

WHAT IS A DISCHARGE PLAN?

TRANSCRIPT

A discharge plan is a written document detailing the specific instructions you need to follow in order to continue a healthy recovery after you leave the hospital. Whether you have been in the hospital for a short time or long-term, for something serious or relatively minor, it feels good when you are finally told you can leave.

But in most cases, your recovery does not end when the hospital doors close behind you. Your discharge plan will give you the information you need to continue a healthy recovery and avoid a return trip to the hospital.

When you are ready to be released from the hospital, a nurse will meet with you to go over specific discharge guidelines for a healthy recovery.

"Mrs. Moore, I have your discharge instructions here for you, and there are a couple of things we need to go over."

At this meeting, you will receive a written discharge plan designed specifically for you. While your instructions will be specific to you and the reason you were admitted to the hospital, common parts of a discharge plan include:

- your treatments or procedures
- newly prescribed medications
- directions for resuming your home medications and over-the-counter meds
- diet restrictions and nutrition goals
- physical activity restrictions and/or exercises
- return to work instructions
- instructions for incision or wound care
- patient education materials on your conditions and recovery
- your doctor's contact information and the date of your follow-up appointment including any referrals.

You may also receive information on how to raise questions about your billing and stay.

This is a lot of information and it is important you understand each part of your discharge plan. Don't be afraid to ask questions about all of your conditions, and make sure you know who to call if you have any questions once you get home.

It is often very helpful to have a family member or friend with you to write down specific points and to help remember all of the information given. Ask for written materials to help. Hospitals have many education materials available for you to take.

Although you may be anxious to leave, take the time to understand your discharge plan now. It will be important to your health for the days and weeks to come.