



National Healthcare Charter
**you and your
health service**

Get involved!

Find out about how you can get involved in improving health services in Ireland.

The HSE is actively inviting service users to get involved on patient forums and quality improvement initiatives. To find out more contact:

National Advocacy Unit, HSE,
Quality & Patient Safety Directorate,
Health Service Executive, Oak House,
Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: (045) 880 400
Email: yoursay@hse.ie
www.hse.ie

your service
your say

Your care plan

It's safer to ask

people caring for people

Quality and
Patient Safety
Directorate

 Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Tús Áite do
Shábháilteacht **1** Othar
Patient Safety **1** First

 An Roinn Sláinte
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Patient Safety First

Patients and family members who are more informed and involved in their healthcare often experience safer and better care and have improved quality of life afterwards.

To ensure that you or your family member receive the best care possible you should always:

- Ask questions
- Talk with your healthcare team
- Listen and note down the information they give

Healthcare workers and managers have a responsibility to make healthcare as safe as possible, but patients and their families can also play an important role in this area. It is vital that everyone talks to and listens to each other to ensure we can all make our healthcare services safer.

If you feel shy about asking questions, or are worried you might forget something, you can always ask someone to come with you or to listen when you are talking to the nurse, doctor or healthcare worker.

Remember – it's safer to ask!

Tips

Here are some tips to follow when attending any health or social care service

- Write down questions **before** your appointment and take notes at your appointment – you can use the space overleaf – start now!
- Learn about your condition and treatments by asking your healthcare providers and using other reliable sources.
- Be sure to speak up if you have any questions or any concerns, for example if you feel that:
 - a) there is something else the health professional should know or might have misunderstood;
 - b) your treatment is not going according to plan, or something was not clearly explained to you.
- Tell your doctor about any previous treatments or surgeries, any allergies and any current treatment you are receiving.
- Inform your doctor of any health conditions that run in your family.
- Ask about the benefits and risks of any treatment that are suggested and what the treatment involves.
- If you have had a test, do not assume that no news is good news. If you hear nothing back, call your doctor and ask for the results.
- If having surgery, clarify with your doctor so that everyone is clear about exactly what is going to be done.

Your care plan

Questions that you can ask your healthcare team

Prepare a list of questions, concerns and symptoms to discuss with your doctor or healthcare professional. Do not worry if your questions seem obvious – it is always better to ask! Here are a few suggested questions to get you started.

- 1. Can you please tell me more about my condition?
- 2. What are the different treatments for this condition?
- 3. How will this treatment help me?
- 4. What does the treatment involve?
- 5. What are the risks of this treatment?
- 6. What is likely to happen if I do not have this treatment?
- 7. If you are being recommended to undergo a test, ask why you need this test and what will it involve?
- 8. Are there signs and symptoms I should look out for?
- 9. What can I do to help improve my health?
- 10. If you need to take medication, ask how often do I need to take the medication, what is the reason for taking it and the possible side effects?
- 11. If you have a long-term health condition ask about what supports are available to help you manage your condition?
- 12. When should I come back to see you?

Your notes

Other questions

Extra tips

When you are in hospital or having a procedure done

1. Make sure that the healthcare workers who attend you and the people who visit you have washed their hands.
2. If you are having surgery, make sure you agree with the doctor exactly what is being done and on what part of the body.
3. If you wish, you may ask your doctor, have they carried many of these procedures, how have they gone in general, and what sort of complications arise and do they arise often.
4. Ask when you are likely to be discharged and what instructions are being sent to your GP (family doctor).
5. When you are being discharged, ask your hospital doctor to write down any treatment plans or instructions.
6. Before being discharged from hospital, ask your hospital doctor what you should look out for, what you can do to help yourself get better and when you should come back see the doctor.
7. If you have a long-term health condition ask about what you can do for the future to remain as healthy as possible and where you might get support to do this.

Contact numbers

National Healthcare Charter

There are eight principles, considered fundamental to both health service providers and service users, are outlined. The principles include the commitments as stated by the HSE and therefore what you can expect wherever and whenever you receive care. The principles also describe ways that you can help the HSE deliver more effective and safe services.

	<i>What you can expect</i>	<i>What you can do to help</i>
Access	Our services are organised to ensure equity of access to public health and social care services.	Keep appointments and let us know if you cannot attend, let us know if you have any special needs such as alternative methods of communication.
Dignity and Respect	We treat people with dignity, respect and compassion. We respect diversity of culture, beliefs and values in line with clinical decision making.	Treat staff and other patients with dignity, respect and consideration.
Safe and Effective Services	We provide services with competence, skill and care in a safe environment, delivered by trusted professionals.	Support us to deliver safe and effective services, e.g. if you think that a member of a healthcare team has forgotten to wash their hands, give them a gentle reminder, know how to manage your medicines.
Communication and Information	We listen carefully and communicate openly and honestly, and provide clear, comprehensive and understandable health information and advice.	Help us to promote clear communication and information, if there is something that you do not understand, let us know and we will explain better.
Participation	We involve people and their families and carers in shared decision making about their healthcare. We take account of people's preferences and values.	Ask questions and become more actively involved in decision making about your care.
Privacy	We will do our best to ensure that you have adequate personal space and privacy when you use our health services. We maintain strict confidentiality of personal information.	Support health services to safeguard patient confidentiality and privacy.
Improving Health	Our services promote health, prevent disease and support and empower those with chronic conditions to self-manage their condition.	Learn more about what you can do to improve your health, ask your healthcare provider for information about healthy living and about what support services are available in your community, ask your healthcare professional to help you to set goals for improving your health.
Accountability	We welcome your complaints and feedback about care and services, we will investigate your complaints and work to address your concerns.	Your feedback matters – tell us about your experience so that we can have your concerns addressed.