

## Hospital stay during COVID 19



Our experiences of staying in hospital can be challenging due to hearing loss and there is no doubt going to hospital will be very different during the pandemic. This is especially the case for those arriving with COVID-19 symptoms and we have set out what you should expect to help you prepare for the event. **You will be greeted by medical personnel wearing personal protective equipment ( PPE) with their faces covered by a mask, so you will not be able to lip read them.** New procedures will also be in place if you are attending hospital for appointments, which means that processes may be slower as services will be stretched. The staff may also wear a mask.

As a precaution, and to prevent the spread of COVID -19, many hospitals will have strict rules on visits and **may not allow interpreters or lipspeakers, family members and general visitors** to come into the hospital. We suggest you prepare for this eventuality and request communication support remotely such as captioning or remote assistance with a lipspeaker, as soon as possible if you need one. **Remember you may be alone for long periods of time when you are in the hospital.**

In the UK patients with disabilities and specific needs have the right to accessible information as part of their care under the NHS [Accessible Information Standard](#). However, the implementation of this standard can be inconsistent, and some health professionals may not be aware of it, so you need to remind them of this.

To support you here are a few things you need to know and some tips to assist you:

- A **handout** articulating that you have hearing loss, to alert hospital staff to any communication barriers. We have included a pre-printed handout for you to use.
- If you have a **smartphone or tablet**, download any speech to text apps you may need and test the apps at home before you go to the hospital and take your smartphone with you. Ask hospital staff to communicate with you though these.
- Keep in mind you may have to use your mobile data in case the hospital does not have Wi-Fi.
- If you do not have a smartphone, bring something to write on and pens or markers (check with your hospital if this is allowed first) or ask hospital staff if they can lend you some.
- Pack an emergency bag with items you need to communicate and anything you may need during your hospital stay. Label the bag and items with your name. Leave space on the label to add your hospital ward or room number.

## Your emergency bag could include:

- Paper and pens (check with your hospital if this is allowed first)
- Plugs and chargers for your smartphone or tablet
- An extension cord or power strip in case your bed is far from a socket (check with your hospital if this is allowed first)
- Extra batteries for your hearing aid, cochlear implant processor or assistive listening device
- Chargers for your Cochlear Implant processor
- Emergency contact information for family members or friends
- Any medicine you are taking
- Sanitizer wipes to keep your smartphone clean

## Here is the list of useful apps for speech to text

Please be aware these apps use automated speech recognition (ASR) and their accuracy and usefulness depends on Wi-Fi, speaker voice, accent and acoustics.

- [Google Live Transcribe](#) (can type back, many languages) ([Android](#))
- [Microsoft Translator](#) (can type back, can translate, many languages) ([iOS](#), [Android](#), [Windows](#))
- [Otter.ai](#) (English only) ([iOS](#), [Android](#))
- [Web Captioner](#) (many languages) (free, universal [web page](#))

## For CI/ Baha users

European Cochlear Implant Users Association ( EURO-CIU) has produced practical handouts to be taken to a hospital with basic instructions on using and maintaining different processors. If you are a CI user please check [EURO-CIU](#) webpage which has emergency manuals related to specific CI model.



*National Association of Deafened People*