

Supporting someone in hospital

At Austin Health, we recognise the important role support people play in a patient's recovery and wellbeing. As someone who knows the person you care for best, your involvement can make a meaningful difference in their journey. This guide has practical information on how you can work with the healthcare team to support the person you care for.

How can I be involved?



Communication

Sharing medical history & social information

Please share any important medical history, medicines, living situation, or unique details that may not be included in their medical records with their healthcare team. For example:

- Do they need communication aids or support?
- What helps calm them or what might cause anxiety?
- Their likes, dislikes, or sensitivities
- Previous medical conditions or treatments

Doctors' ward rounds

We encourage you to talk with the medical team when they come to review the person you support. This is often called a doctors 'ward round' and can happen with short notice, or at a set day/time each week. Speak to the Nurse-In-Charge to let them know if you would like to be present. This is a great opportunity to share your insights about the person you care for, and be involved in decisions about their care.

Your knowledge of their medical history and preferences is valuable in helping to make the best choices for their health. If you cannot attend in person, ask the Nurse-In-Charge that you be phoned during (or after) the ward round.

Changes in patients condition

We are trained to notice changes in someone's health, but you know the normal behaviors and routines of the person you care for better than we do. If they are acting unusually, seem more confused or unwell, this is what you can do:



Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays its respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Austin Health celebrates, values and includes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.



☎ 9496 6888

口译员 傳譯員 INTERPRETE TERCÜMAN ΔΙΕΡΜΗΝΕΑΣ
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- 1- Talk to a nurse if they are starting to feel more unwell or you notice a change in their condition
- 2- If you are still worried, please talk to the nurse in charge
- 3- If you are still worried, call 90 from your bedside phone or **03 9496 5000** from an external phone to speak with switchboard and ask for a Patient and Carer Escalation (PACE) call. A specialised healthcare team member will come and check on you.

Your observations are invaluable in noticing early signs of the patient becoming more unwell.



Bringing food from home

Hospital food may not always be familiar or appealing to patients, and eating less can lead to weight loss or confusion. You can help by:

- Talking with the nursing staff and/or dietitian before bringing meals or helping the person to eat or drink. This is to make sure the food aligns with any dietary requirements or restrictions.
- Bringing in preferred food can help the person you support for maintain good nutrition and feel more at ease during their stay.
- Help the patient to order their preferred food/drink from the daily menu.
- Positioning them so they are upright and comfortable before eating.



Emotional & Cognitive Support

The person you care for may feel confused or disoriented in an unfamiliar environment. You can help them by:

- Reminding them of the place, day, time, and daily plan.
- You can also assist with simple tasks like helping them reading signs, remembering appointments, charging their devices and adding to their bedside communication board.
- Making sure they have their glasses on or hearing aids in.
- Encouraging rest periods.
- Bringing in activities from home such as music, books or a device for media.
- Bringing any valuables home for safe keeping.

Helping with Personal Care Tasks

You may be able to assist with personal care tasks if the patient agrees and their care team say it's okay. Talk to your nurse to see if you can help with:

- Getting them ready for activities or upcoming sessions: such as getting shoes and socks on
- Helping them eat or drink if needed
- Helping them or setting them up to brush their teeth, hair, or grooming tasks
- Assisting with hygiene: such as toileting and showering.

Encouraging Mobility

Movement is essential to recovery. If appropriate, encourage the person you care for to walk or move regularly, with assistance if necessary. This can prevent complications like pressure injuries, lung infections, and help them regain strength faster. You can help them by:

- Adjusting pillows and bedding for comfort and warmth
- Walking with you under supervision and appropriate walking aids.
- Encouraging the patient to sit out of their bed.



Staying safe in hospital

Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent infections. Please wash your hands regularly, especially:

- Before and after touching the person you are supporting
- After using the restroom
- Before preparing or serving food
- After coughing, sneezing, or touching your face

Hand sanitizer (De Bug) is available throughout the hospital for your convenience.

Preventing Falls

Falls are a common risk in hospitals. You can help prevent falls by:

- Reminding them to use their walking aid (where required)
- Keeping their call bell and personal items within easy reach
- Encouraging them to call for their nurse if they need to be supervised or assisted
- Encouraging them to wear non-slip footwear
- Assisting them to get up or move only when it is safe and approved by the healthcare team
- Reporting if you notice any hazards, such as spills or obstacles

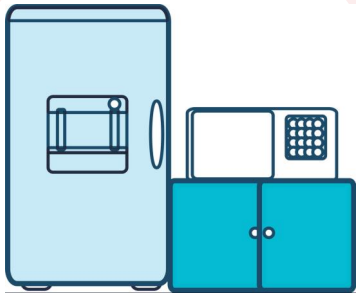
Bringing in own medicines

- If you have brought in any medicines from home for the patient, please tell staff as all medicines need to be reviewed and safely stored.



Support for you:

We understand that caring for someone in the hospital can be challenging. Please speak with your nurse about how we can help you to continue your support while the person is in hospital.



Access to kitchen facilities

Ask staff if a fridge is available to store your food or a microwave to heat food for yourself or the person you care for. You may also be able to access carer meals from the hospital kitchen.



Overnight stays

Please speak to the nurse in charge to see if this is an option that is available on your ward.



Extended visiting hours

Austin Health offers extended hours for support people to allow you more flexibility in spending time with the person you are supporting.

Your responsibilities:

To keep yourself safe, please follow the advice given by our health care professionals.

- Please be aware of not interrupting the workflow of staff when you are caring for the person you support.
- We recognise that hospital stays can be stressful for the person you care for and for you as their carer. Staff are often busy moving quickly from one task to another. Our staff will always communicate with you in a respectful manner, and you must behave in a respectful way to staff, patients and other visitors.
- Smoking, the use of e-cigarettes, vaping, carrying of weapons and use of alcohol or illegal drugs are not allowed in the hospital.

Emotional Support Services:

If you need someone to talk to, we have counselling and social work services available for carers and families. Please ask about these services during your stay.

For further information please speak with the Nurse-In-Charge

