

Going to Hospital?

Te tuku atu ki te Hohipera?

Day Clinics and Specialist Services

Knowing what to expect when you go into hospital may help you.

There may be differences in processes from one hospital to the next, as each hospital does things in its own way to support its community.

If you have any specific questions, we suggest you contact your local hospital directly.

What to think about before you go to hospital

Being prepared at short notice is important and can make things easier.

You may want to have the following:

- **A Health Passport:** to record information that helps people to look after you.
- **A Life Tube:** to record medication and next of kin. Emergency services are trained to look for Life Tubes in people's houses. A Life Tube is available from your local Age Concern.

Support needs

If you require support when you go to hospital, you are entitled to have your support needs met.

For example, you may need access to a New Zealand Sign Language interpreter if you are Deaf or hearing impaired, or you may need help to transfer in and out of a wheelchair.

You should tell the hospital what your support needs are.

Day clinics and specialist services

Day clinics and specialist services are planned services provided by the hospital, and are called outpatients clinics or services. You may attend as an outpatient or an inpatient.

These clinics may occur before and/or after your hospital admission or surgery.

Normally you would be referred to a clinic or specialist service by a health professional in your community, such as your GP. You can also be referred by people in other parts of the hospital, such as the Emergency Department.

Once the clinic or specialist service has your referral, you will be contacted to schedule an appointment.

You may have to wait some time for your appointment, and the clinic may ask you to have more tests done, e.g., X-rays.

Not every hospital will offer the full range of specialist clinics, so sometimes you may have to travel to another hospital for a clinic.

At the hospital

You will be given information about why you are in hospital, and you will be asked to make decisions about, and consent to, your care and treatment.

You can consent in writing, verbally, and non-verbally. If you do give consent, you can change your mind at any time.

All the information should be provided to you in a way you can understand, and you can have help to make decisions about your care.

If you are unable to consent to treatment, then the doctor, your Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA), or a family member may be able to make the decision for you.

Sometimes hospitals will be training student doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals.

You have a right to decide if you are happy for these students to be involved in your care and treatment.

What if you are unhappy with a health or disability service?

Sometimes a person may not get the service they were expecting.

As soon as you can, you need to raise your concerns. If you don't feel comfortable in doing this alone, ask to see a social worker so that you can talk through the matter with them and decide how to raise your concerns.

If you are unhappy with the response, each hospital will have a complaints procedure. If you want support to access the complaints procedure, you should ask. Usually there is information on the website and at the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the service, the Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service can help you with your concerns.

If you would like to make a complaint about a health or disability service, you can also contact the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner.

The contact details for both organisations can be found at the bottom of this leaflet.

For further information about your rights when accessing health or disability services, or to raise your concerns about the service you received, please contact:

The Nationwide Health & Disability Advocacy Service

- Free phone: 0800 555 050
- Email: advocacy@advocacy.org.nz
- Website: www.advocacy.org.nz

The Health and Disability Commissioner

- Postal address: PO BOX 1791, Auckland, 1140
- Auckland: (09) 373 1060; Wellington: (04) 494 7900
- National freephone: 0800 11 22 33
- Email: hdc@hdc.org.nz
- Website: www.hdc.org.nz