



Communicating with your care team while in the hospital with COVID-19

This section* will answer the following questions:

- [How do I communicate with my care team? \(page 3\)](#)
- [How can I advocate for the best care? \(page 5\)](#)
- [How do I access online health records? \(page 6\)](#)
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- [Who is on my hospital care team? \(page 8\)](#)

*Access the other sections of this workbook by visiting: <http://michmed.org/ng2W1>



How to use this section

This workbook is for patients with COVID-19 and for anyone assisting in their care. This document refers to anyone who is providing care to someone during or after a hospital stay as a “caregiver.” This may be the first time you find yourself in a caregiving role, or you may have been a caregiver to this person (or others) for a long time.

Downloading and printing

Printing and downloading instructions may vary depending on the Internet browser you use. Below are example instructions.

1. On your computer, click on the link to the workbook section you wish to print. This will open the document as a tab in your web browser.
2. Hover your mouse over the document. Icons will appear in the top right corner. Click on the middle icon (the underlined arrow). This will download the document as a PDF onto your computer.
3. Open your file explorer, then navigate to your “Downloads” folder. Double-click on the document name. This will open the PDF in a PDF viewer, such as Adobe Acrobat.
4. In the top-left corner of the PDF viewer, select “File,” then “Print.” You can also print by pressing the “P” key while holding down Ctrl (on a PC) or ⌘ Command (on a Mac). Before printing, make sure you have selected the printer you want to use.

Increasing text size

On your computer, tablet, or phone, you can zoom in or zoom out to make text and images larger or smaller.

- **Zoom Buttons:** Depending on your browser or PDF viewer, there may be buttons to zoom in and out. Press or click the plus (+) button to zoom in.
- **Pinch to Zoom:** On a smartphone or tablet, touch the PDF with your finger, then zoom by pinching two fingers in or out.

Using hyperlinks

This workbook contains hyperlinks. On your computer, tablet, or phone, you can click on a hyperlink to take you to a specific website or online resource. A hyperlink can look like text: [Center for Disease Control](#), or like a web address: <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

Using QR codes

This workbook contains **QR codes**: a type of “square barcode” that takes you to an online resource. Most phones now have built-in QR code readers or are compatible with free apps that can read QR codes. To use a QR code, open your camera app on your smartphone, hold your smartphone camera over the QR code, and click on the link that should appear on your screen.

Interactive table of contents

At the beginning of each section is a box that explains what questions the section answers. The questions are also hyperlinks. If you click on one of these hyperlinked questions, you can jump right to that section of the workbook.



How can I communicate with my care team effectively?



If you are a patient

- Identify your care team (doctors, nurses, etc.) and write down or take a picture of their contact information
- Identify your **key support person(s)**: people who should communicate with your care team, often family members
 - Share their contact information with your care team
 - Give your support person(s) access to your online health records ([see page 6](#))
- Complete your advance directives (a social worker can help you with this)
- Ask the care team questions you have about your health problems and treatment options



If you are a caregiver

- Write down the hospital name and patient's room number
- Identify the patient's care team, write down their contact information, and ask for the best way to reach them
- Get access to the patient's online health records ([see page 6](#))
- Ask the patient about their advance directives
- Ask the care team questions you have about the patient's health problems and treatment options
- Answer any calls or texts from your local health department if they reach out to you for contact tracing (see workbook section "Navigating COVID-19 Exposure, Testing, and Quarantine" for more information)

Continue reading for more information to help you with these steps.





Write down important information

Write down the names of the members of your care team (doctors, nurses, etc.). You can print this document to write in the lines below, or write this on your own paper. You may wish to keep a journal of conversations you have with these people.

Hospital name: _____

Room number: _____ Nurses' station phone number: _____

Care team members

Name	Role	Phone	Email

Note: Your room number or care team members may change during your time in the hospital. You can record this information here.



How can I advocate for the best care?

It's important to work with your care team to make sure your needs and preferences are being heard.

If you are a patient

Take an active role in your care.

- ✓ **Be honest and direct.** You know yourself best. Describe how you feel physically and emotionally. If you have concerns, let your care team know.
- ✓ **Ask questions.** If you do not understand what someone is saying, ask them to clarify. It may be helpful to make a list of questions so you cover everything with your care team. Do not worry if your question seems silly or does not make sense – your care team is there to help.
- ✓ **Take notes or record your conversations with your care team.** Taking notes can help you remember what you have talked about with your care team. If allowed, record your conversations. If you cannot take notes, ask someone else to help.
- ✓ **Discuss your wishes with your caregiver.** If there is a point when you are unable to make medical decisions, it is important that your caregiver knows how to represent you to your care team.

If you are unable to speak, try other ways to communicate with your care team such as:

- Using your phone or tablet to type or text
- Writing with paper and pencil
- Writing with a whiteboard and marker
- Using body language (e.g. blinking, hand gestures)

If you are a caregiver

During COVID-19, there may be restrictions on visiting a patient. You can still take an active role in their care.

- ✓ **Ask the care team about their schedule and the best time for updates.** Find a time that works for both you and the care team to talk every day or every other day.
- ✓ **Communicate directly with the patient.** Communicate directly with the patient. Reach out by video call, phone call, text, or email. The care team may be able to help you connect.
- ✓ **Access information through the electronic health portal.** Use the online portal or phone app to view test results, medications, billing, etc.
- ✓ **Ask the care team how you can help.** Care providers really appreciate this question.
- ✓ **Take notes.** Keep a notebook to track the patient's progress and note important information. If allowed, it may be helpful to record discussions with members of the care team
- ✓ **Discuss the patient's wishes with them.** It is important that you know the patient's wishes in case you ever need to represent them when they are unable to make medical decisions.



How do I access and share online health records?

Did you know?

With permission, you can get access to someone else's health records. Read below to see how.

If you are a patient

You can contact your care team and view your health records through the MyUofMHealth Patient Portal. Select "For myself only" to make an account for yourself, or select "Adult granting access to another adult" to give your caregiver access.

If you are a caregiver

With the patient's permission, you can also contact the care team and view the patient's health records. See the contact information below for help.

For questions or information about the MyUofMHealth Patient Portal:

Email: HIM-PatientPortal@med.umich.edu,

Phone: 734-615-0872

Hours: Monday-Friday 7:00 am - 7:00 pm,
Saturday and Sunday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm



Visit

<http://michmed.org/xoWYR>

(or scan the QR code)



How can I make sure the care team knows my health preferences?

Prepare your Advance Directive

An **Advance Directive** is a written statement about your wishes regarding medical treatment. In the State of Michigan, the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care is the most widely used Advance Directive. This is a legal document and allows you to name your Patient Advocate.

If you are a patient

You always have the right to be included in any decisions related to the healthcare you receive. However, there may be a time where you are unable to make your own decisions. Complete an Advance Directive and designate your Patient Advocate to ensure that your wishes are known.

What is a Patient Advocate?

A **Patient Advocate** is the person who can:

- Make medical decisions for you when you are too sick to make them for yourself
- Make medical decisions when two doctors agree that you cannot make your own decisions
- Make medical decisions that are stated in your Advance Directive

If you do not choose a Patient Advocate, your doctors may ask your closest family members to make decisions. If your family members cannot make or agree on a decision, a judge may appoint someone in your family to make decisions for you. It is important for you to know that even if you do not choose a Patient Advocate, you will still receive care from your care team.

If you are a Patient Advocate

You will be able to agree to, say no to, change, stop or choose any of the following:

- Doctors, nurses, social workers
- Hospitals or clinics
- Medications, tests, or treatments
- Whether or not the patient will receive life support treatments
- Whether or not the patient will receive surgery
- Whether or not to take the patient to a hospital or nursing home
- What kind of comfort care the patient will receive, including hospice care



Patients & caregivers

Ask your care team about completing the U-M Advance Directive and Durable Power of Attorney worksheet (michmed.org/xoWYW). A social worker may be especially helpful.



Who is on my hospital care team?

During your hospital stay, many healthcare professionals may care for you by working together as a care team. Each care team member plays a different role to support your mental and physical health. Your care team can:

- Help you make medical decisions
- Answer your questions
- Support you and your family
- Find additional information and resources for you

Continue reading to learn what each care team member can do for you and what questions you might want to ask them.



Doctors

While in the hospital, you will probably have more than one doctor caring for you. Depending on your health history, you may have doctors who specialize in caring for different parts of the body and the mind. Doctors can:

- Give direction to your care team
- Identify your health problems
- Teach you about your health, treatments, or procedures you may go through

Questions to ask

- What are my treatment options?
- What do the different medications do?
- What will this disease do to me?
- How and when will you share information with my caregiver?
- How and when will we decide if I am responding to the treatment or if we need to change treatments?

Notes or additional questions & answers



Who is on my hospital care team?



Nurses

Nurses are members of the care team who directly care for you at the bedside. Nurses can also give updates on how you are doing. Nurses can:

- Provide direct care for you during your hospital stay
- Monitor your labs, vital signs and symptoms
- Give you your medications, perform treatments, and provide information about your overall care plan

Questions to ask

- What medications am I currently taking? What do they do? What are their side effects?
- How do I contact my family or friends while I am in the hospital?
- What can I expect to happen next?
- What can I do to recover faster?
- Can my caregiver send in personal items for me?

Notes or additional questions & answers



Who is on my hospital care team?



Social workers

Social workers focus on personal and often non-medical issues that may arise during your stay in the hospital. Social workers can:

- Offer counseling and helps you cope with care needs
- Advocate for you and your family
- Coordinate going home or to other care facilities
- Assist with financial needs and job concerns

Questions to ask

- There are the changes I am noticing in my mood and thinking/memory, are they normal?
- I am worried about my family. How can I support them?
- I am worried about my job. Are there things I can do to protect it?
- I am worried about being able to pay my bills at home. How can I get assistance?
- What can I do if I'm bored?
- Will my insurance cover my hospitalization?
- Can you tell me about Advance Directives?

At Michigan Medicine, a social worker may also help you through the Guest Assistance Program. The **Guest Assistance Program** can connect you with several types of resources (all based on eligibility) for social needs related to medical care at Michigan Medicine:

- Communication with government and community organizations
- Pharmacy assistance for prescriptions
- Costs for medications, supplies and equipment
- Lodging assistance
- Meal Assistance and Food Insecurity
- Transportation assistance
- Durable medical equipment/supplies
- Parking



Guest Assistance Program:

Ph: 800-888-9825
(9 a.m.-5 p.m., M-F), or
Visit michmed.org/q4kRz
(scan the QR code)

Notes or additional questions & answers



Who is on my hospital care team?



Physical and occupational therapists

Physical and occupational therapists work together to help you regain your ability to do daily tasks.

Physical therapists can:

- Help you improve your overall movement and manage pain
- Teach you exercises that improve strength, balance, or endurance

Occupational therapists can:

- Work with you to recover and relearn the things you do everyday. This includes dressing, eating, bathing, and other activities

Questions to ask

- How long will it take for me to get better?
- What should I practice in between our sessions?
- Is rehab painful? Am I safe to do rehab while I'm recovering medically?
- What are reasonable goals for me? How long will it take me to achieve these goals?

Notes or additional questions & answers



Who is on my hospital care team?



Dietitian

Dietitians make sure you get the proper nutrition during your hospital stay. You may need to give the dietitian information about your regular eating habits. Dietitians can:

- Monitor and assess your nutritional status
- Make recommendations for dietary supplements or tube and intravenous feedings if necessary
- Teach you how to select foods that meet your needs in the recovery process

Questions to ask

- How do I get the nutrition I need while I'm at the hospital?
- Are there foods I can't or shouldn't eat right now?
- What should I know about feeding tubes or eating after ventilation?
- Are there foods that conflict with my medications?
- How do my pre-existing conditions/diabetes affect my diet?

Notes or additional questions & answers



Who is on my hospital care team?



Additional members of my care team

Certified nursing assistants

- Assist you with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, eating, and moving
- Work closely with your nurses

Respiratory therapists

- Help you with your lungs and breathing
- Manage your ventilator settings if you have one
- Help set and check oxygen levels

Hospital chaplains

- Support patients of all belief systems
- Can provide spiritual support and religious services
- Can help you connect with your community and family

You do not have to be religious to connect with a chaplain.

Pharmacists

- Prepare your medications
- Give you information on when, how much, and how long to take your medications
- Explain possible side effects

Notes or additional questions & answers



Help improve these materials

Please help make these materials better for other patients and caregivers.

Share your feedback here (<http://michmed.org/xoWap>), or scan the QR code.

This Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement effort was reviewed under IRB-Med #HUM00190878 and determined not to require IRB approval (Not Regulated - non-research)

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