

Your Surgery Guide

To Our Patients and Their Families:

My staff and I would like to personally thank you for choosing United Hospital Center for your health care needs. On behalf of the Surgical Services Department, it is our pleasure to welcome you. We are committed to excellence and to provide you with outstanding care during your time with us. Enclosed you will find information provided by your physician about your surgery as well as forms that require completion prior to your arrival. This information will allow us to begin preparing for you and your procedure.

Thank you for choosing UHC and please accept our best wishes for your good health.

Sincerely,

Loria Helmick, RN, BSN, CNOR
*Director, Surgical Services
United Hospital Center*



Before Surgery

Planning Your Surgery Date

- You and your surgeon have determined that you will require surgery or a procedure that requires Pre-Admission Testing (PAT).
- Together you will establish your surgery date and time.

Pre-Admission Testing

- PAT is a two-part process intended to make the day of your procedure go smoothly.
 - PAT usually involves:
 - Blood work, Electrocardiograms (ECG), simple diagnostic tests like Chest X-Rays, medical history review, special instruction for your surgery day and answering any questions you may have.
 - Interview by a registered nurse who will complete an assessment to evaluate you for your surgery or procedure.
 - The PAT office is located on the first floor of the new hospital next to the information desk. Here you will check with a greeter dressed in a blue shirt and black pants.
 - The physician's office will schedule the appointment on your behalf
- OR**
- For your convenience, you may walk-in at any time to complete any labs or testing that your physician has ordered. You may have these performed through our Express Test department.
 - A registered nurse from the Pre-Admission Testing department will call you to complete the pre-admission assessment prior to your surgery date.
 - This appointment for testing will be important to prevent any delays on your surgery day.
 - **If the appointment time for your preoperative testing needs changed, please call 681-342-1400 between 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

• Please bring a list of your medications:

- Name of medicine
- Dosage
- How many times you take (frequency) each medication
- Include any herb, vitamins and over the counter medication
- You can also bring your labeled medication prescriptions/containers

• Also bring the following:

- Photo ID
- Insurance card(s)
- Medicaid/Medicare card(s)
- Copy of Living Will or Healthcare Power of Attorney*

* We can provide information on both at your request.

Preparing for Your Surgery

- **STOP SMOKING OR USING TOBACCO** as soon as you know you are having surgery. This will improve your healing after surgery. Quitting tobacco is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Call these free resources for help: 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) or 866-QUIT-YES (866-784-8937).
- **NO ALCOHOL** (liquor, beer and/or wine) at least two days before surgery.
- **ASK YOUR DOCTOR** about taking medications before surgery, including aspirin, ibuprofen (such as Motrin or Advil), and blood thinning medicines. Please check with your surgeon regarding when to stop taking these medications. This also includes fish oil, ginko biloba, and vitamins.
- **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT** the night before your surgery. This includes water, gum, or hard candy. Eating or drinking increases the risk of severe, life-threatening complications. You may have to re-schedule your surgery. If you eat or drink something, tell the nurse as soon as you arrive at the hospital.
- If your surgeon has instructed you to take any medicine before your surgery, please do so with only a sip of water.
- Call your surgeon if you develop a fever, cold, skin rash, or infection prior to your scheduled surgery. Surgery may have to be postponed.
- Ask your surgeon about any special instructions for your surgery.
- If you have had a hospital bracelet placed on your arm during a pre-operative appointment, please do not remove it.



Small informational plaque or label next to the painting.

Day of Surgery

Before You Leave Home

- Bathe or shower on the day of your surgery. You may be given special instructions (regarding your bath or shower) at your pre-op visit.
- Do not wear make-up.
- Do not shave near your surgical site. Shaving can irritate the skin and could lead to infection.
- Wear loose fitting clothes and comfortable shoes.
- Remove all jewelry, metal and body piercings, to prevent injury to you.
- Brush your teeth, but do not swallow any water or mouthwash.
- **Do not eat or drink anything, including gum and hard candy.**
- Leave all valuables at home. This includes jewelry, cash, credit cards, cell phones and computers. UHC is not responsible for lost valuables.
- **Leave personal medicines at home unless told otherwise.**

What to Bring

- Any forms your surgeon may have given you about your post-operative care.
- Also bring the following
 - Photo ID
 - Insurance card(s)
 - Medicaid/Medicare card(s)
 - Copy of Living Will or Healthcare Power of Attorney* (We can provide information on both at your request.)
- If you wear BiPAP or CPAP, bring your machine. It may be needed for your care after surgery.
- If you are instructed to bring medicine with you, please be sure the medication is in its original container and provide these to the pre-operative nurse. Your medicine will be returned to you or a family member.
- If you will be staying overnight, please bring a robe and slippers. You will want to leave your overnight bag in your vehicle. A friend or family member can bring it to you once you are in your room.

Arrival at the Hospital

- Arriving on time is very important. Please allow enough time for heavy traffic and parking. You will want to arrive two hours prior to your surgery time.
- Please enter the hospital through the main entrance (center hospital entrance) and check-in with the greeter (blue shirt and black pants) on the first floor next to the information desk.
- If any further testing has been ordered, you will be directed to registration or you will be directed to the Outpatient Surgery Department on the second floor.



Surgery

- At Outpatient Surgery, the registration clerk will review your information; please have the following:
 - Photo ID
 - Insurance cards
 - Medicaid/Medicare card(s)
 - Copy of Living Will or Healthcare Power of Attorney (We can provide information on both at your request).
- The OPS nurse will bring you to one of our rooms to check:
 - Heart rate
 - Blood pressure
 - Temperature
 - Oxygen level
 - Health history review
- If you were unable to meet with the pre-admission nurse, please complete the Outpatient Surgery Medication Form and bring your medication(s) with you in the labeled prescription bottles.
- If your doctor has requested an anesthesiologist to be part of your care, they will visit you in your room at this time. The anesthesiologist will review your health history and answer any questions you may have.
- Anesthesia is a complex combination of medications used to prevent pain, awareness and movement during surgery. The anesthesia care team for the operating room includes an anesthesiologist (a physician), nurse anesthetist (CRNA) and a registered nurse. The team will provide your anesthesia as well as your complete medical management prior to surgery, during surgery and immediately following your surgery.
- Before surgery, the physician and CRNA will talk with you about what type of anesthesia will be best for you. Types of anesthesia include:
 - General - You are asleep during surgery.
 - Regional - A nerve block numbs only the body part where surgery is being performed. You may receive additional medications to help you relax.
 - Local anesthesia with sedation - Anesthetic is injected into the area of your body where surgery will be performed. You may stay awake or be in a light sleep.
- The surgical team is led by your surgeon. Other team members include registered nurses and a surgical technician. They provide a safe setting for your surgery.
- Please ask a surgical team member for a blanket if you feel cold.
- A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm to monitor your blood pressure.
- Small round pads will be placed on your chest to monitor your heart function.
- A clip will be placed on your finger to measure the oxygen level in your blood while you are in surgery.
- You will be asked to remove all clothing articles, including undergarments and a hospital gown will be provided.
- You may have an IV line placed for giving fluids and needed medications.

- If your surgery is specific to one side (right or left) your doctor will also see you in your room and mark the correct site.
- When the surgery staff is ready for you, the nurse anesthetist and the nurse working with your doctor will come to your room and take you to surgery.
- Your family and friends will be able to stay with you until you are taken to the operating room for your surgery.

Patient Safety

- For your safety, you are required to remove glasses, contact lenses, hearing aids, dentures, wigs and hairpieces. You will be given a bag for your personal items, please provide this to your family/friends to keep for you. If you are alone, we will keep your belongings safe and return these items to you after surgery.
- To ensure your safety, you and your surgeon will talk about your surgery and surgical consent. You will be told about the risks and benefits of surgery. You and your surgeon will agree to the advised plan of care. The surgical consent is a legal document that you sign. It states that you understand the surgery, risks, benefits and care. If you should have any questions please contact your surgeon.
- You and your physician may determine that you will require surgery or a procedure that requires a pre-surgical antiseptic shower. You will be given a scrub that contains chlorhexidine gluconate, an antimicrobial soap. Chlorhexidine destroys bacteria, which will help prevent infections during and after surgery.
- Do not shave near your surgical site. Shaving can irritate the skin and could lead to infection. It may be necessary for the surgical staff to remove hair from the area of your body where the surgery will be performed. Hair will be removed with surgical clippers for your safety.
- Staff and volunteers are required to wear a photo identification badge at all times. Please feel free to ask for identification if someone without a badge enters your room.
- Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infection and is an important part of your care. Employees wash their hands and use foam soap in between patients. Staff also use protective equipment such as gloves for everyone's safety. Remember, as the patient, it is important that you wash your hands as well. Your family and friends should wash their hands before touching you.
- Your illness, surgery, or the medications you are receiving may cause you to be unsteady.
 - Please ask for help when you want to stand or get out of bed.
 - If you do get out of bed, always wear nonskid slippers and move slowly.
 - Keep your call bell within reach.

Support People, Family and Visitor Information

When you sign in at the surgery family waiting room, you will receive:

- A beeper to give to your support person when it is time for you to go into the pre-op area.
- A confidential patient identification code protecting your identity.
- Patient tracking code instructions explaining how to follow your progress through all stages of surgery on the electronic surgical tracking board.

In addition to your designated support person, you may have additional family or friends in the waiting room. When the procedure is complete, the surgeon will meet with your designated support person, family and friends in the waiting area consultation room to provide an update.



After Surgery

After Surgery

- If you had an outpatient procedure, you will recover in outpatient recovery or Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).
- The doctor will talk to your family after surgery is complete. After speaking with the doctor, your family should know that you will arrive in the Recovery Area in about 20-30 minutes. Families are not able to visit in the recovery area, unless the patient is a child, and parents will be able to be with the child as soon as possible.
- PACU nurses will closely monitor you throughout your recovery and respond to your individual needs. Tell the PACU nurse if you have pain, nausea or other sick feelings.
- You will receive pain and/or nausea medication to keep you comfortable.
- You will feel sleepy and your mouth may be dry. You might have a mild sore throat if a tube to help you breathe was used for surgery.
- If you are in the PACU for longer than two hours, two visitors may be allowed to visit you for five minutes. If the PACU is very busy with patients, you will not be able to have visitors until you return to OPS or are transferred to a hospital room.
- After your vital signs are stable, your pain is under control and you are more awake, you will be transferred to OPS or a room in the hospital.
- If you are to be admitted to the hospital, your recovery room nurse will take you to your hospital room when you are awake. The recovery room nurse will notify your family of your room number and when you are being taken to your room.
- If you are going home on the same day as surgery, you will return to the OPS area for discharge as soon as you are awake.
- Recovery times vary and you may be at the hospital for several hours or possibly most of the day.
- Prior to discharge, the staff will make sure you are able to sit up and take in some liquids.

- Discharge instructions will be reviewed at this time, including how to take care of yourself once you are home and your follow up needs.
- You will then be able to get dressed and a staff member or volunteer will accompany you to your car to go home. Remember to bring a responsible adult with you to drive since you will be recovering from surgery and will not be allowed to drive. A responsible adult must stay with you at home for the next 12 hours after your surgery. You will be asked to provide the driver's name and contact information before your surgery.

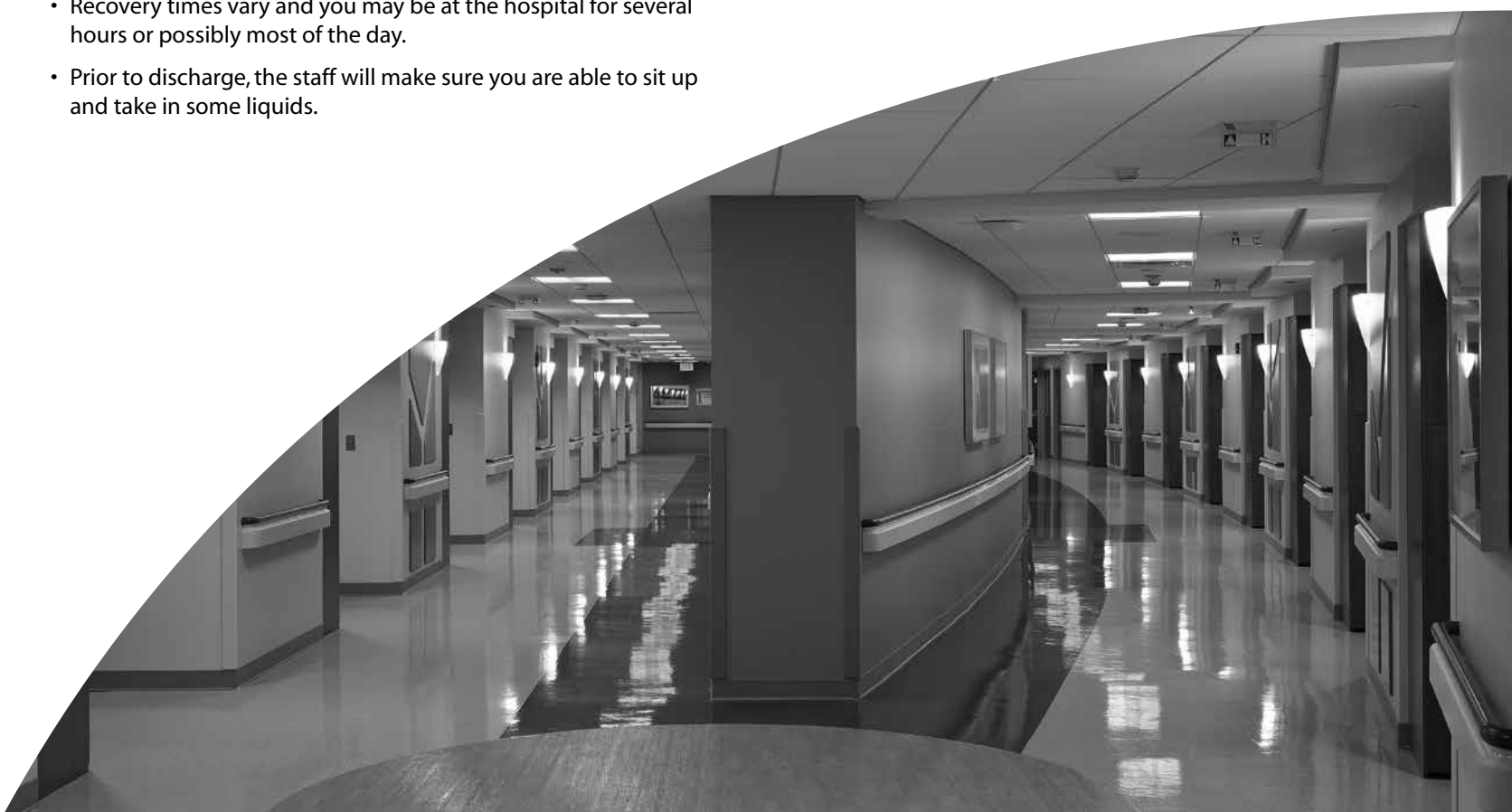
At Home

After surgery, it is important that you rest. Do not do any of the following for 24 hours after your surgery: Drive, drink alcoholic beverages, make critical decisions, use chemical substances, operate machinery or take drugs/medications not approved by your surgeon.

If you have any questions about your follow-up care, please call your surgeon.

Follow-Up

If you had outpatient surgery, a nurse will call you the next business day after your surgery. The nurse will ask how you are doing and answer any questions you may have.



Outpatient Surgery

Patient Instruction

You are scheduled for pre-operative testing on _____ at _____ am / pm. Please check in at the registration desk in the main lobby of the hospital.

You are scheduled for surgery on _____ at _____ am / pm. Please arrive at the hospital on your surgery day at _____ am / pm.

Important Points to Remember

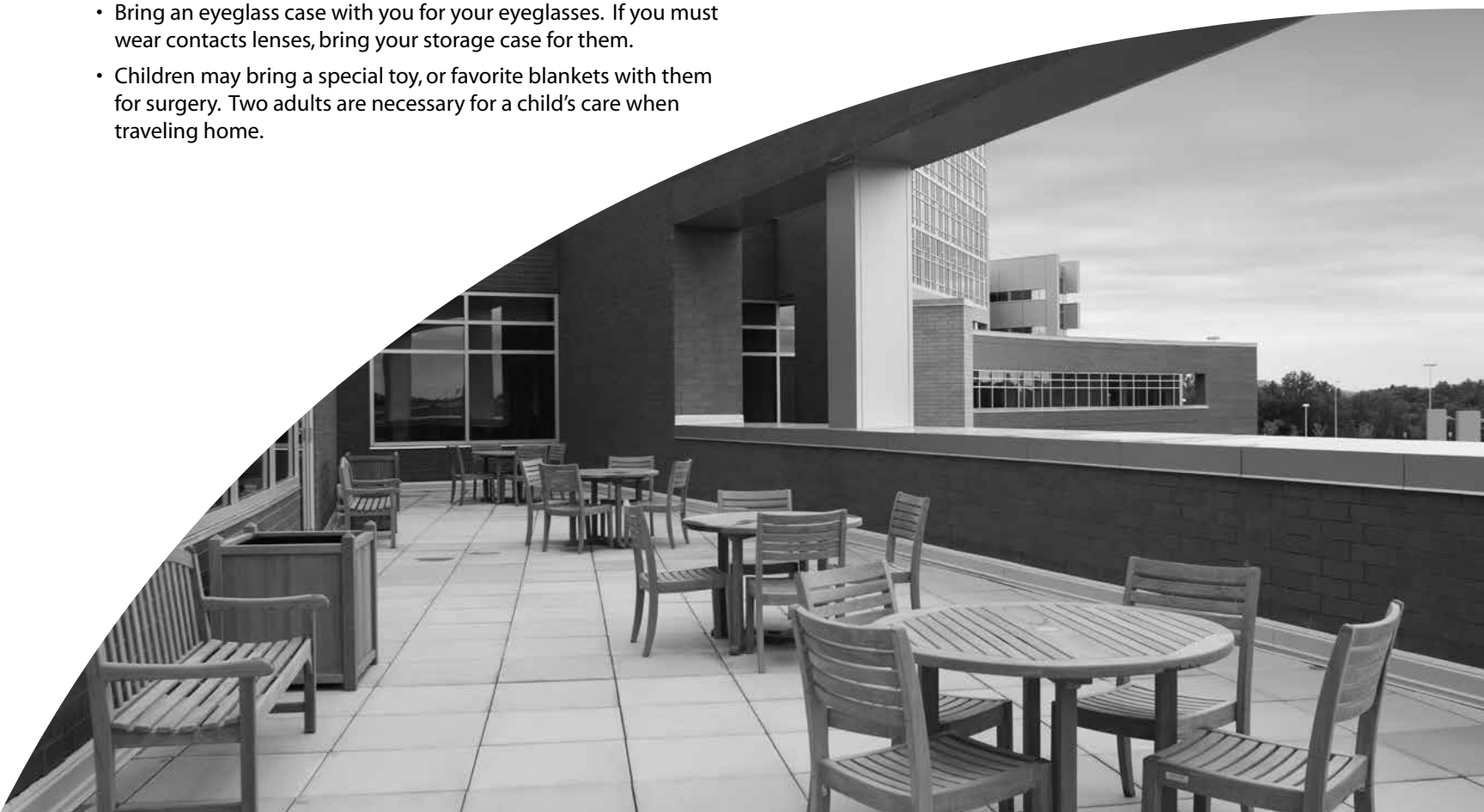
- Report any change in your condition to your doctor, such as a cold, bronchitis, flu, injuries, or drug reactions which might result in a delay of your surgery.
- Have lab work, x-rays, and EKG done as requested by your doctor.
- Take a bath or shower the night before or morning of your surgery.
- You may brush your teeth, but do not swallow any water the morning of your surgery.
- Take any heart, blood pressure or seizure medication with a small sip of water the morning of your surgery. Do not take insulin or any oral diabetic medications the morning of your surgery.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke or chew gum after midnight the day of your surgery.
- Do not wear make-up or jewelry. Leave all valuables at home. Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing.
- Bring an eyeglass case with you for your eyeglasses. If you must wear contacts lenses, bring your storage case for them.
- Children may bring a special toy, or favorite blankets with them for surgery. Two adults are necessary for a child's care when traveling home.
- You must have a responsible adult available to drive you home after surgery. If you receive any type of IV sedation or anesthesia, you will not be permitted to drive for 24 hours. You will not be released to ride home in a cab or on the bus unless you have a responsible adult (other than the bus or cab driver) to escort you home.
- If any complications or problems occur during surgery, it may be necessary to admit you to the hospital overnight.
- For patient staying overnight and/or for the convenience of your family, you may want to leave your luggage in the car until you arrive in your room after surgery.
- It is very important that you follow these instructions and arrive on time to avoid delays and possible cancellation of your procedure.

It is our goal at United Hospital Center to provide excellent care for our patients and their families. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact someone at one of the numbers listed below, Monday thru Friday 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. If your call is not answered, please leave a detailed message including your name, phone number and reason for calling. Your call is important to us and it will be returned promptly.

Director of Surgical Services: (681) 342-2250

Outpatient Surgery Nurse Manager: (681) 342-2300

Pre-Admission Testing Manager: (681) 342-1407



Visitors

Visitors play an important part in helping patients feel better and get well. **At UHC our general visiting hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.** However, special visiting policies and more limited visiting hours exist for areas such as the Critical Care and United Transitional Care Center (UTCC) due to the nature of the patient's medical condition. Obstetrics observes "Quiet Time" from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please speak with a nurse regarding visiting hours in special care areas.

We ask that visitors:

- be free from illness such as colds/flu
- observe our no-smoking policy
- observe UHC's cell phone policy (see "Telephone" heading on following page)

We also ask that you speak with a nurse before bringing a child to visit, as there may be concerns about communicable disease or patient confidentiality that need to be addressed. All children should be accompanied by a parent while visiting UHC.

Banking Machines

Automated banking tellers (ATMs) are located on the first floor in the vending/ATM area.

Coffee Shop

The Coffee Shop is located off the main lobby. It is open 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is closed on holidays. The menu includes specialty coffee, cappuccino, espresso, milkshakes and pastries.

Restaurant

The Garden View Cafe is located on the garden level. It is open seven days a week, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. to 4 a.m., and offers a varied menu.

Flowers

Live floral arrangements are available for purchase in the gift shop.

UHC Gift Shop

The Auxiliary to United Hospital Center operates two gift shops located on the first floor. The Gift Shop is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday. Artisans' Crossing, the newest gift shop, is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Public Telephones

Pay telephones are located in the Emergency Department waiting area, first floor by the information desk and second floor public elevator lobby.

Overnight Visitors/ Courtesy Rooms

Overnight arrangements may be made for the immediate family of critically ill patients and for out-of-town patients (i.e. radiation oncology) whose treatment program requires that they be in Bridgeport overnight. For information, contact a nurse on your unit.

Parking

There are three parking lots for patients and visitors at the new United Hospital Center.

1. Patient/Visitor Parking Lot - located directly in front of the hospital. This lot is designated for patients and visitors as well as the volunteer auxiliary of the hospital.
2. Cancer Center Lot - located at the south end of the hospital by the Cancer Center. This lot is designated for Cancer Center patients and family.
3. Emergency Center Lot - located at the north end of the hospital by the Emergency Department. This lot is designated for Emergency Department patients and family.

Rest Rooms

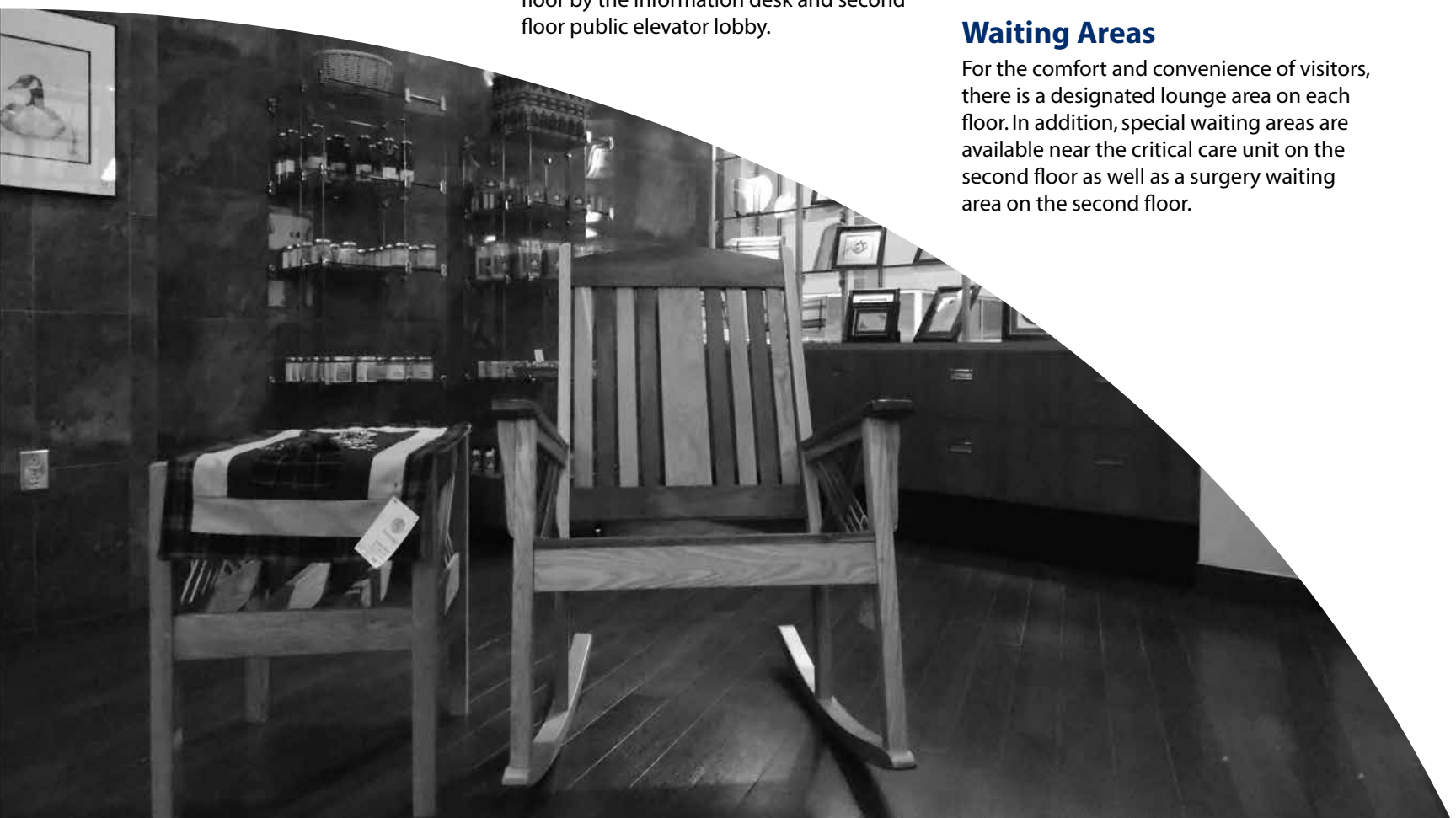
Rest rooms for visitors are located on each floor. Visitors should not use rest rooms in patient rooms.

Vending Machines

Snack and soda machines are located on the first floor in the vending/ATM area. The vending area is open 24-hours a day.

Waiting Areas

For the comfort and convenience of visitors, there is a designated lounge area on each floor. In addition, special waiting areas are available near the critical care unit on the second floor as well as a surgery waiting area on the second floor.



Telephone

The Admissions' staff provided you with a card listing your room and telephone number. Please make this information available to your family and friends so they can make direct calls to you. Others who want to call can simply dial (681) 342-2641/1642 and ask for your room.

You may dial out at any time; however, incoming calls are not directed to your room between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Cellular Phone Use

Cellular phones may not be used in the following areas: Critical Care, Operating Room, Recovery Unit, Emergency Department clinical areas, CT, Catheterization Lab and Special Procedures.

Patients connected to telemetry monitors should refrain from using cellular phones or they may compromise the staff's ability to monitor them. Cellular phones can interfere with patient monitors and with the nurses' ability to see alarms.

Cellular phones may be used in all other areas.

Local calls

There is no charge for making local or toll free calls.

To make a local call: Dial "9," followed by the local number.
Example: 9, (681) 342-xxxx.

To make a toll free call: Dial "9," followed by the number.
Example: 9, 1-800-xxx-xxxx.

To call long distance

Using a calling card

You may use your calling card by dialing "9," followed by the number listed on your card, Example: 9, 1-800-CALLATT.

Charging call to a credit card

When patients want to call long distance, and don't have a cell phone or a long distance calling card, please call the UHC operator for instructions by dialing "0".

To call the hospital operator

Dial "0".

TDD/TTY

TDD/TTY services for the deaf/hard of hearing are available at UHC. If you would like this service, please have a nurse on our floor notify a clinical coordinator.

UHC's TDD/TTY number is (681) 342-1005.

Important Phone Numbers

Admissions – Central Registration	(681) 342-1700
CancerLine	1-800-924-2083
Chaplaincy	(681) 342-1735
Diabetes Education	(681) 342-1862
Gift Shop	(681) 342-1633
Home Health	(304) 624-2424
Hospice	(304) 624-2424
Laboratory	(681) 342-1500
Patient Information (room/phone numbers)	(681) 342-1641
Patient Safety Issues/Concerns/Complaints	(681) 342-1070
Physician Referral	1-800-607-8888
United Rehab Bridgeport	(304) 842-3898
United Rehab Clarksburg	(681) 342-3180
Sleep Disorders	(681) 342-3290
Social Services	(681) 342-1670
TTY/TDD for deaf/hearing impaired	(681) 342-1005
United Transitional Care Center	(681) 342 5100
Volunteer Services	(681) 342-1630
Wound Center	(304) 842-1034

24 Hour Suicide Hotlines In a crisis situation please call

911 or 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2499) or
1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

United Summit Center Crisis Hotline

1-800-SUMMIT-0 (1-800-786-6480)

24 Hour Statewide Hotline to Report Abuse or Neglect For an Adult or Child

1-800-352-6513



POLICY: At UHC concern for the rights and dignity of every patient is a high priority and an expectation of every associate. The hospital also expects responsible behavior from patients and visitors in order to assure quality care and respect for all concerned.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to set forth reasonable expectations of the relationships between UHC, its patients and their visitors and to encourage the patient's participation in his or her care.

Patient Rights Responsibilities

ACCESS TO CARE

Individuals shall be accorded impartial access to treatment or accommodations that are available and medically indicated regardless of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, religion, or source of payment. Appropriate care will be provided without regard to whether or not patients have completed advanced directives. Information on the extent to which the hospital is able, unable or unwilling to honor wishes is given upon admission if the patient has an advance directive.

RESPECT AND DIGNITY

Patients have a right to considerate, respectful care under all circumstances with recognition of the patient's personal dignity. Such respect includes consideration of the patient's religious, social, cultural and personal values, beliefs and preferences. The hospital allows patients to keep and use personal clothing and possessions unless it infringes on others rights, is medically or therapeutically contraindicated.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Patients shall be given every consideration of privacy both in their treatment and care and in the communication of their medical and financial information. This includes reasonable physical privacy during examinations, interviews and care, and access to information only for those directly involved in the patient's care. The environment will support the positive self image of patients including sufficient storage space to meet their personal needs.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Patients have the right to protection from mental, physical, sexual and verbal abuse and exploitation from staff, students, volunteers, other patients, visitors or family members. The hospital has a safe available to secure personal items. UHC is not responsible for personal items unless specifically given to a UHC staff member to be locked in the hospital safe. Patients/families are encouraged to have personal belongings taken home.

IDENTITY

Patients have the right to know the identity and professional status of individuals providing services and to know which physician or practitioner is primarily responsible for their care.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- *Telephone & Mail Service* – Patients have access to telephone and mail services throughout their stay.
- *Treatment Information* – Patients have a right to receive from their attending physician complete and current information concerning diagnosis, treatment and current prognosis in terms the patient can reasonably be expected to understand. This includes the right to an interpreter or other appropriate means of communication when language or physical handicap would hinder communication. This also includes the right to review your medical record with your physician and to have the information explained, except when restricted by law. Patients and when appropriate their families, are informed about the outcomes of care, treatment and services including unanticipated outcomes. Patients have the responsibility to ask questions or acknowledge when he/she does not understand the treatment course or care decision.
- *Organ & Tissue Donation* – Patients have the right to information, education and participation in organ and tissue donation.
- *List of patient advocacy groups is available on request.*

CONSENT AND PARTICIPATION IN CARE

Patients have a right to reasonable informed participation in decisions involving their care, including decisions regarding the initiation and the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment. This participation should be based on a clear, concise explanation of the patient's condition, the risks and benefits of the treatment, and the alternatives

to treatment. Procedures should only be performed with the voluntary and competent consent of the patient or the patient's legally designated representative. If the patient is not capable of making such decisions, their health care providers will honor their wishes as expressed in any advanced directive such as the living will or medical power of attorney to the extent permitted by law and hospital policy. UHC involves the patient's family in care, treatment and service decisions to the extent permitted by the patient or legal representative.

MANAGEMENT OF PAIN

Patients have a right to adequate pain management, including the right to information about pain relief options from their physicians and nurses. The patient has a right to participate with their physician in the process of measuring their pain.

REFUSAL OF TREATMENT

Patients have a right to refuse care, treatment and services within the limitations of the law, without jeopardizing other care and services provided by UHC. Patients are responsible for their actions and condition when exercising such rights. When such refusal compromises professional standards of care the physician or practitioner, upon reasonable notice, may terminate the relationship. When the patient is not legally responsible, their healthcare providers will honor their wishes as expressed in an advance directive and with the surrogate decision maker as allowed by law to refuse care, treatment and services on the patient's behalf.

CONSULTATION

Physician – Patients have the right to request the consultation of another physician when desired.

Pastoral/Other Spiritual – UHC accommodates the right to pastoral and other spiritual services for patients.

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RESEARCH

Patients have a right to be informed of any human experimentation, research, or educational project involving their care and treatment. The patient may refuse to participate in any of these activities without compromise to their ongoing care needs.

CONTINUITY AND TRANSFER

Patients have the right to be informed of the need for and the alternatives to transfer to any other facility, including the right to request a transfer to another facility. Patients also should expect to be informed by their physician or other practitioners of any continuing healthcare requirements following discharge from the hospital.

CHARGES

Regardless of the source of payment, patients have a right to request and receive an itemized explanation of the bill for services rendered in the hospital. Patients also have a responsibility for prompt attention to their hospital bill or other hospital related financial commitments.

HOSPITAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Patients and their visitors have a right to be informed of rules related to their care and conduct, and they have an obligation to abide by such rules that are in place to support quality care for patients and a safe environment for all individuals in the hospital.

PROVISIONS OF INFORMATION

Patients have the responsibility to provide, to the best of their knowledge, accurate and complete information regarding present symptoms, past illnesses, medications and other matters related to their care. The patient is also expected to communicate any changes in his/her condition to the responsible practitioner including risks, information on service needs and expectations. You or your family should report to your nurse any symptoms or concerns about your care. The hospital encourages the patient and/or family to seek assistance if believed the patient condition is changing or worsens. A rapid response team is available as a resource for you and your nurse to assist in assessing symptoms and early interventions to help avoid life-threatening events. Patients have a right to access, request amendment to and receive an accounting of disclosures regarding his/her own health information as permitted under applicable law including advance directives.

COMPLIANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Patients are responsible for following the treatment plan recommended by the practitioner directing their care, including instructions of nurses and allied health personnel as they carry out the practitioner's instructions and enforce applicable hospital policies.

RESPECT

Patients and their visitors are responsible for being considerate of the rights of other patients and hospital associates, including

the control of noise, smoking and number of visitors. Patients and hospital staff and licensed independent practitioners have the responsibility to support mutual consideration and respect by maintaining civil language and conduct in interactions with one another.

VISITATION

Patients generally have the right to receive or restrict visitors, whether a spouse, another family member, a domestic partner (including same-sex domestic partner), a friend, or clergy member. This right is subject to clinically or administratively necessary limitations that may be reasonably placed on such rights. UHC will not restrict visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. UHC wants all visitors to enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences and legitimate regulation.

Primary supporting visitors will generally be able to visit anytime during the patient's hospital stay based upon the patient's wishes or, if applicable, the direction of the patient's support person. These primary supporting visitors are those who are determined by our staff to be needed and who are particularly willing and encouraged to be involved in the patient's care as well as to provide assistance and comfort to the patient. They are encouraged to notify staff when they have concerns about the patient's condition or any changes in the patient's condition. They may be informed that a Rapid Response Team is available as an additional resource to assist in assessing for significant changes in symptoms and to provide early intervention to help avoid life-threatening events. Examples of how such a primary supporting visitor can benefit the patient include calming a confused patient or notifying staff when a patient is attempting to disrupt a treatment or therapy.

WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

Patients have a right to be informed of the mechanisms available for communicating, becoming involved in and resolving concerns, problems and suggestions related to their care. Patients have a right to pursue the resolution of problems without reprisal or an adverse affect on their care.

ASKING QUESTIONS

Patients are responsible for asking questions when they do not understand what they have been told about their care or what they are expected to do. This includes expressing concern over the ability to follow the plan of care.

ACCEPTING CONSEQUENCES

The patient and family are responsible for the outcomes if they do not follow the care, service or treatment plan.

ETHICAL DECISIONS AND ISSUES

In the course of your treatment you and your family may be faced with making important treatment choices. We respect your right to

make such decisions based on the available medical information as well as on your personal beliefs and values. In order to make informed and appropriate decisions we suggest you consider these issues:

- Do you have the information you need to make the decision?
- Have you designated someone to make decisions about your care in case you are unable to do so (advanced directives)?
- Have you expressed to your physician and family your wishes about prolonging care should you become terminally ill?
- Do you need further clarification of the issues involved or help in thinking through your decision?

ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

- If you have not completed an advanced directive (a Living Will or Medical Power of Attorney) and wish to do so, please ask your nurse for assistance. The hospital will honor advanced directives in accordance with law and regulations and the hospital's capabilities.
- A hospital chaplain is available to discuss the religious and ethical issues of your decision. The hospital chaplain will also contact your own minister, priest or religious representative at your request.
- UHC's Ethics Committee is also available to assist you, your family and your physicians in thinking through these issues. The Ethics Committee is comprised of various health care professionals such as physicians, nurses, chaplains, social workers and psychologists and is consulted in those situations involving particularly difficult ethical decisions. To involve the Ethics Committee discuss your desire with your physician or nurse.

RESOLVING PROBLEMS

The staff at UHC recognizes that problems may arise in the course of your treatment. It is our goal to resolve problems as quickly and satisfactorily as possible. Also, we invite both your positive and negative feedback as it assists us in improving the care we provide. The patient can freely voice, report problems and complaints and recommend changes without coercion, discrimination, reprisal, and unreasonable interruption of care, treatment or services. If you have a problem, suggestion or need to discuss your care with someone you may:

- Ask to speak to the manager of the department involved.
- If a problem or complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction by the staff on hand you may file a patient grievance by calling the Risk Manager at extension 1604 and you are entitled to receive a written response to that grievance.
- Call the hospital switchboard operator after normal hours and on weekends.
- File a complaint with West Virginia Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification, Capitol and 408 Leon Sullivan Way, Charleston, WV 25301-1799, (304) 558-0050; West Virginia Medical Institute, 3001 Chesterfield Avenue, Charleston, WV 25304, (800)-642-8686 or Office of Quality Monitoring, The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181, (800) 994-6610. For more information on how to contact the above agencies, call the Risk Manager at extension 1604.