

# Atherton Hospital

PATIENT INFORMATION DIRECTORY



**The Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation is a charity dedicated to improving the quality of health care in Far North Queensland.**

Did you know...

...every cent donated to the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation helps patients across FNQ, an area which has 284,000 people?

This is because all the Foundation's administrative costs...

...are covered by profits from our cafes, carpark and vending machines.

So you can leave a bequest to the Foundation ...

*Will*  
I nominate Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation as my beneficiary

...Attend an event ...

...or purchase a raffle ticket...

...or make a donation.

...Every cent stays local and goes where it's intended.

Please donate today!

You can also help the Foundation by volunteering your time!

Become a volunteer today!

far north queensland **25** YEARS  
hospital foundation

putting the pieces together for a healthier north

Ph: 4226 8993 [www.fnqhf.org.au](http://www.fnqhf.org.au)

## CONTENTS

<b>Welcome to Atherton Hospital .....</b>	<b>01</b>
Atherton Hospital map .....	04
<b>When you arrive.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Hospital procedures.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>During your stay .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Visitor information.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Visiting hours.....	24
<b>Discharge from hospital.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Your feedback.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Right to healthcare .....</b>	<b>32</b>

### Atherton Hospital Cnr Louise and Jack Streets

**PO Box 183  
Atherton QLD 4883**

Hospital is open 24/7 but for  
general enquiries office hours  
are 8.30am to 5.00pm

**Atherton Hospital  
switchboard: 07 4091 0211**



**SCAN ME**  
to go the Atherton  
Hospital webpage



### Making the most of your stay in hospital

**This booklet tells you what  
you can expect during your  
hospital stay.**

Please feel free to talk about  
your needs with our staff  
and ask questions about  
the hospital routine, your  
illness or treatment. We aim  
to make your stay with us as  
comfortable as possible.

LINK CORRE

← Emergency  
← Theatre  
← North

# Welcome

**The Atherton Hospital respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the country's First Nations people. We recognise First Nations people and communities as traditional and cultural custodians of the lands on which we work to provide safe and quality health services. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.**

Atherton Hospital is a 56 bed acute rural inpatient facility located on the southern Atherton Tablelands. The health care team at Atherton Hospital is committed to providing excellence in patient care.

Our dedicated team of health care professionals and patient support staff strive to provide exceptional care, and are committed to providing safe, high quality and efficient services to our patients. As locals themselves, our team understands the health care needs of rural and remote communities and provide supportive and compassionate health care services.

**This booklet provides you with information about what services and amenities are available for you and your visitors. Please speak with a member of our staff if you require further information.**







## ABOUT OUR HOSPITAL

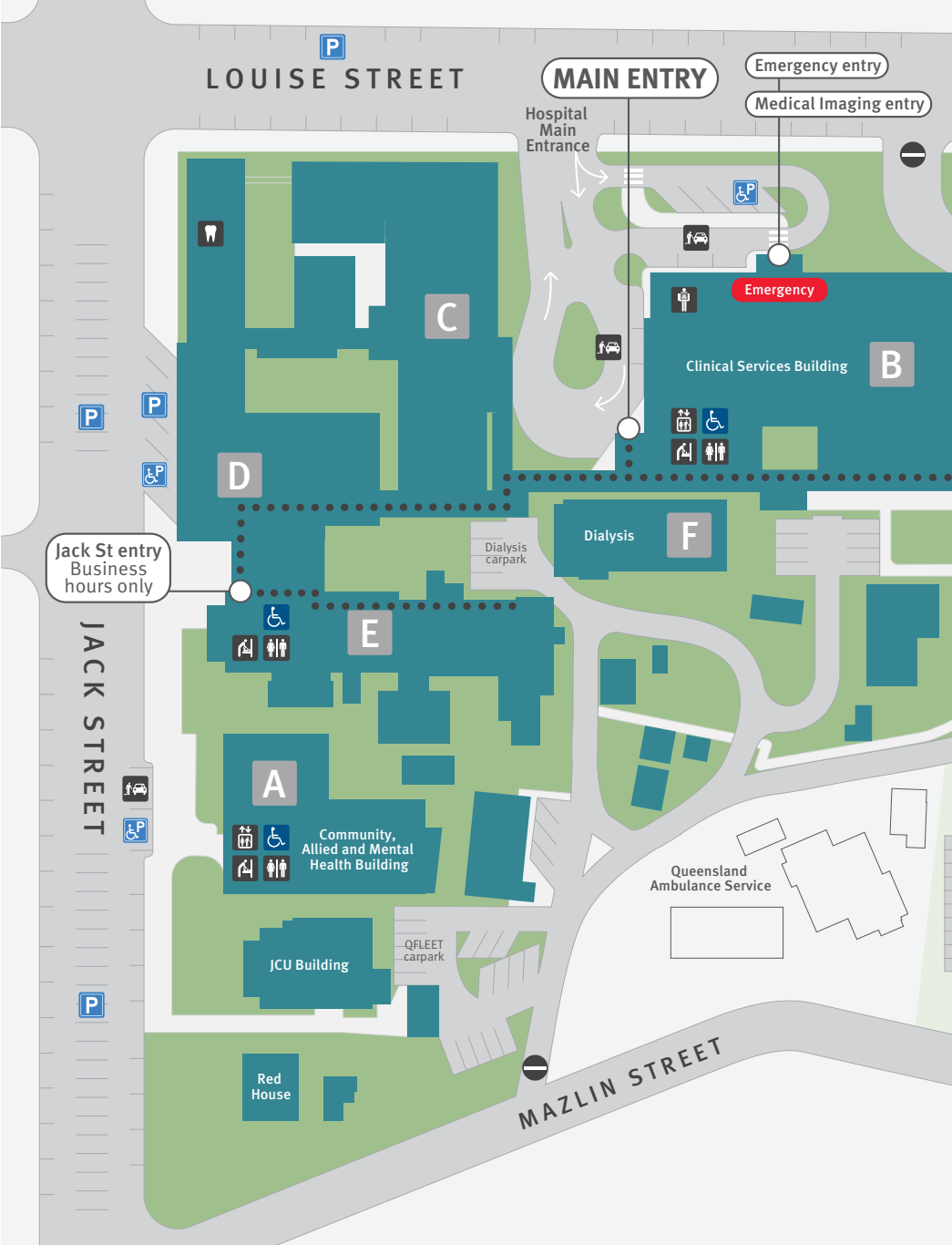
**Our hospital services our rural communities across the Atherton Tablelands, and further to the northwest to remote communities including Forsayth, Georgetown and Croydon.**

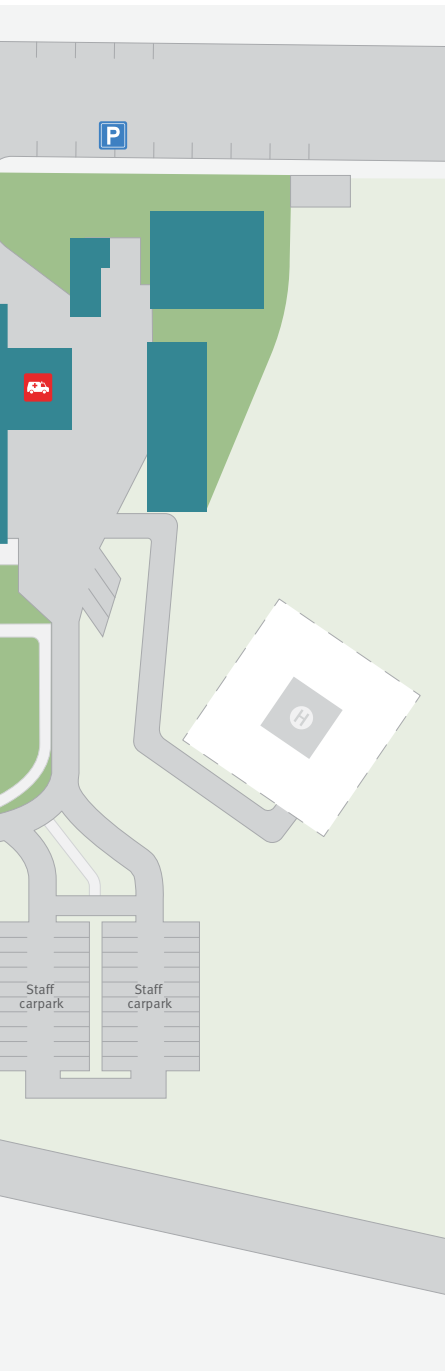
We offer inpatient services and emergency care around the clock, and specialist outpatient services supported by visiting medical specialists who are based in Cairns. Telehealth services are also available, linking our locals to medical specialists based across Queensland. A wide range of community nursing, allied health, and mental health services are provided from the Community Allied Mental Health Building (CAMHB) located in Jack St.

**Every month at Atherton Hospital on average:**

- 14 babies are born
- 73 patients receive elective surgery and other procedures
- 1,650 patients present to the Emergency Department
- 584 patients are admitted to the hospital
- 1,500 patients attend an outpatient appointment.

With the new Clinical Services Building opened in May 2023, Atherton Hospital is a modern facility designed to service the unique health needs of our community members and visitors, and along with the major regional facility that is Cairns Hospital, is managed by the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service.





Wards	Building	Level
High Dependency Unit	B	G
Maternity	B	G
North Ward	B	G
South Ward	C	G

Other Departments	Building	Level
Allied Health	A	G
Cardiac Rehabilitation Program	A	G
Chemotherapy	D	G
Child Health	A	1
Clinics – Specialist Outpatients	D	G
Community Health	A	G
Continence	A	G
Dental	D	LG
Diabetic Education	A	1
Dialysis	F	–
Dietetics	A	1
Emergency Department	B	LG
Endoscopy	B	1
Immunisation	A	G
Indigenous Health	A	G
Medical Imaging (X-ray)	B	LG
Mental Health (Child & Youth)	A	G
Mental Health (Outpatients)	A	G
Occupational Therapy	A	G
Patient Travel	D	G
Pathology	D	G
Pharmacy	E	G
Physiotherapy	A	G
Social Work	A	1
Speech Pathology	A	1
Operating Theatres	B	1
Wound Care	A	G

### Map key

	Lifts		Patient drop-off
	Toilets		Parking
	Accessible toilets		Disabled parking
	Parent room		No public access
	Medical Imaging		Helipad
	Dental		Hospital building
	Ambulance		Central path

## PATIENT SERVICES

**The Atherton Hospital is a busy rural hospital with 56 inpatient beds. The facility provides a range of inpatient and outpatient services, and when necessary, will refer and may transfer patients to Cairns Hospital for ongoing treatment.**

Atherton Hospital operates a 24-hour emergency department. The entrance to the Emergency Department is located at the front of the building on Louise Street.

Adult inpatient services include general medical and surgical inpatient services in South Ward and North Ward, which includes a High Dependency Unit for people needing closer monitoring. If necessary, children are admitted to North Ward. The Community Health Interface Program team helps with the discharge planning of many of our inpatients across the hospital.

Our Maternity Unit provides inpatient and outpatient services and utilises a Midwifery Group Practice model of care to support continuity of care for our mothers and babies. Midwifery Outreach services are provided to local communities including Ravenshoe and Mt Garnett, with local midwives visiting there on a regular basis.

A day surgery model of care is provided by our perioperative services team. The Operating Theatre is located on the 1st floor of the Clinical

Services Building, and most patients attending for a day surgery procedure will be admitted and discharged from the reception area on this level. Day surgery procedures may include endoscopy and minor surgical procedures. Some patients may be admitted overnight to the hospital following their surgical procedure, and this will usually be organised ahead of their procedure.

The Chemotherapy Unit is located through the entrance on Jack Street. A telehealth oncology service supports the chemotherapy service, in consultation with the oncology and haematology teams at Cairns Hospital. Chemotherapy is provided as an outpatient service through the Chemotherapy Unit.

The Atherton Hospital provides pharmacy and pathology services. The Specialist Outpatient Service operates during the week and specialist clinics include General Surgery, General Medicine, Far Regional Obstetrics and Gynaecology (FROGS) Service, Haematology, Cardiac Outreach, Cardiac Stress Testing, Diabetes and Endocrinology, Orthopaedics and Fracture Clinic.

The Medical Imaging Department is located adjacent to the Emergency Department, and provides inpatient and outpatient services including normal X-ray, CT scan and ultrasound services.



A renal dialysis service, a satellite of the Cairns service, is located at Atherton Hospital. Short-term parking and set-down spaces close to the dialysis unit are available for dialysis patients.

A wide range of community, allied and mental health services are provided from the CAMHB building on upper Jack Street. Services provided include complex care management, wound care, telehealth, the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) personal and home care services, child health services, diabetic education, the Tablelands Immunisation Program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, continence advice, specialised community mental health, and drug and alcohol services.

Allied Health professionals provide physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, nutritional and dietetic services, and social work.

## ACCREDITATION

**Atherton Hospital is accredited by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and was reaccredited in 2023.**

This means that our efforts to provide the highest quality of care are recognised nationally.

In gaining accreditation, we made a commitment to focus on delivering quality services, and to keep an eye on how we can continue to improve them.



## CHOOSING YOUR HEALTH CARE

**Eligible Australian residents may choose to receive private or public hospital services delivered from a public hospital.**

Overseas visitors from countries that have reciprocal healthcare agreements with Australia are entitled to emergency public hospital services, free of charge.

*Contact Medicare on 132 011 to find out if this applies to you.*

### Public Health Care

If you choose to be a public patient, generally treatment services will be given free of charge. Services such as spectacles, pharmaceuticals and surgical supplies may have a charge applied.

If there are costs, they will be explained to you.

### Private Health Care

There are times when people admitted to the wards are treated by a private doctor.

If you are admitted as a private patient with single/shared cover, you will need to give details of your health insurance during the admission process and will be asked to sign a health fund claim form.

If you elect to be a private patient and do not have private health insurance, you will have to pay the estimated cost before admission.

Treatment as a private patient does not guarantee access to a single or private room, as this will depend upon availability at the time of your admission.

**Private patients cannot generally elect to become public patients, except as a result of unforeseen circumstances that include:**

- Being admitted for a procedure but having complications.
- Your hospital stay extending longer than planned by the clinical staff treating you.
- Your social conditions changing while you are in hospital (loss of employment).

### Long-Stay Patients

All patients, both private and public, who are still in hospital after 35 days, or who have had a number of admissions without a discharge period of more than seven days, are assessed to see if they meet criteria and may be charged an accommodation fee, whether they are public or private.

If this applies to you or your relatives, a staff member will talk to you and provide further information.

When arranging a funeral you have a  
**REAL CHOICE** on the Tablelands

*and it's simple*

# Community Funerals

Community Spirit



## Exceptional Service Including:

Burial • Cremation • Funerals Packages • Pre-Planned Arrangements  
Best Professional Price Guarantee

*Drop into the Atherton office conveniently located on the main street and see Sharon for a guided tour of our beautiful Chapel.*



Tablelands Team: Sophie Dickinson, Sharon Fittler & Sue Nicholls

**ATHERTON** 112 Main Street 4091 1199 • **MAREEBA** 180 Walsch Street 4092 4774  
[communityfunerals.com.au](http://communityfunerals.com.au)

# When you arrive

## ADMISSION

**When you are admitted, a patient identification band will be put on your wrist or ankle.**

Staff will check your name and date of birth against the details on the identification band to ensure the information is correct.

You are required to wear the band whilst you are in hospital.

To ensure the correct patient is being treated, staff will ask you for your name and date of birth many times throughout your stay. In some situations, they may need to check this against your photograph also. Each time a medicine is given to you you will also be asked if you have any allergies or bad reactions to medicines. This is a safety procedure.

**To help us provide quality care we will need to know complete and accurate details of:**

- Your healthcare history including any allergies or reactions to medications.
- Current list of medicines (including recent changes).
- Your current address and phone number.
- Details of your general practitioner or other treating health professionals.
- Your Medicare number.
- Your private health cover or any other cover that might fund your hospital stay.
- Any current advance health directive or enduring Power of Attorney (person able to make decisions about your health care, personal or financial matters), and copies of these documents.
- Your nominated carer or support person to be contacted, or if you are under the Mental Health Act. (You can request support from an Independent Patients Rights Advisor by speaking to your nurse.)
- Your need for an interpreter or cultural support worker.
- Your next of kin or your agreed substitute decision-maker.
- Whether you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND VALUABLES



**If you're staying overnight in hospital, you'll need to bring:**

- Your admission advice and completed admission form.
- Pyjamas or a night gown, dressing gown and slippers.
- Toiletries.
- A small amount of money for things like a taxi fare home or using a payphone.
- Prescription medicines.
- Your X-rays.
- Your Medicare card, pension card or Health Care Card.
- The name and contact number for your next of kin.
- Your WorkCover detail, if appropriate.

Please do not bring jewellery or large amounts of money to hospital.

While every care is taken for security, the hospital does not accept responsibility if valuables are lost or stolen.

If you must bring such items, please ask staff to arrange safe custody.

The return of these items can only be undertaken in normal office hours.

## WORKCOVER

If you are being treated for a condition that may be covered by WorkCover, please supply all relevant details to the hospital at the time of admission or before discharge.





# Hospital procedures

## SECURITY

**The main entrance to the Atherton Hospital for patients and visitors is under the curved brick archway under the hospital linkway, from Louise Street.**

External doors to the Atherton Hospital are locked between 8pm and 6am. The only access for patients and visitors after this time is through the main entrance from Louise Street. A video intercom is located at this main entrance to the hospital. Press the button to the ward you want to access, and staff will be able to provide you with remote access.

Exit from the hospital between the hours of 8pm and 6am is only possible through the main entrance on Louise Street. There is an electronic security system throughout the Atherton Hospital, ensuring that access is limited throughout the facility, and especially after-hours.

## PROFESSIONAL STAFF

**During your stay in hospital, you will be cared for by a team, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, allied health staff, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers, and others (such as administrative, catering, wards staff and cleaning staff).**

All staff are required to wear photographic identity badges that include their name and job title.

Staff may identify themselves by saying “Hello, my name is...”

## INFECTION CONTROL

**A patient may need to be cared for in a single room to stop the spread of infection. If this is the case, the patient and their family will be informed.**

While giving care, hospital staff may wear protective clothing (like plastic gowns) to stop the spread of infection.

One of the most important ways to protect against spreading infection is for the staff to keep their hands clean. As well as handwashing sinks, alcohol-based hand rub is available from the dispensers on the wall.

Staff are to clean their hands before and after touching the patient.

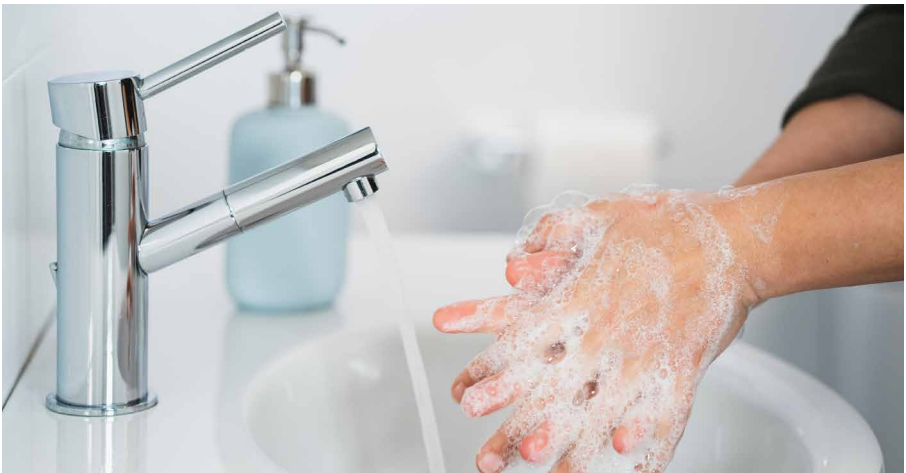
It is important for patients, visitors and staff to clean their hands regularly. Staff should always clean their hands before they treat you. If you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands, ask them before they examine you.

**To help prevent infections, it is very important for patients to continue with a high standard of personal hygiene while in hospital.**

- Brush your teeth and tongue twice a day.
- Shower and change into clean clothes or pyjamas at least daily. Your nurse will provide any assistance you need.
- Clean your hands after toileting and before eating.
- Ask when you can have your intravenous (IV) cannula (drip) removed.
- Ask when you can have your urine catheter removed.
- Tell your nurse if your IV cannula (drip) becomes sore.
- Ask your nurse if you need more information on infection control.

**As a visitor to our hospital you can help stop the spread of infection by doing the following:**

- Use the alcohol hand rub on the way into the hospital or on the way into the patient's room.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet and before eating.
- Follow the instructions on the STOP sign when visiting patients in isolation.
- Please do not come to the hospital to visit if you are sick with cold or flu symptoms, fevers or gastro symptoms.
- It is preferable that home-prepared food is not brought in for patient consumption.



## IF YOUR CHILD IS IN HOSPITAL

We support a parent staying with their child in hospital wherever possible, unless there is some medical or legal reason to stop this. Please talk to your health care team about whether you can stay with your child.

## SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PATIENTS

The hospital has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers who work with First Nations Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people throughout their hospital stay. Liaison officers can provide health education, cultural support, practical assistance and advocacy during your stay. They can ensure the provision of culturally safe and responsive health care to improve your patient journey.



## INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

**You have the right to choose who your doctor will talk to about your condition.**

Please ask a relative or friend to be the main point of contact between the hospital and the family.

Friends and relatives may be given a general condition report by telephoning:

**North Ward – 4091 0258**

**South Ward – 4091 0243**

**Maternity Ward – 4091 0233**

## MEDICAL RECORDS

**During your stay in hospital, confidential medical records will be kept of your illness and treatment.**

This will include results from tests, x-rays and scans. The records will be added to any previous records held for previous treatment in hospital or as an outpatient.

As a general rule, information concerning you will not be given to anyone else unless you give permission or it is required by law.

Queensland Health supports your right to apply for access to health information held about you. Access to your health records may be provided simply through administrative access. If the application cannot be processed administratively, it will generally be referred for processing under the Information Privacy Act 2009.

You also have the right to request access to your health record formally under the Information Privacy Act 2009. If there is information in the health record that is incorrect, or which you do not agree with, you also have the right to request that it be amended.

You can also seek access to documents not relating to you under the Right to Information Act (2009). For further information on what information can be accessed under Right to Information, please refer to the Release of Information internet page found at [www.health.qld.gov.au/cairns\\_hinterland/html/roi-about](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/cairns_hinterland/html/roi-about)

**For further information on how to access your medical record, contact:**

### Release of Information Unit

Cairns Hospital  
PO Box 902, CAIRNS QLD 4870

**Phone:** (07) 4226 8683

**Email:** ROI-CBH@health.qld.gov.au

### The privacy of your personal information

We know you need to trust your healthcare provider before you give them sensitive personal information. You can expect that we will deal with the information in an ethical, lawful and confidential way.

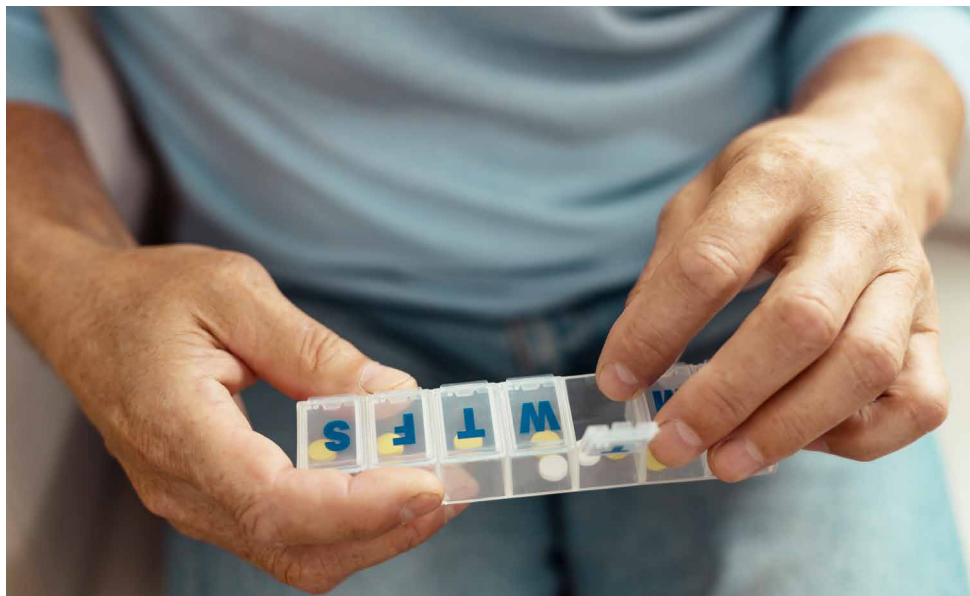
Your health information will only be discussed or made available to those who are involved in your care.

Some government organisations may be legally allowed to access information about you, such as births and deaths, notification of infectious diseases, and other public health matters.

Please ask for a copy of the pamphlet on the privacy of your personal information if you would like to know more.

### Confidentiality and privacy

Your medical information will always be treated as confidential. Please contact your ward or nursing staff if you require extra steps to be taken to ensure your privacy.



## MEDICATIONS

You are encouraged to bring all of your medications with you to hospital so we can tailor treatment to your needs. This includes those prescribed or purchased yourself. Some examples include inhalers, eye drops, creams, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Please ensure they are in their original packaging (this might be a Webster-pak® or a dose administration aid).

Any medication brought into the hospital must be given to nursing staff.

Your doctor will prescribe the appropriate medications for you while you are an inpatient and at discharge.

The medications you have brought from home might need to be used while you are in hospital. On discharge, if there

is a change in dose for your regular medications, a new label can be attached with current instructions.

It is important you understand what your medicines are, what they are used for, how to take them, and anything to watch out for. During your stay, or at discharge, ask to speak to the nurse, doctor, or pharmacist if you have any questions about your medicines. You can also request an updated medicines list to share with your local pharmacy or general practitioner.

**Remember:** At any time if you feel there is something incorrect with your medicines, or think you might be experiencing a side effect, please speak to staff.





## TRANSFER TO ANOTHER HOSPITAL

**If you need specialist health care that cannot be provided locally, you will be referred to a hospital or centre where the treatment can be provided.**

Atherton Hospital works with other Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service facilities and local aged-care homes to ensure there are enough beds to meet increasing demand.

**Patients who may be transferred include those who:**

- Are awaiting residential aged-care placement.
- No longer require acute care but still require some hospital care and are well enough for transfer.
- No longer require acute care but are unable to live independently at home or with family.
- Live in these areas and are suitable for transfer back.

As part of your treatment plan, it may be necessary to transfer you for interim care to other hospitals in the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service.

These may include the facilities at Cairns, Gordonvale, Babinda, Innisfail, Tully, Mareeba, Herberton or Mossman. This arrangement may be necessary for either of two reasons:

1. Once treated and/or rehabilitated, you need to re-establish a normal life outside hospital as soon as possible. Prolonged stays in hospital tend to reduce independent skills. The rural facilities in the health service provide a better environment for this interim care.
2. Beds at Cairns Hospital are required for new patients arriving (often by ambulance) who need acute hospital treatment.



# 5 QUESTIONS

**TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTH  
CARE PROVIDER BEFORE YOU GET ANY  
TEST, TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE**

Some tests, treatments and procedures provide little benefit.  
And in some cases, they may even cause harm.

Use the 5 questions to make sure you end up with the right  
amount of care — not too much and not too little.

**1**

**DO I REALLY  
NEED THIS TEST,  
TREATMENT OR  
PROCEDURE?**

Tests may help you and your doctor or other health  
care provider determine the problem. Treatments,  
such as medicines, and procedures may help to treat it.

**2**

**WHAT ARE  
THE RISKS?**

Will there be side effects to the test or treatment?  
What are the chances of getting results that aren't  
accurate? Could that lead to more testing, additional  
treatments or another procedure?

**3**

**ARE THERE  
SIMPLER, SAFER  
OPTIONS?**

Ask if there are alternative options to treatment  
that could work. Lifestyle changes, such as eating  
healthier foods or exercising more, can be safe  
and effective options.

**4**

**WHAT HAPPENS  
IF I DON'T DO  
ANYTHING?**

Ask if your condition might get worse — or better —  
if you don't have the test, treatment or procedure  
right away.

**5**

**WHAT ARE  
THE COSTS?**

Costs can be financial, emotional or a cost of your  
time. Where there is a cost to the community, is the  
cost reasonable or is there a cheaper alternative?



For more information visit  
[choosingwisely.org.au](http://choosingwisely.org.au)



Join the conversation  
@ChooseWiselyAU

Adapted from material developed by Consumer Reports.

Choosing Wisely Australia® is an initiative enabling clinicians, consumers and  
healthcare stakeholders to start important conversations about unnecessary tests,  
treatments and procedures. With a focus on high quality care, Choosing Wisely  
Australia is led by Australia's medical colleges, societies and associations, and  
facilitated by NPS MedicineWise.

Reasonable care is taken to provide accurate information at the time of creation. This information is not intended  
as a substitute for medical advice and should not be exclusively relied on to manage or diagnose a medical  
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resulting from reliance on or use of this information. Read the full disclaimer at [choosingwisely.org.au](http://choosingwisely.org.au).

# During your stay

## ON THE WARD

**Please advise ward staff if you have any special needs, such as hearing or vision impairments, dietary requirements, or any other disability.**

If you, your family member or someone you care for has a disability, it is important that you discuss this with the staff involved in your care. There may be services that we can offer to make it

easier for you to get the health care you need during your hospital stay.

If you have a carer, it is important you tell us so we can include your carer in your admission and discharge planning.

Please also inform the ward staff before leaving the ward at any time. For your safety, we request that you do not leave the hospital without the permission of your doctor.

## MEALS

**The hospital food service caters for a range of cultural, religious and therapeutic dietary needs.**

Whilst in hospital you will receive three main meals and three mid-meal services daily. Our catering staff visit most inpatient wards to take your main meal orders once a day. If you do not have your meal order taken, you will receive the appropriate menu of the day for your dietary needs.

With certain procedures you will not be able to eat or drink for several hours. Nursing staff will tell you how long you must fast before your procedure.



## RADIO, TV

**In most wards, the Atherton Hospital Inpatient Entertainment is a complimentary service provided at the bedside by Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service.**

This system includes Free to Air television with the controls contained in the Nurse Call System. The speaker for the television is also on the Nurse Call System.

**By using this Inpatient Entertainment, you agree:**

- To only use it for its intended purpose.
- The hospital is not responsible for any interruptions or failure caused by a power or communication failure or maintenance works.

Private battery-operated radios, mobile phones, iPads, iPods and tablets are permitted provided they are used with headphones/ear buds. Due to safety reasons, patients are not permitted to have

private electrical appliances which require a 240 volt mains connection, including television and radios.

The hospital expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from the access to, or use of, information obtained through the Inpatient Entertainment or any consequences arising from such use and includes the loss of any of the above personal items.



## MAIL

Mail is delivered daily, Monday to Friday. Mail should be addressed to your given name, surname and ward, *C/- Atherton Hospital, PO Box 183, Atherton Qld 4883.*

Postage stamps can be purchased from the Friends of the Atherton Hospital Foundation Volunteers trolley. Ask the nurses or the Ward Clerk in your ward to put mail you want to post with the other mail going to the post office each day (Monday to Friday).

## TELEPHONES

Bedside phones for patients are supplied by Queensland Health. These will permit patients to receive incoming calls only.

You may use your own mobile phone to make and receive phone calls while you are in the hospital. Please be mindful of the impact of your phone conversation on others and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner when using your phone in our hospital.

## NO SMOKING

Smoking isn't allowed in any of our hospitals and health centres.

You can't smoke on the premises, the grounds, or within 5 metres of their boundaries. This rule applies to all staff, patients, visitors, contractors and other people who enter our buildings, grounds or vehicles.

You can't use alcohol or illicit drugs at any of our hospitals or health centres. Don't bring them to hospital and ask your visitors not to bring them to hospital.

For patients, free nicotine replacement therapy (patches) and other support options are available during your stay in hospital if you wish to take advantage of these.

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Alcohol and illicit drugs are not permitted in the hospital or at any health service campus.

## CALL SYSTEM

Most beds have a nurse call button located at your bedside should you need assistance. Press the buzzer once unless there is an emergency.



## EMERGENCY AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

**In the event of a personal emergency for yourself or another patient who is nearby, please call for help by pressing the nurse call button.**

In the case of fire or other general emergency, please remain calm and wait for staff to tell you what to do. Smoke detectors and sprinklers are fitted throughout the hospital.



## WE ARE A TEACHING HOSPITAL

**As Atherton Hospital is a teaching hospital, the medical, nursing and allied health staff treating you may have students working with them.**

It is possible that you will be asked to discuss details of your condition and undergo an examination by the students. You have the right to refuse examination by students at any time.

**Please note:** Intern, resident and registrar medical officers are qualified doctors and are not students. You may be assessed and treated by any of these medical officers, with oversight by specialist consultants.

## TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETER SERVICES

**We have interpreter services for people who are hearing impaired or have difficulty communicating in English.**

Ask a staff member to contact the translation and interpreter services for you. Our interpreter services help our staff communicate with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people. They are free and available 24 hours a day.

## RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT A PATIENT'S HEALTH

**(Ryan's Rule)**

**Ryan's Rule is an escalation of care process for patients, families and carers.**

It applies to all patients admitted to any Queensland Health public hospitals. This includes the emergency department and in some Hospital in the Home (HITH) services.

Ryan's Rule assists patients and their carers to receive help and further clinical review if their health condition is worsening or not improving as expected. A brochure and explanation of the process will be provided on admission. Please discuss any concerns with your nurse or treating team before initiating Ryan's Rule. Please note that Ryan's Rule is not a process for raising complaints. Please refer to the section "Providing Feedback" if you wish to make a complaint.

## SOCIAL WORK AND COUNSELLING

**Social workers can help you and your carer (if applicable) with questions or concerns you may have. These include:**

- Assistance with issues around domestic violence, child abuse, older person abuse and exploitation.
- Support with adjustment to a new diagnosis of an illness, disease or disability that causes a major life change.
- Advocacy in communicating concerns and questions regarding a person's care in hospital.
- Family meeting co-ordination and facilitation.
- Liaising/referring to community services that will assist with a safe and supported patient discharge.
- Information and support with Advanced Care Planning and End of Life Planning.
- Grief and loss support for death, dying, trauma, injury and/or crisis.

## CHAPLAINCY

Chaplains of all denominations are welcome to visit patients and visitors in the hospital. Should you wish to see a chaplain, please ask the ward staff.

## HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS

**The Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation (FNQHF) runs an extensive volunteer service. Every week more than 100 volunteers support patients, visitors, and staff at facilities across the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. They undertake a range of tasks.**

The Atherton Hospital Friends of the Foundation are actively involved in fundraising to purchase new equipment and other activities to support the Atherton Hospital. Their fundraising is supported by weekly Bingo at the Atherton International Club which is organised by our volunteers. Each weekday local volunteers take the hospitality service trolley to visit patients. This is stocked with newspapers, snacks, toiletries, and other products.

*For information on how to become a volunteer, please phone the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation on 4226 8993 or visit [www.fnqhf.org.au](http://www.fnqhf.org.au)*

## LAUNDRY

We do not launder patients' personal clothing, so please arrange for a friend/family to launder it and return it to you as required.

# Visitor information

## VISITING HOURS

All wards unless  
otherwise stated  
12pm – 8pm

## Nursing Handover 2.15pm – 2.45pm

all visitors are asked to  
leave the patient's rooms  
at this time



## PARKING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Parking is available in the marked street parking around the Atherton Hospital.**

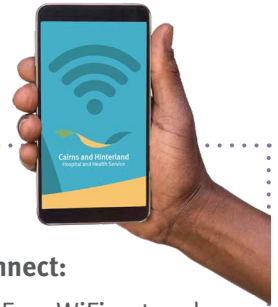
A number of disability car parks are available in several locations around the hospital.

There is a designated drop-off and pick-up zone off Louise Street and in front of the main entrance to the hospital, located at the brick arch and near the linkway between the main hospital blocks. The drop-off and pick-up zone allows you to wait under cover while your family, carer or friends come to collect you.

There is a designated drop-off and pick-up zone outside the entrance to the Emergency Department – this is also off Louise Street. There is some short-term disability parking in this area.

## FOOD AND DRINK VENDING MACHINES

There are several food and drink vending machines located in the foyers of the hospital buildings. These operate with EFT. The vending machines help to raise funds for the Atherton Friends of the Hospital Foundation.



## FREE WI-FI SERVICE

To help you stay connected with family and friends during your stay, the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service provides a free Wi-Fi service for patients, families and visitors.

### Network name: QH-FreeWiFi

*You don't need a password*

This service works on most Wi-Fi enabled devices.

### There are two easy steps to connect:

- Select the QH-Free WiFi network on your device.
- Read the Queensland Health Wi-Fi internet terms of use. Should you agree and accept you will be connected to the free Wi-Fi service.

Due to network capacity, streaming websites for movies, radio, TV and other on-demand content such as Netflix are limited in service quality.

## DISCHARGE PLANNING AND DISCHARGE

Your discharge planning will commence early in your admission process to ensure the return to your home environment is well organised.

Your Estimated Day of Discharge (EDD) should be identified to you and your family on the day you are admitted. Your EDD will also be discussed by your treating team and requires co-ordination throughout your admission. This will provide you with an opportunity to put plans in place for your transition out of the hospital. While timely discharge of patients frees up the acute bed for

the next patient, it is important for your recovery that you do not leave before discharge is arranged.

After the treating team has mentioned you are fit for discharge, there are a lot of steps that need to be taken before you can leave the hospital. This means you might be required to wait. Please be patient as the treating team usually needs to see the rest of the patients they are caring for before they can commence your specific discharge requirements. It is always best to check with staff when this is likely to be finalised so you can make appropriate transport arrangements.

# Discharge from hospital

## GETTING DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL

**We begin planning for your discharge early on in your hospital stay. We monitor your progress in hospital and we'll only discharge you when we're sure it's safe and appropriate to send you home.**

Your treatment may not be complete when you're discharged. You may need to continue treatment when you get home. You may also need some home support services or follow up specialist or clinic appointments.

Discharge times can vary between wards and hospitals. We try to discharge patients in the morning, but sometimes it's not possible. We'll give you an

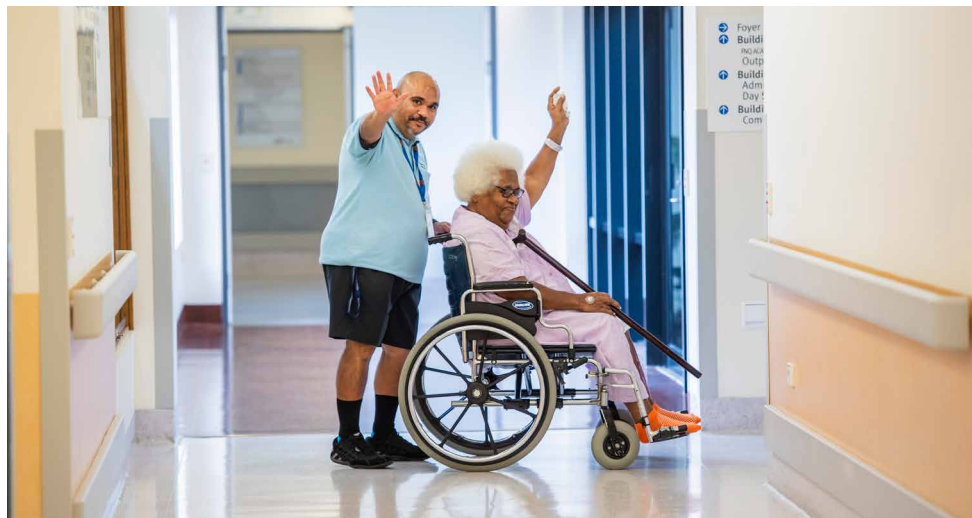
approximate discharge time to help you arrange transport from the hospital.

You can request that a copy of your discharge summary be sent to your regular GP.

## DISCHARGE AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE

**You have the right to leave the hospital before doctors recommend discharge, unless you have an infectious disease.**

If you decide to leave hospital against medical advice, you could be putting your health at risk. We'll ask you to sign a disclaimer form. You can return to hospital if your condition doesn't improve.





**Before you leave hospital, make sure your nurse or doctor gives you:**

- Follow-up outpatient appointment details.
- Medications, scripts and instructions.
- Arrangements for community support services.

**You should also make sure:**

- You have all your personal belongings.
- You've signed claim forms and all your fees are paid.
- You've collected any items held for you.
- Your forwarding address details are correct.
- You have relevant medical certificates.

After you leave hospital, you may need to return for an outpatient clinic. If you need more information, contact your hospital and ask to be connected to the clinic on your appointment card or letter.

If you can't get to an appointment, please tell us in plenty of time.

## YOUR MEDICATIONS FOR HOME

**Generally, discharge prescriptions are only provided for new or changed medications.**

Check with the hospital pharmacist if the prescription can be taken to your usual pharmacy. Please note medications dispensed by the hospital pharmacy may incur a fee. If applicable you will be provided with an invoice with payment options. Normally, supply of your regular medications does not occur by the hospital pharmacy on discharge. You should see your GP for prescriptions of your regular medicines. Before you leave hospital speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about your medications. They're happy to answer your questions.

## AMBULANCE AND TAXI TRANSPORT

**If you can, ask a family member or friend to take you home from hospital. It's a good idea to have someone to help you get home safely.**

Ambulances don't usually take people home from hospital and the hospital doesn't arrange taxis.

It's up to you to arrange your own way home. You can talk to us if you're having problems getting home.

## ASSISTANCE WITH TRAVEL

**Queensland's Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme provides financial assistance for travel and accommodation to eligible patients – and in some cases, their escorts – who need to access specialist medical services that are not available within their local area.**

Ask your health care team for the patient travel subsidy scheme booklet if you need further information or go to [www.qld.gov.au/health/services/travel/subsidies](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/services/travel/subsidies)



## CONTACTING YOUR GENERAL PRACTITIONER

Where possible, a summary of your hospital treatment will be sent to your general practitioner from your treating doctor/s.

## OUTPATIENT CLINIC

**After discharge, you may be required to return to an outpatient clinic.**

If you have any questions, please contact the respective outpatient clinic.

*Atherton Specialist Outpatient*

*Department: 4091 0284.*

*Cairns Hospital: 4226 0000.*

For rural and remote patients who live out of town, you may be eligible for a follow-up telehealth appointment. Telehealth gives you the freedom to be seen at your closest Queensland Health facility without the need to travel back to the specialist hospital. Telehealth uses video conferencing technology to connect you to your specialist. To find out if you're eligible for a Telehealth appointment, contact the clinic and ask the question.

*More information on Telehealth can be found on our website:*

*[www.health.qld.gov.au/cairns\\_hinterlandhtml/telehealth](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/cairns_hinterlandhtml/telehealth)*



*Beautiful facilities in Atherton and Mareeba  
with caring staff and a lifetime of experience.*



*Local Staff, Local Families, Local Knowledge.*

Atherton: 4091 2147

Mareeba: 4092 1013

Established in 1942.

*Owned and Operated  
by the Chaffey Family  
since 1998.*



**Guilfoyle**  
Funeral Services

[www.guilfoylefunerals.com.au](http://www.guilfoylefunerals.com.au)

# Your Feedback

**You are encouraged to provide feedback directly to your care team, this includes compliments and complaints.**

There are occasions when you may prefer to provide feedback to the Patient Liaison Service.

**The Cairns and Hinterland Patient Liaison Service can:**

- Convey your appreciation to staff and advise them of any aspects of your care and treatment you found to be of an exceptional standard.
- Assist with any concerns you wish to raise about the care or service you have been provided.
- Refer your concerns to appropriate staff members, and keep you informed of the progress.
- Seek to address and resolve your concerns and provide advice.

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Following your hospital discharge, you may be invited to participate in the patient reported experience survey.
- Your views about your hospital experience and your level of satisfaction with the healthcare provided are very important in helping us find out what we

are doing well and what can be improved. We use patients' feedback to help identify and prioritise areas for improvement.

- We are participants in the Queensland-wide program allowing you to share your experiences by receiving a text message (SMS) with a link to an online survey relating to your hospital stay.
- If you agree to do the survey, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire that will take about 5 minutes. After this, you will be invited to answer some further questions about other aspects of the care you/your family members received. That will take about 10 minutes. You can choose whether you continue to the longer questionnaire or stop when you have completed the short one.
- A link to the online survey will be sent to the mobile phone number listed in your hospital record via a text message (SMS) two days after you leave hospital. If you don't have a mobile phone number, you will not receive this invitation. If you wish to provide feedback about your experience, you are most welcome and encouraged to complete a 'Tell us how we are doing' paper form or via our online feedback form.

## COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

### Step 1 – Speak to the staff

If you are making a complaint, telling a staff member caring for you gives them an opportunity to fix the problem if they can. If you are not happy with their response, you may ask to speak with a Nurse Unit Manager or equivalent of the area.

If being treated under the mental health act you have a right to support from the Independent Patients Rights Advisors. Please speak with your nurse.

### Step 2 – Contact the Patient Liaison Service

You can contact the Patient Liaison Service by email [CHHHS\\_Feedback@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:CHHHS_Feedback@health.qld.gov.au) or by completing the online feedback form on the internet.

Staff will acknowledge your concerns within five (5) days or contact you for further information. If you have raised an issue requiring an investigation, you should receive a feedback letter within 35 days.

While every effort is made to complete investigations within this timeframe, for complex matters it may extend beyond 35 days.

### Step 3 – Health Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you have the option of also contacting the Office of the Health Ombudsman <http://www.oho.qld.gov.au>. The Ombudsman is independent from Cairns and Hinterland Health and can be contacted by:

#### Office of the Health Ombudsman

PO Box 13281 George St  
BRISBANE QLD 4003

**Phone:** 133 OHO (133 646)

**Email:** [info@oho.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@oho.qld.gov.au)

[www.oho.qld.gov.au](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)



# *Right to healthcare*

**You have a fundamental right to adequate and timely health care. Sometimes, this may not be at the health care facility you first attend, as not all services are necessarily available everywhere.**

You can contribute to the right of access by trying to meet your appointments and telling the facility when you cannot.

## **SAFETY**

**The right to safe and high-quality care.**

If you are unsure about what is happening to you or if you think something has been missed in your care, alert your healthcare provider.

Let your provider know any circumstances that might make your health care riskier.

## **RESPECT**

**The right to be shown respect, dignity and consideration.**

You are entitled to receive care in a way that is respectful of your culture, beliefs, values and characteristics like age and gender.

It is important to tell your health care provider of any changes in your circumstances.

Respect also includes being mindful of health care staff and other patients.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**The right to be informed about services, treatment, options and costs in a clear and open way.**

Health care providers will tell you about the care you are receiving and help you understand what is happening to you.

You can contribute to communication by being as open and honest as you can be.

You have the right to understand the instructions given to you. You can ask questions if you would like more information. You can use interpreters if English is not your first language. Interpreter services can be provided in person or by phone.

## **ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUPPORT**

**We have support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island peoples including liaison officers who can provide cultural support and advice to Indigenous patients, their families and carers.**

Talk to your care team to arrange support from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker.



## PARTICIPATION

### **The right to be included in decisions and choices about care.**

You are encouraged to participate in decisions about your care. Ask questions if you are unsure about what is happening to you. Involve your family or carer if this makes you more comfortable and sure.

## PRIVACY

### **The right to privacy and the confidentiality of provided information.**

You are able to see your records and ask for information to be corrected if it is wrong.

In some situations your health information will need to be shared between health care providers.

You can also contribute by respecting the privacy and confidentiality of others.

## COMMENT

### **Health care providers want to solve problems quickly, but they need to be told about the problem first.**

If you have any suggestions about how services could be improved, please let staff know.

## HEALTH LITERACY

### **Good communication is vital in making sure you and your family receive the best possible health care.**

The posters on the following pages show why it is important and the second shows how to do it.



# My healthcare rights

This is the second edition of the **Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights**.

These rights apply to all people in all places where health care is provided in Australia.

The Charter describes what you, or someone you care for, can expect when receiving health care.



## I have a right to:

### Access

- Healthcare services and treatment that meets my needs

### Safety

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

### Respect

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

### Partnership

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

### Information

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

### Privacy

- Have my personal privacy respected
- Have information about me and my health kept secure and confidential

### Give feedback

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

# Top Tips for Safe Health Care



What you need to know for yourself, your family or someone you care for.

## 1

### Ask questions

You have the right to ask questions about your care.



## 2

### Find good information

Not all information is reliable. Ask your doctor for guidance.



## 3

### Understand the risks and benefits

Find out about your tests and treatments before they happen.



## 4

### List all your medicines

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you need more information about the medicines you are taking.

## 5

### Confirm details of your operation beforehand

Ask to be told who will be doing your procedure and what will happen to you.

## 6

### Ask about your care after leaving hospital

Ask for a written outline of your treatment and what should happen after you get home.

## 7

### Know your rights

You have a number of rights as a patient. Read our guide to find out what they are.

## 8

### Understand privacy

Your medical information is confidential. You can ask to see your medical record.

## 9

### Give feedback

Feedback helps health professionals spot when improvements can be made.

Download our free booklet at:  
[www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips)

## Communicating with your healthcare provider: improving the safety & quality of your care

What does effective communication look like?



Why is it important?



# Communicating with your healthcare provider

You have a right to be treated with **dignity and respect** and for your healthcare provider to **communicate with you** about your care

## How can I effectively communicate with my healthcare provider?



### discuss your 'goals of care'

expectations, preferences, including if you have an advance care plan



### ask for help

let your healthcare provider know if you need a support person and help to communicate



### be open, honest & communicate any changes

to your medical history, medicines and your health including if your family or carer notice a change



### ask questions & raise any concerns

you have about your care



### provide feedback

throughout your care experience



### discuss your ongoing care needs & plan for when you leave

ask about follow-up appointments, involve your carer and if not provided, ask for a copy of your discharge summary



**Queensland**  
Government