

HOW TO AVOID BEING READMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



More than a third of us don't get the tests, referrals or follow-up care we need after a hospital stay.



Nearly one in five older patients covered by Medicare is readmitted to the hospital within a month of discharge.



Each year, millions of potentially preventable trips to the hospital add billions to the nation's health care spending.

CARE ABOUT YOUR CARE

Leaving the hospital sounds simple. But all too often, people find themselves back at the hospital within only a few weeks. With better planning and better communication, many of these return visits can be avoided.

Why It Could Happen to You

- You may not be clear about what medicines you should take and when to take them.
- Important information may not make it from the hospital to you or your primary care providers.
- You may have trouble scheduling needed follow-up appointments or getting to the pharmacy.
- You and your primary care providers may not get important test results in time.
- Your family members may not be able to care for you at home.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO



ASK AND ASK AGAIN

Don't be afraid to bother doctors, nurses and pharmacists with questions and concerns.



SAY IT BACK

Repeat the instructions you get in the hospital back to your doctors and nurses to make sure you understand them.



HAVE A DISCHARGE PLAN

Make sure you leave the hospital with a detailed, written plan that includes:

- A schedule of follow-up appointments.
- A list of your medical problems.
- A list of your medications, including when to take them and for how long, and any possible side effects.
- A list of equipment you might need, such as a cane or wheelchair. Try to make sure any changes to your home, such as grab bars in the bathroom, have been made or scheduled.

If your hospital doesn't provide similar tools, use the [Care About Your Care discharge checklist](#) and [care transition plan](#).



MANAGE YOUR MEDICATIONS

Many people end up back in the hospital because of medication problems. Doctors need to know all the medications you are taking — prescription, over the counter, and vitamins and supplements — to avoid mix-ups and duplications. Get clear oral and written instructions, and then have a family member or friend help go over your medications and ask questions.

Use the [medication list](#) in the *Care About Your Care* transition plan.



KEEP APPOINTMENTS

See your primary care provider or specialist as directed after leaving the hospital. Bring your plan, medications, and medication list to each appointment. If you don't have a doctor or don't know how to reach the needed specialist, ask hospital staff to set you up with one.



KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T FEEL WELL

Know the danger signs for your condition and what you'll do if your symptoms get worse. Know whom to call during the day, at night and on weekends.

