

First Week Home

A checklist from Held Home Care

A practical checklist for the first 7 days home from a hospital or rehab stay — for older adults and the family members, friends, and caregivers helping them.

How to use this checklist

- Work through it day by day — you don't need to do everything at once.
- Keep it with your discharge papers, medication list, and appointment details.
- Your care team's discharge instructions always come first. This checklist supports — not replaces — those instructions.
- See the back pages for when to call 911, when to call the doctor, and a caregiver check-in.



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First Week Home

After a Hospital or Rehab Stay



DAY 1-2

SETUP

Get settled, review medications, and set up for safety and success.



DAY 3-4

ROUTINE

Build a routine, monitor progress, and stay in sync with the care plan.



DAY 5-7

STABILIZE

Confirm appointments, adjust as needed, and plan for what's next.



You don't have to figure this out alone. We're here to help.

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Important Information

Patient name:	Date of discharge:
_____	_____
Reason for stay:	Insurance / Medicare ID:
_____	_____
Primary doctor:	Specialist / surgeon:
_____	_____
Phone:	Phone:
_____	_____
Pharmacy:	24-hr nurse line:
_____	_____
Phone:	Phone:
_____	_____
Emergency contact:	Home health / PT / OT contact:
_____	_____
Phone:	Phone:
_____	_____

Before Arriving Home

Paperwork & Appointments

- Review and bring home all discharge instructions
- Fill all new prescriptions before leaving
- Confirm which medicines to start, stop, or change
- Schedule follow-up appointments before leaving if possible
- Arrange transportation home

Home Health & Equipment

- Confirm the home health agency received the referral and knows the start date
- Confirm insurance authorization for any ordered equipment
- Confirm equipment is ready at home:
 - Walker / cane
 - Wheelchair
 - Shower chair or tub bench
 - Bed rail
 - Raised toilet seat
 - Oxygen / CPAP
 - Other: _____

Personal Items

- Pack keys, glasses, hearing aids, dentures, phone, charger, and ID
- Confirm any dietary restrictions from the hospital before meal planning
- Prepare easy meals, water, and snacks for the first two days

Who is Covering the First 48 Hours?

Plan coverage before you arrive home. Even a few hours of overlap can prevent crises.

Time	Who is Covering	Phone / Notes
Day 1 Afternoon / Evening		
Day 1 Night		
Day 2 Morning		
Day 2 Afternoon		
Day 2 Night		

You don't have to figure this out alone.

- Held Home Care specializes in supporting older adults and their families through exactly this kind of transition.
- Whether you need a few hours of help, daily support, or just guidance on next steps, we're here.
- Call us at (619) 320-5044 or visit heldhomecare.com to learn more.

Days 1–2: Safety, Medications, and Set-Up

Home Safety

- Remove tripping hazards: loose rugs, cords, and clutter
- Clear walking paths between bed, bathroom, and kitchen
- Set up a safe resting area on the main floor if stairs are difficult
- Put frequently used items within easy reach
- Make sure lighting is good, especially at night and in the bathroom
- Place non-slip mats in the bathroom

Medications

Compare the discharge medication list to what is at home. Note any new or changed medications in the last column.

Medication Name	Dose / Instructions	When to Take	New or Changed?

- Set reminders or alarms for doses
- Note side effects to watch for: _____

Any medication concerns to raise with the doctor:

Daily Needs

- Offer water and fluids regularly throughout the day
- Have easy-to-eat meals that match any dietary restrictions
- Help with getting in and out of bed or chairs if needed
- Confirm the bathroom plan is safe and realistic
- Make a plan for overnight support if needed
- Check in on mood and emotional state — it is normal to feel anxious, sad, or disoriented after a hospital stay

Watch For — Call the Doctor if You See:

- Fever or signs of infection
- Redness, swelling, drainage, or opening at any wound or incision
- Worsening pain or new confusion
- Vomiting, poor eating or drinking, or missed medications
- Trouble walking that seems worse than expected

Days 3–4: Build the Routine

Daily Routine

- Create a simple daily schedule: wake-up, medications, meals, hydration, movement, rest, and bedtime
- Encourage light movement only as instructed by the care team
- Is your loved one getting out of bed at least once today? For how long?
- Are they drinking enough fluids? Aim for what the care team recommended
- Track food and fluid intake if eating or drinking seems low

Physical Check

- Check any incision, wound, or affected area for changes
- Note any changes in bathroom habits and flag concerns to the care team
- Watch for new confusion, weakness, dizziness, or worsening pain
- Check in on emotional well-being — note any signs of withdrawal, tearfulness, or unusual anxiety
- Is fall risk increasing as they move around more independently? Re-check the home safety setup if needed

Care Coordination

- Confirm home health or therapy visits happened as expected
- Confirm transportation is arranged for any upcoming follow-up appointments

Notes / Questions for the Care Team (Days 3–4):

Watch For — Call the Doctor if You See:

- Any of the Day 1–2 warning signs above
- Swelling in legs or feet, unusual sleepiness, or a major change from baseline
- Signs of depression or significant emotional distress
- Constipation, diarrhea, or bathroom changes that seem concerning

Days 5–7: Stabilize and Plan Ahead

Review and Confirm

- Re-check the medication routine — is it working? Any missed doses?
- Confirm follow-up appointments are still scheduled and transportation is arranged
- Review whether the home setup is working well or needs adjustment
- Identify any new risks, needs, or barriers that have come up

Assess What Support Is Needed Next Week

- Family or friend help with daily tasks
- Transportation to appointments
- Meal preparation or grocery delivery
- Personal care (bathing, dressing, grooming)
- Home health nursing or therapy visits
- Other: _____

Communication

- Make sure your loved one knows who to call if something changes or feels wrong
- Write down your questions for the upcoming doctor visit

Questions for the Doctor or Care Team (Days 5–7):

When to Get Help

Call 911 Now

- Chest pain or pressure
- Trouble breathing
- New trouble speaking or understanding
- New weakness or numbness on one side
- Fainting or unresponsiveness
- Severe or uncontrolled bleeding
- A fall with head injury or serious pain
- Any situation that feels life-threatening

Call the Doctor Today

- Fever or signs of infection
- Worsening or new pain
- Redness, drainage, or swelling at a wound
- New or worsening confusion
- Vomiting, dehydration, or poor eating/drinking
- Missed medications or medication concerns
- Trouble walking that is worse than expected
- Significant changes in mood or behavior
- Swelling in legs, unusual sleepiness, or major change from baseline
- Bowel or bladder changes that seem concerning

Caregiver Check-In

Before you step back, make sure you can check off each of these:

- I know the top warning signs to watch for
- I know who to call with questions at any hour
- I have the medication plan written down and set up
- I know the date and location of the next follow-up appointment
- Transportation to that appointment is arranged
- I have backup help lined up if I need it
- I have written down the questions I do not want to forget
- My loved one knows who to call if something changes

What feels most overwhelming right now? _____

What would help most this week? _____

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