

Welcome to Brigham and Women's Hospital

# Guide to your hospital stay



**HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL**  
**TEACHING HOSPITAL**



## **Brigham and Women's Hospital** Founding Member, Mass General Brigham



Welcome, and thank you for choosing Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Our patient- and family-focused care involves you and your loved ones as active members of our team, discussing with you the information you need to help make the best decisions. To better prepare you for your hospital stay, I encourage you to read through this guide, which provides detailed information for you, your family and friends.

Please remember that our skilled and knowledgeable staff is here to help. We honor the trust you place in us and wish you a comfortable and healing stay at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Robert S.D. Higgins, MD, MSHA  
*President*

### [brighamandwomens.org](https://brighamandwomens.org)

As a major teaching hospital for Harvard Medical School, the Brigham is considered one of the best in the nation and is continuously recognized for quality and safety, and the innovative care that we provide.

Our website offers everything you need to know about Brigham and Women's Hospital, including:

- Detailed profiles of our physicians
- Our specialized programs and services
- What you can expect from the care we provide
- Multimedia health information from our experts
- Information on visiting the Brigham

# Before you are admitted

## Weiner Center for Preoperative Evaluation (617) 732-7484

If you are having surgery or a procedure, you are likely to have a number of tests and visits. Prior to your surgery or procedure, you will be scheduled to visit the Roberta and Stephen R. Weiner Center for Preoperative Evaluation or be scheduled for a preoperative phone assessment.

The Weiner Center is located near the 45 Francis Street entrance on The Pike. It's open Monday through Friday and appointments will be arranged by your surgeon's office.

### Preoperative Appointment

Your doctor's office will let you know:

- The date and time of your preoperative appointment
- The date and time of your surgery or procedure
- Other instructions you will need for your surgery

Your preoperative appointment will:

- Last 1-3 hours based on waiting time and specific examinations required
- Include a physical examination
- Include a review of current medications and preoperative instructions for your medications

The Weiner Center provides:

- Information and instruction from your health care professionals
- Blood tests, urine testing and an electrocardiogram as indicated
- Preoperative history-taking and physical examination
- Consultation about your anesthesia choices

### Preoperative Phone Assessment

When appropriate, the preoperative visit to the hospital is replaced by a phone assessment. A registered nurse or nurse practitioner will call you before the date of your procedure.

## Financial arrangements (617) 732-7005

Patient Financial Services:

- Will confirm your insurance coverage and financial arrangements for your hospital stay in advance of your admission
- May call to alert you about specific requirements of your health insurance plan, and/or to request further information from you
- May notify you of any payment you must bring to the hospital, such as a copayment, deductible or private-room fee



### Uncompensated Care

Brigham and Women's Hospital assists in applying for government-funded financial assistance programs, such as Health Safety Net (Free Care) and MassHealth.

Health Safety Net (HSN) is available to Massachusetts residents who meet income guidelines, are not receiving Medicaid, and either have no health insurance, or limited health insurance.

If you have any concerns about paying for your medical care, please call Patient Financial Services at **(617) 732-7005**.

## Advance directives (living wills and health care proxies)

Patients and their families often have questions about health care proxies and living wills. These documents:

- Describe your wishes about the type of medical care you would want to receive if you were unable to make these decisions for yourself
- Contain the name of the person you chose to make decisions if you cannot make them yourself

In Massachusetts, the health care proxy is a legal document. Please bring a copy of your health care proxy (along with a living will if you have completed one) with you to the hospital. For more information and copies of forms, please visit [brighamandwomens.org](http://brighamandwomens.org), or call Patient Access Services at **(617) 732-7450**.

## Items to bring from home

The hospital isn't responsible for personal belongings. To avoid losing any belongings during your hospital stay, please remove all jewelry before coming to the hospital and bring only the essentials, such as:

- Photo identification
- Your insurance card
- A list of medications that your doctor instructs you to bring
- Nightclothes, bathrobe and slippers
- Toiletry items (toothbrush, deodorant, comb, etc.)
- A small amount of money for newspapers and other incidentals



# Your admission

## Arrival and parking

Self-parking is available at the 80 Francis Street Garage, the 45 Francis Street Garage, and the 60 Fenwood Road Garage. Valet parking for patients is available at 75 Francis Street, 45 Francis Street, and 60 Fenwood Road. More parking details, such as hours of operation and fees, can be found at [brighamandwomens.org](http://brighamandwomens.org).

## Getting admitted

The Sharf Admitting Center is located in the Schuster Lobby at the main entrance at 75 Francis Street behind the information desk.

An admitting interviewer will:

- Complete your admission paperwork
- Obtain and/or confirm insurance and other information

## Same day admission

For certain surgeries and procedures, you may be admitted to the hospital on the same day of your procedure. Your doctor will inform you if you will be admitted on the same day. If so, remember the following guidelines:

On the **business** day before surgery, please confirm your surgery and arrival time by calling:

- General Surgical Procedures at **(617) 732-7625** between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Thoracic Surgery at **(617) 525-3210** between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Cardiac Surgery: If you haven't received a call by 3:00 p.m. on the business day prior to your surgery, please call **(617) 732-7678**

The night before your procedure:

- Don't eat anything after midnight or your surgery could be delayed or cancelled. This includes candy, gum, vitamins and throat lozenges.
- Refer to the preoperative information provided by the Weiner Center staff for diet instructions. Call **(617) 732-7484** with questions.



The day of surgery:

- You may brush your teeth or use mouthwash
- Don't eat anything and don't drink any type of alcoholic beverage
- Follow drinking instructions given to you by the Weiner Center during your visit or from the nurse during your preoperative phone call
- For your safety, remove all jewelry before arriving at the hospital. If you have trouble removing a ring from your finger, please see a professional jeweler for assistance.
- Don't smoke
- If you wear contact lenses, please leave them at home and wear glasses
- Wear low-heeled, comfortable shoes
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing that can be easily stored in a locker

## Admission prior to surgery

For some procedures, you may be admitted to the hospital before the day of your procedure. If you are already in the hospital on the morning of surgery:

- You will be awakened early enough to wash and change into a hospital gown
- You may receive medication that will make you drowsy and relaxed

Although you will have a scheduled time for your surgery, emergencies or other issues may cause that time to change.



## Patient Gateway

Patient Gateway is a secure, online resource that allows you to communicate with your physician, renew prescriptions, schedule appointments and authorize insurance referrals for appointments with a specialist. You can also access your laboratory results, immunization record, medication list, and health and disease information. To enroll in Patient Gateway, please visit [patientgateway.partners.org](http://patientgateway.partners.org).

# Your surgery

## Before surgery

If you are scheduled for surgery, please first check in at the Admitting Office. A staff member will then escort you to the family liaison waiting area where you will wait until you are called to the preoperative area.

When in the preoperative area:

- A preoperative nurse will interview you and check your vital signs
- You will meet your operating room nurse and anesthesiologist
- An intravenous line may be started to provide fluids and medications during your surgery and postoperative period

## Anesthesia

You will have one of the following types of anesthesia during your day surgery:

- *General anesthesia*: You will be asleep during your procedure. The anesthesiologist may have you breathe oxygen by placing a mask over your nose and mouth. You may notice a strange odor during this procedure, which is caused by the mask and tubing. Medications will be administered either through your intravenous line or through your mask, which will help you to drift off to sleep almost immediately.
- *Spinal/epidural anesthesia*: The lower part of your body will be numbed.
- *Regional anesthesia*: A specific region of your body will be numbed.
- *Local anesthesia with sedation*: The area directly around the site will be numbed and you will be relaxed or drowsy.

If you are having spinal/epidural, regional or local anesthesia, the anesthesiologist will describe what you will be feeling, as he or she numbs a specific part of your body.

With spinal/epidural and regional anesthesia, you may also receive sedation, where you will be given relaxing drugs that make you comfortable and drowsy, but you will not be completely asleep.

## After surgery

When your surgery is over, you:

- Will be monitored in the recovery room while you recover from anesthesia
- Will wear an oxygen mask
- Will be monitored by a nurse who will frequently take your vital signs
- Should ask the nurse for the medicine your doctor has ordered for you, if you are experiencing pain
- Should ask for a blanket, if you are cold

- Patients usually spend between 1-4 hours in the recovery area, depending on the operation and the type of anesthesia used

Your friends and family will be notified when they can enter the recovery room to visit you.

# During your hospital stay

Each patient has an RN Care Coordinator as a member of their health care team. Care coordination staff are available to provide information before and during your admission to the hospital.

The planning of your discharge begins early in your hospitalization. Your care coordination staff can help you and your family and friends make plans to help ensure a smooth transition. If you need help with discharge planning, speak with your nurse or call the Care Coordination Department at (617) 732-6469, or (617) 732-6462.

Prior to discharge, your nurse will explain your discharge instructions and answer any questions you may have; you will review a written copy of these instructions.

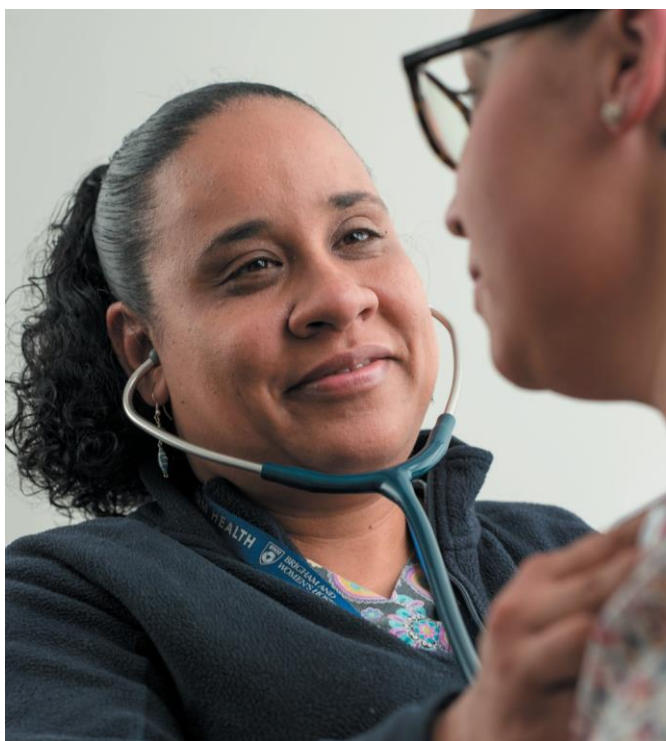
Your stay at Brigham and Women's Hospital may be as short as one day or as long as several weeks. On average, a patient is in the hospital for 2-4 days. For your convenience, it's important to begin planning for discharge as early as possible. Patients who are discharged in the day but can't leave the hospital by their discharge time are encouraged to use one of the many patient and family waiting areas.

# Visitors

The hospital is a patient- and family-focused environment. We appreciate your need to have visitors and the need of family and friends to support their loved ones while they are in the hospital.

Respecting the care and comfort needs of our patients:

- We welcome one designated family member or support person to stay with you during your stay. Visits from this support person is only limited by your need for medical care or treatments, rest, privacy, patient preference, and in case of a double room, a roommate's preference
- All visiting children must be over the age of 12, though exceptions can be made for a patient's own children
- Any visitor exposed to, or having a communicable disease (flu or a cold, tuberculosis, measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, or impetigo), should not visit patients
- It's best to limit visitors to two at a time to respect the comfort of all our patients. We recommend visiting between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m.



## Hospital stay information

### Promoting a healthy environment

We strive to maintain a healthy and secure environment. Therefore, the hospital is a non-smoking institution with restrictions on tobacco use and does not permit patients to use or have in their possession alcohol or drugs that a physician does not prescribe for medical treatment. Brigham and Women's Hospital also has a fragrance-free policy. Additionally, hospital security prohibits anyone on hospital property from possessing a weapon, except for law enforcement officers, corrections officers escorting a patient, and armored car officers who are transporting currency.

### Patient confidentiality and medical records

Brigham and Women's Hospital is committed to providing patients with high-quality health care and to forming relationships that are built on trust. This means respecting patient privacy and confidentiality of medical information. We protect patients' privacy and confidentiality rights through policies and procedures that allow access to personal and medical information only for legitimate purposes that support treatment, payment, and health care operations. Our policies and procedures are in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

You may contact Patient Access Service at **(617) 732-7450** to request a copy of "Partners HealthCare Notice for Use and Sharing of Protected Health Information" that describes how your medical information may be used and shared.

## Hospital resources and services

### Kraft Family Blood Donor Center – (617) 632-3206

We ask you to encourage your family and friends to make blood and platelet donations. Patients treated for cancer, newborns in the intensive care unit, trauma victims and other patients rely on the volunteer blood donor supply. Anyone interested in donating should call the Kraft Family Donor Center at **(617) 632-3206**, or email **BloodDonor@partners.org**.

### Care Coordination Services - (617) 732-6469 or (617) 732-6462

Nurses and social workers within the Care Coordination Department can address continuing care and psychosocial needs. They provide:

- A review of your progress during admission and plan for ongoing care and discharge
- Referrals to rehabilitation hospitals, nursing facilities, long-term acute care facilities and visiting nurses' agencies
- Psychosocial counseling, crisis intervention and referral to community resources and support groups
- Insurance or financial assistance

### Spiritual Care Services – (617) 732-7480

Chaplains can offer support by providing prayer and conversation. They can also arrange sacraments and special rituals. For more information, visit [brighamandwomens.org](http://brighamandwomens.org).

### Ethics Consultation Service – (617) 732-8590

When serious illness is involved, making medical treatment decisions for yourself or a loved one can be difficult and sometimes overwhelming. Members of the Ethics Consultation Service are available to consult with patients, families and staff who are facing serious decisions about treatment and care.

### Gift Shop and Flowers – (617) 732-7878

Shop on the Pike, located up the escalators from the 75 Francis Street Lobby on the second-floor mezzanine, offers a full-service florist and merchandise. It's open weekdays between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and on weekends between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., and you can order flowers by phone for patients in the hospital.

### Interpreter Services – (617) 732-6639

We are committed to communicating clearly and thoroughly with all patients. If you require an interpreter during your hospital stay, your nurse or doctor can arrange for interpreter services at no cost.



### Food Service – (617) 732-7120

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served every day. Food Service provides room service to inpatients every day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. For patients unable to place their own order, assistance will be provided. All menu items are available throughout day.

For patients on specially prescribed diets, a Food Service employee will review their meal order to assure that selections are appropriate. We are also happy to assist in meeting dietary requirements for patients with kosher, vegetarian, or gluten-free diets, or patients with food allergies.

### Patient Parking – (617) 732-5877

Self-parking is available at the 80 Francis Street Garage, located at the corner of Brookline Avenue and Francis Street. Patients may also self-park at the 45 Francis Street Garage located below the hospital entrance at 45 Francis Street and at the 60 Fenwood Road Garage located below the Hale Building for Transformative Medicine at 60 Fenwood Road.

Valet parking is for patient use only and is available at both of the hospital's Francis Street entrances, 45 Francis Street and 75 Francis Street, at the 60 Fenwood Road Garage below the Hale Building for Transformative Medicine, and at 221 Longwood Avenue. The 75 Francis Street entrance offers full valet services for patients 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week. Please call the Parking Office at **(617) 732-5877** with any questions, including information about parking rates.

Handicapped patients also may self-park at 45 Francis Street or at the 80 Francis Street Garage.

Visitors may park in the 80 Francis Street Garage.

### Patient Condition Information – (617) 732-5500

For patients admitted to the hospital, our patient information service will confirm your name, date of your admission, and provide a one-word report of your condition to callers. If you don't want this information released, please tell your admitting interviewer when you arrive.

### Patient/Family Relations – (617) 732-6636

The Patient/Family Relations staff provides a wide range of services to make your experience at the hospital as comfortable as possible. The staff coordinates special service requests, including:

- Providing general information about hospital policies, procedures and services
- Documenting and addressing patient and family feedback and concerns

- Assistance for patients and families seeking accommodations or community resources
- Coordinating any special needs that you or your family may have

### Notary Public – (617) 732-6636

A notary public can authorize important documents regarding power of attorney, living wills, or banking statements. The patient must have a valid photo ID, be alert and oriented, and sign the document in front of the notary public.

### Telephone

A bedside telephone is available in each inpatient room. Your family and friends may obtain your bedside telephone number by calling Patient Information at **(617) 732-5500**.

### Television Services – (617) 732-6576

Rooms have a television for each patient. For general entertainment, there are free channels and movies on-demand. A full listing of channels can be found when you turn on your television. To order expanded programming options, including patient education programs, please call **(617) 732-6576**.

### TTY Machines – (617) 732-6458

The hospital provides portable devices (TTY machines and amplified handsets) for hearing impaired patients during their hospital stay.



# Patient rights and responsibilities

Federal and state laws provide for specific patient rights. At Brigham and Women's Hospital, we recognize our responsibility to respect these rights as well as to inform you of them.

This summarizes both federal law and the Massachusetts Patients' Bill of Rights.

## Your rights as a patient

- You have the right to obtain the name and specialty of the doctor or other person responsible for your care.
- You have the right to have things explained in your preferred language.
- You have a right to confidentiality of all records and communications concerning your medical history and treatment to the extent provided by law.
- You have a right to a prompt response to all reasonable requests.
- You have a right to request and receive an explanation as to the relationship, if any, of this hospital and your doctor to any other health care facility or educational institution, insofar as any such relationship relates to your care.
- You have a right to request and receive information about financial assistance and free health care.
- You have a right to obtain a copy of any rules or regulations of this hospital which may apply to your conduct as a patient.
- You have a right upon request to inspect your medical records, request an amendment to, or receive an accounting of disclosures regarding personal health information, and for a reasonable fee, receive a copy of your record.
- You have a right to receive a copy of your medical record free if you show that your request is to support a claim or appeal under any provisions of the Social Security Act in any federal or state financial needs-based benefit program.
- You have a right to refuse to be observed, examined or treated by students or any other staff without jeopardizing your access to care.
- You have a right to refuse to participate as a research subject.
- You have a right to personal dignity, and to the extent reasonably possible, to privacy during medical treatment and other care.
- You have the right to have your cultural, psychosocial, spiritual, and personal values, beliefs, and preferences respected.
- You have the right to request pastoral and other spiritual services.
- You have the right to pain management.
- You have a right to quick life-saving treatment without discrimination due to economic status or source of payment.
- You have the right, if you are a female rape victim of childbearing age, to receive medically and factually written information prepared by the commissioner of public health about emergency contraception; to be promptly offered emergency contraception; and to be provided with emergency contraception upon request.
- You have a right, if refused treatment for economic status or lack of a source of payment, to prompt and safe transfer to a facility that agrees to provide treatment.
- You have a right to informed consent to the extent provided by law.
- You (or your representatives) have the right to participate in the creation and practice of your care plan. The hospital recognizes the health benefits provided by the presence of loved ones while patients are in the hospital. We welcome one designated family member or support person to stay with the patient at any time. This designated support person's visits would only be limited by the patient's need for medical care or treatments, rest, privacy and patient preference. A support person may be a spouse, adult child, parent, close relative, friend, domestic partner or different sex or same sex significant other.
- You have a right, if suffering from any form of breast cancer, to complete information on all alternative treatments that are medically possible.
- You have a right, if you are a maternity patient, to receive information about the hospital's rate of cesarean sections and related statistics.
- You have a right to request and receive an itemized explanation of your medical bill.



- You have the right to discharge planning evaluation and to participate in the development of your discharge plan.
- You have the right to make informed decisions regarding your care or to have those decisions carried out by your representative as permitted by state law. The right to make informed decisions includes being informed about your health status, being involved in care planning and treatment and being able to request or refuse treatment.
- You have the right to create an advance directive which may include giving someone the right to make decisions about your care to a representative, as well as choosing a support person.
- You have the right to quick notification of a family member or representative of your choice when you are admitted to the hospital.

Brigham and Women's Hospital is committed to responding to patient's issues or concerns about patient care and safety. We encourage patients and families to contact Patient Relations at **(617) 732-6636** if there is an issue or concern. If the concern is not resolved through this process, you have the right to file a grievance and you may contact any of the following agencies:

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health,  
Division of Health Care Quality  
(617) 753-8000**

99 Chauncy Street, 2nd Floor  
Boston, MA 02111

**Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine  
(781) 876-8200**

200 Harvard Mill Square, Suite 330  
Wakefield, MA 01880

The Joint Commission at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org), using the "Report a Patient Safety Event" link in the "Action Center" on the home page of the website; by fax to **(630) 792-5636**; by mail to Office of Quality and Patient Safety, The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181.

Or you can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complain Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, **1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD)**.

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

## Your responsibilities as a patient

By taking an active role in your own health care, you can help your caregivers best meet your needs. That is why we ask you and your family to share with us certain responsibilities. They include:

- Letting us know your expectations about hospitalization and treatment.
- Asking questions and making sure you understand any instructions given to you so that you can safely care for yourself when you leave the hospital or doctor's office.
- Being open and honest with us about your health history, including all medications you are taking and any legal or illegal addictive substances you use.
- Telling us about any situation at home or work that may affect your ability to care for yourself, so that we can direct you to resources that can help.
- Letting us know if you feel you cannot follow a plan of care that has been prescribed, or telling us when things do not seem to be going well, so that, together, we can develop the right plan of care for you.
- Appointing a health care proxy and completing an advance care directive, so that we can know what kind of care you wish to have should you become unable to tell us.
- Expressing concerns to your caregivers in a respectful manner (if you need more help or are angry or upset about your care, a Brigham and Women's Hospital Patient and Family Relations representative can help you).
- Being honest with us about your financial needs so that we may connect you to resources that can help cover your medical expenses.
- Letting us know if you have objections to students or researchers participating in your care.
- Being considerate of Brigham and Women's Hospital staff and property, as well as other patients and their privacy.

**It is the policy of Brigham and Women's Hospital to treat all patients and not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, citizenship, alienage, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age or disability.**

**We recognize that patients may face unique health care challenges, and we commit to caring for you with respect, dignity and cultural humility. Let us know how you identify yourself and how our services can best meet your needs.**

## Notes







Founding Member, Mass General Brigham

75 Francis Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
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**[brighamandwomens.org](https://brighamandwomens.org)**