Your Rights as a Patient

When you use health care services – at a doctor's office, at the hospital, at a walk-in clinic, or anywhere else – you have rights. You also have responsibilities.

As a patient, you have the right:

- ✓ to be clearly informed about your health, your treatment options and how the treatment works
- ✓ to ask questions and receive clear and complete answers
- ✓ to receive safe and appropriate care
- ✓ to participate in health care decisions
- ✓ to give or refuse consent for any treatment
- ✓ to have your personal information kept private
- ✓ to have a person that you choose, to be with you and to help you
- ✓ to see your health records and correct any errors
- ✓ to be treated politely, fairly, and with respect

Rights of youth:

If you are under 18, and are able to understand your health and the benefits and risks of treatment, you are considered "capable." Capable youth have the right to give or refuse consent to treatment. In Quebec, you must be 14 to be considered capable of giving consent.

If you are capable to make health decisions, you also have the right to privacy. For example, if you see a doctor for birth control, the doctor can't tell your parents unless you say it's OK.

But, if doctors believe you are being abused, they are required by law to report it – even if you don't want them to.

Rights of patients with mental health problems:

If you are a mental health patient and capable of making decisions about your treatment, you have the same rights as any other patient.

But, if doctors think you are a danger to yourself or others, they can limit your rights.

If you believe your rights have not been respected, you can make a complaint.

Each province and territory have its own process to make a complaint. To find out more, go to patientscanada.ca and click on "Learning Centre." You can also call Patients Canada for more information at 416-900-2975.

Patient Responsibilities

You don't have legal responsibilities as a patient, but it's important to support your own health care. It's your responsibility to:

- treat health care staff with respect
- ask questions if you don't understand something
- follow instructions for taking medicine and for other treatments
- call your health care provider if you can't go to an appointment