

Patient Rights *cont.*

The right to receive care in a safe setting

A safe setting is one that a reasonable person would consider safe. Safety includes environmental factors, infection control and security, i.e., the presence of security staff, alarms and policies. A safe setting also protects vulnerable patients, including newborns and children.

The right to be free from all forms of abuse or harassment

Abuse is the willful infliction of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation or punishment which causes harm, pain or mental anguish.

Neglect is considered a form of abuse. It is defined as the failure to provide the goods and services needed to avoid physical harm, mental anguish or mental illness.

Harassment is intentional behavior which is found threatening or disturbing.

The right to be free from physical or mental abuse and corporal (physical) punishment

You have the right to be free from restraints unless they are used to ensure your immediate physical safety or the safety of a staff member or another person. Restraints must be removed as soon as safely possible. MaineGeneral does not use restraints as a routine part of care and works hard to find the least restrictive way to keep patients and others safe.

The right to safe implementation of restraints and seclusion by trained staff

If restraints or seclusion (isolation) are deemed the best way to keep you and others safe, you have the right to receive care from staff trained in the proper and safe use of seclusion and restraints to help calm unsafe situations and prevent injuries.

The right to understand your rights to have visitors

You have the right to welcome the visitors of your choice for emotional support, including a spouse, domestic partner, other family members and friends. You may also change your mind at any time. Visitors may be restricted when their presence intrudes on others' rights, safety or health.

The right to receive relevant, current, easy-to-understand information

You and your representative have the right to receive information in a format that is easy for you to understand. This includes information about your diagnosis, the likely course of your illness, treatment and any unplanned outcomes. We offer qualified interpreters for those who are deaf/hard of hearing and for patients with limited English skills as defined by hospital policy. These services are free to our patients.

The right to have your cultural, personal values, beliefs and preferences respected

We know coming into a hospital can make people feel scared and helpless. To ease these feelings, we accept and support each person's culture, personal values and spiritual beliefs within the bounds of safe medical practices.

The right to be treated with respect and dignity

You have the right to be free from discrimination based on age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. This means we treat everyone with respect, dignity and caring here at MaineGeneral.

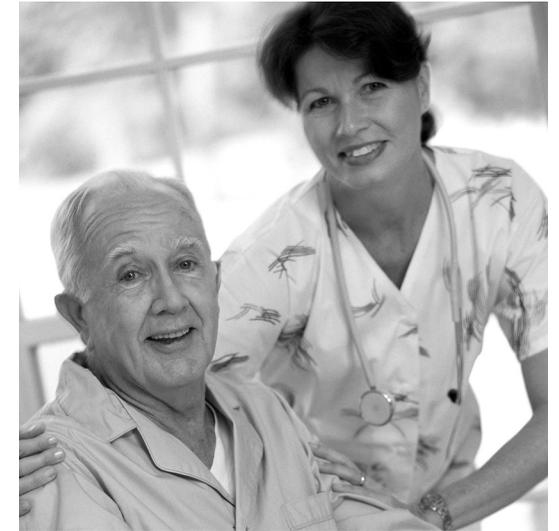
Patient Responsibilities

Patients have the responsibility to:

- Provide a correct and complete health history including use of medicine
- Ask questions when they do not understand something
- Tell their doctor if they do not think they can follow through with treatment
- Accept the consequences of refusing treatment
- Respect the rights of other patients
- Respect hospital staff and property
- Provide correct and complete insurance information and work with the hospital to arrange payment when needed
- Recognize the effect of lifestyle on their personal health
- Report any concerns they may have so the hospital can try to resolve them

* "Informed decisions" presumes that you or your representative have received information about your health status, diagnosis and prognosis in a format you understand.

** "Prompt" means as soon as possible after the doctor or other qualified practitioner has given orders to admit the patient.



Patient Rights and Responsibilities

Patient Advocacy

At MaineGeneral Medical Center (MGMC), we believe medical care includes being treated with **concern, respect and recognition** of each person's dignity and preferences. The federal and state rights detailed in this brochure support our belief.

These rights and responsibilities pertain to all patients who stay overnight (inpatients) and who receive care during the day where applicable (outpatients) throughout MGMC.

Patient Rights

The right to notice of privacy

You and your designated representative(s) have the right to be informed of your rights in a language or format that you can understand. We will give you this information before starting or stopping patient care whenever possible.

The right for prompt resolution of a grievance

Our goal is to promptly and completely address the concerns of our patients/patient representatives, support people or family members. We can often resolve an issue or question right away, as long as we know about it. But sometimes a concern is more involved or requires an interdepartmental team to help answer.

If a patient care concern is not resolved or addressed to everyone's satisfaction, a patient, or the patient's representative/support person or family member, may file a grievance. A grievance is a formal or informal written or verbal complaint made to the hospital about the patient's care. It may involve abuse or neglect or a concern about a Medicare beneficiary billing complaint. (Note: Billing complaints are not considered grievances unless the complaint includes issues with patient services or care.)

Here are the steps involved in submitting a grievance:

1. Discuss your grievance with a staff member from the service area or with a patient advocate. Call 248-5290 to speak with an advocate.
2. We strive to investigate and resolve most concerns within 7 business days. Due to the nature of the concern, staff scheduling or work load, a concern may need extra time. When this occurs, MaineGeneral works to resolve the concern in another two weeks or within 21 business days total.

3. A grievance is considered resolved when the patient, patient representative/support person or family member is satisfied with the action taken on his/her behalf. Once resolved, we send you a written response which includes steps taken to investigate your grievance, the results of the investigation, the date the investigation was completed, the name of the hospital and the name of the person investigating your grievance.
4. Sometimes MGMC takes appropriate and reasonable actions to resolve an issue, but the person making the complaint is still not satisfied. When this happens, the grievance is also considered closed.
5. If you are not satisfied with the grievance resolution process at MaineGeneral, you may write or call:
DHHS Division of Licensing at
41 Anthony Avenue, 11 State House Station,
Augusta, ME 04333-0011
Phone: 1-800-383-2441, 207-287-9308 or
Voice/TTY at 711 or Fax at 207-287-9307.

You do not have to use the hospital's grievance process before contacting DHHS.
6. If patient care and safety issues cannot be resolved through MGMC's complaint process, you may also call The Joint Commission toll-free at 1-800-994-6610.
7. If you receive Medicare and have a grievance about quality of care, or disagree with a coverage decision or wish to appeal a premature discharge, you may write or call:
Northeast Health Care Quality Foundation
15 Old Rollinsford Rd. Suite 302,
Dover, NH 03820
Phone: 603-749-1641
Toll-Free in New England: 1-800-772-0151

Please note: Health care facilities like MaineGeneral Medical Center are not allowed to receive payment for treatment of serious harm that results from preventable mistakes and adverse events as defined by state law.

The right to help develop and implement your plan of care

You or your representatives have the right to be involved in all aspects of your plan of care, discharge plan and pain management plan.

The right to make informed decisions

This includes knowing your health status, being involved in care planning and treatment and being able to request or refuse treatment. Being a partner in your own care allows you to make "informed decisions"* about your care. This right does not allow you to demand that MaineGeneral provide care or services deemed medically unnecessary or inappropriate.

The patient has the right to have an advance directive

An advance directive is a written document, such as a living will or power of attorney for health care, that defines what health care you want in case you cannot decide for yourself.

A psychiatric advance directive is a type of advance directive prepared by a person who is concerned that he/she may be subject to involuntary psychiatric commitment or treatment.

You have the right to have such directives honored as permitted by state law.

The right for the hospital to give "prompt" notice of your admission to the hospital to a family member, your representative/support person and your primary care provider

The right to personal privacy such as the right to respect, dignity and comfort

This includes privacy while going to the bathroom, bathing and dressing; privacy during medical/nursing treatments; and when requested as appropriate. A patient's right to privacy may be limited if he/she must be continuously observed, such as when restrained or in seclusion, because there is immediate and serious risk of harm to self or others.

The right to confidentiality

The hospital protects and safeguards your medical information from being shared with people who are not allowed to have it. This includes paper records, video, audio and/or computer-stored information.

We share this information with specific informed consent from you or your legal representative. Our Notice of Privacy has more details about privacy of health care information.

You or your legal representative have the right to access information contained in your clinical records within a reasonable timeframe.

You have the right to access your medical records and to inspect and obtain a copy; this may involve a fee for producing and handling. You also have the right to request corrections if you think the information is wrong. There are certain exceptions which may prevent you from accessing all or parts of your records.

Please call Medical Records at 626-1441 or 872-1254 or the Patient Advocate Office at 248-5290 to learn more.

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