



ST VINCENT'S
PRIVATE HOSPITAL
MELBOURNE

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA



Patient Information

Preparing for your hospital stay at
St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne



Welcome

Thank you for choosing St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne for your healthcare needs.

Your wellness and safety is our top priority. We are dedicated to providing you, and your family, with the highest possible standard of healthcare. St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne is part of St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA). Under the healing ministry of Mary Aikenhead, we are proud of our rich Catholic tradition. We are a not-for-profit hospital group and one of Melbourne's biggest and busiest private acute care providers. Our team is committed to providing compassionate and innovative care, enabling hope for those we serve.

We want you to experience a comfortable stay while in our care. This book will provide you with useful information for your hospital stay, including important information to ensure your comfort and safety. We encourage you to become an active member of your healthcare team. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact our hospital Pre-admission Clinic on (03) 9411 7358.

On behalf of the entire team at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne, we thank you for trusting us with your treatment and care. Our goal is to ensure a great health care experience for you and the ones you love.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grisold".

Ian Grisold

CEO St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne



“We are one of Melbourne’s busiest and biggest acute care hospitals.”

1 in 10 Victorian private patients are treated at St Vincent’s Private Hospital Melbourne

Our Mission

As a Catholic health and aged care service our mission is to bring God’s love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus. We are especially committed to people who are poor or vulnerable.

We draw on the talents of our people and collaborate with others who share our vision and values to continue the pioneering spirit of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity. We are committed to providing compassionate and innovative care, enabling hope for those we serve.

We are a mission-focussed hospital. We are strongly influenced by the gospel-inspired works of Mary Aikenhead, the founder of the Sisters of Charity. Mary Aikenhead inspires our leadership, our teams and individuals, giving each of us the privilege to shine with compassion and kindness. We strive to be inspired by the mission and to live the mission at St Vincent’s Private every day.

Our Values:

- Compassion: feel with compassion
- Justice: act with justice
- Integrity: walk the path of integrity
- Excellence: strive for excellence

Our Care

For those entrusted to our care it is:

- Provided in an environment underpinned by our mission and values.
- Holistic and centred on the needs of each patient and resident.
- High quality, safe and continuously improved to ensure best practice.
- Innovative and informed by current research, using contemporary techniques and technology.
- Delivered by a team of dedicated, appropriately qualified people who are supported in the continuing development of their skills and knowledge.
- Committed to a respect for life within the tradition of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity.

Our Hospitals

St Vincent’s Health Australia is the nation’s largest Catholic not-for-profit health and aged care provider.

St Vincent’s Private Hospital Melbourne is represented across three hospital sites located in Fitzroy, East Melbourne, and Kew.

- 504 beds (across 3 sites)
- 1,800 staff employed
- 53,000 admissions

Before you come into Hospital

Before you arrive

Planning for your visit is important and will help you understand what to expect during your stay.

At St Vincent's Private Hospital we are committed to providing you with the best patient care before you arrive, during your stay and after you leave our hospital.

Information from your doctor

Your doctor's office should provide you with information to tell you when you are coming including what time to arrive.

Your doctor will discuss your procedure and should sign a consent form with you. During this time it is important to have any questions about your procedure answered by your doctor.

The questions to ask your doctor

- The admission date and time.
- The preparation required for surgery.
- When I should fast from (no food or fluids, including water).
- Do I need to alter my medications e.g. before or on the day of surgery.
- The best preparation for discharge to home.
- Will there be any restrictions after surgery e.g. driving.

Preparing for your admission

Registration

To help us prepare for your stay we require your completed registration form 14 days prior to admission, or as soon as possible if arranged closer to the date of admission.

All patients must complete our registration form as this form becomes the basis of your medical record.

To register you can choose one of three methods:

1. Complete the paperwork you receive from your doctor's office, or download off our website.
2. Register online (proposed to go live July 2016).
3. Contact our call centre 9411 7358 or 1800 771 180.

Your doctor's rooms will instruct you on the best way for you to register.

You must complete ALL sections to the best of your ability – ask a relative or carer for help.

Pre-admission clinic

The role of the Pre-admission Clinic is to ensure you are fully prepared for your visit to hospital.

You may be contacted by the Pre-admission staff by phone to discuss your health history and during this phone call you will also receive information regarding your hospital stay.

In addition, you may be asked to attend the Pre-admission Clinic for further assessments and/or education classes relating to your surgery.

At this point the Clinic staff will also discuss discharge planning with you.

If at any stage you have questions about your admission or discharge, please contact the Pre-admission Clinic on 9411 7358.

If you live more than 100kms away you are eligible for a travel and accommodation subsidy from Victorian Patients Transport Assistance Scheme. For more information, contact Victorian VPTAS office on free call: 1300 737 073 or online at www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/rural-health/vptas-how-to-apply

For interstate patients, there are similar patient transport assistance schemes to help with the cost of getting to and from hospital. A quick online search will give you the relevant service in your state or call the Pre-admission Clinic on (03) 9411 7358.

Interpreter services

If you require an interpreter during your admission, please indicate this on your preadmission form and one will be arranged for you. Please indicate which language.

Financial arrangements

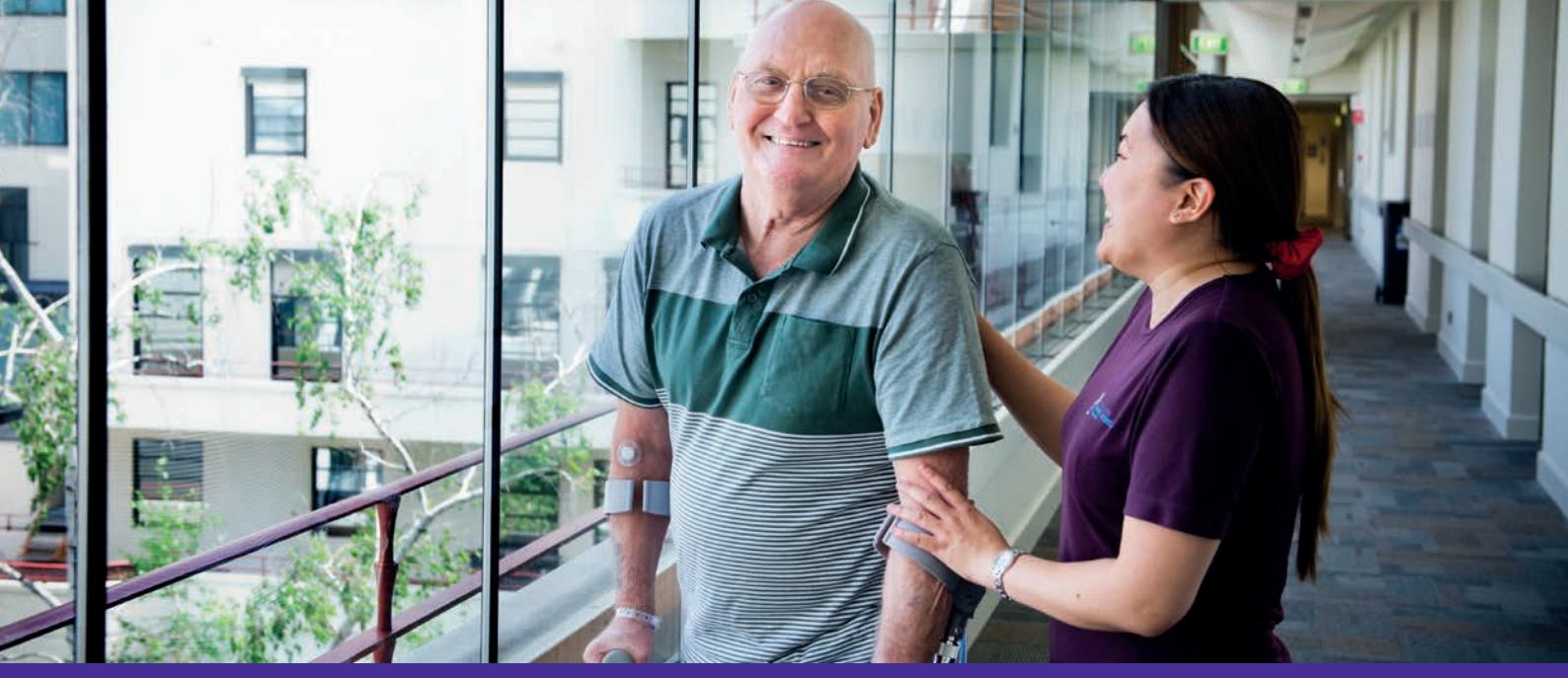
Out of pocket expenses

If you have any out of pocket expenses that may relate to your admission our Business Office Team will call and discuss these prior to your admission.

Private health insurance

Please check your health insurance details.

We suggest you contact your health fund to confirm that your admission is covered, and if there are any co-payments/excess that will apply to this admission.



Questions to ask:

- Does my policy have any restrictions?
- Does my level of cover adequately cover my hospital stay (including theatre fees and prostheses)?
- If I am likely to need inpatient rehabilitation – does my insurance cover me for this?
- Are there any out of pocket expenses (i.e. excess or co-payments) that are payable on admission?

Note: if you have been a member of your health fund for less than 12 months you will be responsible for the total fees on, or prior to admission unless we have confirmation from your fund that the claim has been pre-determined and accepted.

WorkSafe / TAC

If you have a compensation claim (WorkSafe, TAC, Third Party etc.) please confirm with your case manager or insurance company that they will cover the cost of the admission.

A written approval from the Workcover Insurer or TAC is required prior to admission. Please note that all patients covered by Workcover or TAC are eligible for shared room accommodation only. If a private room is requested and available, a co-payment of \$50 per night will apply.

If a claim has not been lodged or approval has not yet been given for the admission and you wish to claim through your private health insurance, the hospital will require confirmation from your fund that the account will be paid pending the finalisation of the claim. If this cannot be guaranteed, the full costs will be payable prior to, or on admission.

Uninsured (self-funded) patients

If you are self-insured (uninsured), please request an Estimate of Expense from your treating surgeon who will then liaise with the hospital. These fees will be payable prior to, or on admission.

The Estimate of Expenses will be based on the Item Numbers / type of procedure and any prostheses required for surgery.

If your surgeon requires any additional prostheses or the Item Numbers / type of procedure changes there may be additional fees that are payable prior to discharge. Changes to Item Numbers can alter the fees significantly.

The hospital reserves the right to refuse admission if payment is not received.

Overseas insured

Patients who are covered by an international insurance fund with whom the hospital has an agreement will be required to provide an approval prior to admission.

All other patients covered by non-contracted international insurance funds will be required to pay in full prior to, or on admission.

Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) patients

Prior to admission, eligibility will be confirmed with the Department of Veterans Affairs. If a patient has a White card, pre-approval by your Surgeon will be required.

Present your DVA card to Reception on admission.

If a private room is requested and available, a co-payment of \$50 per night will apply.

While in hospital, our Discharge Coordinators are the contact people for all DVA-related enquiries, and will visit patients during their stay.

They can assist with travel, organising any necessary aids for safe discharge and if required, facilitate referrals to Veterans Home care, community nursing and respite/convalescence.

Coming to Hospital

For information about our location and how to find your way to the Hospital please see our website (or page 15).

What should I bring in to hospital?

Checklist

Documents

Doctors letters
Pathology Reports
Consent Forms (if not sent by doctor)
X-rays and scans

Insurance Information

Health Care card, Pensioner concession card, Pharmaceutical safety net card, Health Fund card, DVA card for veterans, Medicare card.

Personal items

Pyjamas
Robe
Slippers (it is important that these are non-slip, well-fitting and enclosed)

Personal toiletries, such as:

Comb
Toothbrush and toothpaste
Shampoo and conditioner

Bank/Credit card

To pay for any out of pocket expenses.

Money

(we recommend \$50 or less)

Medications

Please write down ALL medications you are currently taking on your pre-admission form.

We strongly recommend that you call your pharmacist or GP, and ask them to give you a list of all your medications (including medication name, strength, quantity, and frequency) so that we can compare this list to your medications in hospital.

For your safety, please let us know if you have any allergies or reactions to medications to avoid prescribing similar medications during your stay.

Bring in all of your medications, in their original boxes. We can give you these medications during your admission rather than dispense more as this will be an additional cost. (Please note: the hospital will supply sedatives and strong pain-relievers so if you have your own, these will be sent home with a carer or family member).

We are unable to accept Webster packs or other medication dispensing systems.

If applicable:

Eyeglasses (with case) Hearing aid (with case)
Walking aids (e.g. frame, walking stick)
Denture cup (and supplies, including denture case)
CPAP machine

Other

You may also like to bring items to help pass the time (such as books or magazines)

Valuables

We strongly advise that non-essential items (such as laptops, jewellery, items of sentimental value and excessive money) should be left at home.

Whilst the hospital maintains security, we cannot be held liable or responsible for lost or stolen items.

Regularly used items such as reading glasses, mobile phones, hearing aids, and dentures should be stored in a safe and designated area, like your bedside table.

Do not leave any personal items on your food tray or in your bed, as these may accidentally be removed with the food tray or disposed with the linen.

Many rooms have a small safe. You are responsible for all belongings kept in your room and the safe.



Luggage Limitations

You may be admitted for surgery through our Surgical Admissions or Day Unit. This is where you will meet your anaesthetist and surgeon and be admitted by a nurse. Following surgery you will be transferred directly to the ward if staying overnight. We have limited space for storage of luggage and ask that on the day of admission you bring a small overnight bag only. If possible, please ask family members or carers to bring additional belongings to the ward after surgery as required.

Storage of Personal Items

Space is limited for storage of clothing and personal belongings in the ward. Your luggage will be labelled and stored, so it is important to minimise the size of your bag. As a guide, your bag should be no bigger than cabin baggage size.

We recommend that you label all of your personal items with your full name. As mentioned previously, please leave your valuables at home where they are safest.

Car parking

Car parking is available at all three hospitals. For parking at Fitzroy, there is a convenient multistorey car park located behind the hospital in Fitzroy Street. As Fitzroy can be a very busy area it is advisable to allow extra time for admission.

At East Melbourne there is a car park opposite the hospital in Grey St. Hourly rates apply and the automated ticket machine takes cash or credit card.

At Kew there is limited parking on the hospital grounds with restricted car parking in the nearby streets.

There is discounted parking available for longer-term patients and carers. Please ask the Nurse Unit Manager or the staff at main reception for assistance.

Preparing for your hospital stay

Visit our website www.svphm.org.au to view information videos:

“Preparing for Hospital”

“Partnering with Us in Your Care”

Ambulance transport

Following state government changes in 2014 ambulance transport can only be used for patients who have an authorized clinical need to be transported this way. In other words, it must be clinically necessary for a patient to travel by ambulance.

For transport to be clinically necessary, the patient must require active clinical monitoring/care or clinical supervision during transport.

Pensioners who used to receive government funded transport to home prior to these changes will no longer do so.

We recommend that all patients purchase Ambulance Victoria membership to cover clinically necessary transport.



Your Hospital Stay

Arriving at hospital

Come to the hospital Reception desk. You will be greeted by our Business Office Staff who will complete your admission.

- You may be admitted either via our Surgical Admissions Unit (SAU) or Day Procedure Unit (DPU). For overnight stay, your room may not be available until after your surgery.
- Your belongings will be clearly marked and delivered to your room
- If you come with a support person, they may not be able to enter SAU or DPU. Your support person is welcome to sit in our waiting area, and nursing staff will keep them informed of your progress and transfer from Recovery to the Ward.

Day procedures

Having a day procedure may mean a full day in hospital. It can mean an early start and a wait for surgery, depending on the theatre list. We want your day surgical experience to be pleasant so our staff will keep you informed of any unforeseen delays. We encourage you to speak with your admission nurse regarding any concerns at any time.

Special Instructions for Day Patients

It is essential for your safety to arrange for a family member or friend over the age of 18 to pick you up on discharge and stay with you overnight because sedation, anaesthetics and pain relief can cause drowsiness or impaired thinking.

Failure to do so may result in your procedure being postponed or even cancelled until you can find someone to care for you.

It is also important that you do not drive for 24 hours following receiving an anaesthetic.

Please wear loose and comfortable clothing on the day of your procedure. Do not wear jewellery, make-up, or nail varnish.

You will be provided with a personal discharge plan. If you have any concerns, please speak with your nurse.

Your room

All rooms at Fitzroy are single rooms. East Melbourne and Kew consist of both single and shared accommodation (with ensuite facilities). Single rooms will be subject to availability. Whilst we will consider your preferences, bed allocations are made on the day of admission and will be prioritized according to clinical need.

Telephones

Your room contains a telephone for you to use. Local calls are free. Just dial '0' then enter the phone number. For mobile/interstate calls, phone cards can be purchased from the hospital reception.

Internet access (Wi-Fi)

The hospital provides free Wi-Fi for patients and families.

Smoke free

SVPHM is a smoke free environment at all sites. Smoking is strictly prohibited within the hospital grounds. If you smoke, you may want to discuss the use of nicotine patches with your doctor.

Privacy

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne is committed to maintaining the privacy of your information and this applies to the collection, use and disclosure of your personal and health information.

If you would like more information about our privacy policies or accessing your medical record, please contact the hospital Privacy Assistant on (03) 9411 7695.

Care boards

Located on the wall in your room is a care board. This is to assist with communication between staff and patients, and includes information about the name of your nurse, and your plan of care. If you (or your family) have any questions or concerns, you may use the care board to remind yourself about questions to ask your doctor and nurse.

If the patient has English as a second language, family may like to translate information on the care board into the primary language.

Information for visitors

General visiting hours are between 2pm and 8pm each day.

For further information about nearby accommodation, public transport, and car-parking, please refer to the hospital website: www.svphm.org.au/home/patients-and-visitors/accommodation-for-visitors

To allow patients to get plenty of rest, we suggest visiting be kept to a minimum with closest family and friends. If you have any visitor restrictions, please speak with the Nurse Unit Manager upon admission.

Consideration of others: Please keep noise levels to a minimum so as not to disturb other patients.

Keeping our hospital safe: Anyone suffering from an illness (such as flu or gastro) should not visit hospital. This may cause health risks for you and other patients. In this situation, we encourage visitors to talk to patients by telephone.

Pastoral services

Coming into hospital is a different experience for everyone, and it may lead to feelings of isolation, uncertainty and vulnerability. To help with these feelings, you may find it helpful to speak with someone from Pastoral Services. Pastoral Practitioners are employed by St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne to offer spiritual and emotional support to patients and their families. They are sensitive to all religious, non-religious and cultural traditions.

Communion, the Sacrament of the Sick and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are available at your bedside. If desired, please ask the Pastoral Practitioners on your floor. Please feel free to contact your Pastoral Practitioner if you would like a visit by a chaplain/representative from your own denomination.

The hospital chapels are located to the right of the Ground Floor front entrance at both East Melbourne and Fitzroy. At Kew we have a quiet reflection room on the ward. All patients and visitors are welcome.

Teaching and learning

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne is committed to training the next generation of doctors, nurses, midwives and other healthcare practitioners. We are proud to have affiliations with a number of universities, the University of Melbourne and the Australian Catholic University.

Our nursing and midwifery students are undertaking diploma, bachelor or post graduate programs and work under the supervision of an experienced nurse or midwife and a clinical teacher.

If you have any concerns regarding the care you are receiving from one of our nursing or midwifery students, please discuss this with the Nurse Unit Manager immediately.

Our medical team also consists of specialist medical trainees. Specialist medical trainees are fully qualified registered doctors, who undertake at least 7 years of training after gaining their medical degree to gain further knowledge and skills in their chosen specialty area. These doctors may work closely with your specialist and under their supervision to assist with your care. They may also provide emergency assistance, if your specialist is not immediately available, to ensure you are safe and medically stable.

If you do not want specialist trainees to be involved in your medical or surgical care, please discuss this with your treating specialist. Your support of our hospital trainees will be greatly appreciated.

Advance care directives

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne is committed to continuing the healing ministry of Christ, striving to demonstrate Compassion, Justice, Integrity and Excellence in all that we do. Our Catholic identity calls us to value the inherent dignity of the human person and requires of us a special solidarity with the sick and the dying.

Many patients come to hospital with an existing Advanced Care Directive. These are documents developed in consultation with your GP or specialist that outline your health preferences in the event you are unable to make these decisions. These preferences are for any future treatments and are not limited to end-of-life decisions.

Please inform our hospital staff if you have, or wish to have an Advanced Care Directive.

If you have one, we will retain a copy in your medical records.

If you wish to have an Advanced Care Directive, we will facilitate a discussion between you, your family and your treating doctor.

Person centred care

At St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne, we believe that working with patients and their families is the key to providing exceptional healthcare. This philosophy is called person-centred care. It means that we involve you in planning and delivering your care, so we can meet your individual needs and preferences.

In providing person-centred care we:

- Recognise that each patient and family is different.
- Help you and your family develop healthcare skills and knowledge.
- Support you and your family to make decisions about your care.
- Respect your choices, values, beliefs and culture.

We hope you will:

- Ask questions about your care and treatment.
- Tell us about any concerns you have.
- Get involved in your care, as much as you'd like.
- Tell us if you have any special requests for your care and treatment.
- Tell us who you want to visit you and when.
- Take part in nursing handover and medical rounds.
- Tell us what we're doing well and what we could be doing better.

Your rights and responsibilities

We believe staff, patients, families and carers all have a mutual right to expect, and a responsibility to provide, respect and dignity to each other.

The following list outlines your rights as our patient in accordance with the Australian Charter on Healthcare Rights and the principles of the Human Rights Act.

Your rights as a patient:

Access to health care: you can access services to attend to your healthcare needs including pastoral and spiritual care as required.

Safe and high quality care: you receive safe and high quality health services, which are provided with professional care, skill and competence.

Communication: you receive open, timely and appropriate information about your healthcare and the treatment you are receiving in a manner you can understand.

Participation: you may join in making decisions and choices about your care and health service planning.

Parental rights: you can exercise your rights as a parent or guardian of a child.

Respect: the care provided shows respect to you and your culture, beliefs, values and personal characteristics.

Privacy: your personal privacy is maintained and

proper handling of your personal health and other information is assured.

Comment: you can comment on or complain about your care and have your concerns investigated and responded to.

Patient satisfaction

At St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne, we aim to provide the best care and service to you. It is our mission to provide exceptional care to all patients and their families.

If you are not completely satisfied with your hospital stay, please ask to speak with your nurse and/or the Nurse Manager. We would like the opportunity to resolve any of your concerns as they arise.

If you have a compliment or wish to acknowledge a staff member who has provided exceptional care ask to speak to the Nurse Manager or you may like to complete a feedback form.

When you go home you may receive a Press Ganey survey which is used to monitor patient satisfaction anonymously. You may be contacted by mail (or phone) and asked to evaluate your hospital stay. We appreciate you taking the time to provide your feedback as it helps us to improve our hospital services and continue to provide excellence in care for all patients.

If you have any concerns

If you experience any issues, we would like the opportunity to resolve them. Please notify our staff so we can provide immediate assistance.

Step 1. Alert your nurse about any concerns or questions you may have as they arise.

Step 2. If you are not satisfied with the response, you may ask to speak with the Nurse Manager who will be happy to help you resolve the matter.

Step 3. If the Nurse Manager is unable to resolve your concerns, you may submit a formal complaint, and use the services of the hospital's Patient Experience Coordinator.

Complaints management

Your feedback will help us to improve our services. To submit a formal complaint, please write a letter outlining: the situation, your concerns, and what you would like to see happen. Send to:
Patient Experience Coordinator,
St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne,
59 Victoria Parade Fitzroy VIC 3065.

For further information, please call the Patient Experience Coordinator on (03) 9411 7563. Further information is also available on our hospital website.



Partners in Safety

What you need to know when you are in hospital

**You are the centre of the health care team.
We encourage you to participate in all decisions about your treatment.**

Your safety is our priority. The best way you can help with your safety is to SPEAK UP if you have any questions or concerns. Your opinions matter.



Patients come first

- It is important that you feel comfortable during your stay, and have your questions and concerns addressed. Whenever a staff member enters your room, they should identify themselves and explain what they are planning to do. If someone does not introduce themselves, please ask them to do so.
- Make sure you understand how to use your call bell to alert your nurse. Your nurse will check on you regularly throughout the day and night.
- Please don't feel embarrassed to ask any questions. If you are still unsure about something, feel free to ask us to explain in another way. We want to work together with you – and your family – to plan your care and assist with your recovery. Effective communication is essential.



Fall prevention

How to reduce your risk of falling:

- On admission, a falls risk assessment will be completed to determine if you are at risk of a fall. If you have any fall risks, we will discuss ways to help you avoid a fall; with you and your relatives.

- Staff will put up signs:
 - to remind you to '**Call Don't Fall.**'
 - to alert staff that you require close observation when walking: '**Look at Me Please.**'
- If required, a toileting program will be developed so that you don't have to rush to the bathroom.

Useful points to help you keep safe during your stay in hospital

Getting up:

- Please turn the light on so you can see clearly.
- Please use your call bell to call for assistance.
- Wear supportive flat, non-slip shoes or Ruby Red Socks (if provided).
- When you are moving from a lying down position to standing up, try to sit on the bed for a minute or two before standing up.
- Move your feet up and down to get the blood flowing.
- Bring your 'nose over your toes' to stand up.
- Use your arms to push yourself up from the bed or chair.
- Wait a minute before you start to walk.

When you are walking:

- Take your time when turning around.
- If you have a walking aid, make sure it is in good condition and the right size and height for you. Ask staff to check the aid.
- Use your walking aid and do not rely on furniture for support: you may fall.
- Always wear suitable footwear that is non-slip and comfortable or wear the Ruby Red Socks, if provided.



Medication safety

It is important that you provide information about all of the medications you are presently taking. Medications include prescription, over the counter, herbal and natural medicines and come in different forms, such as tablets, lotions, patches and drops. It is very important that you tell us if you have had a reaction to anything in the past. You will be given a red identity band rather than a clear identity band as an alert to staff.

During your admission:

EVERY TIME you are given a medication, your nurse will:

1. Check your identity band.
2. Ask your name and date of birth (to make sure we are giving the correct medications to the correct person).
3. Ask if you have any allergies to any medications, drugs, or substances (e.g. penicillin, shellfish, or tapes).
4. Explain what medication is being given and why.

If you feel this medication is incorrect (for example: wrong amount, wrong time, wrong medication, or you don't need it), or you have any questions or concerns, do not take the medication. Speak with your nurse or pharmacist.

On Discharge:

It is very important that you are well informed about all medications that you are going to take at home.

You may be given a medicines list, printed information or brochures about your medications by the pharmacist or nurse. If you are unsure about any of your medications, it is very important that you ask a nurse, pharmacist or doctor for more information before you leave.



Infection prevention

Hand hygiene is the single most important factor in reducing infection. Your hands may look clean, but germs are not visible to the naked eye. These germs can be easily transmitted by touch. We provide hand basins and liquid soap in all patient's rooms. There may be times when these are not easily accessible, so we also provide alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) – at the hospital entry, next to all lift doors, and at all bedsides and trolleys. ABHR is a highly effective and practical alternative to hand washing. Please apply ABHR on entry and exit to the hospital, before eating, and after the toilet.

All people (including staff and visitors) need to clean their hands before they touch you. If you are unsure whether somebody has cleaned their hands, don't hesitate to ask them. This will reduce your risk of infection.

Surgical Site Infection

Most patients who have surgery do not develop an infection. If you do develop an infection, this can be treated with antibiotics. The type of antibiotic used will depend on the bacteria causing the infection.

Common symptoms will be redness and pain around the surgical site, drainage of cloudy fluid from your wound, and fever.

There are a number of ways to help prevent a surgical site infection. This includes good hand hygiene and sterile techniques (both in the operating theatre, and when performing your wound dressing). Make sure you or a carer fully understand how to care for your wound when you go home. Call your doctor immediately if you have any of the above symptoms. If you have been prescribed antibiotics, remember to take the full course, even if you are feeling well.



Pain management

It is important that you are comfortable during your stay. Our hospital staff will monitor you to make sure the pain relief we are giving you is not making you excessively drowsy, dizzy, or nauseated. Some pain medications can cause constipation so you may be prescribed or offered aperients to prevent or alleviate this unwanted side effect. If you are experiencing any unwanted side-effects or your pain control seems inadequate, please speak with your nurse, pharmacist and/or doctor about your concerns. Your healthcare team may consider prescribing different medications.

Your nurse will regularly assess your pain level by asking you to rate pain on a score of 0 (no pain) to 10 (worse pain imaginable). It is important that you are moving when you rate your pain. For example, if you have chest or abdominal surgery, you may be asked to take deep breaths or cough. If you have had limb surgery, you may be asked to move the affected limb.

Pain becomes problematic if it stops you from moving; so our goal is to reduce your pain and restore your ability to move, quickly and safely.



Preventing blood clots

Our hospital staff will assess your risk for developing blood clots. If you are at risk, treatment may include:

- Moving and walking - the best method of preventing clots. You will be encouraged to commence walking as soon as you are able to after surgery. Effective pain control is necessary.
- Wearing leg compression stockings. (Note: these stockings may be slippery, so make sure you wear shoes when you walk around).
- Using a compression pump on your lower legs.
- Taking tablets or injections to help prevent a blood clot.

If you experience any unusual symptoms, such as pain or swelling in your legs, pain in your lungs or chest, difficulty breathing – call your nurse immediately.

Have you had blood clots before? If yes, it is important to tell staff on admission.



Handing over patient information

Patients in hospital receive care from nursing, medical, and allied health staff. They need up-to-date information about your condition and treatment.

“Clinical Handover” involves the sharing of information between staff involved in your care. You can expect that staff will update you and involve you in handover information on a regular basis so that you know what is going on and your needs are met. Clinical handover is an ideal time for you to talk to your nurses about what you feel your most important needs are.



Identification

Checking your identification ensures we give you the right care.

- Always wear an identification band on your wrist or leg
- Make sure the information on this is correct. If not, let your nurse know immediately.
- Tell us if you have any allergies. If so, you will be given a red identification band.
 - Staff will check your identification before giving any medicine or before you have any tests or procedures.

If you are not sure who someone is, please feel free to ask.



Detecting changes in your health condition

Our staff are trained in noticing changes in your health, but you can help by letting staff know:

- If you do not feel well.
- If you notice a worrying change in your condition or behaviour.

Your nurse may contact your doctor on your behalf.

The **R.E.A.C.H.** model is a way of supporting you (the patient) and your family and carers to seek assistance if you notice a worrying change in your condition.

R Recognise a worrying change

E Engage with the nurse or doctor

A Act

C Call the Hospital Coordinator

H Help is on the way



Safe use of blood

Some patients will require blood transfusions as part of their hospital stay – as part of or following a major surgical operation or their ongoing medical treatment.

When the nurses give you your blood transfusion they will ask you to tell them your name and date of birth. We can give you written information about the risks and benefits of blood transfusions, so please feel free to ask your nurse or doctor for a copy.

Blood and blood components are supplied by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS). The ARCBS has strict screening protocols for donors and most of our blood is obtained in Australia where donation is from unpaid volunteers.

If you are a Jehovah’s Witness or have other objections to blood transfusions, it is extremely important that you discuss this with your doctor and that your wishes are recorded in your medical record. It is important that your wish not to have a blood transfusion is clearly written on the hospital consent form before you sign this document.



Prevent pressure injuries

Pressure injuries are caused by unrelieved pressure, shearing or friction resulting in pain and damage to skin and underlying tissue (such as muscle and bone). You may be at risk when you are lying in bed or sitting on a chair.

What you can do:

- Keep moving. Change your sitting and lying position as much as possible to reduce pressure.
- Find comfortable positions, and avoid putting pressure on bony, red, or sore areas.
- Keep skin clean and dry. Moisturise very dry skin.
- Alert your nurse and doctor if you notice any areas of your skin showing changes, or if any areas are painful.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.



Good nutrition

Eating well in hospital is important. It can help you recover from illness quicker and allow you to go home sooner. Let staff know if you:

- Have any special dietary needs.
- Need assistance at mealtimes.
- Have a poor appetite.

If you are having problems eating, or have concerns about your diet, please speak to your nurse. You may be referred to a dietitian if necessary.



Discharge

Preparing to cope at home after discharge

It is very important that you plan for being discharged. You may be tired for several days, even after minor surgery. If you have had an operation where you have an arm in a sling, need to use a walking aid or have restrictions on the way you can move or drive, you need to plan how you will manage getting fresh food, preparing meals and moving things around your home.

How will you shower and dress? If you will need to continue to wear the compression stockings, will you be able to get these on and off?

If you do not have anyone at home who can assist with these things, there are simple tricks and a large variety of aids that can enable you to be independent with all of these tasks. Our Occupational Therapists have prepared information about tips, tricks and aids for discharge. This information is available on our website www.svphm.org.au

Please have a look before coming to hospital. If you are assessed by our staff as either requiring an occupational therapy visit in hospital or home, this will be discussed with you.

You may also be seen by other allied health staff e.g. a Physiotherapist, Dietician or Social Worker depending on your needs.

The Physiotherapist will ensure you are safely mobile and have a good understanding of any exercises you need to continue and any precautions you may need to take following your procedure. They will also liaise with you, your family representative and the Discharge Coordinator to arrange ongoing physiotherapy if required.

Our Discharge Coordinators / Social Workers assist with arranging the best possible plan for discharge. This can include home nursing, home support services and respite depending on clinical need and health funding.

Preparing to leave hospital

Hospital discharge occurs at 9.30am

Transport to home

You will need to arrange your transportation home. This needs to be finalised the day before you are discharged. If you have any transportation concerns, please discuss this with ward staff.

Discharge instructions

- Make sure you fully understand your discharge instructions. Your nurse will coordinate your discharge, please ask any questions.
- To help you remember, we will provide you with written discharge instructions.
- Make sure that you feel confident knowing how to manage your wound, showering, taking medications, and any other home-care instructions.
- Pack your belongings, and check your room carefully to ensure nothing is left behind.
- Collect your x-rays and any aids that you require for home.
- If you have any questions about medications (such as cost, or reason for taking) ask to speak to the pharmacist.

Follow-up phone call: after you are discharged, a nurse may contact you by phone to check up on your progress and answer any questions that you may have.

Enjoy your stay at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne.



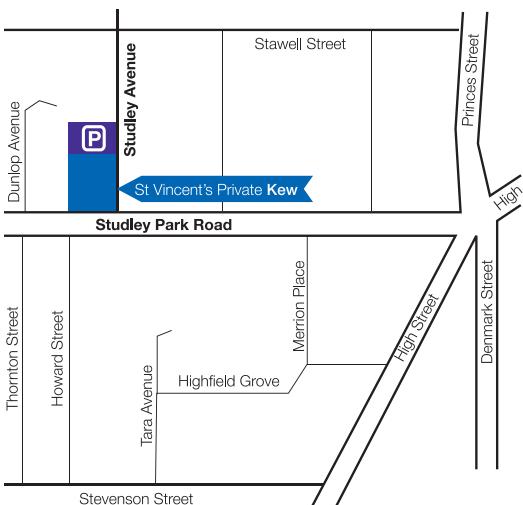
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