

Patient and Relative Information Booklet

Spinal Injuries Unit



Our QSCIS Mission

To provide a state-wide service that enables people with spinal cord injury to achieve their maximum potential.

qscis.health.qld.gov.au



Partnering with Consumers - 2.9 Where information for patients, carers, families and consumers about health and health services is developed internally, the organisation involves consumers in its development and review. *Standard 2, 2nd edition*

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The Spinal Injuries Unit

The Spinal Injuries Unit (Spinal Unit or SIU) is a 40 bed unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) in Brisbane. It is the only specialist adult spinal injuries rehabilitation (rehab) unit in Queensland. Our staff are highly trained to care for you during your rehab journey.

The SIU is part of the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service (QSCIS). We provide acute care and rehab to people with a “SCI”. QSCIS aims to help people with a SCI to reach their maximum potential and stay healthy. To learn more about QSCIS, see our staff or read a copy online [here](#).



Address:

Spinal Injuries Unit
Building 17
Ground floor
Princess Alexandra Hospital
199 Ipswich Road
Woolloongabba QLD 4102



Scan the QR code for PA hospital [website](#).

Ward Reception

Phone: (07) 3176 2737

Visiting Hours:

10 am to 8pm

Patient – Centred Care Following Spinal Cord Injury

Many people who have a spinal cord injury (SCI) need to come to the Spinal Injuries Unit (SIU) in Brisbane for treatment and rehab. Rehab includes support from medical, nursing and therapy staff.

At the Spinal Injuries Unit (SIU) we help people with new injuries, as well as those with an existing spinal cord injury.

Everyone's journey through rehabilitation is different.

Rehabilitation or rehab is a program to help you reach your maximum potential after a spinal cord injury. Rehab includes learning how to take care of yourself and your health.

The main goal of rehab is to help you to learn the skills that help you to be as independent as possible. This means:

- Looking at your personal goals.
- The level of your injury.
- Your housing and lifestyle.

We want to help you to do what is important to you.

Safe In Our Care

Your Rights and Responsibilities

As our patient, you not only have the right to:

- Safe and high-quality health care.
- To be treated as an individual with dignity and respect.
- To be a part of all decisions and choices about your care.

The QR codes will take you to our Metro South Health website for more information. If you need hard copies, please ask one of our staff.

Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

Everyone should be able to have safe and good care. **This is your right.** The Australian Charter of Healthcare rights explains all your rights. Everyone is asked to tell us things that matter to their care. This is your responsibility.

All parts of our hospital and services fully support the [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#).



Ryan's Rule

[Ryan's Rule](#) helps you to:

- Get help when you are worried about a person who is in hospital.
- Someone who may be getting worse or not improving.

All Metro South Health hospitals and services fully support this program.

Ryan's rule is not for feedback. Please use Have Your Say for compliments and complaints.



Have Your Say

We value your opinion. We want you to tell us what is working well and where we can do better.

We will always protect [your privacy](#) when you give us feedback. The Have Your Say cards can be found all over the hospital. You can write on the cards or upload a video or voice recording.



Cultural Support

We have a free interpreter service for patients.

We only use fully qualified professional interpreters for all medical discussions. Family or friends can sometimes find it difficult to translate complex medical information.

If you would like an interpreter, please ask a staff member as soon as possible.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers

Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers play an important role in supporting and assisting patients. From a cultural point of view, they supply cultural safety and connection. They can help you understand information about your stay and treatment. If language is a barrier they will help. Please contact one of our staff if you would like to connect with a PAH Hospital Liaison Officer.

Princess Alexandra Hospital Liaison Officer

Phone: 3176 7073

Metro South Health, in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations has committed to achieve First Nations Health Equity in South East Queensland by 2031.



What to Expect During Your Stay

What to Bring to the SIU

During rehabilitation, we recommend bringing the following items:

- Loose clothing, without seams for example tracksuit pants
- Loose cardigan, beanie
- Shoes, preferably 1 size bigger
- High calf length socks (please discuss with your treating team before purchasing as some socks can cause swelling and pressure areas)
- Loose sandals or slippers
- Toiletries
- Glasses, dentures and hearing aids as required
- Medications and medications lists
- Blanket in cooler weather
- Small bag or backpack for the back of your wheelchair
- Water bottle or CamelBak type hydration pack
- Phone chargers & personal electronics (labelled)

Please label all items with your name

We strongly ask you leave valuables at home

The SIU can not fit large personal items (for example: furniture, TVs and bar fridges)

The SIU Team

Medical / Doctor

A team of medical specialists are available 24 hours 7 days a week. For specialist rehab your medical team consist of:

- Rehabilitation specialists (Consultants)
- Registrars and residents
- Other medical and surgical doctors who may be involved during your stay, depending on your care needs.

The medical team look after your general health and ensure that you stay well enough to take part in your rehab program. They also follow you up in the outpatient clinics on discharge and liaise with your primary care physician (GP).

Nursing

Nurses are available to help you 24 hours, 7 days a week to help with your daily care needs. They teach you how to look after your skin, bladder and bowels so you can stay healthy after Spinal Cord Injury.

Physiotherapy

Helps you to work towards physical goals and to be as independent as possible.

Occupational Therapy

Helps you to achieve activities of daily living as independently as possible.

Social Work

Helps you and your family to adjust to your injury and hospital admission, access supports and prepare for leaving hospital.

Psychology

Helps you to find effective ways of coping with the changes happening in your life.

Dietitian

Helps you to understand the importance of nutrition, as your body adjusts to injury.

Speech Pathology

Helps support you for speech and communication, as well as safe swallowing for food and drink.

Leisure Therapy

Helps you become independent with the life activities you enjoy.

My Rehab Team



Patient's Key People:



During your stay, other staff you might meet include:

- Administration officers and support staff
- Allied Health Assistants
- Health Liaison Officers (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Nurse Navigators
- Rehabilitation Engineers
- And possibly more.

Your Rehabilitation Program

We cannot cure spinal cord injuries (SCI), but the SIU team can help patients and their families adapt to the changes following injury. Our goal at the SIU is to support you in achieving your maximum functional potential.

Rehabilitation is a team effort. You and your family are at the centre of it. Together we create a rehabilitation plan by:

- Learning about you
- What it is you would like to achieve
- Setting a timeline for your goals
- Breaking down your goals into smaller tasks for each day

A simple goal example: checking your own skin for pressure injuries.

Your whole team will help you through your rehabilitation. Setting goals for your time at the Spinal Injuries Unit gives you and your team a clear path.

What Happens Next?

Rehab is not just about exercise, it's a plan to learn how to take care of:

- Yourself.
- Your health.
- Your overall wellbeing.

Therapy and rehab can occur in:

- Your room
- Consultation rooms
- Outdoor spaces and gardens
- Self-care spaces like bathrooms
- Dining room
- When you're ready, access within the hospital and community (For example, wheelchair skills)
- Allied Health gyms, kitchens and technology rooms

Your Role:

- We want you to be involved in every part of your rehab.
- Work together with your rehab team.
- Ask questions to make sure you understand how your injury affects you.
- Be respectful to both patients and staff. Everyone deserves to feel safe here.

Each person in the rehab team helps you learn important skills about:

- Skin care
- Bowel and bladder management
- Dealing with pain
- Grief and adjustment to injury
- Equipment
- Stretching and strength training
- Medication
- Sexual function, relationships and fertility
- Healthy living and eating
- Ways to manage possible complications of your spinal cord injury
- Managing changes to blood pressure control
- Dealing with swelling in the legs
- Dealing with loss of temperature regulation
- You may get funding to help your move to the community



Goal Planning

While you're here, we will have meetings with:

- You
- Your family and / or chosen support people

To talk about what has happened and what you want to achieve during your rehab.

Your thoughts and ideas are important. They help us plan for your recovery and help you reach your maximum potential.

Preparing to leave hospital is called 'discharge planning'. We will provide you with information about funding and supports that are available. The team will help you access the things you need to discharge home safely. We will also link you with other parts of our service for ongoing support.

Making Your Stay More Comfortable

Visitors

We encourage family and friends to visit you during your stay. Children who are with an adult are also welcome.

- Visitor's bathrooms are outside the SIU main entrance on the left.
- Change rooms can be found:
 - on floor 1 in SIU OPD accessible Monday to Friday 7am to 4:30pm
 - in the main foyer near the cafeteria.

While you are a patient in the SIU, it is important that staff members can deal with your needs quickly. As there is a limited space around your bed, it is not possible for relatives to stay overnight. There are accommodation facilities close to the hospital, some with accessible rooms.

If you are travelling more than 50km from your local hospital you may be able to get financial help from the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. The PA Travel Clerk can be reached on 3176 5011.

Hospital Leave

As part of your rehabilitation, we encourage day or overnight leave. We will talk to you about when these can start.

You will get:

- A day and weekend checklist to make sure you are safe.
- The chance to share what happened with your treating team when you get back.
- For any leave from SIU (day or weekend), make sure you have share the best phone number to reach you on.

The Metro South Health [website](#) has more information about your time in hospital.



Everyone

deserves to feel safe here



Metro South Health is committed to delivering caring, compassionate and high-quality healthcare in a healing environment.

Violent, aggressive or unacceptable behaviour puts staff, other patients and visitors at risk of harm.

Incidents may result in removal from this facility and prosecution.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- ♦ physical or sexual assault abusive or threatening language
- ♦ harassment
- ♦ deliberate damage to property ignoring staff instructions
- ♦ filming, recording or photographing without approval
- ♦ inappropriate actions on social media including stalking and trolling.
- ♦

Specialist Support During Your SIU Journey

Monthly Patient Forum

SIU holds a monthly patient forum which allows you to talk about your rehab and patient experience. This forum is attended by senior nursing, medical and allied health staff.

Peer Support Program

During your stay, you will meet peer support officers. They can share with you their personal experiences of living with a spinal cord injury. Queensland Health has an agreement with Spinal Life Australia to provide this service.

If you would like to talk with a peer support officer, please contact one of the staff.
Phone: 1300 774 625

Sports and Recreation Program

The sport and recreation program lets you join in community events and other activities in a fun, safe way. During this time, there are less therapy sessions so you can enjoy this program. Details on times and dates may change so please check in with a staff member.

Food Service

While having rehab in the Spinal Injuries Unit, you need nutritious foods to support your recovery. Food is socially and culturally important for many people and their families. Recent changes to the food service have been made to support your stay. We are happy for any tips to improve your meals.

Getting Around the Local Hospital

SIU Facilities and Services

Starting in 2023, major projects began to make the Spinal Injuries Unit better. If things in or around the unit are going to change, the staff will let you know. The details below may change while you're here.

Computers and Wi-Fi

Two computers with internet access and printer are next to the ward kitchenette.

Free Wi-Fi for all patients and their families can be found by selecting in your Wi-Fi settings: 'QH-Free WIFI' and follow the instructions.

Deck, BBQ and Garden Facilities

The outside deck and BBQ can be used by you and your family. Patients and family need to provide utensils for cooking.

Kitchenette

There is a small kitchen near the computers that you can use. You can bring in your own food and place them in the fridges. Please label all food with your name and the date as the fridges are cleaned regularly. Please be careful if you use the hot water and microwave.

Laundry

There is a laundry near the back of the SIU. The laundry is free, laundry detergent is supplied. Staff members can help you with your laundry if you or your family are unable to do this. Please keep the area tidy for everyone to use. Staff members are not responsible for lost or missing clothing. Please use your bed number tag while using the laundry.

Patient Dining Room

The patient dining room is found along the back of the SIU, just off the walkway leading to the gym. Going to this room for meals rather than staying in your own room helps you in your rehab. The dining room is open from 8am to 8pm.

Televisions

Televisions are free of charge. Please keep the volume low or use headphones to avoid disturbing other patients in your room. We ask that TV's are turned off between 11pm and 6am.

Parking

Public parking is open on the hospital grounds or opposite the hospital on Wolseley Street.

Patients admitted for longer than 3 months may be able to access a long stay car parking pass. Please see your social worker for more information.

Car parks directly outside the SIU are for patients attending Spinal Injuries Unit outpatient appointments. Outpatients need:

- A valid Queensland Department of Transport Disability Parking Permit and
- A Spinal Injuries Unit Yellow Permit to use these bays.

Hospital Facilities and Services

Our health service is committed to a smoke free environment for all patients, visitors, and staff. All hospitals have a smoke free policy (including e-cigarettes and vapes). Alcohol and recreational drugs are not allowed.



Please scan the QR code for the [PA Hospital website](#). There are instructions on getting to the main campus, public transport options and local campus maps.

There is a short route-finding video on this website.

The Spinal Injuries Unit is in Building 17.

Shops, cafes, and ATMs are available on the ground floor of the main building and across the road, off Ipswich Road.

The Spinal Injuries Unit looks forward to helping you get started on your rehabilitation journey.