Preparing for a Parent's Hospital Discharge

Use this in the days before your parent leaves the hospital, so the people, plans, supplies and papers are ready before the ride home.

The basics

Hospital: _____ **Room:** _____ **Unit phone:** _____

Planned discharge date: _____ **Time:** _____

Discharge planner or case manager: _____ **Phone:** _____

Going to: ☐ Home ☐ Home, with home health visits ☐ Rehab or a nursing facility ☐ Somewhere else

Status: ☐ Inpatient ☐ Under observation ☐ Not sure yet

Ask about status. It can change what Medicare pays for after the hospital.

Coverage: ☐ Original Medicare ☐ Medicare Advantage plan ☐ Medicaid ☐ Other

In the first day or two of the stay

- ☐ Find out who the discharge planner or case manager is, and how to reach them.
- ☐ Ask to be named as the family caregiver in the record, so the team includes you in the plan and teaching. Many states require hospitals to ask.
- ☐ Tell the team, early and specifically, what your family can and cannot do at home. "No one can be there overnight" is more useful than "we'll help."
- ☐ Ask what kind of care is being recommended after the hospital, and why.
- ☐ If home health or a facility is recommended, ask for the list of options. You can choose, and the hospital must tell you if it has a financial interest in any of them.

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Who in the family does what

Fill this in together. Put one name next to each job, even if others help.

Job	Who	Notes
Ride home (and someone to help at the door)		
Staying the first night or nights		
Picking up new prescriptions		
Being home for the first home health visit		
Making follow-up appointments		
Groceries and meals for the first week		
Pets, mail, bills that are due		
Updating the rest of the family		

Before discharge day

- ☐ Ask whether the family will be expected to do any care at home, such as wound care, injections, a feeding tube or a catheter. Ask to be shown, and practice while the nurse watches.
- ☐ Ask what equipment is ordered (walker, commode, hospital bed, oxygen) and when it will be delivered. Ask that it arrive before your parent does, if possible.
- ☐ Ask which pharmacy will fill new prescriptions, and whether the hospital can fill them before discharge.
- ☐ If home health is ordered, get the agency's name and phone number, and ask when the first visit will be.
- ☐ Get the house ready: clear paths, a bed reachable without stairs if stairs are hard, a clear route to the bathroom, a night light.
- ☐ Bring what your parent will need to go home: clothes, shoes that fit over any swelling, glasses, hearing aids, dentures, coat and house keys.

Have these in hand before you leave

- ☐ Written discharge instructions
- ☐ The updated medicine list (new, changed, stopped)

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- ☐ Prescriptions, or confirmation they were sent
- ☐ The warning signs to watch for, and who to call
- ☐ Home health agency name and first visit date
- ☐ Results still pending, and who will report them
- ☐ Follow-up appointments, or who will call to set them
- ☐ A number to call with questions after hours
- ☐ Equipment delivery confirmation
- ☐ Copies of anything you were asked to sign

> **If you don't think your parent is ready**
> Under Medicare, the hospital must give your parent a notice called the **Important Message from Medicare**. It explains how to ask for a fast review if you believe discharge is too soon. Follow its directions and call the number on it no later than the day of discharge. With a Medicare Advantage plan, ask the plan about its process.

Notes and questions for the team

> **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.

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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