

PATIENTS' RIGHTS

Dear patients,

during your stay at Varaždin General Hospital (later in the text: the Hospital) we would like to provide some basic information about your rights regulated by the **Protection of Patients' Rights Act (Official Gazette no. 169/04, 37/08)**, in order to build mutual trust, understanding, and partnership between patients and healthcare professionals.

The protection of patients' rights in the Republic of Croatia relies on the principles of humanity and accessibility.

Your rights while receiving healthcare are:

1. The right to shared decision-making and exception to the shared decision-making right

The right to shared decision-making includes:

- the right to be informed
- the right to accept or refuse a certain diagnostic or therapeutic procedure

These rights may exceptionally be limited only when justified by your health condition.

2. The right to be informed and to refuse to receive information

You have the right to be fully informed in an understandable and approachable manner about:

- your health condition,
- recommended examinations and procedures, the advantages and risks of having or not having them done as well as the dates of the planned procedures,
- the outcome of the treatment,
- your right to decide on the recommended procedures,
- the further course of receiving health care,
- recommended lifestyle,
- health insurance rights.

You will receive this information upon your oral or written request from a doctor providing healthcare services directly. You always have the right to seek second expert opinion on your health condition, which has to be issued upon your oral or written request by an appropriate specialist who has not directly provided a specific healthcare service to you.

Before each procedure you have the right to be informed about the names and qualifications of the staff who are providing you with healthcare services directly. Also, after each procedure you are entitled to be informed of the success or failure and the results of the procedure, as well as the reasons for any discrepancies in the expected results.

You have the right to refuse to receive information about the nature of your health condition and the expected outcome of the proposed and/or undertaken measures by means of a written and signed statement. If you are a person with full legal capacity, you cannot waive the right to be informed in cases where you must be aware of the nature of your illness in order not to endanger the health of other people, but you have the right to designate in writing or in any other credible manner a person who will be informed instead of you.

It is your right to be informed even in cases where your consent is not a condition for starting therapy (e.g. in emergency cases).

A legal representative/guardian has the right to be informed about a patient with impaired reasoning ability, in accordance with age, i.e. physical, mental, and psychological condition.

3. The right to accept or refuse a diagnostic or therapeutic procedure

You have the right to accept or refuse a particular diagnostic or therapeutic procedure, except in cases of urgent medical intervention when the failure to undertake one would endanger your life and health, or cause permanent damage to your or other people's health. You accept a particular diagnostic or therapeutic procedure by signing a consent form. A blind person, a deaf person unable read, a mute person unable to write, and a deaf-blind person, accept particular diagnostic or therapeutic procedure by means of a statement in the form of a notarial document appointing a legally competent person to accept or refuse such a procedure on their behalf.

4. Protection of patients who are unable to give consent

For an unconscious patient, a patient with a serious mental disorder, a legally incapacitated patient, or a minor patient, except in the case of an urgent medical intervention, the consent to accept a diagnostic or therapeutic procedure is signed by his/her legal representative/guardian, who may withdraw the consent given at any time in the interest of the patient by signing a statement refusing the procedure.

If the interests of the patient and his/her legal representative/guardian are in conflict, the doctor is obliged to immediately inform the authorized social welfare center.

If the consent of the legal representative/guardian cannot be obtained due to an emergency, the patient will undergo a diagnostic or therapeutic procedure only in the event that failure to take the procedure would directly endanger his/her life or the life of another person, or would pose a serious and immediate risk or serious damage to his/her or other people's health. The procedure may be carried out without the consent of the patient's legal representative/guardian only for as long as the aforementioned danger persists.

5. Protection of the patient undergoing scientific research

If you participate in scientific research, you have the right to receive precise and understandable written information about the nature, importance, consequences, and risks of the research and to give a signed consent of your participation. You also have the right to give your consent to participate in medical education. For a legally incapacitated or minor patient, the consent is given by his/her legal representative/guardian, who may withdraw the consent at any time in the interest of the patient.

6. Interventions on the human genome

Interventions aimed at modifying the human genome may only be undertaken for preventive, diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, provided that the aim of the modification is not to introduce any modifications in the genome of the patient's descendants. Tests indicating genetic diseases or serving to identify patients as carriers of the gene responsible for the disease or to detect a genetic disposition or susceptibility to the disease may only be carried out for health purposes or for scientific research related to health purposes, including appropriate genetic counselling.

7. The right to access medical records

You have the right to access all medical records related to the diagnosis and treatment of your illness and to request a copy of the medical records at your own expense. In the event of a patient's death, unless the patient expressly forbade it during his or her lifetime, the right to access and request a copy of the medical records is granted to the spouse or common-law partner, adult child, parent, adult sibling, and legal representative/guardian. The patient shall state his or her objection to the access to his/her medical records in a written statement certified by a notary public.

8. The right to confidentiality

You have the right to have your health information kept confidential and to give a written statement listing the people who may be informed about your admission to the Hospital and your health. You may name the people to whom you prohibit the disclosure of this information in writing.

9. The right to maintain personal contacts

During your stay in the Hospital you have the right to receive visitors in accordance with the house rules as well as to prohibit visits to a specific person or people.

10. The right to leave the healthcare institution voluntarily

You have the right to leave the Hospital voluntarily, except in cases when it would harm your health and the health or safety of other people. You must give a written or oral statement about your intention to leave the Hospital in front of two witnesses, present at the same time, who will then sign a statement about your intention to leave the institution. If the patient chooses to self-discharge without notice, the doctor is obliged to enter this information in the patient's medical records. In case the patient is in poor health, the doctor is obliged to inform the designated person about the patient's self-discharge from the Hospital without notice. If the patient has lost decisional capacity or is a minor, the doctor is obliged to inform his or her legal representative/guardian.

11. The right to privacy

During an examination or treatment, especially when receiving personal care, you have the right to conditions that ensure privacy.

12. The right to compensation

Your right to compensation for damage is compliant with the provisions of the Civil Obligations Act (Official Gazette no. 35/05, 41/08, 125/11, 78/15).

13. Your other rights are: protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or harassment, effective pain control, provision of care in a safe environment, the right to requests made in advance, the right to file a complaint, and the protection of rights of people with mental disorders.

A verbal complaint can be made on site to the head of the department or the department's head nurse. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, upon the receipt of the complaint the person is informed about the procedure for submitting the complaint at the Hospital (available at www.obv.hr) in the following order:

- the head of service/head of department,
 - the deputy director, and in his absence, the director's assistant for quality,
 - the director,
- for the field of nursing:
- the head nurse/technician of the unit/department and the head of the department
 - director's assistant for nursing – the hospital's head nurse and/or deputy director, and in his absence, the director's assistant for quality
 - the director

A complaint can be submitted:

- in person to the clerk's office/registry book (all three locations)
- via mail to the address: Opća bolnica Varaždin, Ivana Meštrovića 1, 42 000 Varaždin
- via e-mail to the address urudzbeni@obv.hr

If the complaint is received at any official e-mail of the Hospital, the complaint is registered and forwarded for resolution.

If you have not received a reply concerning the actions taken regarding the complaint or if you are not satisfied with them, you are entitled to file a written complaint to the Commission for the Protection of Patients' Rights in the regional autonomous administrative unit, Franjevački trg 7, 42 000 Varaždin, or to the Ministry of Health, Ksaver 200a, 10 000 Zagreb, National Health Info Line 0800 – 7999;

Director:
Assist.prof.dr.sc. Damir Poljak, mag.soc.geront.