



Patient Safety Handbook



Changing What's Possible

Partners in Your Healthcare

You and your family are the most important members of your healthcare team. We want to partner with you. Please tell us how you are feeling, what you are thinking, and what you need. The information you provide can make a real difference in your care. If you have any questions or concerns, please share them with a care team member.

Here's how you can take charge of your own safety:¹

- n Ask questions about the risks and benefits of recommendations until you understand the answers.
- n Don't go alone to the hospital or to doctor visits.
- n Always know why and how you take your medications, and their names.
- n Be sure you understand the plan of action for your care plan.
- n Say back to your clinicians in your own words what you think they have told you.
- n Arrange to get any recommended lab tests done before a visit.
- n Know who is in charge of your care.

¹ National Patient Safety Foundation's Lucian Leape Institute. Safety Is Personal: Partnering with Patients and Families for the Safest Care. Boston, MA: National Patient Safety Foundation; 2014

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Patient Rights



MUSC Health promotes and supports a patient and family-centered approach to care. This means you and your loved ones are important members of your care team. We depend on you to help us make the best choices about your care.

As a patient at MUSC Medical Center, you have certain rights and protections assured by state and federal law.

These exist to help ensure the quality and safety of your hospital care. You should have received a copy of these rights when you were admitted to the hospital. If you did not receive a copy of your Patient Rights, please speak with a member of your health care team and we will make sure that you receive a copy.

Patient privacy is very important to us. If you choose not to have your room number or telephone number shared with others, let us know. Our care team members are very careful not to share your information without your permission. We encourage you to choose one family member or person to be your “family spokesperson.” This spokesperson can receive updates from your care team and share that information with your extended family and friends.

Patient Visitors



Family is determined by each patient. For you, your close family may include a best friend, grandparent, aunt or partner. This is your choice!

Your family members are encouraged to be present and involved with your care while you are hospitalized. Check with your care team about visiting hours.

Please remember to wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser as you enter and leave patient rooms. Also, follow the special rules when visiting a patient who is on “isolation” to protect everyone from infection.

Patient and Patient Advocates



Your care team members will work together to meet all of your needs. However, if you feel that your questions, concerns or needs have not been met, ask your nurse to connect you with a patient advocate.

If you are concerned about any safety issues or would like to report a hazard or error, please speak with your nurse or physician. We'll do our best to resolve the problem. If you feel that you are not being heard, you may also you may also ask to be connected to a patient advocate.

Liaisons are available from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, to help you. If you reach a voice recording, you may leave a private message and a liaison will call you back. If you need help after business hours, ask a care team member on the floor to call the House Supervisor.

Infection Prevention



Germs that cause infections can be spread in a number of ways. The most common way is by hands.

Removing germs helps protect patients from infections. Hand washing is the single most important thing we can ALL do to prevent the spread of infection.

- n Wash hands with soap and water for 15-20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- n Clean your hands and ask family/visitors to clean their hands each time they enter and leave your room, before eating, and after using the bathroom.
- n Ask care team members if they have washed their hands before providing your care.

Patient Identification



A wrist band with your name and important information was placed on your wrist during admission. Your wristband will be checked or scanned anytime care is delivered or medicines are given to you. You may need other bands to help us keep you safe during your hospital stay. If this applies to you, we will explain the meaning of the other bands. They are a visible reminder to us about special safety needs.

Hospital Care Team Members



(Who We Are) MUSC has some teaching hospitals. During your stay, there will be a team of people working together to coordinate your care. Everyone who works at MUSC is called a Care Team Member.

Your attending doctor (physician) is the person in charge of your overall care while you are in the hospital. Your attending physician may change during your stay, depending on the type of care and services that you need. If your attending physician is not available at any time, another one is assigned to manage your care.

Interns, residents, and fellows may help the attending physician with your care, treatment, and procedure or surgery. They are physicians who have graduated from medical school and are receiving additional training in specialty areas.

Nurses provide care around the clock, including assessment, medication, nutrition and hygiene. Because nurses usually work for a certain unit in the hospital, they also help coordinate your care with other professionals who see patients in different units.

Therapists (Respiratory, Physical, Occupational, and Speech), and **Technicians** (Lab, Patient Care, Radiology) are specially trained members of your care team.

Medical Social Workers help prepare for discharge from the hospital by connecting patients and families with other resources in the community.

Students are individuals who are in medical, nursing, or other health-related schools. A professional supervises students when they assist with patient care.

At MUSC Medical Center care team members may wear uniform colors specific to their role. This practice provides patients and visitors a visual cue and clear identification of who your caregivers are. For example, Registered Nurses wear royal blue and white uniforms and Certified Nursing Assistants or Patient Care Technicians wear black uniforms. To learn more, ask your nurse or any care team member for additional information.

Other examples of Care Team Members

n **Chaplains**

n **Child Life Specialists**

n **Dietary Services**

n **Environmental Services**

n **Guest Relations**

n **Pharmacists**

n **Patient Transporters**

n **Volunteers (including pet therapy dogs and owners)**

If you have questions about your medical care, please ask one of your care team members. If you would like to speak directly with your attending physician please ask your nurse, who will help you contact her/him or one of their partners. You may also contact the nurse manager, the house supervisor, or your attending physician directly by dialing "0" for the operator from your bedside phone.

Everyone involved with your care at MUSC Health is required to wear photo identification (ID) badge. We will introduce ourselves so you can get to know us. If you notice that a person is not wearing an ID badge, please bring it to our attention right away.

Ways to Communicate



Patient Communication Board - The white board on your wall is where your care team members will engage patients and family in patient care. A care team member will update the communication board once a shift with their names and other important information.

Hourly Rounding



A care team member will stop by your room every hour to check on you (every 2 hours during hours of sleep).

They will ask you about:

- n **Your comfort and pain.**
- n **Bathroom needs.**
- n **Any personal items that you may need and move them within reach.**

Rounds

Your attending physician will review your condition with other members of the team and partner with you about your plan of care.

Bedside Shift Change Report

Your nurses will talk to each other and with you as they hand off care from one shift to the next.

You are an important part of conversations about your health care! We welcome you to participate in hourly rounding, team rounds, and bedside shift change reports.

Personal Items



Your care team's top priority is taking care of you. MUSC is not responsible for your personal items or valuables (cell phones, laptops, money, jewelry, and clothing) please:

- n Leave them at home, or
- n Send them home with a loved one once you are admitted, or
- n Use the personal safe (if available) in your room to secure your valuables and money
 - Remember to take with you any items you put in the room safe when you transfer to another room or leave the hospital

These items are not allowed:

- n Guns
- n Alcohol
- n Illegal drugs
- n Knives or other sharp objects



Security In The Hospital

The mission of the Security Department is to enhance the environment of care throughout the medical center by working cooperatively with our staff, patients and visitors to preserve peace, enforce policies, reduce the perception of fear and promote a safe and caring environment.

To accomplish this mission the medical centers employs a diverse cadre of honorably discharged veterans, former law enforcement officers and career security professionals that are focused on providing the best customer service to our care team members, patients, families and visitors.

- n **Safety rounds** – Security Officers proactively patrol all floors, common areas and stairwells in the medical center
- n **Safety and Security Cameras** – are in various areas to watch for safety issues
- n **Visitor Management System** – all visitors are directed to the information desk for processing and obtaining a badge with their picture, date, time and visiting location.
- n **Badge Access Photo ID Cards** – required for all care team members to prominently display so that you know who we are and our role in the medical center.

The cards also provide the care team member with the appropriate access to areas of the medical center.

Medicine Safety



Taking the **right dose** of the **right medicine** at the **right time** in the **right way** for the **right reason** is important. You can help!

- n Give your doctor, nurse or pharmacist a full list of your medicines when you arrive.
- n Tell the doctors and nurses if you are allergic to food, medicines, or other things such as IV contrast dye or latex.
- n All medicine you take in the hospital must be ordered by your doctor. Please send home any medicine you may have brought with you. For safety reasons, medicine cannot be stored in your room.
- n While in the hospital and before you go home, make sure you understand why you are taking each medicine, what the medicine treats, and what side effects you might experience.
- n Make sure the nurse checks or scans your ID band and each medicine before giving it to you.

Before you go home, ask your nurse, doctor, or pharmacist:

- n For a list of all the medications that you should take at home
- n To double-check if you think a medicine is missing from your list
- n If you are worried about a medicine, or have questions

When you pick up your medicine, at one of the MUSC pharmacies or at another retail pharmacy:

- n Make sure it matches your doctor's discharge orders.
- n Ask what the medicine is used for, how to take it, and when to take it (how often, what time of day).
- n Ask what side effects you may experience.
- n Ask for a phone number to call if you experience serious side effects.

Preventing Falls



You may be at risk of falling while you are ill or after surgery. You may feel weak or unsteady due to your illness, procedures or the medicines you are taking. At MUSC we will work with you and your family to keep you safe from falling.

Together, we can prevent falls.

- n Your nurse will ask you questions to decide if you are at a high risk of falling. Answer honestly.
- n A special wrist band and signs will help your care team know if you are at risk of falling.
- n Please call for help before getting up. Do not get out of bed or the chair alone.
- n Sit up with your feet on the floor for one minute before standing.
- n Keep the nurse call bell and personal items within your reach.
- n If you start to feel dizzy or lightheaded, please sit down and call for help.
- n Please sit down while dressing or putting on shoes.
- n Please keep personal assistive devices within reach.
- n Your bed will be in a low position and side rails will be up. If you are at high risk for falling, a bed alarm will be set to notify care team members if you are trying to get out of or have fallen out of bed.
- n We will ask you if you need to use the bathroom.
- n If you are at high risk for falling, one of your care team members will stay with you in the bathroom to help keep you safe.
- n Wear rubber-soled shoes that fit well or non-skid socks when getting out of bed to walk.
- n Ask your family to help keep your room and walkways clear of clutter.
- n Tell us about spills or unsafe conditions.
- n Make sure you have enough light so you can see clearly where to walk.
- n Do not try to walk in a dark room at night.

Before you go home:

- n Falls can be a concern for people at home. If you fall, you may be hurt. You may even have to return to the hospital.
- n You and your family will receive education about your risk of falling, including how some of your medicines may increase your risk.
- n Small changes at home (adding night lights, removing throw rugs, clearing walk-ways) can help you avoid a fall. Ask your nurse for more information on protecting yourself or your loved one from falling at home.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)



Because you may be in bed more than usual while in the hospital, you may develop a condition known as a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). A DVT is a blood clot that usually forms in the veins of your calf or thigh when blood flow slows down.

A clot can be very serious if it breaks off and travels through your bloodstream to your lungs. This is known as a pulmonary embolism (PE), so it is very important that we all do our best to prevent these complications.

Ways to prevent a DVT:

- n Receiving injections such as heparin, Lovenox® (enoxaparin sodium) or Arixtra® (fondaparinux sodium), which help to thin your blood
- n Walking as soon as you safely can
- n Wearing sequential compression devices (SCD) on your legs or feet while you are in the hospital to pump the blood through your legs
- n Drinking enough fluids
- n Doing gentle exercises
- n Wearing compression stockings

If you have any questions or concerns about developing a DVT please contact your doctor or nurse.

Pain Management



There are many different kinds of pain, caused by injury, illness, or surgery. Pain management is an important part of your care. Please **help us help you** by learning how to describe your pain. We will work together to manage your pain and keep you as comfortable as possible.

Food and Nutrition



Eating the right food is important for your recovery.

- n Let your care team members know if you have any food allergies or dietary needs due to religious beliefs.
- n On the menu, there is a brief description of the diets your physician may order for you. If you would like further information on your prescribed diet, please ask your nurse for help.
- n There are foods that may cause your medicines not to work as well. These foods may be limited or omitted from your menu selections.
- n If you are having trouble chewing or swallowing, let a care team member know.

Suicide Risk:



We want to protect the safety of patients who've attempted suicide and patients who express thoughts of suicide. Patients at risk for suicide are closely monitored for their safety. A care team member will examine patient belongings and items brought by visitors for harm risks.

- n If you are a patient with thoughts of suicide, please tell your doctor or nurse.
- n If you are a family member or friend with concerns about a patient's self-harm statements or actions, please tell the patient's doctor or nurse.

Rapid Response Team



The **Rapid Response Team** (RRT) is a special team of doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists that respond to patients in the medical center who may suddenly need more care.

This team may be called by your doctor or nurse to help in your treatment. When the team arrives, you may notice a lot of activity. This is normal. After they have assessed the situation, team members will talk to you and your family about what will happen next.

Smoking and Vaping



Because smoke can cause serious breathing problems for some of our patients, MUSC is a tobacco-free campus - no smoking, chewing, or electronic cigarettes (vaping) allowed.

Please do not smoke anywhere in or around the hospital or any other campus buildings. We will gladly provide help for you to quit smoking.

Community Resources



Pain Medication Disposal

After hospitalization you might go home with pain medication. If you do not take all of your pain medication, it is important to dispose of it properly. Look up local medication take-back locations at <https://apps2.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch>

If you have unused pain medication at home and cannot get to a drop box, crush the unused medication and mix it with household waste such as coffee grinds, dirt, or flour and throw it in the trash.

Falls at Home

Creating a safe environment at home can help prevent falls. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention STEADI initiative offers information on how to prevent falling at home. www.cdc.gov/steadipatient.html provides access to educational material.

Surgery and Tests



You are an important member of your care team. Before any surgery, tests, or treatments we encourage you to ask questions!

- n Ask about **alternative treatment options** other than surgery
- n Ask about the **risks** associated with your surgery
- n Ask **what** will be done in your surgery or treatment
- n Ask **where** your surgery will be done and the **name of the surgeon**
- n Talk with your surgeon about his/her **experience** with the kind of surgery you are going to have
- n On the day of the surgery your doctor or a care team member will mark the **part of your body** where the surgery will happen
- n If you are having a treatment or test, ask the person giving the test or treatment which **part of your body** will be involved.

Hospital Acquired Infections

Hospital acquired infections (**HAI**) are a concern for both patients and care team members.

Central Line Associated Blood Stream Infection (CLABSI):

To avoid a central line (tube placed in a large vein) infection we will:



- n Place a central line only if we must, and remove it as soon as possible.
- n Clean your skin with a germ-killing cleanser before putting in a central line or before surgery.
- n Wear a mask, cap, sterile gown, and/or sterile gloves when placing your central line or changing your central line dressing.
- n Make sure the central line dressing stays clean and dry and covers the site completely.
- n Ask you to wear a mask whenever a central line dressing is changed.

- n Clean the IV opening (or “hub”) with a germ-killing cleanser before using it to draw blood or give you medicine.
- n Decide each day if you still need the central line.

HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Before you get a central line, ask questions. Find out why you need the line and where it will be placed. Learn what steps the hospital is taking to reduce your infection risk. Once the line has been placed, you, your caretakers, and any visitors can help prevent infection by doing the following:

- n **Wash your hands often with soap and water, and use alcohol-based hand cleanser as directed. To clean your hands effectively, follow the guidelines in this handbook. Visitors should wash hands well upon arriving and when they leave.**
- n **Make sure health care staff clean their hands. They should use soap and water or an alcohol based hand cleanser before and after checking the line. Don't be afraid to remind them.**
- n **Keep the line dry. Follow your provider's guidelines for showering. If the dressing does get wet, tell your doctor or nurse right away.**
- n **Don't touch the line. Even when your hands are clean, try not to touch the catheter or dressing.**
- n **Learn the sterile dressing technique if you will be caring for the line at home. The doctor or nurse can show you what to do.**

Surgical Site Infection (SSI):

To avoid a surgical site infection we will:

- n Give you antibiotics before your surgery begins to help fight infection.
- n Ask you to bathe with a special soap or give you a bath with a special soap before surgery.
- n Remove some of your hair (if required) using electric clippers at the site of your surgery just before the start of the procedure.



HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- n **Ask questions. Learn what your hospital is doing to prevent infection.**
- n **If your doctor instructs, shower or bathe with antiseptic soap the night before and the day of your operation. Follow the instructions you are given. You may be asked to use antiseptic cleansing wipes that you don't rinse off.**
- n **If you smoke, stop or cut down. Ask your doctor about ways to quit.**
- n **Take antibiotics only when your healthcare provider tells you to. Using antibiotics when they're not needed can create germs that are harder to kill. Also, finish all your antibiotics, even if you feel better.**

Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infection (CAUTI):



To help prevent these infections, we will:

- n Place a urine catheter (tube into the bladder) only when necessary, and remove it as soon as possible.
- n Keep the urine bag below the level of your bladder.
- n Secure the urine catheter so that it flows correctly.
- n Empty the urine bag regularly and before transport.
- n Decide each day if you still need the urine catheter.

HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO:

You can prevent yourself from getting a CAUTI by doing the following:

- n **Every day ask your health care provider how long you need to have the catheter. The longer you have a catheter, the higher your chance of getting a CAUTI.**
- n **If a caregiver doesn't clean his or her hands and put on gloves before touching your catheter, ask them to do so.**
- n **If you have been taught how to care for your catheter, be sure to wash your hands before and after each session.**

- n **Make sure your bag is lower than your bladder. If it's not, tell your caregiver.**
- n **Don't disconnect the catheter and drain the tube. Doing so allows germs to get into the catheter.**
- n **Cleansing of the genital and perineal areas is very important to help decrease bacteria in areas surrounding the catheter. Ask your doctor what you should use and how often to clean these areas.**

Please ask a care team member if you would like to learn more about preventing HAIs.

Multi-Drug Resistant Organisms



Hospitals pay close attention to certain bacteria or germs that you may come in contact with during your hospital stay. MUSC takes special steps to prevent the spread of bacteria that are not killed with common antibiotics. It is harder to treat these infections if they do happen. Your doctor may perform tests, such as cultures, if you show signs of an infection. The culture will help to select the best antibiotic for you.

If you are found to carry or are infected with a multi-drug resistant organism, we will work together to keep it from spreading. We will:

- n Wear gowns and gloves and wash hands before and after providing care for you.
- n Work with a team of infection prevention and control specialists to prevent the spread of infection.
- n Use special cleaning processes for your room and any equipment used by you during your stay.

The most common resistant bacteria are:

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA):

These bacteria normally live on the skin and in the nose. MRSA usually does not cause you to be sick. However, these bacteria can cause infections of the blood, wounds, and other parts of the body.

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE):

These bacteria are found in the intestines, and are part of the bacteria normally living in your body. These bacteria can cause infections of the urinary tract, blood, and other parts of the body.

Clostridium difficile (C. Diff):

These bacteria are the most common cause of infectious diarrhea in a hospital. You may have C. Diff in your intestines (bowels) with no symptoms. While in the hospital some of the treatments or antibiotics you receive may change the numbers of bacteria that are normally found in your bowels. C. Diff may then grow in your bowels and cause diarrhea.

HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT MULTI-DRUG RESISTANT ORGANISMS:

- n Wash your hands often with warm water and soap.**
 - Clean your whole hand, under your nails, between your fingers, and up the wrists.**
 - Wash for at least 15 to 20 seconds**
 - Rinse, letting the water run down your fingers, not up your wrist.**
 - Dry your hands well. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.**
- n If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol based hand cleanser.**
 - Squeeze about a tablespoon of cleanser into the palm of one hand**
 - Rub your hands together briskly, cleaning the backs of your hands, the palms, between your fingers, and up the wrists.**
 - Rub until the cleaner is gone and your hands are completely dry.**
- n Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered until they have healed.**
- n Avoid contact with the wounds or bandages of others.**
- n Avoid sharing towels, razors, clothing, and athletic equipment.**



Isolation Precautions:

Isolation precautions are put in place when your caregivers have determined there may be a risk of spreading germs to other patients or caregivers. A sign will be placed on your door to tell others how to prevent spreading or getting an infection.



Please ask visitors and care team members to follow the directions on the isolation door sign. Some patients and families don't think it makes sense for your family to wear the isolation equipment when they are around you at home. However, we ask families to wear this equipment to prevent the spread of these germs elsewhere, like in the elevators.

IF THE SIGN SAYS:

Contact Precautions – everyone (family, visitors and care team members) puts on a gown and gloves.

Droplet or Airborne Precautions – everyone wears a face mask.

Ask your nurse if you have questions or want to be shown how to put on a gown, gloves, or mask.

Other important steps to prevent the spread of germs:

- n Ask any visitor who is sick, even with “just a cold,” not to visit you. This may help you and other patients get well faster.
- n Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough into your upper sleeve or elbow.
- n Throw used tissues into a trash can and wash your hands right away with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleanser.

Flu and Pneumonia



Getting pneumonia or the flu can be very serious. MUSC offers the flu and pneumonia vaccines to patients who need them. The pneumonia vaccine is available year round and the flu vaccine is available during each flu season. BE SURE to ask your doctor or nurse about receiving the vaccines before you are discharged!

You may be at risk for developing a pressure injury:



A pressure injury, sometimes called a bedsore, is an injury to the skin and underlying tissue usually caused by pressure. Pressure injuries usually occur on the shoulders, elbows, hips, buttocks, and heels. These areas are found over bony parts of the body that sustain pressure when lying in bed or sitting for long periods of time. Pressure injuries begin as reddened areas, and can damage skin and muscles if not treated promptly.

If you have any of the following conditions, you may have an increased risk for pressure injury:

- n Inability to change positions
- n Loss of bowel and/or bladder control (all the time or just sometimes)
- n Poor nutrition and hydration
- n Lowered mental awareness
- n Other medical conditions such as diabetes mellitus, heart disease, or peripheral vascular disease

Be Active in Your Care!



Reduce your risk of getting a pressure injury. Get your family and health care team involved in pressure injury prevention early and often. Ask your nurse for educational materials related to prevention.

Your care team members will help in these ways:

- n Limiting pressure
- n Reducing friction
- n Taking care of your skin
- n Improving your mobility
- n Providing proper nutrition
- n Addressing incontinence



Your Discharge

Remember, you are an essential part of your health care team. Be sure that your hospital doctor has the names of all your other doctors.

- n When you are discharged your doctor will send a summary of your hospital care and condition to your regular doctors.
- n You may need a follow-up appointment with your regular doctor or the doctor who cared for you while you were in the hospital.

If we are not able to make an appointment for you before discharge, a notice will be sent to your doctor's office to contact you.

- n Your health care team will talk with you about your discharge needs. Nurses and Medical Social Workers help with ordering equipment for home and coordinating any healthcare needs you may have after discharge.

It is important to know that most patients are not completely healed when they are discharged from the hospital. Take time to recover at home and follow up with the care your doctor recommends.

Follow-up Care in the MUSC Clinics



In order to provide care after your discharge from the hospital, your doctor may set up an appointment for you in one of the MUSC outpatient clinics. The same doctors who provide care in the hospital also see patients in the clinics.

You may be given an appointment with the same doctor who took care of you in the hospital, or depending on your follow-up needs, with another doctor.

Thank you for allowing us to partner with you in your healthcare.

The doctor, nurses and all care team members in the outpatient clinics provide excellent care to our patients.

To learn more about all of the services offered throughout the MUSC Health network or to make an appointment, please visit [MUSChealth.org](https://www.musc.edu/health).



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