

Preparing for a Hospital Stay (Adult)



If you are sick or are having a surgical procedure or other treatment, you may need to spend a few days in the hospital. This sheet can help you prepare for an upcoming hospital stay and know what to expect.

Your hospital room

Most hospitals have private rooms. But some may have semi-private rooms and you may have a roommate. Rooms may vary depending on your hospital. The room may have:

- A hospital bed. A hospital bed has guardrails on the sides for extra safety. The head and foot of the bed can be moved up or down with a set of controls. This allows you to rest comfortably.
- A call button. This can be used to call a nurse or healthcare provider if you need help.
- A phone. This is within reach near the bed. You can speak with friends and family directly.
- A bathroom. A nurse or healthcare provider will assist you if you need help getting to the bathroom.
- Basic emergency equipment. This includes a resuscitation bag, oxygen, a flow meter, a suction canister, and a suction machine.
- A whiteboard or sign on the wall marking the day, your room number, important care information, and the hospital staff involved in your care.
- A TV. You likely will have a TV with a remote control so you can watch TV shows and movies to pass the time.

The hospital staff

Many hospital staff with different specialties are involved in your care. All staff should have identification (ID) tags that identify who they are. If you aren't sure who someone is, don't hesitate to ask. Here are some of the people you might meet:

- Healthcare providers are responsible for your care and treatment. You will have a primary healthcare provider (sometimes called a hospitalist) who may be aided by residents, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, or medical students.
- Registered nurses (RN) develop care plans for you and can answer questions about your care. Registered nurses are responsible for the daily care that includes administering medicines. RNs may be assisted by a licensed practical or vocational nurse (LPN or LVN). Nursing assistants may be available to assist with daily care such as bathing and obtaining vital signs (blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature.)
- Pharmacists who help manage your medicines.
- Administrative staff who ensure the operations on the unit run smoothly. They sometimes can be heard over the intercom.
- Patient support assistants help clean equipment and stock supplies.
- Housekeeping staff maintain the cleanliness of your room and bathroom.
- Therapists help assess and improve your breathing, speech, strength, or movement and flexibility.
- A clinical nutritionist or dietitian helps with your nutritional needs and can teach you about any special diets you may need.

- A social worker can help you deal with problems concerning your hospital care. They can offer support, provide counseling when you have questions, and refer you to community resources.
- A faith-based advisor who can provide spiritual and emotional care and counseling.

A typical hospital day

Hospitals are open all day and night. This is to make sure that patients receive care around the clock. During a typical hospital day, a nurse or healthcare provider may:

- Check your respiratory rate, heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature
- Do a physical exam
- Give you medicines
- Deliver a meal tray
- Assess your pain
- Help you with personal hygiene (such as bathing)
- Check IV (intravenous) lines and insertion sites
- Check wounds or incision sites
- Change dressings on wounds or incisions
- Empty bags, such as urine bags

What to bring to the hospital

Bring an advocate. Ask a family member or friend to come with you during your hospital stay. They can:

- Drive you to the hospital and home upon discharge.
- Help you feel more comfortable and confident.
- Remind you what you planned to ask.
- Take notes.
- Help you remember what the healthcare provider says.

Leave your valuables such as money, credit cards, and jewelry at home.

Bring with you:

- A zip lock bag with your medicines, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements.
- Personal care items such as toothbrush, hairbrush, lip balm, lotion, mints or breath strips, and shampoo
- Eyeglasses (if you wear them)
- Pajamas
- Bathrobe and slippers
- Comfortable clothes for you to wear home. This might be sweatpants, yoga pants, or other stretchable clothes.
- Personal music player and headphones

- Coins for vending machines
- Phone numbers of people to call if needed
- Cell phone and charger
- Insurance information and any other paperwork needed for your hospital stay

Add anything else that you don't want to forget:

Other things to remember:

- **Prevent infections.** Wash your hands often. Don't hesitate to remind others to wash their hands often.
- **Stay safe.** You'll be asked to identify yourself before receiving medicines or treatments. This is for safety to make sure the right medicine and treatment is being given.
- **Know your hospital visitation policy and hours.** It's helpful to be familiar with the visiting hours and how many people can visit at the same time. You can tell friends or loved ones who want to visit.

Follow any directions about preregistration information that you can fill out before you get to the hospital. You may be asked to verify your medicines, allergies, and insurance information. Filling out these forms in advance can help make your admission less stressful.

Other important information:

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