
Finding your way around a hospital

Summary

- Before your hospital stay, find out where you have to go within the hospital and ask a staff member how to get there.
 - Visit the hospital's website to find a map of the hospital and where the different departments and wards are.
 - Look for signs around the hospital that will show you where you need to go.
 - Most large hospitals have a café, florist, newsagency, ATM and a pharmacy.
 - Write down the name of the department you have to visit.
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Whether you are going to hospital for surgery, tests, or to visit someone, finding your way around a hospital can be challenging. The different department names and services may use unfamiliar words and descriptions. Getting to know your hospital's layout and the names of common hospital departments can help make your trip to the hospital easier.

Before your hospital stay

If you have planned your hospital admission, then you have a chance to get to know the hospital layout before your stay. You can visit the hospital's website to find a hospital map and location information for its different wards, departments and services, or call the hospital to ask for directions. You may even receive a pre-admission pack with a map in it.

Before the day of your hospital admission, you may need to have a pre-admission assessment to make sure you are ready for your surgery or procedure. This may be done by telephone or you may need to go to the hospital.

If you need to go the hospital for your pre-admission assessment, use it as an opportunity to learn more about the hospital – including where you need to go on the day of your admission and the names of the different departments that you may need.

The Department of Health & Human Services has a list of all [Victorian public hospitals with links to their websites](#). Or visit the [MyHospitals website](#) for information on all Australian public hospitals.

Hospital maps

You can visit your hospital's website to find a map online. Some hospitals provide an orientation video to help familiarise you with the hospital's layout.

When you arrive at hospital, you can also ask the staff at the information or reception desk for directions or a brochure with a map of the hospital.

Navigating your way around hospital

Some Victorian hospitals use a colour-coded navigation system on the floor to help guide you to the right department or service. For example, blue lines might direct you to specialist clinics and a red line might direct you to the emergency department.

Hospitals also use signs in prominent places to help guide you to the right place. Look out for these signs when you arrive.

Non-medical services

You can usually find non-medical services in larger hospitals, including:

- café

- florist
- newsagency
- vending machines
- ATMs
- chapel and prayer rooms or 'sacred spaces'
- information desk
- mail box
- public telephones
- pharmacy
- public toilets.

Who to ask for directions

When you arrive at hospital, staff at the reception or information desk can give you directions to where you need to go. Volunteers may also be available to give you directions or information.

If you are looking for a patient within a particular ward, you can ask ward administration or at the nurse's station for directions to a particular patient's room.

If you have been admitted to hospital, ask your nurse or other medical staff for directions. Hospital porters are usually available to take you to the different departments you need to visit while you are a patient in hospital.

Where to get help

- Hospital staff
- Your hospital's website

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

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