

Questions to ask your doctor

- How often will your doctor see you during your stay?
- Who is responsible for your care when the doctor is not available? For example, on weekends and at night?
- What happens to you if life-saving actions are taken?
- If your test or procedure shows that you need another procedure right away, can you get it done here? Or will you need to go to a different facility?

Resources

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, www.ahrq.gov, “Questions Are The Answer” campaign and “20 Tips To Help Prevent Medical Errors”



**Know
Your Rights**

You have rights and a role regarding your treatment and care. This brochure has questions and answers to help you find out about your rights and role as a patient. Knowing your rights and role can help you make better decisions about your care.

What are your rights?

- You have the right to be informed about the care you will receive.
- You have the right to get information about your care in your language.
- You have the right to make decisions about your care, including refusing care.
- You have the right to know the names of the caregivers who treat you.
- You have the right to safe care.
- You have the right to have your pain treated.
- You have the right to know when something goes wrong with your care.
- You have the right to get an up-to-date list of all of your current medicines.
- You have the right to be listened to.
- You have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.

Ask for written information about all of your rights as a patient.

What is your role in your health care?

- You should be active in your health care.
- You should ask questions.
- You should pay attention to the instructions given to you by your caregivers. Follow the instructions.

- You should share as much information as possible about your health with your caregivers. For example, give them an up-to-date list of your medicines. And remind them about your allergies.

Can your family or friends help with your care?

Find out if there is a form you need to fill out to name your personal representative, also called an advocate. Ask about your state's laws regarding advocates.

How can an advocate help with your care?

They can get information and ask questions for you when you can't. They can remind you about instructions and help you make decisions. They can find out who to go to if you are not getting the care you need.

Can your advocate make decisions for you?

No, not unless they are your legal guardian or you have given them that responsibility by signing a legal document, such as a health care power of attorney.

Can other people find out about your disease or condition?

The law requires health care providers to keep information about your health private. You may need to sign a form if you want your health care providers to share information with your advocate or others.

What is "informed consent?"

This means that your health care providers have talked to you about your treatment and its risks. They have also talked to you about options to treatment and what can happen if you aren't treated.

What happens if something goes wrong during treatment or with my care?

If something goes wrong, you have the right to an honest explanation and an apology. The explanation and apology should be made in a reasonable amount of time.

How do you file a complaint?

First, call the hospital or health system so that they can correct the problem. Next, if you still have concerns, complaints can be sent to the licensing authority or The Joint Commission. The Joint Commission provides a complaint form on its website at www.jointcommission.org.

Questions to ask before you enter the health care facility

- Can you have an advocate? Do you need to sign a document so your advocate can get important information about your care?
- What will be done to make sure I don't get an infection?
- Is there a form you need to sign about life-saving actions, like resuscitation?
- Is there a form you need to sign about life support?
- Does the organization allow members of your religion to visit and pray with you?
- What kind of security does the facility have? Is there a 24-hour guard or alarm system?
- Whom do you speak to if a problem arises? How does the organization handle complaints?
- Are there any procedures that cannot be done at this facility for religious reasons?
- Can you get a copy of your medical record and test results?