

Going Home from Hospital: It is good to have a plan!

We hope these questions and tips will help as you think about going home.

*Note: These ideas do not replace the advice of your healthcare providers.

Safety at Home

- Do you feel confident walking up and down any stairs that are in your home?
- Is there clutter or furniture that will be in your way?
- Will it help to have bathroom grab bars, a bath transfer bench, a toilet seat riser or a walker? What other health equipment might you need?
- Can you get in and out of your bed?
- Can you still reach items in your kitchen?

Tips:

- Ask to speak with an occupational therapist about how to make your home safe.
- If you live alone, arrange for someone to check on you and ask a Social Worker for information about a 'medical alert button'.
- Light up your living space.
- Remove tripping hazards like mats, and clutter on stairs and in hallways.
- Use a non-slip mat in the tub/shower.
- If you need to borrow or buy equipment, a Social Assistance Worker or Occupational Therapist can help make arrangements.
- Some communities have free medical equipment loan programs. To find out what is available in your community, call SeniorsNL at: 1-800-563-5599.
- Move things out of lower and upper cupboards so they are easier to reach.
- Don't forget to keep paying your rent and power bill while you are in the hospital.

Medications

- Do you understand your new medications?
- How will you get your new medications on the day you leave the hospital?

Tips:

- Talk to your nurse about all of your medications so that you understand any side effects, interactions and when to take each medication.
- You can have new prescriptions faxed to your pharmacy, ask your nurse.
- Your pharmacist may be able to deliver medications to your home, and can answer any questions.

- Use a daily/weekly pill container or ask your pharmacist about putting medications in weekly or monthly "blister packs".
- There are several NL Prescription Drug Plans to help with costs. Call the NL Prescription Drug Program to learn about the right plan for you: 1-888-859-3535.

Food

- Will you need to eat specific foods when you go home from the hospital?
- How will you get groceries and prepare your food?

Tips:

- The hospital dietician can help you to plan meals, make a list of what you need, and think about how and who might help to prepare meals.
- Talk to the hospital Social Worker if you do not have enough food or other necessities at home.
- You can call 811 to speak with a dietician 9am-12pm, 1 - 4 pm, Mon - Fri.
- Many grocery stores deliver for a small fee.
- Some areas have meal delivery; call SeniorsNL at 1-800-563-5599 for details.

Personal Care and Household Chores

- Will you need help with meals, cleaning, doing the laundry, snow shovelling?
- Are you able to shower/bathe on your own or would you like some help?

Tips:

- Family or friends may be happy to help with meals/chores. Don't be afraid to ask.
- The hospital Social Worker can discuss home care options with you as needed; ask if there is a cost for home care.
- You can get a list of home support companies from the hospital Social Worker, or call SeniorsNL at 1-800-563-5599.

Follow up

- Do you have a list of your upcoming appointments?
- Will you need health equipment such as a commode or walker at home?

Tips:

- Before you leave the hospital, take notes or get a list of what you need to do next.
- Follow-up appointments will be scheduled before you leave or will be mailed to you. You may also get a telephone reminder once you are home.
- A community health nurse will usually call in a couple of days if you have dressings or stitches. As needed, call 811 for a community health nurse near you.
- Plan early so that you can safely recover at home.

Questions? Call SeniorsNL: 709-737-2333 or 1-800-563-5599, M to F, 8:30am to 4:30pm