

Being Diagnosed Overview

Patient's Rights - Your Rights

You have many rights as a patient.

- Your right to **informed consent**. This means you have a right to understand what your doctor is saying when he or she explains how a treatment or procedure will be done, what results are expected, and if there are likely side effects, physical or mental. You can ask what the intention is with the procedure or treatment – for example, is it curative or palliative?

You have the right to refuse treatments and procedures and you can always ask for more information or to speak to another person if something is not clear.

Understand the medical facts (including what will be done to the body, potential side effects, risks, and costs) involved in a surgical or medical procedure or treatment (or participation in a clinical study) before agreeing to the procedure or treatment.

- Your right to **privacy and confidentiality**. This means your medical providers cannot share your chart and medical information with others without your agreement. This includes members of your family and friends. So tell your doctors who may be allowed to know the details of your condition and your care.

You always have a right to see your chart and have someone explain what is written in it.

The privacy rule is a federal law called the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act** of 1996 (**HIPAA** - pronounced “Hipaa”). [Learn more](#) about HIPAA.

You have additional rights as a patient in a New York State hospital. A list of these rights is given to you on admission to a hospital. Many people do not read the list because it is presented at a stressful time, and includes a lot of detailed information. In summary, these rights mean you have control over your own body, the right to access information about your care, the right to leave the hospital, and the right to change your care team.

[Learn more](#) about the New York State Patient’s Bill of Rights.

If at any time while you are in the hospital you are not sure about your rights, you can call the hospital’s Patient Representative. It is his or her job to help you with any aspect of your hospital stay and, especially, to make sure you can exercise your rights while you are in the hospital. If they can’t help you, ask them to steer you to someone who can.