

Telephone numbers:

If you have any problems call the Hospital Hotline on 0800 5889936.

Patient Support Office:

Patient Support Service:

Medical Centre:

Defence Medical Welfare Service:

Padre:

Medical centre transport clerk:

Medical centre reception:

Unit welfare office:

Space for your personal numbers:

For comments or suggestions about this handbook please e-mail patientsupportservices@shcac.de or call the Hospital Hotline.

More information

More information and answers to FAQ can be found on the Guy's and St Thomas' (GSTT) Website at the following web address:

<http://www.patient-wise.de>

Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital 
NHS Trust

Hospital Handbook for BFG patients

This handbook is for British Forces Germany (BFG) patients who are admitted or are going to a hospital in Germany. Your healthcare experience should be as safe and comfortable as possible and to help with this you will find an overview of what you can expect, and how to resolve any issues you may have. A hospital has lots of different departments and many members of staff. Patients are admitted, treated and discharged every day. You can play an active role in your health care by ensuring that you are fully informed, and question if something seems wrong, even if it seems trivial. Staying well informed helps avoid communication errors and injuries.

If you are concerned about **anything** at all please ask a member of staff, contact the Patient Support Officer (PSO) formerly the Hospital Liaison Officer (HLO), or call the Hospital Hotline on **0800 5889936** (24/7) free from any German landline.

There is space throughout the booklet to record details of what is happening before, during and after your stay in hospital. You could complete all the questions you are likely to be asked during your stay before going to hospital, and while in hospital make regular notes about your progress, examinations or tests, operations and outcomes. Write down all the questions you want to ask the doctor and record the answers. This can be your permanent record and may be useful if you need further care at a later date, or to discuss your treatment with your GP or consultant. It can be used from the moment you have been referred until your treatment has been completed.



Before your planned admission:

You may have received an admission letter with your admission date and details about where to go. If not, ask your PSO or Patient Support Service (PSS) to help you find out. See back page for telephone numbers. For more info on what PSO/PSS staff can do for you please see page 6. If you cannot make your admission date or are unwell in the 3 days before the admission please contact the number on your letter to re-arrange your admission, or call the PSO/PSS as above.

Parking: It is best to have someone drive you to the hospital as you may not be able to drive on discharge (medication or sedation), and parking is often difficult and expensive. If you need transport please call your Medical Centre transport clerk. (see back page). This must be at least 48hrs before, but book transport as soon as you can.

You may or may not be asked to go to the admissions office (Aufnahme) on arrival. Sometimes the admission has been arranged for you. If staff do not speak English, or ask you to complete forms which you do not understand, do not sign, but call the PSO/PSS for assistance, or call the Hospital Hotline on 0800 5889936.

In the admissions office you may be asked some questions including your name, address, date/place of birth, next of kin (NoK) etc. Page 3. If you can, please give your Unit address only but this has to be a German address/postcode or the hospital may not accept it.

If you receive any medical reports or bills, please take these to your Medical Centre **without delay** for processing or post bills as soon as possible via the BFPO mail system to:

GSTT NHS Foundation Trust
Payment Section
Gilead Hospital
Bielefeld BFPO 39

The timelines for paying the bills in Germany are very short. *Any delay could result in legal action.*

Nurses

I'm going to take your temperature
I'm going to take your pulse
Have you had a bowel movement today?
I'm going to take your blood pressure
I have to give you an injection
I have to take an X-Ray

We need to do an ultrasound
I need a blood sample
I need a urine/stool sample

Your symptoms

I feel unwell
I feel sick (nausea)
I am in pain / It hurts (here, there)

I feel dizzy
I have been sick
I can't breathe
I have a temperature
I can't sleep
I have diarrhoea
I'm constipated
I'm a bit scared

Medication

I am going to give you a prescription
Take a tablet 3 times a day
I will give you a suppository

Visiting

When is visiting time?
In which ward is Mrs Jones?

Clinicians

GP (General Practitioner)
Surgeon
Ward doctor
Consultant (senior)
Chief consultant

Ich möchte Ihr Fieber messen
Ich möchte Ihren Puls fühlen
Haben Sie heute Stuhlgang gehabt?
Ich werde Ihren Blutdruck messen
Ich muß Ihnen eine Spritze geben
Ich muß eine Röntgenaufnahme machen
Wir müssen einen Ultraschall machen
Ich brauche eine Blutprobe
Ich brauche eine Urinprobe / Stuhlprobe

Ich fühle mich nicht wohl
Mir ist übel
Ich habe Schmerzen / Es tut weh (hier, dort)
Mir ist schwindlig
Ich habe mich übergeben
Ich kann nicht atmen
Ich habe Fieber
Ich kann nicht schlafen
Ich habe Durchfall
Ich habe Verstopfung
Ich habe ein bißchen Angst

Ich gebe Ihnen ein Rezept
Nehmen Sie 3x täglich eine Tablette
Ich werde Ihnen ein Zäpfchen geben

Wann ist die Besuchszeit?
Auf welcher Station liegt Mrs Jones?

Hausarzt
Chirurg
Stationsarzt
Oberarzt
Chefarzt

Hospital words and phrases

General Terms

Good morning / day / evening	Guten Morgen / Tag / Abend
I'm hungry / thirsty	Ich habe Hunger / Durst
Goodbye / cheerio	Auf wiedersehen / tschüß
Do you speak English?	Sprechen Sie Englisch?
Can you help me, please?	Können Sie mir bitte helfen?
Is there anyone who speaks English?	Kann hier jemand Englisch sprechen?
I don't understand	Ich verstehe nicht
Excuse me please (forgive me)	Entschuldigen Sie bitte (Verzeihung)
Please / Thank you	Bitte / Danke
I'm sorry/ Sorry, what was that?	Es tut mir leid/ Wie bitte?
Yes, please / No, thanks	Ja, bitte / Nein, danke
May I speak to a doctor?	Darf ich bitte den Arzt sprechen?
Please call a doctor	Bitte rufen Sie einen Arzt
Snoring/smell/loud noise	Schnarchen/Geruch/lautes Geräusch
My name is . . .	Mein Name ist . . . / Ich heiße . . .
May I use the telephone?	Darf ich bitte telefonieren?
I need to ring my family	Ich muß meine Familie anrufen
Slowly, please	Langsam, bitte
Eye/ear/nose/mouth/lip/tongue/	Auge/Ohr/Nase/Mund/Lippe/Zunge/
Tooth/head/neck/shoulder/arm	Zahn/Kopf/Hals/Schulter/Arm
Elbow/wrist/hand/finger/thumb	Ellbogen/Handgelenk/Hand/Finger/ Daumen
Back/chest/ribs/abdomen/skin	Rücken/Brust/Rippen/Abdomen/ Haut
Bottom/groin/genitals/thigh	Hintern/Lenden/Genitalien/ Oberschenkel
Knee/shin/calf/foot/	Knie/Schienbein/Waden/Fuß/
ankle/toe	Fußgelenk/Zeh
Left/right/front/behind	Links/rechts/vorn/hinten
Big/small - hard/soft - hot/cold	Groß/klein - hart/weich – heiß/kalt
Hygiene	
I would like to wash	Ich möchte mich waschen
Where is the bathroom? / the toilet	Wo ist das Badezimmer? / Die Toiletten
Do you have a towel?	Haben Sie ein Handtuch?
I need . . .	Ich brauche . . .
Soap / toothpaste / toothbrush / razor	Seife / Zahnpaste / Zahnbürste / Rasierer

What to bring:

- your admission letter, x-rays and copies of any medical reports you may have
- current medication including over the counter medicine or herbal supplements (See page 12 for how to record medication)
- toiletries (soap and shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, brush or comb, shaving equipment, sanitary products etc.)
- hand, bath towel and flannel (the hospital does **not** provide towels and there are no facilities for personal laundry)
- glasses or contact lenses, hearing aid, mobility aids etc.
- nightclothes, dressing gown and non slip slippers or shoes
- day clothes: tracksuit / comfortable clothes, shoes and a coat
- small change for the telephone, vending machines, cafe or kiosk
- items of religious importance to you
- name and contact numbers (space on back page) and address book, paper and pen
- books and/or magazines
- Audio equipment (remember to bring earphones/headphones so that other people in the room are not disturbed by the noise)
- A charger for your mobile or any other equipment you use.

Some hospitals offer internet access and allow laptops, others don't. Please ask the PSO/PSS to check for you before you go to hospital.

Please do not bring any jewellery or valuables, alcohol or large bags/ suitcases as storage space is very limited. The hospital cannot accept liability for any items stolen or damaged.

Patient Support Officers/Patient Support Staff

Patient Support Officers are experienced bi-lingual staff familiar with the way the German health care system works.

Below are some of the things the Patient Support staff can do for you.

- Give you directions and general information about the hospital
- Support on the day of admission especially with administration
- Explain the cultural differences
- Organise the telephone/television connection
- Translate the menu and show you how to order food
- Attend consultations with the doctor if you/the doctor requests this
- Explain the ward routine
- Translate any hospital or ward information available if not already in English
- Inform your GP/Medical Centre/Unit of your admission, location and length of stay with your permission
- Accompany the doctor on ward rounds if requested
- Visit on working days or have regular telephone contact
- Assist with consent forms for tests/operations and procedures
- Inform Welfare (if you want support) with your permission
- Help with issues or complaints you may have
- Help on discharge with administration, medication, transport, follow up care etc.

Complaints and compliments

If you have any concerns about the care you received it is best to sort it out straight away by speaking to a member of staff immediately. If the ward nurse is not available please ask the PSO/PSS staff to help you. They can speak to the staff on your behalf and assist in resolving any problems. If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been adequately dealt with, you can make a formal complaint by writing to the Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital Operations Manager. For further details please ask for our 'Making a complaint' leaflet, available from the PSO office or PSS staff, or you can download it from our website www.patient-wise.de under your region (bottom right of page under information leaflets).

If a relative wants to complain on behalf of the patient they will need consent from the patient in writing to be included with the complaint.

Some advice if you are making a formal complaint:

- ◆ Please write as soon as possible after the event
- ◆ Give as much detail as you can including your name and the name of the person(s) and department involved
- ◆ If you are raising more than one concern it helps if you number each of the different points you are making. This will ensure that we understand each of your concerns and they can all be answered
- ◆ Please add your address for the written answer and a telephone number so we can contact you if necessary

If you have been very satisfied with your stay or someone has been particularly helpful, you can let the member of staff know before you are discharged or ask the PSO/PSS staff to let them know.

You may receive a questionnaire after your discharge from hospital. Please complete this if you can. It helps to shape the service of the future and assists to improve service provision.

General information

Visiting times: mainly between 10am to 7pm but please check when the official visiting hours are (ask the PSO/PSS staff). Young children may not be allowed to visit all wards, so please check before visiting. In Intensive Care the hours are restricted, and so are the number of visitors so please ask before visiting.

Flowers: Cut flowers can be brought in but potted plants are not permitted due to the bacteria in the soil.

Smoking: All German hospitals have a no smoking policy anywhere in the building. If you want to smoke please ask staff where you can go.

Cafeteria: For opening times please look near the entrance where this is usually displayed. If not ask a member of staff. Most cafeterias offer hot and cold drinks, cakes, hot food, and some also offer kiosk type items, such as personal hygiene items, magazines and toys, but it does vary so go along and have a look or ask the PSO/PSS staff.

Telephone, television and radio: Details about this are usually given on admission. A headset is required so if you have one bring your own, if not you can purchase one at the hospital. If you use the bedside phone or are allowed to use your mobile phone, please consider others with you and do not make any calls after 10pm and before 6am from the room.

Self discharge: All patients are strongly advised against discharging themselves and if they do so, they assume responsibility for any medical mishap, which may result. Service personnel are not to discharge themselves from hospital without the express permission of their Commanding Officer. In the first instance, they are to inform the PSO/PSS of the reasons for wishing to take their own discharge. The PSO/PSS will then inform the unit in order for a decision to be reached. On self-discharge, all patients (whether serving or not) are to sign the appropriate form given to them by ward staff before leaving the hospital. They are advised to contact their unit medical officer as soon as possible (during normal working hours) after leaving the hospital to discuss their actions.

Cultural differences:

There are some cultural differences you should be aware of.

Rooms: In German hospitals the wards (Station) all have individual rooms which can have 2 or more beds in it. Some rooms will have a bathroom attached but some will be located in the corridor. German hospitals are generally more quiet and do not have as many people wandering about as there are not so many outpatient clinics. They favour rest and recuperation. The nurse will not disturb you routinely *so if you need anything at all please use the bell provided* or go to the ward office and ask for help.

Screens and curtains: In most German hospitals curtains or screens are not used to protect your privacy and dignity. If you require privacy for an examination or discussion please tell the doctor or nurse and ask if you can go into a treatment room or private area. During ward rounds the doctor will speak to all the patients in the room, but if you want to have a more private conversation with the doctor please let the staff know in advance and they can book an appointment for you to talk to the doctor.

Medication: Your medication for the day usually comes in a see through tray, with your name on it (if not please ask if this medication is for you). The tray has compartments labelled Morgens (a.m.) Mittags, (p.m.) Nachmittags, (evening) Abends: (night). If you are unsure about anything to do with your medication please ask the doctor or nurse. For pain relief see page 18.

Food and drink: The main meal (hot food) is at lunchtime, breakfast is fresh rolls, cold meat and cheese, jam, coffee and tea. There are usually lots of teas to choose from but you may want to take your own teabags with you as the German black tea is different. When asked about your food remember to include fresh milk if you like this in your tea as the coffee milk provided is often more like condensed milk. Evening meal is usually cold meat, cheese and bread. If you have any issues with ordering food or do not understand the menu please ask the PSO/PSS for assistance. Phone numbers are on the back page.

The Doctor:

The doctor will see you, examine you and ask further questions about your previous medical history. You may wish to record the answers below. The following are some of the questions you may be asked:

- 1. What are your symptoms and how long have you had them?
.....
.....
- 2. Is there anything that makes it worse or better?
.....
.....
- 3. Have you had any serious illnesses or accidents?
.....
.....
- 4. Have you ever been admitted to hospital?
.....
.....
- 5. Have you had surgery before?
.....
.....
- 6. Do you have any allergies?
.....
.....
.....

The doctor will usually come to see you the day after your operation to tell you all about it. The day of your operation you may not be able to understand or remember what is said to you. Do tell the doctor if you do not understand, and he/she will explain further. Any problems speak to your PSO/PSS staff.

After your operation you may be given physiotherapy. Your doctor will advise you on this or if you need any rehabilitation afterwards. He/she will also tell you how much longer you will have to stay in hospital, when the stitches will come out if they do not dissolve by themselves etc. Do write down any questions you have for the doctor below and record the answers for future reference.

Blank for your questions and answer notes:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Your operation:

If you are to have surgery you will need to be prepared for it. The nurse will come and measure your legs to see what size of support stockings (anti-thrombosis stockings) you will need. These will have to be put on before surgery and are hard to pull up. If you cannot manage it yourself please call the nurse who will help you with this. You will also be given a surgical gown to put on. You will need to remove any make-up, nail varnish and jewellery, spectacles, lenses, false teeth and hearing aid. Depending on the type of surgery you may have to have the surrounding area shaved. If you want to you can usually do this yourself. If not the nurses will assist.

You will probably be given medication to help you be calm before the surgery (a pre-med) and you may have been told a time when you are due to go to theatre. There is no guarantee that your operation will happen on time, as emergencies could come in between. The nursing staff should keep you informed, but if you are at all concerned please ask. When you have been given your pre-medication **stay in bed**, if you need anything at all please call the nurses. Once taken to theatre the anaesthetist should ask you for your name and if you know what you are there for. This may seem odd as they should know, but this is a safety precaution to ensure that you know what is going to happen and you are the right patient. When the operation has been completed you will go into the recovery area for a while. After some time when you have recovered sufficiently you may be returned to the ward or go to the intensive care unit.

As German patient rooms usually have the door closed the nurse does not see the patient that often and if there are only a few members of staff on the ward you may have to go to the intensive care ward for a few hours or overnight stay. This does not mean that there is anything seriously wrong! You will be advised when you can eat or drink again. This is usually some hours after the operation. Please ask the staff any questions you may have and let them know if you are in any pain or feel unwell. *Do not hesitate to call the nurses if there is anything at all.*

Space for questions you want to ask your doctor and record the answers:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Medication:

It is important that you know about your medication; what strength, when you start taking it, how often you should take it and with food or without, what it looks like, side effects and why you are taking it. You should ask the doctor whether there is anything you should be aware of when taking this medication. (No alcohol/driving or whether certain foods affect the medication etc).



Keep a list of all the medication you are currently using and what you are given in hospital; name, dosage, start date, colour and size. If you are unsure of what you are taking or when you are to take the medication ask! If the medication looks different to what you are used to, say so, and ask why has there been a change.

If you are at all unsure, **do not** take the medication until you have had a satisfactory explanation by the doctor or nurse. If you are still unsure call the PSO/PSS or the Hospital Hotline for assistance. Telephone numbers on the back page of this booklet.

Medication list:

Name:	Date medication	Dosage & how often to take:	End date:

Pain register continued:

Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Date:	Time:	Comments:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		

Pain relief:

If you are in pain at all you must let the doctor or nurse know. They will assume you are pain free or that the pain relief provided is sufficient. Pain relief can be in tablet or liquid form, via injection or drip, but be aware that sometimes you may be offered a suppository. The tell tale signs are; they come in tin foil wrappers, are cone shaped and are usually accompanied by a glove! This is gentler on the stomach but if you do not want this please let the nursing staff know and ask for an alternative.

A pain register may be a good idea. The pain scale is from 0 –10, if you have no pain at all you would record 0, if you are in the worst pain possible you would record 10. It may be useful to keep a register of this with the date and time as your doctor may wish to know how you are feeling and coping with any pain you may have.

Here is an example below:

Date: 5th July Time: 10am Ring (4) Comments: Just had a shower

Date: Time: Comments:

0 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 8 9 10

Date: Time: Comments:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Date: Time: Comments:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Date: Time: Comments:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Date: Time: Comments: .

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Date: Time: Comments:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Name:	Date medication	Dosage & how often to take:	End date:

Blank page for your notes:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Disease of the blood or tendency to bleed excessively (do you develop bruises for no apparent reason, nosebleeds)?

Allergies/Allergic reactions (e.g. hay fever, allergy to any foods, medications, plasters, latex gloves)?

If yes, please indicate.....

Any other diseases (e.g. disease of the immune system, skin disease, meningitis, tumours, poisoning)?

If yes, please indicate.....

Other health factors (e.g. accidents, severe injuries, special job related factors)?

.....

Do you smoke? If yes, how many per day?.....

Do you drink alcohol regularly? If yes, how much per day?.....

Space for your notes:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Anaesthetic consent form questions:

Age.....years/Height..... cm/Weight.....kg (see p 26/27)

What is your present occupation?

Do you wear a hearing aid/contact lenses/have removable dental prosthesis? Do you have teeth or gum problems? Do you have loose teeth?

Have you been under medical care recently?

If yes, what for?

Do you take medication regularly (pain, sleep, heart, circulation or blood thinning agents such as aspirin)?

If yes, please indicate type and amount per day.....

Have you ever had surgery?

If yes, when and what type of surgery.....

Were there any problems as a result of the anaesthesia?

If yes, please indicate

Did any blood relative ever suffer a complication of anaesthesia?

Have you ever had a blood transfusion?

If yes, were there any complications?

Have you donated your own blood for this proposed surgery?

For women of child bearing age: Are you pregnant?

Do you have/have you ever had one of the following diseases?

Heart disease (e.g., infarct, angina pectoris, heart defect, breathing difficulties on exertion, myocarditis, heart rhythm irregularities)?

Disease of the nervous system (e.g., epilepsy, paralysis)?

Have you ever been treated for **psychiatric problems** (e.g. depression).

Disease of the skeletal system (e.g. injuries to the spine, joint disease)?

Muscular disease or weakness, predisposition to malignant hyperthermia?

Do any of your blood relatives have or had a muscular disease?

Consent forms:

If you need any type of investigation or operation you will be given a declaration of consent to sign. This is a form which will explain why you need the investigation or operation, what is to happen, how it will happen, possible side effects and risks, what is necessary before and after, as well as what the expected outcome is.

Consent forms in the contract hospitals Designated German Provider hospitals (DGP) are in English but some non contracted (or Non-DGP) hospitals will have German forms only. There are usually pictures to help with the explanation. The doctor will discuss it with you. Please ask any questions you may have. Ask for further explanation if you do not understand and do not sign until you do understand. If you have any problems at all contact your PSO/PSS.

Anaesthetic consent form:

If you need any type of anaesthetic you will be given an information sheet to read and fill out the history form. The purpose of the information sheet is to inform you about the various types of anaesthesia available and to prepare you for a discussion with the anaesthetist. He/she will talk about the most appropriate type of anaesthesia for you and explain the risks and possible side effects.

You may be given medication the night before the operation such as medication to help you sleep, and tablets to settle any stomach acid which can build up. This will all be discussed by the anaesthetist at the consultation. Let him/her know if you are really anxious.

When you are satisfied that you have understood everything about the anaesthetic and have no further questions after the discussion you can sign the form in the presence of the doctor. The doctor will ask if you have any further questions and if not he/she will also sign the form. If a Patient Support Officer is present for the translation they may have to sign as well to confirm their presence and that they have translated for you and the doctor. On the next 2 pages are some of the questions you may be asked.