

Before You Leave the Hospital



A successful recovery after your stay starts with a solid plan before you go.

Plan Early to reduce your chances of being readmitted and increase your chances for a healthy recovery. Take steps as soon as possible during your stay to plan for a successful transition from the hospital.

To begin, ask to speak with your discharge planner, and review the following:

- your discharge summary and discharge plan
- your complete medicine list and instructions
- your upcoming appointments
- what to do if you don't feel well

A Reason To Plan Early

If you need a rehabilitation facility, nursing home, skilled care, or other service after your stay, you'll need time to find and weigh your options. For help comparing services in your local area, go to:

- www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare
- www.medicare.gov/homehealthcompare
- www.qualitycheck.org



Checklist for Discharge

Make sure you have the following information before you leave the hospital.

Discharge summary.

This includes why you were in the hospital, who cared for you, your procedures and medicines.

Medicine list. This

includes all your new and former prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements. Ask if there are any medicines you can stop taking or that are not good to take together. Also make sure you know why, how and when to take each one.

Prescriptions. Check that your pharmacy has your new prescriptions and that you have a plan to get them filled.

Follow-up care instructions. Beyond medicine, this can include:

- foods or activities to avoid
- tests or appointments
- how to care for incisions or use equipment
- warning signs to watch for
- daily living adjustments (like how to get into bed)
- who to call with questions

After-hospital services. Know how much support you'll need in these areas:

- **Personal care:** bathing, eating, dressing, toileting
- **Home care:** cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping
- **Healthcare:** taking your medicines, doctor's appointments, physical therapy, wound care, injections, medical equipment

Local Resources. Ask your discharge planner for help finding local after-care services or other support groups.

Not Ready To Leave?

You have the right to appeal your discharge if you don't agree with the decision that you are ready to leave the hospital. Speak with your discharge planner or physician and share your concerns. You also may need to reach out to Medicare, Medicaid or your insurance company.



Try the teach back method. Repeat back what you hear the discharge planner say to make sure you understand the details correctly.

Top 10 Questions to Ask Before Discharge

1. What number can I call 24 hours a day if I have questions or concerns? Who is my contact?

2. Has my follow-up appointment been scheduled? With whom? Do I have a ride there?

3. What are key warning signs I need to watch out for? Whom do I call if they happen?

4. What special equipment do I need? What special instructions do I need (wound care, injections, etc.)?

5. What kinds of activities and foods are limited? For how long?

6. Do the doctors caring for me after my stay have access to my test results and medicines? Do I need follow-up tests?

7. Are my new medicines safe to take with my other medicines, vitamins or supplements?

8. Do I know how and when to take my medicines and how I will get prescriptions filled?

9. Who will provide the extra personal, home or healthcare services I may need?

10. Who can help me if I have concerns about medical costs?

Need Medical Equipment or Supplies?

If you need durable medical equipment (walker, wheelchair, hospital bed, oxygen, etc.), Medicare will only cover the cost if you use an approved supplier. To find one in your area, visit www.medicare.gov and select "Find suppliers of medical equipment and supplies" or call **1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227)**.

