

*Ready, Set,  
Go Home!*



# Discharge Guide

*America's Choice in Homecare.*  
**VisitingAngels**  
LIVING ASSISTANCE SERVICES





# Discharge Guide

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# Discharge Guide

## INTRODUCTION

You are on the road to recovery and finally being discharged to the comfort of your own home. As exciting as this is, transitioning home from the hospital and/or rehab takes thoughtful consideration to make sure you minimize the risk or even avoid re-hospitalization. While you may be relieved to be going home, a hospital or rehab stay can leave you feeling weak, tired, and overwhelmed. Many underestimate the temporary assistance they need to recuperate comfortably and quickly while building back their strength and independence – as a result, some end up back in the hospital. In fact, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), approximately 20% of patients (that's 1 of 5 people) over age 65 are re-admitted back to the hospital within 30 days of discharge.

*Some reasons why being re-admitted to the hospital can happen include:*

- Not fully understanding discharge instructions: particularly due to weakness or fatigue from an exhausting hospital stay.
- Medication related issues such as skipping doses, not taking as prescribed, or running out.
- Missing follow-up medical appointments due to lack of transportation, not wanting to inconvenience a loved one, or canceling because symptoms have improved.
- Inadequate support at home, unable to shop for food and cook, or simply needing some assistance with bathing, dressing, or walking due to weakness and fatigue.
- Falls can happen and cause an injury due to weakness or as a side effect of your medications.
- Certain diseases such as heart problems cause high readmission rates.

There are several things you can do to stay in control and manage a smooth transition home beginning with a thoughtful discharge plan that is customized to your health and wellness.

***Ready, Set, Go Home! Guiding you to a smooth transition!***

Visiting Angels *Ready, Set, Go Home!* program offers you an organized guide and things to think about as you return to the comforts of your home. Before you leave the hospital or rehab, use the guide or have a loved one assist you to be better prepared and get started on your road to recovery. Record discharge instructions and identify who to contact if you have questions. Make sure your health and wellness is covered during the healing process and determine areas where you may need some assistance until you fully recover. When you get home, use the guide as a quick reference to review medications, manage follow-up appointments, and locate important phone numbers. You can also note any questions or information to share with your physician.

# Discharge Guide

## HOW DO I USE THE GUIDE

### ***While you are in the hospital or rehab:***

- Ask the important questions outlined in the Visiting Angels' Ready, Set, Go Home! Guide so that you are better prepared when you go home. Record vital information as you discuss discharge plans with your physician, nurse, therapist, social worker, or other health professional.
- Identify areas where you may need some assistance and determine who (family, friends, neighbors and/or Visiting Angels) can assist and coordinate your home care recovery program.

### ***When you get home:***

Keep your Visiting Angels' Ready, Set, Go Home! Guide handy and near the phone to use as your care reference with important information, notes from the hospital/rehab, medication list, phone numbers etc.

### ***When you have your follow-up appointments:***

- Bring along your Visiting Angels' Ready, Set, Go Home! Guide to have a comprehensive update on your progress as well as any additional questions to ask or comments to be made; you can also use the guide to record further instructions from your doctor.

### ***When family and loved ones want to know:***

- Keep your Visiting Angels' Ready, Set, Go Home! Guide available for your family and loved ones so that when they ask the questions, you are well prepared.

Our caring and compassionate Angel caregivers are companions through your recovery and are available to help support you and your family during this transitional period, in the comfort of your home.

# Discharge Guide

## MY HOSPITAL/REHAB/NURSING HOME INFORMATION

Visiting Angels' Ready, Set, Go Home! Guide belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

I was admitted to the hospital on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

I was discharged from hospital on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

I was admitted to the nursing home/rehab facility on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

I was discharged from the nursing home/rehab facility on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

The reason(s) for my hospitalization and/or rehab/nursing home admission were: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***My recent surgeries:***

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of my last flu shot: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of my last pneumonia shot: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***My primary care providers (PCPs) while I was a patient at the hospital or rehab/nursing home were (Physicians, Nurse Practitioner, other):***

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# Discharge Guide

## HOME MANAGEMENT

### *Home Management*

The things that concern me most about going home are (check all that apply):

- I don't understand how to manage my disease
- I am concerned about pain
- Getting to appointments
- Obtaining my medications
- Managing my medications
- Paying for my medications
- Social support
- Getting to social activities
- Cooking
- Meal planning
- Shopping
- Bathing
- Dressing
- Falling
- Other concerns (list) \_\_\_\_\_
- The thought of going home makes me feel: excited, overwhelmed, anxious, lonely or other: \_\_\_\_\_

My top three goals for when I get home are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What things can I do alone? \_\_\_\_\_

What things will I need some help with? \_\_\_\_\_

# Discharge Guide

## HEALTH MANAGEMENT

What should I expect from my illness when I get home?

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Is my condition expected to:

- Improve?
- Stabilize?
- Decline?

Are there any special instructions for my care when I get home? \_\_\_\_\_

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Should I consider having some assistance in my home during my recuperation? \_\_\_\_\_

What signs or symptoms should I be concerned about? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who should I call if my symptoms or condition worsen?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Who should I contact if my symptoms worsen after hours?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

When should I call 911? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Discharge Guide

## ACTIVITIES AND DIET

Can I resume my normal activities at home?

- Yes
- No

If no, what are my restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_

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Can I resume my regular diet at home?

- Yes
- No

If no, what are my dietary restrictions and special dietary instructions? \_\_\_\_\_

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### ***Shopping and Running Errands***

How will I get my food/groceries when I get home? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who will assist me with my shopping needs when I get home, including pharmacy?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will assist me with meal planning?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will assist me with meal preparation?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Will I need special equipment when I get home? (Check all that apply)

- Oxygen     Safety Rails     Grab Bars     Hospital bed     Transfer Lift  
 Cane     Walker     Wheelchair     Other (specify)

Will I need supplies? (List): \_\_\_\_\_

How do I get the equipment or supplies I need?

- Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Company

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

- Other provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will pay for my equipment/supplies?

- DME Company \_\_\_\_\_     Home Health Care Agency \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hospice Agency \_\_\_\_\_     Insurance \_\_\_\_\_  
 Private Pay (myself)     Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Additional Home Services***

What additional help will I need when I get home?

- Help with personal care (bathing, dressing, toileting, meal preparation, medication reminders)  
 Help with household chores (cooking, cleaning, laundry, errands)  
 Help with social/companionship (conversations, meaningful activities)  
 Help with health care needs (medication education and management, disease education/management, wound care, oxygen, injections, increase strength, help walking, etc.)  
 Skilled Nursing     Social Work  
 Physical Therapy     Occupational Therapy  
 Hospice services     Adult Day Care

Has a home assessment been scheduled?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No

What is the name and contact number of the home care agency?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Visiting Angels of \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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## FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS/MEDICAL/MEDICAL TESTS

### Questions to Ask

You probably have list of follow-up appointments scheduled with several different health practitioners which can be very confusing and complicated. Often it is difficult to know what questions to ask or what symptoms to report. You may not want to bother the doctor with a problem that you believe will go away with time or seem trivial. The truth is, you have limited time with your follow up health practitioners to gather health updates, status and information, and share your concerns. Your health is important so make the most of your time by pre-planning for your appointment and approach each medical visit as a meeting. List the symptoms you may be experiencing, ask about your medications, and obtain clarification on specific health concerns.

What questions should I ask when I go to my medical appointments? Visiting Angels' Ready, Set, Go Home! has provided some questions to think about before your next appointment that may require follow up with your doctor or health professional.

I am most concerned about: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I have noticed the following symptoms and changes in my condition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are these symptoms normal for my condition? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any pain issues: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Share medication issues/ questions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is medicine being changed? If so, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special instructions for taking new medications: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any side effects? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Test results: ask about all test results (lab, radiology, other). What do the results mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional tests required (when): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## APPOINTMENTS

Note: If you need some support in getting ready for your appointment, being escorted to your appointment and following up with pharmacy and shopping errands after the appointment, our Angels at Visiting Angels can help.

**Appointment Name/Type** (doctor, therapy, rehab, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

Has this appointment been made?  Yes  No\*

\*If no, who do I call to make the appointment? Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

Appointment Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/address: \_\_\_\_\_

Is transportation arranged?  Yes  No\*

Who will accompany me to the appointment? \_\_\_\_\_

Special instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appointment Name/Type** (doctor, therapy, rehab, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

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Appointment Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/address: \_\_\_\_\_

Is transportation arranged?  Yes  No\*

Who will accompany me to the appointment? \_\_\_\_\_

Special instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

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## MEDICATIONS

Taking medications as prescribed by your physician is an important part of your treatment plan and should be a high priority in your healthy road to recovery. Unfortunately, people often make the mistake of stopping their medications prematurely for a few reasons: they start to feel better and think the medication has done its job, they haven't seen any improvement since starting the medication and decide it's not working, or the medication costs too much money to buy.

Medication issues are one of the leading reasons for re-admission to the hospital. Whether you just miss an occasional dose or stop taking your medications all together, the result can be the same; an unplanned emergency room visit or hospitalization which is much more costly, health-wise and financially.

Don't stop taking medications prescribed by your physician until you've discussed your concerns with your health care provider or pharmacist first. He or she may be able to give you additional options to address your treatment: change the medication, alter the dosage, offer a lower cost alternative, offer a discount drug plan, or provide other professional recommendations to accomplish the goal of improving your health and wellness.

I have a copy of my current medication list  Yes  No

I understand how to get my medications from the pharmacy (pick-up or delivery)  Yes  No

Who will pick up my medications? Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

I am uncomfortable setting up my medications.  Yes  No

I may sometimes forget to take my medications and need some reminders.  Yes  No

Who pays for medication?  Self-pay  Insurance  Other \_\_\_\_\_

I need assistance paying for my medications.  Yes  No

A medication profile is a place to summarize the list of medications you are currently taking. Complete the list and take with you to your health care appointments, then update when medications are added, discontinued, or dosages changed. Be sure to include all non-prescriptions (over the counter) medications and vitamins you take as well.

Medication Name	Warfarin	Medication Name	Lipitor
Prescribing Doctor	David Tennant D.O.	Prescribing Doctor	David Tennant D.O.
Dose - How Much I Take	2mg (1 pill)	Dose - How Much I Take	20 mg
Frequency - How Often I Take It	once a day	Frequency - How Often I Take It	daily
What Time Of Day	evening	What Time Of Day	morning
Purpose - Why Do I Take It?	blood thinner	Purpose - Why Do I Take It?	high cholesterol
Side Effects - Special Instructions	bleeding	Side Effects - Special Instructions	low blood pressure
Start Date	June 1, 2016	Start Date	May 25, 2016

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## MEDICATION SCHEDULE

<i>Medication Name</i>	
<i>Prescribing Doctor</i>	
<i>Dose - How Much I Take</i>	
<i>Frequency - How Often I Take It</i>	
<i>What Time Of Day</i>	
<i>Purpose - Why Do I Take It?</i>	
<i>Side Effects - Special Instructions</i>	
<i>Start Date</i>	

<i>Medication Name</i>	
<i>Prescribing Doctor</i>	
<i>Dose - How Much I Take</i>	
<i>Frequency - How Often I Take It</i>	
<i>What Time Of Day</i>	
<i>Purpose - Why Do I Take It?</i>	
<i>Side Effects - Special Instructions</i>	
<i>Start Date</i>	

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<i>Prescribing Doctor</i>	
<i>Dose - How Much I Take</i>	
<i>Frequency - How Often I Take It</i>	
<i>What Time Of Day</i>	
<i>Purpose - Why Do I Take It?</i>	
<i>Side Effects - Special Instructions</i>	
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<i>Side Effects - Special Instructions</i>	
<i>Start Date</i>	



### ***What should I do if I don't feel well?***

Your body will send signals to you when something is wrong. It's important to pay attention and not ignore potential problems to minimize the risk of landing back in the hospital.

Please share these warning signs with family and loved ones.

If you develop any of the following signs, report promptly to reduce your risk of further problems.

- You develop a fever.
- You become confused or forgetful.
- Others see a change in your behavior – you become uncharacteristically angry or hostile.
- You develop an unsteady gait or have balance problems – holding on to walls and furniture when to move around.
- You develop weakness or vertigo (dizziness).
- You have bowel issues – diarrhea or constipation (no bowel movement for 3 days).
- Your pain is not easily relieved with medications.
- You run out of medications.
- You lose your appetite.
- You have nausea or vomiting.
- You feel depressed, sad or lonely and can't seem to shake it.
- Something just doesn't feel right, you don't feel like yourself.

### ***If in doubt, check it out!***

The following signs may indicate a serious event and require a call to 911:

- You have chest pain.
- You have slurred speech or find it hard to speak - your loved ones can't understand what you are saying because your words sound jumbled.
- You have sudden weakness of your arms or legs.
- You fall and hit your head, start bleeding, or have another injury.
- You have severe or unresolved pain – your medications are not helping.
- You become very sleepy or drowsy.
- You have difficulty breathing – not relieved with medications or rest.

It wasn't too long ago that you were admitted to the hospital because of a serious illness or health concern. Thankfully, you are now returning home and well on your road to recovery. It's been a long and sometimes tiring healing journey. With proper care and planning you can reduce the risk of re-hospitalization. Invest in your health and wellness by taking the appropriate measures at home to manage your recovery. Use this Visiting Angels Discharge Guide as the first step to taking care of yourself. And if you were to find you are in need of additional care support whether it's for a few hours a day or a few days a week, our Visiting Angels caregivers are in the wings and available to assist you until you are back to your full recovery.





