

SOP Template: Protocols for Handling Patient Inquiries and Concerns

This SOP establishes clear **protocols for handling patient inquiries and concerns** to ensure timely, respectful, and effective communication. It covers initial patient contact procedures, documentation of inquiries, escalation processes for complex issues, and follow-up actions. The goal is to enhance patient satisfaction, maintain confidentiality, and resolve concerns efficiently while fostering trust between patients and healthcare providers.

1. Purpose

To provide standardized procedures for managing patient inquiries and concerns, ensuring high-quality communication, efficient resolution, and adherence to confidentiality standards.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff members involved in receiving, documenting, escalating, and resolving patient inquiries and concerns.

3. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Frontline Staff	Receive and document inquiries. Address basic questions or refer as appropriate.
Supervisors/Managers	Handle escalated or complex issues. Ensure timely follow-up and resolution.
All Staff	Maintain professionalism, confidentiality, and patient-centered communication at all times.

4. Procedure

4.1 Initial Patient Contact

- Greet the patient courteously and identify yourself and your role.
- Listen attentively to the patient's inquiry or concern without interruption.
- Confirm understanding by summarizing or repeating main points.
- Assure the patient that their concern will be managed promptly and confidentially.

4.2 Documentation

- Record details of the inquiry/concern in the designated system or log, including:
 - Date and time
 - Patient's name and contact details (if applicable)
 - Nature of the inquiry or concern
 - Actions taken
 - Staff member involved

4.3 Escalation Process

- If the inquiry cannot be resolved at first contact, escalate to a supervisor or appropriate specialist as per internal guidelines.
- Notify the patient of the escalation and provide an estimated timeframe for follow-up.
- Document the escalation steps and involved individuals.

4.4 Follow-Up

- Ensure follow-up within the specified timeframe (e.g., 24-48 hours, depending on urgency).
- Inform the patient of the outcome, further actions, or resolution plan.
- Document the follow-up communication and any agreed-upon actions.

5. Confidentiality

- All patient information must be handled according to HIPAA and institutional confidentiality policies.
- Limit sharing of patient information to staff directly involved in the resolution process.

6. Continuous Improvement

- Regularly review logged concerns to identify patterns or systemic issues.
- Share learnings with relevant teams to improve service quality and patient satisfaction.

7. References

- HIPAA Privacy Rule
- Internal Policy on Patient Communication
- Institutional Escalation Guidelines

8. Revision & Review

This SOP should be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure compliance with best practices and regulatory requirements.