



Going to Hospital

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What is this booklet about?

People With disabilities WA (PWdWA) and the Health Consumers' Council WA (HCC) got together to write the booklet.

It is information about going to hospital

The booklet has practical advice for:

- getting ready to go to hospital,
- while you are in hospital, and
- for when you are going back home.



We wrote the booklet in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas. We explain words that are in **bold**.

You might like to get someone to help to read this paper. This could be your family, or a friend or support person.



You can also get the booklet in Plain English. This has more words and doesn't have the pictures.

Going to Hospital



Sometimes you might be booked to go to hospital. But sometimes you might go to hospital in an emergency.

If you do know you will be going to hospital, here are some things to do to get ready.



Go to the **pre-admission** appointment. This is an appointment to plan for when you go into hospital.



Make sure you ask lots of questions, and tell them about any equipment or support you will need.

This could be things like letting the hospital know you will need:



An interpreter. The hospital should book this.

A hoist to help you in and out of bed.



A support person to stay with you. You will organise this, but it's good to let the hospital staff know.



Here are some things to get ready to bring to hospital:



Your Medicare and private health insurance card.



A list or photos of all the medicines you take at home.



Toiletries.



Phone and charger.



Money to pay for things such as the TV.



Other things to take to hospital could be:

Any equipment you usually use to get around, such as a walker or stick.



Anything you usually use to help you communicate.

Remember to bring chargers for equipment.



Cancel any other appointments for the time you will be in hospital.

It is ok if you need other things while you are in hospital.

The hospital should help with things you need because of a disability.



If you have any problems, ask to speak to a **social worker** or **patient liaison officer**. It is their job to help you sort out problems.

Staying in hospital



Your nurse will help you make a plan for staying safe while you are in hospital.

Here is some advice to help you stay safe:

Falls



Sometimes people have falls when they are in hospital.

This might happen because they are sick, taking new medicine or in a place they don't know well.



Here are some things to help you not to fall:

Get up slowly so you don't feel dizzy.

Get to know your way around the place.

If you need help or you feel a bit scared, ask the nurses to help you.



Be extra careful in the bathroom or wet floor areas.





Pressure Sores

These sores are sometimes also called bed sores.

They happen when you are sitting or lying down in the same spot for a long time without moving.



They start as red patches on your skin. Then they turn into blisters or sores.

Pressure sores are a very serious health problem.

Here are some things that will help you not get pressure sores:



Sit up straight as much as possible.

Move around every half hour.

If you are very sick or can't move by yourself, nurses will help you to move about every 2 hours.



Check your skin for redness or blisters. Ask your nurse to check places you can't see.

Drink lots of water and eat good food.



Use moisturiser on your skin.



Tell your nurse if you notice any of these things:



Redness on your skin that won't go away.

Blisters or broken skin.



Pain that stays in one area such as your heels or your bottom.



Tingly or numb feelings.

Infections

You can catch infections wherever you are.

Here are some tips to keep infections away in hospital or at home.

Ask staff to wash their hands before they touch you.

Wash your hands with soap and water or hand gel:

- After you touch rubbish.
- After going to the toilet.
- After blowing your nose.
- After touching animals.
- Before you touch or eat food.
- Before and after taking medicines.

If you are a smoker, try to quit. Smoking can stop you getting well.

If you are in hospital with an infection, staff and visitors may need to wear gowns and gloves.

This is to stop germs spreading.



Going home from hospital



Before you go home, ask your doctor or nurse what you need to do to keep healthy.

Here are some things to think about:



Has the hospital given you information about what to do now?

Have they explained what happened to you in hospital?

Has the hospital done a **discharge summary** for you and your GP? This is a report about your treatment in hospital and what happens next.



Are your medicines organised – a script and medicine for the next week?



If you need help at home has it been organised?

Do you need help to get home? You may be able to get Patient Transport to help.



Do you have doctor appointments booked?



Do you know what to do if you get sick again?



Are you worried about going home? Ask to talk to Patient Liaison about it.



A nurse or occupational therapist can organise to check out your home and do a plan to help keep you safe.

For more information contact



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