

Welcome to
SEARHC S'áxt' Hít
Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital.

Patient information
for your convenience.



At SEARHC, we value respect and dignity for patients, visitors and staff. This information packet lets you know how to speak out about your care, gives you tips on how to prevent the spread of disease, lets you know your patient rights and responsibilities, how to report concerns to The Joint Commission, how to register complaints at the hospital, and lets you know about how our doctors are available. Please read these over. Also, we encourage all patients to fill out one of our patient satisfaction surveys.



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Notice of Availability of Physicians

Provided in compliance with 42 CFR 489.20(v)

SEARHC Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital believes that you are entitled to make informed decisions regarding your medical care. Physicians are either present at the hospital or available "on-call" by telephone at all times. However, physicians are not present in the hospital 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

If a medical emergency arises when physicians are not in the hospital:
(1) Nurses will start immediate medical care within their capability and a physician will be called by telephone. **(2)** A physician will provide care instructions over the telephone and/or a physician will immediately come to the hospital to provide care.

Patient Rights

Considerate and respectful care. The patient has the right to considerate and respectful care. This includes appropriate assessment and management of pain.

Comfort and dignity. The patient who is dying has the right to care that will optimize his/her comfort and dignity throughout the treatment, as desired by the patient or his/her next of kin in the absence of an advanced directive.

Understandable information. The patient has the right to, and is encouraged to, obtain from physicians and other direct caregivers relevant, current and understandable information concerning diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis.

Request information. Except in emergencies when the patient lacks decision-making capacity and the need for treatment is urgent, the patient is entitled to the opportunity to discuss and request information related to the specific procedures and/or treatments, the risks involved, the possible length of recuperation, and the medically reasonable alternatives and their accompanying risks and benefits.

Identity of physicians. Patients have the right to know the identity of physicians, nurses, and others involved in their care, as well as when those involved are students, residents, or other trainees. The patient also has the right to know the immediate and long-term financial implications of treatment choices, insofar as they are known.

Plan of care. The patient has the right to make decisions about the plan of care prior to and during the course of treatment and to refuse a recommended treatment or plan of care to the extent permitted by law and hospital policy and to be informed of the medical consequences of this action. In case of such refusal, the patient is entitled to other appropriate care and services that the hospital provides or information regarding transfer to another hospital.

Advance directive. The patient has the right to have an advance directive (such as a living will, health care proxy, or durable power of attorney for health care) concerning treatment or designating a surrogate decision maker with the expectation that the hospital will honor the intent of that directive to the extent permitted by law and hospital policy.

Consideration of privacy. The patient has the right to every consideration of privacy. The patient has the right to expect that all communications and records pertaining to his/her care will be treated as confidential by the hospital, except in cases such as suspected abuse and public health hazards when reporting is permitted or required by law.

Research studies. The patient has the right to consent to or decline to participate in proposed research studies or human experimentation affecting care and treatment or requiring direct patient involvement, and to have those studies fully explained prior to consent.

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Patient Rights Continued

Review of medical care records. The patient has the right to review the records pertaining to his/her medical care and to have the information explained or interpreted as necessary, except when restricted by law.

Reasonable response to patient requests. The patient has the right to expect that, within its capacity and policies, the hospital will make reasonable response to the request of a patient for appropriate and medically indicated care and services. The hospital must provide evaluation, service, and/or referral as indicated by the urgency of the case. When medically appropriate and legally permissible, a patient may be transferred to another facility. The patient must have complete information concerning the transfer.

Existence of business relationships. The patient has the right to ask and be informed of the existence of business relationships among the hospital, educational institutions, health care providers, or payers that may influence the patient's treatment and care.

Reasonable continuity of care. The patient has the right to expect reasonable continuity of care and to be informed by physicians and other caregivers of available and realistic patient care options when hospital care is no longer appropriate.

Informed of hospital policies. The patient has the right to be informed of hospital policies and practices that relate to patient care, treatment, and responsibilities.

Informed of available resources. The patient has the right to be informed of available resources for resolving disputes, grievances, and conflicts, such as ethics committees and patient representatives. The patient has the right to be informed of the hospital's charges for services and available payment methods.

Patient Responsibilities

Information about past illnesses. Patients are responsible for providing information about past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other matters related to health status. To participate effectively in decision making, patients must be encouraged to take responsibility for requesting additional information or clarification about their health status, pain management, or treatment when they do not fully understand information and instructions. This includes potential limitations and side effects of pain management therapies and other treatments.

Written advance directive. Patients are responsible for ensuring that the health care institution has a copy of their written advance directive, if they have one.

Follow prescribed treatment. Patients are responsible for informing their physicians and other caregivers if they anticipate problems in following prescribed treatment. Persons entering into patient care contracts are responsible for fulfilling their obligations in the contract and discussing with their providers difficulties they may have meeting the contract.

Reasonable accommodations. Patients should also be aware of the hospital's obligation to be reasonably efficient and equitable in providing care to other patients and the community. Patients and their families are responsible for making reasonable accommodations to the needs of the hospital, other patients, medical staff and hospital employees.

Necessary information for insurance claims. Patients are responsible for providing necessary information for insurance claims and for working with the hospital to make payment arrangements, when necessary.

Impact of lifestyle. Patients are responsible for recognizing the impact of their life-style on their personal health. A person's health depends on more than health care services.

Patient safety. Patients are responsible for informing staff if the care provided may create a risk for patient safety.

Speak Up About Your Safety

You and your family are invited to be part of the Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital Patient Safety Team. Here's what you can do. Speak up if you have questions or concerns. If you still don't understand, ask again.

- ◆ All questions are good questions.
- ◆ Feel free to ask about safety. If you're having surgery, ask the doctor to mark the area that is to be operated on.
- ◆ Feel free to tell the nurse or the doctor if you think you are about to get the wrong medicine.
- ◆ Feel free to tell a health care professional if you think he or she has confused you with another patient. Pay attention to the care you get. Always make sure you're getting the right treatments and medicines.
- ◆ Tell your nurse or doctor if something doesn't seem right.
- ◆ Health care workers should introduce themselves. If they have not, ask to see their identification (ID) badges. A new mother should know the person to whom she hands her baby.
- ◆ Hand washing is the most important way to prevent infections. Feel free to ask if your caregivers have washed their hands.
- ◆ Your identity should be verified before you receive medicine or treatment. Educate yourself about your illness. Learn about the medical tests you get, and your treatment plan.
- ◆ Read all medical forms and make sure you understand them before you sign anything. If you don't understand, ask your doctor or nurse to explain them. Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (advisor or supporter).
- ◆ Your advocate can ask questions that you may not think about when you are stressed.
- ◆ Your advocate can help remember answers to questions you have asked.
- ◆ Make sure your advocate understands the type of care you will need when you get home. Your advocate should know what to look for if your condition gets worse. He or she should know who to call for help. Know your medicines, when you should take them, and why you take them.
- ◆ Ask about the side effects of all medicines.
- ◆ If you do not recognize a medicine, double-check that it is meant for you.
- ◆ If you are given an IV, tell the nurse if it doesn't seem to be dripping right (too fast or too slow) or if it's burning or stinging.
- ◆ Tell your doctors and nurses about allergies you have and negative reactions you have had to other medicines.
- ◆ Tell your doctors and nurses if you generally take vitamins, herbal remedies, over-the-counter products, or medications prescribed outside of SEARHC. Use a hospital or clinic that meets industry standards (for example, Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission).
- ◆ Accredited means that the hospital or health care organization meets state, national or international patient safety and quality standards. Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team.
- ◆ You and your doctor and your nurse will discuss and plan your care.
- ◆ Feel free to ask for a second opinion.

Preventing Infections in the Hospital

One of the easiest ways to avoid spreading disease is through frequent hand washing. It's a simple habit, but one that can keep you, your family and friends from getting sick. In a hospital setting, washing the hands is an important way to keep patients safe from infection or infectious diseases that can be spread by hand-to-hand contact, such as the common cold, the flu, norovirus, infectious diarrhea and many other gastrointestinal disorders. Your hands collect germs when you use the restroom, cover your mouth when coughing or touch a contaminated surface, such as a doorknob or computer screen. Washing your hands with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, is one of the best ways to protect people from getting sick.

Clean your hands:

- ◆ Clean your hands before touching or eating food, after you use the bathroom and after handling any type of soiled material.
- ◆ Use soap and warm water. Rub your hands really well for at least 15 seconds. Rub your palms, fingernails, in between your fingers and the backs of your hands.
- ◆ Or, if you have no soap and water or your hands do not look dirty, clean them with alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Rub the sanitizer all over your hands, especially under your nails and between your fingers, until your hands are dry.

Make sure health care providers clean their hands or wear gloves:

- ◆ Doctors, nurses, dentists and other health care providers come into contact with lots of germs. So before they treat you, ask them if they've cleaned their hands.
- ◆ Health care providers should wear clean gloves when they do tasks such as taking throat cultures or blood, touching wounds or body fluids, and examining your mouth. Feel free to ask them if they should wear gloves.

Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze:

- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose with the back of your forearm or the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze. If you use your hands to cover your mouth, clean them right away.
- ◆ If you use a tissue, be sure to throw away used tissues and clean your hands.

If you are sick, avoid close contact with others:

- ◆ If you are sick, stay away from people or stay home. Avoid shaking hands or touching others.
- ◆ When you go for medical treatment, call ahead and ask if there's anything you can do to avoid infecting people in the waiting room.

Plan ahead for surgery:

- ◆ If you have diabetes, be sure you and your physician discuss the best way to control your blood sugar before, during and after your hospital stay. High blood sugar increases the risk of infection.
- ◆ If you are overweight, losing weight will reduce the risk of infection following surgery.
- ◆ If you are a smoker, you should consider a smoking cessation program. This will reduce the chance of developing a lung infection while in the hospital and may also improve your ability to heal following surgery.

If you are in the hospital following surgery:

- ◆ If you have an intravenous catheter or a dressing on a wound, keep the skin around the dressing clean and dry.

Tell your nurse if the dressing works loose or gets wet:

- ◆ Follow your doctor's instructions about breathing treatments and getting out of bed. Feel free to ask for help, advice or sufficient pain medications.
- ◆ If possible, ask your friends and relatives not to visit if they are feeling ill. This will help you avoid getting their illness.

Reporting Patient Concerns

Please let your doctor or nurse know if you have any safety concerns while you are in the hospital or clinic. To provide you with the best quality health care, we need to hear your concerns and ideas on how we may better serve you.

If you would like to further communicate a concern about patient care, complete a patient report card or write or call us about your concern. If your concern is about care at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital in Sitka, you may call 1-800-478-8355 toll-free and leave a message for Vice President of Hospital Services Frank Sutton or send an e-mail to frank.sutton@searhc.org. For the Ethel Lund Medical Center in Juneau, contact the Administrative Office at 907-463-4058. For patient privacy concerns, contact David Garrison at 907-364-4466.

Don't hesitate to tell us how we can improve patient care and safety. The hospital and clinic administration review the report card responses and other patient comments with the department managers of the areas involved, and the managers will evaluate and follow up. A summary of responses also is provided to the SEARHC Accreditation Governing Body.

If you feel your concern about patient safety has not been adequately addressed by the hospital or clinic, you also may contact The Joint Commission, the organization that accredits these facilities. The Joint Commission's online complaint submission Web address is: <http://www.jointcommission.org/GeneralPublic/Complaint>. You also may write to:

Division of Accreditation Operations
Office of Quality Monitoring
The Joint Commission
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

The Joint Commission will notify us about your patient safety concern and we will respond to The Joint Commission about follow-up.

How to Provide Feedback

To provide you with the highest quality health care, we need your ideas on how we may better serve you. We will give you a questionnaire to fill out just before you are discharged, or we will send it to you shortly after you return home.

We welcome your comments, so please fill out the questionnaire and return it to us. Don't hesitate to tell us how we can improve patient care.

All questionnaires are reviewed by the hospital's department managers to find ways to improve our services. A summary of responses is also provided to the SEARHC Accreditation Governing Body.



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