



Thriving After Discharge: Navigating Follow-Up Care





Thriving After Discharge: Navigating Follow-Up Care

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The learning objective of this health and wellness workshop is to provide LSU retiree health plan members with simple and practical guidance to help them thrive after being discharged from a short- or long-term hospital stay.

Introduction

Thriving after being discharged from the hospital involves a combination of physical recovery, emotional well-being, and practical adjustments to your daily life. As you get older, visits to the doctor can become more frequent and hospital stays more common.

Before we discuss how you can thrive after discharge, let's look at some conditions that can land you in the hospital in the first place.

KEY TOPICS

- Workshop Introduction
- Common Conditions that Land Seniors in the Hospital
- Thriving After Discharge: Navigating Follow-Up Care
- The UnitedHealthcare App

Workshop Companion Materials

- Discharge Planning Checklist

COMMON CONDITIONS THAT LAND SENIORS IN THE HOSPITAL

Cardiac arrhythmias

These heartbeat irregularities can cause heart palpitations, a sudden drop in blood pressure that can lead to unconsciousness, stroke and even sudden cardiac arrest. Over 500,000 adults over 65 are hospitalized for an irregular heartbeat every year.

Congestive Heart Failure

Congestive heart failure is a condition where the heart muscle is weakened and cannot pump blood effectively. This leads to a buildup of fluid in the lungs and other parts of the body. Every year, over 750,000 adults over 65 are hospitalized for congestive heart failure.

Stroke

When blood flow is cut off to part of the brain because of a clot in an artery or a blood vessel that bursts, the result is a stroke. Approximately 75% of the 795,000 strokes occurring annually in the United States occur in persons ages 65 and older.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

COPD is a group of lung diseases that cause long-term breathing problems. COPD is the third leading cause of hospitalization among Americans over age 65.

Coronary Atherosclerosis

Coronary Atherosclerosis is a blockage of blood flow to the heart from the build-up of fatty plaque. The build-up can cause heart damage and even a heart attack. Over 750,000 adults over 45 are hospitalized for coronary atherosclerosis yearly.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Common reasons for hospitalization due to diabetes include strokes, heart attacks, ulcers and dehydration from elevated blood sugar levels. Every year, over 650,000 adults enter the hospital because of diabetes.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is the most common infection in adults over 65 that is often caused by bacteria, viruses, or fungi, that inflames the air sacs. This can lead to fluid or pus buildup, making it difficult to breathe. Nearly 1,000,000 adults over 65 are hospitalized with Pneumonia each year.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

A UTI is an infection in any part of the urinary system which includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Women are at greater risk of developing a UTI than are men. UTIs are responsible for 15.5% of hospitalizations among patients over 65 years old.

Polypharmacy Problems

Older adults are particularly vulnerable to drug reactions leading to hospitalizations due to how their bodies process medications, multiple chronic conditions, and taking multiple medications. About 750 seniors in the U.S., are hospitalized due to serious side effects from medications every day.

As you can see, there are many conditions that can lead to spending days, even weeks in the hospital. But with the right support system and adherence to your post-hospitalization care plans, you can thrive after discharge.



THRIVING AFTER DISCHARGE: NAVIGATING FOLLOW-UP CARE

Follow Your Doctor's Advice and Care Plans

Medications: Ensure you take prescribed medications as directed by your healthcare provider. And make sure all your care providers know your medications and medication schedule to avoid negative drug interactions.

Patients may not take medications as prescribed due to confusion, cost, or side effects. Ensure both the patient and the care providers know the patient's medication regimen.

Wound Care: Make sure you and your care providers understand all instructions on wound care. For example, any dietary or physical activity restrictions, and being able to detect any warning signs of complications to better manage your recovery.

Follow-Up Appointments: Keep all scheduled follow-up appointments with your doctors to monitor your progress and catch any potential complications early. If you don't receive proper post-hospitalization care and attend your follow-up appointments or, your condition may deteriorate.

Physical Therapy: If it's part of your follow-care plan, attend all your physical therapy sessions to regain your strength and mobility. If you can't make it to physical therapy appointments or a gym, do seated exercises at home to regain your strength and mobility.



Create a Safe and Comfortable Living Environment

Adjust your living space to reduce the risk of falls or accidents by installing grab bars in the bathroom, removing tripping hazards off the floor, and improving lighting in your home. Ensure you have supportive seating and bedding to improve your relaxation and sleep. As a recently hospitalized patient, you may have a long recovery period so making sure your home or recovery environment is safe can only help your recovery time.

Develop a Routine

Develop a daily routine- *Wake up, take meds, perform seated exercises*- to gain a sense of stability and purpose in support of your recovery. Make sure you get enough rest during the day and sleep at night to also support your recovery.

Focus on Your Nutrition

Once you're been discharged from the hospital, remember to adhere to your discharge plan's dietary restrictions to aid in your recovery. With or without doctor's orders, you should eat a healthy, balanced diet to aid in your recovery. Drinking plenty of water, and limited or no alcohol, will also aid in your recovery, as will supplements, like calcium, vitamin D and B12. Have your doctor recommend a diet and supplements that can aid in your recovery as a part of your discharge plan.



Prioritize Your Mental Health

Stay connected to family and friends after discharge to remind you that you're not in recovery alone and that have a support system ready to help. Engage in activities like reading, puzzles or hobbies to help keep you mentally sharp. Anxiety, depression, and stress from a hospital stay can negatively impact your recovery. Be honest with your doctor during your follow-up visits about how you're feeling.

Monitor for Warning Signs

Shortness of breath, chest pains, headaches, unusual swelling, or discomfort could all be warning signs of problems with your recovery. Have an emergency plan as part of your follow-up care plan. And get help as soon as you or your caregiver sees warning signs that something's not right.

Lean on Your Support System

Having a strong support system of loved ones and caregivers who can assist with meals, physical therapy, transportation, and doctor's appointments is crucial during recovery and beyond. As a part of your follow-up care plan, make a list of all the people who can help with your recovery and follow-up care like preparing meals, cleaning your home, and getting you to your doctor's appointments.

Adjust Your Expectations

Recovery takes time, especially as you age. Be patient with yourself and understand that it's okay to ask for help when you need it. Set small, achievable recovery goals and celebrate your progress as it comes.

Recovery after discharge isn't guaranteed, but it may be possible if you adhere to your follow-up care plan, follow your doctor's orders and get the help you need from those who want you to thrive after discharge.



THE UNITEDHEALTHCARE APP FOR MEMBERS

Get instant access to the answers and support you need, when you need through the UnitedHealthcare App. The UnitedHealthcare App connects you to your health plan details anytime, anywhere 24/7.

Through the app, you can:

Find Care and Pricing

Search for network providers near you, see ratings and reviews, and estimate your out-of-pocket costs for different types of visits.

Refill Prescriptions

Conveniently request refills right from the app, look up drug prices and search for pharmacies near you.

Access Your Plan ID cards

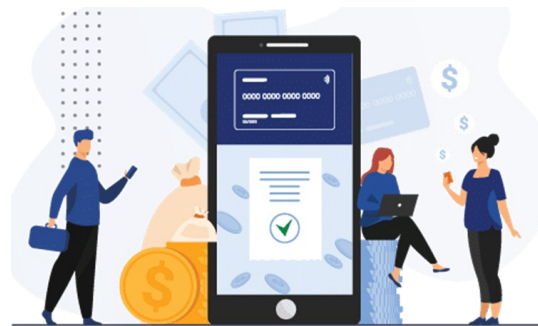
Easily view and show your UCard or Member ID Card when you need them. You can also add your health plan details to your Apple or Google Wallet.

Check Your Benefits and Coverage

Find copay and coinsurance amounts, view plan spending and see how your plan covers different types of care and services.

View Your Claims

Check the status of new and past claims, see the amount you were billed, what your plan paid and how much you owe.



*Scan the QR code above to get started or register for a member account at ***retiree.uhc.com/lsufirst****

Notes



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