibility
- The registering of births and deaths
- Circumstances of death
- Drink-driving
- Cancer cases.

You are entitled to see information about yourself written in your medical record. If you need any information from your medical record, please ask us.

**HealthNet** is a secure online summary of your personal health information from NSW public health services. HealthNet provides access to **My Health Record**.

HealthNet and My Health Record provide us with better information about your health care. For further information go to: [www.ehealth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ehealth.nsw.gov.au) and <https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/>

## Consumer Participation

We encourage a stronger, more active role for patients, consumers, carers and families by promoting, integrating and sharing information and increasing patient and community involvement in health service planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. If you are interested and wish to contribute and be involved, please write to the Executive office.

## Cultural Background

We care for all patients regardless of race, nationality, culture, language, religious beliefs and choices.

We will ask 'Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?' to all patients. This is a mandatory requirement from all NSW Health Services to collect this information. This allows the health service to ensure that if you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, you have an opportunity to services such as the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, if you choose.

If you or your family/carer are not fluent / confident in English or are hearing impaired, we can arrange a healthcare interpreter. Please ask staff if you require this service.

## Donations

Donations may be made to the Hospital for specific items or equipment or to general funds. They may be left in the form of a bequest. All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. No matter how small the donation, it will always be welcome and appreciated.

## Gifts of Food, Drinks, Sweets

Visitors are asked to talk to us before giving you any food or drink. Some patients are on special diets due to swallowing difficulties or diseases such as diabetes. Giving the wrong food to you could result in serious harm.

## Hairdresser

Please ask us if you require any hairdressing service.

## Health Literacy / Health Information

We aim to provide you with information that you can understand. If you do not understand the information that is given to you either by the health professionals or the written information in brochures or pamphlets, please let us know.

You can visit the Health Literacy website for tips on taking charge of your health – <https://healthliteracy.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/>

## Hospital Auxiliary

The Hospital Auxiliary is located in town and provides a trolley service to the wards - the trolley carries sweets, drinks, books, stationery, toiletry requirements etc.

All funds are used to improve the hospital facilities. Donations are welcome and can be made directly to the Hospital Auxiliary.

## Justice of the Peace

A Justice of the Peace is available to witness documents. Please ask the Nursing / Maternity Unit Manager if you require this service.

## Mail

Mail is delivered to the ward. If you would like to post something you can give it to the Nurse/Midwife or Ward Clerk.

## Meals

The Catering Department operates between 6:00am and 8:30pm, 7 days a week. They offer a large range of meals to accommodate your tastes and preferences (such as vegetarian, vegan or Gluten Free meals) and recommendations from health professionals (i.e. speech pathologist, dietician & doctors).

A menu is provided and staff with mobile devices will take your order just hours before meal time, so that you get a meal you will feel like eating. We can assist you at each meal if needed. Please ask if you need assistance.

**Meal times are:**

Breakfast:	7:30am
Morning Tea:	9:30am
Lunch:	12 noon
Afternoon Tea:	3:00pm
Dinner:	5:00pm
Supper:	6:30pm

A dietician is available for advice on special dietary needs.

## Media Contact

Under NSW Ministry of Health regulations, any arrangement made with a journalist wishing to speak with, interview, or photograph a patient in a public hospital must be referred in advance to the Northern NSW Local Health District Media Office on (02) 66202141.

The privacy and wishes of our patients is paramount. It is important that media activity does not affect the hospital's provision of clinical care.

## Mobile Phones and Laptops

Mobile phones & laptops can be used in the hospital, however, you will need to ask nursing staff because using these devices as they may affect medical equipment.

Consideration for other patients and staff is expected, so please use earphones when using your laptop and do not use your mobile phone or laptop while staff are trying to treat you. Visitors may be asked to leave the ward to use their mobile phone.

## Newspapers

Newspapers are available from the convenience store. A daily newspaper is provided if you are a private patient.

## Parking

There is limited free car parking available within hospital grounds. Parking is also available in Arthur Street – this is free but some parking spaces have time limits.

## Personal Laundry

This should be arranged with your family, carer or friends. The hospital does not provide laundry facilities for patients.

## Security

At certain times, outside doors to the hospital and checks inside the hospital are done during the night. We employ Hospital and Security Assistants who have security training and hold a security licence to help keep you safe. These staff wear an identification badge.

The hospital has 24 hour CCTV (closed-circuit television) for security purposes. You may be videoed as part of this process.

## Smoking

Our hospital is smoke-free. Smoking is prohibited in hospital buildings or on hospital grounds. You may be fined if you are smoking on site.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) can help you manage cravings for smoking. You may be able to get free NRT during your hospital stay and 3 days' supply when you leave hospital. Please ask us if you have any questions or concerns about cravings, quitting and using NRT while in hospital.

It's a good idea to quit or reduce your smoking before you come to hospital. For support and advice, phone Quitline on 137848 or go to the website [iCanQuit.org.au](http://iCanQuit.org.au) or get the My QuitBuddy app.

## Spiritual Needs

Religious representatives/clergy are welcome to visit you during your stay and can be called at any time if you wish. Please ask the nurse caring for you to arrange this.

## Staff Identification

We all wear an identification badge showing our name, role and photograph. Categories of staff can be identified by their uniforms. Posters showing the different uniforms of staff are located throughout the hospital.

## Telephones

There are bedside telephones available for incoming calls. Calls asking about patients, or to speak to patients should be made after 10:00am. This allows us to do our morning rounds.

Public telephones are available for use and are located on the Ground Floor. If walking around is a problem for you, we can help place a call for you.

## Television Rental

Grafton Base Hospital provides a TV rental service. Please ask ward staff for details. Any electrical equipment you bring into the Hospital must be checked by our staff Electrician.

## Toilets

For health reasons, visitors are not to use the patient toilets. Visitor toilets are in Emergency Department waiting rooms, Maternity Unit (for Maternity patient visitors) and Ground Floor. We clean the bathroom and toilets regularly. If you feel the toilets need further cleaning, please let the nursing staff know.

## Valuables

Valuables include – cash, cheque books, bank cards (debit and credit cards), 'valuable' cards (licence, pension card, DVA card), jewellery and keys.

Wherever possible please do not bring valuables to hospital. We cannot accept responsibility for your personal property, except for valuables that are placed in the hospital safe. If you do bring valuables with you to hospital, you are requested to please send them home with a family member.

Please tell us if you need valuables and money to be locked in the hospital safe. Your valuables will be checked by staff members with you and you will be given a receipt for the items being placed in the hospital safe. Money over \$500 will be placed into an account on your behalf and returned to you via electronic transfer to a bank account of your choice within 5 business days.

When you are ready to go home, collect your valuables from Emergency Department during business hours. You will need to have your hospital Identification Band and your valuables receipt. If a family member is collecting the valuables, they need to show staff written consent from you, the valuables receipt and photo identification.

We are not permitted to make payments or do shopping on your behalf - please ask your family/carer to help with this. If it is absolutely essential that we assist you, there are procedures we must follow.

## Hospital Fees and Health Insurance

According to the existing Medicare arrangements, every Australian resident (except those who are receiving treatment in an insurance matter) has the right to elect to be treated as either a chargeable (private) or non-chargeable (public) patient.

It is very important that you tell the admissions staff whether you choose to be admitted as a private or public patient. Staff are available to discuss the benefits of each option and help you to choose the one that suits you best.

### Privately Insured patients

If you choose to be privately insured, you are responsible for finding out if your health fund will provide the cover that you need. You will have no out of pocket expenses related to your hospital care. This means you will not have to pay any money to the hospital.

You will be asked to sign private elective forms. We submit these forms to Medicare and your health insurance fund for you. Your health insurance fund will then give you a statement of your hospital costs, for your record. There may be **out of pocket expenses** for your care from your **specialist doctors**. You should ask your specialist doctor about this. If you have to pay any fees, you will be sent a bill from your doctor.

If you come to hospital through the Emergency Department, you will firstly be cared for by the on-call Specialist doctor best suited for your condition. You may choose to be transferred to the care of your preferred doctor, if available.

After you leave the hospital, your Specialist doctor usually provides follow-up care in their private rooms. You may be able to go to a private hospital for further treatment or for follow-up care.

There are not many single rooms in the hospital. They are first given to patients with specific medical conditions and may not always be available for private patients. Privately insured patients will be given a free local newspaper and are entitled to free access of the hospital television system.

You will help our hospital if you choose to use your private health insurance. The money we get from your health fund goes directly to the wards and services providing your care.

### **Self-funded Private Patients**

If you do not have private health insurance, you can still choose to be treated as a private patient. You will have to pay for staying in the hospital, your medical care and tests, and any other fees yourself.

Hospital bills will be sent to your home address after you leave hospital. You cannot get this money back from Medicare if you have chosen to be treated as a private 'chargeable' patient and you do not have private health insurance.

### **Non-chargeable Patients (Medicare)**

There will be no charges for any healthcare-related service if you have a Medicare card. If you are not sure if you are eligible for Medicare, please ask us.

### **Long Stay Patients**

A long stay patient is someone who is a patient in hospital (public or private) for longer than 35 days (without a break of more than 7 days). After this, your doctor must decide if you still need acute treatment (short term, urgent care). If your doctor decides you do not need acute care, you may be classified as a 'Non-Acute Patient'.

This means an accommodation charge will apply, it does not mean you are going to be sent to a nursing home. This is a fee for staying in the hospital when you do not need acute care anymore - these charges are called a 'patient contribution'. This means you cannot claim them on your Health Insurance or Veterans Affairs. For more information, please ask to speak to the Ward Clerk.



# Your Rights & Responsibilities

## Your Rights as a Patient

The Hospital recognises the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). These include:

### 1. Access

- Healthcare services and treatment that meets your needs.

### 2. Safety

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

### 3. Respect

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

### 4. Partnership

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

### 5. Information

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

### 6. Privacy

- Have your personal privacy respected.
- Have information about you and your health kept secure and confidential.

### 7. Give feedback

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

If you do have any concerns, do not hesitate to contact the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager, or the Hospital Executive by phone or letter.

## Your Responsibilities as a Patient

As a patient we expect you:

- To provide complete information about your:
  - current issues
  - past illnesses and hospitalisations
  - medications
  - other matters relating to your health.
- To report unexpected changes in your health to us.
- To tell us if you do not understand the care being planned for you and what is expected of you.
- To follow the treatment plan we recommend for you. This includes instructions from Nurses and Allied Health workers.
- You may refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law.
- You are responsible for your actions if you refuse or do not follow the health professional's instructions.

There are some things not allowed in the hospital or on the hospital grounds. These include:

- All weapons, illegal drugs or alcohol – having these in hospital may result in police involvement.
- Any dangerous items that may cause harm to yourself or anybody else
- Smoking – fines may apply if you smoke on hospital grounds.

We will not tolerate violent behaviour or verbal abuse towards a staff member, patient or visitor. If this occurs, the person may be removed from the hospital and reported to the police.

If you would like any further information about our hospital or health network, please visit:

<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/> or

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/patientconcerns/Pages/your-health-rights-responsibilities.aspx>

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