



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Patients, Visitors, and Guests with a Service Animal in UPMC Hospitals

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

Can I bring my service animal to the hospital with me?

Yes. Service animals are allowed in the hospital 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.

Can my service animal accompany me in all areas of the hospital?

Yes. Service animals are allowed anywhere the general public is allowed. However, this does not apply to sterile settings such as a Burn Unit, Operating Room or Intensive Care Unit.

Will hospital staff help to care for my service animal?

No. If you are unable to care for the animal yourself, you must choose another person to feed, water, and toilet the animal during your stay. Staff are not responsible.

What if I am unable to care for my service animal and cannot choose another person to do so?

If there is nobody to care for the animal, the animal will have to be taken home or temporarily placed in a kennel. If taken to a kennel, it is at owner's expense.

Are there any other reasons I may not be able to have my service animal at the hospital?

Yes. If the service animal is aggressive, growling or otherwise not under control of its owner/handler, it will not be permitted to stay. It will also not be permitted to stay if it is not housebroken.

Will staff ask me questions about my service animal?

Yes. Staff will need to verify that your animal is needed because of your disability and will need to know what tasks it has been trained to perform for you.



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Does my service animal have to be on a leash or harness?

Yes. Exceptions can be made if leash/harness interferes with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents the use of those devices. In these cases, animal must be controlled through voice, signal or other effective controls.

Who is permitted to bring a service animal to the hospital?

Both patients and visitors with disabilities are permitted to bring their service animals to the hospital.

When do I tell hospital staff that I have a service animal?

If you require help, inform staff when scheduling hospital stays or appointments:

- **Hospital Admissions**
 - If your hospital visit begins in the emergency department and you have questions about your service animal, ask for help when you come to the hospital.
 - If your hospital visit is scheduled, tell the admissions staff (ex: the scheduler or receptionist) and your health care provider ahead of your stay or visit.
- **Surgical Scheduling**
 - Tell your surgeon and the surgery scheduler (remember: service animals are not permitted in the Operating Room).
- **Office Visits**
 - Tell the scheduler or receptionist and your health care provider
 - If you requested any accommodations, 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.



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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 on your health issue
 - [Patient Relations Department](#)
- The Disabilities Resource Center at 412-605-1483 or disabilitiesresource@upmc.edu