

DISCLOSURE: What to expect when *the unexpected happens in health care*



When you receive health-care services from Eastern Health, you expect to get the safest care possible. However, even with the best of care, skill, and interventions, sometimes unintended events happen that may negatively affect you.

An unintended event that is not consistent with safe health-care delivery is called an **occurrence**. When an occurrence happens you have a right to know and understand what this will mean for you.

A **disclosure process** and investigation will be initiated to share important information with you, determine what went wrong and what needs to be done to try to prevent it from happening again.



The disclosure process involves:

- the facts as known about **what happened**;
- the **steps that were taken**, and will be taken, to inform the client or minimize the impact; and
- the things that will be done to **prevent** it from happening again.

Why does disclosure occur?

- Disclosure is the right thing to do.

As a client, you have the right to know when something unintended happens.

As health-care providers, your safety is our primary concern and your questions and concerns are important to us.

Who does disclosure?

- A health-care team member(s) will disclose information about the occurrence to you.

When does disclosure occur?

- Disclosure should occur immediately following the identification of an occurrence. However, disclosure is a process which may require more than one conversation to fully investigate and to answer any questions you may have.

Ways disclosure can occur

- Based on the circumstances, disclosure can occur in several ways:
- it may take place immediately where care is being provided;
- occur by telephone, or;
- in a meeting with you, your support person and the health-care team.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Can a support person be present during the disclosure process?

Yes. You can choose who you would like to have as a support person(s) and when you wish to have them present.

What happens after the disclosure investigation?

After the disclosure investigation is complete, a report is prepared to share learnings and recommendations. Recommendations support the increased safety of clients and prevent what happened from happening again. Some recommendations may be implemented right away, while others may require changes that take time to implement.

Are there other support services available?

Yes. Eastern Health understands you and your family may require practical or emotional support during the disclosure process. We can direct you to available resources and arrange access to these services on your behalf.

What if the client is a child?

If the client is a child, we will conduct the disclosure process with the child's parent(s)/guardian or caregiver.

What if the client lacks the mental capacity to understand what happened?

If the client lacks the mental capacity to understand what happened, we will conduct the disclosure with the client's designated next of kin or assigned substitute decision-maker. Eastern Health will provide the necessary resources if additional support is needed to complete the disclosure process. This could include, but is not limited to, the support of mental health professionals, pastoral care staff or a client advocate.

Resources

[Provincial Law Supporting Patient Safety – Eastern Health](#)

[CPSI \(Canadian Patient Safety Institute\) Canadian Disclosure Guidelines.pdf \(patientsafetyinstitute.ca\)](#)

For more resources, please visit [Disclosure – Eastern Health](#)

Your Feedback

For more information or to provide your feedback on the disclosure process, please contact our Client Relations Office at <https://www.easternhealth.ca/prc/your-say/compliments-and-complaints/>, by email: client.relations@easternhealth.ca, or phone: 709-777-6500/1-877-444-1399 (toll free).