

# Patients' Rights and Responsibilities

## The Faculty Of General Dental Practice (UK) Lay Advisory Group

Oral healthcare is a two-way process between you, the patient, and the staff who care for you. You have the right to expect high quality care, but there are things you can do to help ensure you get this.

### As a patient, you can expect...

- dental professionals to put your interests first and to act to protect you
- to receive treatment on the basis of your clinical need
- to take part in all decisions about your treatment and to have the pros and cons of treatment, including any risks, side effects and alternative methods of treatment, fully explained
- to be encouraged to ask questions about your diagnosis and treatment and to receive clear information in writing
- to be told what aftercare you will need and how long this should last and the anticipated outcome
- to be given a method of contact (telephone number, email address) and the name of someone you can ring with any further queries
- to be able to request a second opinion
- to see clearly displayed in dental practices indicative prices on a range of relevant services, including National Health Service (NHS) and private patient fee levels
- to be informed about all the costs, if any, involved in advance of your treatment and receive itemised costing details in written treatment plans
- to see clearly displayed in practices what services are available under the NHS and what services the practice provides privately, and to understand if your treatment will be provided under the NHS or privately
- to be treated by an appropriately trained and experienced member of the dental team or one under the close supervision of a suitably experienced member of staff
- to know the names and professional status of all the staff involved in your care
- to choose whether you see dental and other healthcare students or not, or take part in any trials, surveys etc.
- to be treated in an environment that is safe and clean

- to be able to request information on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and hospital-acquired infections (HAI) and how they affect patients and is managed in the hospital environment
- to be treated with courtesy and with respect for your privacy and dignity
- to have details about you, including your medical records and anything you say, treated in confidence and, except where required by law, to be given an opportunity to decide whether your details can be passed to anyone else
- to be given access to information kept about you
- to be able to choose to have a relative or friend with you during consultations, examinations and, where possible, treatment
- staff to understand that you might be feeling anxious and vulnerable and that this may affect the way you behave
- to be given an appointment date and time or to be told when an appointment is likely to be
- to be informed on arrival at an appointment if delays are occurring and to receive an explanation why;
- to receive an explanation and, where appropriate, an apology if things go wrong
- to be able to complain if you are unhappy with the treatment you receive and to be given the name of someone who can help you with this if you wish

**As a patient, you have a responsibility...**

- to treat the staff who care for you with courtesy and respect at all times
- to inform the dental practice or hospital at once of any change in contact address or telephone number
- to attend appointments given on time, or give reasonable notice of inability to attend
- to attend follow up appointments as requested
- if receiving NHS treatment, to understand that there are pressures and limitations of resources on the health service and those working within it
- to give staff full information about any medical conditions including permanent disabilities, along with details of any medicines you are taking
- to let the staff know if you have any allergies or sensitivities to medications
- to tell staff about any change in your health that could affect the treatment you are having
- to take any medicines as instructed and seek dental or medical advice before stopping or changing treatment
- to consider the consequences of refusing treatment or not following dental or medical advice and accept responsibility for your own actions

- to tell staff if you are uncertain or don't understand any aspect of your treatment
- if there are charges for your treatment, to pay them at an appropriate time or via a payment plan agreed with the dental practice
- to use the out-of-hours emergency dental service with discretion and only in genuine cases of emergency
- to treat other patients with courtesy and respect

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) wishes to acknowledge work undertaken by the Patient Liaison Group of The Royal College of Surgeons of England to produce the original document *Patients' Rights and Responsibilities* from which this document is adapted.