

Moving from the care of your GP to hospital and back again

Your GP is the central coordinator of your primary care. You or your carer should keep your GP informed of any changes to your condition and the treatment options provided by other health professionals involved in your care.

This **5 Step Guide** will help you and your carer understand what you need to do to help keep your GP informed of changes to your condition and treatment options as you move from the care of your GP to hospital and back again.

Read through and understand each step.

Collect the contact details of all those involved in your care.

Keep the following items stored together in a large envelope

a. a card wallet with all your health care providers business cards

b. an appointment diary

c. a list of your prescription medications

d. a list of your non-prescription medications

e. a list of your herbal remedies

f. recent test results

g. summary of your medical history

h. any care plans

i. other useful information, such as your blood type and any allergies

Take these items with you to all your medical appointments.

1 Collect your health care teams contact details

First, write down your own contact details and store them in your card wallet for others to refer to if required.

Also store the contact details of your next of kin, carer, or any person authorised to act as your medical power of attorney.

Next, ask your general practitioner for their business card and store this in your card wallet.

You should also store the business cards of any medical specialists you see.

Also collect the business cards of any allied health professionals you visit. Allied health professionals include nurses, physiotherapist, optometrist, podiatrist, dentist, pharmacists and psychologists among others.

Try to record the date of your appointments either on the back of the collected business cards or in an appointment diary.

Storing all your health care providers contact details in a single card wallet will help you remember who has been involved in your care and will help your GP and the hospital meet your health care needs.

2 Prepare for a hospital outpatient or emergency visit

If you have an appointment at a hospital outpatient clinic or need to go to hospital in an emergency situation make sure that you take the envelope containing all your health care information with you.

This will help the hospital establish your health status.

Further treatment decisions will be made on the basis of this information.

If you are not immediately admitted to hospital, make sure that your GP is informed of your hospital attendance and give your GP the contact details of the unit that provided your outpatient or emergency care.

At your next appointment take with you the hospital's contact details, any new medications, test results and documents given to you by the hospital.

3 Prepare for hospital admission

If you are admitted to hospital for further tests, medical treatment or surgery, you should give the envelope containing your health related information to the person assessing your condition.

You and your carer may also be asked questions about:

- your ability to perform daily living activities
- current living arrangements
- any obstacles in your home that may affect your recovery
- the community services used before going to hospital
- the availability of a carer to assist you when you return home.

This will help the hospital determine the level of care you will need after leaving hospital.

You and your carer should discuss anything you are unsure about with your assessor.

4 Prepare to leave hospital

Following your treatment, the hospital will give you a copy of your:

- discharge summary, and
- discharge care plan.

Provide the hospital with your GP's contact details and ask that copies of both of documents be sent to your GP.

Make sure you collect and store any new medications, test results and documents provided by the hospital in the envelope containing your health care information.

Before leaving the hospital ask the person discharging you to give you the contact details that can be used by your GP if required. Store this information in your card wallet.

Make sure you have the date, time and location of your follow-up outpatient appointment recorded either in your card wallet or in appointment diary.

5 Return to the care of your GP

After leaving hospital make an appointment to see your GP and take your envelope with you, including any new information.

This will ensure that your GP is fully informed of any changes to your condition, treatment and future health care needs.

Then with the support of your GP and any other services required, carefully follow the instructions in your discharge care plan.