



HARVARD

School of Dental Medicine

Harvard Dental Center

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

At the Harvard Dental Center of the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, we are committed to providing safe dental care and to treating each patient with dignity, compassion, and respect. We recognize that a professional relationship based on confidentiality and trust between the dentist/students/providers/hygienists and the patient is essential for the provision of quality oral health care. The following summary of Rights and Responsibilities serves as a framework for successful care.

Patient Rights

- The patient has the right to receive care in a safe setting, free from any form of abuse or harassment.
- The patient has the right to treatment that meets the standard of care in the profession.
- The patient has the right to every consideration of privacy concerning his/her own oral health care program. Case discussion, consultation, examination, and treatment are confidential and shall be conducted discreetly. Those not directly involved in the patient's care must have permission of the patient to be present.
- The patient has the right to receive the information necessary to give an informed consent prior to the start of any procedure/treatment. Except in emergencies, such information for informed consent should include but not necessarily be limited to the specific procedure/treatment, name and qualifications of the dentist/students/providers/hygienists, significant risks (if any), probable duration of incapacitation, estimated costs, and alternative treatments (if any).
- The patient has the right to refuse treatment and be informed of the oral health consequences of such action.
- The patient has the right to obtain from the dentist/students/providers/hygienists complete, current information concerning diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis in terms that the patient can reasonably be expected to understand. When it is deemed not professionally advisable to give such information to the patient, it must be made available to a family member or appropriate person on behalf of the patient.
- The patient has the right to obtain from a person designated by the Practice a copy of any rules or regulations of the facility that apply to his/her conduct as a patient.
- The patient has the right to expect that all records and communications pertaining to the patient's dental care and financial information are treated as confidential.
- The patient has the right to emergency care as needed.
- Once accepted in the Practice, the patient has the right to reasonable, continuing care.
- Once treated, the patient has the right to expect that the Practice will provide instructions regarding continuing health care requirements following discharge.
- The patient has the right to decide to participate, or refuse to participate, as a subject in a research project. The patient's decision will not affect his/her access to continuing dental care at the Harvard Dental Center. Agreement to participate in a research project must be in writing.
- The patient has the right to request to receive normal, unsecured emails from the Harvard Dental Center understanding that requesting to do so may introduce some level of risk that the information in the email could be read by a third party.
- The patient has the right to request an itemized bill, and to examine it, and receive an explanation of it, regardless of the source of payment for services rendered or his/her conduct as a patient.

Patient Responsibilities

- The patient is responsible for keeping appointments, and if unable to do so, to notify the Harvard Dental Center reasonably in advance.
- The patient shall recognize and respect the rights of other patients, families, and staff.
- The patient shall provide to the best of his/her knowledge accurate and complete information regarding his/her present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other information pertaining to his/her health. The patient also has the responsibility of reporting unexpected changes in his/her condition to the responsible dentist/students/providers/hygienists.
- The patient is responsible for following instructions given by the dentist/students/ providers/hygienists, including the plan for continuing health care following discharge.
- The patient should expect the Harvard Dental Center to provide only those services that the dentist/students/ providers/hygienists deem appropriate.
- The patient is responsible for his/her actions if the patient refuses treatment.
- The patient is responsible for prompt fulfillment of financial obligations.

The patient is encouraged to ask questions about any of these rights or responsibilities. Concerns may be brought to the attention of the Harvard Dental Center at 617-432-1434 or, if further attention is needed, the Compliance and Privacy Officer at 617-432-6894.