



# Going to Hospital



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Government of Western Australia  
Department of Health



WA Primary  
Health Alliance  
Better health, together

phn

PERTH NORTH, PERTH SOUTH,  
COUNTRY WA

An Australian Government Initiative



**If you are Aboriginal, this booklet has been designed to help you prepare for your hospital visit.**

**It is important that you understand what is happening to you and that decisions about your health care are made with you.**

**The Department of Health and WA Primary Health Alliance acknowledge the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of WA. We acknowledge the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pay respect to the Aboriginal Communities of today.**

**Within WA, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of WA.**

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**Artists: Wendy Waye, Rita Minga, Julia Lawford, Jean Tighe and Elsie Dickens.**

The painting has been created by five women Elders from the Walmajarri language group of the Fitzroy River Valley. The painting is made up of five individual parts that tell a similar story relating to the hospital journey – one that revolves around collecting and eating bush foods, bush medicines, talking with doctors and working with Maparn (traditional healers).

# Your rights and responsibilities



You have the right to health care that is:

- **Respectful**
- **Responsive**
- **Safe**

Your healthcare team (doctors, nurses and other staff) have a responsibility to:

- treat you and your family respectfully
- listen to your concerns
- answer your questions clearly, honestly and repeat if necessary
- give you information about your condition
- respect your cultural beliefs.

They may ask you about:

- whether you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- if you would like support from an Aboriginal Liaison Officer
- if you would like family or support people to be included in health care discussions
- you and your family's medical history
- the medicines you are taking
- any bad reactions you may have had to a medicine in the past
- your religious, cultural, communication or language needs
- your food requirements.

It is important to tell your healthcare team about your health problems and any worries you might have about your condition and treatment.

Please treat the hospital, the staff and other patients with respect.

**Racism will not be tolerated. Please tell the hospital staff your concerns, they will be taken seriously.**

# Talking with staff



If you need help talking with the staff or understanding any of the information that you are told, you can ask to:

- see an Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO)
- see a translator or interpreter; or call an ALO from your home region
- access the National Relay Service, if you have hearing or speech needs.

You can ask staff to repeat information or speak slower. You and your family might need time to think over the information before making decisions.

You can also ask a family member or carer to speak on your behalf when you are not feeling well.



# Before hospital admission



Before going to hospital, you may be asked to come to an appointment at the hospital or have a chat by phone.

At this appointment the hospital will want to:

- confirm your contact details and any special needs you may have
- ask you about your medical history
- ask if you smoke or used to smoke
- explain what will happen during your hospital stay
- tell you if there is anything you need to do before you come to the hospital (like not eating or drinking from a certain time if you are having surgery)
- tell you the time you need to be at the hospital and how long you are likely to be there
- ask whether you have family or a carer coming to hospital to support you.



**This is a good time to ask questions and find out more about what to expect.**

You need to think about your personal and family needs while you will be in hospital, such as organising childcare, time off work, bill payments and social commitments.



# Smoking

If you are a cigarette smoker the following might be helpful for you to know before you go to hospital:

- all hospitals are 'smoke free'
- you can get **free** Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) to help you not to smoke
- you can ask your healthcare team to explain how the NRT (patches, gum, lozenges) works so you feel comfortable during your hospital visit
- if you have a carer, they can also get free NRT while you are in hospital
- your healthcare team can also support you if you want to quit smoking for good.



# Consent



**Your** treatment is your **choice**.

Before saying yes to treatment or surgery, you need to understand:

- your condition
- what treatments can help you
- the benefits and risks of the treatment, medicine, or surgery
- what will happen if you choose not to have any treatment.

Your healthcare team will provide you with information and answer any questions you might have. If you are not sure, discuss your options with a family member, friend or the Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

Below are some useful questions to ask your doctor:

| Questions to ask... | Do I really need this test or procedure? | What are the risks? | Are there simpler, safer options? | What are the costs? | What happens if I don't do anything? |
|---------------------|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| My Notes            |  |                     |                                   |                     |                                      |

<http://www.choosingwisely.org.au/resources/consumers/5-questions-to-ask-your-doctor>

## The final decision is yours

When you're happy that you understand and agree to what is going to happen, you will be asked to sign a form to show that you agree.



**During your stay in hospital, you will be asked your name, date of birth and if you have any allergies.**

You will be asked these questions a few times as the staff need to be sure they have everything correct.

# What to bring and prepare



- your Medicare card
- your Centrelink Card/Health Care Card
- a small amount of cash for emergency purchases (e.g. phone credit, TV rental)
- things you use every day, like glasses and dentures
- your mobile phone and charger
- regular medicines you take (including over-the-counter medicines, inhalers, eye/ear drops)
- mobility aids, if you use any (e.g. wheelchair, walking stick/frame)
- X-rays or scans related to your hospital treatment
- your care-coordinator details if you have any (e.g. Integrated Team Care)
- footwear/slippers, sleepwear, a spare change of clothes, socks and toiletries especially for overnight stays
- books, magazines, or other items to entertain you
- PATS forms, if you are travelling away from your home town for treatment

## Other preparations

- If you are caring for someone else at home, ask someone to help while you are in hospital.
- If you have any pets, make sure that there is someone to look after them.
- If you are a maternity patient, check with the hospital for any specific items you need to bring.

# Getting to hospital



Think about how you will get to and from the hospital:

- consider booking a taxi, or getting a lift with a family member or friend
- get to know the hospital's parking areas.

## Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)

If you live in the country and need to travel to another town, region or to Perth for medical treatment, you may be able to get travel and accommodation assistance through the PATS.

Talk to your local doctor or your local PATS office before planning your travel.

## Country Health Connection (Meet-and-Assist service)

Country Health Connect can provide transport for you if you are a PATS patient staying at an Aboriginal Hostel in Perth. You can make bookings through your local PATS office.





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