



University
Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust



Martha's Rule:

If you are worried a child
in hospital's condition
is getting worse, talk to us.

You know your child better than anyone.
If you notice a change or feel they are becoming
more unwell, please tell us. We're here to listen
and help.



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out more or to view
the Easy Read version

What is Martha's Rule?

Martha's Rule has been introduced to help detect any unexpected signs of deterioration early. It is not the same as a second opinion - Martha's Rule gives you the right to ask for a rapid review if you're worried your child is becoming more unwell.

How we monitor your child

We regularly check things like blood pressure, heart rate, breathing patterns, temperature and take blood tests, including overnight. How often these checks are done will depend on a patient's individual condition and needs.

We also ask you (or your child) regularly if they are better or worse or if you have any concerns.

Your role is vital

Parents/Carers are often the first to notice that something is not right. You may notice small changes before they show up in our routine measurements which could be early warning signs of deterioration.

Please tell us if you are worried about:

- Sweating, feeling hotter or colder than usual
- A high-pitched or unusual cry
- Skin changes (pale, rash, sores, blisters) – rashes may be harder to see on black or brown skin
- Your child is floppy, less responsive, or hard to wake.
- The sudden loss of their usual abilities (e.g. no longer able to sit up, walk, talk) or unusual behaviour.
- Very irritable or unable to settle
- Not interested in feeding, drinking, or eating
- Breathing faster than normal, grunting, wheezing, or noisy breathing
- Passing much less urine or blood in poo
- **Anything else that worries you.**

Telling our staff about these changes can help us detect deterioration early so we can take action to prevent patients becoming more unwell.

If your concern is about communication with the care team, treatment planning or any general issues relating to the ward, please speak to the **Nurse in Charge**, **Ward Manager** or **Matron** for the ward, or the **Medical/Surgical Team** responsible for the child.

What to do if you're worried

Step 1. First, please speak to the team on the ward caring for the child you are worried about to discuss the concerns you have.

Step 2. If, after speaking to the doctors and/or nurses on the ward, you are still worried and feel the ward team is not dealing with your concerns, call or text for a rapid review:

**Royal Sussex County Hospital
and Royal Alexandra Children's
Hospital (Brighton and Hove)**
07917 836543

**Princess Royal Hospital
(Haywards Heath) 07747 201999**

**Worthing Hospital
(Worthing) 07788 878656**

**St Richards Hospital
(Chichester) 07710 978715**



Your call/text will go to a different team. They may be adult-trained nurses, not children's nurses, but they will **listen carefully and help you get the right support.**

The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, however, please be aware the team responding to these calls attend medical emergencies in the hospital so may not be able to respond immediately.

For any other complaints or grievances, contact
the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Royal Sussex County Hospital

01273 696955 Ext. 64511 or **64973**

or email uhsussex.pals@nhs.net

Princess Royal Hospital

01444 448678

or email uhsussex.pals@nhs.net

St Richard's Hospital

01243 831822

or email uhsussex.palschichester@nhs.net

Worthing and Southlands hospitals

01903 285032

or email uhsussex.palsworthing@nhs.net

Using the right route helps us respond quickly to those who need immediate care. Thank you for helping us keep patients safe.

To successfully deliver care, there needs to be mutual respect, politeness, and courteous communication between staff, patients, and visitors. We operate a zero-tolerance policy which means we will not tolerate violence, discriminatory language or aggression towards staff, patients or members of the public.