**Your hospital guide 2**

**Your hospital stay**

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Understanding what your hospital stay might be like may reduce stress and improve your hospital experience.

It can be helpful to have an idea about:

* what might happen
* who you might talk to
* how you might feel.

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**Arriving at hospital**

## What might happen

* If you travel to hospital by ambulance, you might be taken to one hospital then to another hospital
* When a hospital is busy you may have to stay in the ambulance until the hospital has space to treat you
* Where special assistance is required, police officers might take you to hospital
* You may be transported to hospital by air

## Who you might talk to

* Ambulance team
* Emergency paramedics
* Police officers
* Flight crew
* Doctors
* Nurses

## How you might feel

You may feel comfortable and relieved, or you might feel:

* Anxious
* Frightened
* In pain
* In shock

## Tips

* Try to stay calm and respectful
* Let the professionals do their job they are there to help you with no judgement
* If you are not sure what is happening, then ask questions

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**Emergency Department**

## What might happen

* If you go to the Emergency Department, you will be seen by someone from the triage team. Triage is where patients are prioritised for treatment based on their needs
* If you have private health insurance, it is your choice whether you choose to go public or private
* Critical patients go straight through for treatment
* If you are not critical and the hospital is busy, you may need to wait
* You might need some emergency medications, procedures and or medical tests which may involve special equipment. For example: x-rays and scans
* You may be transferred to another hospital
* A nurse will complete medical observations and paperwork
* The nurse and doctor have other patients, so you may be left alone sometimes
* After your assessment is complete, you will either be discharged or admitted to a ward
* If you are admitted, you will be taken to a ward

## Who you might talk to

* Admission clerk
* Customer relations
* Admin staff
* Triage nurses
* Doctors
* Interpreters
* Social workers
* Occupational therapists
* Psychologists
* Specialists. For example: surgeons
* Orderlies
* Police

## How you might feel

You may feel fine and not concerned, or you might feel:

* Uncomfortable
* Frustrated
* Worried
* Traumatised
* Not listened to or forgotten
* Confused
* Very unwell and in pain

## Tips

* It is good to have a support person with you where possible
* Be aware it will be noisy – lots of beeping and alarms – and you may have to wait a long time to be seen
* It’s okay to ask questions about your condition and the process
* Be kind to and patient with hospital staff
* If you are a National Disability Insurance Scheme participant, let staff know and provide them with your essential information
* If you have sensory sensitivities, let someone know you need a quiet place and explain why
* Ask the nurse to show you the call button and how to use it
* If you feel your condition is getting worse, go to the triage station or call out for help
* If you have aids or equipment, ask for a patient label to stick on each item
* If you are admitted, make sure all your clothes, shoes and personal items are bagged and go with you to the ward
* If you feel you need advice and or someone to speak on your behalf – get an advocate

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**Ward Stay**

## What might happen

* A ward is the area you are allocated for your hospital stay
* You may be moved around to different wards depending on your health needs
* You will be asked to fill out a menu. Make sure you are clear if you have any dietary requirements and or food allergies
* If you are assessed as needing help to shower, assistance will be provided
* Doctors, nurses and other members of your health team will visit you to discuss your health and discharge plan
* You may be given new medications
* You may have different types of tests taken
* You may be referred to therapy, such as speech, occupational and physiotherapy
* You may need a procedure or surgery
* Your health team will work with you to prepare your discharge plan for you to leave hospital

## Who you might talk to

* Nurses
* Doctors
* Specialists
* Allied health professionals. For example: psychologist
* Other service providers who may help during your stay or with your discharge plans

## How you might feel

* You might enjoy your hospital stay, but you also might be feeling
* Lonely
* Isolated
* Tired
* Anxious
* Down
* Bored
* Very unwell and in pain
* Scared

Tips

* Some hospitals have an information folder that explains how the hospital works
* Be aware your sleep may be disturbed
* Staff can change and you might not see the same people all the time
* If you would like to practise your faith while in hospital, talk to the Patient Liaison Officer
* If discharge planning hasn’t begun, ask why and when it will begin
* If you feel you need advice and or someone to speak on your behalf – get an advocate

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**Discharge**

## What might happen

* Discharge planning meetings are coordinated with your health team and services
* You and your support networks (family, carer, friends) can be involved in discharge planning meetings
* A discharge date is decided but may change depending on your progress and circumstances
* If you have had a long hospital stay, you may go home for a few days at a time until you are ready to go home full-time
* You may have to go to rehabilitation or temporary accommodation
* You may need help from your support networks (family, carer, friends), as well as service providers

## Who you might talk to

* Allied health professionals. For example: social worker, dietician, occupational therapist
* Nurses
* Doctors
* Community service providers

## How you might feel

* You may be excited and relieved to be moving on from hospital, but it is okay to feel like you are not ready
* Leaving hospital can be overwhelming and it is not unusual to feel anxious
* You might feel uncertain or apprehensive
* You may still feel unwell and in pain

Tips

* If you feel you need advice and or someone to speak on your behalf – get an advocate
* If you get new assistive technology, ask about training on how to safely use any new equipment or aids
* Ask about any at-home rehabilitation services that you may be eligible to receive
* Talk to your social worker about any concession programs

The Ready to Go Home project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Go to [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au/) for more information.

