

# 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 an 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**. Alternatively you can contact My Aged Care directly prior to your hospital stay to discuss your support and care options. Tel **1800 200 422**, [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://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 **Carer Gateway** may be able to assist with arranging respite care.

Tel. **1800 422 737**; [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)

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.

The hospital staff may request an assessment by the **Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)** through **My Aged Care**. The ACAT will determine your eligibility to receive ongoing or short-term home support and care services or a placement in an aged care facility. The ACAT may also establish that you are eligible for the **Transition Care Program** (further information overleaf).

### SA Community Care

The **Metropolitan Referral Unit (MRU)** provides a single entry point of contact for the SA Community Care Program, giving patients access 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 a public hospital. Services available include nursing/midwifery care, allied health, personal care, end of life care.

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

### Country Referral Unit

This unit provides information and referral for people living in regional South Australia regarding local community health service to assist with care and support. Services available may include community nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, podiatry, social work, speech pathology, palliative care, restorative and transitional care.

Regional South Australians can ring **1800 003 307** directly for a confidential discussion about health and home care services. GPs, hospitals and health professionals can refer country clients to this program.

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#### Transition Care Program (TCP)

TCP provides short-term care services to older persons who have been in hospital and need help to regain as much functional independence and confidence as possible. It lasts up to 12 weeks (84 days); in some cases service providers can request an extension of up to 42 days.

Depending on the person's care needs, it can be delivered in an aged care facility, in the person's home, in the community, or a combination of these.

Care and support provided under the program may include:

- Low intensity therapies (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, dietetics, speech pathology, counselling, social work, connecting the client to wider community support and social activities)
- Clinical care by a registered nurse (pain management, wound care, oxygen therapy, medication assistance, dementia support, catheter care, on-call access to specialised nursing services)
- Personal care (bathing, showering, personal hygiene and grooming, managing incontinence, eating and eating aids, dressing, walking and using mobility aids, communication, including addressing difficulties arising from special conditions, such as dementia)

Eligibility is determined by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessor upon referral by hospital staff.

For general enquiries contact the relevant Transition Care Team in the metropolitan area (Central – tel. **8222 8864**, Northern – tel. **7321 4066**, Southern – tel. **8204 7640**) or the Country Referral Unit, tel. **8561 2128**. Further information can also be found on the My Aged care website:

[www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au).

The program is funded by the Australian Government; the State Government provides a co-contribution.

Clients who can afford to contribute to the cost of their care may be asked to pay up to 85% of the basic daily rate of the single Age Pension if they receive care while living in a residential aged care setting, or 17.5% if they receive care while living at home.

#### Hospitals' own discharge services

All public hospitals and some private hospitals assist patients with accessing support 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.

#### Hospital avoidance services

**My Home Hospital** is a Wellbeing SA program delivering care in patient's own home. The service brings public hospital-level care to the patient in the form of doctors, nurses, allied health practitioners, some x-rays, blood tests, medication, and other support services including meals and personal care, depending on the patient's needs. Patients will receive daily visits and have regular contact with the care team.

Eligibility is dependent on the health condition for which the patient is being treated. Your health practitioner may discuss the option of My Home Hospital with you, and if you are interested and eligible for the service, they will make the referral.

My Home Hospital is currently available to people aged 13 years and over living within the Adelaide metropolitan area, Gawler and Mount Barker regions and their surrounds.

#### Other services, useful contacts

A number of private and not-for-profit organisations provide full-fee home support and care 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** can provide information on private service providers covering your area and on respite options.

*Catalyst Foundation is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Visit the website [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) for more information. Although funding for this publication has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.*

*Updated March 2022*