



Resolving Concerns During Your Healthcare Experience



Most healthcare professionals are committed to providing safe, compassionate, and respectful care. If something doesn't feel right, it's often helpful to begin by asking questions and sharing your concerns with the members of your care team. Many misunderstandings can be resolved through open communication.

If your concern isn't addressed, or if you believe your safety, rights, or dignity are at risk, you have the right to ask for additional assistance.

Step 1: Document Your Experience

If you believe a significant concern occurred, write down:

- Dates and times
- Names and roles of those involved
- What happened
- What was said
- Questions you asked
- The responses you received
- Any witnesses
- Copies of discharge paperwork or other relevant documents

Clear documentation can be helpful if you decide to pursue a formal review.

Step 2: Speak with Your Nurse or Healthcare Provider

Many concerns can be resolved by discussing them directly with the person providing your care.

Consider saying things like:

- "I'd like to better understand your recommendation."
- "I'm still concerned about my symptoms."
- "Can we talk through my options together?"
- "Can you explain why this is the recommended approach?"

Step 3: Request the Charge Nurse

If your concerns continue or you feel they haven't been addressed, you can ask to speak with the Charge Nurse, who helps oversee patient care during each shift.

A Charge Nurse may be able to:

- Clarify the plan of care.
- Address communication concerns.
- Coordinate discussions with additional members of the healthcare team.
- Help resolve misunderstandings.

Step 4: Ask to Speak with the Attending Physician, Midwife, or Clinical Supervisor

If you would like another explanation or additional medical guidance, you may request to speak with the supervising physician, attending physician, supervising midwife, department chief, or other clinical leader involved in your care.

Step 5: Contact the Patient Advocate or Patient Relations Department

Most hospitals have a Patient Advocate or Patient Relations office whose role is to help patients and families resolve concerns about communication, quality of care, respect, or the overall patient experience. Patient advocates can often help facilitate conversations between patients and the healthcare team.

Step 6: Request Hospital Leadership

If your concerns remain unresolved, you may request to speak with hospital leadership, such as:

- Nurse Manager
- Department Director
- Unit Administrator
- Chief Nursing Officer
- Chief Medical Officer
- Hospital President or Chief Executive Officer (depending on the issue and the hospital's process)

Step 7: External Reporting (When Appropriate)

If you believe there were serious concerns related to patient safety, discrimination, professional conduct, or healthcare quality that were not adequately addressed by the hospital, you may consider contacting the appropriate external organization.

Depending on the situation, this may include:

- Your state's Department of Public Health or other healthcare licensing agency.
- The state licensing board for the healthcare professional involved (such as the medical, nursing, or midwifery licensing board).
- The hospital's accrediting organization, if applicable.
- Your health insurance plan, if the concern relates to coverage or access to care.
- Civil rights agencies if you believe discrimination occurred.
- An attorney if you believe you have experienced significant harm and are seeking legal advice.

In some situations, you may also choose to share your experience with advocacy organizations, community organizations, or the media. Consider doing so thoughtfully and with an understanding of privacy considerations and the potential impact of making personal health information public.

Remember: reporting a concern can help improve patient care, accountability, and safety for future families.