

SENTARA PATIENT AND FAMILY GUIDEBOOK



[sentara.com](https://www.sentara.com)

SENTARA COMMITMENTS

We are committed to improving health every day. As members of the Sentara team, we are committed to your well-being and creating an extraordinary healthcare experience.



Safety

Always keep you safe



Respect

Always treat you with dignity, respect and compassion



Listen

Always listen and respond to you



Inform

Always keep you informed and involved



Teamwork

Always work together as a team to provide you quality healthcare



ABOUT US: SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Because our patients expect nothing less

Quality and safety are our top priorities for our patients and members.

We also know it is a privilege to serve our communities and that our patients and members have many healthcare choices. We are committed to providing you with an exceptional experience and better health outcomes.

Our mission: We improve health every day

Our values: people, quality, safety, service and integrity

Our vision: to be the healthcare choice of the communities we serve



ACCESSIBILITY

Communication

We aim to provide effective communication for everyone.

- Interpreter services and/or Communication Aids will be given for free if you are limited-English speaking, deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, or have other impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.
- You can ask to have a friend or family member interpret for you. However, Sentara will still provide a qualified medical interpreter when you are discussing important information.
- We will read written materials about treatment, benefits, services, and informed consent forms aloud. We will explain forms to you if you are blind or have low vision. We will offer large print and words converted to Braille if needed.

Please contact any Sentara Healthcare staff for help.

Accessibility

Our promise:

- To have ADA compliant facilities that everyone can access.
- To have convenient Handicap Accessible off-street parking.
- To ensure curb cuts and ramps between parking areas and buildings.
- To give level access into the first floor with elevator access to all other floors.
- To provide fully accessible offices, meeting rooms, bathrooms, public waiting areas, cafeteria and patient treatment areas, including examining rooms and patient units.

THE SENTARA LANDSCAPE

One healthcare system with many doors, but a shared commitment to quality care and creating an extraordinary healthcare experience.



Members of the Team

Nearly 28,000 employees across the system



Sites of Care

More than 300 sites of care



12 Hospitals

Located across Charlottesville, Hampton Roads, Harrisonburg, Northern Virginia, Northeastern North Carolina and South Boston and including a Level 1 trauma center



Four Medical Groups

More than 1,000 Quality Physicians and Advanced Practice Clinicians



Optima Health Plan

Serving 455,000 Members in Ohio, North Carolina and Virginia



Home Care & Hospice

Available in Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina



Rehabilitation, Nursing, Assisted Living and PACE Centers

Assisted Living Centers and PACE locations located in Hampton Roads with Rehabilitation and

Nursing Centers in Hampton Roads, Northeastern North Carolina and South Boston



Advanced Imaging and Diagnostic Centers

Located across Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia, Charlottesville, South Boston, Harrisonburg and Northeastern North Carolina



Outpatient Care Centers

Convenient locations across Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia, Charlottesville and Northeastern North Carolina



Sentara College of Health Sciences

Offering a variety of programs including Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree, Associate Degree in Cardiovascular Technology, Associate Degree in Surgical Technology and certificate courses



Medical Transport

Medical transportation with Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance or ground Medical Transport Ambulance

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR CARE

You are the most important member of your healthcare team.



SPEAK UP

Ask questions and voice concerns. It is your body.



FIND AN ADVOCATE

Pick a trusted loved one or friend to be your advocate or support person.



PAY ATTENTION

Make sure you are getting the right treatments and medicines.



WHAT MEDS & WHY

Know what medicines you take and why you take them.



EDUCATE YOURSELF

Learn about the medical tests you get and your treatment plan.



PLAN EARLY

Prepare yourself for a healthy recovery and a successful transition from the hospital.



And Remember:

ASK QUESTIONS

If you hear a term you do not know, ask what it means.



TEACH BACK

After you hear instructions or an explanation, repeat back what you heard to make sure you understand.



TAKE NOTES

Write down any key facts your doctor tells you in the notes section at the back of this patient guide.

THE SENTARA APP

HEALTHCARE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

DOWNLOAD THE SENTARA APP TODAY



Securely View
Health Information



Review Test Results



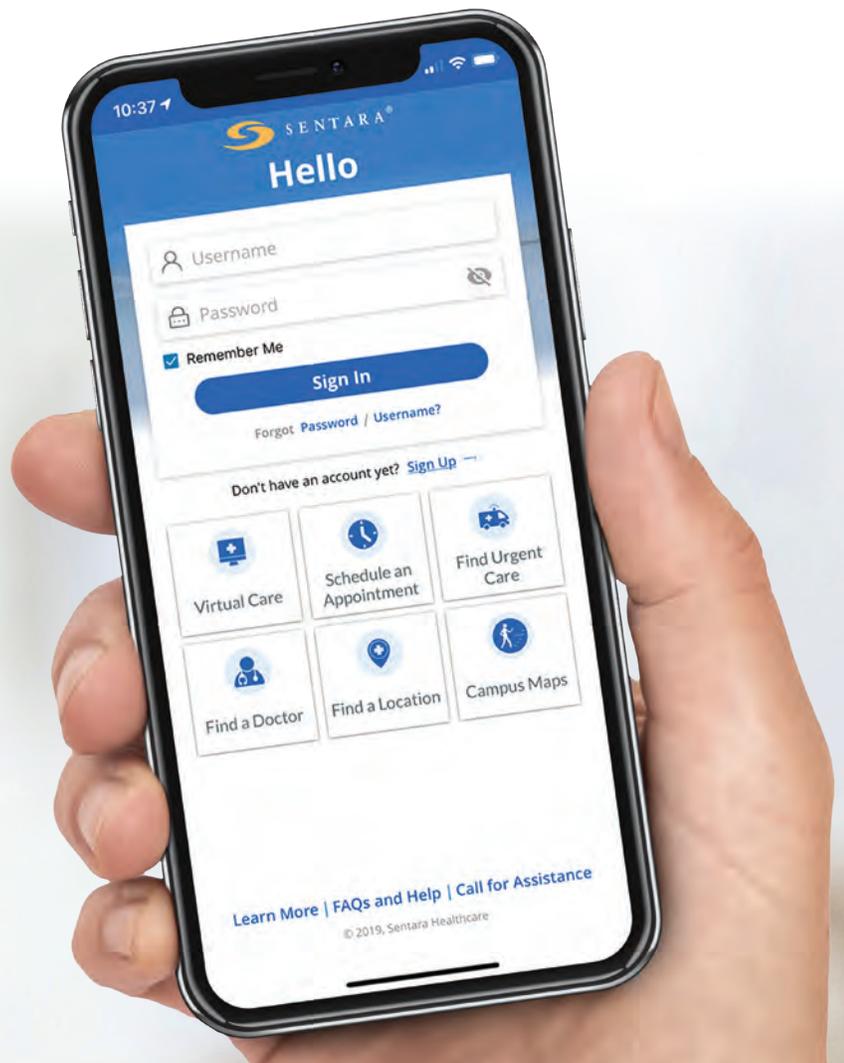
Schedule an
Appointment



Get Care by Phone
or Video



Find a Provider



Text APP to 26320 to download now.



Available on the App Store® and Google Play™





RIGHT TO COMPLAIN

You can file a complaint if you think your rights are being denied or your health information is not being protected. File with your provider, health insurer, the U.S. government or through the Sentara Patient Advocate at 1-800-SENTARA.

CONTACT 757-507-7100 FOR COPIES OF MEDICAL RECORDS.

Another law gives more privacy protections to patients of alcohol and drug treatment programs. For more information, visit: samhsa.gov.

*U.S. Department of Health
& Human Services Office for
Civil Rights*

PRIVACY & HEALTH INFORMATION

A federal law gives you privacy rights and protects your health information. This law sets rules on who can read and receive your information. These rights are important for you to know.

Who must follow this law?

- Most doctors, nurses, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and many other healthcare providers, their vendors and health insurance companies, including HMOs and government programs

What information is protected?

- Information your doctors, nurses and other providers put in your medical records
- Information about you in your health insurer's computer system
- Billing information

What rights do you have over your health information?

- Providers and health insurers must obey your right to:
 - Ask to see and get a copy of your health records
 - Make corrections to your health information
 - File a complaint



What are the rules and limits on who can see and receive your health information?

Your health information can be used and shared in a way that is secure and doesn't interfere with your healthcare:

- For your treatment and care coordination
- To protect the public's health, such as reporting when the flu is in your area
- To make required reports to the police, such as reporting gunshot wounds

Social Media and Privacy

Please remember to respect the privacy of the people around you, if you are on social media while you are a patient at Sentara Healthcare. These people include other patients, their families/friends, and Sentara staff.

- Sentara staff cannot accept a "friend" or "follow" request from you.
- Sentara staff cannot send you a "friend" or "follow" request on social media.
- Please be aware of your providers' privacy, professional boundaries and confidentiality. Do not post pictures of other patients or staff on social media.

Thank you for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our patients and Sentara staff.



WASHING YOUR HANDS

Why should I wash my hands?

One of the most important things we can do to avoid getting sick and spreading germs is washing our hands. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that hand washing is one of the “most important means of preventing the spread of infection”; it is the first line of defense for infectious diseases. Remember: It is okay to ask your doctors if they have washed their hands.

When should I wash my hands?

- Before making or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up someone who has gone to the bathroom
- Before and after taking care of someone who is sick
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut

What happens if I do not wash my hands?

When you do not wash your hands, you risk picking up germs that are unaffected by common antibiotics (drugs). These antibiotic-resistant germs can spread and make you or others sick.

How should I wash my hands?

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if you can.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub the front and back of your hands and fingers.
- Continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If you can, use your used paper towel to turn off the faucet.

What if soap and water are not available?

Use an alcohol-based gel to clean your hands. The nursing staff can give you hand-sanitizing wipes. These wipes work the same way as alcohol-based gel. Ask a staff member if you have not already been given a pack of wipes.

When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands and fingers together until hands are dry.



QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK DURING YOUR STAY

You have the right to ask questions and get responses from your doctor or nurse that make sense to you. Share your answers to these questions with hospital staff so we can help.

SHARE

- Do you or your caregiver have any communication needs?
- Do you need hearing aids or other devices?
- Do you prefer to read or have someone read health information to you?
- Do you have any cultural, ethnic or religious-based needs we need to know?
- Who is your support person who can talk with hospital staff about your care?

We encourage you and your caregiver to listen to and speak openly with staff during your stay. Keep an eye out for information from us on the whiteboard in your room. We also suggest that you:

- Write down what your doctors and nurses say or ask for written instructions.
- Make lists of what needs to be done and who can help.
- Ask questions until you understand and get the answers you need.

SHARE

Here are some examples of questions you may ask:

- What exercises are good for me?
- What should I eat?
- What activities or foods should I avoid?
- When are my next appointments?
- What issues should I watch for?
- When and how should I report problems to a doctor or nurse?

Talk with our staff such as social workers, physical therapists and chaplains about your care or other help you need. Our team is here to help guide you and make sure you understand everything related to your care. Please ask questions if anything is unclear.

MONITORING YOUR MEDICATIONS

It's important to know what medications you are taking and why.

SHARE

Ask your doctor these questions about any new (and current) medicines you take:

- What is the name of my medicine? What is the generic name for it?
- Why am I taking it? How will it help? When will it start working?
- What dose? How often? How long?
- What is the best time (morning, night, etc.) or way to take it (with food, with water)?
- What are possible side effects? What do I do if they happen?
- Do I need to avoid any foods, drinks or activities?
- What do I do if I miss a dose?

Remember, Take Charge of Your Medicines

Think you are due for your next dose? Wondering if a new medicine can replace one you already take? Want to make sure all your medicines and supplements are safe to take together? Just ask!

PREVENT MEDICINE ERRORS

Be sure your doctors and nurses know:

- All the prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines and herbal or vitamin supplements you take
- Any allergies you have to medicines, anesthesia, foods, latex, etc.
- That your name matches the name on the medicine (use your ID bracelet to double-check)



PAIN

Pain after a procedure (post-procedure pain) is normal and expected. These tips can help you stay as comfortable as possible.

Taking Pain Medications

- Take medications on time. Do not wait until the pain is severe.
- Only take the medications your doctor tells you to take. Do not take more than prescribed.
- Take pain medicine with food to avoid an upset stomach.
- Do not drink alcohol while using pain medicine.

Types of Pain Medications

Pain medications include non-narcotics and narcotics.

Non-narcotics:

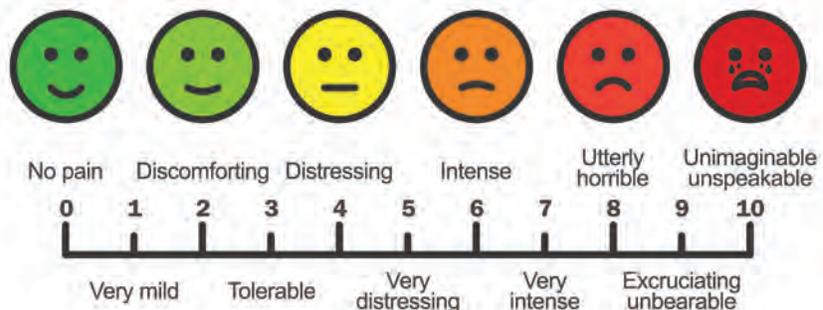
- Over-the-counter (such as *acetaminophen and ibuprofen) or prescription
- Relieve mild to moderate pain; some reduce swelling
- Possible side effects include upset stomach and bleeding

*Do not take Tylenol (acetaminophen) if taking any narcotic containing Tylenol/acetaminophen. Ask your pharmacist if you are unsure.

Narcotics (opiates):

- Requires a prescription
- Relieve severe pain
- Possible side effects include upset stomach, nausea, and itching
- May cause constipation (to help prevent this, eat high-fiber foods and drink lots of water)

For pain management, talk to your doctor or other support services in your area.



PREPARING YOU FOR LEAVING THE HOSPITAL

Did you know that some patients go back to the hospital after their stay? We know that returning to the hospital is the last thing you want to do. At Sentara, we want to do everything we can to prepare you for the next steps in your recovery. Our goal is to help you finish recovering from the comfort of your home or next care facility.

There are many things you need to do to take care of yourself after you leave the hospital.

You need to:

- See your doctor, ideally within seven days
- Take your medicines
- Exercise
- Eat healthy foods
- Know who to call with questions or concerns

There is space on the last page of this book to write down important numbers.

You can view the “Preparing You for Leaving the Hospital” video at any time at sentara.com/LeavingHospital.

SHARE

Questions to ask your doctor or discharge nurse before discharge:

1. What number can I call 24 hours a day if I have questions or concerns? Who is my contact?
2. Has my follow-up appointment been scheduled? With whom? Do I have a ride there?
3. What are key warning signs I need to watch for? Who do I call if they happen?
4. What special devices do I need? What special instructions do I need (wound care, injections, etc.)?
5. What kinds of activities and foods are limited? For how long?
6. Can the doctors caring for me after my stay access my test results and medications? Do I need follow-up tests?
7. Are my new medicines safe to take with my other medicines, vitamins or supplements?
8. How and when do I take my medicines? How do I fill my prescriptions?
9. Who will provide the extra personal, home or healthcare services I may need?
10. Who can help me if I have concerns about medical costs?



FOLLOW-UP CARE

It is very important that you come to your follow-up appointment. Your doctor will examine you and review your treatment plan to ensure you are recovering. This will help us address any problems that may cause you to return to the hospital. We may adjust your care plan to prevent that from happening.

You will need to see one of your doctors within seven days after you leave the hospital. Our staff can help you and your caregiver make these follow-up appointments.

You may also get phone calls after you leave the hospital. These calls let us know that you are doing well and have everything you need.

After-hospital care that fits your needs is important. Make sure you understand what your hospital staff recommends for you.

Talk to your Care Coordinator or Social Worker for help finding the right after-hospital care.

HOW TO AVOID COMING BACK TO THE HOSPITAL

During your stay at Sentara, the doctors and staff will help you get ready to leave the hospital. You and your caregiver can use this checklist to see what things you can do to help.

Instructions:

1. Use this checklist early and often during your stay.
2. Talk to your doctor and staff about the items on this checklist.
3. Check the box next to each item when you and your caregiver complete it.
4. Use the notes column to write down anything important (like names and phone numbers)
5. Skip any items that do not apply to you.

CHECKLIST FOR DISCHARGE

Make sure you have the following information before you leave the hospital.



Discharge summary

This is why you were in the hospital, who cared for you, your procedures and medicines.



Medicines list

This lists all your new and past prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements. Ask if there are any medicines you can stop taking or that are not good to take together. Also make sure you know why, how and when to take each one.



Prescriptions

Check that your pharmacy has your new prescriptions and you know how to fill them.



Follow-up care instructions

Beyond medicines, this can include:

- Foods or activities to avoid
- Tests or appointments
- How to care for incisions or use devices
- Warning signs to watch for
- Daily living adjustments (like how to get in and out of bed)
- Who to call with questions

NOT READY TO LEAVE?

You have the right to stay in the hospital longer if you do not think you are ready to leave. Share your concerns with your discharge planner or doctor. You may also need to contact Medicare, Medicaid or your insurance company.



After-hospital services

Know how much support you will need in these areas:

- Personal care: bathing, eating, dressing, toileting
- Home care: cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping
- Healthcare: taking medicines, doctor's appointments, physical therapy, wound care, injections, medical devices
- Local resources: Ask your Care Coordinator for help finding local after-care services or other support groups



Try the teach-back method

Repeat back what the Care Coordinator says to make sure you fully understand.

MAKE A PLAN

ACTION ITEMS	NOTES
What's Ahead?	
Ask where you will get care after you leave the hospital.	
If you have a caregiver, give their name and phone number to your nurse.	
Your Health	
Ask the staff about your diagnosis and what you can do to help yourself get better.	
Ask about problems to watch for and what to do if you develop them.	
Ask to review your medication list before discharge.	
Ask if there are any new medicines you need to start taking.	
Recovery & Support	
Ask if you will need medical equipment and who will arrange for this.	
Ask about any activities to avoid, such as bathing, cooking and exercise.	
Ask if there are any tasks or special skills that you and your caregiver need to learn.	
Ask your Social Worker or Care Manager about what your insurance will cover.	
Ask for written discharge instructions.	
Know when your next follow-up appointment will be.	Date _____ Time _____ Provider _____

SENTARA TO HOME

Sentara To Home is made with you – the patient leaving the hospital and going home – in mind. Our goal is to care for you even after you leave. We want to make your move back home simple and convenient for you and your family.

With Sentara to Home you will be able to:

- Leave the hospital with your prescribed medications in hand
- Have the necessary home medical equipment you need, ALL before you leave the hospital

Service, Designed for You, About You

1. The Transition Specialist will speak with you once you are admitted OR after your surgery or procedure. They will tell you what you will need to have a successful recovery once you leave the hospital.
2. The day before you are discharged from the hospital, the Transition Specialist will visit you in your room. They will address your medication needs and self care requirements. They will also arrange any purchases and handle payment right at your bedside.



3. Your medicines will be sent to your hospital room before you leave. Any home medical equipment that you will need to take with you will also be delivered to you.

Who is the Transition Specialist?

The Transition Specialist will serve as your advocate and partner in your transition to home. You can expect your Transition Specialist to:

- Teach you about the various services offered through Sentara To Home
- Visit you when you arrive, after surgery and before you leave to talk about your recovery needs
- Order and arrange for any medication and/or medical equipment deliveries to your hospital room before you leave



SENTARA TO HOME PROVIDES CONVENIENCE TO PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines (cough and cold medicine, pain medicine, first aid products, vitamins and nutritional supplements)
- Durable medical equipment including:
 - Canes and walkers including walker bags, cane tips and cup holders
 - Complex wound care items
- Aids for daily living such as reachers, grabbers and car caddies
- Bath and bedroom safety items such as raised toilet seats, bath benches, and grab bars
- Specialty items for unique health needs:
 - Diabetic and cardiac care items such as monitors, scales, socks, foot care products, travel cases
 - Orthopedic care items such as wrist, ankle, and knee braces
 - Rehabilitation items such as easy grab silverware, over-the-door shoulder pulleys, exercise bands, and therapeutic warm and cold packs
 - Incontinence supplies such as adult diapers and cleansers



UNDERSTANDING/PAYING YOUR BILL

Sentara offers many ways to pay your bill — online, through the mail, on the phone, or at a payment location near you.

You may get one of two bill types: a physician bill for services provided at your doctor's office and/or a hospital bill for services provided at one of our hospitals.

We are here to help you with your billing questions. Please contact our billing representatives using one of the numbers below, or visit sentara.com/billing.

Sentara Hospital Billing

Call Customer Service at 757-233-4500.

Hours: Monday – Thursday

8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Sentara Physician Billing

Please contact our Sentara Physician Billing Customer Service Department for any billing concerns or send an inquiry through the Sentara App.

Hours: Monday – Friday

8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 757-252-2900

Toll free: 888-236-2263

