

NICHE

NURSES IMPROVING CARE FOR HEALTHSYSTEM ELDERS

Need to Know for Patients and Families

*What patients
and their
families need to
know before
hospitalization
or a nursing
home admission*



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Discharge

Why Is It Important? The discharge process is very important and requires advanced planning. You may require ongoing care after discharge for a full recovery. The transition is especially important for older adult patients. The discharge process is meant to prevent further health problems that might require you to be hospitalized again.

What You Can Do:

1. Plan ahead for your discharge with your health care team and caregivers.
2. Get a written discharge plan and make sure you understand all of it. Read it carefully, share it with your caregiver, ask questions if something is unclear or confusing, and write down the answers.
3. Discuss your routine and lifestyle with your health care providers and ask what activities you should be able to do after discharge.
4. Discuss the expected timeline of your recovery.
5. Find out if you will need equipment, such as a walker, and how to arrange for it. Social workers can arrange for help at home prior to discharge from a hospital or nursing home.
6. Make sure you and your caregiver are shown how to do any medical or physical tasks you will need to perform, such as changing bandages, or doing certain exercises.
7. Get a list of your medications with their purpose, precautions and a schedule for taking them. Arrange ahead of time to have your prescriptions filled. Make sure to ask if medications taken prior the hospital or nursing home stay should be continued or discontinued and why. When you get home, review all past and current medications with your health care provider to make sure all medications, dosages, and frequency of taking them is correct.
8. Before your discharge, make an appointment with your primary care provider and make arrangements for getting there.
9. Arrange ahead of time for any changes that may be needed at home such as adding grab bars in the bathroom/shower and/or seat in the shower for bathroom safety, or installation of ramps into the home.
10. Ask your health care provider, including a social worker, about support groups for both yourself and your caregiver
11. Get a 24/7 telephone number that you can call with questions.

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When you are going home from the hospital or nursing home, make sure you know:

- Written directions on what you should do when you get home
- How to do any medical or physical tasks you will need, such as changing bandages, doing certain exercises
- Any changes that may be needed in the environment at home, such as adding grab bars in the bathroom/shower and/or seat in the shower for bathroom safety
- The expected timeline of your recovery
- Any new medications or prescriptions to be filled
- Any needed equipment or supplies
- Date when you need to see your health care provider and/or specialist
- Which procedures and tests were done and the results
- The call-back number and name of the floor/unit from where you are discharged home in case you have any questions
- The phone number of a Home Health Agency affiliated with the hospital or nursing home If you feel you need more assistance at home

Make sure medications listed on your discharge summary match those you have at home. Follow up with your health care provider if you have any questions about your medication list and to make sure past medications are still needed or if they should be discontinued. After you review medications with your health care provider, properly dispose of any medications discontinued during your hospital or nursing home visit.



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