

East and North Hertfordshire  
NHS Trust

# Bedside Information

**Please leave at the bedside for the next patient**

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# Welcome from the Chief Executive

Welcome to the hospital. I hope that your stay with us will be a positive one. I also hope that if at all possible, your stay is brief and that you are soon back home with your family and friends. If your stay with us needs to be longer, then I trust that you will feel cared for throughout your stay.

Here at the Trust, we are very aware that we need to have your confidence in our ability to look after you and your health. This is a time of considerable transition for the Trust's hospitals, when we are determined to make real and very positive changes that improve your experience while you are in our care.

It is never possible to get absolutely everything right on each and every occasion – no matter how hard we try. So if you spot something that we could be doing better, then please let someone know – ideally the nurse in charge of your ward or department, or the matron.

We also welcome your feedback about your care or how we could be doing things better. Comments cards are available from your ward – please let us know what you think.

Nick Carver  
Chief Executive, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

# Sign up and support your local hospital services

This is a very exciting time for the NHS in East & North Hertfordshire. We are committed to providing high class health services valued by the local community and strive to improve services continually. Help us to get it right!

All patients, carers and members of the community have the right to have a say in how services should be developed in the future. Make sure your views are counted by signing up to become a member of our Trust. Becoming a NHS Foundation Trust gives us greater financial freedom to develop our services. As a member of this new kind of trust you can help us improve our hospitals with your input.

If you are interested to hear what is happening or would like to be involved in helping us then please contact the membership office on 01438 781846 or email [ftmembership.enh-tr@nhs.net](mailto:ftmembership.enh-tr@nhs.net). Details can also be found on the web at [www.enherts-tr.org](http://www.enherts-tr.org)

## Allergies

If you have any allergies please inform the ward staff so that they can take appropriate measures when caring for you. Your nurse will put an allergy band on you (like your name band) which should not be removed while you are in hospital.

# Chaplaincy

Christian Chaplains are employed by the Trust and visit the wards regularly. If you wish to see a Chaplain during your stay or if you need assistance to visit a Chapel, please ask the staff on your ward for help and advice. Christian services are held on Sunday mornings or bedside Communion can be arranged for patients unable to attend the Chapel Services. A duty Chaplain is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

If you would like to see a representative of a faith community not covered by the hospitals' chaplains please ask your nurse to contact the Chaplaincy Department who will arrange this for you.

Each hospital has a Chapel and facilities to accommodate those of a Muslim faith.

## Comments and suggestions

There is no doubt that the best way that the Trust can improve its services is to listen to the views of those people who use them every day. After all, it's our patients who have the first hand experience of what it's like to be in our care.

This is why we welcome your comments and suggestions – both good and bad – about our hospitals. So if you would like to make a comment or suggestion to help us improve the facilities and services we offer patients please complete the 'comment card' available from your ward or from the PALS office and place it into one of the comment card boxes around the hospital. You can either leave your comments anonymous, or give your details to receive feedback.

# Concerns and complaints...

Whilst we try to make your stay as comfortable and informed as possible we don't always get it right. If you have any questions or worries we want to know about them early so that we can help to resolve them. There are a number of approaches to take.

## **Ward staff**

In the first instant please speak with your ward staff – your nurse, housekeeper, doctor, nurse in charge etc. These people know the most about you and the care and treatment you are having. They are the best people to be able to answer your question quickly and correctly.

## **Modern matrons / senior nurses**

If you feel your concern has not been addressed by the ward staff you may wish to speak with one of our matrons or senior nurses, or perhaps a senior doctor. This can be arranged by speaking with your nurse. Please note that Matrons work shifts and although they are not on duty all of the time there is always a senior nurse available.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you feel your concern has still not been addressed you may wish to speak with a member of the PALS team. Your nurse will be able to tell you how to contact them, or may contact them on your behalf. PALS staff are not involved in your care so you will need to explain your concern to them carefully, giving as much detail as possible. In order to help resolve your concern they will need to speak with the ward staff which may take a little time.

As well as helping you with your concerns PALS staff can offer advice about our Trust and other NHS services. They can help to point you in the right direction to answer your queries.

PALS offices are located at the front of the QEII and Lister Hospitals and can be contacted via telephone from all sites. Leaflets are available on your ward showing all relevant contact numbers.

### **Making a verbal complaint**

We hope that you do not have reason to complain about your care but if you do you may wish to make a verbal complaint to the staff on your ward. Your ward staff will discuss the complaint with you and do what they can to address the issues. Details will be recorded and forwarded to the complaints department.

### **Making a written complaint**

If you wish to make a written complaint then please write to the Chief Executive, Lister Hospital, Coreys Mill Lane, Stevenage. SG1 4AB. Your complaint will be dealt with according to NHS procedures.

Please be assured that all complaints are dealt with sensitively and in complete confidence. If, for whatever reason, you need assistance to make your concerns known to us please let us know and we will arrange for someone to help you. You can be confident that making a complaint will not compromise or adversely affect the care you receive as we value your comments and complaints as a way to improve our services.

# Confidentiality

The hospital keeps records about your health and any treatment and care you receive. This may be written down or held on computer. Such information includes test results, x-rays, photographs as well as details of the care given. Information is kept because it is an accurate record of your care and treatment.

Your records may be used for other purposes too, such as undertaking audit or for sharing with other organisations / people such as your GP so that we can work together to deliver your care and to monitor the quality of care provided. *Everyone working for the NHS, or who receives information from us, has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential and secure.*

We will only ever use or pass on information about you if others involved in your care have a genuine need for it and we believe this to be in your best interest. Where information is used for statistical purposes, strict measures are taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified. Unless required by law you have the right to chose whether or not to agree to information being shared. Your consent will be obtained before using any personally identifiable information. If you have concerns about the sharing of information with other agencies please discuss this with a relevant member of staff.

Please be aware that in meeting national guidance on confidentiality Trust staff may be restricted in what they can say to relatives and visitors.

## **Electrical equipment (eg. televisions)**

Televisions for personal use are available to hire in most areas of our hospitals – please speak with your nurse. Televisions are also available in the day rooms on each ward.

If you would like to bring your own television or other electrical equipment into hospital, it will have to undergo an electrical inspection carried out by the Estates Department before you can use it. Please speak with your nurse to arrange this. Please be aware that the Estates Department may not be able to respond to this request immediately.

Please note that toasters are not allowed to be brought in to the hospital.

The Trust cannot accept responsibility for the safety of such equipment.

## **Fire alarms**

The fire alarms may sound for three reasons:

- It's a routine test – fire alarms are tested each week
- There is a fire / smoke in another ward or department
- There is a fire / smoke in your ward or department

If a fire alarm sounds, the staff on your area will tell you what action, if any, needs to be taken. Evacuation is extremely unlikely but if this happens the staff will tell you what to do and give assistance as required.

If there is a fire alarm on your ward during visiting time all the visitors will be asked to leave in order to reduce the numbers on the ward, so that staff can concentrate on the patients. Visitors arriving while the alarms are sounding will not be allowed into the hospital until the alarms stop.

## **Food and drink**

Upon admission you will be asked about your diet and whether you have any specific dietary requirements (for example relating to an allergy or to your faith). We can cater for a range of dietary requirements eg. coeliac, halaal, kosher, and where necessary refer you to a Dietician or Occupational Therapist for specialist advice.

You will be given a menu card detailing a choice of meals from which to make your selection. The menu cards indicate specific details about the food eg. vegetarian, low salt, low sugar (etc). Ward staff will help you to complete these cards if necessary.

We run 'protected mealtimes' at lunch and supper time which means that meals should not be interrupted by doctors visits, tests (etc). This should make your meals more enjoyable and ensure you receive proper nutrition.

If you require assistance with eating the ward staff will help you. Alternatively your visitor may wish to help, but please check with your nurse first.

Your ward will supply you with beverages at regular intervals throughout the day.

We recognise that sometimes you may wish to eat food brought in from home. The Trust cannot accept

responsibility for the safety of foods brought in to our hospitals in this way and due to health and safety legislation, none of our wards have facilities to reheat meals. Staff are not able to prepare meals brought into the hospital.

A ward refrigerator is provided where cold foods may be stored. These must be labelled clearly with your name and the date and kept in a covered container. They can only be stored for up to twenty-four hours before being discarded.

We recommend that foods brought in to hospital should be commercially manufactured products which are hygienically wrapped and carry specific storage instructions.

## **Going home...**

As soon as you arrive in hospital, plans will be made for your discharge and an estimated date of discharge (EDD) will be established. This may change depending upon your treatment and progress. If you do not know your EDD please ask the doctors / nurses responsible for your care.

Most people go home from hospital and return to their previous way of life, but other people may require some additional assistance at home, or short or longer term stay in another setting, eg a nursing home or a community hospital. Throughout your stay you will be assessed and your nurse will discuss your discharge plans with you as they progress. It is important for you to highlight any concerns you may have so that they may be addressed at an early stage. If necessary you will be referred to specialists (eg therapists, dieticians) or other

health or social care providers or services (eg District Nurse, Adult Care Services etc). These people/agencies will give advice and assistance and to help plan any ongoing care when you have been discharged from our hospitals.

Once your doctor feels you are ready to go home there are a number of things that happen:

- Your health and/or social care arrangements will be finalised, where necessary such as a District Nurse or other specialist
- Your doctor will write to your GP telling him/her of the treatment you have received and recommending any on-going care you will need in the future
- If you need an outpatient appointment - the details will be sent to your home by a follow-up letter
- If you will be re-attending for on-going treatment please check the date before you leave
- If you need medication the pharmacy team will prepare these and you will take them home with you. (Occasionally you may be asked to go home first and collect them later in the day)
- If you require dressings you will be given a supply for a few days

On the day of discharge all your discharge arrangements should be in place by 11am so that your bed can be vacated for another patient. Unless your medical condition or mobility meets the criteria to qualify for hospital transport, you are expected to organise your own transport home. If someone is collecting you then you should arrange a pick-up at this time. Please let your nurse know if you anticipate a delay.

You may be asked to vacate your bed in the morning and wait to go home in the Departure Lounge. The lounge is a comfortable and safe environment staffed by nurses who will ensure that you continue to receive high quality care up until the moment you leave the hospital.

Please ensure you have adequate clothing and a set of house keys with which to return home. Please remember to collect all belongings from your ward.

**Age Concern** offers a hospital discharge support service which provides practical and emotional support. For details, phone 0845 6013446.

**Adult Care Services (Hertfordshire)** To find out more about social care services and support please go to our website [www.hertsdirect.org](http://www.hertsdirect.org) or telephone 01438 737400. The lines are open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm on Saturdays.

# Infection prevention

Healthcare associated infection affects an estimated one in ten NHS hospital patients each year. Infection prevention and control is a high priority for the Trust and we would ask you to work with us by following the guidance below:

- Advise staff if you have been previously told that you are MRSA positive or if you have been an inpatient in any other hospital in the last year
- Whilst in hospital you maybe tested for MRSA and possibly placed in to a side room whilst staff await results. Results normally take up to 48 hours and you will be informed as soon as they are known
- If you are at all worried about any aspect of your care related to infection prevention and control please do not hesitate to ask the ward staff to contact a member of the Infection Control Team who will gladly come and meet you
- **Please feel able to ask any member of staff if they have used the alcohol gel at the bedside or washed their hands before they administer any care to you**
- Please use the alcohol gel on your hands when entering or leaving the wards
- Do not share personal belongings with other patients
- Whilst in hospital please keep your belongings to a minimum to enable the domestic staff to thoroughly clean your bed space/locker or table
- Please refrain from sitting on other patient's beds or chairs
- Please inform the nursing staff if you are a carer of someone who frequently attends hospital

- Please ensure your used bedclothes (pyjamas, nightdresses) are bagged up regularly and taken home for laundering
- Please do not share food with other patients

## Information

Our staff try hard to keep you informed about, and involved in, your care and treatment.

If you have any questions ...

If you'd like more information ...

If you'd like to be more involved in your care or decisions about your care ...

If you don't understand something ...

**... please ask**

If you wish to speak with a doctor then please ask your nurse to arrange this for you. Depending upon who you wish to see and the time of day you may have to wait or may be asked to book an appointment. This is because of other commitments that the doctor may have eg. operating lists, clinics. Your nurse will keep you informed.

## **Interpreter services**

Interpreting services covering a wide range of languages, including sign language are available. This can be arranged by a member of staff.

Information leaflets can be converted into an audio CD for people who have difficulties reading. Please ask your nurse to contact the Clinical Governance Department.

## **Medication**

If you have been asked to bring your medicines with you into hospital your nurse will ask you for them when you arrive. Please hand these over and they will be locked in a medicine cabinet next to your bed for your use only.

Please inform your nurse if you have any steroid, diabetic, anticoagulant or donor cards.

Staff will administer medications at the time prescribed on the chart. This may be slightly different from your usual time.

During your stay a pharmacist, pharmacy technician or both may visit you. They will look at your drug chart and may ask you some questions about your medicines.

While you are in hospital, your doctor may prescribe an unlicensed medicine for you because he feels it is the best treatment for you. An unlicensed medicine is one, that for a variety of reasons, does not have an official UK product licence like most medicines in the UK.

If you have any questions about this or any of your other medication, please ask the pharmacist for more details.

On discharge from hospital:

- Your doctor will write a prescription and discharge letter to your GP informing him/her of the details of the medication you are being discharged with
- You will be given at least one week's supply of medication according to your prescription. Please say if you have any medication at home. In some cases you will be given a sufficient quantity to complete a course of treatment e.g. antibiotics and painkillers.

It may take some time to prepare your medication in pharmacy so please be patient. There will be no prescription charges.

When your medication is sent to the ward, the nurse, pharmacist or pharmacy technician will explain what each is for, how to take it and for how long, and the side effects to watch out for. If there is anything you do not understand then please ask. There will be a 'Patient Information Leaflet' inside each box of medicine. This will give you more information about the medicine and its side effects. Please read this leaflet carefully.

When you will go home you must contact your GP to obtain further supplies of regular medication before you run out.

Please note that if you take illegal drugs whilst on hospital premises you may be reported to the police.

# Money and valuables

Whilst in hospital you should not require much money – perhaps sufficient for a newspaper, toiletries or telephone.

Despite our best efforts, security in hospital can never be guaranteed and the Trust cannot accept responsibility for items of value that patients and/or their visitors bring into hospital. Therefore:

- Arrange for any valuables to be taken home for you as most wards do not have temporary safekeeping facilities
- In wards that do have temporary safekeeping facilities please ensure you are given a receipt, otherwise we cannot accept responsibility
- If you have a large sum of money in your possession speak to your nurse about our banking facility. This sum will be returned to your home address in the form of a cheque within a week of discharge.

# Overseas visitors and non-UK residents

Any treatment received within the A&E Dept is free for everyone. Entitlement to free treatment in other departments is dependent upon whether you are a UK resident or are from a European Union (EU) country.

A member of the Overseas Visitors Team will come and see you to discuss your situation if:

- you are not normally resident in the UK, or spend more than 3 months per year out of the UK\*
- you are visiting from a country in the EU and are receiving treatment “for the need that arose during a visit”

The Overseas Visitor Team will ask to see copies of your passport, proof of address and medical insurance (European Health Insurance Card for EU members).

Information leaflets are available at the front entrance to the hospital and within the A&E Dept.

*\*UK state pensioners are permitted to spend not more than 6 months per year out of the UK without jeopardising their NHS entitlement, provided that they are visiting an EU member state.*

# **Pain management**

We use a pain score to assess your level of pain on movement where 0/10 is no pain and 10/10 is the worst possible pain. This score will be used to make decisions about your pain medication and to monitor your progress. It is important that you are able to move around, depending of course on your medical condition. However you should be able to take a deep breath, cough and move up the bed.

We aim for your pain score to be less than 4/10. There are many types of pain relief that can be supplied from simple painkillers to strong pain killers (tablets or injection); hot or cold packs, epidurals etc. The right one or combination will be prescribed for you to keep your pain score below 4. If you feel your pain is not being adequately controlled or if you cannot move because of the pain then please speak with your nurse.

We have a team of dedicated clinical nurse specialists (pain team), anaesthetists and specialist staff caring for people with cancer who can assist your ward nurses in managing your pain.

## **Parking**

Public parking facilities are available across our hospital sites, which operate on a pay and display basis. The parking charges in force at any given time are advertised in the car parks themselves.

Blue badge holders will to be able to park free in designated bays when displaying a blue badge.

However, if they have to park in the main pay & display car parks they will have to pay the applicable charge.

## **Shops and services**

### **Shops**

Shops at our hospitals stock a range of items to make your stay a little more comfortable – newspapers, basic toiletries, confectionery etc. Opening times vary between sites so please speak with your nurse.

Shop trolleys visit some of the wards – please check with your nurse.

There are also a series of visiting day traders offering a range of products on different days.

### **Coffee Shops / Restaurants**

The Trust has several coffee shops and restaurants that can be used by patients. There are also vending facilities offering light snacks and beverages. Please ask your nurse for more information on the facilities nearest to you.

### **Cash Office**

If you are eligible to reclaim travel expenses, please attend the cash offices situated on the main concourses.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not allowed in any area of our hospitals, including the grounds or the car park.

# Telephones

Each ward has a direct telephone line – the number will be given to you upon arrival. It would help our ward staff enormously if one member of your family agreed to be the designated person enquiring about your condition. This will result in far fewer calls being made to our wards and allow staff more time to care for the patients.

Payphone facilities are available in main entrances.

Mobile phones are restricted in some areas – a member of staff can advise. If you do use a mobile phone please be mindful of others as calls are intrusive. Patients are requested to use the silent or vibrate functions rather than a ring tone and to turn mobile phones off at night.

# Transport

A “Helping you to get to hospital” leaflet is available via the Trust’s website [www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk) . It lists the opportunities available to you to get to hospital for future visits.

## **Buses and Taxis**

There are regular bus services from our hospitals servicing local towns. A free phone service for contacting taxis is available in the main entrance of our hospital sites.

### **Health Shuttle Service (Lister Hospital only)**

The Health Shuttle is a Trust service available to any patient or visitor who wants to travel to and from the Lister Hospital from Mondays to Fridays (not Bank Holidays) during the day from approx. 6.30am to 6.00pm. This service can be used for visiting and for discharge purposes.

It's a door-to-door service covering the Stevenage, Baldock, Letchworth, Hitchin and Stotfold areas. The Health Shuttle also can also provide a service between the QEII and Lister sites.

A fee is payable and pre-booking is required.

To make a booking, please telephone 01438 726219 or Lister internal ext 5338.

### **Voluntary Car Service**

Patients who will need to attend follow—up appointments at Lister and QEII sites may request transport from the voluntary car service. Please phone between 09:45 and 12:15 Mon to Friday:

- Lister Hospital: 01438 781238
- QEII Hospital: 01707 365462

# Visiting

Visiting times vary between our hospitals and between individual wards. A member of staff should make you aware of visiting times, but if you are not sure please ask. The times are also displayed at the ward entrance.

It is acceptable for one visitor to attend out of visiting times to assist with aspects of care eg. washing or eating. This must be arranged with the nurse in charge.

Whilst we welcome visitors we must also ensure that your clinical care is not interrupted and that the safety and wellbeing of yourself and others are considered. Therefore:

- Your visitors may be asked to wait if you are receiving treatment
- Space around the bedside may restrict the number of visitors and ideally not more than two visitors should be present at the same time
- It is advisable that children do not visit due to risk of infection. However, children are allowed to visit at the discretion of the nurse in charge of your ward and for safety reasons children under 12 must be supervised by an adult
- Visitors are asked to wash their hands upon arrival to, and departure from, the ward
- Visitors are not allowed to sit on beds
- Alcohol gel is available at ward entrances and by the bedside for hand cleaning
- Any visitor who is feeling unwell should go home and not visit again until they are feeling better
- Visitors are asked to be mindful of other patients and keep noise to a minimum. This includes

turning mobile phones onto silent or vibrate and leaving the ward to take calls

- Visitors are asked to respect confidentiality and only view your notes with your consent.

## **Volunteering**

Volunteers play an important role in helping our staff make your stay with us as comfortable and efficient as possible. Should you wish to know more about how to become a hospital volunteer, please do not hesitate to ask for further information from our voluntary services department on Lister 01438 781 285 or QEII 01707 365 535

## **Zero Tolerance**

The Trust operates a zero tolerance policy and will not tolerate any physical or verbal aggression towards its staff.