

# Patient Rights and Responsibilities



[www.averasacredheart.org](http://www.averasacredheart.org)

*Sponsored by the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters*



More than a century has passed since the light of Avera Sacred Heart Hospital began to shine on Yankton. In 1897, the Benedictine Sisters first opened their doors and began to provide care and compassion to the sick.

Today our light casts a healing glow over 135,000 residents in southeastern South Dakota and northeastern Nebraska and now illuminates a state-of-the-art center of care, always expanding to meet the changing needs of this region. And yet, it is still the same simple light of healing that has always guided our mission: to reach out to those who are hurting.

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# **YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PATIENT**

At Avera Sacred Heart Hospital we want you to have the best possible physical, spiritual and emotional support during your stay with us. We want you to know what your rights and responsibilities are, and we encourage you to talk openly with those involved in your care. After leaving the hospital, if you have a question or feel a situation is unresolved and are unsure where to turn, please call our business office at 668-8109, where your question will be answered, or directed to the appropriate party, so that you may receive information in a manner you understand.

## **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT**

- To care without discrimination based on age, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, ability to pay, gender identity or expression.
- To have visitors of your choosing without restriction based upon the visitors race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or ethnicity, culture or language.
- To expect your personal privacy to be respected to the fullest extent consistent with the care prescribed for you.
- To expect all communications and other records pertaining to your care, including the source of payment for treatment, to be kept confidential, unless you have directed otherwise.
- To determine who may visit you.
- To expect reasonable safety insofar as the hospital practices and environment are concerned.
- To know by name the physicians, nurses and staff members responsible for your care.
- To discuss with your primary physician your diagnosis, the treatment prescribed for you, the prognosis of your illness and any instructions required for follow-up care.

- To have appropriate assessment and management of pain.
- To state-of-the-art pain management.
- To know the reasons you are given various tests and treatments.
- To know the general nature, risk and benefits of any procedure for which you have given your consent.
- To refuse to participate in medical training programs and research projects.
- To change your mind about any procedure for which you have given your consent.
- To refuse to sign a consent form if you feel everything has not been explained to your satisfaction.
- To refuse treatment and to be informed by your physician of the medical consequences of this action.
- To request a consultation or second opinion from another physician.
- To change physicians.
- To change hospitals.
- To examine your hospital bill and to receive an explanation of it.
- To have access to the Guide to Patient Services during your stay in the hospital.
- To be free from verbal, mental, physical and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- To be informed of your health status.
- To be involved in care planning and treatment.
- To request or refuse treatment.
- To formulate advance directives.
- To have practitioners and staff provide care that is consistent with your advance directives.
- To have a family member or representative and your own physician notified promptly upon your admission to the hospital.

## **YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY**

- To know and to follow rules and regulations.
- To give cooperation and to follow the care prescribed or recommended for you by your physicians, nurses or allied health personnel.
- To provide your caregivers with accurate and complete information about present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications and other matters relating to your health.
- To ask your physician or nurse what to expect regarding pain and pain management.
- To discuss pain relief options with your physician and nurse.
- To work with your caregivers to develop a pain management plan.
- To ask for pain relief when pain first begins.
- To help your caregivers assess your pain.
- To tell your caregivers if your pain is not relieved.
- To tell your caregivers about any concerns you have about taking pain medication.
- To accept the consequences for your actions if you refuse treatment or do not follow the instructions of your caregivers.
- To notify your physician or nurse if you do not understand your diagnosis, treatment or prognosis.
- To let your nurse and your family know if you feel you are receiving too many visitors.
- To respect the privacy of your roommate.
- To accept the financial obligations associated with your care and to fulfill them as promptly as possible.
- To advise your nurse, physician or any staff member of any dissatisfaction you may have in regard to your care at the hospital.
- To be considerate of the rights of other patients and hospital personnel and to assist in the control of noise and the number of visitors you receive.

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# **PATIENT'S GUIDE TO SAFETY**

## **How to Prevent Falls**

Everyone tries to be careful to avoid falls, but when you are sick or injured you may be more prone to accidental injury from falls. Because of the increased risk of falling when you are sick, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital has developed a program designed to reduce the risk of injury while you or your loved one is here. Our efforts can be successful only if our patients and their support system, if available, become our partners in this fall prevention program.

## **Special Precautions**

When you or your loved one was admitted to the hospital, a nurse asked some questions to help determine if there were steps that would be helpful to prevent falls. If these questions indicate a high risk for falls, a plan to prevent falls was developed for you or your loved one. A red sign was placed on the door to alert all staff to your safety needs. Staff will be stopping in and checking with you or your loved one periodically throughout the day and night as to any need you may have. This might be a drink of water or to go to the bathroom.

## **How to Promote Your Own Safety**

- Use your call button to ask for help getting out of bed if you feel unsteady.
- Ask for help going to the bathroom or walking around the room or in hallways.
- Wear non-slip socks or footwear.
- Lower the height of the bed and the side rails.
- Talk to your physician if your medicine makes you sleepy, light-headed, sluggish or confused. Ask how to reduce these side effects or if you can take another medicine.

## **Use of Side Rails**

In the past, hospitals have been able to place the four (4) side rails in the up position as a means of providing patient safety. For many years, side rails have been viewed as a restraint in nursing homes by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS, formerly known as HCFA).

CMS now views the use of side rails in hospitals as a protective restraint, too. The reason for this is that there are documented cases of worse injury from falls (including deaths) when patients have gone over the top of raised rails or have gotten trapped in the rails or between the rails and mattress.

## **Protective Restraints**

Occasionally, a protective restraint may be necessary to prevent injury to you or your loved one. Safety devices such as vests, belts, wrist ties and side rails are used only when other alternatives have not been successful in maintaining patient's safety.

The following information is offered to help you understand the use of these devices:

- The health care staff determines that a restraint is necessary to ensure patient safety. Restraints are used under the supervision of these trained staff members.
- The staff may contact your family if need for restraint is indicated. They will be given the option to sit with you.
- A physician will be contacted regarding staff concerns and a written order for restraints will be obtained.
- The staff will frequently reevaluate your condition or that of your loved one and continued need for safety devices.
- The staff will routinely check to see that you or your loved one is comfortable and that his or her needs are met. If you have any questions about the use of protective devices, please do not hesitate to talk to the nursing staff.

## **AVERA SACRED HEART HOSPITAL CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS**

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital wishes to promote open communication regarding your hospital experience. We encourage you to call the respective Department Director at (605) 668-8000 or call the Compliance Officer at (605) 668-8707 to ask questions or to voice concerns or complaints. Should you have a concern that is unresolved, you have the right to contact:

South Dakota Department of Health  
600 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 773-3361

And/or

Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Boulevard  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
(800) 994-6610  
[complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:complaint@jointcommission.org)

## **BILLING QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION**

Medical bills and how they get paid can be very confusing. We have tried to answer some more commonly asked questions. However, each situation has the potential to be different based on the circumstances involved. Please do not hesitate to contact your insurer or one of our business office professionals.

### **What information do I need to provide?**

Our staff has already begun working on your behalf even before you arrived at the hospital. We have several professionals dedicated to making sure your medical bills are handled quickly and professionally. The people you speak with upon admission/registration gather information required to submit your claims accurately and completely, including some information in certain circumstances to comply with federal and state regulations to help ensure appropriate parties are notified should there be a determination that there is a third party or liability that should be responsible. If you have insurance cards you should bring them with you each time you visit the facility. In general, you need to provide the latest information regarding your address, phone number and insurance information.

### **What are Precertification/Preauthorization requirements?**

Depending on your plan, your insurance company may have requirements for you to contact them before you receive services from a hospital. In some instances you may need to contact your insurance provider up to a week ahead of planned hospital services. If you do not follow your insurance plan's precertification/preauthorization requirements they may not pay your hospital bill, leaving you with an unexpected bill to pay. Whenever your doctor wants you to have hospital services, please consult with your insurance company to see if they require precertification/preauthorization.

**Will I receive an itemization of my hospital charges?**

We have found that most of our customers do not want to receive a detailed, itemized bill. We would be happy to send you an itemized bill any time you request one.

**What if I can't pay my portion of the bill in full?**

The business office staff will work with you on a payment plan that will work for your situation. We offer many alternatives to assist you in payment including, MasterCard/Visa acceptance, ability to pay by direct bank deduction and payroll deduction for employees. We are more than happy to work with everyone in establishing payment arrangements; however, we can not help without hearing from you. Should you have extenuating circumstances and need special assistance please call us at (605) 668-8109 so we can help find a solution for you.

**I do not have insurance or money to pay my bill, what will happen to me?**

We have many options for you. You may qualify for one of several government programs that will pay for your services. We can help you by understanding your situation and getting the ball rolling for these types of assistance.

If there are no programs available for which you qualify, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital has a financial assistance program that may be able to help you address your bill. Please call us at (605) 668-8109.

**If I have another question that was not addressed in this brochure, how can I get my question answered?**

Please call us. We want to help you with any questions you may have. You may reach us Monday through Friday at the following number. Special weekend or evening appointments may also be made if the situation can not be handled over the telephone.

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Business Office  
(605) 668-8109

**Additional notes:**

Finance charge will be charged on self pay balances after ninety (90) days.





# CAMPUS MAP

## Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Campus



501 Summit, Yankton, SD 57078 ■ (605) 668-8000 ■ [www.AveraSacredHeart.org](http://www.AveraSacredHeart.org)

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