



BRIGHTWAY AGING ADVOCACY

# Questions to Ask Before Hospital Discharge

The key questions many families wish they had asked - organized so you can walk in prepared.

**Bring this guide to the hospital, type in the answers, and leave with clearer instructions and more confidence.**

Fillable digital PDF with senior-friendly spacing

**Brightway Aging Advocacy**

Guidance | Clarity | Compassion

# Start Here: Use This at the Bedside or Before Discharge

This digital version lets families type directly into the guide and check off items as they review them. Use the sections that fit your situation.

**Helpful phrase**

**“Before we leave, I want to make sure I understand the plan, the medications, the warning signs, and who to call if something changes.”**

**Write this down first**

Patient name \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital / unit / room \_\_\_\_\_

Main diagnosis \_\_\_\_\_

Discharge date \_\_\_\_\_

Primary caregiver \_\_\_\_\_

Best callback number \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred pharmacy \_\_\_\_\_

## Before the papers are printed, ask:

- Who is the person responsible for explaining this plan to our family?
- Can we review the plan slowly, with the patient and caregiver present?
- Will we need help before leaving the hospital?
- Can we write or receive the key instructions in larger print?

**Important notes**

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# 1. Medical Readiness and What Changed

Start with the big picture. Families often need more time to understand what happened, what has improved, and what still needs watching.

## Questions about the hospital stay

- What was the final diagnosis, and what problem brought the patient here?
- What treatment was given in the hospital, and what changed?
- What is better now, and what still needs watching when we get home?
- Were there complications, infections, new symptoms, falls, medication reactions, or other issues during the stay?
- What should the patient be able to do safely before going home?

## My notes / answers

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## Questions about warning signs

- What symptoms mean we should call the doctor the same day?
- What symptoms are expected and okay to watch?
- What would be considered urgent or an emergency?

## More notes

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## 2. Medications and Follow-Up

Medication questions are one of the biggest sources of confusion after a hospital stay. Leave knowing what is new, what stopped, and who to call if something does not make sense.

### Medication review

Medication	Dose	When to take it	What changed? / Why is it needed?

### Follow-up questions

- What appointments are already scheduled before we leave?
- Who should manage refills, side effects, or medication questions?
- Do we need home health, therapy, or nursing support?

### Appointment dates / next steps

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### 3. Home Care, Mobility, and Safety

A discharge plan is not just paperwork. It has to work in the real home, with the real caregiver, the real bathroom, the real stairs, and the real energy level.

#### Can the patient do these safely?

- Get in and out of bed, chair, or toilet
- Walk safely, with or without a walker or cane
- Use stairs, if needed at home
- Bathe, dress, and manage basic needs
- Eat, drink, and take medications safely

#### Home safety and equipment

- What equipment will be needed at home?
- Does the patient need a walker, wheelchair, hospital bed, commode, oxygen, grab bars, or other supports?
- Are there diet restrictions, wound care steps, or lifting / transfer instructions?

#### Caregiver concerns

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#### Equipment / home setup notes

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#### Important questions to ask before leaving

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# 4. Services, Coverage, and Care Options

Families often learn too late that services and coverage were not clearly explained. Use this page to slow down and capture what help is available.

**Home health / therapy**

- Nursing
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Bath aide / support

**Rehab or skilled nursing**

- Is rehab recommended?
- If yes, what level of care?
- What are the goals?
- How soon can it begin?

**Insurance and costs**

- What is covered?
- Are authorizations needed?
- Who can answer billing questions?

**Coverage, costs, and service notes**

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**If discharge feels unsafe**

- Can you explain again why home is considered safe?
- Can the discharge be delayed if key concerns are not resolved?
- What is the appeal or review process if our family believes more support is needed?

**Notes**

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## 5. Final 10-Minute Check Before Leaving

Use this page as a calm final review before the patient heads home. It can help you catch missing pieces while someone is still available to answer questions.

### Before you walk out, review these items

- We understand the diagnosis and why discharge is considered safe today.
- We have written discharge instructions in plain language.
- We reviewed medications and know what to start, stop, change, and continue.
- We know how to reach the right person to call for questions or urgent concerns.
- Follow-up appointments, therapies, equipment, and services are understood.
- Important paperwork and prescriptions are gathered and accounted for.
- The caregiver has had a chance to ask questions and describe home concerns.

### Anything still unresolved?

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### Name of the person who answered our final questions

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# Family Action Plan

Sometimes the most important part of discharge happens after you get home. Use this page to organize the first day or two and keep everyone on the same page.

Time frame	What needs to happen	Who will do it

## Important reminders

- Refill medications early if there is any risk of running out.
- Put phone numbers, medication instructions, and follow-up dates in one visible place.
- When in doubt, call sooner rather than waiting too long.

**Our biggest concerns after discharge**

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**Questions for the next visit or call**

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## A Gentle Reminder

You are allowed to slow the conversation down. You are allowed to ask for repetition. You are allowed to say, “I need this written down so I can help safely at home.”

**The goal is not to remember everything perfectly. The goal is to leave with a clearer plan, safer instructions, and more confidence.**

Anything else our family needs to remember

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# Supplemental Medication Review

This extra page matches the medication section in the guide. Use it when the patient comes home with several new, changed, or discontinued prescriptions.

## Pharmacy information

Preferred pharmacy  Phone

Notes

## Medication review

Medication	Dose	When to take it	What changed? / Why is it needed?

## Questions for the pharmacist

## Refill issues, prior authorizations, or pharmacy follow-up