

After the Hospital

Your Plan of Care

When you no longer need hospital care, you will be discharged. This does not mean that you are fully healed or completely well. You may have a health problem that still needs attention and care. Before you leave the hospital, you need to know how to care for yourself, watch for problems, take your medications, and more.

Your Healthcare

You will receive papers called your Plan of Care that summarize your hospital stay, list your medications, and contain instructions from your doctor.

Look over these papers with your nurse. Be sure that you can find the information you need.

Another place to find this information is in My Sanford Chart. To review this information any time after you leave the hospital, go to [Visit Summaries and Notes](#).



PREPARE to Leave the Hospital

P Preferences

We will listen to and honor your goals and concerns about your health and care. Think about these things:

- You may want to learn more about your health problem.
- You may choose to quit tobacco. Ask your nurse or call (800) QUIT NOW.
- You may choose to fill out an advance directive for healthcare also called advance care planning.

R Review Medications

Check the medication list in your care plan.

- Circle or highlight any medications that are new or that you have questions about.
- Know your medications, how much to take and when, side effects to watch for, and what to do if you have side effects.
- Find out when the next dose of each medication is due.
- Talk to your nurse, doctor, or pharmacist about any supplements or herbs that you take. Sometimes these can change the way your prescribed medications work.

E Everyday Life

Before you leave, talk to your doctor and nurse about the best ways to care for yourself at home. Some things to talk about are:

- How to manage pain
- Special food and drink needs
- Showering or bathing
- Driving
- Walking or other exercise
- What chores you can do around the house
- How long to be off work (Ask your doctor for a letter if needed.)
- Other questions: _____

P Problems and Warning Signs

Know what problems to watch for.

- Highlight or circle problems to watch for on your Plan of Care papers or other patient education handouts.
- Call your doctor when you see any warning signs or have any questions. Highlight or circle the phone number in your Plan of Care papers.
- Watch for changing emotions. Call 911 if you have any thoughts of harming yourself.

Appointments

For a safe recovery, it is important to go to your follow-up appointments. These may be with the doctor or therapist, or you may need to come in for more testing.

- Put your appointments in your calendar.
- Arrange a ride if you cannot drive yourself.
- Let your nurse know if you think it may be difficult to get to your appointment.

Results

You may have had some tests done in the hospital but not get the results before you leave. Be sure to know how you will get the results.

- Test results may come from your surgeon, primary care provider, or other care provider.

Equipment or Supplies

Be sure you know how to care for yourself after you leave the hospital.

- You may need equipment like a walker or cane to be safe at home.
- You may need supplies like fresh gauze and tape to care for a surgical cut.

When Out of the Hospital

- Review your plan of care.
- Call your doctor or surgeon's office, or My Sanford Nurse if available, for any concerns.
- Tell us about the care you received while you were in the hospital. If you receive a survey, please fill it out and send it in. This helps us to better meet our patients' needs.

Notes

Getting Ready to Leave the Hospital

Beginning early in your hospital stay, a member of the care team will help make things ready for you to leave the hospital. This may be a nurse, case manager, social worker, or a discharge planner. This team member will:

- Oversee your care
- Work with you and your insurance company if needed
- Help create your safe discharge plan

After the Hospital

You may still need health care after leaving the hospital. The services available for you to choose may depend on what Medicare or your insurance allows. You may also have the option of paying for the service yourself.

Certain rules must be met for some services. These may include the length of your hospital stay, if you need rehabilitation services, and if you are able to leave your home for care. Some options for where you go when you leave the hospital may include:

- Your home or the home of a family member
 - A home care or hospice agency may send health care providers to your home.
 - You may pay for private home care services such as homemaking, meals, or respite services.
 - You may travel to outpatient rehabilitation, for physical therapy or other services to your home. This service is not intended for all day or every day needs.
- Another facility such as a:
 - Skilled nursing facility (If your first choice is not available, your care team will help with options.)
 - Rehabilitation unit or hospital, which provides short-term therapy

Your nurse, case manager, social worker, or discharge planner will talk with you about:

- Who can help you after you leave the hospital
- Your plans for transportation (including for follow-up appointments)
- Your choice of pharmacy for medications when you leave the hospital (if not already decided)
- Services or supplies you have been told you need
- Resources available in your community
- Any concerns you have about leaving the hospital and about your care

Always ask your care team if you have any questions about your care.