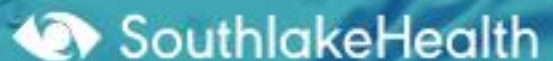




# Essential Care Partner (ECP) Handbook

Support patients. Strengthen Care. Make a difference.



## Welcome to Southlake Health!



For 100 years and counting, Southlake Health has been dedicated to building healthy communities through leading edge care with an unwavering pride for people, place, and performance. What began as a single hospital has grown into a comprehensive network that brings health, healing, and hope close to home for patients and families across northern York Region and southern Simcoe County.

As you begin your time with Southlake as an Essential Care Partner, know that you are supporting an organization dedicated to making a difference at every stage of life for the communities we serve. Your presence plays an important role in a patient's care journey, and your support, advocacy, and compassion make a meaningful impact each day. We are grateful to have you alongside our care teams during this time.

Thank you for being here, and welcome to the Southlake community.

## The Essential Care Partner Program

If you are reading this handbook, you have been identified as an Essential Care Partner (ECP) — someone whose presence, knowledge, and support are important to a patient's care and well-being. We know that when patients are supported by people who know them well, both their experience and outcomes improve. The ECP Program strengthens collaboration between patients, families, caregivers, and the healthcare team and helps ensure care at Southlake is grounded in compassion, respect, and meaningful partnership.

This handbook is designed to support you during your time in the hospital. It explains your role as an ECP, how you can support your loved one, what to expect while on site, and how to work safely and collaboratively with the care team.

ECPs are more than visitors – they are recognized partners in care. ECPs may provide emotional, cognitive, and physical support, as appropriate and in collaboration with the care team, to enhance comfort, understanding, and continuity throughout the patient's care journey.

By integrating ECPs into our care model, Southlake supports a more people-centred, inclusive, and collaborative healthcare environment – one that respects the dignity, safety, and individual needs of every patient.

### Definitions

#### Essential Care Partner

An ECP is a support person identified by the patient or their Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) as essential to the patient's safety, wellbeing, and overall care experience. An ECP may be a family member, friend, neighbour, paid support personnel, or another trusted individual chosen by the patient. ECPs are more than visitors — they are recognized partners in care who help strengthen communication between patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare teams.

- ECPs must be at least 18 years of age.
- ECPs must agree to follow Southlake guidelines.
- ECPs commit to providing ongoing, consistent involvement, as appropriate to the patient's needs.

## **Substitute Decision Maker (SDM)**

A Substitute Decision Maker is a person authorized to make healthcare decisions on behalf of an individual who is incapable of doing so themselves. In Ontario, the Health Care Consent Act outlines a hierarchy of potential SDMs, including spouses, partners, parents, children, siblings, and other relatives. The SDM must be willing, available, capable, at least 16 years old, and not prohibited by court order or separation agreement from acting in this role.

## **Visitor**

A visitor is someone who comes to a healthcare facility to provide social and friendly support to a patient. Unlike ECPs, visitors are not considered part of the formal care team and do not have the same level of involvement in the patient's care plan.

## **Power of Attorney (POA) for Personal care**

An individual legally appointed through a Power of Attorney document to make personal care decisions on behalf of someone else if they become incapable of making those decisions themselves.

## **Essential Care Partner: what to know**

### **ECP responsibilities**

Below are examples of the emotional, physical, and cognitive supports an ECP may provide. Offered in collaboration with the care team, these supports safely enhance patient comfort, safety, and wellbeing without replacing clinical care.

#### **Emotional support**

- Offer companionship and a familiar presence, reducing feelings of loneliness or anxiety
- Engage in comforting activities like holding hands, listening, and talking
- Provide reassurance during stressful medical procedures or transitions in care
- Facilitate communication with other family members or friends for additional emotional support
- Support the patient's emotional needs by being present during medical updates or discussions with the care team

### **Physical support**

- Assist with mobility and repositioning (e.g., sitting up, standing, short walks) as directed by staff
- Support comfort measures, such as adjusting pillows, blankets, lighting or room setup
- Help with personal care tasks, such as grooming, oral care, dressing or toileting support when permitted
- Assist with meals and hydration, including opening containers, encouraging intake, or feeding when appropriated and approved
- Ensure safe access to personal items during transfers, using staff guidance and alerting the care team as needed

### **Cognitive support**

- Help the patient understand and remember information provided by healthcare staff
- Assist with communication, ensuring the patient's needs and preferences are clearly conveyed
- Remind the patient about daily schedules, medication times, and hospital routines, as needed
- Engage in activities that stimulate the mind, such as reading aloud, playing simple games, or engaging in conversation
- Support the patient in following cognitive exercises or routines suggested by the care team, such as memory aids or relaxation techniques

We encourage you to speak with a member of the care team if you notice a change in the patient's condition, have safety concerns, or need clarification about instructions or next steps. Your voice matters and can help keep patients safe.

ECPs are **not** permitted to:

- Lift or transfer patients independently
- Enter the room of another patient or provide care or support to anyone other than their designated loved one
- Perform clinical procedures, administer medications or complete tasks designated for healthcare staff only
- Make decisions on behalf of the patient unless they are also the legally designated SDM

## **ECP status and review**

Your role as an Essential Care Partner is an important part of supporting patient safety and well-being. If concerns arise related to safety, privacy, behaviour, or adherence to hospital policies, the care team may need to review ECP access.

When this happens, the care team will speak with the patient and the ECP, or SDM, to explain the concern and discuss next steps. Decisions are guided by a commitment to patient safety, well-being, and a safe care environment for everyone.

If you have questions or would like to discuss a decision, you may contact the Patient Relations Office by phone at 905-895-4521 ext. 2290 or by email at [PRO@southlake.ca](mailto:PRO@southlake.ca).

## **Visiting access**

Patients may designate up to two Essential Care Partners. Only one ECP may visit at a time. Essential Care Partners have expanded visitation access, including access during outbreaks and outside of standard visiting hours. ECP presence is coordinated in collaboration with the care team to best support the patient's care and safety needs.

## **Identification badge**

As part of the program, you have been issued an ECP identification badge. Wearing your badge helps staff easily recognize you as an ECP and supports a safe, coordinated care environment. We encourage you to always wear your badge visibly while on site.

When the patient is discharged, please remember to return your badge to the unit as part of the checkout process. If you have questions about your badge or need a replacement, a member of the care team will be happy to assist.



**As the program comes to an end**

As the patient's hospital stay comes to an end and your participation in the program concludes, please take a moment to:

- Return your ECP identification badge
- Ask the care team any remaining questions
- Confirm you understand the patient's follow-up care and next steps after discharge

# About Southlake Health

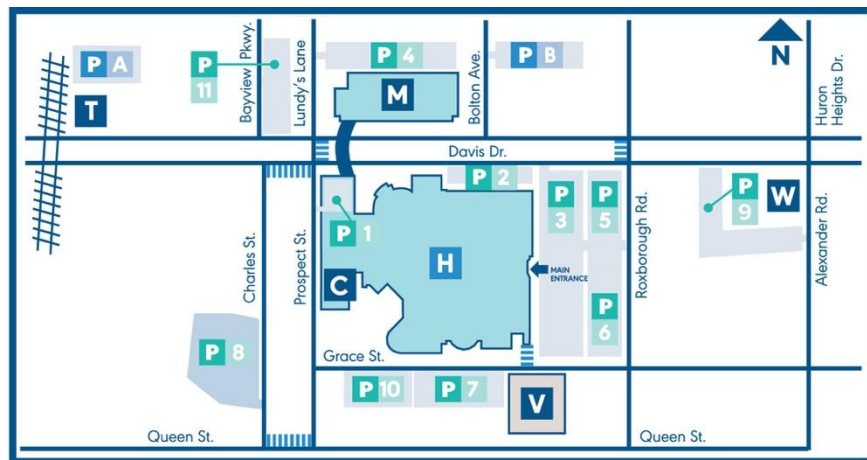
## Finding your way

Southlake Health is a large hospital with multiple buildings and levels, but clear signage is posted throughout to help you navigate. If you're unsure where to go, please ask a staff member or volunteer for directions, or follow the posted directional signs.

## Parking

There are three on-site parking lots for patients, caregivers and visitors at Southlake:

- West Parking Garage (P1)
- East Parking Lot (P3)
- Medical Arts Building (P4)



**H** Southlake Regional Health Centre, 596 Davis Dr.

**C** Stronach Regional Cancer Centre, 596 Davis Dr.

**T** The Tannery Mall, 465 Davis Dr.

**M** Medical Arts Building (MAB), 581 Davis Dr.

**W** Tenatronics Warehouse, 776 Davis Dr.

**V** Southlake Village, 640 Grace St.

**|||** Pedestrian crosswalk

**⌋** Bridge crossing Davis Drive. Accessible from P3 of the Parking Garage and Level 3 of the MAB.

**P Public Parking Lots:**

**A** The Tannery Mall, 465 Davis Dr.

**B** Park Wise, 615 Davis Dr.

**P Parking Lots:**

**1** Parking Garage

**2** North Emergency Room

**3** Main Visitors Lot, 596 Davis Dr.

**4** MAB Lot, 581 Davis Dr.

**5** Northeast Staff Lot

**6** Southeast Staff Lot

**7** South Lot

**8** Charles Street Lot, 56 Charles St.

**9** Tenatronics Lot, 776 Davis Dr.

**10** Assigned Overflow Lot

**11** Bayview Parkway Lot, 567 Davis Dr.

## Parking rates

- On-site parking rates (prices subject to change)
  - Each ½ hour: \$5.25
  - Daily maximum: \$20
- Multi-site parking rates (prices subject to change)
  - 5-day HPass: \$50\*
  - 10-day HPass: \$100\*
  - 30-day HPass: \$180\*

\*5-day and 10-day HPass can be purchased from the HPass self-serve kiosk at the East Main Entrance or the parking office on Level 1 of Southlake's East Building. 30-day HPass can only be purchased from the parking office. Rates are subject to change without notice.

## Meals and amenities

Nutrition plays an important role in a patient's recovery, and caregivers can help support this during a hospital stay. The Food Services Department is responsible for providing timely, friendly service and meals that meet each patient's nutritional needs. On most units, patients are supported by a Food Services representative to select their meals; caregivers may also assist with meal selection when appropriate.

Meals are delivered during the following time periods:

- **Breakfast:** 7 a.m. – 9 a.m.
- **Lunch:** 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- **Dinner:** 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.

If there are any concerns requiring immediate attention related to meals or nutrition services, caregivers can contact the Food Services Department at 905-895-4521, ext. 2524.



# SouthlakeHealth | Retail Directory



## Market Aquene Café

*The Market* Open 24 hours, 7 days a week

*Roots & Seeds* Fresh bowls or wraps  
11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

*San Marzano Pizza* 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

*Grill & Co* Full breakfast 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.  
and lunch 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

*Chef's Table* 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday to Friday

East building, Level 1,  
across from Gift Shop,  
microwave available



## Carvery C&B Bakery

Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Closed weekends and stat holidays\*

Between Cancer Centre  
and West Building, Level P2



## Subway

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Stat holidays 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.\*

East Building, Level 1  
(Between Gift Shop  
and East Elevators)



## Tim Hortons

Open 24 hours, 7 days a week

East Building, Level 1  
(Next to Central Elevators)



## On the Go featuring Tim Hortons

Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Closed weekends and stat holidays\*

West Building, Level 2  
Across from the Lab



## Starbucks

Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Stat holidays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.\*

East Building, Level 1,  
Cafeteria



## Guardian

Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Closed Sunday

East Building, Level 1  
Near Main Entrance



## Southlake Gift Shop

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

East Building, Level 1  
Across from Cafeteria

\*Hours may differ on statutory holidays.

## Additional resources

### **Patient billings**

Southlake Health will invoice you for all uninsured hospital services you receive. If you have any questions regarding payments, please contact Financial Services at 905-895-4521 ext. 2262.

### **Health Information Office**

Patients can order copies of their hospital records online or by phone. For more information on how to order records, visit [www.southlake.ca/health-information-office](http://www.southlake.ca/health-information-office) or call 905-895-4521 ext. 2315. The Health Information office is open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### **Bank Machines**

Automated bank machines are located near the East Main entrance, outside the cafeteria, and on Level 1 of the Medical Arts Building.

### **Gift Shop**

The volunteer-run Gift Shop, located on Level 1 of the East building, offers an assortment of gifts, clothing, toiletries, cards, books and magazines.

Hours of operation:

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

### **Lost and Found**

Southlake is not responsible for items that go missing. We recommend that patients don't bring valuables such as jewelry, large sums of money, or personal mementos to the Hospital.

Lost and found items are kept by Facility Operations for a maximum of 14 days. To contact Facility Operations, call 905-895-4521, ext. 2561 and provide your name, telephone number, address, and a description of any lost items. This information will be recorded in the Lost and Found journal.

Every effort will be made to locate your lost property.

**Privacy Office**

For information about privacy practices or to raise a concern, please contact our privacy office by phone at 905-895-4521 ext. 2581 or by emailing [privacy@southlake.ca](mailto:privacy@southlake.ca).

**The Parking Office**

Location: East building, Level 1

**Hours**

Monday to Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

\*Closed on statutory holidays

**Spiritual Care**

Our sacred multi-faith rooms are available 24/7 and all faith or religious background are welcome to use the space for prayer, meditation, or quiet reflection. We have three multi-faith sacred rooms at our Davis Drive site in the following locations:

- East building, Level 1 – Chapel near the Tim Hortons
- East building, Level 2 – near the central elevators
- Stronach Regional Cancer Centre, Level 2

For more information on spiritual care offerings, or to request spiritual care services email [spritualcare@southlake.ca](mailto:spritualcare@southlake.ca).



