

Inpatient Guide



Welcome to the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center

Thank you for choosing us to provide for your health care needs.

If we can assist you in any way, please let a member of our staff know.

We hope that your stay with us is pleasant and that you have a complete and speedy recovery.

Being a patient is not easy. You probably have several questions, and naturally you and your family are concerned about your health.

Our staff is here to make your stay easier for you. Please ask any questions or talk with us about any concerns you have about your condition.

It is very important for you to follow all patient safety precautions and instructions given by your health care team. Because we are a teaching hospital, your team may include medical and other health care students under the supervision of our senior clinicians.

We will also work with you to make plans for your care after you leave the hospital. These plans may include clinic appointments or having a nurse visit you when you go home.

Please let us know how we can assist you during your stay.



Calling Your Nurse

A button to call your nurse is located at your bedside and in the bathrooms. When you press the button, the nursing station is alerted that you need assistance. A staff member will respond to your call as soon as possible.

Identification

The identification band placed on your wrist when you were admitted must be worn at all times to ensure proper identification for medical care.

Meals

Your physicians may order a regular or special diet to meet your nutritional and medical needs. A dietitian may also visit you to discuss your diet. Please make sure you follow your diet plan.



Women Veterans

The medical center team includes a Women Veterans Coordinator to make sure we are fully addressing the needs of every patient. The Women Veterans Coordinator can be reached at ext. 7260.

Patient Advocates

If a problem develops with respect to your care, please talk with the nurse manager or contact the patient advocate. We want to know what you think, so please complete patient surveys too. To reach the patient advocate, please call ext. 6066 or 7204.



Social Work Assistance

Our social workers have information about many community resources which may be of assistance to you and your family. They can also help plan special post-hospital care. Please notify the nurses if you need to contact a social worker.



Chaplain Services

Our chaplains are committed to meeting your spiritual needs. Chaplains are available seven days a week, and the Chapel is open on the first floor 24 hours a day. Services are also held every Sunday on the first floor in Room A144 at 9:30 am. If you would like to talk with a chaplain, please ask your nurse to call the Chaplain Service.

The finest care for our nation's heroes

Medication

If you brought any medication from home, please give it to your nurse. Your physician will order all appropriate medications for you.

Clothing & Valuables

Please send valuables home or ask your nurse to have them placed in safekeeping with the medical center. If you choose to keep valuables with you, the medical center cannot assume responsibility for any loss or damage.

Veterans Benefits Counselors

Veterans Benefits Counselors are here to assist you with questions on Federal and State benefits available to veterans such as compensation, pension, government insurance, education, GI loans and vocational rehabilitation.

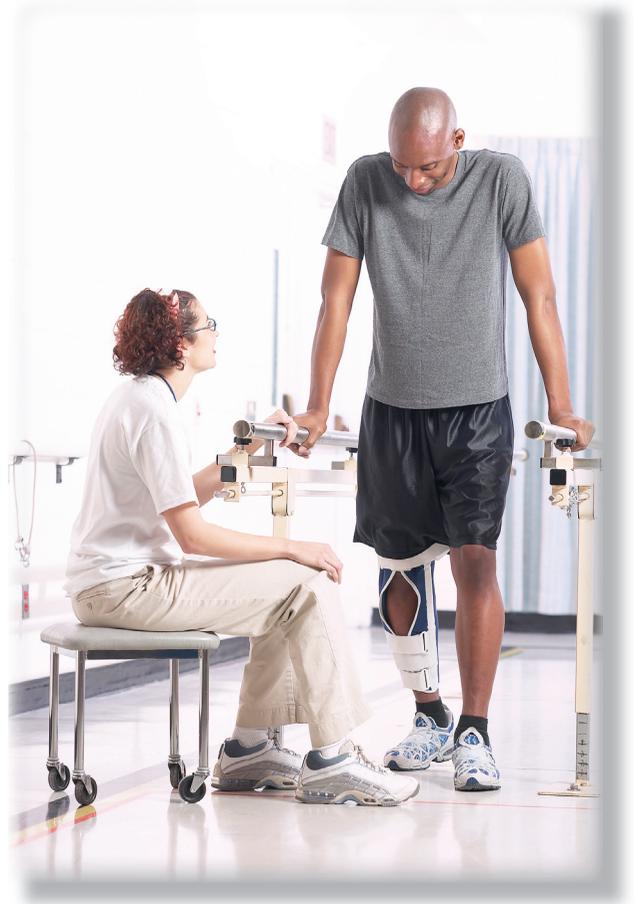
SC Division of Veterans Affairs - ext. 7506

VA Military Liaison Representative - ext. 7123

DAV Representative - ext. 7456

Care Management

Our RN care managers coordinate care for our patients throughout their hospital stays and serve as liaisons between patients and the health care team. Discharge planning and coordination of post-hospital care is a major focus of care management. Care management is provided 24 hours a day.



Insurance

We are dedicated to providing for all of your health care needs whether or not they are service connected. We do follow the provisions of the Medical Care Cost Recovery Act by billing health insurance carriers for medical care provided to veterans for treatment of their non-service connected disabilities. Please provide your insurance information to us as these funds help us care for you and your fellow veterans.

Visiting Hours & Guidelines

Visitors are welcome on all patient care units. Each unit may have specific requirements for visiting. Please check with the nursing staff to coordinate appropriate times to visit your veteran.

- Children under 12 years of age must have physician or nurse permission to visit patients. Patients may visit with children in the lobby.
- Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- Please do not bring food or beverages to patients without authorization from the physician or nurse. Please do not eat in patient rooms.
- Patients on the Mental Health Unit will receive visitors in specifically designated areas. Your unit staff will assist with directions.
- If a patient is in a high-risk area or in isolation, the Charge Nurse will instruct visitors on proper hand-washing procedures, appropriate use of gown, mask, gloves or other Infection Control guidelines.

Canteen

The Canteen is located on the first floor. It includes a cafeteria and a retail store. Hours are:

Cafeteria

7:00 am - 4:00 pm

Monday - Friday

Retail Store

7:45 am - 4:00 pm

Monday - Friday

A snack machine area is located on the first floor at the rear entrance.



Patient & Visitor Behavior

Please be considerate of others and help us maintain a calm, quiet, smoke-free environment. The use of loud, abusive or profane language is not permitted. Patients and visitors may not engage in gambling, soliciting, bartering, selling, use or possession of intoxicants or unauthorized drugs while at the medical center. No weapons are permitted on medical center grounds.

Patients should remain on their assigned unit. If you want to temporarily leave the unit, please notify the nursing staff. For their own safety, patients with certain diagnoses such as dementia or confusion must remain on the unit at all times.

*The Ralph H. Johnson
VA Medical Center is
a smoke-free environment.
Thank you for not smoking.*

Advance Directives

Medical advances have made it possible to maintain a person's life, in certain circumstances, by means other than the body's own natural processes. Some people have strong feelings about whether or not they would want such treatment if they were already terminally ill and there was little or no hope of getting well.

A patient must always give his or her consent for any treatment. Sometimes, however, a patient's condition is such that an informed decision cannot be made any longer.

Under these conditions, your family and health care providers are best able to follow your wishes if you have stated them in writing while you were still capable of making choices for yourself.

A Living Will allows you to decide whether you want life sustaining treatment if you have a terminal illness.

A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care gives your permission for a person you name to make decisions about your health care when you can no longer do so yourself.

Talk with your loved ones and physicians about what treatments might be necessary and your wishes for treatment. If you need assistance with an Advance Directive, please ask your nurse to contact a social worker for you.



Patient Privacy & Release of Information

Please rest assured that our staff will diligently protect your personal data and medical information. Medical information will be released upon receipt of your written request and consent. If you wish to have any medical information released, please contact the nursing staff or call ext. 7243 or ext. 7486.

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet (MHV) is the gateway to veteran health benefits and services. It provides access to trusted health information, links to Federal and VA benefits and resources, the Personal Health Journal, and online VA prescription refill. In the future, MHV registrants will be able to view appointments, copay balances, and key portions of their VA medical records on this secure site. My HealtheVet is a powerful tool to help you better understand and manage your health. Get online and register today at:

www.myhealth.va.gov

Going Home

When you are well enough to go home, the doctors, nurses and social worker on your unit will work with you to plan your post hospital stay care. They will discuss any concerns you may have, information you need to know about your medical condition and follow-up care instructions.

This information may include:

- Things that might improve or worsen your condition
- How to contact your physician
- Symptoms to report to your physician
- Activities you should and should not do
- Care needed for any tubes or dressings
- Treatments to continue at home
- Diet
- Medication instructions and possible side effects

Be sure you have:

- Someone to help with your care at home
- Transportation to home and to follow-up appointments
- Supplies or equipment you will need
- Medications and medication refill instructions
- A clinic appointment if your doctor wants you to return for follow-up

If you need assistance transporting your personal items to your car, please call Escort Service at ext. 7442.



*Caring for our nation's heroes
is more than our job ...
it's our privilege.*

Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Telephone Directory

Medical Center Operator	(843) 577-5011
Toll-Free Number	1-888-878-6884
Blue Primary Care Clinic	(843) 789-6400
Red Primary Care Clinic	(843) 789-6400
Beaufort Primary Care Clinic	(843) 789-6400
Goose Creek Primary Care Clinic	(843) 789-6400
Myrtle Beach Primary Care Clinic	(843) 477-0177
Savannah Primary Care Clinic	(912) 920-0214
Bed Central (Admissions)	ext. 7859
Beneficiary Travel	ext. 7305
Billing Office	ext. 6250
Chaplain Service	ext. 7415
Eligibility Information	ext. 6217/6215
Fee Basis	ext. 7484/7485/7146/7209
Hospital Based Home Care (HBHC)	ext. 6627
Medical/Surgery Clinics	ext. 7245
Patient Advocate	ext. 6066/7204
Pharmacy	ext. 7545
Police	ext. 7251
Prosthetics	ext. 7414
Release of Information	ext. 7243/7486
Veterans Benefits Counselor	ext. 7506
Visual Impairment Service	ext. 7575
Voluntary Service	ext. 7230