

WORKING WITH THE HEALTHCARE TEAM

Need to Knows provide older adults and their families with important information to enhance their hospital or nursing home stays. Communication and teamwork are important aspects of high-quality healthcare. The individual, family, and caregivers are vital members of the team.

Here is what you can do to improve communication:

Prepare.

The healthcare team needs all relevant information. Carry a document with a list of your health conditions, medical history, allergies, and medications.

Write down questions that you may forget in the moment.

Have a family member or friend present during discussions with the doctor or other healthcare providers, if possible.

Be specific.

Describe all symptoms in as much detail as possible. When did it start? Did something start the event? Where did it occur? How long did it last or how long has it been going on? What makes it better or worse?

Family members and friends:

Be supportive.

Ask how you can be helpful to the individual and the healthcare team.

Choose a representative to be the primary point person for the healthcare team. This will simplify communication.

Ask questions.

All questions are good questions. There is no such thing as a silly question. If you do not understand, ask for clarification.

Refer to your prepared questions.

Do not feel rushed. You are the most important part of the healthcare team.

Ask questions regarding health insurance and how it may affect treatment options.

Make a plan.

End each meeting with a summary of what was discussed and plan for what is to come.