

Hospital Discharge Checklist for Families

Bring this to the hospital. Write the answers on the lines.

This is general information, not medical advice. Talk to the care team before changing any medication. In an emergency, call 911.

Patient _____ Discharge date _____

Hospital _____

Before you leave

Ask the nurse, discharge planner, or social worker.

☐ Who can we call with questions after we leave, and what is the phone number?

☐ Can we have written discharge instructions and a summary of my parent's health?

- ☐ **Where will care continue: home, home health, rehab, or a nursing facility?**

Say what your parent prefers.

- ☐ **Which new problems should we watch for, and what do we do about each one?**

- ☐ **Are any test results not back yet, and who will tell us?**

- ☐ **Which daily tasks will need help?**

Bathing, dressing, toileting, stairs, cooking, shopping, bills, rides.

- ☐ **Can staff show us any special task and watch us practice it?**

Such as a bandage change or a shot.

☐**What will insurance cover, and what will we pay?**

Ask the social worker or health plan about help with costs.

☐**Does your parent need equipment, such as a walker?**

Ask if insurance covers it and who delivers it.

☐**If home health care is an option, how do we start it?**

Ask who will call you. Compare agencies at [Medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare).

☐**Can we talk with the social worker about how our family is coping?**

Ask about support groups and resources.

Once these are answered, your family leaves with a plan in hand.

Medicines

Check every medicine against one list.

- ☐ Write down everything your parent takes, including what they took at home.
Prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- ☐ Go through the list with the care team.
Which continue, stop, are new, or changed?
- ☐ For each new medicine, ask what it is for and when to take it.
Ask about side effects too.
- ☐ Ask the pharmacist if the new medicines are safe to take with the old ones.
- ☐ Get new prescriptions filled before the ride home, or plan the pharmacy stop.
- ☐ Share the updated list with every provider.
Keep one copy at home and one in your parent's wallet.

Do not stop or change a medicine without asking the care team. Keep the list on our free Medication List for Aging Parents.

With one clear list, every medicine has a plan.

Follow-up appointments

Write each visit here.

- ☐ Book follow-up visits before you leave, if you can.
Primary care doctor and specialists.
- ☐ Ask who sends the hospital records to those doctors, and when.
- ☐ Plan rides, and choose who goes along to take notes.

Appointment or doctor	Date	Time	Who is driving

With visits booked and rides planned, the next step is set.

First 48 hours at home

One task at a time.

Set up the home

- ☐ Clear a safe path between the bed, bathroom, kitchen, and front door.
- ☐ Put these within reach: phone, charger, water, and easy food.
Also papers, medicine list, and phone numbers.
- ☐ Stock any food the diet instructions call for.

Medicines at home

- ☐ Compare each pill bottle with the updated list.
Set aside any medicine the care team stopped.
- ☐ Fill a weekly pill organizer from the updated list.
- ☐ Give medicines exactly as directed.
If a dose is missed, ask the pharmacist. Never double up.

First 48 hours at home, continued

Check-ins

- ☐ Read the discharge instructions together and mark anything unclear.
- ☐ Write down how your parent is eating, drinking, sleeping, moving, and thinking.

When	Who is checking in	Visit or call
Tonight		
Tomorrow morning		
Tomorrow night		

Your parent has a safe space, a clear plan, and people checking in.

First two weeks

A steady routine helps everyone.

Appointments and paperwork

- ☐ Bring the discharge papers, medicine list, and your notes to every follow-up visit.
- ☐ Write down what each doctor says.
Update the medicine list the same day.
- ☐ Confirm that home health, therapy, and equipment have started.
- ☐ Keep hospital and insurance papers in one folder.
Help with costs: shiphelp.org or the social worker.

Daily routine

- ☐ Check in every day, by visit or phone.
Note appetite, sleep, pain, movement, mood, and medicines taken.
- ☐ Report changes to the care team right away.
- ☐ At the first refill, review the medicine list with the pharmacist.
Ask whether every medicine is still needed.

First two weeks, continued

Share the work

Task	Who	By when

- ☐ Keep one place where the whole family sees updates.
- ☐ Caregivers need rest too. Ask someone to cover a day.

Your family has a rhythm, and your parent has a team.

Who to call

Keep this page by the phone.

Warning signs the care team told us to watch for

Daytime number for questions

After-hours number

Symptoms the care team says need 911

In an emergency, call 911.

If your parent has Medicare

Hospital staff should give you the Important Message from Medicare. It explains how to ask for a fast appeal if you think your parent is being sent home too soon. An independent reviewer, called a BFCC-QIO, then looks at the decision. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for the BFCC-QIO that serves your state.

With the right numbers on one page, help is one call away.