



WEST REGION



Discharge Planning Toolkit

For TRICARE Patients and Their Caregivers

This toolkit is to support military families in ensuring a timely and smooth transition to home or the next level of care following their discharge from a hospital. The use of this toolkit is not meant to replace any instructions given by your provider or other healthcare providers. This toolkit provides the general information you typically need after you leave the hospital and supports your use of Department of War resources and processes.

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What is Discharge Planning?

Discharge planning begins before admission to a hospital, preparing you to leave the hospital with the necessary services and support for recovery (for example: oxygen, wheelchair, home health nurse, medications, and appointments). You and your caregiver will be directly involved in planning any care or follow-up needed for discharge from the hospital.

Almost 20% of patients may have an issue regarding their inpatient hospital care within 30 days after discharge. You can prevent common discharge problems by following the plan outlined below.

1. Before you leave the hospital, plan for what returning home will be like and what help you will need.
2. For mental health hospitalizations, determine which items in your home to secure before discharge. These include medications or chemicals someone could ingest, items someone could use as a noose (such as rope or hoses), and weapons such as sharp cutting tools or guns. Securing lethal means such as these greatly reduces suicide.
3. Bring a written list of your medications with you when you go to the hospital, and obtain a new list showing what to start, stop, or continue when you leave.
 - You can use the “Medication List” in this document to help you list your medications.
 - If you think you may have trouble getting your medications on the way home from the hospital, plan ahead and ask your care team to send a prescription the day before discharge so the pharmacy can resolve any issues before you leave.
 - Ask your provider if they want you to bring all your medication bottles to the hospital or only a list. Hospitals have different preferences and will need to lock your medications with your valuables when you admit.
4. Have a list of your known allergies and all your current providers’ names and phone numbers.
5. Have a written description from the hospital of what symptoms you should immediately call your provider about versus symptoms that require you to go to the emergency room right away.
6. Have a written document with all tests scheduled for follow-up from the hospital and make sure you plan a reminder as well as reliable transportation to get there on time.
 - Know if you need to change any medications or avoid eating for these tests.
 - Keeping a follow-up appointments and seeing your provider can dramatically reduce the need for readmission to the hospital.
 - Prompt mental health follow-up reduces suicide by ensuring you see your outpatient provider within a week and address your care plan and needs.

Questionnaire

Below are questions you should ask your care team before and during your hospital stay to help with discharge planning. Use the space after each question to take notes.

Questions To Ask Yourself Before You Are Admitted To The Hospital

1. Do I have someone to assist with my care after I am discharged from the hospital?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If yes, who will assist me? _____
 - b. Does my caretaker need to request time off of work? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - c. Will they need a note for their work absence? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - d. Does my caretaker have health issues or physical restrictions that may limit their help?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Is my home environment safe for me?
 - a. Are there stairs or steps that will prevent me from getting where I need to go in my home?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 - b. Do I need a ramp to get into my home? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - c. Are there any rugs that I may slip on and cause me to fall? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - d. Do I need special bathtub/shower or toilet equipment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do I need to make arrangements for anyone else (e.g. children, spouse, pets or parents) that depends on me for help? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Do I have transportation to and from the hospital? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Do I have a list of my medications, creams, eye or ear drops, herbal supplements and vitamins to bring with me to the hospital? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Do I need to avoid eating or drinking before I am admitted to the hospital? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If so, for how long? _____
7. Are my advance directives or medical power of attorney updated and packed for the hospital stay?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If you don't have one yet, consider talking to your provider before admission.



Questions to Ask Your Provider Before You Are Admitted to the Hospital

1. What am I being admitted to the hospital for and what should I expect?

2. How long will I be there? _____
3. Do I need Care Coordination or Case Management assistance, and would it help to start that before the hospital stay? _____
4. Where will I receive care after I am discharged from the hospital and what type of support will I need (for example: caregiver, home health, medical equipment, wound care, skilled nursing facility or inpatient rehab facility)?

5. How long will it take me to recover and how long will I need to be off work or limited in activity after I am discharged from the hospital?

6. Do I need a note for my work absence? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Are there medications I should stop taking before I am admitted to the hospital (e.g., Ibuprofen, Aspirin, Warfarin)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. List of medications to stop taking and when: _____
8. Do I need to limit any food or beverages prior to admission and at what time?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If so, when? _____
9. Do I need to have any lab work, X-rays or see any other providers before I am admitted?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If so, when? _____

Questions to Ask Before You Are Discharged from the Hospital

1. What signs and symptoms do I need to look for and what do I need to do or who should I contact if they occur? _____
2. What changes to my diet do I need to make? _____
3. Will I need to make changes to my activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. What activities should I avoid and for how long (for example: driving, lifting heavy objects)?

 - b. What activities will I need help with and for how long (for example: bathing, walking, climbing stairs, house cleaning, cooking and/or paying bills)?

 - c. What activities should I do? _____

4. What type of support will I need if I am discharged to my home?

TriWest can work with your primary care manager to provide what is needed at home.

- a. Do I need any medical equipment at home? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- b. Do I need a home health nurse or outpatient therapy? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- c. Does my caregiver need to be taught how to help with my care? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Dressing changes
- ☐ Injections or infusions
- ☐ Using special equipment
- ☐ Other: _____

- d. Are there any other resources that I will need? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Meals on Wheels
- ☐ Grocery delivery
- ☐ Help with stress
- ☐ Other: _____

5. What do I need to know about my medications?

- a. Complete the “My Medication” sheet in this packet using your own words as the nurse explains your medications to you so you can understand clearly what to do when you get home.
- b. What should I do with medications I no longer take? How do I dispose of them?

6. How should I manage my pain?

7. Will I need to go to a rehab or skilled nursing facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. What appointments and tests do I need scheduled after discharge to ensure I stay well and safe with my discharge plans? _____

- a. See “My Appointment” tracking form to help keep track of your appointments.
- b. If I am not supposed to drive or I do not have a vehicle, do I have transportation to get to my appointments? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Is anything confusing or unclear in the written discharge instructions given to me before I leave the hospital? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- a. Can I read it clearly? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- b. Can I explain what I need to do after discharge to my care team to make sure I fully understand how to stay well? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Who can I call with questions when I'm home? _____

Discharge Instructions

TRICARE Medications

Your care team can electronically send the medications prescribed during your stay to the network pharmacy of your choice, but you may pay much less if you fill them through your military hospital or clinic. There are no limitations to 14 days or no refills in TRICARE prescriptions in the community. Mail order of your ongoing and unchanging medications may be the easiest and most cost-effective means long term. Learn more about prescriptions: <https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Pharmacy/FillPrescriptions>

Food

The right food is essential for your body to heal and recover from illness or surgery. It is very important that you understand any changes you might have to make after discharge, make those changes in your meal planning, and continue to eat the best food while you recover. If you or your family or caregiver needs assistance with your diet and food planning or you are experiencing problems eating, call your community provider or discharge planner.

Follow-up Appointments

Before you leave the hospital, your care team will ask you to follow up with your providers and possibly schedule additional medical appointments. It is important for you to keep your appointment because your provider needs to determine how well you are recovering from your illness. This will allow providers to adjust to your care plan and goals.

It can be much faster if you make your follow-up appointments before you're discharged. Let the provider's office know you are calling from the hospital.

Additionally, you may receive calls when you return home to make sure you have everything you need and are doing well. Please answer those calls even if they are from an unrecognized number during this time so we can reduce the risk of you being readmitted to hospital due to missing items, medication, or needed follow-up.

Community Resources

Sometimes you need additional resources to support your healthcare needs. The link below will give you access to the National Resource Directory that provides a listing of resources in your state, including transportation and family and caregiver support.

<https://www.nrd.gov/>

Resources

- Crisis Line (Available 24/7/365): Dial 988 or 800-273-8255
- TRICARE West Region Customer Service: 888-TRIWEST (874-9378)
- <https://tricare.mil/west> to find additional TRICARE information



My Medications

[illegible]

My Appointments

With Who?	For What?	Address	Phone Number	Date & Time

My Goals

Goal	Steps	Family/Caregiver Assisting	Start Date	Finish Date

Additional Notes