

Family Education Sheet

Rights and Responsibilities of Patients, Families and Patient Representatives



Boston Children's Hospital

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Boston Children's Hospital is committed to respecting and protecting the rights of our patients and families. We strive to provide care that's sensitive to culture, race, religion, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, age, disability, military or veteran status.

Key points:

Boston Children's is committed to giving you the best care when you need it. That's why we have rights and responsibilities that protect you and your family. This handout discusses your rights and responsibilities while receiving care with us. Your rights include:

- Getting care when you need it and being an active and informed member of the care team that includes doctors, nurses, therapists, social workers and other hospital staff
- Receiving care that respects your privacy and confidentiality
- Being able to share your thoughts and concerns about the care you've received at Boston Children's

If you have any questions about the information in this handout, please ask a member of your care team.

Your rights

Access to care

You have the right to:

- Get safe and respectful care suited to your age, cultural and personal values and needs.
- Be given care that is free from abuse or neglect, and that supports respect, dignity and comfort.
- Be given treatment in an emergency, whether or not you can pay.
- Transfer safely to another facility that agrees to treat you.
- Be given care that's free of discrimination.
- Be given care that supports special needs to the best of our ability; this may include a wheelchair-accessible bathroom or an interpreter.
- Have your religious and spiritual needs supported
- Be given access to protective and advocacy services if you need them.

Information about care and care providers

You have the right to:

- Choose an available health care provider for your care and treatment, except in an emergency.
- To be fully informed about your or your child's health status to make informed decisions about care.
- Know the name and specialty of those providing care to you or your child.

- Ask for information about the relationship of the hospital or health care providers to any other health care facility or educational institution and how it relates to your care.
- Choose not to receive care, except if the situation presents risk to your or your child's health or wellbeing; the hospital will take action and may engage the Department of Children and Families according to hospital policies and laws.
- Not be examined, observed or treated by students without affecting your treatment from the care team.
- Have us tell someone (like a family member or your doctor) that you have been admitted to the hospital.

Privacy and confidentiality

You have the right to:

- Safety and reasonable privacy.
- Keep your medical records and communications confidential and receive guidelines on how we use or share health information.
- Have access to your medical records or receive a copy within a reasonable amount of time.
- Get a copy of the hospital's privacy policies.
- Choose not to be listed in our directory to keep your hospital stay private.
- Refuse any requests for help with fundraising or marketing activities.

Visitors

- You have the right to decide who may visit you or your child. You also may restrict visitors. Visiting hours are between 12:00 p.m. (noon) and 8:00 p.m. Parents and guardians may visit at any time.
- The hospital may restrict or put limitations on visitation if you or a visitor interfere with the rights of others or are a safety risk to a patient, staff member or the hospital.
- Visitor limitations may be required based on patient needs, your or your family member's needs or the needs of nearby patients in your unit/area.
- During a state of emergency or an emergency situation, the hospital may need to restrict visitor access for the safety of our patients, families and staff.

Health information and billing

You have the right to ask for and get:

- A bill or statement of charges and explanation of costs.
- Information about financial help and free health care opportunities.
- To request a correction to your confidential health information if you believe the information is not right.

Decision-making and being part of the care team

You have the right to:

- Be an active and informed member of the care team throughout your stay and as you plan to leave the hospital.
- Be given information in a way that meets your needs.
- Be given a clear explanation of the results of any treatment or procedure.
- Ask for a copy of any hospital rules that patients and families must follow.
- Choose a Health Care Proxy (someone to make health care decisions for you) as allowed by Massachusetts law, if you can't make decisions for yourself.
- Get information about special services, like a Health Care Proxy, guardianship, advocacy services and protective services.
- Have your choices about your care (including organ donation and end-of-life decisions) honored as allowed by law and/or the hospital's ability.
- Be given or notified of resources that can help after discharge (when you go home).
- Consult another specialist (seek a second opinion) at your own expense.
- Have information on all alternative treatments which are medically appropriate if you have any form of breast cancer.

Informed consent

You have the right to:

- Make an informed and voluntary decision about the recommended procedure, intervention or treatment.
- Except in an emergency, have an opportunity to discuss with the primary provider performing the procedure, intervention or treatment an explanation that includes anticipated benefits, potential risks and available alternatives before signing the consent form.

Research

You have the right to:

- Get information about any research or education projects that affect your or your child's care or treatment.
- Be given care with or without participation in research projects.
- Refuse to serve as a research subject.
- Refuse any care or examination when the main purpose is educational or informational rather than therapeutic (for treatment).

Pain management

You have the right to:

- Be given care that manages your pain.

Restraints

You have the right to:

- Be given the least restrictive restraint for the shortest length of time that will protect you, visitors, and staff from harm. Boston Children's is committed to reducing the use of restraints.

Emergency contraception

Female rape victims (who can have children) have the right to:

- Be given written information about emergency contraception and how to obtain counseling and other assistance.
- Be provided emergency contraception (like the "morning-after pill") if you ask for it.

Sharing your concerns

Boston Children's is committed to providing the safest care possible. If you see something that doesn't make sense, or if something worries you, please speak with any member of your care team. Never be afraid to raise a concern or ask questions.

We want to hear from you if you are not satisfied with your care. These are the ways in which you can share your concerns or file a complaint:

- Talk to a Boston Children's nursing or department manager
- Contact a member of Boston Children's Patient Relations staff
 - Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.: Call 617-355-7673
 - After 4:30 p.m. or on weekends and holidays: Contact the Nursing Administrator on Call (NAOC) through the page operator at 617-355-6369
 - Mailing address:
Patient Relations
300 Longwood Avenue
Boston Children's Hospital 3238
Boston, Ma 02115

Formal grievance (complaint or concern)

You also have the right to file a formal grievance or complaint verbally or in writing to Boston Children's Patient Relations. All grievances will be reviewed in a timely manner.

1. Submit your grievance to Boston Children's Patient Relations, either verbally or in writing.
2. We will contact you upon receipt and will also provide a written response to your concern, which will include:
 - Name of the hospital contact person
 - Internal process for reviewing the complaint
 - Outline the results of our review
 - Date actions were completed

Grievances about privacy and confidentiality

For any questions or concerns regarding the privacy of patient information, please contact the Boston Children's Privacy Officer:

- email: privacy@childrens.harvard.edu
- phone: 617-919-4309

Other agencies to contact

You can also report a safety or quality of care concern to the following regulatory agencies:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-complaint-regarding-a-hospital>

If you are a patient, consumer, or their representative, please send the Patient Complaint Form, along with any necessary HIPAA forms (available at the site above) to:

Division of Health Care Facility Licensure and Certification
Complaint Intake Unit
67 Forest Street
Marlborough, MA 01752

You may also call the 24-hour consumer complaint line: 800-462-5540

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

Please fill out a Department of Mental Health (DMH) Complaint Form (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/complaint-form>) and mail to:

Department of Mental Health
Central Office of Investigations
25 Staniford Street
Boston, MA 02114

You may also contact the DMH Information and Resource line: 800-221-0053.

The Joint Commission

Online: At www.jointcommission.org, using the "Report a Safety Concern" icon in the "Connect with Us" menu on the home page of the website.

By mail to: The Office of Quality and Patient Safety, The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Visit the following website for CMS contact information: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/ContactCMS/index.html>

You may also contact CMS by calling: 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227)

The Office for Civil Rights

Complete an online form at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>

Or mail a written complaint to:

Centralized Case Management Operations
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Your family's responsibilities

You are a valued partner on the care team. While at Boston Children's, we ask that you:

- Share information about your or your child's health. This includes medical history, symptoms, treatments, medicines taken and any other information that could affect the treatment plan.
- Share with us how you want to take part in your or your child's care and ask us questions if you do not understand the care plan, any decisions or your responsibilities.
- Follow the care plan and instructions given to you by the health care team.
- Tell us if you are not able to follow the care plan.
- Let us know if you are not satisfied with your care or with any other experience at the hospital.
- Respect the rights of other patients, families, and hospital staff. For example: Be considerate with noise levels when talking or using music/video devices. Do not talk about or repeat information about other patients or families.
- Act and speak in a way that shows mutual consideration and respect for the care team, other patients and families, or visitors. Actions and language that are intimidating, abusive, or disrespectful will not be tolerated and may affect your access to the hospital.
- Support efforts to improve health equity, diversity, and inclusivity of our staff, patients, and families. Actions that are inappropriate, disrespectful or discriminatory are not tolerated and may result in limiting access to services, transferring to another facility or discharge.
- In general, be as quiet as possible to respect and support the care of all patients and families.
- Understand that Boston Children's is a smoke-free campus. If you smoke, you'll need to leave the hospital grounds.
- You are responsible for your or your child's belongings when in the hospital. Please leave anything that you do not need at home.
- Be prepared to meet any financial responsibilities that come up as part of your or your child's care, consistent with Boston Children's credit and collection policy.

Thank you for partnering with us to create a safe and trusting environment of care.

Important note

A copy of these Patient and Family Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Hale Family Center for Families or can be given to you by a member of your health care team.