

Introduction Discharge Group Part 1

Conduct this group **early** in the patients stay (within the 1st 7 days)

PREPARING FOR SAFE DISCHARGE TO HOME:

- Fall prevention
- Home Safety

Schedule for set day/time (60 MIN)

“Falls are a serious public health problem among older adults. In the United States, one of every three seniors over 65 years fall each year, and falls are the leading cause of injury death for seniors 65 and over. Certain risk factors in the home environment may contribute to about half of all home falls. Homes that were perfectly convenient one year can cause problems in later years. Changing physical abilities can make daily routines more difficult. It makes sense, then, to make changes to existing homes, or build in features in new construction that will help create a safer environment”

“I am going to give you some handouts related to falls and safety that I want you to complete either by yourself or with your family in preparation for a safe discharge. You can discuss what is relevant to you with your therapists after you complete the forms. Closer to your discharge date, if clinically appropriate, we highly suggest that you go on a Home Pass for a few hours so that you and your family can assess your abilities and identify and barriers to your safe discharge before you leave our care here at this skilled facility. We will talk about some of the topics that are of particular importance for everyone now.”

Fall prevention/ HOME SAFETY

Let's talk about fall risk and home safety:

*Handouts: Home Safety Assessment Checklist/ Fall Prevention safety checklist/ optional:
Functional abilities confidence scale

1. Home Safety Assessment checklist
 - a. Review packet-encourage patient to complete with their discharge setting details (with family if necessary)
 - b. Discuss that individual concerns/barriers identified should be brought to treating therapist, and concerns will be addressed.
2. Fall Prevention Home Safety Checklist packet
 - a. Review handout and safety suggestions
3. If appropriate for member of the group, can provide "Functional Abilities Confidence scale" for the patient to complete and review with treating therapist to identify areas of concern.
4. Discuss Home Pass: Review that prior to DC to home setting their treating therapist may recommend a home pass. In order for a home pass to be safe and effective:
 - a. Identify specific mobility or safety items to be trialed prior to home pass
 - b. Care giver training must be completed and successful
 - c. Home pass form will be provided by therapy with specific instructions/safety reminders, and patient can return to facility with any identified concerns.
5. Provide for Q & A time at the end of the group

HOME SAFETY ASSESSMENT FORM

Patient Name: _____ Facility/Agency: _____

Diagnosis: _____ Physician: _____

Home Type: Pvt Home _____ Apt. _____

- _____ Can patient enter/exit independently?
- _____ Can patient open and close the door independently?
- _____ Is driveway/walkway surface inclined?
- _____ How many steps are into the home? Front door _____ Back door _____
- _____ Width of Front door (28" for wheel chair/walker clearance).
- _____ Width of Back door.
- _____ Comments:

Stairways

- _____ Type of stairs. Straight _____ Spiral _____ Landings _____
- _____ Are stairs well lit? Can you distinguish the 1st and last step from the stairs.
- _____ Are sturdy handrails fastened on both sides of the stairway?
- _____ Do the handrails run continuously from beyond the top or beyond the bottom of the entire flight of stairs?
- _____ Is there worn or loose carpeting or worn treads?
- _____ Are steps even and of the same height and size?
- _____ Are there any structural safety issues for stairs inside and/or outside?
- _____ Is the riser open?
- _____ Height of stairs. >6"
- _____ Depth of stairs. <6"
- _____ Comments:

Bedroom

- _____ Location: Main level _____ Stairs _____
- _____ Width of doorway
- _____ What type of bed?
 Hospital _____ Electric _____ Manual _____
- _____ Width from bed to nearest obstacle.
 Right side _____ Left _____ Both sides _____
- _____ Are lamps or light switches within easy reach of the bed?
- _____ Is night lighting adequate?
- _____ Are carpets non-skid and well anchored?
- _____ Height of bed (19" → 21" from the floor).
- _____ Are bed rails in place if needed?
- _____ Any structural safety issues in bedroom?
- _____ Draw a layout of the bedroom.

Comments:

Bathroom

- _____ Location: Main level _____ Stairs _____
- _____ Width of doorway (28" for wheelchair/walker clearance).
- _____ Is doorknob accessible?
- _____ What is the tub height from the floor to rim?
- _____ Are bathtubs and showers equipped with non-skid mats?
- _____ Are wall mounted or tub mounted grab bars in place?
- _____ Is tub seat used if standing is unsteady?
- _____ What is the toilet height from floor? (19")
- _____ Is a raised toilet seat/or grab bar used if the toilet is too low?
- _____ Are cabinets accessible?
- _____ Are medications clearly labeled and accessible?
- _____ Are loose scatter rugs removed?
- _____ Maneuvering space/dimensions of bathroom.
- _____ Draw layout of bathroom.

Comments:

Kitchen

- _____ Width of doorway (28" for wheelchair/walker clearance).
- _____ What is the height of the stove?
- _____ Is oven accessible?
- _____ Is microwave accessible?
- _____ Height /location of microwave.
- _____ Is sink accessible?
- _____ Height of sink (chair height 19"—21" from the floor).
- _____ Are cupboards directly under sink or is it open?
- _____ Are cupboards accessible? Location: _____
- _____ Does refrigerator hinge on left or right?
- _____ Is it accessible with w/c?
- _____ Height of kitchen table (clearance of wheelchair).
- _____ Height of kitchen chair / Does it have arms? _____
- _____ Maneuvering space/dimensions of kitchen.
- _____ Is patient able to use outlets, lights, garbage disposal, oven?
- _____ Are frequently used items within easy reach?
- _____ Is stepstool used, is it wide based with handles?
- _____ Draw layout of kitchen.

Comments:

Miscellaneous

- _____ Can patient complete phone call, dial emergency number, answer phone in reasonable time?
- _____ Seat height of favorite chair?
- _____ Can patient answer door independently?
- _____ Would furniture re-arrangement be feasible?
- _____ Are there throw rugs to be moved?
- _____ Is there hot water, heating, air conditioning?
- _____ Is there garbage removal?
- _____ Are phones within easy reach through out home or do you have a portable phone?
- _____ Are any exposed cords or other such obstacles in the pathways of the home?
- _____ Is there clutter?

Use this checklist to find and fix hazards in your home.

STAIRS & STEPS (INDOORS & OUTDOORS)

Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the stairs?

- Always keep objects off the stairs.

Are some steps broken or uneven?

- Fix loose or uneven steps.

Is there a light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs?

- Have an electrician put in an overhead light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.

Has a stairway light bulb burned out?

- Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.

Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?

- Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs?

- Fix loose handrails, or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs, and are as long as the stairs.

FLOORS

When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?

- Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.

Do you have throw rugs on the floor?

- Remove the rugs, or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.

Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the floor?

- Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.

Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, telephone, or extension cords)?

- Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet.

KITCHEN

Are the things you use often on high shelves?

- Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist high).

Is your step stool sturdy?

- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

BEDROOMS

Is the light near the bed hard to reach?

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.

Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?

- Put in a nightlight so you can see where you're walking. Some nightlights go on by themselves after dark.

BATHROOMS

Is the tub or shower floor slippery?

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.

Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub, or up from the toilet?

- Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.



Discharge Group Part 2

Conduct this group **late** in the patients stay (within the last 1st 7 days)

PREPARING FOR SAFE DISCHARGE TO HOME:

- Emergency preparation
- HEP review
- Safety during change of season
- Outdoor mobility
- Adaptive equipment
- Socialization
- How to manage ADLS

Schedule for set day/time (60 MIN)

PREPARING FOR UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS

“You also want to be ready for unexpected situations. Think about what you would do in case of an emergency or crisis situation.”

*Provide ready.org Fire safety handouts

1. Fire safety

When fire breaks out it may take just 3 min. to go from a tiny flame to a raging fire. This is due to flashover – air becomes hot enough to ignite combustible items in a room. Toxic gases are also a hazard. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause death. Smoke rises to the ceiling. Beneath it you can still breathe. Heat rises – protect your lungs – drop to the floor and crawl

Fire Safety Tips for Seniors

1. Be a fire-safe smoker

Smoking is the No. 1 cause of home fire deaths across the country. You can **prevent fires** caused by cigarettes and other smoking materials. Also, smoke outside, don't smoke in bed and never smoke after taking medicine that makes you tired. Do not smoke around medical oxygen because it can explode if a flame or spark is near.

2. Test smoke alarms

Without a smoke alarm, you may not wake up from the smoke, and it can kill you in your sleep. This is why home fires are the most dangerous at night or when people are sleeping. Test your smoke alarms once a month. Use the test button to make sure your smoke alarms are working.

3. Make sure you can hear your smoke alarm

The standard smoke alarm sound does not wake some people. If you cannot hear your alarm, you may need an alarm that has a different sound or one that comes with a bed shaker or strobe light.

4. Make an escape plan around your abilities

You may have less than three minutes to get out of your home if there is a fire. It is important to have an escape plan before a fire occurs, so everyone is prepared and ready to act.

5. Think about your needs

If you need to use a wheelchair or a cane, make sure you can get to them easily and get out quickly. If you wear a hearing aid or eyeglasses, put them next to your bed while you are sleeping. Have a phone near the bed in case of an emergency and know the local emergency number in case of a fire. If you are trapped and cannot get out of your bedroom, you will need to call for help.

6. Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food

Use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.

Electricity Safety and Usage

Follow electric safety tips:

1. Check electrical cords to make sure they're not running across doorways or under carpets. Also, check them for damage before using. Replace damaged cords immediately.
2. Don't overload electrical outlets or extension cords
3. Extension cords are intended for temporary use; have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.
4. Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture. There should be a sticker that indicates the maximum wattage light bulb to use.
5. If outlets or switches feel warm, frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuits, or flickering or dimming lights, call a qualified electrician.
6. Only plug one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) into a receptacle outlet at a time.
7. Keep electrical appliances away from water sources such as sinks, pools and bathtubs.
8. Keep the area around your electric meter and other electrical equipment clear.
9. Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician

Emergency Preparedness:

- Have emergency contacts readily available
 - Fire
 - Ambulance
 - Police
 - Family members (POA)
 - MD
- Consider wearing a safety alert device
- Carry a list of your medications – precautions

Home Exercise Program

HEP script:

As we age, muscle mass, strength, and endurance decrease. By the time you discharge from the SNF your therapist will provide you with a HEP, or Home Exercise Program. The purpose of this program is to increase strength, decrease risks for falls, and prevent decline in mobility. The exercises provided to you are a personalized program at this level of your recovery. The exercises that your therapist has chosen specifically for you for the purpose to either maintain or continue to improve your strength, flexibility, and/or mobility. The risks for not complying with the program may result in a decline in your mobility, strength, range of motion, and possibility increased risk for falls, wounds, or cardiovascular health.

If you have questions regarding your program, please consult with your therapist prior to leaving the facility. As you progress throughout the continuum of care, your HEP may be modified or upgraded. Please refer to the therapist that is currently active in your care regarding your HEP.

Adapting to the Seasons:

***Provide handouts: Winter and Summer Tipsheets**

Baby It's Cold Outside -Winter Preparedness

Prepare for Winter

- Winterize you car – antifreeze, tires, windshield wipers, windshield scrapper
- Check your furnace
- Consider home food or medication delivery services

If there is ice or snow on the ground:

- Be careful while shoveling snow. If you have a heart condition, thinning bones, arthritis check with you MD to see if shoveling snow is safe for you.
- Make sure the steps and walkways are clear before you go out
- Wear boots with nonskid soles
- Use a walking device such as a cane to steady you

Hypothermia occurs when your body temp drops to a dangerous level.

Warning signs include

- Cold skin that is pale or ashy
- Feeling tired, confused or sleepy
- Feeling weak
- Problems walking
- Slowed breathing rate

What to do if experience hypothermia:

- Move your limbs, flex fingers and toes
- Keep moving
- Move out of the cold
- Remove wet clothing
- Warm the body slowly and gently
- Wrap in blanket
- Use warm compresses
- Warm slowly – if your hands are cold start running cool water on them and increase to warmer water gradually.
- Drink warm fluids

Protect against Frostbite

- Wear clothing that covers and insulates your feet, hands, ears, head as those areas are most prone to frostbite
- Layer Up
- Protect your lungs – wear a scarf over your nose and mouth

Prepare for Winter

- Winterize your car – antifreeze, tires, windshield wipers, windshield scraper
- Check your furnace
- Consider home food or medication delivery services

If there is ice or snow on the ground:

- Be careful while shoveling snow. If you have a heart condition, thinning bones, arthritis check with you MD to see if shoveling snow is safe for you.
- Make sure the steps and walkways are clear before you go out
- Wear boots with nonskid soles
- Use a walking device such as a cane to steady you

ROLL OUT THOSE LAZY, CRAZY HAZY DAYS OF SUMMER – PREPARING FOR HEAT

While summer brings us warmth and bloom, prolonged exposure to excessive heat can be dangerous. Every summer, more than 600 adults die of health related problems caused by heat and humidity. Older adults with chronic health conditions are at high risk of developing heat related illnesses.

When the temp reaches above 80 degrees take precautions and stay cool:

- Stay away from direct sun exposure as much as possible. Plan outdoor activities in the morning or closer to sunset.
- Stay hydrated with cool water, juices or liquids that do not have caffeine or alcohol.
- Dress appropriately. Wear loose, light colored clothing. Dark colors absorb heat. Wear a brimmed hat as well.
- Use air-conditioning. Either in your home or visiting places with it such as a mall, restaurant, cooling center, movie house.

- Use sunscreen and insect repellent
- Cool down with a tepid shower or bath or just use a wet washcloth and wash your face or place water on your wrists, ankles, armpits or neck.

How to Spot and Treat Health Problems Caused by Heat

- **It's important to recognize when hot weather is making you sick, and when to get help. Here's a list of health problems caused by exposure to too much heat:**

Dehydration:

- **What it is:** A loss of water in your body. It can be serious if not treated.
- **Warning signs:** Weakness, headache, muscle cramps, dizziness, confusion, and passing out.
- **What to do:** Drink plenty of water and, if possible, sports drinks such as Gatorade™, which contain important salts called “electrolytes.” Among other things, electrolytes play a key role in regulating your heartbeat. Your body loses electrolytes when you're dehydrated. If you don't feel better, call 911. If you feel better after drinking fluids, but have medical conditions like heart failure or take diuretics (“water pills”), you should also call your healthcare provider for a follow-up.
- **Heat Stroke:**
- **What it is:** A very dangerous rise in your body temperature, which may happen gradually over days of heat exposure in older adults. It can be deadly.
- **Warning signs:** A body temperature of 104°F (40°C) or higher; red, hot, and dry skin; a fast pulse; headache; dizziness; nausea or vomiting; confusion or lethargy; and passing out.
- **What to do:** Call 911 immediately. Move to a cool, shady place and take off or loosen heavy clothes. If possible, douse yourself with cool water, or put cloths soaked with cool water on your wrists, ankles, armpits, and neck to lower your temperature. Try to see if you can safely swallow water or sports drinks while waiting for 911.
- **Note:** If you are caring for someone else who has heat stroke, only give them water or drinks if they are awake and can swallow. Do not try to give fluids by mouth if the person is drowsy, as it could cause choking.

Heat Exhaustion:

- **What it is:** A serious health problem caused by too much heat and dehydration. If not treated, it may lead to heat stroke (see above).
- **Warning signs:** Heavy sweating or no sweating, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, paleness, cold or clammy skin, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, fast and weak pulse, fainting. Body temperature is generally between 98.6°F (37°C) and 104°F (40°C).
- **What to do:** Without delay, move to a cool, shady place, and drink plenty of cool fluids, such as water or sports drinks. Call 911 right away if you have high blood pressure or heart problems, or if you don't feel better quickly after moving to the shade and drinking liquids.

Heat Syncope

- **What it is:** Fainting caused by high temperatures.
- **Warning signs:** Dizziness or fainting.
- **What to do:** Lie down and put your feet up, and drink plenty of water and other cool fluids.

Adaptive Equipment

Your therapist will be asking about any mobility or adaptive equipment that you may have at home. This may include a commode, shower chair, hospital bed, walker, cane, wheelchair, grab bars, etc... There is a multitude of equipment options to assist with safe mobility. Your therapists will provide you with any equipment recommendations that they believe will aid in your safety and/or convenience once you leave the facility.

Often times you may be able to borrow equipment or receive used equipment from friends or family members, or a lending closet. It is imperative that your equipment is assessed for safety. If feasible, the therapy staff at our facility are able to assess if the equipment is safe. If unable to bring to our facility, please review with your home health therapist to determine the safety of your adaptive or mobility equipment. Signs of unsafe equipment may include: rust, loose parts, noise, etc..

Mobility equipment often comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. Your therapist will provide you with information on the equipment that they recommend specifically for you. This may include: height, weight, and width recommendations for a wheelchair, walker, cane, bed, etc... Please keep this in mind as well if you are considering borrowed or gifted equipment. Also, walkers, canes, crutches must be fitted specifically to your height. For example: a cane or walker should be adjusted to the wrist crease of your arm when at rest for optimal height. Also, all four legs of the walker should remain level, and not on an incline or decline.
(Demonstration)

Some equipment may be covered under Medicare or your insurance plan. Please be aware that the therapy staff makes the recommendations for your equipment, however the facility social worker or discharge planner is who will order and discuss coverage for those items.

Socialization- Staying Connected

On the old television show “The Golden Girls,” four, senior women lived together, providing each other companionship, friendship and emotional support. Many seniors, however, lack this kind of social network. In fact, loneliness is a serious problem among elderly people. Its important to try to stay connected for your physical, emotional and mental health.

Do you have a support system to help you manage when you get home?

- Family or friends to contact and stay in touch with either on the phone, via emails, skyping, letters, cards
- Hobbies to fall back on for those days where others are busy
- Hired caregiver that you can communicate with
- Connection with your church, local community, senior centers
- Library services to provide books, movies,
- Adopt a pet

For more resources see the social worker