

Speak^{UP}TM

Planning Your Follow-up Care



For more information

National Alliance for Caregiving
www.caregiving.org
(301) 718-8444

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid
Services Care Planner
www.careplanner.org
(877) 267-2323



Before leaving the hospital, you should be given written instructions about your follow-up care. This brochure provides questions to help you get the information you need for the best follow-up care.

What should you do before leaving the hospital?

- Find out if the hospital has a discharge planner, social worker or nurse who can help you plan your follow-up care.
- Ask a family member or friend to help plan your follow-up care.
- Take a note pad to the hospital that you can write questions, answers and reminders on.

What if you have trouble understanding the language used in the instructions?

Ask for a translation or an interpreter.

You feel overwhelmed by the follow-up care you need. What can you do?

Ask about referrals for home care services or a skilled nursing facility. Find out about payment options, including whether financial assistance is available. Find out if the service or organization is licensed or accredited. Organizations accredited by The Joint Commission are listed on Quality Check at www.qualitycheck.org.

Questions to ask about your condition

- How soon should you feel better after leaving the hospital?
- Will you be able to walk, climb stairs, go to the bathroom, prepare meals and drive?
- Are there any special instructions for daily activities? For example, should you take a shower instead of a bath?
- How much help will you need after you leave the hospital? Should someone be with you 24 hours a day?
- What signs and symptoms should you watch for? If you have them, what should you do?
- Will you need any special equipment at home? Where can you get the equipment? Is it covered by your insurance, Medicare, or other health plan?
- Will you need physical therapy? Are there any physical exercises you need to do? If so, get written instructions.
- If you have wounds, how do you take care of them? How long should it take them to heal?
- Will you need to have any follow-up tests? Who should you follow up with to get the test results?
- Will you need to schedule any follow-up visits with your doctor?
- When can you expect to go back to work?
- Who can you call if you have any problems after leaving the hospital?

Questions to ask about your medicines

- What medicines will you need to take at home? Get a written list that includes all of your medicines—new and old. Take this list with you when you go for follow-up care.
- Can you get written instructions about your medicines? Make sure you understand the instructions. Ask any questions before you leave the hospital.
- Are there any medicines, vitamins or herbs that you should not take with your medicines?
- Are there any foods and drinks—including alcohol—that you should avoid while you're taking your medicines?
- Are there any side effects of your medicines? What should you do if you have side effects?

www.jointcommission.org