

Your doctor and you will decide when you are ready to go home from the hospital.

New medications, home nursing, special equipment, and physical, occupational, or speech therapy are things that might be included in your recovery routine. Going home from the hospital can be a hectic and confusing time. Start planning for going home as early in your hospital stay as is practical. Ask for written discharge instruction materials concerning the different aspects of your medical care. Written instructions are invaluable in helping you follow your doctor's discharge instructions. Here are some helpful tips to assist you in preparing to go home.

MEDICINE FOR HOME

Your doctor may order medicine for you to take at home. There are a few things you can do before you go home from the hospital to ease the last minute rush.

Before you leave the hospital...

- Tell your doctor about the medicine (self prescribed or prescribed by your doctor) you were taking when you came to the hospital.
- Know the name and telephone number of your pharmacy.
- Check if your pharmacy offers home delivery services.
- Call your pharmacy to check on availability of your medicines for home.
- Plan how you will pay for your medicine.
- Tell your doctor if you are unable to obtain the medicine needed for going home.

Listen carefully to the instructions for taking your medicine.

Instructions may include:

- Number of times per day to take the medicine
- Time of day to take the medicine (morning, night, meals)
- Number of pills to take
- Foods to avoid when taking your medicine
- Affect on activity (drowsy, sleepy, insomnia)
- Ask questions!

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TAKING YOUR MEDICINE

Closely follow your doctor's instructions when taking your medicine. An easy guide to help you take your medicine safely is to follow the five "Rights".

- Right person
- Right medicine
- Right time
- Right dose
- Right route (oral, topical, nasal)

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS

- Know the name and office telephone numbers of the doctors with whom you need to schedule appointments after you go home.
- Know the reason for the doctor appointment and information your doctor needs for the visit.
- Schedule an appointment with your primary care physician to see you after you go home
 - Communicate your discharge instructions to your primary care physician and obtain referrals as necessary.
 - Know what other types of care you will need, such as PT, OT, or cardiac rehabilitation, and whether you need to call for an appointment or whether the appointment has already been scheduled for you.



HOME HEALTH SERVICES

Your doctor may order a nurse or therapist to visit you at home and/or medical equipment such as oxygen and wheelchair. The nurse or therapist will assess your health status and communicate findings to your doctor.

CHOOSING A HOME HEALTH COMPANY...

- Ask your doctor, family or friends for home health company recommendations. Let your nurse know if you need help in choosing a home health company.
- Check your insurance company's preferred provider list for home health companies.
- Contact the home health company to determine if they can provide the service your doctor ordered and can send a nurse or therapist to your home when you are discharged.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL...

- Give the home health company your telephone number and address where you will be staying after you leave the hospital.
- Know home nursing services and/ or medical equipment ordered by your doctor.
- Know when the first home nursing visit is scheduled to begin.
- Confirm time of delivery and delivery address of medical equipment (your hospital room or your home).
- Confirm portable oxygen tank is full before you leave the hospital, if applicable.
- Make sure you have taken home supplies to last you until the first home nursing visit.
- Obtain the name, telephone number and name of contact person at the home nursing company.

Family and friends can usually help care for you after you go home from the hospital.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT HOME...

- Call the home health agency to let them know you have arrived at your home.

Taking Care of Yourself When You Go Home

You may need help caring for yourself when you go home from the hospital with tasks such as bathing, cooking, cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping and traveling back and forth to the doctor's office. Typically, your energy reserves are low when you first come home from the hospital and you may tire more easily than normal. Family and friends can usually help care for you after you go home from the hospital. Organize a schedule of helpers with your friends and family.

HOME ENVIRONMENT...

- Plan to enter your home without climbing steps. If you need to climb steps to enter your home, determine if a neighbor, friend or family member is routinely available to provide assistance to you.
- Plan to make your bedroom on the same floor as the bathroom if possible.
- Use night-lights in strategic areas to prevent night falls.
- Place the telephone and emergency telephone numbers near you.
- Keep hallways, stairways and pathways clear of clutter.
- Wear snugly-fitting, non-slip, low heeled shoes or slippers.

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES...

- Clarify bathing instructions with your doctor (sponge bath, shower, tub bath).
- Clarify activity instructions with your doctor (cooking, cleaning, driving).
- Ask your doctor if there are specific foods you should eat or avoid eating.
- Schedule bathing, grooming and dressing activities when friends or family are present in your home.
- Schedule quiet time for yourself.

ARRIVING HOME

Coming home is a day full of activity and joy. You and your family have been preparing for this day. Reacquaint yourself with your home environment by reviewing the helpful hints mentioned above and your discharge instructions. Enjoy your homecoming.



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Safety As You Go From Hospital to Home



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