Social media for patients

Social media is a great tool for keeping in touch with friends and family, and for sharing a wide variety of information. Many of our patients and their families like to share their hospital experience on social media sites – especially Facebook and Instagram. However, sometimes this can lead to unwanted attention so there are a few things to keep in mind.

**Anything you post on social media is permanent**

- Think about whether you’d want your boss, your grandma, your children or a potential future employer to see what you post – or how you’d feel having it published in a national newspaper. If in doubt, it’s best to keep it to yourself or just share with close family and friends.

- If your social media accounts are not set to private, anybody can see what you’ve posted – including photos, check-ins, and personal details about your hospital stay that you may want to restrict to friends-only.

- Journalists will often access patient Facebook accounts and use the information there – including photos, comments from friends, family connections and more. They are able to publish this information because it has been made public on social media. Setting your accounts to private will restrict what they can access and use.

- When a patient is seriously ill, sometimes family members want to take photos and post information to keep other friends and family informed. Taking photos – particularly for seriously ill patients – can later help them come to terms with parts of their recovery that they may not remember. However, if you are not able to ask the patient’s permission, it’s a good idea not to post images or information about them on social media.

- Please respect the privacy of other patients and staff, and make sure you don’t accidentally take photos with other people in the background. Staff have the right to refuse any patient photography if it interferes with treatment, or if they don’t feel comfortable being photographed.

If you have any questions, our Public Affairs team is always happy to assist. Contact them on 9076 2266 or email publicaffairs@alfred.org.au
Media information for patients

Public Affairs

Sometimes our patients and their family members find themselves in the media spotlight during their hospital stay, for a variety of reasons. Some people enjoy the opportunity to tell their story, while others would rather remain private. Either way, the Public Affairs team is here to help you.

- All media enquiries should come through Public Affairs, but sometimes journalists make direct enquiries with patients. If you would prefer not to speak to the journalist, or you don’t want them to contact you anymore, let your nurse know and they will contact Public Affairs.

- If you do decide to arrange an interview with a journalist while you’re still in hospital, please let your nurse know immediately. Any media personnel who come into the hospital must be accompanied by a member of Public Affairs.

- If Public Affairs receives an interview request for you or a family member, we will always check with you first before giving an answer. Remember, you are under no obligation to speak to the media but if you do want to, we’re happy to facilitate.

- Sometimes media might try to contact you through Facebook. You do not have to reply, and if this makes you feel uncomfortable, consider changing your settings so you are not ‘searchable’.

- In some situations, families can ask the hospital to assist with making a statement to the media. Public Affairs can help you write that statement and circulate it to media, if that is what you choose to do.

- If you are involved in a police investigation and a journalist makes a request to interview you, it is best to check with Victoria Police before agreeing to be involved with any media.

- Often journalists will contact friends or family members if they are unable to reach a patient. If this happens to you and the patient is unable to speak for themselves, please consider their wishes and their privacy before speaking to the media on their behalf.

If you have any questions, our Public Affairs team is always happy to assist. Contact them on 9076 2266 or email publicaffairs@alfred.org.au