

Discharge

Instructions given about how to care for yourself at home

QUESTION DEFINITION

This question measures the patient's perception that they know what to do after they are discharged. With shorter lengths of stay, patients often must assume greater roles in medical care. The facility needs to prepare the patient to do this by providing good information and instructions of self-care.

IMPROVEMENT SOLUTIONS

- Be certain a discharge plan has been prepared, discussed, and is understood by the patient.
- Train the patient to care for themselves (physically and emotionally) at home. (A separate question rates the information that was provided for this purpose.)
- Confirm that patient has acquired the skills/services to manage at home after leaving the hospital.
- Ask the patient if they have questions about what to do when they get home.
- Give the patient the name and telephone number of a person who can answer questions after they get home.
- Provide written instructions on what to do at home.
- Inform the patient of everything that is being done for them to arrange for home care equipment as it is being done. Keep them frequently updated on the progress of these arrangements.
- Evaluate the quality of patient education materials. Are they easily readable? Do they answer common questions (e.g., When can I resume activities, Who do I contact if I have questions, etc.)?
- Evaluate effectiveness of education. Is any post-test done?
- Ask about concerns regarding discharge. Address stated concerns (physician answered questions, nurse educates, etc.).
- Solicit any other remaining concerns. Ask if any questions or issues remain unanswered. Address whatever the patient brings up. Provide a pen and notepad titled "Questions to ask before I go home."
- Give patient verbal and written education on how to care for him/herself. Provide a summarized checklist.
- Evaluate the patient's readiness to learn and enlist help of family or friends when the patient is slow or unwilling to acquire the skills needed for self-care.
- Show the patient (family) video tapes of how to accomplish certain tasks.
- Train the patient (family) on taking medicine

- Train the patient (family) on wound care and dressing, what to touch and not touch, how to recognize infections, what to do about them, what constitutes an emergency, and who to call if they have any questions.
- Train the patient (family) on use of medical equipment
- Evaluate training, watch the patient perform the task, coach or correct as needed.
- Schedule follow-up visit to the physician
- Tell that patient what to do if they have pain, what to do if pain gets worse or lasts more than a given length of time.
- Provide an overview of what the patient can expect to happen or how he/she might feel after they are discharged (physically and emotionally).
- Have former patients and lay persons evaluate the quality of patient education materials. Are they easily readable? Do they answer common questions?
- Are education materials and self-care instructions available in different languages?
- Begin educating patients on their illness, surgery and post-operative condition as far upstream as possible.
- Examine your data by DRG to determine where discharge instruction and patient education may be lacking. Develop ongoing education strategies for chronic illnesses.
- Provide videos, audio cassette tapes, or CDs that pertain to their illness, their recovery or their self-care instructions.
- If the patient needs to prepare special meals for a period of time after they are discharged, have a staff member from Food and Nutrition provide meal preparation tips.
- Conduct continual organizational learning to staff in both clinical knowledge and service skills.
- Evaluate the patient's readiness to learn and enlist help of family or friends when there is a need. In some cases the patient may be slow, under the effects of medication(s), or unwilling to acquire the skills needed for self-care.
- Provide an overview of what the patient can expect to happen, or how they might feel after they are discharged (emotionally and physically).
- If the patient requires follow-up care, whenever possible, have the nurse help them schedule an appointment and write down the patients' appointment time/date and the physician's information.
- Provide a brief educational session with the family before discharge. Many patients are released into the care of others, so it is important the family members are also educated.
- Explain the information verbally, and then hand the patient the same information in pamphlet, booklet, or brochure format.
- Depending on the severity of the patient's illness, make sure to tell them when they can resume "normal" activities.



PRESS GANEY™
Outcomes driven. Performance strong.

- Let the patient know if there are any support groups or meetings they can attend, to better help them understand how to care for themselves, and what to expect.