



Veteran Discharge Planning Toolkit

Using This Veteran Discharge Planning Toolkit

Intended Recipients

The intended recipients of the “Discharge Planning Toolkit” are Veterans and their families/caregivers that are receiving services through TriWest Healthcare Alliance’s provider network after care has been authorized through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Patient Centered Community Care (PC3) program or Veterans Choice Program (VCP).

A Special Thanks To Our Veterans

TriWest’s mission is to serve our nation’s Veterans. It is an honor and a privilege to serve those who have served our country. We believe our Veterans deserve nothing less than the best health care possible.

We created this toolkit to support our Veterans and their families/caregivers to ensure a timely and smooth transition to home or the next level of care. The use of this toolkit is not meant to replace any instructions given by your doctor or other health care provider. The information provided in this toolkit includes general information that is typically needed after a patient is discharged from the hospital and supports use of VA-specific resources or processes.

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Discharge Planning Toolkit



What is Discharge Planning?

Discharge planning prepares a patient to leave the hospital and ensures that he/she has the necessary services and support during his/her recovery (e.g. oxygen, wheelchair, home health nurse, medications, etc).

Discharge planning begins before admission to the hospital and continues through the hospital stay until the episode of care is completed. Several health care professionals (e.g. nurses, doctors, social workers) provide support in preparing for discharge. The patient and family/caregiver will be directly involved in planning any care or follow-up that is needed once discharged from the hospital. A TriWest Healthcare Alliance (TriWest) nurse or social worker will be contacting the Veteran prior to any authorized and scheduled admissions to the hospital to support him/her in the discharge planning process. The Veteran will also receive a call from a TriWest nurse or social worker after discharge from the hospital to continue coordinating any potential health care needs.

We understand that patients get a lot of information during their hospital stay and this can be overwhelming. We recommend that patients have a family member/caregiver present during any teaching sessions or discharge planning discussions. Even though written discharge instructions are provided before leaving the hospital, we recommend that someone take notes.

Questionnaire

What questions should a patient ask before and during his/her hospital stay to make sure he/she has the support needed once he/she leaves the hospital? Please utilize the space provided after each question to take any notes.

Questions to Ask Yourself Before You Are Admitted to the Hospital

1. **Do I have someone to assist with my care after I am discharged from the hospital and do I have their contact information?**

- a. Does my caregiver need to request time off of work?

- b. Does my caregiver have health issues or physical restrictions that may make it challenging to help care for me?

2. **Do I need to make arrangements for anyone else (e.g. pets, spouse, children, or parents) that depends on me to help care for them?**

3. **Do I have transportation to and from the hospital?**

4. **Do I have a list of my medications, herbal supplements and vitamins to bring with me to the hospital?**

- a. You can use the “Medications List” link on the TriWest Healthcare Alliance website to organize your list.

- b. Bring a list of known allergies and all your current medical providers’ names and phone numbers.

Questionnaire

5. Do I need to alter my diet before I am admitted?

6. Am I prepared with easy meals after I am discharged?

More Notes for this Section

Questions To Ask Your Doctor Before You Are Admitted To The Hospital

1. **What am I being admitted to the hospital for and what should I expect during my hospital stay?**

2. **How long will I be in the hospital?**

3. **Where will I receive care after I am discharged from the hospital and what type of support will I need (e.g. caregiver, home health, long-term care center)?**

4. **How long will it take me to recover after I am discharged from the hospital?**

5. **What medications should I stop taking and/or keep taking before I am admitted to the hospital?**

6. **Do I need any medical equipment at the home and who will arrange for this?**

7. **How can I get my perscriptions to VA so they can be filled?**

Questionnaire

Questions To Ask Before You Are Discharged From The Hospital

1. **What signs and symptoms do I need to look for and what do I need to do if they occur?
Who do I need to contact?**

2. **What changes to my diet do I need to make?**

3. **What changes to my activity will I need to make?**

- a. What activities should I avoid and for how long?

- b. What activities can I do?

- c. What activities do I need help with (e.g. grocery shopping, laundry, bathing, walking, climbing stairs, house cleaning, cooking and/or paying bills)?

4. **What type of support will I need if I am discharged to my home?**

- a. Do I need any medical equipment at home and who will arrange for this?

- b. Do I need a home health nurse?

Questionnaire

c. Does my caregiver need any special skills to help with my care?

- i. Dressing changes
- ii. Injections or infusions
- iii. Using special equipment

d. Do I need to talk to a social worker about how my family and I are coping with my illness emotionally and financially?

e. Are there any other resources that I will need?

- i. Meals on Wheels, Grocery delivery

f. Is my home environment safe for me?

- i. Do I need a ramp to get into my home?
- ii. Do I live in a one story home or a house with lots of stairs?
- iii. Is there enough space to get around?
- iv. Are there any rugs that I may slip on and cause me to fall?
- v. Do I need special bathtub/shower or toilet accommodations?

5. **Are there any changes to medications?**

- a. Are there any new medications I need to start?
- b. Are there any medications I need to stop taking?

6. **What do I need to know about my medications?**

- a. Why am I taking them?
- b. How often and how much of my medication should I take?
- c. How should I take my medications (e.g. with or without food)?
- d. What are common side effects of medications and what should I do if they occur?
- e. How can I get my prescriptions to VA so they can be filled?

Questionnaire

7. **How should I manage my pain?**

8. **Will I need to go to a rehab or skilled nursing facility?**

a. How long is the anticipated length of stay?

9. **What appointments and tests do I need to schedule after I am discharged?**

a. Please use the “My Appointment” tracking form to help keep track of your appointments found on [page 14](#).

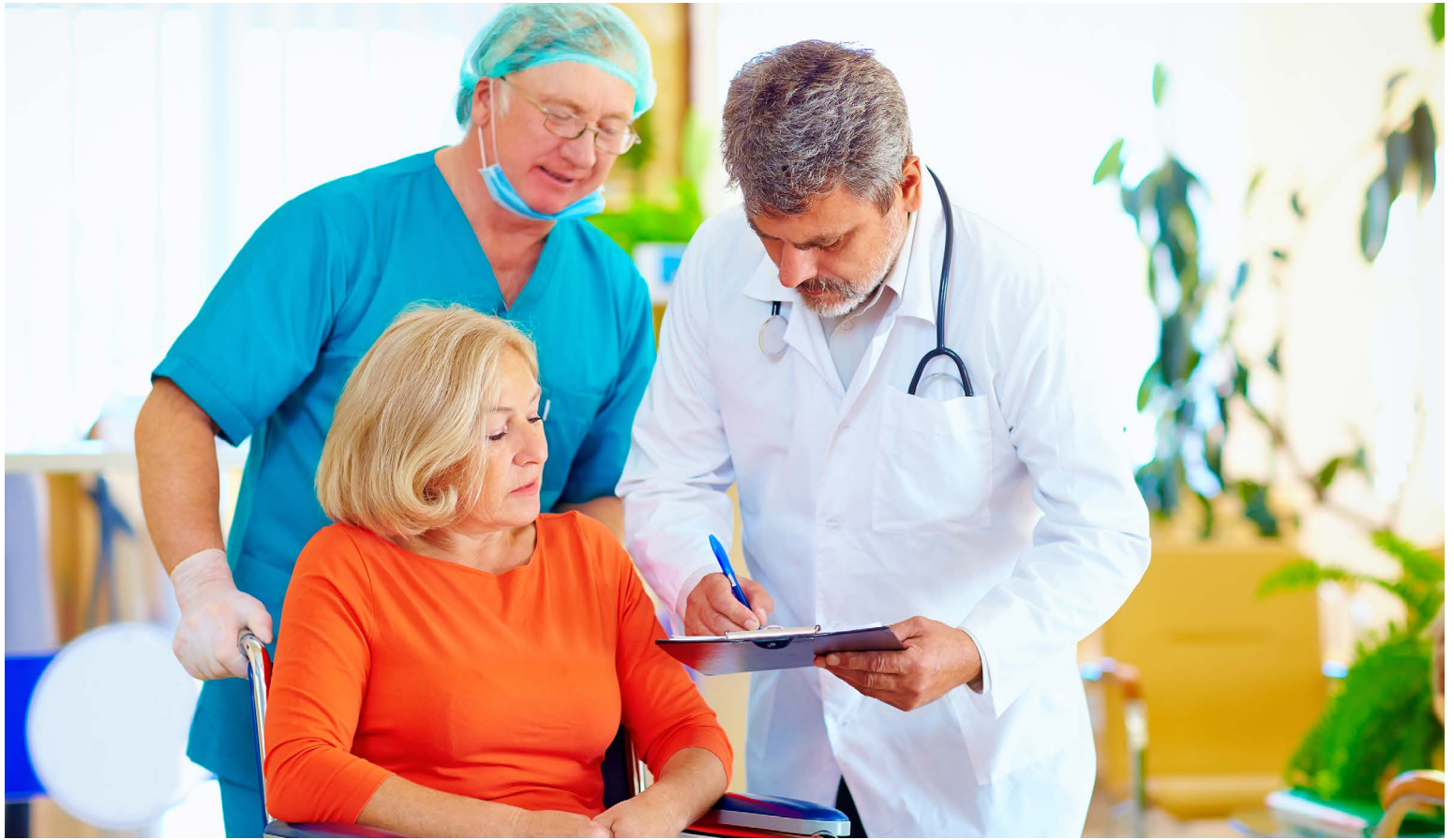
b. If I am not supposed to drive or I do not have a vehicle, do I have transportation to get to my appointments?

10. **Do I understand the written discharge instructions that my nurse will give me before I leave the hospital?**

11. **Who can I call with treatment questions?**

a. Will someone be available 24 hours a day and on weekends?

Discharge Instructions



Medications

It is very important for patients to take all of their medications exactly as their provider prescribed them. If you are having any problems taking your medications exactly as prescribed or if you have stopped taking your medications for any reason, notify your provider as soon as possible.

You should continue taking your medications even if you feel better. The medication should make you feel better; stopping the medication can make your condition worse. Some medications have a risk of serious side effects if stopped suddenly. If you think you will have problems getting your medications, please let your VA health care team know right away. Always keep a current list of medications and share that list with your providers, family and caregivers.

Allergic Reaction

If you have a sudden onset or worsening of these symptoms, you may be having an allergic reaction. Contact a health professional immediately or seek urgent medical attention.

- Hives or a rash
- Swelling, especially in your face, eyes, throat, tongue or mouth
- Feel hot
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Itching

Discharge Instructions

Nutrition

Good nutrition is essential for a body to heal or recover from illness. It is very important that you understand any dietary restrictions you might have after discharge, incorporate those restrictions into your meal planning and continue to eat healthy meals while you recover.

If you or your family/caregiver needs assistance with your diet and meal planning or you are experiencing problems eating, inform your TriWest Discharge Coordinator or provider. Network providers may prescribe medications to be filled at a VA pharmacy or Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) as a part of the health care treatment authorized by VA under this contract.

Follow-up Appointments

Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to follow-up with your provider and/or schedule other medical appointments. It is important for you to keep your appointment because the provider needs to determine how you are recovering from your illness so he/she can make adjustments to your care plan as needed.

We recommend that you make your follow-up appointments as soon as possible. If you are able, make follow-up appointments before you leave the hospital.

We have included an appointment tracker on [page 14](#) to make it easier for you to keep track of your appointments.

Special Benefit Information for PC3 and VCP

Medications

All medications prescribed for you must be obtained from a VA pharmacy unless your provider has identified an urgent need for you to start taking a medication immediately and there is no time to get your medications from a VA pharmacy.

If you need to obtain a prescription medication from a non-VA pharmacy, you will be given a prescription for a 14-day supply of the medication, without a refill, to fill at a non-VA pharmacy. Please contact VA for reimbursement of the cost.

If the provider wants you to continue taking the medication more than 14 days, you will be given a second prescription that you will need to have filled at your VA pharmacy.

If the prescription is for a non-formulary medication, you will be reimbursed for the 14-day supply and your provider will need to follow the process to have the remaining supply of your non-formulary prescription approved by VA.

Special Note:

If you are participating in a Human Subject Research study and are enrolled in a clinical trial, you will be referred to your respective Non-VA Care Office for authorization and coordination.

Durable Medical Equipment

If your provider orders medical equipment for you, TriWest will coordinate your needs with VA. Most durable medical equipment is provided by VA.

Home Health Services or Other Discharge Needs

If your provider orders home health services or other post-admission services for you, TriWest will coordinate your needs with VA.

Contacts

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3)
1-855-PCCCVET (1-855-722-2838)

Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA)

Veterans Choice Program (VCP)
1-866-606-8198



