Understanding Medication Changes After Hospitalization

Use this before the first dose at home to sort out which medicines are new, which changed, which stopped, and what to ask the pharmacist.

A hospital stay often changes a medicine list: new prescriptions, new doses, and old medicines that should stop. Problems usually come from the gap between the new list and the bottles already at home. Close that gap before the first dose.

Six steps

- [ ] **Gather everything.** The discharge medicine list, new prescriptions, and every bottle in the house, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, supplements, inhalers, eye drops, patches and creams.
- [ ] **Compare line by line.** Mark each medicine below as new, changed, stopped or the same.
- [ ] **Ask about every difference.** Call the pharmacist or the doctor's office before giving a medicine you aren't sure about.
- [ ] **Set stopped medicines apart.** Bag them and label them "STOPPED," away from the daily supply, until the doctor or pharmacist confirms. Ask the pharmacist how to dispose of them.
- [ ] **Update one list and the pill organizer.** One current list, kept where everyone who helps can find it.
- [ ] **Bring the list to the first follow-up visit,** and to every doctor after that.

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Medicine comparison

Status: N = new, C = changed, S = stopped, Same = no change. "Checked with" is the name of the pharmacist or nurse who confirmed it.

Medicine and strength	Status	What changed (dose, time)	Why	Checked with

Questions for the pharmacist

- ☐ Are any of these the same medicine under a brand name and a generic name?
- ☐ Should any of these be taken with food, or apart from other medicines?
- ☐ Do any of them interact with her over-the-counter medicines or supplements?
- ☐ What should we do if a dose is missed?
- ☐ Which ones need refills soon, and will her plan cover them?
- ☐ How should we get rid of the medicines that were stopped?

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Stop and ask
Call the doctor or pharmacist before the next dose if two bottles look like the same medicine, if a medicine she took before is missing from the list and no one said why, if the instructions on a bottle don't match the list, if she can't swallow a medicine or refuses it, or if new dizziness, falls, confusion or sleepiness start after a change.

Notes

The care team has the final word
Ask the hospital team or your parent's doctor about anything on this list that is unclear. This checklist helps you organize; it does not replace their instructions. Never start, stop or change a dose on your own.

The other checklists in this set: Preparing for a Parent's Hospital Discharge · Questions to Ask Before Leaving the Hospital · The First 72 Hours at Home · Understanding Medication Changes After Hospitalization · Getting the Home Ready for Home Health Services. All at AgingAtHomeSupport.com/hospital-discharge-checklists/

For the whole discharge in one place, the Coming Home from the Hospital workbook (21 fill-in pages) is at AgingAtHomeSupport.com/coming-home-from-the-hospital-workbook/

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