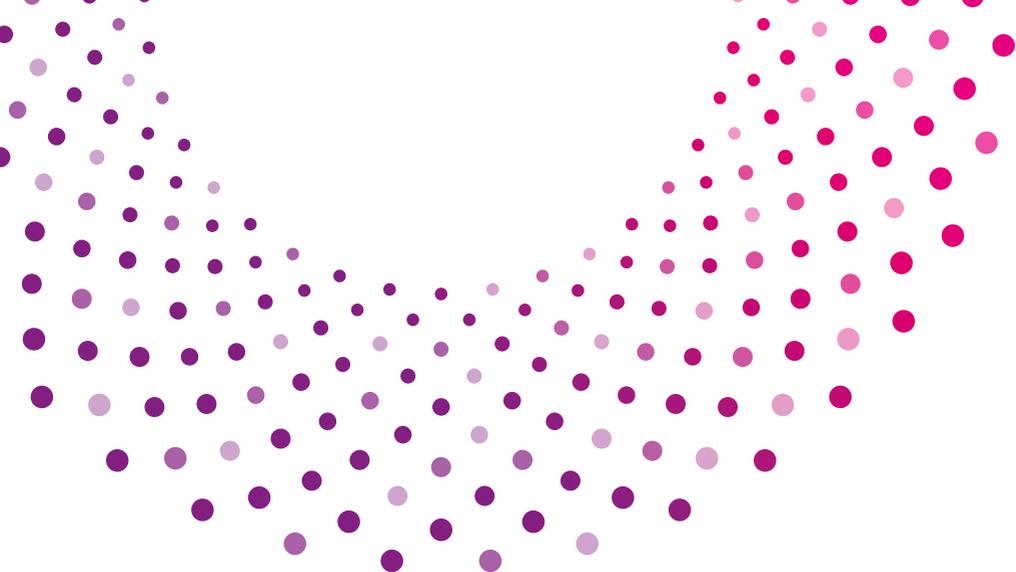




the women's  
the royal women's hospital

# Your stay at the Women's





## Feedback

The Royal Women's Hospital aims to develop health information that is useful for women and their families. We always welcome your comments. If you have anything you wish to tell us about this booklet, please contact the Women's at [rwh.publications@thewomens.org.au](mailto:rwh.publications@thewomens.org.au).

You can also send comments to  
Women's Consumer Health Information  
Royal Women's Hospital Locked Bag 300  
Cnr Grattan St and Flemington Rd  
Parkville VIC 3052

## Disclaimer

This booklet provides general information only. For specific advice about your healthcare needs or your baby's healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this booklet instead of seeing a health professional. If you or your baby require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department.  
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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

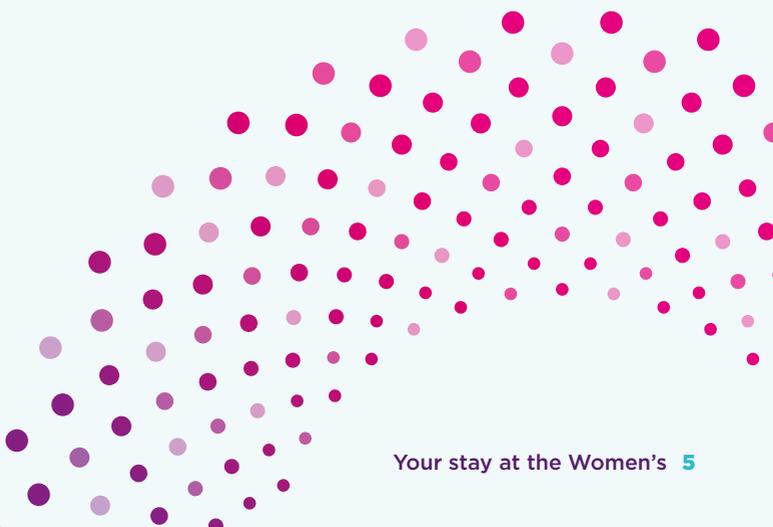
The Royal Women's Hospital acknowledges and pays respect to the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nations, the Traditional Owners of the country on which our sites at Parkville and Sandringham stand and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



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# Welcome

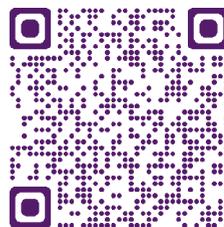
**We are committed to providing the highest standard of service, care and experience to all our patients. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask our staff, we are happy to help you.**

## About this booklet

The Women's recognises the importance of involving patients in their own care and providing clear communication. This booklet aims to provide information about the care and services available at the Royal Women's Hospital.

### For more information about the Women's

Scan QR Code for quick access to the Women's website  
[thewomens.org.au](http://thewomens.org.au)



## Our Vision

Creating healthier futures  
for women and babies

## Our Strategic Directions



We provide  
leading care  
for women  
and newborns



We partner to  
create exceptional  
experiences  
every day



We are the best  
place to work,  
learn and  
contribute



We lead  
and partner  
to influence  
change

## Our Declaration

We are committed to the social model of health

We care for women from all walks of life

We recognise that sex and gender affect health and healthcare

We are a voice for women's health

We seek to achieve health equity

## Our Values



Courage



Passion



Discovery



Respect



# Getting to the Women's

**The Women's is at the corner of Grattan Street and Flemington Road in Parkville.**

## **Traffic changes in Parkville**

There are major works to build Parkville Station, which is part of the Metro Tunnel Project, happening in the hospital precinct. Grattan Street is now closed between Royal Parade and Leicester Street. Parkville Station is planned to open in 2025.

For more information about how this major work impacts your stay at the Women's please visit [metrotunnel.vic.gov.au/construction/parkville](https://metrotunnel.vic.gov.au/construction/parkville)

## **Public transport**

The Women's is well serviced by public transport with tram and bus stops for several routes within easy walking distance of the hospital.

For information regarding train, tram and bus routes and timetables call [1800 800 007](tel:1800800007) or visit [ptv.vic.gov.au/timetables](http://ptv.vic.gov.au/timetables)

## **Taxis**

There is a taxi rank in front of The Royal Melbourne Hospital on Grattan Street.

## **Parking**

Limited underground car parking is available at the Women's main building, accessed from the Flemington Road car park entrance.

Carpark lifts lead up to the main reception, outpatient services or private consulting suites. The car park is operated by Wilsons Parking and is open 6.00am–9.00pm daily.

For more information:  
[wilsonparking.com.au/park/3244](http://wilsonparking.com.au/park/3244)  
[Royal-Women](#)

There are a small number of short-term (30 minute) parking spaces for pick-up and drop-off only at the Lower Ground level, also off Flemington Road.

Limited street meter parking is available in streets surrounding the hospital. Check signs for restrictions.

Bicycle racks are available at the hospital's main entrance (Grattan Street) and the Emergency entrance (Flemington Road).

## **Accessibility**

There are a number of parking bays set aside for patients and visitors with a disability on level B1 of our carpark. There is also a small area for pick-up and drop-off at the Lower Ground entrance.

Wheelchair access is available at the hospital's main entrance on Grattan Street (Ground level) and the Women's Emergency Care entrance on Flemington Road (Lower Ground entrance).

# Find your way around the Women's



## Lower ground

- Emergency and Admissions
- Car parking entrance
- Public toilets



## Ground floor

- Reception/Information desk
- Women's Welcome Centre
- Sacred Space
- Badjurr-bulok Wilam
- Women's Counselling and Support Services
- Consumer Liaison
- Childcare and Early Learning Centre
- Retail and food precinct
- Public toilets
- Payphone



## Level 1

- Women's Health clinics and Pregnancy clinics
- Pregnancy Day Care
- Parent's Room
- Pauline Gandel Women's Imaging Centre
- Pharmacy for hospital patients
- Pathology
- Physiotherapy
- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Public toilets



## Level 2

- Reproductive Services
- Women's private consulting suites
- Frances Perry House private consulting suites
- Public toilets



## Level 5

- Women's Health Ward – 5 North
- Complex Care Unit (CCU)
- Early Pregnancy Assessment Centre
- Public toilets



## Level 3

- Birth Centre and Assessment Centre
- Day Surgery



## Level 6

- Frances Perry House private hospital



## Level 4

- Maternity Wards
- Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU)
- Breastfeeding Service
- Hospital garden courtyard
- Public toilets



## Level 7

- Women's Research Precinct
- Frances Perry House private hospital
- University of Melbourne Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Public toilets

Wurundjeri  
and  
Boonwurrung  
Country



# Services at the Women's

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families

Badjurr-Bulok Wilam (meaning 'Home of many women' in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri Peoples) provides a drop-in place for patients who identify themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and their families. Non-indigenous patients with indigenous partners are also encouraged to access Badjurr-Bulok Wilam for support. This may include support to access the hospital's services, information, referral to services and practical assistance.

Badjurr-Bulok Wilam provides a resting place where you and your family can sit, yarn, and have a cuppa with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Hospital Liaison Officer (AHLO). Badjurr-Bulok Wilam is on the Ground floor right next to the main entrance of the hospital.



## Mental health services

The Women's has a mental health team that provides assessment and treatment options for our current patients.

Referral to our mental health service may be for:

- a pre-existing mental illness
- anxiety or depression related to pregnancy and childbirth
- bonding and attachment problems with newborn babies
- support and counselling for issues related to:
  - significant health problems
  - gynaecology including menopause
  - ageing.

The mental health team provides a range of individual and group-based treatments.

Psychiatry and psychology outpatient services are generally provided in the Pregnancy and Women's Health Clinics. Telehealth appointments are also available.



## Family violence support



The Women's has a suite of resources, services and information to support staff to identify, respond to and prevent family violence.

We are here to support you. Please ask our staff or visit our website: [thewomens.org.au/health-information/violence-against-women](http://thewomens.org.au/health-information/violence-against-women)

## Spiritual care, seating areas and quiet spaces

Spiritual Care at the Women's is a free confidential service, offering emotional and spiritual support to all patients, their family and friends, and staff at the hospital. Representatives from various traditions may be available. Please ask a member of our spiritual care team which representatives are available, as they do change from time to time.

### Contact details

Monday to Friday  
8.30am-4.30pm (Ground floor).  
**T (03) 8345 3016**

### Sacred Space

The Women's offers two multi-faith Sacred Spaces for patients and families to use for reflection and prayer. There are sacred texts as well as a prayer journal for recording thoughts. A member of the spiritual care team can assist if visitors wish to light candles and incense. Memorial events can be arranged for families and staff who wish to come together. See the noticeboard at the corridor entrance for weekly activities on offer (Ground floor).

### Seating areas

We offer a number of comfortable seating areas around the atrium and near the main entrance of the hospital (Ground floor).



### Breastfeeding rooms

The Women's is a baby-friendly hospital, and we encourage breastfeeding wherever and whenever it feels comfortable to do so. There are also breastfeeding rooms available for visitors and patients near the Pregnancy Clinics (Level 1).

### Internal garden courtyard

We have a garden courtyard for patients and visitors. This can give you a break and some fresh air away from the wards and nurseries (Level 4).



## Women's Welcome Centre

The Welcome Centre is a warm and inviting space to relax, feed your baby, charge your phone, join our library, or pick up some women's health information. The Welcome Centre team supports patients, families and other visitors to access and navigate our hospital and its services.



The Welcome Centre team can:

- help you find information on women's health issues in English and other languages
- assist visitors to the Centre to use our specialist library. You can browse and borrow a book or DVD or take a brochure
- assist you in booking Childbirth Education classes and hospital [tours](#).



### Contact details

Monday to Friday

9.00am-5.00pm (Ground floor)

**T** [\(03\) 8345 3037](tel:0383453037) or [1800 442 007](tel:1800442007) (rural callers)

## Childcare and Early Learning Centre

Occasional care is available for children, aged 6 weeks to 6 years, of patients' attending appointments at the Women's. Places are limited, so booking in advance is recommended.

The Childcare and Early Learning Centre is a child safe environment and is committed to the protection and promotion of the health, safety, and wellbeing of children.

### Contact details

Monday to Friday

9.00am-5.00pm

(Ground floor)

**T** [\(03\) 8345 2099](tel:0383452099)

**E** [Childcare.Centre@thewomens.org.au](mailto:Childcare.Centre@thewomens.org.au)



## Ground floor food and retail area

In this area you will find a number of shops and services. These include:

- Australia Post
- Chemist: medicines and gifts
- Cafés: Zouki cafeteria and Isabella Café
- Convenience store: Newspapers, magazines, gifts, snack food and confectionery
- Florist
- The Chocolate Box
- Gifts are also sold occasionally at the Volunteer desk.



## Health Hub

Health Hub is a secure, easy to use and interactive platform that can be accessed from your phone, tablet, or computer.

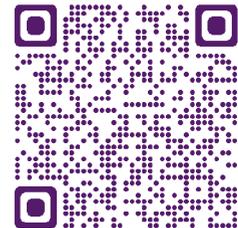
It allows patients to:

- see details of upcoming appointments
- change or cancel appointments (with some exceptions)
- see information about recent visits
- find test results (usually available within 4 days)
- check prescribed medicines and request repeat prescriptions
- view details of your healthcare team
- nominate someone to access Health Hub on their behalf.

If you're receiving care at these neighbouring hospitals – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, The Royal Melbourne Hospital or The Royal Children's Hospital – you'll be able to see those details too.

You can download the Health Hub app from the App Store and Google Play.

For more information visit [health-hub.org.au](http://health-hub.org.au) or scan this QR code.





# Your stay



## Need an interpreter?

If your first language is not English and you would like help talking with your healthcare team, we have professional interpreters who can help.

Ask for an interpreter, including an Auslan interpreter, when you organise your hospital stay.

You can also ask your midwife or nurse if you would like an interpreter.

## Personal belongings



We suggest you keep only a small amount of money with you and that your valuables be sent home. If this is not possible, always keep any valuable items with you or locked securely in the safe in your room.

Please let the nurse or midwife know if you have brought any electrical equipment with you to use during your stay.

## Visiting hours



Visitors are welcome at the Women's.  
Check our website for any restrictions that may apply.

- Visiting hours (general): 2.30pm–8.00pm
- Visiting hours for partners: 8.00am–8.30pm

For the comfort, health, and safety of our patients, we ask visitors to respect our visiting hours. If your family, friends, or carers feel ill, have an infection or have recently been unwell, ask them not to visit until they have fully recovered.

Alternative visiting hours may be negotiated with the nurse-in-charge in special circumstances.

### Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

- Visiting hours (general): 2.30pm–8.00pm
- Visiting hours for parents are unrestricted

We ask that no more than three people (including the baby's parents) are at a baby's bedside at any one time. Family and friends (including children) may visit babies in intensive or special care according to the wishes of the parents.

Written permission from the parents is required for family members or friends to visit in the absence of parents.

## Visitors' toilets

Visitors' toilets are in the lift foyers on each floor or near the main reception desk.



## Meals



Patient meals are served at the following approximate times:

- Breakfast: 8.00am
- Lunch: 12.30pm
- Dinner: 6.00pm

You will be given a menu to complete each day that is appropriate for your dietary needs.

**Please let the nursing and meal staff know if you have any allergies or specific dietary requirements.**

## Your bedside console

Your bedside console has buttons that allow you to call the nurse or midwife, turn on a light and control the TV. It also has a speaker for the TV and radio.

Your nurse or midwife will explain how to use it and other call devices located throughout your room.

Please be considerate of fellow patients when you are watching or listening to the TV or radio.

### Nurse/midwife call system



## Audio and visual recording



You're welcome to film or record in the hospital when it is safe and appropriate to do so. However, there are times when taking photographs, filming or recording can affect your care, breach the privacy of other patients, or breach the privacy of our staff members.

You don't need permission to photograph, film or record yourself or a loved one while in the hospital as long as you don't photograph, film, or record a member of staff or any other patient or visitor. This includes capturing the voice or image of anyone nearby.

You can photograph, film, or record clinical care – such as the birth of a baby – if you have permission of all staff members involved in the clinical care. You must stop photographing, filming, or recording if asked to do so.

Please do not post online or on any social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.) any material featuring Women's staff without their permission.

Ask a staff member if you are uncertain when it is appropriate to take a photo, film, or record.

## Telephones



Outside callers can call your bedside phone by ringing patient enquiries on (03) 8345 3030. They can ask the operator to speak with a patient and give your name. The operator will then transfer the call to you.

You can use your mobile phone while you are in the hospital, although please maintain one metre from any medical equipment. Please be considerate of others when using your mobile phone or tablet.

Free phone charging facilities are available in the Women's Welcome Centre on the Ground floor. A payphone is available in the Ground floor foyer.

## Discharge times



There are two discharge times each day:

- Morning discharge: 9.30am
- Afternoon discharge: 3.30pm



# Your care

## Why do we confirm who you are?

The Women's is committed to ensuring your safety. To assist with this, we need to confirm your identity to make sure you or your baby are safe and receiving the correct intended treatment. To do this we will check your identity multiple times throughout your stay.

On each occasion, we will check you or your baby's:

- full name
- address
- date of birth.

Then we will check this against your:

- health record
- patient identification bands (wrist bands).



## What you can do

- Let us know if you or your baby's name, address or date of birth are incorrect or have changed.
- If something does not look right, or you hear something that is wrong, please let us know immediately by speaking to your nurse.

Our electronic medical record system allows you to add your preferred or chosen name and gender identity to your medical record. Once added, your healthcare team will aim to use your chosen name throughout your patient journey.

Sometimes, we may still need to use your legal name (the name on your legal identity documents). For example, we must use your legal name to make safe patient identification.



## Need an interpreter?

You can request an interpreter, including an Auslan interpreter, at any time. Please ask our staff to arrange this for you.

## Handover of your health information



During your stay a number of different staff are involved in your care including doctors, midwives, nurses, pharmacists, and allied health professionals. All these staff access your health information. When staff share information about you it is called a clinical handover.

Handover will sometimes occur at your bedside. You and your partner are invited to participate if you would like to. This is a good opportunity to clarify information and ask questions about your care. If you would prefer not to have your care discussed at the bedside, please let the staff know.

If information or instructions are unclear or confusing, you can ask:

- for the information to be written down for you
- to have the information repeated when you have a family member or carer present, and they can also ask questions
- for an interpreter to help you.

**If anything discussed is not correct or you don't understand, please let us know and ask us to explain.**



## Tell us about your medicines

Medicines are an important part of your treatment. When you are admitted to hospital, we will ask you what medicines you take. Knowing about your medicines will help us make the right decisions about your care.

It is important to mention all medicines. These include prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and natural therapies. Tell us what you take and what works for you.

Tell us if you are using:

- medicines from a pharmacist or supermarket
- liquid medicine like cough syrup
- natural therapies like herbs and tinctures
- vitamins
- medicated creams or patches
- puffers or inhalers
- vaginal products
- injections
- eye drops, ear drops or nasal sprays
- any other drugs or substances.

You can also use Health Hub to tell us what medicines you are taking and if you have any allergies. See [page 16](#) for more about Health Hub.

To help manage your medicines:

- Bring all your medicines to hospital.
- Keep an up-to-date list of your medicines and show it to staff when you're admitted.
- Ask for an updated list of your medicines before you go home. This will be helpful for your local doctor and pharmacist.
- Tell us if you've ever had allergies or bad reactions to medicines.
- While in hospital, don't be afraid to ask what medicines you are receiving and why.

Your hospital pharmacist will regularly review your medicine chart and work with your doctors to be sure medicines prescribed are appropriate and safe to use. If you are discharged and require medicines, you will be given information about each medicine.

Please show staff your current Medicare card, plus any other concession cards, e.g., pension or Health Care Card, DVA card, Safety Net entitlement card from your local pharmacy.



### Pharmacy (Level 1):

Monday to Friday: 8.30am–5.00pm

You will need to pay for any medicines you are given to take home. These can be paid for at the Cashiers Office (Ground floor).



## Preventing infection

Any patient receiving healthcare is at risk of getting an infection, either through invasive procedures or because of their illness. Our hospital staff are trained to use strategies to reduce this risk.

Patients and visitors also have a role in preventing infection in hospitals.

The best way to prevent infection is by making sure your hands are clean. Even if your hands look clean, you should use alcohol-based hand rub (hand gel) when in hospital. If your hands look dirty, you should wash them with soap and water.

You should always clean your hands:

- after going to the toilet
- before touching food or eating
- after sneezing, coughing, or disposing of tissues
- before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- before and after touching a dressing.

To protect everyone, visitors or carers must:

- not visit if they feel unwell; have a cold, rash, have been vomiting or have diarrhoea



- use the alcohol-based hand rub when they first come in, when they enter patient areas, and when they leave
- follow any special precautions that are asked of them. Sometimes visitors may be asked to wear a mask or gown. This may be to protect either them or you
- not to touch your dressings, drips, or other equipment around your bed.

If you or your loved one have any drips or drains, those caring for you will explain why they are needed, the extra care required to prevent infection, and when you can expect them to be removed. Information about wound care will also be provided.

**Our staff are happy to be asked “Have you cleaned your hands”.**



## If you need a blood transfusion

A blood transfusion is the transfer of blood from one person to another. In rare cases, you may need a transfusion because of your condition or the treatment you are receiving.

Before you consent to a blood transfusion, ask why you need it and what are the benefits and risks. If you don't understand why a transfusion is necessary, don't be afraid to ask questions or for more information.

**Australia's blood supply is extremely safe. All donated blood is tested for blood-borne diseases like HIV, hepatitis, and syphilis. The risk of contracting any type of infection from a blood transfusion is very low.**

Most people who receive a blood transfusion do not experience any side effects and any reaction is usually mild.

The most common reactions to a blood transfusion are:

- fever
- rash
- itching.

Very rarely, severe reactions can be life-threatening. Remember to tell your doctor if you have ever had a reaction to a blood transfusion.

So that your blood transfusion can be given as safely as possible there are strict procedures staff will follow. This involves confirming your identity.

You will be asked for your full name and date of birth and your identification band will be checked every time:

- you have a blood sample taken
- before your blood transfusion.

## Pain relief

Severe pain after surgery or the birth of a child was once something people thought they had to put up with. With the availability of new methods of pain relief, it is recognised that good pain relief can help you:

- be more comfortable while you heal
- recover more quickly and perhaps leave hospital sooner.

It is very important to us that your pain is well controlled.

### Who is involved?

A range of healthcare professionals may work with you to control your pain. They include nurses, midwives, doctors, pharmacists, and physiotherapists.

The Women's also has an Acute Pain Service (APS) staffed by a team of nurses, midwives and anaesthetists with specialised knowledge and experience in the treatment of acute pain.

You are also important in the management of your pain. Only you know what you are feeling and so you are the best person to decide if you need more pain-relieving medicines.

Letting your nurse, midwife or doctor know when you have pain will allow them to work out what is causing your pain and choose the best form of pain relief and treatment.

### How painful is it?

There are several methods that can be used for rating or describing your pain:

- **scoring** your pain between 1 and 10. No pain is scored as 0 and the worst pain you could ever imagine is 10
- rating your pain as either **no pain, mild pain, moderate pain, severe pain**
- describing the **type** of pain you have. Some words for pain include sharp; hot; stinging; cramping; dull; burning; tingly; numb; shooting; stabbing; aching; throbbing.

It is very important to tell the nurse, midwife, or doctor if, after taking your pain medicine, your pain does not go away. You may need more pain medicine at different times of the day, for example when showering or doing your physiotherapy exercises.



If you have had all your prescribed pain medicines and you are still feeling sore, ask to see your doctor. If you are still in pain after seeing your doctor, you can ask to see someone from the APS.



## Preventing falls

As a patient you have a higher risk of falls. Falling is more likely when you:

- are unwell
- have low blood pressure
- are taking certain medicines
- are pregnant
- have just given birth
- have had a general, epidural or spinal anaesthetic
- have had an operation
- have been in bed for a while
- are in an unfamiliar place
- have poor eyesight.

There are several ways to avoid falls:

- Always wear supportive, flat, non-slip shoes or slippers (don't walk in socks or stockings).
- Bring your eyeglasses and walking aids to the hospital.
- Let staff know if there are things on the floor in your way, or if a spill occurs.
- Make sure you can reach your call button easily.
- At night, turn your light on before getting out of bed.
- Take your time getting up from a chair or out of bed.

The following information is particularly for patients who have recently given birth, had an epidural or spinal anaesthetic, must spend long periods in bed, or have lost a lot of blood.

- Check with your nurse or midwife before getting out of bed.
- Ask staff to help you when you get out of bed.
- When you have a shower, use a shower chair to sit on.
- After an epidural or a spinal anaesthetic, wait until you have full leg sensation and strength before trying to stand or walk.
- Let staff know if you are feeling unsteady on your feet.

How to prevent your baby from falling:

- Put your baby to sleep on their back in their cot next to your bed.
- Stay with your baby when they are on a surface such as a change table or bed.
- Put your baby in their cot if you are sleepy or you have taken strong medication for pain relief. If you fall asleep holding your baby, they can fall from your arms.



## Are you or your baby becoming unwell?

If you feel that you are becoming unwell or you notice your baby is getting sick, tell a member of staff immediately or ring the nurse/midwife call bell.

If there is no response and you are still feeling unwell or concerned about you or your baby's health, phone 2999 on your bedside phone.

A senior staff member will respond and assess you.

If you are a visitor and you notice a patient's health is getting worse – please tell a member of staff.



### Urgently tell the nurse, midwife, or doctor if your baby:

- stops breathing or turns blue
- has a fit/convulsion/seizure
- cannot be woken
- is not taking any notice of loud noises, a bright light shone in their eyes or a gentle pinch on the arm.

### Inform the nurse, midwife, or doctor if your baby:

- In the **first 24 hours** of life:
  - has not fed for more than 6 hours
  - has not had a wet and/or dirty nappy
  - has yellow-looking skin.

You should also tell them if your baby's:

- **arm**, eye, leg, and body movements appear twitchy or jerky
- **body**, head, neck, arms, and legs appear floppy
- **breathing** is fast, and they make grunting noises
- **cry** is unusual (a weak, high-pitched, moaning, or painful cry)
- **poo** (stool/faeces) has any blood in it
- **skin** seems very pale or is turning yellow
- **tummy** (stomach) or the bottom of their chest draws in with each breath
- **vomit** is not clear or not milk or lemon-coloured or they are vomiting a lot

or if your instinct tells you that something is wrong.



We are here to help you

**If you're worried,  
we're worried**



Nurse/midwife  
call (green)

**Press the  
call button**

**OR**



**Speak to a  
staff member**

**If you are still worried**

**Dial 2999**



## Pressure injuries

A pressure injury, also known as a bed sore or ulcer, can form when you spend a long time sitting or lying in the same position.

You can get pressure injuries anywhere on your body, but you are more likely to get them in places where you are bonier and have very little padding, for example:

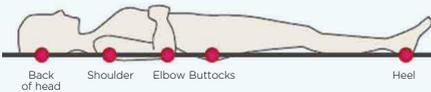


Diagram courtesy of Clinical Excellence Commission, State of New South Wales *Pressure Injury Prevention*

Early signs that you are getting a bed sore, or pressure injury are:

- tingling and/or numbness
- pain.

Please let your nurse know if you experience these symptoms.

## What you can do to prevent a pressure injury

- Move, move, move
  - Whether you are lying in bed or sitting in a chair, keeping active and changing your position frequently is the best way of avoiding a pressure injury.
  - If you are too sore or unable to move yourself, let the staff know.
  - Special equipment such as air mattresses, cushions and booties may be used to reduce the pressure in particular places.
- Look after your skin
  - Keep your skin and bedding dry. Let staff know if your clothes or bedding are damp.
  - Use a mild soap and moisturise dry skin.
- Eat a healthy and nutritious diet.

## Advance care planning

If you are very unwell, and not able to communicate your preferences for care to others, who would you want to speak for you? What healthcare decisions would you want them to make?

Writing down your values and preferences in an advance care plan or directive, is a good way to let people know what is most important to you.

For more information on advanced care planning please ask our staff. If you already have an Advanced Care Directive, please inform staff, and provide us with a copy.



# Your healthcare rights

The Women's supports the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

The **Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights** describes what you can expect when receiving health care in Australia.



PUBLISHED MAY 2020

**AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION**  
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

For more information,  
ask a member of staff or visit  
[safetyandquality.gov.au/your-rights](https://safetyandquality.gov.au/your-rights)



## Your rights

As a patient at the Women's, you have the right to:

- make a complaint
- be treated with respect and dignity
- receive treatment and care in a safe environment
- privacy and confidentiality for your personal and health information, except where the law permits this to be disclosed
- ask questions about your condition and treatment options or seek a second opinion
- be involved in decisions about your treatment or care
- refuse treatment and services
- have a support person with you where possible
- ask for an interpreter
- receive a culturally sensitive service
- choose to receive care as a public or private patient
- see your health records and ask for information to be corrected if it is wrong.

Try to:

- tell everybody involved in your care what you need
- tell staff if you have a problem
- understand your treatment and ask questions if you don't
- give staff accurate information about your health and your present treatment
- tell hospital staff if your condition changes
- be considerate of staff and other patients and ask your visitors to do the same.

## Informed consent

Whenever you or your baby need to have medical treatment, you are normally asked to give your consent. You may be asked to sign a form or give your consent verbally.

Informed consent is when you understand your condition and agree to the treatment that is being offered to you.

Before you give your consent, make sure you fully understand:

- why you or your baby are having the treatment or the procedure
- what is involved
- the risks of any treatment or procedure, as well as the risk of not having treatment
- what the alternatives are.

### **Ask for an interpreter if you need one.**

You have the right to ask questions, to ask for a second opinion and to refuse treatment if you wish.

- If you don't understand anything your healthcare team tells you, ask them to explain it again.
- Ask for written information to discuss with others and refer to when making decisions.
- Repeat back to staff what they have said to you. This will help them to know if you have understood their advice.

It can be difficult to feel 'fully informed' about procedures or treatments for you or your baby. Having some information may help you feel more comfortable and involved in decisions about you or your baby's care.



# Tell us what you think

## Compliments, complaints, feedback, suggestions

We welcome your comments, both positive and negative, about all aspects of your care at the Women's. This helps us to continually improve the quality and safety of care we provide.

We aim to always provide our patients with the best possible care. If this is not your experience, you have the right to express your concerns or make a complaint.

**Please discuss any complaints or concerns that you have, no matter how big or small, with the staff who are caring for you.**

Usually, matters can be resolved immediately with your care team. If not, and you would like further assistance, you, your partner, or your support person can contact our Consumer Liaison team.

## Contacting a Consumer Liaison Officer

You can contact a Consumer Liaison Officer while you are in hospital, or when you go home. It may take weeks or months for you to decide that you would like to feedback a compliment, make a complaint, or express your concerns. The consumer liaison officers are here to listen when you feel ready.

### Contact details

Monday to Friday:  
9.00am–4.00pm (Ground floor)  
Excludes public holidays  
**T** [\(03\) 8345 2290](tel:(03)83452290)  
or [\(03\) 8345 2291](tel:(03)83452291)  
**E** [Consumer.Liaison@thewomens.org.au](mailto:Consumer.Liaison@thewomens.org.au)

## What happens when I contact the Consumer Liaison team with my feedback?

The Consumer Liaison Officer can offer you support by:

- confidentially discussing any concerns that you have, which may include issues with a service, staff member, care, or treatment
- investigating your concerns
- helping you to resolve a problem.

If you make a complaint, it is important to understand that:

- details are not included in your medical record
- it will not affect your care or treatment
- you will not be made to feel unwelcome
- issues are only discussed with relevant staff
- the way your feedback is investigated will always be discussed with your first.

## What can I do if I am still not happy?

Problems are usually best addressed when and where they happen. If you are not happy with our response, the Health Complaints Commissioner is an independent agency available to anyone who has a complaint about a health service provider in Victoria.

**T** [1300 582 113](tel:1300582113) (toll free)  
**Online** [hcc.vic.gov.au/](http://hcc.vic.gov.au/)





# Going home

Before you leave the hospital, make sure you have:

- all your belongings
- all your medicines
- any X-rays or ultrasounds that you may have brought in
- your next appointment booking
- a medical certificate if you need one.

## **We will give you**

- A letter about your admission to give to your local doctor.
- An updated list of your medicines before you go home.

## **Need more information?**

Ask your midwife or nurse if there is written information available that will help you to know about your condition or treatment.

You can also visit our website where you will find information on a range of health topics.

[thewomens.org.au/health-information](http://thewomens.org.au/health-information)

## If you have had an operation

The time it takes to recover from a major operation is different for each person. We expect that it will take between six and eight weeks.

### Be aware of signs of infection

Although infections are rare, the following symptoms may be a sign of infection:

- sudden hot flushes or sweating
- high temperatures above 38°C
- sudden onset of pain that is not relieved by over-the-counter painkillers.

If you experience any of these symptoms, or there are any other aspects of your health you are worried about, please see your local doctor or come to the Women's Emergency Care.



### Going home with a new baby

If you are worried or concerned something is wrong with your baby:

- Call the Maternal and Child Health Line on [13 22 29](tel:132229) 24 hours, 7 days a week
- Call 24-hour Nurse-on-Call on [1300 60 60 24](tel:1300606024)
- See your local doctor (GP)
- Attend a hospital emergency department.

For urgent assistance, call [000](tel:000)



## Healthy eating can help your recovery

Healthy eating is important, especially during pregnancy and breastfeeding, when recovering from surgery or when you are unwell and not eating enough to meet your needs.

These tips can help:

- Be aware of signs that your nutrition is at risk. These include a decrease in appetite, not enjoying your food, eating less, noticing your clothes are looser or that you have lost weight.
- Eat a variety of foods each day. Include meat or alternatives such as fish, chicken or pulses, dairy foods, wholegrains, fruits and vegetables.
- If your appetite is poor, eat small amounts more often over the day.
- Ask for help if you are struggling with your meals while in hospital. Our dietitians can provide extra help and may suggest special supplements if your food intake is poor.

- If you have just had a baby, nutrition plays an important role in the health and development of your baby.



- Eat well as a family. Eat together as often as you can, include a wide variety of foods and involve your children in meal planning so that they take an interest in their food.

**It's not always easy. Life can be busy and stressful, and it can be hard to make healthy eating a priority, especially if money is limited or you don't have a regular place to live.**

Please let us know if this is a problem for you. We can help with simple meal ideas, budget food ideas, and even link you into other supports if required.



# Be involved at the Women's

**There are always opportunities to be involved - we'd love to hear from you.**

## Participate

You are invited to become involved by:

- being part of our committees, working groups, and focus groups
- helping us develop and review our health information
- providing feedback via online surveys.

If you are interested in partnering with us, contact the Community Engagement Coordinator.

**T** [\(03\) 8345 3983](tel:0383453983)

**E** [community.engagement@thewomens.org.au](mailto:community.engagement@thewomens.org.au)

## Volunteers

Volunteers at the Women's contribute to creating exceptional experiences for our patients and their families, offering their skills and energy where and when it is needed most.

**As a Women's volunteer, you will complement our clinical and support services with your knowledge, enthusiasm, empathy, and generosity.**

For more information contact the Volunteer Program Lead

**T** [\(03\) 8345 2078](tel:(03)83452078)

**E** [volunteers@thewomens.org.au](mailto:volunteers@thewomens.org.au)

## Find us on social media



The Royal Women's Hospital



@theroyalwomens (Instagram)



@thewomens (Twitter)

The Women's offers a range of health information in English and other community languages.

Information is available on the Women's website:

[thewomens.org.au](http://thewomens.org.au)

## Language link

በርስዎ ቋንቋ መረጃ ለማግኘት በድረገጻችን ላይ ይጎብኙ

للحصول على المعلومات بلغتكم زوروا موقعنا الإلكتروني

用您說的語言瞭解詳情，請瀏覽我們的網站

Για πληροφορίες στη γλώσσα σας επισκεφθείτε την ιστοσελίδα μας

अपनी भाषा में जानकारी प्राप्त करने के लिए हमारी वेबसाइट पर जाइए

Per informazioni nella vostra lingua visitate il nostro sito web

Macluumaad intaas ka badan oo af Somali ah booqo websaytkayaga

Kendi dilinizde bilgi almak için web sitemizi ziyaret edin

Để biết thông tin bằng ngôn ngữ của quý vị, hãy truy cập trang mạng của chúng tôi

**[thewomens.org.au](http://thewomens.org.au)**

**Women's health  
is important.  
Read our health  
information.**

Please visit:

**[thewomens.org.au](http://thewomens.org.au)**



**the women's**  
the royal women's hospital  
victoria australia