

Transition of care from hospital to home

Adapted from: <https://elizz.com/caregiver-resources/caregiving-tips/transition-hospital-to-home>

Returning home after surgery or a hospital stay may require some adjustments to be made in order to make the living space more accommodating for the person in your care. There are a number of things that you, as a caregiver, can do to ease the transition from hospital to home.

The goal in preparing home for post surgery is to make the living space as convenient and comfortable as possible for both you and the person in your care. In planning ahead and preparing the home for surgery recovery you will need to address what changes you may need to make to help you feel more prepared and confident once the person in your care arrives back home.

Here are some tips on how to ease the transition between hospital and home and preparing the home for surgery recovery:

Move the bedroom to the main floor

If stairs will be an issue for the person in your care, see if you have a room on the main floor of the home that can be converted into a bedroom. Ideally this room would have some level of privacy and access to a main floor bathroom. If there isn't a main floor bathroom, you will have to look into setting up a portable commode.

Install home safety features

Installing safety grab bars, ensuring adequate lighting, and removing tripping hazards can help the person in your care move around the home more safely.

Prepare easy meals

Think about the food and drink you will need to provide for the person in your care. They may have new or existing dietary restrictions that you'll want to keep in mind while meal planning. By planning meals and snacks ahead of time you will reduce your stress level by knowing that you have nutritious food ready to go whenever the person in your care is hungry.

Stock up on food and supplies

If you have notice ahead of time that the person in your care will be returning home soon, it's not a bad idea to stock up on essentials such as food, toiletries, paper products (toilet paper, wipes, and paper towels), cleaning supplies, and medical supplies, as needed. This ensures that you have everything in stock when you need it. And, it will hopefully reduce the need for last minute runs to the store.

Put frequently-used items within reach

Think about the items the person in your care may need throughout the day. This may include a drinking glass, a book to read, the TV remote, a phone, any medication they are taking, or their walker. By ensuring these frequently used items are within reach it can give the person in your care a bit of independence and comfort while going about their day. It's also helpful for you, as their caregiver, to stay organized and to know where to find things quickly.

Stay organized

Keep any medical information and important documents organized. You may consider keeping a notebook near the bed to record changes in condition or questions for the next doctor/nurse visit.

Ask for help

Many caregivers benefit from having help providing care or looking after things around the house. See if any family, friends, or neighbours can pitch in on different tasks.

As a caregiver, there are many things you can do to ensure the home is safe and comfortable for the person in your care. Sometimes you will have advanced notice in order to prepare and organize the home, but there may be times where the person in your care is unexpectedly admitted to the hospital or requires an emergency procedure.

In these unexpected circumstances it's helpful if you've given some advanced thought about preparing the home for post surgery. You will need to think about what you may need or how you could make accommodations to the home if the need arises. Like many aspects of caregiving, you need to be flexible and able to adapt to changing situations.

You viewed this article on the Caregivers Nova Scotia website www.CaregiversNS.org. For more information, contact us toll-free at 1.877.488.7390.