

Anyone living with cancer and receiving treatment has certain rights. The Patients' Bill of Rights and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) guarantee medical care and protect individuals' medical records. This fact sheet will cover the following:

- Your rights as a patient under federal law
- The HIPAA Act and patient privacy
- Responsibilities you have as a patient
- Expectations you should have during a hospital visit or stay



What Are Your Rights as a Patient?

Under a federal law, you have the following rights when it comes to medical care:

- You are guaranteed access to your medical records.
- You will be notified of your privacy rights.
- You have permission to ask questions to ensure that your medical information is being protected.
- You have the right to request changes and additions to your medical records, including the right to correct any incorrect information.
- Your health information cannot be used for marketing or advertising purposes.
- You may file a formal complaint if these rights have been violated.



What Are Your Responsibilities as a Patient?

To get the best medical care possible, you should:

- Provide information about past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications and other health-related information.
- Ask for easier-to-understand information from your hospital or health care team if you do not understand the explanations or instructions.
- Inform your doctor and caregivers if you experience problems following treatment.
- Make sure the hospital has a copy of your advance directives, if you have any. (See CancerCare's "Advance Care Planning: Be Prepared" fact sheet for more information, at www.cancercare.org/publications/268-advance_care_planning_be_prepared).



What to Expect During a Hospital Stay

Patients and caregivers are often concerned when they have to go into the hospital. It may make you feel more comfortable if you are aware of what you are guaranteed by law. These include:

- Considerate, respectful hospital care
- Emergency care, if you need it
- A clean, safe environment
- A non-smoking room
- Medical treatment without discrimination
- Names, positions and functions of all hospital staff involved in your care
- The right to accept or refuse participation in research
- Priority visitation rights for your family members and other adults

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