

# Hospital Tips

## Understanding Your Rights: HIPAA

**HIPAA** stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act established in 1996.

- This act was created to protect your personal health information.
- It is a federal law that allows you to obtain your health records, correct information on your health records, and permit those who need to see your health records.
- The law sets limits on who can view and receive your personal information, whether verbal, electronic or written.

The information protected under HIPAA includes any information that is put into your medical record by doctors, nurses, or other healthcare providers, as well as any information in your health insurance computer system, billing information, and conversations between your providers your care.

If you feel that your privacy is being violated and your health information is not being protected, you have the right to file a complaint. The complaint must be filed within 180 days of the presumed breach of privacy.

If you wish to learn more about HIPPA, you can visit the following [website](#).



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## **Ombudsman**

- A hospital ombudsman is a person who is on staff to investigate patient complaints and serve as a liaison between patients and the hospital system.
- Most major hospital systems and centers will have an ombudsman that you may contact if you find your care unsatisfactory or find issues with certain aspects of your care.
- The ombudsman may or may not resolve the issue that you bring to them; however, they will always look into it and try to help in the best way possible.
- Please refer to your individual center for policies and procedures for filing complaints with the ombudsman department.

## **Other Support Services**

The inpatient stay can be difficult, but there are many support systems in place to help you get through this challenging time.

**Chaplain:** Chaplains help meet your family's spiritual needs. A chaplain can work with your pastor or religious leader to provide needed spiritual support.

**Healing Services:** Many centers have a healing services department that offer things such as light massage, reiki, and deep breathing. Ask your care team or floor nurses to see if your center offers these services.

**Volunteer Services:** Many centers have volunteers that are on the floor that can offer support or visits to keep you company. Ask your care team or floor nurses to see if your center offers these services.



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## **Tips for Having a Hospital Roommate**

When you are sick, it can be challenging to deal with another person in the room, but that is the reality at many of the major transplant centers. For the sake of both patients, it is best if you can be kind and courteous and follow some of these tips to try and make the situation pleasant for both parties.

- Keep the room temperature at an agreeable level- do not go to one extreme or the other- unless you both have agreed that the extreme is what you both desire.
- Do not blast your television volume- if you have a hard time hearing your television, then wear headphones.
  - It can become very frustrating when the person on the other side of the curtain has the television blasting, and you are trying to talk to your doctors or family.
- If you are going to watch television after 10:00 pm or before 7:00 am, wear headphones.
- Some people like to get sleep, and watching TV is quite disruptive to some people.
  - The same goes for the use of lights- if you have to have lights on at night, try to keep them to a minimum, respecting the fact that your roommate may be trying to sleep.
- Clean up after yourself, especially in the bathroom. You are not the only person in the room; thus, you are not the only person using the bathroom. It is not sanitary nor pleasant to walk into a bathroom with someone else's mess left behind.
  - If you cannot clean it up yourself, call in your aide or nurse to do it for you and inform your roommate of the situation.



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## **Tips for Having a Hospital Roommate**

- Limit the number of family members who visit.
  - This doesn't mean that you cannot eat in the room or bring food into the room, but remember that you will probably be a roommate of another intestinal patient who is likely nauseous.
  - As you may know, rooms are tight spaces, and people can become loud. Just as you may not feel good at times, your roommate probably isn't feeling well, either.
- Try to be conscious of the food you or your visitors bring into the room.
  - This doesn't mean that you cannot eat in the room or bring food into the room, but remember that you are probably going to be a roommate of another intestinal patient who is likely nauseous.
  - Try to be wary of bringing strong-smelling foods into the room. If you want to eat something with a strong scent, considering eating it in the cafeteria or another location, unless you have discussed it with your roommate and agreed it is okay.
- Avoid using strong smelling lotions or perfumes. Once again, many patients are nauseous while in the hospital or may have headaches or migraines.



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