



For the Hard of Hearing Patient

So You and Your Hearing Loss are Going to the Hospital!

Six easy steps to use in the hospital waiting room:

- Tell the receptionist your name.
- Explain that you are hard of hearing and what it means to you and your healthcare providers.
- Explain that you may not hear your name when called.
- Ask staff members to approach you when requiring your attention.
- Ask to have "Hard of Hearing" shown prominently on all your medical records.
- Express your appreciation for the attention you have received.

Your Rights as a Hard of Hearing Patient are the Same as any Other Patient!

They include:

- Full participation in your health care.
- Conscientious effort by staff members in communicating to you your medical status and options.
- Courteous treatment from staff members.
- A reasonable response to your requests for help or service.
- Flexibility of staff members in using alternative communication procedures on your behalf.
- Reasonable accommodation of your hearing loss, with assistive devices provided at no charge.
- Clarification of all bills and medical documents before you sign.
- Help in providing information on obtaining financial aid.
- Help in finding alternative ways of receiving follow-up care if you cannot use the telephone.
- Contacting the hospital patient advocate, patient relations, or patient care coordinator for problem solving.
- Obtaining more than one opinion about your medical treatment.

Planning and Preparing for Your Stay in the Hospital.

Items to ask for:

- telephone with a visible alert, an amplified telephone, or a text telephone (TTY)
- Caption decoder for TV
- Hearing loss identification symbol for patient room door

Items to take:

- a small night light
- a supply of Hearing Loss Association of America Communication Tips to pass out
- your personal communication equipment
- extra hearing aid batteries
- a storage container for your hearing aids
- pen and paper

For Better Communication Understand Your Responsibilities as a Hard of Hearing Patient.

Use your pre-admission hospital visit to discuss your hearing loss, as well as any special needs you may have during your hospitalization, with admissions office and other hospital personnel.

Discuss your preferred method of communication, using assistive devices other than your hearing aid, such as: Pocket Talker, Amplified Telephone, Personal FM System.

Inform your doctor, your surgeon, and particularly your anesthesiologist of your hearing loss.

Make inquiries about medication. It may affect your hearing.

Suggest a note be prominently displayed on your medical records requesting spoken communication be brief, clear, and to the point.

Explain that you may not be able to understand staff members who speak through surgical masks.

Request staff members to give you instructions *before* putting on a mask.

Inform hospital personnel of available standard notes and stickers that can be used to alert your care givers to your hearing loss.

Inform hospital personnel that you may not understand public address announcements. Suggest a notice on the intercom at the nurses station to serve as a reminder.

Since different doctors, nurses, and aides will be attending you, it may be necessary and helpful to remind and explain to each of them about your hearing loss, and the communication strategies that work best for you.

Inquire about hospital policy regarding removal of your hearing aids during surgery. Ask where they will be held, for how long, and when you can expect their safe return.

If your hearing aids are removed, suggest that they be placed in a plastic bag attached to the medical record that accompanies you to and from the operating and recovery rooms.

Learn to feel comfortable telling your visitors who stay too long that you and your ears tire easily.

While being cooperative and courteous, be assertive and persistent for accommodation of your hearing needs during your stay in the hospital.

-- Thanks to HLA (formerly SHHH) chapter in Rochester, NY, for compiling above info.