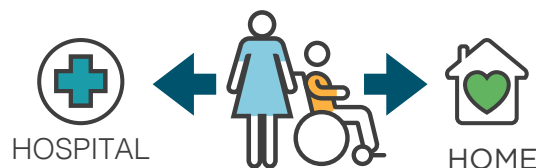


Hospital Guide



Any stay in the hospital, whether it was a planned admittance or the result of an emergency, can feel overwhelming for you and your loved ones. When you have the information and tools to play an active role in your care, you can get on the road to recovery more quickly.

Medicine Is a Team Sport and You're the Captain

While you're in the hospital, you will encounter a number of professionals from doctors, nurses and phlebotomists to technicians, case managers and more. Each member of your health care team plays an important role, but your role on the team is most important to achieving your desired health care outcomes.

Communication Is Key

Be Honest

Be honest with your providers about how you are feeling and any symptoms you may be experiencing. Dismissing a symptom as minor or unrelated may hinder your care.

Let Them Know

Be sure to let your healthcare team know about all medications, vitamins and other remedies you take.

Ask Questions

Ask questions about your injury or illness. It is important to understand your treatment plan and express any concerns you have about following the plan.

Write It Down

Don't be afraid to ask your health care team to repeat something, explain it differently, or write down instructions.



BEFORE YOU GO TO THE HOSPITAL

- When you meet with your doctor, consider bringing a friend, loved one or caregiver with you. They can help you ask questions and take notes.
- Review with your doctor why you are being hospitalized — a diagnosis or any planned tests — and who will be in charge of your care while you are in the hospital.
- Understand your insurance coverage.
- If you need or want a family member, caregiver or friend to act as an advocate for you while you're hospitalized, ask the person in advance and inform your doctor and admitting healthcare professionals.

Take these items with you to the hospital:

- Photo identification (such as a driver's license).
- Health insurance card(s) and, if needed, referral form.
- An up-to-date list of all medications you are currently taking, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, supplements, vitamins, etc.
- A list of allergies or sensitivities to any medicine.
- Results for tests done six weeks or less prior to hospitalization.
- Advance directive, if you have one.
- Health care decision-makers you may have appointed.



WHILE YOU'RE IN THE HOSPITAL

- Keep a notebook at your bedside. Write down your questions, who's coming into your room, and conversations you have with doctors and other staff.
- If any member of the medical staff says something that you don't understand, ask for an explanation. It's useful to repeat back what you have heard, so you are sure you are clear on the explanation.
- Ask for help. Use the nurse call button if you are in pain or need help. If you feel worse, let your medical team know right away.
- Plan for your discharge as soon as you are admitted. Throughout your hospital stay, talk with your healthcare team about what your recovery at home will look like. Begin identifying services to help you once you are home.
- Review your discharge information and understand your care plan before you leave the hospital.



WHEN YOU GET HOME

- Update your medication list to include any new prescriptions or changes in existing prescriptions.
- Make appointments with the doctor(s), clinic or testing facility that will be treating you after discharge.
- Report symptoms of recurrence or complications of your disease, injury or treatment immediately to your doctor, home health nurse or pharmacist.
- Contact your doctor if you have problems managing your illness or questions about your treatment plan.