

Martha's Rule

If you think you or your loved one is getting more unwell, you can ask for a rapid review — at any time, day or night.

Martha's Rule helps patients, families and carers raise concerns when someone in hospital is becoming more unwell.

When to use it

You might notice changes such as:

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| • Skin hot or cold to the touch | • Worsening pain |
| • Skin changes — a rash or mottling | • Drowsy or sleepier than normal |
| • Changes in breathing | • New confusion |

Anything else that worries you

Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, tell staff. So, they can act to prevent more serious health problems.

How to use it

If you are worried, follow these steps:

- 1** Speak to the team caring for you or your loved one.
- 2** Still worried? Ask to speak to the **Nurse in Charge** or **Ward Manager**.
- 3** If you've done this and remain worried — and feel your concerns aren't being addressed — you can call for a **rapid review**.

Need a Rapid Review?

📞 Follow your hospital's Martha's Rule process.

You will need: Patient's name + Ward or department + Details of your concern

Need help communicating? You can ask for a translator, or use Google Translate, to tell staff your concerns.

When not to use it

Martha's Rule is for patients who are **unwell and getting worse**. It isn't for general concerns about a stay in hospital — please raise those with the Nurse in Charge, Ward Manager, or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

It lets inpatients and their families seek a rapid review when someone is becoming more unwell. This is different from a **second opinion**, where you ask to see another consultant to discuss a diagnosis or treatment — to arrange that, talk to your ward team.

Calls should only be made about people who are **current inpatients** in hospital. For outpatient queries, please contact:

Your GP

NHS 111 non-urgent

Call 999 emergency

PALS — Patient Advice & Liaison Service

PALS offers confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters, and helps improve the NHS by listening to your concerns and suggestions.

How PALS can help

- ✓ Answer queries related to your care, treatment or experience
- ✓ Listening to concerns
- ✓ Raising a complaint
- ✓ Provide feedback, suggestions and comments

PALS can tell you about

- ✓ Accessing interpreting and translation services
- ✓ Patient information leaflets

Find PALS: it can be found in hospital, ask the welcome desk for directions. You can also ask your GP surgery or phone NHS 111 for details of your nearest service.

Making a complaint

If you're not happy with an NHS service, you can make a complaint. You can complain to the person or organisation providing the service — such as the GP, dentist, hospital or pharmacist.

Need help making a complaint? VoiceAbility are the nominated NHS advocacy provider for Swindon. Search 'VoiceAbility' online or call 0300 303 1660.