

NICHE

NURSES IMPROVING CARE FOR HEALTHSYSTEM ELDERS

Need to Know for Patients and Families

*What patients
and their
families need to
know before
hospitalization*



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Dementia Transition Series Hospital to Home

Definition: Dementia is a decline in memory and other cognitive functions severe enough to interfere with daily functioning.

Why Is It Important? Returning home from the hospital can be challenging for caregivers but preparedness can help make the transition easier. Taking care of yourself, as well as your loved one, is essential to provide the best care. It is important that you feel prepared and are able to ask for and receive help when needed.

What Can Patients and Caregivers Do?

1. Know and understand discharge instructions.
 - Do you understand the diagnosis?
 - Do you know what to expect?
 - What is normal?
 - What is a sign of a problem?
 - Who do you contact with questions or if you notice a change in your loved one's condition or behavior?
 - When do you follow up with your loved one's health care provider?
2. Caregivers should make sure all needed equipment and supplies are available at home.
 - Find out what the hospital or home care agency will provide and what you need to get. Social workers can help arrange for needs at home.
 - Get the contact information for anyone who will be providing services at home (home health nurse and/or physical therapist visits, equipment such as a walker, grab bar in bathroom, shower seat, etc.)
3. Schedule a follow-up visit with the health care provider within seven days of hospital discharge.
4. Understand the limits of what you can do. Ask for help when needed.
5. The home should be comfortable, safe and a good place for care. Caregivers should:
 - Remove items that may cause falls, such as throw rugs
 - Make room for any large equipment, such as a hospital bed
 - Create a place to collect important information, such as emergency numbers
6. Read hospital bills closely. Inform the hospital or insurance company of any issues.
 - Write down with whom you spoke and what was discussed
 - Check Medicare facts by calling 800-333-4114 and speaking with a Medicare specialist or check out www.medicarerights.org
7. Find out about local resources such as:
 - Help with transportation or financial issues
 - Friendly volunteer visits
 - Counseling or support groups
 - Respite care (to give the caregiver a much-needed break from caregiving)