

NICHE

NURSES IMPROVING CARE FOR HEALTHSYSTEM ELDERS

Need to Know for Patients and Families

*What patients
and their
families need to
know before
hospitalization
or a nursing
home admission*

ROME
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

An Affiliate of St. Joseph's Health

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Working with the Healthcare Team

Research has shown that communication and teamwork are among the most important aspects of high quality healthcare. The individual, family, and caregivers are a vital part of the team!

Here is what you can do to improve communication:

Prepare

- The healthcare team needs all relevant information. Carry a document with a list of your health problems, allergies, and medications.
- Write down questions that you may forget in the moment.
- Have a family member or friend present during discussions with the doctor or other health care provider, if possible.

Be specific

- Describe all symptoms in as much detail as possible. When did it start? Did something trigger the event? Where did it occur (location)? How long did it last or how long has it been going on? What makes it better or worse? Did you try anything to make it better? If yes, did it work?

Ask questions

- All questions are good questions! There is no such thing as a silly question! If you do not understand ask for clarification.
- Refer to your prepared questions.
- Do not feel rushed. You are the most important part of the healthcare team.
- Ask questions regarding health insurance and how it may affect treatment options.

Make a plan

- End each meeting with a summary of what was discussed and plan for what is to come.

Family members and friends:

Be present

- Navigating the healthcare system is challenging. Doing it alone is ever harder. Be supportive.
- If there are many friends and family members, choose a representative who will be the primary person who communicates with the healthcare team. This will simplify communication.
- Ask how you can be helpful to the individual and the healthcare team!

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Going and Coming Home: The NICHE Need to Know Hospital Checklist

Things you should bring to the hospital or have available at all times

- Your medication list
- The names and phone numbers of all of your health care providers and what their specialties are
- Your medical history (surgeries, procedures, etc. and dates)
- Your family phone numbers — home and cell
- Allergies or adverse reactions to medication, food or environment
- Your Power of Attorney and/or Living Will papers, MOLST, HCP, DNR, Advance Directives
- Your insurance cards and information
- Your pharmacy phone number

If you are staying in the hospital or long term care facility, you may want to have your family bring in the following:

- If you didn't already, your Power of Attorney and/or Living Will papers, MOLST, HCP, DNR, Advance Directives.
- Insurance cards, Medicaid card and/or Medicare card
- Your glasses and/or hearing aids if you did not bring them
- Assistive devices such as a walker or cane
- Dentures if you didn't bring them
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Comb or brush
- Notebook and pen
- Other items you feel would make you more comfortable (robe, slippers, etc.)
- Soothing entertainment items such as music, radio, books, magazines or puzzle books
- Favorite blanket
- When bringing personal items like a blanket, music, etc. be sure to clearly label belongings with your name and phone number, notify staff.
- For family/caregivers: If your loved one is cognitively impaired, provide personal information (hobbies, interests, occupation, etc.) about the patient that can help the staff "connect." See NICHE Need to Know Dementia Series.

When you are going home from the hospital or long term care facility, make sure you know:

- Written directions on what you should do when you get home
- How to do any medical tasks you will need (such as changing bandages)
- Any changes that may be needed in the environment at home (e.g., bathroom safety)
- The timeline of your recovery
- Any new medications or prescriptions to be filled
- Any needed equipment or supplies
- Date when you need to see your doctor and/or specialist
- Which procedures and tests were done during the hospital or long term care facility stay and that results were sent to your doctor or specialist
- The call-back number and name of the unit or facility if you have any questions The phone number of a Home Health Agency affiliated with the hospital If you feel you need more assistance at home.

Make sure medications listed on your discharge summary match those you have at home. Follow up with your doctor or other health care provider if you have any questions about your medication list. Properly dispose of any medications discontinued during your hospital visit.