

Responsibilities

All clients, patients and visitors have rights and responsibilities when accessing health services. You can assist staff to provide a safe level of care by adhering to the following **responsibilities**:

- Inform your doctor if you are getting treatment from another health professional (including alternative therapists).
- Provide information about your own medical history. This includes details of any medications you may be taking (including vitamins), and the side effects of any treatment you are having and any other health concerns you may have.
- Participate in the use of any medical equipment or mechanical / lifting aids as instructed by staff.

Zero Tolerance to violence

All staff and patients have the right to work and be cared for in a safe environment.

As a result, Hunter New England Health has a Zero Tolerance policy in place to protect staff, patients, visitors and health service property from the effects of violent behaviour.

Under this policy, violence and verbal abuse will not be tolerated.

Smoke-free environment

- All clients, patients and visitors are to comply with the NSW Health Smoke-free Workplace Policy, by not smoking in any of the health service's buildings, grounds or vehicles.
- Quit smoking information and counselling support is available from health service staff.

When your child is a patient

Hunter New England Health is committed to providing the best possible care for your child, or a child in your care, including respecting and maintaining their dignity, safety, cultural needs, developmental needs, rights and values.

We know that families play a vital role in supporting children and young people receiving healthcare and our staff work together with parents and families to achieve this. We will include you as part of your child's health care team and will make every effort to ensure that your child feels secure and receives a clear and age appropriate explanation about any service provided, procedure performed, or treatment to be undertaken.

We encourage you to ask questions so that you can understand your Rights and Responsibilities. If at any time you are dissatisfied with your child's care, you can, and are encouraged to, discuss your concerns with a member of your health care team.

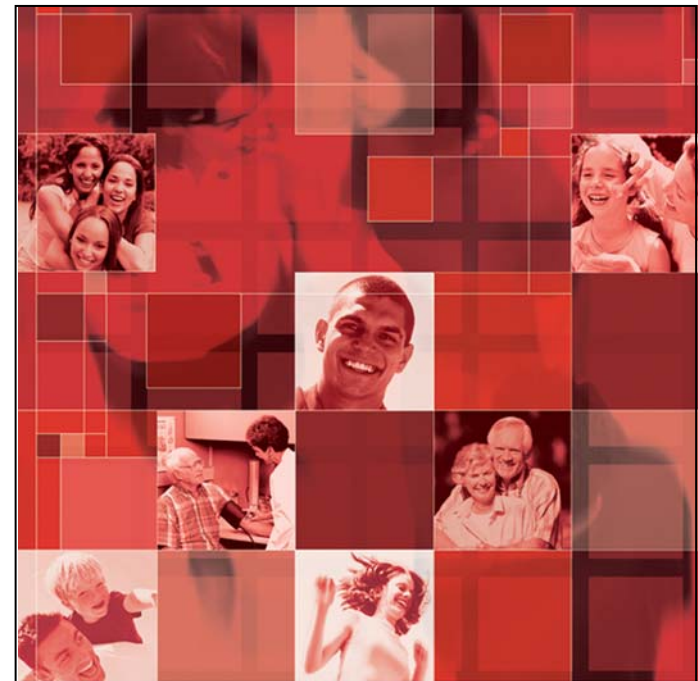
A couple of things to remember when your child is in hospital:

- If you are not the child's biological parents or you do not have "parental responsibility" rights, you need to let us know and advise us who has the authority to consent to medical procedures;
- Just as staff respect the privacy of your family, we ask that you also respect the privacy of other families at the hospital;
- It is important that you provide care for your child only. If another child needs assistance, please call a member of the nursing staff to assist;
- We understand that all families are different – please let us know of any special needs your family has, so that we can try to meet them.

For more information see Kaleidoscope brochure "*Your Rights and Responsibilities*".

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HUNTER NEW ENGLAND
NSW HEALTH

Your Rights and
Responsibilities
as a client, patient or visitor

March 2009

All clients, patients and visitors have rights and responsibilities when accessing health services.

Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of patients and other people using the Australian health system.

Hunter New England Health seeks to actively support these rights and invites your feedback if you think that your rights have not been supported.

Under this Charter, you can expect:

1. To access services to address your health care needs.

2. To receive safe and high quality health services provided with professional care, skill and competence.

For instance, to help prevent hospital-acquired infection, healthcare staff are expected to clean their hands before and after touching every patient.

3. To receive care in a way that shows respect to you and your culture, beliefs, values and personal characteristics.

4. To receive open, timely and appropriate communication about your health care in a way you can understand.

This means being informed about services, treatment options and costs in a clear and open way, including:

- Being given clear explanations about your condition and what to expect during your healthcare before any treatment is carried out;

- Being fully informed about all costs before treatment;
- Having assistance arranged from the free and confidential interpreter services as needed;
- Reading your own medical files if desired.

5. To be included in making decisions and choices about your care and about health service planning.

For instance, this might include:

- Discussing your treatment options, including any significant risks or alternatives before giving your consent to treatment;
- Being told if the proposed treatment is experimental or part of medical research (you can refuse such treatment);
- Asking for treatment to stop at any time (with the exception of involuntary mental health patients);
- Asking for a second opinion (advice from another doctor) about your diagnosis or treatment;
- Leaving hospital at any time (except in the case of some infectious diseases or psychiatric conditions). If you do leave without the hospital agreeing that you are ready, you will be responsible for any injury or illness caused by your own actions.

6. That your personal privacy is maintained and proper handling of your personal health and other information is assured.

This means that:

- the details of your condition and treatment are kept confidential by staff;
- you can choose to not be identified to

callers or visitors, or have any information given to them without your consent;

- you can inform staff if you do not wish to see a visitor.

7. To be able to comment on or complain about your care and have your concerns addressed properly and promptly.

We welcome your feedback, whether it is a compliment or a complaint. All feedback is viewed as an opportunity to improve our services.

If you have any concerns about your treatment or wish to compliment a staff member please feel free to speak to your treating doctor, nurse or healthcare worker. If you feel uncomfortable speaking directly to the staff involved you can lodge a complaint or compliment with the manager of the service or facility concerned.

Alternatively, contact:

Chief Executive
Hunter New England Health
Locked Bag 1, New Lambton NSW 2305
Fax: (02) 4921 4939
Phone: (toll free) 1800 605 172

If you are dissatisfied with the way Hunter New England Health has managed your complaint you can contact the Health Care Complaints Commission, which is independent of the health service.

Health Care Complaints Commission
Locked Bag 18
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Ph: (toll free) 1800 043 159

For further information about the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, please visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au