



Patient Rights & Responsibilities

The Patient Care Partnership

Understanding Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities

When you need hospital care, your doctor, the nurses and other professionals at our hospital are committed to working together with you and your family to meet your healthcare needs. Our goal is for you and your family to have the same care and attention we would want for our families and ourselves.

High Quality Hospital Care

Our first priority is to provide you the care you need, when you need it, with skill, compassion and respect. Tell your caregivers if you have concerns about your care or if you have pain.

As a patient at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, you have the right to:

- Know the identity of all physicians, nurses and others involved in your care, and you have the right to know when they are students, residents or other trainees.
- Obtain from the physician complete and current information concerning diagnosis, treatment, prognosis and post-discharge instructions that your physician determines, in terms that can be understood. When it is not medically advisable to give such information to the patient, the information should be made available to an appropriate person on the patient's behalf.

- Ask questions. If you have questions at any time, please ask them. Unasked or unanswered questions can add to the stress of being in the hospital. Your comfort and confidence in your care are very important to us.
- Privacy concerning your medical care.
- Have a family member or person of your choice, and your own doctor, notified promptly of your admission to the hospital.

Involvement in Your Care

You and your doctor often make decisions about your care before you go to the hospital. Other times, especially in emergencies, those decisions are made during your hospital stay.

As a patient at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, you have the right to:

- Make an informed decision regarding your health by discussing your medical condition and information about medically appropriate treatment choices with your healthcare professional.
- Receive all information necessary to give consent prior to the start of any procedure and/or treatment, including the benefits and risks. Receive information as to what you can reasonably expect from your treatment and any long-term effects it might have on your quality of life.
- Make an informed decision regarding the financial consequences of using uncovered services or out-of-network providers.
- Refuse care and treatment and be informed of the medical consequence of your action.
- Receive information regarding what you and your family will need to do after you leave the hospital.
- Consent to or refuse participation in experimental treatment.
- Be free from chemical and physical restraint except as medically indicated and authorized, in writing, by your physician.
- Receive appropriate assessment and management of pain.
- Receive care that is consistent with the hospital's resources and religious values.

Your Healthcare Goals and Values

You may have healthcare goals and values or spiritual beliefs that are important to your well-being. Make sure your doctor and your family know your wishes.

As a patient at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, you have the right to:

- Receive care that respects your individual, spiritual and cultural values to the extent permitted by law.
- Designate a decision-maker in accordance with Illinois law.
- Receive an explanation of your hospital bill.

Protecting Your Privacy

We respect the confidentiality of your relationship with your doctor and other caregivers, and the sensitive information about your health and healthcare that are part of that relationship. State and federal laws and hospital operating policies protect the privacy of your medical information.

You will receive a Notice of Privacy Practices that describes the ways that we use, disclose and safeguard patient information. It also explains how you can obtain a copy of information from our records about your care.

St. Elizabeth's respects your privacy and we appreciate visitors consideration of our patients' right to privacy. At any

time visitors may be asked to leave a patient's room in order for physicians or nursing staff to privately discuss the patient's care.

Your Responsibilities as a Patient

Your caregivers need complete and correct information about your health and coverage so that they can make good decisions about your care.

As a patient at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, you have the responsibility to:

- Provide complete and accurate medical histories to the best of your ability, including past illnesses, surgeries or hospital stays, allergic reactions and any medicines or dietary supplements you are taking.
- Comply with hospital policies.
- Cooperate in the treatment program specified by your physician and answer questions honestly and completely.
- Comply with follow-up instructions of your physician to ensure continuity of care.
- Inform your caregiver when your rights are not being respected.
- Be considerate of other patients, hospital personnel and property.
- Provide the hospital with accurate and timely information regarding any network or admission requirements under your health plan and methods of payment and ability to meet financial obligations.

Patient Rights to Self-Determination

Understanding Who Should Make Decisions When You Cannot

St. Elizabeth's Hospital, in accordance with its philosophy and tradition, has the responsibility to respect and preserve the patient's choices of care in all the stages of illness, including the stage of dying. The preservation of the patient's choice will be consistent with current Catholic medical moral teachings.

This hospital recognizes the rights of its patients to make informed decisions about their medical care, including the right to accept or refuse medical or surgical treatment, including life-sustaining care, even if the refusal could hasten death, and the right to formulate advance directives. Additionally, this hospital recognizes the rights of patients lacking decisional capacity to have surrogates, in certain circumstances, make decisions on their behalf.

An “**advance directive**” is a written document in which an individual expresses preferences relating to the provision of his or her medical care should the individual become incapacitated, i.e., unable to make those decisions. There are two types of advance directives authorized by Illinois statute: living wills and powers of attorney for healthcare.

If you have signed a healthcare power of attorney stating who should speak for you if you become unable to make healthcare decisions for yourself, or a living will or advance directive that states your wishes about end-of-life care, give copies to your doctor, your family and your care team.

It is the hospital's policy to comply with applicable law by honoring the treatment preferences expressed by patients in their advance directives, so long as those preferences are allowed by law. In so doing, it is this hospital's policy not to condition care or discriminate against individuals based on whether they have executed an advance directive, nor to require any person to execute an advance directive.

Please bring to the hospital a copy of any advance directives for healthcare you may have.

Your Role in Healthcare Safety - The “Speak Up!” Program

St. Elizabeth's is committed to making your healthcare safety a priority. You, as the patient, also can play a vital role in your healthcare safety by becoming well-informed and actively involved in your care. The "Speak Up" program, sponsored by The Joint Commission, urges patients to get involved in their care.

You should follow these tips to make your hospital stay a positive experience:

- Speak up if you have questions or concerns, and if you do not understand, ask again.
- Pay attention to the care you are receiving. Make sure you are getting the right treatments and medications by the right healthcare professionals.
- Educate yourself about your diagnosis, the medical tests you are undergoing and your treatment plan.
- Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate. Your advocate can ask questions that you may not think of while you are under stress.
- Know what medications you take and why you take them. Also, inquire about the side effects of the medication.
- Use a healthcare organization, such as St. Elizabeth, that has undergone a rigorous on-site evaluation, such as that provided by The Joint Commission.
- Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of your healthcare team.

Speak Up — Prevent Medication Mistakes

Follow these tips to help prevent a medication mistake from happening to you or your loved one:

- Share a list of all your current medications with your doctor. Be sure to include prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, herbs, vitamins, and supplements.
- Discuss any allergies you have whenever you get a new medicine.
- If you are taking a lot of medicine, ask your doctor if it is safe to take them together.
- Always read and follow label directions.
- Don't be afraid to verify with your doctor or nurse that you are receiving the correct medication.
- Before you leave the hospital, make sure you understand all of the instructions for the medicines you have been prescribed. Ask questions if you have any concerns.

Speak Up — Planning Your Recovery

- Do not hesitate to ask questions about your care after you return home. Keep the following tips in mind.
- Find out about any special instructions for daily activities.
- Make sure your home is set up to help with any physical limitations you may have. Arrange for any special equipment you may need. Arrange for family or friends to stay with you.
- Write down any question you have and ask them before you leave the hospital.
- Ask about any medication you are prescribed.
- Ask for written directions for activities, medicines, exercises.
- Ask if there are any activities, foods, or drinks you should avoid.

Speak Up — Participating in a clinical research study

Research involving patient subjects significantly contributes to the quality of life for millions of people worldwide. You can play a vital role in making the research process as safe as possible by becoming active, involved and informed. St. Elizabeth's has several clinical research studies approved for use here. Although most are cancer related, other special studies may also be approved.

- Ask for a copy of the study protocol. Look for a description of potential side effects of the treatment.
- Talk to your doctor conducting the study and your insurance provider to determine if there will be extra cost to participating in a research study.
- Ask questions and understand any forms of consent or protocol documents you must sign.
- Ask about other options or choices you have if you decide not to participate in the study.
- Know who to contact if you have questions about your care or the study.

Your Role in Preventing Infections

The National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) has a “Stand Up for Patient Safety” project designed to provide patients with helpful principles for managing their healthcare, including preventing infections in the hospital. Infections can occur after many types of medical procedures. This is particularly true if you are having surgery.

There are several things you can do to help prevent infections from developing in the hospital:

- Wash your hands carefully after handling any type of soiled material. This is especially important after you have gone to the bathroom.
- Since you are part of your healthcare team, do not be afraid to remind doctors and nurses about washing their hands before working with you.
- If you have an intravenous catheter, keep the skin around the dressing clean and dry. Tell your nurse promptly if the dressing works loose or gets wet.
- Likewise, if you have a dressing on a wound, let your nurse know promptly if it works loose or gets wet.
- If you have any type of catheter or drainage tube, let your nurse know promptly if it becomes loose or dislodged.
- If you have diabetes, be sure that you and your doctor discuss the best way to control your blood sugar before, during and after your hospital stay. High blood sugar increases the risk of infection noticeably.
- 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 healing abilities following surgery.
- Carefully follow your doctor’s instructions regarding breathing treatments and getting out of bed. Don’t be afraid to ask for help, advice or sufficient pain medications.
- If possible, ask your friends and relatives not to visit if they themselves feel ill.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions about your care so that you may fully understand your treatment plan and expected outcomes. You and your family/friends will be able to better facilitate your recovery.

Pain Control: Your Rights and Responsibilities

As a patient of St. Elizabeth's Hospital services, you have several rights and responsibilities when it comes to treating your pain. There are many kinds of treatments that can be used to effectively control pain.

Some Facts You Should Know

Today, pain control is a very important part of the hospital’s care of patients. First, you will be asked about pain when

you enter the hospital setting or receive Home Care services. Next, you and your family will be told that effective pain relief is available and is an important part of treatment. In many cases, the hospital can give you educational material that explains pain and how to control it.

If you have been given pain medication, the healthcare team will ask if you are still having pain and how much or how little it has improved to ensure that you are getting the correct dose.

There are several things that you will be asked about regarding your pain. They include:

- Where is the pain located?
- Does the pain come and go, or is it continuous?
- How would you describe the pain: sharp, dull, aching, throbbing, etc.?
- What makes the pain better?
- What makes the pain worse?
- Does the pain stop you from doing things like bathing, eating, etc.?
- You will be asked to rate your pain according to a pain intensity scale before and after treatment. Be as accurate as possible with your answer so that the staff can help you control your pain successfully.

Sometimes a patient is not able to tell the nurse or doctor about pain. There is a special method of rating pain for children and for those unable to communicate their needs. If this is the case with your family member, please talk to the nurse or doctor if you feel your loved one is in pain.

Patient Rights for Pain Control

You have the right to:

- Information and answers to your questions about pain and pain relief.
- Expect that the staff is concerned about your pain and that your doctor and nurse believe your complaints of pain.
- A quick response from your doctor or nurse when you report pain.
- The best appropriate/available pain relief treatments.
- A second opinion on your pain management if needed.

Patient Responsibilities for Pain Control

You have the responsibility to:

- Ask your doctor what to expect regarding pain management.
- Discuss different kinds of pain relief choices with your doctor.
- Work with your doctor to make a pain management plan.
- Ask for pain relief as soon as the pain begins.
- Help doctors and nurses measure your pain.
- Tell your doctor or nurse about any pain that won't go away.
- Discuss any personal, cultural, spiritual and/or ethnic beliefs that might alter or affect your pain management plan with your doctor or nurse.

Patient safety concerns can be reported to [The Joint Commission](#):

- At www.jointcommission.org, using the “Report a Patient Safety Event” link in the “Action Center” on the home page of the website
- By fax to **630-792-5636**

- By mail to:

**Office of Quality and Patient Safety
The Joint Commission
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181**