

Care and Support.

Care and support after a hospital stay



A hospital stay involves acute care and is usually followed by a period of recovery when the patient's care and support needs are higher than usual. There are Commonwealth and State funded services that provide short-term support following hospitalisation. This can avoid prolonged hospital stay and in some cases help avoid a premature re-admission.

Private health funds and private hospitals may also have schemes to support patients upon discharge.

Questions to ask

If you go to hospital for a scheduled procedure such as elective surgery you may wish to ask some questions prior to admission, to make sure you know about any support available when you return home. If you are admitted to hospital in an emergency situation, similar questions should be asked as soon as possible, before you are discharged.

Discuss with the hospital's medical staff what limitations you are likely to experience and for how long, so that you can determine the required assistance.

Consider which types of support you are going to need. These may include assistance with:

- Personal care, e.g. showering, dressing, eating
- Meal preparation
- Shopping, banking and bill paying
- Transport to return home and to attend subsequent medical appointments
- Rehabilitation/therapy services (e.g. physiotherapy)
- Home adaptation e.g. handrails, ramps
- Basic cleaning and home maintenance
- Laundry or linen service
- Mobility aids, equipment to assist with daily tasks
- Nursing care

Most hospitals have a social worker or discharge planner with whom you can discuss the support available and who will refer you to the appropriate service providers.

If you are 65 years and over (50+ if indigenous Australian) the hospital may refer you to **My Aged Care (tel. 1800 200 422)** for information and access to support services available from the **Commonwealth Home Support Program** through **My Aged Care**, www.myagedcare.gov.au.

If you are caring for a relative or friend who is frail or has a disability and you are going into hospital, the

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres may be able to assist with arranging respite care. **Tel. 1800 052 222** to be connected to your local Centre.

If you have private health insurance check the services provided under your plan and what conditions apply.

Paths to recovery

The paths suggested by the hospital team may include a short-term package of care and support services, a stay in a rehabilitation hospital and/or a permanent change to your care arrangements.

If the hospital staff assesses that you will need medium-long term support or permanent residential aged care they may request an assessment by the **Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)** through My Aged Care. The ACAT will determine your eligibility to receive a Commonwealth-funded **Home Care Package** or a placement in an aged care facility. The ACAT may also establish that you are eligible for the **Transition Care Program**.

Metropolitan Referral Unit (MRU)

This unit provides a single entry point of contact for referral to a range of hospital avoidance and early supported discharge services. It aims to put short to medium term home-based care services in place providing options for Adelaide metro residents when leaving hospital. Services available include wound management, medication management, equipment, post-procedural accommodation/transport, allied health, personal care, etc.

Referrals can only be made by a health professional (including acute public hospital teams, GPs, palliative care and mental health teams, SA Ambulance Service and residential aged care facilities).

Country Referral Unit

This unit provides information and referral to local community health service to assist with care and support, including community health, transitional care and the Country Homelink program. GPs, hospitals and health professionals can refer country clients to these services.

Transition Care Program (TCP)

Short-term care services for older persons who have been in hospital and are expected to benefit from the restorative/rehabilitation focus of the program. It can be delivered in the person's home or in an aged care facility, usually for up to twelve weeks.

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The program is jointly funded by the Australian Government and the State Government. Eligibility is determined by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). Access is managed by referral through the relevant hospital to the TCP program in each region.

The client's contribution is up to 85% of the basic daily rate of single pension, when the services are provided in an aged care facility, or up to 17.5% when provided at the patient's home. A fee waiver is available for those in financial hardship.

Referrals are made by hospital staff. For general enquiries contact the relevant **SA Local Health Network: tel. 8222 8864 (Central); 8243 5462 (Northern); tel. 8204 7640 (Southern); tel. 8561 2186 (Country).**

Hospitals' own discharge services

All public and some private hospitals assist with access to some support for patients upon discharge. Services provided vary and may include specific short-term treatment to patients in their homes who would otherwise need to remain in hospital. Referral to other services is also provided.

Other services, useful contacts

A number of private and not-for-profit organisations provide full-fee home support services, catering for anyone, including post-acute patients. These services are usually charged on an hourly basis. The range of services offered varies. They may include personal care, domestic assistance, personal transport, day and night respite care and medication reminders or administration. Some providers will offer care coordination and planning and may charge a one-off set-up fee.

Other services that may assist you could include provision of equipment such as mobility aids, lift chairs, over-bed/over-chair table, self-help poles, electric lifting/standing hoists, slings. Some items may be available for hire, as well as for sale.

Catalyst Foundation (including **Seniors Information Service**), tel. 8168 8776 or 1800 63 63 68 (SA Country callers) can provide information on private service providers covering your area, providers of disability aids and information on respite options.

The **Independent Living Centre** can provide free information on a range of disability equipment and other aids to daily living. **Tel. 1300 885 886 or 8266 5260.**

Silver Chain's RDNS provides mobile health services including specialist nursing services in areas such as wound management, diabetes management, palliative care, continence management, health care for people

with disabilities, HIV-AIDS, and dementia management. Services can be provided in the client's home or at one of the nursing centres located across the metropolitan area.

A subsidised fee may apply depending on the client's circumstances and referral pathways. **Tel. 1300 364 264**

Other nursing agencies may provide similar services.

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