



Identification and Verification Procedure for Face-to-Face Check-In

Visit the [MGH Identity Authentication at Patient Intake Sites Policy](#) for more details.

Identification

To facilitate proper patient **identification** and **verification** of patients who have previously registered at MGH, check-in staff will first **identify** a patient in the hospital scheduling system by matching a combination of identifiers consistently used by the department (usually name and date of birth).

Verification

Once the patient is identified, the patient's identity should be **verified** by reviewing the following at each visit:

- A government-issued photo identification document (e.g. driver's license, resident card, passport, state identification card, military ID, etc.)
or
- An MGH or PHS employee photo identification badge
or
- Two forms of non-photo ID, one of which has been issued by a state or federal agency (e.g., Social Security card or Medicare card and a utility bill or employment ID or school ID or health insurance card)

For those patients whose identity has been verified with the acceptable documentation listed above, the appropriate indicator in the patient information system (e.g. Epic) will be activated if applicable to denote a verification was completed.

Verification steps for patients without ID documents

No patient will be refused care because they do not have the acceptable identification listed above. In particular, it is expected that pediatric patients will not have the acceptable identification listed above. When an adult patient is unable to provide the required documentation for identity verification, they should be told to bring appropriate documents to all future visits. The appropriate null indicator in the patient information system will be activated.

The patient's identity should still be **verified** by providing at least one of the following identifiers that was not provided in the identification step above:

- Social Security number (if available in the electronic medical record)
 - Patients who are uncomfortable providing their Social Security number for verification can choose to provide only the last 4 digits for verification.

- Date of birth
- Mother’s maiden name (if available in the electronic medical record)
- Date of last visit
 - It is reasonable that a patient might not remember the exact date of their last visit, but they should be able to provide a general timeframe and location of care.

Sample script

Staff	Good morning! Can I have your full name and date of birth, please?
Patient	Sure: Santa Claus, January 1, 1900.
Staff	Thank you, and may I please see a photo ID for verification purposes?
Patient	You know me. I’m here all the time. Why do you need my ID? You have never asked for it before.
Staff	I know, Mr. Claus. MGH has started asking for a photo ID at each visit so we can safely make certain we have verified our patient’s identity. It is to protect you. I am sure you have heard about medical identity theft... now one of the fastest-growing crimes in America, and potentially dangerous for our patients. So we are taking an extra moment to identify and verify every patient seen at MGH.
Patient	Can I give you my blue card instead?
Staff	Actually, your blue card can help make certain I have selected the correct person in our system, but I also need to see a photo ID for verification purposes.
Patient	What if I am interested in learning how I can get a photo ID, since I don’t have a driver’s license?
Staff	We can have you meet with our Patient Advocates or Patient Financial Services, who have helpful information.
Patient	I actually don’t mind, since you are trying to protect me, but what if I forget my ID?
Staff	You will just be asked an additional verification question, like your Social Security number or your last visit date. Then we would just remind you to bring it with you next time.

More resources

- [MGH Identity Authentication at Patient Intake Sites Policy](#)
- [Check-in Tip Sheet](#)
- [eCheck-in Tip Sheet](#)