



**Galway University Hospitals**

*Ospidéal na h-Ollscoile Gaillimh*

UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL GALWAY  
MERLIN PARK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL



# Planning Your Discharge From Hospital



This booklet will help you, your carer, and your relatives and friends understand how your discharge or transfer from hospital takes place.

We need your help and co-operation so that this happens as efficiently and smoothly as possible.

If you need specific medical or surgical treatment then hospital is the right place for you. Once your treatment has been completed we will work with you to help you leave hospital safely, and without delays.

Name of Patient .....

Predicted Date of Discharge .....

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# Galway University Hospitals



Galway University Hospitals, comprising of University Hospital Galway (UHG) and Merlin Park University Hospital (MPUH), provide a full range of services to emergency and elective patients on an inpatient, outpatient and day care basis across the two sites.

**Main Phone Number:**

+353 (0)91 544544

**Waiting List Call Centre:**

+353 (0)91 384597 / 091 384599

**Website:**

[www.saolta.ie/hospital/university-hospital-galway](http://www.saolta.ie/hospital/university-hospital-galway)

# Planning your discharge from hospital

You will be under the care of one of our medical or surgical teams whilst you are in hospital. They will let you know how you are doing and when you will be well enough to leave hospital.

We will help you in planning your hospital discharge. Shortly after you are admitted a nurse will ask you about your home and the support you have at home. It is important that you tell your medical team as soon as possible about anything that might make your return home difficult.

Your discharge will start being planned on admission. We will identify a date when we think you will be discharged early on your admission. Sometimes this may change, and when it does we will discuss the reasons for the change with you in advance.

We will not discharge you from hospital until you are medically well enough. The multidisciplinary team are happy for you to leave when it is safe for you to return home or be transferred to a step down facility, such as convalescence.

Some people may need additional supports. If you or the team think you may need them, we may involve other members of the multi-disciplinary team in the hospital or community. These may include the Physiotherapist, the Occupational Therapist or the Home Help services, for example.

If you, your relatives, or carers would like help with planning your discharge please speak to your nurse or another member of the multi-disciplinary team.

When you go home it is important that you will be as safe as possible and that you will be able to look after yourself. Some people need no extra help, while others do need some help and support. This can either be for a short time or long term, depending on what you need.

We will help you to work out what you need help with.

If you had supports, like a home help, before your hospital admission, and your needs have not changed, staff on your ward will help you get this care restarted in time for your discharge.

If your needs have changed, to help you with your discharge we can make referrals on your behalf to a range of services, including:

- Public Health Nurse (PHN)
- Community Occupational Therapy (COT)
- Community Physiotherapy
- Social Workers in Community
- Disability Case Managers
- Nursing Home care/ Community Nursing Unit
- Home Help Services

## Rehabilitation

There are occasions when your medical condition has improved but your recovery is not complete. If further rehabilitation is required, a referral may be made to the rehabilitation unit within your area.

### Community Intervention Team (CIT)

A Community Intervention Team is a Specialist Nurse led health professional team. They provide a rapid response to patients with an acute episode of illness, who require services for a defined short period of time in a community setting. If you are within the catchment area for a CIT, a referral to this service may be made on discharge.

### Transferring to your local hospital

Once your hospital treatment in GUH has been completed, you may be transferred back to your local hospital for further care if required.

### Nursing Home Care

You may need a short or long term placement in a nursing home immediately on discharge from hospital. The Discharge Co-ordinator or the Medical Social Work department can help you with this.



While you are in hospital, you may be referred to one or more of the following hospital services depending on your care needs. Together these services make up the multi-disciplinary team.

### **Dietitian**

Dietitians look at your nutritional needs and provide advice about nutrition, food-related issues, and dietary plans. This will support you with the management of your medical or surgical condition.

### **Public Health Nurse or Community Nurse**

Public health nurses and community nurses are qualified nurses with additional training in assessing your needs at home. They work closely with your GP to support your care at home.

### **Discharge Coordinator**

The Discharge Coordinators can help you with planning your discharge, particularly if your situation has changed or you need help to organise your on-going care.

### **Speech and Language Therapist**

Speech and Language Therapists assess speech, language and swallowing difficulties and give advice on the management of these problems.

### **Chaplaincy Service**

The chaplaincy team is available to offer spiritual, pastoral and religious support to all patients and their relatives and carers, during their stay in hospital.

# Professionals and Services

## Occupational Therapist

Occupational Therapists help you to maintain or regain independence in activities like dressing yourself, cooking or going to the toilet. They can advise you about special equipment to help you at home such as rails, toilet surround frames or wheelchairs.

## Medical Social Work

The Medical Social Worker is there to meet with you or your family members to provide support, advice or counselling. As part of the team of professionals involved in your care, they will help you and your family to consider all the options related to you and your discharge.

They also provide counselling for individuals and families who are coping with personal and/or family issues.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS are here to help patients, their families and carers, by providing support and information, and helping them with any concerns or queries they may have about their care, treatment and service in our hospital.

The service is available Monday – Friday from 9 -5pm  
(Information leaflets available on all wards)

Contact us by calling 091-524222 and ask for bleep 844.

Email us at [pals.guh@hse.ie](mailto:pals.guh@hse.ie) or ask a member of staff if you require assistance to contact PALS service.

## Specialist Nurse

Specialist Nurses are nurses who have additional skills and training in a particular area, such as diabetes, breast care, heart failure, respiratory and palliative care. They can offer specialist advice and support.

## Hospital Pharmacist

Pharmacy staff will check the medicines you have brought into hospital and your prescription chart during your hospital stay. Please let any of the team know if you need help managing your medicines. They can talk to your regular pharmacy to see if they can offer solutions for you when you are home too.

You can ask to see the hospital pharmacist if you have any questions.

## Physiotherapist

Getting moving is an important part of your recovery. Your Physiotherapist will work with you, as part of the team to help you start moving safely. You may feel more comfortable to dress in your day clothes.

Mobilising is the best exercise for your lungs, and also for your muscles and your bowels.

Please tell your physiotherapist if you have any stairs at home, and if you have had any falls at home. They may be able to organise a physiotherapist to review your progress in the community.

# You Home

Talk to the multi-disciplinary team about your home.

You may have housing problems such as:

- Your medical needs may make your current home is unsuitable.
- You may have no home to go to.
- You are having a long stay in hospital which may affect you paying your rent and/or your tenancy.

While we often cannot resolve long-standing issues during your brief hospital stay, appropriate referrals will be made to assist your discharge. These may include the occupational therapist, social worker and discharge co-ordinator.



# Planning Your Discharge **CHECKLIST**

In hospital please ask yourself and make a note:



## **When I get home can I?**

- Take a bath?
- Have a shower?
- Climb stairs or steps?
- Lift heavy objects?
- Take walks or exercise?
- Resume sexual activities?
- Return to work?
- Drive a car?
- Other activities?



## **When I get home will I need to think about?**

- Someone to stay with me?
- Help to get to the toilet?
- Help with shopping or preparing meals?
- Help to do housework or gardening?
- Help to walk up my path to my front door?
- Help with my medicines?
- Help to communicate?
- Help to swallow safely?
- My family/carers to be taught to care for me?

*Please tell staff about any problems or concerns you have about going home. The sooner we know about a problem, the sooner we can give help.*

# Day of Discharge

## Transport

It is expected that people will make their own travel arrangements when they leave hospital. Please arrange for a relative or friend to collect you from hospital by 11am. If your transport is not available before 11am, you will usually be asked to move out of your bed and sit in a designated area of the ward.

Phone numbers for Taxi companies are available, and they will be happy to accept a booking for a journey home. Patients can get a quote for the cost of their journey in advance by phoning a taxi company.

## Medication

If you brought medications in with you, please ask the nurse to return them to you. They will be returned providing it is safe and appropriate to do so. Some medications may have changed during your stay - some added, some stopped.

It is a good idea to check your discharge prescription before you leave hospital to make sure you understand what medicines you need to take and to make sure that all your medicines are on the prescription.

You may need to collect your prescription from your local pharmacy on your way home. Further repeat prescription should be got from your local GP surgery.

## Discharge Summary

Your medical team will send your GP a letter that has all the details of your hospital admission.

# 'Going Home Day' CHECKLIST



- Ask family or friends to bring in outdoor clothes
- Have House keys at hand
- Ask for valuables to be returned
- Details of outpatient or follow up appointments
- Contact names and numbers for any support services arranged
- Medications I must take and instructions on their use
- Information about any special diets
- Information for my carer or family on how to care for me
- Ask for a medical certificate if needed for your employer

*Please ask relatives or friends to make sure your home is ready for your return, with the heating turned on and some food available.*

## PROBLEM SOLVING:

### Common Questions when discharged



- Q.** What if the Support Services do not arrive?
- A.** During office hours contact your GP surgery or local health centre, or the number given to you on discharge

- Q.** What if I need more dressings?
- A.** Contact your local pharmacy or PHN

- Q.** What if the home care services do not arrive when expected?
- A.** Telephone the home help co-ordinator or Local Health Centre.

- Q.** What if my recovery is not going as expected?
- A.** Contact your own GP who will assess the situation.

*In a medical emergency always **CALL 999** or **112**, or proceed to the emergency department.*

# Safety at Home CHECKLIST



- Make sure all your carpets are secure and remove loose rugs
- Is your lighting adequate? Choose brighter bulbs, especially on stairs
- Is furniture arranged so that you can move around easily?
- Make sure your phone is accessible and stay in contact with friends and family
- You may want to consider the benefit of a community alarm. Further information can be got from your public health nurse or social worker.



The Hospitals **Visiting Hours** are strictly  
**14:00 to 16:00** and **18:30 to 20:30**

Protected Meal times are

**BREAKFAST:** 8.15am – 9.15am

**LUNCH:** 12.15pm – 1.15pm

**TEA:** 5.15pm – 6.15pm

*Please note no visiting is allowed during these times*

*We wish you well*

*University Hospital Galway  
and Merlin Park University Hospital  
are smoke free and Health Promoting Hospitals*

*This leaflet was produced by a multi-disciplinary group  
in Galway University Hospital, February 2018*



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