



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Communications Assistance and Accommodations at UPMC Hospitals for Patients, Visitors, and Guests with Autism

UPMC is committed to giving the best care possible to patients who have autism, making sure that all patients, visitors, and guests have equal access to health care.

What should a patient with a disability do when going to a UPMC hospital to make sure their needs are met?

- Tell hospital staff about any communication assistance needs, such as a communication board.
- Please mark all personal belongings with your name and contact information in the event that the items are lost or misplaced. Please understand that you are responsible for all personal items brought to the facility.
- If bringing a service animal, make arrangements for someone to feed, water, and toilet the animal while you are in the facility. Service animals are allowed unless the animal is not under control and the owner/handler does not take strong, useful action to control it. All service animals must be housebroken.

What types of communication assistance or accommodation are available at UPMC hospitals?

- Quiet exam room (with dimmed lights)
- Lower number of staff present during the visit (when applicable)
- Communication board or other visual aids
- More time to explain and do exams
- Allow for videos/music during the visit (when applicable)
- iPad with communication apps
- Picture storyboards for certain procedures (X-ray, CT Scan, MRI, Phlebotomy, Stitches)
- Interpreters

Do patients, visitors, and guests pay for communication assistance or accommodations?

No. The facility or health care provider gives communication assistance for the visit free of charge.

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When do I ask for communication assistance or an accommodation?

If you need help, ask when scheduling hospital stays or appointments (as well as follow-up appointments):

- **Hospital Admissions**
 - If your hospital visit starts in the emergency department, ask for help when you come to the hospital. Such as, "I need communication assistance because I have autism."
 - If your hospital visit is scheduled, tell the admissions staff (ex: the scheduler or receptionist) and your health care provider before your stay or visit.
 - If you are in the hospital, ask your nurse. If they cannot help you, [contact Patient Relations](#).
- **Surgical Scheduling**
 - Tell your surgeon and the surgery scheduler.
- **Office Visits**
 - Tell the scheduler or receptionist and your health care provider.
 - Check with your health care team a few days before your appointment to make sure any needed accommodations have been arranged for.
- If you are scheduling a visit or stay at a UPMC hospital, you can call the Disabilities Resource Center to learn more about taking part in the **Let Us Help You (LUHU) program**. Through this patient care coordination program, the Center will work with you and the hospital to pre-schedule communication assistance and accommodations ahead of your stay or visit. Call the Center at 412-605-1483 for more information.

What else can I do to make sure I get the help that I need?

Tell the staff right away if you feel that your communication needs are not being met, and ask for other help.

- **MyUPMC**
 - MyUPMC is an electronic portal to help you communicate with your doctor's office and access your medical records through your computer or tablet. Visit MyUPMC at: www.myupmc.com



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Who do I ask or go to if I have questions or concerns?

- Ask a person on your health care team, such as the:
 - Nurse or unit director
 - Social worker
 - Case manager
 - Your doctor
 - Other health care providers based on your health issue
 - [Patient Relations Department](#)
 - The Disabilities Resource Center at 412-605-1483 or disabilitiesresource@upmc.edu