

# SpeakUP™

For more information

**National Alliance for Caregiving**

[www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org)

301-718-8444

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**

Your Discharge Planning Checklist

<http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Pubs/pdf/11376.pdf>

800-MEDICARE

The Joint Commission is the largest health care accrediting body in the United States that promotes quality and safety.

*Helping health care organizations help patients*



Planning  
Your  
Follow-up  
Care

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 plan your follow-up care.
- ❑ Ask a family member or friend to help plan your follow-up care. They can be your advocate. An advocate can ask questions that you may not think about or be able to ask.
- ❑ You or your advocate should write down questions, answers and reminders about your follow-up care.
- ❑ Ask if there is a number to call if you have questions. Can you talk to someone 24-hours a day, seven days a week?

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

Ask for a translation or an interpreter. You have the right to get important information about your care in your preferred language.

## 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 help is available. Use a service or organization that has been carefully evaluated or accredited. "Accredited" means it follows rules that guide safe and quality patient care. Go to Quality Check® at [www.qualitycheck.org](http://www.qualitycheck.org) to find Joint Commission accredited health care organizations.

## 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 medical equipment at home? Where can you get the equipment? Is it covered by your insurance, a government program, or other health plan?
- ❑ Will you need physical therapy? Are there any exercises you need to do? If so, get written instructions.
- ❑ Can you get home health or hospice services if you need them?
- ❑ 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 contact to get the test results?
- ❑ Will you need to schedule follow-up visits with your doctor?
- ❑ When can you expect to go back to work?

## 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. Take this list with you when you go for follow-up care.
- ❑ What if you have had a reaction to other medicines? Tell your doctor or nurse about these reactions and any allergies you might have.
- ❑ Can you get written instructions about your medicines? Make sure you understand the instructions. Ask questions if you do not understand.
- ❑ What should you do if you miss a dose?
- ❑ Are there any side effects of the medicines? What should you do if you have side effects?
- ❑ Are there any medicines, vitamins or herbal supplements that you should not take with your medicines?
- ❑ Should you avoid any foods, drinks, or alcohol while taking your medicines?
- ❑ Is there a pharmacy that can deliver medicines to your home?

[www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)