NHS Lothian

Going to hospital

A guide for patients, carers and relatives



Contents

Introduction.....1
Our hospitals.....1
Car parking and public transport.....1
Public transport.....2
Inpatient information.....2
On arrival.....2
Communicating and understanding.....3
Interpreting and translation.....3
Contact with carers, relatives and friends.....3
Mobile phones.....3
Visitors.....4
Medicines.....4
Money, valuables and what to leave at home.....4
What else to bring with you.....5
Ward routine.....5
Meals.....5
Television and radio.....6
The Care Team who may be involved in your care.....6
Staff uniforms.....6
Doctors' ward rounds.....6
Hospital Social Workers.....7
Drugs and alcohol.....7
Smoke-free.....7
Infection control.....7
Moving and lifting you safely.....8
Students.....8
Leaving hospital.....8
Valuing feedback and compliments.....9
Tell us Ten Things (TTT):.....9
Making a complaint.....9
Confidentiality and information about you:.....9
Additional information section.....10
Additional Support.....10
Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism.....10
Moving on from hospital.....10
Fire precautions.....11
Advocacy services.....11
Learning Disability Liaison Service.....11
Benefits whilst in hospital.....11
Violence and aggression.....11
Notes.....12

Introduction

This booklet has been written to help you prepare for your visit to hospital. We aim to provide our care centred on the individual.

Our Values are:

- Care and Compassion
- Dignity and Respect
- Quality
- Teamwork
- Openness, Honesty and Responsibility

Our Values Into Action

- It is what we do and how we do it
- Our vision, our plan, our objectives, our priorities are essential to steer us to where we want to get to and we will achieve them over time
- But our values speak more loudly than anything else about how our patients and relatives perceive us and our services, and we can all shape that perception every day we come to work.

Our hospitals

Hospitals in NHS Lothian may be contacted via the switchboard number. However, as we receive many calls, it may take the staff in the clinical areas time to answer the phone due to care provision and we thank you for your patience.

The switchboard number is 0131 536 1000.

Car parking and public transport

Car parking is free at most hospitals, apart from the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE). There may be occasions when patients and relatives attending the RIE more frequently are able to receive discounts. For more details, please contact the Senior Charge Nurse or the Nurse in Charge. Parking spaces are limited at some of the hospitals, so please

use public transport if possible, or arrange to be dropped off at the hospital in a drop-off zone. Please do not park in any of the drop-off zones. There are disabled parking spaces for blue badge holders only.

Please be aware that the roads around the RIE site are controlled by the local council. Parking on single or double yellow lines may result in a parking ticket issued by local council parking attendants.

Public transport

Edinburgh and the Lothians are well served by a network of buses, and there are a number of dedicated cycle paths offering safer, traffic-free routes for cyclists. For more information, visit:



- Lothian Buses
- Lothian Buses Tracker
- First Group
- Traveline Scotland
- West Lothian Council - Journey planning and timetables
- Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign
- www.walkit.com - The urban walking route planner

How to access patient transport services on the internet:

http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/GoingToHospital/Travel/Pages/PatientTransport.aspx

Inpatient information

On arrival

When you arrive on the ward/or admission area, a nurse will welcome you and explain about your stay with us. The nurse will ask you for information which will help us to make sure we understand your needs. We call this your care plan.

Communicating and understanding

Good communication is important as you need to understand what is happening to you at all times. We encourage patients and their families/carers to ask questions. Please initially speak to your nurse/doctor. We are increasingly using technology, but may have to ask you questions on several occasions.

Interpreting and translation

These services are available; please let staff know before or when you arrive at hospital if you need help.

Contact with carers, relatives and friends

We will ask you for the name and phone number of a carer, family member or friend whom we can contact for you if necessary, so please bring these details with you. Family and friends may want to enquire after you whilst in hospital and it is best if just one person could phone for all of your family and friends. We do allow the use of personal mobile phones so that family can keep in touch with patients.



Mobile phones

Mobile phones may be used in most of our buildings. However, they should be used with consideration for others and be set to vibrate mode. Patients and relatives are advised to use their mobiles phones outside clinical areas. For reasons of patient confidentiality, cameras and camera facilities on mobile phones must not be used in patient areas, unless with special permission in areas such as Maternity.
In the interests of patient safety, mobile phones should not be used near medical equipment.

Visitors

Visitors are very welcome. Visiting times vary and ward staff can tell you what the arrangements are. If visiting times are a problem because of personal circumstances or travelling difficulties, the Senior Charge Nurse can agree other arrangements.



Please do not visit if you have a cold or if you are feeling unwell.

Animals are not allowed in hospital, apart from guide dogs, other support animals or registered therapeutic pets.

Medicines

If you are currently taking any medicines, **please bring them all with you**. If you have a card with details of any current treatment, such as a steroid or Warfarin card, **please bring it with you** to show the Nurse in Charge. Bringing your own medicines means they are not wasted and that you keep taking what you are used to.

If you are given new medicines or dressings, you will usually receive at least a seven-day supply from the hospital pharmacy on your discharge, so you will not need to visit your GP immediately.

It could be dangerous for you to take any medicines that visitors might bring you. Always tell the Nurse in Charge if medicines are brought to you during your stay.

Money, valuables and what to leave at home

Please leave valuables at home and only bring a small amount of money into hospital with you. Televisions, radios or other equipment should be left at home. Tobacco or cigarettes should be left at home. This includes e-cigarettes. NHS Lothian is a smoke-free environment and it is illegal to smoke on the site.

We cannot be held responsible for any valuables you bring into hospital which are not handed in for safekeeping. Please ask family/ friends to take these home.

What else to bring with you

Storage space is limited, so please only bring the basics, such as:

- Night clothes, dressing gown and slippers
- Toiletries such as soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb or hairbrush, deodorant and shaving kit. There are shaving points on each ward and adaptor plugs are available
- Comfortable daywear and nightwear
- Any mobility aids normally used, such as walking frame, crutches, walking stick, wheelchair, prosthesis
- Dentures, glasses, hearing aids
- Loose change for newspapers, payphone etc.

Laundry services are not available, so we ask members of the patient's family or friends to take home clothes that need to be washed.

Ward routine

Ward routine is designed to help care for patients in the best way possible and for smooth running of services. It includes things such as timing of ward rounds, mealtimes, bathing facilities and visiting hours. If you are not told about ward routines when you arrive, please ask.

Meals

Meals of breakfast, lunch and supper are provided each day for patients on wards. Mealtimes vary at different hospitals. We will ask you to choose what you would like to eat. If you have special dietary needs or simply do not like the choice on the menu, please let the nurse know.



In NHS Lothian, we provide protected mealtimes, which allow for non-essential work to stop and allows staff to focus when meals are served and support patients who need assistance. Relatives may also assist the patient and you should make the staff on the ward aware of this if you wish to come in during protected mealtimes.

Television and radio

Televisions and radios are available on most wards. In some hospitals, a screen called Patientline is available at each bed. This has a phone line, access to the internet, e-mails, games, television and radio. There is a charge for some of these services. To reduce disruption to other patients, you can only use personal sound systems with earphones or headphones. Hospital Radios broadcast in all of our hospitals.

The Care Team who may be involved in your care

During your stay in hospital, you may receive care or treatment from different members of staff. The team caring for you is led by a Consultant. If you have a question or need an answer about your care, please ask.

Staff uniforms

The Senior Charge Nurse is the nurse who is in overall charge of the ward. She/he will be the only nurse wearing a navy coloured tunic with NHS Lothian logo and trousers.

Doctors will be dressed in everyday smart clothes.

All other staff, such as Nurses, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Porters, Ward Clerks, Domestic staff, etc. will also be uniform.

Doctors' ward rounds

Doctors generally do their ward rounds in the morning, so updates may not be available until early afternoon, to give time for reviews and tests to be analysed.

In the evenings, there are fewer doctors available and they cover additional wards, attending to other patients. Speak with the nursing staff for routine updates in the evening. If a patient is unwell, or their situation has changed, doctors try to be available to give updates, although assessing emergencies must come first.

Hospital Social Workers

You, your relatives or carers may like to speak confidentially with one of the hospital Social Workers who are trained to help you with many of the practical or personal problems you may have as a result of your illness or your stay in hospital. The Nurse in Charge will be happy to make a referral on your behalf.

Drugs and alcohol

Consuming alcohol or illegal drugs in hospital is forbidden. Please do not bring either into the hospital. If you do bring illegal drugs, we will report you to the police. Any patient or visitor found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol may be asked to leave the premises, if necessary involving the police.

Smoke-free

The grounds, buildings and car parks across NHS Lothian are totally smoke-free. This includes e-cigarettes. Please do not smoke anywhere in our buildings or grounds, or in vehicles.

Infection control

We are doing our best to reduce the spread of Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI), such as MRSA (Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) and you can help us with this. Infections can be spread from one person to another by hand contact, so washing your hands thoroughly is one of the best ways to prevent its spread. We provide hand gel at hospital ward entrances for use by staff, patients and visitors when entering and leaving the ward. You can also help by:



- Washing your hands
- Asking everyone who touches you to clean their hands!
- Not visiting someone in hospital if you have a cold or are feeling unwell, especially if you have diarrhoea
- Not sitting on the patient's bed when visiting
- Keeping the number of visitors to a minimum at any one time
- Never touching dressings, drips or other equipment around the bed.

There are information leaflets regarding specific types of infections and hand hygiene available at the Information Centres, on the wards, or online at www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Moving and lifting you safely

To keep you comfortable and safe if you need to move, staff will use special patient handling equipment. Staff should explain how this equipment is used before moving you. Please note that staff are not allowed to lift patients without using the appropriate equipment.

Students

Hospitals within NHS Lothian are teaching hospitals and help to train students from all healthcare professions, including medicine. This means that the staff caring for you may include a small number of students. We will ask you if you agree to students being present during your care or playing a part in caring for you. By agreeing to this, you will be helping us train future healthcare professionals, but you do have the right to refuse. If you do refuse, we will respect your decision and your treatment will not be affected.

Leaving hospital

You may already have an expected date of discharge from when you attended the pre-admission clinic. If not, you should receive one within 24 hours of admission. We will involve you and your carer in the discussions and plans for your discharge, taking account of any care needs you may have once you leave hospital. This important date and the plans will be reviewed daily. You will probably be discharged in the morning and asked to wait in the Discharge Lounge until you have your medicines and discharge letter and to allow you to make transport arrangements to take you home. A letter will also be sent to your GP confirming details of your admission and discharge.

Valuing feedback and compliments

Tell us Ten Things (TTT):

We welcome all forms of feedback from people. We are keen to hear what went well and, importantly, how we can improve the care and services that we provide.

Tell us Ten Things is a system that NHS Lothian uses to get feedback from patients and relatives. The questions have been revised to reflect what patients have told us is important to them. Copies of the feedback form will be available in the ward. If you cannot find one, please ask a member of staff.

Making a complaint

Where things have not gone so well, we would encourage patients, their families and / carers to speak directly with the staff who may be able to resolve them at the time. Alternatively, people can give us their feedback (compliment, comment, concern or complaint) by contacting us at the Patient Experience Team, Waverley Gate, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EG or via email feedback@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk .

Confidentiality and information about you:

NHS Lothian must keep personal health information confidential and your information is kept in securely stored medical records and/or on a computer. We sometimes share relevant information with other NHS staff involved in your care, as well as those in Social Work, where appropriate. We will always endeavour to inform you before sharing this information.



For more information on NHS Lothian, please visit our website at www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

We do our best to meet the needs of people with additional support needs. Professional interpreting and translating services are available. Please inform staff of your language requirements, either before you come to hospital or when you are in hospital.

To get this booklet in another language or format, please call 0131 242 7660 or 01506 523 589. If you require further copies of the booklet, please call 0131 242 7660.

Additional information section

Additional Support

If children under the age of 16 are thought to be capable of making an informed decision, they are entitled to give or refuse permission for certain treatments, tests or operations under the Age of Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991. Further information is available from the Scottish Child Law Centre at www.sclc.org.uk or call 0800 328 8970.

Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism

All patients having an operation are at risk of having a blood clot, called a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE). All possible precautions are taken in the hospital to stop this happening, but patients can help too by stopping or reducing smoking, losing weight (if overweight or obese), and keeping as fit and active as possible before coming into hospital.

Moving on from hospital

If you are unable to return home after your hospital treatment is completed, you may have to consider alternatives such as sheltered accommodation or a care home. This is a major change in anyone's life and we offer help and support throughout the process. For further information about this, please speak to a member of staff on the ward.

Fire precautions

In the event of a fire alert, an alarm will sound continuously in the fire zone and intermittently in nearby zones. Please follow instructions given by hospital staff; they are regularly trained in fire and evacuation procedures.

Advocacy services

You may require the services of an advocate to help you get information, understand the options open to you and make your views and wishes known. A variety of advocacy services are provided throughout Lothian and these can be found in the NHS Inform Services Directory at www.nhsinform.co.uk, or by calling 0800 22 44 88 between 8am and 10pm.

Learning Disability Liaison Service

Our Learning Disabilities Liaison Nursing Service aims to promote access to all hospital services for people with learning disabilities. For further information, advice or support, please contact the service on 0131 446 4453, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, before coming to hospital, or as soon as possible after arrival.

Benefits whilst in hospital

If you are in hospital for four weeks or more, this may affect any benefits you receive. If you require a medical certificate, ask the Nurse in Charge and send this to your employer or the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) office within 3 days of going into hospital. Please inform the DWP or ask someone to contact them for any other advice.

Violence and aggression

Our staff have the right to work without fear of assault or abuse. They are dedicated to providing patients with the highest standards of care and expect to be treated politely, and with respect.

We will not tolerate any verbal or physical abuse against staff, volunteers, patients or visitors. We will take appropriate action in any situation where violent or aggressive behaviour is shown towards people or property.

Notes

For more information on NHS Lothian, please visit our website at www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

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