

# Dear patient, demand your rights

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**D**ear Patient, The healing profession being built on the foundations of implicit faith and trust between you and your doctor, any controversies on medical, ethical or legal issues hamper the quality and success of treatment. As a patient, therefore, you and your family should be aware of your rights as well as responsibilities when unfortunately faced with an ailment needing medical attention. Your rights are the healthcare provider's responsibility and vice versa.

Irrespective of the differences in ancillary facilities provided in different hospitals and between room categories within a hospital, a certain minimum standard of medical and nursing care is built into the contract between the healthcare provider and you. Your right to compassion and kindness from all hospital employees cannot be overstressed. You have a right to express your grievances and complaints to the doctor or the hospital management and get them redressed.

You have the right to know

the name of the doctor/s treating you to know about the probable diagnosis, treatment planned, the prognosis of the disease and also to obtain all necessary information for understanding your condition. You can demand transfer to another facility once you are informed of the necessity of and alternatives to the transfer. You have the right to be informed of the possible financial implications of the proposed treatment at admission and,

subsequently, when there is a change in the medical condition or treatment modality. You can accept or refuse any treatment after being informed of the risks, benefits and consequences of your decision.

You are free to get discharged even against the advice of the treating doctor. (You will be asked to sign the "Discharge against Medical Advice" form). You have every right to be informed before any research protocol is

initiated; and to refuse to be included in the research protocol. You can demand, in writing, a photocopy of your entire medical records.

Your right to the confidentiality of your medical information is unquestionable. This should be disclosed only to the medical personnel directly responsible for your care or to any statutory authorised body like a court of law. You have the right to total privacy during a physical examination. While in hospi-



tal, you can avoid receiving visitors and guests unacceptable to you. You can demand an itemised copy of the final bill and clarify any doubts and misgivings with the billing official.

You have a right to be informed of the safety, effectiveness and potential side-effects of the surgery to be performed or the medication administered before you sign the consent form.

## Your responsibilities

You should provide accurate information to the hospital authorities on personal identification details, your past illnesses, hospitalisations, medication, allergies and any other issue related to your health. As a customer, you have a responsibility to pay for the services billed for in a timely manner as per the hospital policies, if you are not covered by a cashless mediclaim policy. Under the cashless scheme too, certain items clearly mentioned are excluded and you have a responsibility to pay for them. For the cashless benefit, you have to provide accurate information and the cashless benefit card attached to your policy to the hospital

authorities.

You should abide by all hospital rules and regulations. Comply with the 'No smoking-no alcohol-no spitting' policy; be considerate of the noise levels and the privacy of other patients. You should follow the security rules of the hospital and comply with the visitor policies to ensure the rights and comfort of all patients. You should treat the hospital staff, other patients, and visitors with courtesy and respect. You have a responsibility to help maintain a clean environment on the hospital premises and not litter the place with waste paper, food packages, leaves, bottles, etc. You should not take any medication without the knowledge of your doctor.

So, the next time you visit a hospital, be armed with the knowledge of your rights as a patient and also be ready to fulfil your own responsibilities towards the written as well as unwritten contract of faith and trust with your doctor and hospital. Follow these simple rules and see what a world of difference it makes.

Your Doctor

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