



PERSONAL ASSISTANCE • COMPANIONSHIP • DEMENTIA CARE
OVERNIGHT SUPPORT • FALL PREVENTION



HOSPITAL DISCHARGE HANDBOOK

 careprovide.ca



INTRODUCTION

Transitioning from hospital to home or another care facility is a crucial period for both patients and family caregivers. Proper planning during hospital discharge helps reduce complications, ensures continuity of care, and prepares both the patient and their caregivers for the challenges ahead. This guide provides a comprehensive outline to assist you during this important phase.

WHAT IS HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PLANNING?

Hospital discharge planning refers to the coordination between the healthcare team, patient, and family caregivers to ensure a smooth transition from hospital care to home or another care setting. This plan addresses ongoing medical, personal, and emotional needs, reducing the risk of complications post-discharge.

Key Elements of Discharge Planning:



Medical Assessment:

The healthcare team will evaluate the patient's current condition, identifying ongoing needs and any necessary care arrangements at home.



Care Plan Development:

A tailored plan is created that outlines what medical treatments, therapies, or medications are required post-discharge. It also includes recommendations for physical aids, like mobility devices or wound care.



Caregiver Involvement:

The discharge plan should be clearly communicated with caregivers to ensure they fully understand the care required. This involves providing detailed instructions on medication management, physical assistance, and follow-up care.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE DISCHARGE

Before leaving the hospital, make sure you understand the specifics of the discharge plan by asking key questions. This will help you stay informed and prepared for ongoing care.



Questions to Ask:

What is the expected recovery time?

- Knowing the estimated timeline for recovery will help caregivers plan for necessary support and resources.

What follow-up appointments are needed?

- Clarify with the healthcare team when the next check-up should be and who will manage the ongoing care.

What medications are needed?

- Understand the purpose, dosage, and side effects of any prescribed medications. Be sure to clarify when and how they should be taken.

What are the signs of complications?

- Recognize the warning signs that may indicate the need for immediate medical attention, such as difficulty breathing, fever, or pain worsening.

Who do we contact for questions?

- Ensure you have a direct phone number for a healthcare provider to address any concerns that arise after discharge.





PREPARING THE HOME FOR SAFE RECOVERY

If your loved one is returning home, it's essential to prepare the environment for a safe and supportive recovery. Small adjustments can greatly reduce the risk of accidents, especially for individuals with limited mobility or post-surgical care needs.

Key Steps to Prepare the Home:



Remove Hazards: Clear pathways of clutter or trip hazards, especially in frequently used areas like the bathroom and kitchen. Install grab bars in the bathroom and place non-slip mats to prevent falls.



Set Up Medical Equipment: If the patient requires medical devices such as oxygen tanks, mobility aids, or a hospital bed, make sure they are arranged before discharge.



Organize Medications: Keep medications organized with clear labels and a schedule to avoid confusion. Use a pill organizer if necessary to prevent missed doses.

MANAGING POST-DISCHARGE CARE

Once the patient is discharged, managing ongoing care is crucial. Depending on the patient's condition, this could involve daily tasks such as dressing, bathing, or wound care.

Assistance with Daily Activities:



Home Care Services: If more hands-on help is needed, you can engage the assistance of home care services or personal support workers to help with bathing, feeding, and other daily activities.



Medication Management: Carefully follow the medication schedule provided by the hospital. Keep an updated list of all medications, their dosages, and any potential side effects to watch out for.



Monitor Emotional Health: Recovery can take an emotional toll, so be mindful of any signs of depression or anxiety in your loved one. Be ready to seek mental health support if necessary.



ADDRESSING COMMON POST-DISCHARGE COMPLICATIONS

Complications after discharge can occur, but being aware of potential risks and how to handle them can prevent unnecessary hospital readmissions.

Watch for Signs of:



Infection: If your loved one had surgery, keep an eye out for symptoms such as fever, swelling, or unusual discharge from wounds.



Medication Errors: Be vigilant in administering medications on time and in the correct dosages. If you notice side effects like dizziness or fatigue, contact the healthcare provider immediately.



Falls and Mobility Issues: Patients with weakened mobility are more prone to falls. Ensure the environment is safe, and consider supervising activities like showering and moving between rooms

LEGAL AND LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

After discharge, there are legal and administrative tasks to complete, such as understanding Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) rights and ensuring access to medical records.

Key Considerations:

PHIPA Compliance: Ensure you have the necessary permissions to access your loved one's medical information. You may need to get signed authorizations, especially for complex medical conditions. For more information, check the PHIPA FAQs (ipc.on.ca).

Advance Directives: Confirm that any living wills or health proxies are up-to-date and shared with the appropriate healthcare providers.

CAREGIVER SELF-CARE

Taking care of someone post-discharge can be exhausting. It's important to also care for yourself to avoid burnout.

Tips for Caregiver Well-Being:



Ask for Help: Enlist family members or professional caregivers to share the load.



Use Respite Care: Take breaks through respite care programs that provide temporary relief.



Join Support Groups: Connect with other caregivers to share experiences and gather support.



ADVICE FOR NEW FAMILY CAREGIVERS

We understand that navigating the hospital discharge process can feel overwhelming, especially if you're new to caregiving. But with a few simple steps, you can make the process more manageable:



Print This Guide: Keep a printed copy of this guide with you during hospital visits or when meeting with healthcare professionals. It can serve as a reminder of key topics and questions you want to discuss. Bring a pen along to take notes, or use your phone to record important conversations with the discharge planner or doctor. This way, you can easily reference what was said later.



Explore Other Resources: Make sure to review other tools, organizations, and websites. Those resources may also offer valuable information and support that can help you navigate post-hospital care with more confidence.



Reach Out for Support: While the medical care team is your primary source of information, don't hesitate to talk to others. Friends and family members may have gone through similar experiences and can provide helpful recommendations or referrals. Plus, having emotional support from people who understand what you're going through is invaluable.



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We know hospital discharge and post-care planning can feel overwhelming. If you need support or have questions, you can count on us to help.

Let us guide you through the next steps to ensure your loved one's care is seamless and stress-free.

**Need More Help?
Contact Us Today!**



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