



15 to-dos for every hospital patient

1. Get names and contact information for your primary hospital doctor and other specialists involved in your care from your nurse. Know that your primary hospital physician is the one who will coordinate the entire team.

Primary physician: _____

Other specialists: _____

2. Ask your physician what your main diagnosis is and any other issues that are newly diagnosed.

My primary diagnosis: _____

Other issues being treated: _____

3. Ask your nurse or physician for updated, daily feedback about how your illnesses are responding to the treatments. *It is your fundamental right to get information regarding your medical conditions. Understanding both your diagnosis and treatment plan is central to the Patient's Bill of Rights adopted in 1995. According to the Rights, all patients are entitled "to be informed about their medical condition, the risks and benefits of treatment and appropriate alternatives."*

My condition today (use pencil): _____

4. Express your fears and anxieties about the illness to physicians and nursing staff. Don't let anxiety build up until it becomes uncontrollable.

Fears/Issues I want to discuss with my caregivers: _____

5. Involve family and friends if you feel that will help you. Understand that your family is an integral part of the treatment team. Obtain the contact information for the hospital's social worker assigned to your unit and ask to speak to that individual if you're concerned about how you and your family are coping with your illness.

Name/Contact information for social worker: _____

6. Nursing staff members are your best route to assistance needed during your stay. Ask the staff about your health condition and what you can do to help yourself get better.

Questions for nursing staff: _____

7. When in doubt, always ask for the nurse manager (or the charge nurse) regarding any issues with nursing care. They are there to help you and ease any misunderstanding or tensions that may arise during your stay.

Name/contact information for nurse manager: _____

8. As you approach discharge, tell the healthcare team what medications you took before you were admitted. Ask if you should still take these after you leave.

New medications (included in discharge instructions): _____

Medications prior to admission: _____



15 to-dos for every hospital patient (continued)

9. Ask the staff to show you and your caregiver any other tasks that require special skills (e.g. changing a bandage, giving an insulin or a blood-thinner shot). Then, practice the task while they're in your room to ensure you're doing the tasks correctly.

Tasks I need to practice before discharge: _____

10. Ask if you're able to do ordinary tasks alone like bathing dressing, cleaning, paying bills and driving. If not, be sure you have the proper help arranged before you get home.

Home tasks I need help with: _____

11. Ask where you'll get care after you leave (after you're discharged). Do you have options, like home health care? Be sure to tell the team your preference for care at home and don't assume they'll know it and arrange for it.

My choices for home care: _____

12. Ask if you'll need medical equipment (like a walker) and whether you, your family or someone from the hospital will arrange to obtain this and retrieve it from the supplier.

Medical equipment needed: _____
Where to obtain? _____

13. If it's unclear where you can obtain equipment and how you'll pay for it, speak to the social worker to learn what your insurance covers and how much you'll have to pay. If you need help with the costs, inform the social worker to see if arrangements can be made for assistance.

Equipment supplier: _____
Assistance with costs: _____

14. If the hospital staff does not provide you with printed discharge instructions and a summary of your health status, do not leave the hospital without obtaining this information and reading it or having it read to you. Ask your nurse if you have any questions regarding the printed discharge instructions.

Questions about my discharge instructions: _____

15. Record all your upcoming appointments and tests you may need in the coming weeks.

Appointments and tests needed and dates: _____

