

Accreditation

Northwest Medical Center is a member of the Alabama Hospital Association, and the American Hospital Association, and is licensed by the Alabama State Health Department.

The hospital and the home health agency each are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. This accreditation represents professional and national recognition reserved for facilities that provide high quality health care. Our voluntary request for evaluation by JCAHO is your assurance that our facility meets the highest professional standards of medical care in organization, equipment and personnel.



Joint Commission

on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

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Welcome

The entire staff at Northwest Medical Center would like to extend a warm welcome to you. We want you to know that your comfort and recovery are our main concerns. We will all be working together as a team to make your stay as pleasant as possible and return you to good health.



As a patient at Northwest Medical Center, you are in the skilled and sensitive hands of excellent doctors, nurses, and other technicians. They are experts in using the most up to date diagnostic and treatment technology. We take pride in offering our patients personalized health care and we promise to do our best to see that you are comfortable and receive outstanding medical care.

We hope this booklet will acquaint you with Northwest Medical Center. During your hospital stay, always feel free to ask questions or make suggestions about your care. It is very important that you are a participant in your own care and recovery. Your rights and responsibilities as a patient are outlined in this booklet.

We wish you a speedy recovery.

Chuck Spann

Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

Admission

The Admitting Department works with your physician to make your admission procedure as simple as possible. You will be asked to supply routine information on yourself, your insurance coverage, and make the necessary financial arrangements. This information remains confidential and is necessary for medical and hospital records. At the time of your admission, you will be asked for your hospital insurance identification card, policy, and other pertinent information.

Consent Forms

A consent form for treatment must be signed by you, your next of kin, or another authorized person. Specific authorization must be given for surgery, some diagnostic tests and procedures, and the release of information to your insurance company. Consent forms for minors must be signed by parents or legal guardian. If you do not understand our forms, please ask for an explanation.

Identification Band

The identification band placed around your wrist allows hospital personnel to check your name and hospital identification number when administering medications or performing routine procedures and tests. This safeguard is for your protection. Please do not remove this band until after you are discharged.

Volunteers

Volunteers serve in a number of areas at the hospital. They deliver mail, assist in transporting patients, provide support services for nursing and work on many hospital projects. These people who give their most valuable commodity, their time, are an important part of the health care team.

Valuables

Northwest Medical Center does not assume responsibility for any valuables, clothing, or other personal items. Please leave valuables at home, send them home with your family members, or request that such items be placed in the hospital safe. Eyeglasses, contact lenses, and dentures should be kept in protective containers when not in use.

Procedures Before Surgery

We have specialty trained, experienced surgical staff committed to your safety and comfort throughout your surgical procedure. If you have questions about your operation or about what to expect during the next few days, please talk to your doctor or nurse about your surgical procedure.

If a pre-operative stay is necessary, various diagnostic procedures may be requested by your physician. An anesthesia provider will also visit with you prior to your surgery. The operation will be explained to you by your physician and then you will sign the consent form.

If you are having an outpatient surgical procedure, a nursing history and physical assessment will be completed along with any pre-operative tests which are ordered by your physician. Please bring a list of medications you are taking as well as a list of previous surgeries.

Recovery Room

Following surgery, you will be taken to the recovery room, where you will be watched closely and your vital signs will be checked frequently. Time spent in the recovery room varies greatly. While you are in the recovery room, your family will not be permitted to visit you.

Medication From Home

Please do not keep medications from home at the hospital unless your physician tells you to do so. All medications must be stored securely. Be sure to advise your physician and nurses if you have been taking medications and/or herbal preparations recently or if you have any drug allergies.

Special Concerns

Northwest Medical Center strives to meet any special needs, when possible. Please share with your nurse any special concerns. We are equipped to meet these needs with such resources as 24-hour available interpreters through Language Line Services and other resources.

Your Hospital Stay

Accommodations

All patient rooms are private at Northwest Medical Center. However, in the event of high occupancy, certain private rooms may be converted to semi-private rooms. If such should occur, please give us your understanding and cooperation.

For your convenience, our rooms have electrically controlled beds with bedside controls which are designed for your comfort and safety. Your nurse will show you how to operate the controls.

In addition, an individual temperature control is located in each room for your comfort.

Telephone

No charges apply for local calls. Local calls may be made by pressing “9”, waiting for a dial tone, then dialing the number you desire. Long distance calls must be placed through the switchboard operator and may be charged either to your telephone credit card, or placed as a “collect call”. To place a long distance call, press “0”, and the hospital operator will assist you. Your friends and relatives may dial you directly, and your nurse will be glad to give you the direct number for your room.

Meals

Besides providing you with nourishment, your diet is also a valuable tool to your recovery. Your doctor orders the diet that best suits your needs. Your physician’s orders will determine the type of food served to you. If you have questions about your special diet, please contact our Dietician at 205-487-7758. Unless you are having a procedure that requires withholding your meals, you will be served Breakfast 6:30 AM; Lunch 11:30 AM; and Dinner 4:30 PM. All meals at Northwest Medical Center are prepared by the trained staff of the Dietary Department.

Each nursing unit is stocked with a variety of light snacks for patients. These snacks include juices, milk, ice cream, cereal, and crackers. Please ask the nursing staff to make these snacks available to you. In some circumstances, your physician or dietician may prescribe snacks for you based on your nutritional needs.

Television

Your television is free for your use whenever you wish. Controls for the television are located on the nurse call system or on the bedrails.

Mail and Flowers

All mail and flowers addressed to you will be delivered to your room. Mail received after discharge will be forwarded to your home address. If flowers are received after your discharge, the florist will be informed that you have gone home. Flowers are not permitted in the Intensive Care Unit.

Clergy

Notify your minister of your hospital stay so that he or she can make arrangements to visit you. If you do not have a minister, our nurses and social services department will help you contact a minister of the denomination of your choice.

Lost and Found

If you misplace any of your belongings, please notify the nurse. Items left behind are kept in the hospital's safe for a reasonable length of time before they are discarded. Remember never to leave valuables in your room.

Information

If you need any additional educational material related to your condition or treatment, please contact your nurse or caregiver.

Your Safety

Bedrails

Side rails may be raised on the bed for your protection. When they are used, please cooperate with the nurses. Do not try to lower the rails, and never try to climb over them. If you need help, press the nurse-call button.

Asking for Assistance

While you are hospitalized, your ability to move around may be hampered, whether as a result of illness or medication. Your doctor will indicate on your chart whether you can get out of bed and if assistance is needed. Members of the hospital staff are trained to assist you in getting out of bed, moving to a chair or wheelchair, or going to the bathroom. To assure your safety, please call on the staff to assist you. Please wear slippers at all times when you are out of bed, and be particularly cautious in the bathroom. Should you find that you need assistance in the bathroom, please pull the emergency cord which will alert the staff that you need help.

Medications

Your physician will prescribe the drugs you need during your hospital stay and they will be administered by the hospital staff. If you have brought medication with you, contact your nurse. For your protection, medication cannot be kept at the bedside. Maintenance type drugs such as medications for diabetes or high blood pressure, will be administered by the hospital staff with the permission of your physician.

Personal Articles

Since the use of electrical appliances, such as radios, hair dryers, etc., may interfere with the operation of medical equipment or pose a safety hazard, patients may wish to leave such appliances at home. If you must use an electric appliance, it must first be checked and approved by our maintenance personnel. Before using, notify your nurse that you have brought an electric appliance and need approval from maintenance.

Smoking

Northwest Medical Center is a health care facility; therefore, smoking is not allowed in the hospital. Patients and visitors may only smoke in the designated smoking area. Hospital staff will direct you to the designated smoking area outside the facility. **Smoking at the front entrance is prohibited.**

Fire Drills

Please do not be alarmed if you hear the fire alarm. Frequent fire and disaster drills are conducted to assure maximum safety for our patients in case of an actual emergency situation.

Infant and Child Safety

We at Northwest Medical Center are committed to your child's safety and security during his or her hospital stay. We would like to remind you of the following key points to ensure your child's safety:

- 1) Become familiar with the hospital personnel.
- 2) Never leave your baby or child alone or unsupervised.
- 3) Check for proper ID before giving your baby/child to anyone.
- 4) If you are unsure of a hospital employee ID for any reason, press your call light and ask for your nurse.
- 5) Place your baby's/child's crib on the side of the bed away from the door. This allows you to see visitors and hospital staff as they approach your baby/child.

Remember, your child's protection is priority with us. You as a parent play a key role in assuring that these priorities are met.

Valuables

The hospital cannot be responsible for any valuables that you may wish to keep in your room. You are encouraged to send jewelry, credit cards, and money home. There is a safe available for valuables if necessary.

Special Services

Mother's Tray

The hospital provides a free tray each meal for the parent of a hospitalized child under age of 12, if the parent is staying in the room with the child.

Patient Education

Depending on your type of illness, your physician may order individual education on controlling or monitoring your illness. Patient education will be provided by nursing staff as needed. It is encouraged that a family member be present during these teaching sessions.

Social Services/Discharge Planning

The Social Services/Discharge Planning Director is on staff to assist you with problems associated with your illness or hospitalization. The Social Worker can help you make use of your financial resources, as well as work with you and your physician to coordinate your discharge and post-hospital care. Should you need it, a list of home health agencies in the area can be obtained through Social Services.

For Family & Friends

Cafeteria

Our hospital operates a dining room where your guests may obtain meals. Our cafeteria Morning hours are 6:30 to 9:00a.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday). The Lunch hours are 11:00 to 1:00 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday) Closed for breakfast on Sunday. The cafeteria is closed to the public on Saturdays.

Vending Machines

The vending machines are located on the first floor of the hospital and provide a selection of food and beverages 24 hours a day.

Visiting Hours

Your visitors are welcome guests in our hospital. Observance of visiting hours helps us best fulfill our commitment to provide the best service to you and our other patients. As part of your overall therapy, the doctor may suggest certain guidelines that are more restrictive than the ones listed below. Please ask your visitors to observe the following requests:

- *Only two visitors should be in the room at one time.*
- *Visitors should leave the room promptly when treatment is to be given, or when asked to leave by hospital staff of the physician.*
- *Visitors and patients are requested to speak quietly and to be considerate of other patients.*

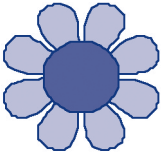
Because of the nature of critical care units, more specific policies are established for ICU visitors. Plants, flowers, and other gifts cannot be brought into the patient's room. We ask that visitors be kept to immediate family members and that visits last no longer than 15 minutes. Listed below are ICU visiting hours:

10-10:15 AM 6-6:15 PM
12-12:15 PM 8-8:15 PM
2-2:15 PM

Any personal request on visiting hours can be posted by the nurses. If the patient or family wishes limited visitors, the nurses will post this information on the patient's door.

Parking

The hospital parking lot is well lighted and accessible to the hospital. We request that visitors do not use the emergency department parking spaces or employee parking. These are reserved for use by the emergency patients, their families, and employees. Parking is allowed at the entrance only when picking up or dropping off a patient.



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Front Lobby
Open 8 AM – 4 PM
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patient rooms***



**Stop by or call
205-487-7700**

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Hello Kitty®, Willow Angels®,
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Financial Arrangements

During the admitting process, you were asked for your insurance identification card so that coverage could be verified and arrangements could be made for the payment of your bill.

The Business Office will work with you in every way to see that your insurance coverage is utilized to the fullest. However, you are ultimately responsible for your account.

If you anticipate difficulty concerning payment of your hospital bill, please contact the Financial Counselor in the Business Office at 487-7703 to make the necessary arrangements.

The Business Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

Delayed Charges

It sometimes requires 24 hours or more for a charge from hospital departments to be posted to your account. Therefore, charges for treatments or medicines ordered during the 24 hours preceding your discharge may not appear on your bill until after you have left the hospital.

If you have questions about your bill, please do not hesitate to call the hospital Business Office at 487-7705.

Professional Fees

Your hospital bill does not include fees for professional services of your physician, surgeon, or consulting physicians, nor fees for the services of physician specialists, such as radiologists or pathologists.

Although your bill will carry a hospital charge for the administration of these services, separate charges will be billed by these physicians to cover their professional fees.

If additional financial arrangements are required, please contact the business office at 487-7705.

Going Home

Your physician will advise you of the day you may leave the hospital. Please allow at least one hour from the time your physician has informed you of your discharge for the nurses to complete all necessary paperwork. Your discharge planning nurse will bring the papers to you in your room and explain any discharge orders.

Reminders

A few reminders as you prepare to go home:

- 1) Remember to keep all records of bills, insurance forms, payments of claims, receipts and other papers because many of these expenses are tax deductible.
- 2) If you plan to change your residence, give the admitting office your new forwarding address for any mail or gifts that might come to you after your discharge.
- 3) Follow your doctor's recommendations for your continued recovery.
- 4) If you require continued care and meet qualifications, our nurses and therapists can help you complete your recovery at home. Ask us about our homecare.

AMBULANCE



Northwest MEDICAL CENTER

Emergency and Non-Emergency Transport

24-Hour Ambulance Service

205-487-7166

“First There - First Care”

Patients' Rights

Northwest Medical Center respects the rights of the patient, recognizes that each patient is an individual with unique health care needs, and because of the importance of respecting each patient's personal dignity, provides considerate, respectful care focused on the patient's individual needs.

Northwest Medical Center affirms the patient's right to make decisions regarding his/her medical care, including the decision to discontinue treatment, to the extent permitted by laws.

Northwest Medical Center assists the patient with his/her responsibilities in the exercise of those rights.

RIGHTS

Access to care: The right to receive the best care medically indicated, regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, age or ability to pay. The right to be informed in advance of furnishing or discontinuation of care when possible.

Respect and Dignity: The right to considerate, respectful care at all times and circumstances, with recognition of your personal dignity including psychosocial, spiritual, and cultural beliefs. *The care of the dying patient will include optimal emphasis on comfort and dignity by:*

- a. treating primary and secondary symptoms that respond to treatment as desired by the patient or surrogate decision maker
- b. Acknowledgement of the psychosocial and spiritual concerns of the patient and the family concerning the dying and expression of grief by the patient and family.

Privacy and Confidentiality: The right to personal and informational privacy during your treatment and care, including the right to exclude any and all family members from participating in health care. To have a family member of your choice notified promptly of your admission, unless you request this information to remain confidential. The right to have your physician notified promptly of your admission to the hospital. You have the right to expect privacy of your medical records.

You also have the right to wear appropriate personal clothing and religious or other symbolic items, as long as they do not interfere with diagnostic procedures or treatment.

You have the right to be interviewed and examined in surroundings designed to assure reasonable visual and auditory privacy. This includes the right to have a person of one's own sex present during certain parts of a physical examination, treatment, or procedures performed by a health professional of the opposite sex and the right not to remain disrobed any longer than is required for accomplishing the medical purpose for which the patient was asked to disrobe. You have the right to expect that any discussion or consultation involving his/her case will be conducted discreetly and that individuals not directly involved in his/her care will not be present without his/her permission.

Personal Safety: The right to expect reasonable safety, free from abuse or harassment, as the hospital practices and environment are concerned. You have the right to be free from restraints of any form that are not medically necessary. You have the right to access protective services.

Identity: You have the right to know the names and duties of persons concerned with your care.

Information: You have the right to request complete and current information about your condition and treatment, in terms you understand, including unanticipated outcomes of care. You have the right to access information in your medical record within a reasonable timeframe.

Communication: You have the right to access people outside the hospital by means of visitors and by verbal and written communication. You have the right to have an interpreter if needed if you do not speak or understand the predominant language at no cost to you or your family.

Consent: You have the right to be involved, whenever possible, in decisions about your care including the right to refuse treatment, and to leave the hospital even if your doctors advise against it. To the degree possible, this should be based on clear, concise explanation of his/her condition and of all proposed technical procedures, including the possibilities of any risk of mortality or serious side effects, problems related to recuperation, and

probability of success. The patient shall not be subjected to any procedure without his/her voluntary, competent, and understanding consent or the consent of his/her legally authorized representative. Where medically significant alternatives for care or treatment exist, the patient shall be so informed.

You have the right to participate in the development and implementation of the care plan.

You have the right to participate or not participate in investigative studies without compromising access to care.

Living Will Declaration and Advance Directive: You have the right to be given an opportunity to develop an Advance Directive which may include information regarding withholding resuscitative services and foregoing or withdrawing life sustaining treatment, and have the terms of your advance directive complied with by the health care facility and caregivers to the extent permitted by law. You have the right to designate a decision maker.

Consultation: You have the right to consult with a specialist and/or another physician.

Continuity of Care: You have the right to receive information about your care needs after discharge, to be given information about resources and to receive assistance in making necessary arrangement. You have the right to receive a complete explanation of the need for transfer to another facility and the alternatives to such a transfer.

Hospital Charges: You have the right to request and receive an explanation of your bills for service received in this hospital.

Hospital Rules and Regulations: You have the right to be informed of the hospital rules and regulations applicable to your conduct as a patient.

Pain Management: You have the right to appropriate assessment and management of pain.

Resolution of Complaints: You have the right to a mechanism for resolving conflicts that arise concerning your care by informing the physician, nursing supervisor, quality resource manager, or administration of the concern. The state agency may be contacted directly at: *Alabama Department of Public Health – Division of Healthcare Facilities, 201 Monroe Street, Suite 600, Montgomery, AL 36104 – Attention Complaint Department* or by dialing the *Hotline Number at 1-800-356-9596*. Patients/families may contact Hospital Administration at 205-487-7737 for patient care and safety concerns or may contact the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations at 1-800-994-6610 or by emailing complaint@jcaho.org

RESPONSIBILITIES

Provision of Information: You are responsible for giving complete and accurate information about your health and medical history, including information about any unexpected changes.

Compliance with Instructions: You are responsible for following instructions given by your caregiver. You are responsible for telling us if you do not understand the instructions, or if you cannot follow them. If you refuse treatment or fail to follow instructions, you will be responsible for the outcome.

Hospital Charges: You are responsible for making certain you understand your health care bills and for making arrangements to meet financial obligations. A patient account representative is available to assist you in financial matters.

Respect and Consideration: You are responsible for being considerate of the rights of other patients and hospital personnel and for assisting in the control of noise, smoking, and the number of visitors. You are responsible for being respectful of the property of other persons and of the hospital.

If you have any questions or if you desire more information about these rights and responsibilities, please contact Administration at 487-7737.

Northwest Medical Center has established the Ethics Committee as an internal mechanism to address ethical issues. The Ethics Committee serves in a consultative capacity to patients and their families. Patients or families facing ethical issues may contact hospital staff, administration, or medical staff for referral of issues to the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee may be accessed by contacting Social Services at 487-7798.

Pain Management

During hospitalization, you may experience discomfort or pain. The health care professionals at Northwest Medical Center consider each patient to be a unique individual worthy of compassionate care. Information about your current pain level and options to manage your pain will be discussed in your initial assessment interview. The pain management plan developed with your health care team will be evaluated on an on-going basis. Any questions concerning your pain management should be addressed with your physician or nurse. The health care team values your partnership in determining a suitable pain management plan during your hospital stay and continuing recovery after discharge.

As a patient you can expect appropriate assessment and management of pain, information about pain and pain relief measures, a concerned staff committed to pain management, health professionals who respond quickly to reports of pain, and state of the art pain management.

Pain Management Options

There are many options for pain management. Your healthcare team will discuss medications and other alternative measures for managing your pain.

Patient Controlled Analgesia

Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) refers to giving pain medication as ordered by the physician through a PCA pump into an existing intravenous line (IV). The patient controls the amount of pain medication given by pushing a button when pain occurs. The pump will be set to deliver only the dosage your doctor feels is safe for you. Discuss any questions about patient controlled analgesia with your physician or nurse.

Epidural Pain Management

Epidural pain management refers to pain medications given through a pump into a very small tube that is placed in the patient's back. The epidural pain management option is used for certain surgical procedures. The anesthesia provider determines the dosage of medication given and directs the pain management plan as long as the epidural is in place. For further information concerning this pain relief option, talk with your surgeon, anesthesia provider, or nurse.

Advance Directive Policy

Northwest Medical Center supports a patient's right to participate actively in healthcare decision making. Through education and inquiry about the presence of an Advance Directive and/or Living Will Declaration, this hospital will encourage patients to communicate their preferences. Such communications will guide others in healthcare decision making for the patient if he/she becomes incapacitated.

The patient will be given information regarding Advance Directives. If the patient desires to formulate an Advance Directive, a packet of information may be obtained from Social Services (205-487-7798). The hospital shall not condition the provision of medical care or otherwise discriminate against an individual based on whether or not the individual has executed an advance directive.

Northwest Medical Center and its caregivers shall comply with the patient's advance directive(s) to the extent permitted by law. The patient shall be transferred to another doctor or healthcare facility of his/her doctor(s) or agent of his/her doctor(s), or the healthcare facility cannot respect the patient's advance directive requests as a matter of "conscience". In the event a patient wishes to initiate an advance directive during his/her hospitalization, Social Services shall be contacted.

Deciding About Your Health Care

If you are 19 or older, the law says you have the right to decide about your medical care. If you are very sick or badly hurt, you may not be able to say what medical care you want. If you have an **advance directive**, your doctor and family will know what medical care you want if you are too sick or hurt to talk or make decisions.

Advance Directives

An advance directive is used to tell your doctor and family what kind of medical care you want if you are too sick or hurt to talk or make decisions. If you do not have one, certain members of your family will have to decide on your care.

You must be at least 19 years old to set up an advance directive. You must be able to think clearly and make decisions for yourself when you set it up. You do not need a lawyer to set one up, but you may want to talk with a lawyer before you take this important step. Whether or not you have an advance directive, you have the same right to get the care you need.

Types of Advance Directives

In Alabama, you can set up an Advance Directive for Health Care. The choices you have include:

- A **living will** is used to write down ahead of time what kind of care you do or do not want if you are too sick to speak for yourself.
- A **proxy** can be part of a living will. You can pick a proxy to speak for you and make the choices you would make if you could. If you pick a proxy, you should talk to that person ahead of time. Be sure that your proxy knows how you feel about different kinds of medical treatments.
- Another way to pick a proxy is to sign a **durable power of attorney for health care**. The person you pick does not need to be a lawyer.

You can choose to have any or all of these three advance directives: living will, proxy, and/or durable power of attorney for health care.

Hospitals, home health agencies, hospices, and nursing homes usually have forms you can fill out if you want to set up a living will, pick a proxy, or set up a durable power of attorney for health care. If you have questions, you should ask your own lawyer or call your local Council on Aging for help.

When You Set Up An Advance Directive

Be sure to sign your name and write the date on any form of paper you fill out. Talk to your family and doctor now so they will know and understand your choices. Give them a copy of what you have signed. If you go to the hospital, give a copy of your advance directive to the person who admits you to the hospital.

What Do I Need to Decide?

You will need to decide if you want treatments or machines that will make you live longer even if you will never get better. An example of this is a machine that breathes for you. Some people do not want machines or treatments if they cannot get better. They may want food and water through a tube or pain medicine. With an advance directive, you decide what medical care you want.

Talk to Your Doctor and Family Now

The law says doctors, hospitals, and nursing homes must do what you want or send you to another place that will. Before you set up an advance directive, talk to your doctor ahead of time. Find out if your doctor is willing to go along with your wishes. If your doctor does not feel he or she can carry out your wishes, you can ask to go to another doctor, hospital, or nursing home.

Once you decide on the care you want or do not want, talk to your family. Explain why you want the care you have decided on. Find out if they are willing to let your wishes be carried out.

Family members do not always want to go along with an advance directive. This often happens when family members do not know about a patient's wishes ahead of time or if they are not sure about what has been decided. Talking with your family ahead of time can prevent this problem.

You Can Change Your Mind at Any Time

As long as you can speak for yourself, you can change your mind any time about what you have written down. If you make changes, tear up your old papers and give copies of any new forms or changes to everyone who needs to know.

Giving

Have you considered giving the “Gift of Life”? Unfortunately, the opportunity to truly help others by offering them new life usually comes at a time when we are, or our loved one is very ill with no hope of recovery. At a time like this, we realize the grief you would be feeling. Such grief is also felt by others who have no hope for the future - unless you are willing to help.

Ideally, family members should discuss their wishes on organ donation among themselves before the emotional and traumatic time immediately preceding the death of a family member.

If you have considered organ donation or would like to discuss organ donation with someone, you may speak with your nurse.

Anyone who has made the decision to become an organ donor, and has thoroughly discussed this decision with their family and physician, may obtain a donor card by contacting the Alabama Organ Center at 1-800-252-3677.

Patient Safety Guidelines

To Our Patients

Patient safety is important and we need your help with it. Everyone has a role in making health care safe – physicians, health care executives, nurses and technicians. Health care organizations across the country are working to make health care safety a priority. You as the patient, can also play a vital role in making your care safe by becoming an active, involved, and informed member of your health care team. Here are ways you and your family can help us provide safe care:

Medications

1. Tell us ALL medications you are taking including those prescribed by your physicians, eye drops, ear drops, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and minerals. Make sure you include alternative, herbal, and homeopathic medications and substances and topicals (lotions). We also need to know if you smoke, chew tobacco, drink alcoholic beverages, or take illegal drugs.
2. Tell us anything you are allergic to or had reactions to (such as a rash, stomach reaction, breathing problems, etc.).
3. Tell us any past positive or negative medication effects.
4. Keep a written list of your medications, including your doses, dose form, and time you take each medication (schedule).
5. Be sure you understand all instructions about taking your medications and if you do not, ask us to clarify for you and your family.
6. If we provide a medication that doesn't look right, questions us about it.
7. Ask to be told the name and purpose of every drug we give to you to take.
8. Don't take any medication unless the caregiver has checked your ID band first and compared it to the Medication Record or other patient identifier.
9. Tell us if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
10. A copy of your medication administration record may be provided to you upon your request.

Other Helpful Thoughts

1. Don't get out of bed by yourself unless the nurses and your doctor say it is safe. Call for assistance. Should you need assistance while in the bathroom, please pull the emergency call light and wait for assistance.
2. Check the paper on your meal trays to be sure you received your tray and prescribed diet.
3. Do not leave your hearing aide, dentures, eyeglasses on your meal tray.
4. Keep your personal possessions to a minimum. Send any items you don't need home with family.
5. Speak up if you have any questions or concerns.
6. If your doctor has not told you about tests or procedures and a caregiver comes in to do a test or procedure, speak up. Have us double check the recorded order from your doctor.
7. Don't let anyone do a test or procedure who has not checked your ID band.
8. Tell the doctors, nurses, and other caregivers how you feel. Don't feel like you are complaining. They need to know.
9. Learn about your condition and treatment. Ask questions.
10. If you see an unsafe situation, or hazardous condition, please let us know.
11. Confirm where on your body surgery is going to be done with nursing staff and your surgeon before going to the Operating Room or Procedure Room (i.e., which side of the body, what type of procedure)
12. For your protection, patients and visitors must wear shoes when not in a patient room.
13. The Fire/Safety regulations allow only two chairs per patient room. Please do not move furniture from one room to another.

Rapid Response Team

Northwest Medical Center now offers a Rapid Response Team. The Rapid Response Team is made of specially trained individuals whose responsibility is to assist care givers in appropriately assessing our patients and providing the necessary treatment in order to prevent a life threatening emergency. This team is available at the patient and/or families' request, should you feel that your situation needs further attention. To access the Rapid Response Team, you may ask any staff member and the team shall be paged.

Hotline Information

If you have feelings of depression or just need to talk with someone about your feelings, please let your nurse, physician, or social worker know. You may also call the Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or if you are 60 years of age or older, you may call the 24 hour Friendship Line at 1-800-971-0016. These lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the event that the line is momentarily busy, please dial back. (The Crisis Line nor the Friendship Line are affiliated with Northwest Medical Center).

Complaint/Conflict Resolution

Northwest Medical Center provides a mechanism for responding to and resolving patients/families concerns or complaints regarding their care or hospital service. We ask that all complaints regarding your service at Northwest Medical Center be brought to the attention of the Department Manager or Administration. However, the patient and/or patient representative maintains the right to notify the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Medicare beneficiaries having a complaint regarding quality of care, a coverage decision, or wish to appeal a premature discharge, may contact the Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation (AQAF). Contact numbers may be obtained from the Quality Resource Management Department.

It is the goal of Northwest Medical Center to review, investigate, and respond to each patient's grievance within seven days. If the complaint cannot be resolved within seven days, or if the investigation will not be completed within seven days, the patient or patient representative shall be informed that the hospital is working to resolve the complaint and that written follow-up will be provided within 30 days.

Important Phone Numbers

Administration	205-487-7737
House Supervisor (Issues about your care).....	205-487-7166
<i>(Will page House Supervisor after hours or contact clinical representative)</i>	
Admitting	205-487-7760
Business Office	205-487-7703
Day Surgery	205-487-7713
Emergency Department	205-487-7738
General Information.....	205-487-7697
Home Health	205-487-7900
Human Resources	205-487-7735
Laboratory.....	205-487-7725
Medical Records	205-487-7724
Nursing Administration	205-487-7772
Physical Therapy.....	205-487-7786
Radiology.....	205-487-7748
Respiratory Therapy	205-487-7782
Social Services.....	205-487-7798

Physician Listing

CARDIOLOGY

Saji Jacob, M.D.
(205) 487-4224

DERMATOLOGY

Matthew Abele, M.D.
(205) 487-7730

DENTISTRY

Rodney Tittle, M.D.
(205) 487-5004

EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Michael Baker, M.D.
(205)-487-7000

Michael Bindon, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

John Boswell, M.D.
(205) 487-4224

Martin Hajjar, M.D.
(205)-487-7000

Kevin Hornsby, M.D.
(205)-487-7000

Ike Ijemere, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

Timothy Jordan, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

Rhett Krone, M.D.
(205)-487-7000

Timothy Lovely, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

Paul Southall, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

Jarred J. Thomas, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

Lauren Walter, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

Michael Ward, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

George Weatherly, M.D.
(205)-487-7000

Weston Welker, M.D.
(205) 487-7000

FAMILY PRACTICE

Kimberly Balasky, D.O.
(205) 698-7111

Brent Boyett, D.O.
(205) 921-5556

William C. Box, M.D.
(205) 698-7111

R. William Davis, M.D.
(205) 698-7111

Gary Fowler, M.D.
(205) 487-1586

Jason Hatfield, D.O.
(205) 487-7556

J. Travis Miller, D.O.
(205) 468-2754

Farouk Raquib, M.D.
(205) 487-4535

GASTRO- ENTEROLOGY

Ralph Lyerly, M.D.
(205) 250-6869

GENERAL SURGERY/ VASCULAR SURGERY

William R. Harvey,
M.D.
(205) 487-7730

William S. Konetzki,
M.D.
(205) 487-0550

Jeffrey D. Manord,
M.D.
(205) 487-7800

Octavian Tomescu,
M.D.
(205) 921-2372

GYNECOLOGY

Ted R. Cox, M.D.
(205) 487-1203

William L. Lenahan,
M.D.
(205) 487-2004

INFECTON CONTROL

Cathy Mitchell, RN
phone: 205-487-7720

INTERNAL MEDICINE

John Boswell, M.D.
(205) 487-4224

James R. Moss, M.D.
(205) 487-4224

Raj Sehgal, M.D.
(205) 487-3284

M. Dale Spruiell, M.D.
(205) 487-4224

Gary D. Thomas, M.D.
(205) 487-4224

ONCOLOGY

Shelby Sanford, M.D.
(205) 487-4405

Syed Fuad Hussany,
M.D.
(205) 487-4405

Pamela Hughes, M.D.
(205) 487-4405

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Donald P. McCurdy,
M.D.
(205) 943-4600

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

Patrick Boyett, D.O.
(205) 487-1111

Todd Smith, M.D.
(205) 487-7730

OTOLARYNGOLO- GY (ENT)

Jon Graham, M.D.
(205) 487-7536

PATHOLOGY

Monnette Baker, M.D.
(205) 487-7725

Kevin Giadrosich, M.D.
(205) 487-7725

Martin Palmer, M.D.
(205) 487-7725

Brian Ragland, M.D.
(205) 487-7725

PEDIATRICS

Kara J. Carpenter, M.D.
(205) 487-0700

PLASTIC SURGERY

Luis Pernia, M.D.
205-345-8820

PODIATRY

Danallynn Guasteferro,
D.P.M.
(205) 487-7730

PSYCHIATRY

David U. Anakwenze,
M.D.
(205) 487-7916

Evaldas Radzevicius,
M.D.
(205) 487-7916

Kamal A. Nagi, M.D.
(205) 657-1475

PULMONOLOGY

Paul Stephen, M.D.
(205) 487-7725

RADIOLOGY

Jeremy M. Ferris, M.D.
(205) 487-7748

Randall Finley, M.D.
(205) 487-7748

Scott Loveless, M.D.
(205) 487-7748

John Waldo, M.D.
(205) 487-7748

John Yeoman, M.D.
(205) 487-7748

UROLOGY

George Adams, M.D.
(205) 487-7730

Eric Brewer, M.D.
(205) 487-7730

Henry Hudson, M.D.
(205) 487-7730

Carll Sanfelippo, M.D.
(205) 487-7730

CLINICS

Karen Draper, C.R.N.P.
205-487-4405

Andrea Dooley, C.R.N.P.
(205)487-7556

Lou Ann Hubbard,
C.R.N.P.
(205) 468-3355

Tami Green, C.R.N.P.
(205) 487-1586

Dana Norris, C.R.N.P.
(205) 487-1586

Alissa Hood, C.R.N.P.
(205) 487-4224

Help prevent errors in your care.

To prevent health care errors, patients are urged to “Speak Up™”.

Everyone has a role in making health care safe. That includes doctors, health care executives, nurses and many health care technicians. Health care organizations all across the country are working to make health care safe. As a patient, you can make your care safer by being an active, involved and informed member of your health care team. An Institute of Medicine report says that medical mistakes are a serious problem in the health care system. The IOM says that public awareness of the problem is an important step in making things better.

The “Speak Up™” program is sponsored by The Joint Commission. They agree that patients should be involved in their own health care. These efforts to increase patient awareness and involvement are also supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

This program gives simple advice on how you can help make health care a good experience. Research shows that patients who take part in decisions about their own health care are more likely to get better faster. To help prevent health care mistakes, patients are urged to “Speak Up.”

Speak up if you have questions or concerns. If you still don't understand, ask again. It's your body and you have a right to know.

- Your health is very important. Do not worry about being embarrassed if you don't understand something that your doctor, nurse or other health care professional tells you.
- Don't be afraid to ask about safety. If you're having surgery, ask the doctor to mark the area that is to be operated on.
- Don't be afraid to tell the nurse or the doctor if you think you are about to get the wrong medicine.
- Don't be afraid to tell a health care professional if you think he or she has confused you with another patient.

Pay attention to the care you get. Always make sure you're getting the right treatments and medicines by the right health care professionals.

Don't assume anything.

- Tell your nurse or doctor if something doesn't seem right. Expect health care workers to introduce themselves. Look for their identification (ID) badges. A new mother should know the person who she hands her baby to. If you don't know who the person is, ask for their ID.
- Notice whether your caregivers have washed their hands. Hand washing is the most important way to prevent infections. Don't be afraid to remind a doctor or nurse to do this.
- Know what time of the day you normally get medicine. If you don't get it, tell your nurse or doctor.

- Make sure your nurse or doctor checks your ID. Make sure he or she checks your wristband and asks your name before he or she gives you your medicine or treatment.

Educate yourself about your illness. Learn about the medical tests you get, and your treatment plan.

- Ask your doctor about the special training and experience that qualifies him or her to treat your illness.
- Look for information about your condition. Good places to get that information are from your doctor, your library, respected websites and support groups.
- Write down important facts your doctor tells you. Ask your doctor if he or she has any written information you can keep.
- Read all medical forms and make sure you understand them before you sign anything. If you don't understand, ask your doctor or nurse to explain them.
- Make sure you know how to work any equipment that is being used in your care. If you use oxygen at home, do not smoke or let anyone smoke near you.

Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (advisor or supporter).

- Your advocate can ask questions that you may not think about when you are stressed.
- Ask this person to stay with you, even overnight, when you are hospitalized. You will be able to rest better. Your advocate can help make sure you get the right medicines and treatments.
- Your advocate can also help remember answers to questions you have asked. He or she can speak up for you when you cannot speak up for yourself.
- Make sure this person understands the kind of care you want. Make sure he or she knows what you want done about life support and other life-saving efforts if you are unconscious and not likely to get better.
- Go over the consents for treatment with your advocate before you sign them. Make sure you both understand exactly what you are about to agree to.
- Make sure your advocate understands the type of care you will need when you get home. Your advocate should know what to look for if your condition is getting worse. He or she should also know who to call for help.

Know what medicines you take and why you take them. Medicine errors are the most common health care mistakes.

- Ask about why you should take the medication. Ask for written information about it, including its brand and generic names. Also ask about the side effects of all medicines.
- If you do not recognize a medicine, double-check that it is for you. Ask about medicines that you are to take by mouth before you swallow them. Read the contents of the bags of intravenous (IV) fluids. If you're not well enough to do this, ask your advocate to do it.
- If you are given an IV, ask the nurse how long it should take for the liquid to run out. Tell the nurse if it doesn't seem to be dripping right

(too fast or too slow).

- Whenever you get a new medicine, tell your doctors and nurses about allergies you have, or negative reactions you have had to other medicines.
- If you are taking a lot of medicines, be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist if it is safe to take those medicines together. Do the same thing with vitamins, herbs and over-the-counter drugs.
- Make sure you can read the handwriting on prescriptions written by your doctor. If you can't read it, the pharmacist may not be able to either. Ask somebody at the doctor's office to print the prescription, if necessary.

Use a hospital, clinic, surgery center or other type of health care organization that has been carefully checked out. For example, The Joint Commission visits hospitals to see if they are meeting The Joint Commission's quality standards.

- Ask about the health care organization's experience in taking care of people with your type of illness. How often do they perform the procedure you need? What special care do they provide to help patients get well?
- If you have more than one hospital to choose from, ask your doctor which one has the best care for your condition.
- Before you leave the hospital or other facility, ask about follow-up care and make sure that you understand all of the instructions.
- Go to Quality Check at www.qualitycheck.org to find out whether your hospital or other health care organization is "accredited." Accredited means that the hospital or health care organization works by rules that make sure that patient safety and quality standards are followed.

Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team.

- You and your doctor should agree on exactly what will be done during each step of your care.
- Know who will be taking care of you. Know how long the treatment will last. Know how you should feel.
- Understand that more tests or medications may not always be better for you. Ask your doctor how a new test or medication will help.
- Keep copies of your medical records from previous hospital stays and share them with your health care team. This will give them better information about your health history.
- Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. If you are unsure about the best treatment for your illness, talk with one or two additional doctors. The more information you have about all the kinds of treatment available to you, the better you will feel about the decisions made.
- Ask to speak with others who have had the same treatment or operation you may have to have. They may help you prepare for the days and weeks ahead. They may be able to tell you what to expect and what worked best for them.

The goal of the Speak Up™ program is to help patients become more informed and involved in their health care.