



Your rights and responsibilities

While you're getting treatment for cancer, you will be spending time in a health care system that can sometimes seem very complicated. Dealing with the system can be challenging, especially when you're already grappling with the physical and emotional effects of cancer. Knowing more about your rights and responsibilities as a patient will help you get the best out of your cancer treatment.

Your rights

The NSW Ministry of Health and Lifehouse clearly set out the rights of patients. They are:

- The right to be treated with respect, dignity and consideration, and to receive access to the best possible care, regardless of age, gender, sexual preference, religion or culture.
- The right to have your condition clearly explained, in language that is easy to understand, including an explanation of the risks involved in your treatment and a discussion of the other treatment choices available to you.
- The right to take part in decisions about your health care.
- The right to free hospital inpatient services as a public patient, as long as you have a current Medicare card.
- The right to ask for a health care interpreter.
- The right to be informed of costs relating to any proposed services.
- The right to treatment based on your clinical need, regardless of your health insurance status or your ability to pay for the treatment.
- The right to have your personal information kept private and confidential.
- The right to obtain a second opinion about your condition.
- The right to give a compliment.
- The right to make a complaint.
- The right to see your health record, to the extent permitted within NSW Ministry of Health and Lifehouse guidelines.
- The right to apply for a travel allowance if you need to travel more than 100 km to receive treatment.
- The right to decide whether or not you take part in medical research, or the clinical training of junior doctors and medical students.
- The right to leave a health facility at any time, at your own risk and liability.
- The right to refuse care from a particular health care practitioner or facility.
- The right to get instructions about how to care for yourself after you've been discharged.

Your responsibilities

Your health care providers' ability to offer you the best possible treatment relies on you being open, honest, flexible and committed. If you

withhold information, or delay or obstruct treatment, you will be making it very hard for your care team to give you the care you need.

In particular, you will be doing your part if you:

- **Communicate honestly and openly** If you're up-front and give your care team accurate details about your health, they will be able to develop the treatment program that suits you best.
- **Ask questions and raise concerns** If there are things you don't understand, things that are troubling you or decisions you don't feel ready to make, talk to your care team. They can help you, but only if they know what's bothering you.
- **Explain your circumstances** Your lifestyle and home situation can have an impact on your treatment. Tell your care team if you live alone, if you care for a young family or an elderly relative, if you work or study, or if there are any other demands on you at home. It might be possible to adapt your treatment to make it easier and more effective for you.
- **Speak up about pain or side effects** Don't suffer in silence! Your care team might be able to ease pain or discomfort simply by changing the dosage of your medicine, or offering you different medications to control unwanted side effects.
- **Inform your care team about any medications you're taking** All sorts of medications can have an impact on your treatment, and may reduce its effectiveness or trigger unpleasant or even dangerous side effects. That applies to prescribed drugs, over-the-counter pharmaceuticals or remedies relating to complementary or alternative therapies.
- **Let your care team know if you are seeing other health professionals** There is much

evidence that complementary therapies can promote the health and wellbeing of people with cancer. Keep your care team informed of any other therapies you are involved in, or any other professionals you are seeing, including other doctors. That way your care team can talk to you about any risks or benefits associated with combining the recommended treatment with other therapies or strategies.

- **Tell your care team if you decide not to take their advice** Talk to your care team if you're seeing more than one doctor or if you decide not to follow your doctor's instructions, or if you have stopped taking the recommended medications. It is your right to decide not to follow treatment. Telling your care team of your decision is respectful, but it may also allow them to give you alternative recommendations.
- **Be considerate** Always treat the members of your care team as you would like to be treated: with courtesy, dignity and respect. The same applies to other patients that you come into contact with. Be on time for your appointments; if you're not, it can be a frustration for your care team and a disruption to other patients getting treatment. If you know that you are unable, or running late to attend an appointment, let your care team know as soon as possible.
- **Be flexible** Your care team will develop a treatment plan with you based on the results of your initial medical tests. Later tests may produce different results, prompting your care team to recommend changes to your treatment plan. This is an indication that your care team is paying close attention to your condition and offering the best response possible. Maintaining a flexible and positive outlook to your care will have a positive impact on the outcome of your treatment.
- **Be accountable for payment of goods and services or items that you may receive in the course of your treatment.**

Comments and Complaints

Your care, comfort and satisfaction are important to Lifehouse.

Making a complaint will not affect your right to quality service and may help us to improve our services.

If you have any questions or are concerned about your treatment at Lifehouse we encourage you to:

Option 1

Discuss your concerns with the nurse, doctor, or other health professional involved in your treatment. They may be able to resolve your issues immediately or they can refer you to a more senior member of staff.

If you do not wish to take this option, then the following alternatives are available:



**Chris O'Brien
Lifehouse**

Option 2

Phone and speak with Lifehouse's Head of Patient Experience to gain a greater understanding of the complaints process.

Phone:

(02) 8514 0000

Option 3

Email or write to Lifehouse's Complaints Office.

Email:

complaints@lh.org.au

Mail:

**Lifehouse Complaints Office
PO BOX M33
Missenden Road NSW 2050**

Option 4

The Health Care Complaints commission is an independent body that receives and assesses complaints about Health Care practitioners and Health Care Services.

Contact the Health Care Complaints Commission:
**Level 13, 323 Castlereagh Street,
Sydney NSW 2000**

Hours of business:

Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm

Postal address:

**Locked Bag 18
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012**

Telephone:

(02) 9219 7444

Toll Free:

1800 043 159

Facsimile:

(02) 9281 4585

Email:

hccc@hccc.nsw.gov.au

Website:

www.hccc.nsw.gov.au



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