

Wellington Health Care Alliance (WHCA)
Patient and Visitor Guide



Groves Memorial Community Hospital
Palmerston and District Hospital
Louise Marshall Hospital



Welcome

Admission to hospital can be a difficult and stressful time for patients and their families. We hope this handbook answers some of your questions and provides you with the information you require. Please ask your health care team if you have any remaining questions.

Thank you to the members of the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) for your help developing this valuable communication tool.

Who We Are

We are three rural acute care hospitals providing a range of surgical, inpatient, outpatient and emergency services. The WHCA provides a strong, consistent voice for rural health care.

Groves Memorial Community Hospital (GMCH) – Fergus site

Palmerston District Hospital (PDH) – Palmerston site

Louise Marshall Hospital (LMH) – Mount Forest site

Our Vision:

Rooted in Wellness - Growing Together - Cultivating Health

Our Mission:

Together, elevating quality to achieve excellent care, empowering all to thrive on our journey of wellness

Our Values:

Teamwork, **R**espect, **A**ccountability, **C**ompassion, **K**indness

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Information in healthcare is constantly changing and may change between printings of this handbook.

Please refer to the online edition of this handbook for the most up-to-date information.

www.gmch.ca

www.nwhc.ca

Your Well-being

Your Safety

The *Ontario Patient Safety Tips Campaign* encourages you to take an active role in your health.

Help us to help you!

Be involved in your health care.
Speak up if you have questions or concerns about your care.

Speak with a member of your health care team about your past illnesses and your current health condition.

Bring all your medicines with you when you go to the hospital.

If you have ever had an allergic or bad reaction to any medicine or food, please speak with a member of your healthcare team.

Make sure you know what to do when you go home from the hospital.

Created by the Ontario Hospital Association and Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

Reducing the Risk of Transmitting Infection

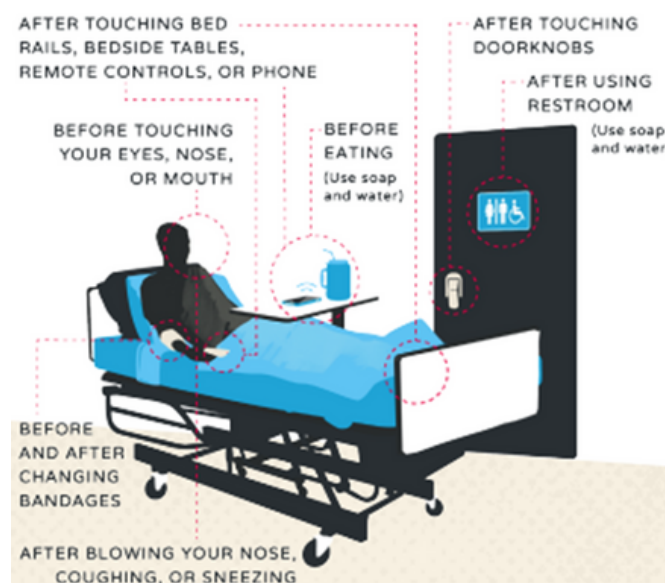
You and your visitors may come in contact with different types of serious germs. The Routine and Additional Precautions may reduce this risk.

Routine Precautions:

Your healthcare team strives to reduce the risk of transmitting infection for all individuals in the hospital all the time through routine precautions.

Cleaning your hands is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection:

- Cleaning your hands often can protect you from getting an infection and prevent the spread of germs to others, especially after using washroom and before eating.
- When your hands are visibly soiled or when germs are the cause of gastrointestinal infections, soap and water are preferred.
- When your hands are not visibly soiled, hand sanitizer is the preferred tool. Rub your hands together until they are dry (15 seconds).
- You can also ask your healthcare worker if they have washed their hands before providing care!



Reducing the Risk of Transmitting Infection (continued)

Additional Precautions:

Additional Precautions are in place when patients are experiencing symptoms for specific medical illness or infection.

- Patients requiring Additional Precautions may receive testing and/or treatment related to a specific medical illness or infection. Until the risk of transmitting infection is resolved or understood, these precautions will remain in place.
- Signs may be posted in patient rooms with terms such as Contact, Contact Plus, Enhanced Contact, Droplet/Contact, Enhanced Droplet/Contact, or Airborne Precautions. A combination of these may be initiated.
- Ask your healthcare provider to explain what precautions may apply for your admission.
- Staff who enter a patient room are required to follow all Additional Precautions.
- Visitors may be asked to wear extra personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, eye protection, gown) if a patient requires Additional Precautions. If gloves are worn, hands must be cleaned before and after use.



Look for signage to help guide you and instruct you on additional precautions.



STOP

Visitors: Talk to a staff person before going into this room.

Falls Prevention

Your clinical condition may make you feel weak and off-balance, which can increase your risk of falling.

Help us to help you!

If you need help, use your call bell for assistance to get up.

Wear non-slip slippers or shoes.

Get up slowly.

Before standing, sit at the edge of the bed for a few minutes.

If you feel weak or dizzy, do not get up.

Make sure you have a clear path to your chair or bathroom.
Consider any intravenous poles or tubing you may be using.

Use any walking aids or supports available to you.

Eat healthy and stay hydrated.

Incident Reporting and Disclosure

- Patient safety is a top priority in our hospitals.
- If you are involved in a safety event that affects your care, WHCA staff will explain the event to you and/or your substitute decision maker.
- If you feel you've experienced an unsafe situation, please report it to your healthcare provider. They will ensure it is reported in our Risk and Incident Management System for investigation and/or correction.

Your Privacy

Hospital staff, by policy, may only release information regarding patient's information status to the identified the person identified by patient/family as the key contact person.

Please remind your family and friends that staff may NOT release your patient personal information to anyone without your consent.

If you have a concern about how your health information has been used, please contact the Privacy Officer at **519-843-2010 ext. 45611** or by emailing **privacy@whca.ca**.

Your Consent

- You may be asked to give consent to tests, procedures, and treatments. Please be sure you understand the risks and benefits before giving consent for yourself or as a substitute decision-maker.
- You have the right to accept or decline tests, procedures, or treatment, so we want to make sure you are fully informed before making these decisions.
- If you have questions, please speak with a member of your healthcare team.

Questions and Concerns

If you have questions or concerns during your admission, please ask to speak to the following members, in escalating order:

- Your assigned nurse for the day.
- The “Charge Nurse” or “Clinical Resource Lead” on your floor.
- The manager of the department.
- The Quality and Risk Manager.

Services Available to You

Patient Experience Team

WHCA aims to provide the highest level of service excellence, satisfaction, and engagement in accordance with our Mission, Vision, and Values. The Patient Experience Team is here to receive feedback, complaints, compliments, or concerns. All actionable feedback, both positive and negative, may help us improve our services.

Feedback can be received 24/7 through various means:

- Ask to speak to a Patient Experience representative in-person
- By phone: 519-843-2010 ex 40718
- By email: patientexperience@whca.ca
- Your contact will be returned within three business days.

Patient Satisfaction Surveys can be completed online:

- At www.gmch.ca under “Patient Services”
- At nwhealthcare.ca under “Patients & Visitors”

Helping You Communicate

- If you have a hearing impairment, adaptive devices can be available.
- If you have a language barrier, a translator can be arranged at no cost.
- If you have difficulty understanding or using language, speech language pathology can be available.
- Please speak with a member of the health care team for more information.

Pastoral Care

- Regardless of faith or creed, pastoral services can be offered at our hospitals.
- Please speak with a member of the health care team, who will help arrange this service.

Quiet Space

- A quiet, private space may be used for discussion, prayer, and/or reflection.
- At GMCH, multi-faith room is available in the main lobby. Please ask a member of the health care team about using this space.
- At PDH and LMH, please ask a member of the health care team, who will source a suitable space for you

Ethics Resources

- Difficult conversations and choices happen every day in healthcare, often due to uncertainty in decision making and differences in opinions. An open, sensitive, and mindful discussion may help to resolve these challenges.
- Ethical consultation services are available to help with dilemmas that remain difficult. Please ask a member of the health care team, to connect you to our bioethicist.

Accessing Your Health Record

- The patient health record belongs to the hospital.
- You may request for copies of patient health records, which are processed in Health Information Services by the Release of Information Department. A fee may be applied.
- For patient at GMCH, call **(519) 843-2010 ext. 45614**
- For patients at PDH and LMH, call **(519) 323-2210 ext. 75614**

Patient and Family Advisory Council

- The patient and family advisory council (PFAC) is always recruiting volunteer members.
- PFAC is an organized group of people with lived experience within WHCA. Our goal is to have the patients' and families' voices heard during the design and development of equitable, integrated healthcare in WHCA.
- Membership involves discussion meetings and project-based work, with time commitment up to a few hours per month.
- For more information, ask to speak to a Patient Experience representative.
- By phone: **519-843-2010 ext. 40718**
- For patients at GMCH www.gmch.ca/<front>/patient-relations
- For patients at PDH and LMH www.nwhealthcare.ca/patients-visitors/patient-relations

Hospital Logistics

Parking

- Free parking is available for vehicles and horse-and-buggy at all sites.
- For patients at GMCH, park in the main entrance lot.
- For patients at PDH and LMH, park in the side visitor lots.

What to Bring to the Hospital

- Ontario Health Insurance Plan card (OHIP; if you do not have an OHIP card, an alternate photo identification will be needed – preferably government-issued)
- Supplemental insurance information, if any
- For Workplace Safety Insurance Board visits, Social Insurance Number and employer information.
- Full name and address of your family doctor
- Emergency contact information
- All medications you are currently taking, including non-prescription medications (e.g., over the counter, herbal medications).
- Personal care items (e.g., toothbrush, toothpaste, hand soap, shampoo, deodorant, shaving kit, brush/comb).
- Sleepwear, robe (if you prefer to a hospital gown), and non-skid slippers
- Dentures/partials with your name clearly labeled.
- Hearing aid with your name clearly labeled.
- Glasses/contact lenses with your name clearly labeled.
- Canes, walkers, wheelchairs, or any other aid you use with your name clearly labeled.
- If you are bringing any electrical device (e.g., radio, electric shaver, blow dryer), please speak with a member of your healthcare team prior to using it for safety reasons
- Calling card for long-distance calls.
- Only bring what you will need, as storage is limited.

Please leave all valuables at home or arrange to have them taken home.

- WHCA will not be responsible for any personal items that are lost, stolen, or damaged.
- Eyeglasses and dentures should be kept in your bedside table drawer when not in use.

WIFI, Telephones, and Television

We want to make sure you can stay in touch and up to date during this time.

- WHCA offers easy and free Wi-Fi with no username or password
- Users will have to accept the terms and conditions before gaining access.
- Patients and visitors can use their own devices by choosing one the following, depending on your location:

GMCH_GUEST_WIFI
PDH_GUEST_WIFI
LMH_GUEST_WIFI

- Telephone and TV services are also free, with various basic cable and specialty channels.
- If you need help with these services, please speak with a member of the health care team.

Meals/Cafeteria

- Cash, debit, and credit accepted.
- GMCH Hospital café is open to visitors **Monday to Friday** from **7:00am to 3:30pm.**
- PDH and LMH cafeterias are not currently open to visitors.

Patient Meals Arrive Between:

- Breakfast - 7:45AM-8:00AM
- Lunch - 11:30AM-12:00PM
- Dinner - 4:45PM-5:00PM
- *Snacks Provided*

Gift Shops

Volunteers run our Gift Shops, located in the Main Lobby at each site.

- GMCH gift shop is open on **Monday to Friday 10:00am to 2:00pm.**
- PDH and LMH gift shop is open on **Monday to Friday 10:00am to 4:00pm.**

Smoking/Vaping

- Smoking and vaping are prohibited on all hospital properties.
- Smoking cessation support is available for patients.

Accessibility

- At GMCH, the main and emergency entrances are wheelchair accessible.
- At PDH and LMH, all entrances are wheelchair accessible.
- If you need a wheelchair upon arrival at the hospital, please speak with a staff member.
- At GMCH, elevators are located inside the main entrance.

Codes and Fire Drills

- A code announced over the intercom or a fire drill may be alarmed during your admission.
- These drills test the system and quality of personnel training to ensure efficient protection of your safety.

Should a real emergency exist, you will be notified and assisted by our staff.
If you hear the fire alarm, please stay in the patient room and wait for staff instruction.

Financial Department

- Some services and items may not be covered by Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).
- Examples include requests for preferred accommodations (e.g., semi-private or private rooms) and medical appliances (e.g., splints, casts, or crutches), and ambulance services.
- You will receive a bill for non-OHIP covered services or items, which can be paid by various methods:
 1. In-person at the switchboard by any payment method.
 2. Over the phone by credit card.
 3. Mail in a cheque or by completing the bill with your credit card information.

Please pay your bill at the site you received your service or item from.

If you have a concern or question, please contact the Financial Department:

- For patients at GMCH, call: **519-843-2010 ext. 47113**
- For patients at NWHC, call: **519-323-2210 ext. 77113**

Visitors and Visiting

Our policy may change over time. Please check our website or speak with a member of your healthcare team for the most updated visiting policies.

Visiting Policy

- Visiting hours are 9am – 7pm to minimize disruptions in patient care and provide all patients with the rest they need. Outside visiting hours, partners-in-care may be subject to review on a case-by-case basis.
- Masks are encouraged but not required - except for when in the Oncology Department.
- One visitor per patient in the emergency department and outpatient services is allowed.
- Two visitors per patient at a time in the inpatient units.
- Please do not eat or drink in the patient rooms.

Bringing Treats and Gifts

- Before bringing food, snacks, or beverages, visitors must obtain permission from the Charge Nurse. This is to ensure compliance with any diet restrictions for the patient.
- Latex balloons are prohibited, as latex can trigger allergic reactions. Mylar balloons are permitted (i.e., the silver, shiny balloons).
- The no scent policy prohibits strongly scented flowers (e.g., lilies and perfumes), as scented products can trigger allergic reactions.
- Please avoid adding to clutter that may contribute to risks of falls or impair patient care.

Photography/Videography/Audio Recordings

- Consent must be obtained, and care taken to ensure that other patients, visitors, or staff are not captured.
- The use of such devices must not interfere with patient care or hospital business.

Noise

- Please keep volumes low to respect other patients. Noise of any kind may disturb patients that are very ill.

Personal Notes

THANK YOU!

**We thank you for reading this handbook, which was brought to you by our PFAC.
Please do not hesitate to ask your healthcare team any questions.**



**WELLINGTON HEALTH CARE
ALLIANCE**

WHCA PATIENT CARE HANDBOOK

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