



# **IN AND OUT OF HOSPITAL**

**A SENIOR'S GUIDE**

**FOR YOUR STAY IN HOSPITAL**

**AND RETURN HOME**

**The Council on Aging of Ottawa**

**1247 Kilborn Place, Suite 101  
Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9**

**2012 Edition**

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## Acknowledgements

The Council on Aging of Ottawa wishes to thank all those who contributed to the development and updating of this document with their comments and very solid experience as seniors, caregivers, and health care professionals. Their insights and expertise were invaluable.

Carefor Health and Community Services

Ottawa Public Health

Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa

VHA Health and Home Support Ottawa

We especially acknowledge the **Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario** for facilitating input from the hospitals and for funding the 2012 translation and printing of this document.

### Hospitals in the Champlain LHIN Area

Almonte General Hospital

Arnprior and District Memorial Hospital

Brockville General Hospital

Élisabeth Bruyère Hospital (Ottawa)

Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital

Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (Ottawa)

Cornwall Community Hospital

Deep River and District Hospital

Glengarry Memorial Hospital

Hawkesbury and District General Hospital

Kemptville District Hospital

Montfort Hospital (Ottawa)

Ottawa Hospital (The)

Pembroke Regional Hospital

Queensway Carleton Hospital (Ottawa)

Renfrew Victoria Hospital

Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre (Ottawa)

St. Francis Memorial Hospital (Barry's Bay)

Winchester District Memorial Hospital

## **PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE**

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare should you have to go to hospital, as well as for your return home. You and your caregivers (family members, friends) have the right to ask questions, to get answers, and to decide what is the best action to take for your health and well-being.

In this guide there are ideas that have helped seniors to get ready to go to the hospital and ideas that have helped them when they returned home.

This guide contains information to help you prepare for a planned admission to the hospital. It will also help if you are unexpectedly admitted through the Emergency Department.

In our efforts to create this document, we tried to keep it generic, recognizing that hospitals may have their own specific programs, services and/or policies.

## Pre-Hospital Information

**MY NAME:**

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**FAMILY DOCTOR'S NAME:**

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**PHONE NUMBER:**

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**MY EMERGENCY CONTACT IS:**

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**PHONE NUMBER:**

---

**MY SECOND EMERGENCY CONTACT IS:**

---

**PHONE NUMBER:**

---

## In-Hospital

**HOSPITAL NAME:**

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**LOCATION:**

---

**PHONE NUMBER:**

---

**FLOOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ROOM #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CLINICAL MANAGER'S NAME:**

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**PHONE NUMBER:**

---

**DISCHARGE PLANNER'S NAME:**

---

**PHONE NUMBER:**

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## Post-Hospital Information

**POST-DISCHARGE HOSPITAL CONTACT NAME:**

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**PHONE NUMBER:**

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**COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRE (CCAC)  
PHONE NUMBER:**

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# BEFORE YOU GO TO THE HOSPITAL

## What to Ask/Tell your Doctor

It is important that you understand your condition and every procedure that is recommended. You have the right to ask questions so you are able to make well informed decisions about your health care. You have the right to say “yes” or “no” to the treatment that is offered to you. Talk with your nurse and doctor about the information that you want shared.

Below are some examples of questions that you may want to ask. You can write your answers to the questions in the space provided. You can add your own questions.

### Before agreeing to a treatment, ask:

1. Why do I need this treatment?

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2. How might I feel after this treatment?

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3. What are the possible complications with this treatment?

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4. What could happen if I don't have this treatment, or if I delay in making a decision?

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5. If I don't want this treatment, what are the other possible tests or treatments that could be done?

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6. If new medication is prescribed, what are the possible side effects of the medication?

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7. Approximately how long should I expect to be in the hospital?

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8. In your opinion, what will I be able, or not able, to do when I return home? What activities will I need help with at home?

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9. Approximately how long do you think I will need this help?

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10. What services are available to me at home?

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11. How can these services be set up for my return home?

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12. What are the dates and times of any follow-up appointments?

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13. Do you expect I will require modifications to my home upon my return? If so, how can I find out the costs and who will pay?

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# What to Do Before You Go to the Hospital

## Medications

- Make a list of any drug allergies you may have and bring it with you.
- Pack your prescribed, over-the-counter and herbal medications (in their original bottles) to bring to the hospital.
- When you go to the hospital:
  - show all your medications to your nurse.
  - **do not** take (swallow) your own medications, unless the doctor or nurse tells you to do so.

## Provincial and Private Insurance

### **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE YOUR PROVINCIAL HEALTH CARD AND PRIVATE HEALTH CARD(S) WITH YOU.**

- Provincial Health Insurance (OHIP) covers the complete cost of a standard ward room and all in-hospital services. OHIP also covers certain other home health care services.
- If you have private insurance, contact your insurance company to see what benefits are covered under your insurance plan for your hospital stay and after discharge.
- If you have private insurance, check with the hospital to see if other accommodation options covered by your private insurance are available.
- Your insurance may also cover the costs, in full or in part, of equipment, treatments, personal care, home support, transportation, nursing, rehabilitation services and/or any other services you may need when you return home.

# Legal Affairs

## Powers of Attorney

- There are two kinds of Power of Attorney: personal care and property.
- The Ontario Substitute Decisions Act (1992) says you can choose someone or more than one person in advance to make decisions for you, if you become mentally incapable of making these decisions yourself.
- Various forms can be used to designate a substitute decision-maker. Power of Attorney forms are commonly used. You can appoint a substitute decision-maker in your living will, if legally documented.
- A Power of Attorney is a legal document in which you give another person or persons the right to act on your behalf.
- The person(s) you appoint is called your attorney(s), though need not be a lawyer. If you appoint more than one attorney, you should consider whether you wish them to act individually (any one of them can act on your behalf) or jointly (more than one or all must be involved for each decision) and so indicate in your Power of Attorney document.
- Giving a Power of Attorney to someone/people you trust is a very serious matter and deserves careful consideration. It is helpful if you discuss your wishes with your family, friends, physician and consulting a lawyer is strongly encouraged.
- Power of Attorney can be revoked in writing; however, you must be mentally capable at time of writing the revocation for it to be valid.

## Power of Attorney for Personal Care

- With this legal document you give a person or persons the power to make personal care decisions on your behalf, if you become mentally incapable of making these decisions yourself. Personal care decisions are about your:
  - health care (including medical treatment).
  - health care wishes in certain situations, i.e. need for resuscitation such as CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation), need for ventilation (artificial breathing).
  - diet, personal grooming, and clothing.
  - housing, including admission to a long-term care home.
  - safety.
  
- If you have not legally designated anyone to make personal care decisions on your behalf, each health care practitioner who finds you incapable of making your own health care decision(s) must get consent from an available substitute decision-maker based upon the following list as specified by the Ontario Health Care Consent Act.

The highest ranking person on the list who is available, capable, and willing to make these decisions will become your substitute decision-maker.

- Your spouse, common-law spouse or partner
- Your child (if they are 16 years of age or older) or parent
- Your parent with right of access only (Custodial parents rank ahead of non-custodial parents.)
- Your brother or sister
- Any other relative by blood, marriage or adoption

- The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

The Provincial Public Guardian and Trustee is the substitute decision-maker of last resort if there is no other appropriate person to act for you.

### **Power of Attorney for Property**

- You may give a Power of Attorney for Property which means someone/people can act on your behalf with respect to all financial decisions and operations pertaining to the management of all your property and all your financial affairs.
- A Power of Attorney for Property can be used by your “attorney(s)” as soon as it is signed, unless otherwise stipulated. Restrictions can be placed upon this Power of Attorney, allowing access to only certain assets and/or access only under certain conditions.
- The “Continuing” label used in conjunction with a Power of Attorney for Property (Continuing Power of Attorney for Property) gives someone/people the power to act or continue acting on your behalf with respect to your property and finances even after you become mentally incapable of making these decisions yourself.

### **Planning a Living Will**

- You may want to consider making a living will, which specifies your wishes, and discuss it with your family/power of attorney(s).
- Upon admission to the hospital you will be asked questions regarding your wishes around CPR and your Plan of Treatment. You are encouraged to discuss your wishes with your family/power of attorney(s).

- Category 1: Full treatment including ICU and CPR;
  - Category 2: Full treatment including ICU but no CPR
  - Category 3: Full treatment excluding ICU and CPR
- You may want to consider organ donation, which should also be discussed with your family/power of attorney(s).

## **What to Do at Home**

1.  Learn about your condition.
2.  Tell your family and close friends that you are going to be in the hospital. Tell them where important papers are.
3.  Designate someone as your special resource/caregiver. Identify him/her as your main contact with the hospital and indicate that you want this person to be with you. This person should be exempt from standard visiting hours.
4.  Seriously consider giving Power of Attorney for Personal Care and/or Property to a family member(s) or someone/people you trust.
5.  Bring an agenda or planner to document any future appointments or care instructions that may be required.
6.  Ask a family member, or someone you trust, to help you with home security, mail, bills, and plant or pet care while you are in the hospital.

7.  Put the telephone, your doctor's number, and any other important numbers in a place that is easy to reach.
8.  Place your health supplies and cooking utensils within easy reach at home.
9.  Consider preparing or purchasing meals in advance.
10.  Consider arranging for automatic deposit for cheques and automatic payments for utility bills and other appropriate payments.
11.  While it is difficult to predict, start thinking about what resources will be available to you upon discharge. Check out and/or arrange home support services, when necessary and if possible, prior to admission: ie. Meals on Wheels, home assistance.

## **What Your Family/Friends Can Do**

- Go with you to the doctor and act as an extra pair of ears.
- Go with you to and from the hospital.
- Write down key points about:
  - your condition
  - your treatment
  - your expected length of time in the hospital
  - your expected state of health after the treatment.
- Act as Power of Attorney if designated, when required.
- Collect your mail, pay your bills, and look after pets or plants.
- Look into the availability of a hospital handbook that may contain general information about topics such as visiting



hours and parking. Go to the hospital website for more information.

- Look into getting a parking pass that can be shared among family members/friends throughout your hospital stay.
- Advocate for you by making requests of the health care team and keeping your family members informed (with your permission).
- Arrange a phone and/or television for you and other incidentals. (\$ involved)
- Pick up items you may want from home or the store.
- Stay or visit with you in the hospital, while respecting the hospital's limited visiting hours because of efforts to reduce infection rates.
- Check to see if special arrangements can be made for a designated family member or friend(s) to support your care: for example, assisting with feeding or assisting with going to the washroom, etc.
- If language is an issue, act as interpreter or arrange interpretation for you.
- Stay with you upon your return home.

## **What to Bring to the Hospital**

1. Ontario Health Card (OHIP), and private health insurance card and hospital card if you have one.
2. Toiletries including:
  - shampoo, soap, and body lotion
  - make-up/shaving equipment

- brush/comb
  - toothpaste and toothbrush.
3. Clothing including:
- loose fitting pyjamas/night gown/housecoat
  - one set of street clothes; it is a good idea to have this either to practise before going home or in preparation for discharge.
  - non-slip slippers/footwear.
4. Personal items such as:
- hearing aid, batteries, case, cleaning supplies
  - dentures, denture cup
  - eyeglasses, eyeglass case
  - prostheses
  - continence supplies
  - ostomy supplies
  - cane, walker, etc.
5. Prescribed and herbal medications, allergy list.
6. Books, magazines, notebook, pen, pencil.
7. A music player with earphones.
8. A small amount of cash or credit card number.

**\* Leave your wallet, credit cards, and jewellery at home.**

**\* Please label all items with your name.**

**\* Please respect no-scent hospital policies for toiletries.**

# WHEN YOU ARE IN THE HOSPITAL

## Rights

As a patient you have the right:

- to all the information that you need to make the best health care choices for yourself.
- to ask questions and to receive answers which help you to understand your condition, your treatment, and hospital routines.
- to express your concerns and to change your mind.
- to say “yes” or “no” to a treatment.
- to ask for copies of any form that you have signed.
- to be treated in a manner that respects your needs and cultural preferences.
- to request a copy of all your test results and your discharge summary while you are still on the ward; there may be a charge for this afterwards.

## Responsibilities

As a patient you have the responsibility:

- to be an active partner in the planning and delivery of your health care.
- to tell your family physician about your condition and your concerns.
- to make sure you have all the information that you need to know so that you can plan for your return home.
- to keep your family doctor informed and listed as a contact to receive all the updates on your condition and/or treatment.
- to use the information provided by your health care team in order to make informed decisions about your health care.
- to understand the possible results/consequences of your decisions before moving forward.

As a patient you have the choice:

- to inform your family and friends about your condition and/or to give your health care team permission to do so. **We encourage you to seriously consider this choice as your family and friends can provide invaluable support during and after your hospital stay.**

## What To Do If...

1. You are having a problem, have spoken to the hospital staff, and the problem still exists...

Speak to the manager of the unit or department. If necessary, ask to speak with whoever handles patient/family concerns.

2. The doctor/medical residents and/or medical students come to see you and you would prefer to talk with just the doctor...

You can speak to the doctor about how you feel.

3. You have been in the hospital for some time and you learn that you are going to have to stay longer....you may want to ask for a family meeting to review your care plan.

You or a family member should:

- find out if there is an extra cost for your room.
- find out the amount of the extra cost.
- decide if you need to change rooms.



## Health Care Team Members

**Your health care team includes those members who can best meet your health care needs. Your team will include all or some of the following:**

### Doctor

Assesses medical and surgical problems and directs your treatment plan. Note that at a teaching hospital you may also be seen by medical residents.

### Nurse

Gives you care and coordinates and implements your **Care Plan. A Care Plan is an outline of what your health care team will do to help you to improve your health condition.** Other health care workers will assist the nurse with your care.

### Social Worker

Assesses your family and community support networks. He/she works with other health care team members to help you and your family adjust to any changes resulting from your illness. He/she helps you plan for your discharge from hospital.

### Specialized Geriatric Assessment Services

This is usually a consultation team including nursing and physicians who can assist in suggestions for care, diagnosis and discharge planning.

### Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) Case Manager

Determines your eligibility and plans the health care services you will need at home. Will recommend and provide information for community supports.

### Occupational Therapist

Reviews your care plan and assists you to be as independent as possible in your activities of daily living (eating, bathing, toileting, dressing, grooming).

### Physiotherapist

Assesses your mobility and strength and works with you to improve your mobility and strength.

### Recreation Therapist

Assesses your lifestyle and develops an activity plan to meet your needs (physical, social, intellectual, and solitary).

### Dietitian

Assesses your eating habits and will help you to plan nutritious meals.

### Pharmacist (in and outside of hospital)

Assesses your medications and provides information about the medications you are taking and the medications which are prescribed for you.

### Speech and Language Pathologist

Assesses your speech, hearing and/or swallowing abilities and helps you to improve these abilities.

### Psychologist

Helps you to adjust to the physical, mental, and emotional effects of your condition.

### Pastoral Visitor/ Chaplain

Listens to your story, in a non-judgemental way, and is able to assist with your spiritual needs.



## **Discharge Planning**

Discharge Planning is:

- the development of a plan for what happens after you leave the hospital to continue the progress of your recovery.

### **Planning your discharge starts upon your admission and involves:**

- You, your caregiver, your family and/or friends in combination with members of the health care team.
- Arranging your transportation home is essential.
- Make sure to tell your hospital doctor, nurse and discharge planner whether:
  - a) you live alone
  - b) you have relatives or friends who can help you
  - c) you have neighbours who can help you

### **What to Ask**

1. What is the expected day/date of my discharge? How will I get home?
2. What will I be able to do when I go home?
3. What will I need help with when I go home?
4. For how long will I need this help?
5. What signs and symptoms should I watch for and report back to the post-discharge hospital contact?

6. What wound care and/or self-care procedures do I need to know?
7. What equipment will I need when I go home?
8. Ask the discharge planner to write down the following information for you when you are discharged:
  - names of the relevant service agencies
  - what service(s) these agencies provide
  - when the service(s) will start
  - fees for the service(s)
  - name and phone number of a contact person for each agency or service
9. Ask the discharge planner/nurse to write down the following information for you when you are discharged:
  - ask if there is a post-discharge hospital contact name and phone number
  - a list of your medications, dosages, and side effects
  - any follow-up appointments that have been made for you.
10. Ask for clarification of medical terms and information that you do not understand.
11. If you are worried and have questions about your discharge, you may ask the manager of the unit or department to arrange a team meeting with you and/or your family to discuss your concerns.



# WHEN YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

**When the doctor signs the orders, you will be discharged. Most hospitals discharge patients by 10:00 a.m.**

Transportation home may be challenging. It is normally the responsibility of the patient and family to arrange for transportation. It is only under special circumstances that the hospital will assist you (e.g. ambulance or non-urgent transportation).

## What to Bring Home

1.  Collect all your personal items.
2.  Get a copy of your discharge plan, which should be shared with your family doctor.
3.  Arrange for someone to be with you on your way home if you are going by car. Otherwise, he/she should meet you at home.
4.  If you feel unsettled at night, try to arrange for someone to stay with you.







# **Ottawa Area Community Resources to Help You at Home:**

## **BOOKS**

### **Directory of Resources for Senior Citizens of Ottawa (This is a yearly publication).**

Available at minimal cost:

The Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa

Telephone: **613-234-8044.**

### **Community Resource Guide for Caregivers of Older Adults.**

Available free at:

Ottawa Public Health

Telephone: **613-580-6744.**

## **SERVICES**

*If you need help with health care contact:*

**The Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) at  
613-745-5525**

**<http://www.ccac-ont.ca/Content.aspx?EnterpriseID=11>**

- The CCAC coordinates in-home services, such as nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy and personal support, for people who are recovering from illness or injury, and for those who are living with chronic illness or disability.
- An individual or family member can self refer for services; however, a doctor's referral is required in order to receive nursing services.

- An assessment is done by a CCAC Case Manager to determine eligibility for the services.
- Services are provided for a specified time period. At the end of this period an assessment is done to determine if the time period will be extended.
- If you are eligible for services, there is no fee.
- If you are having difficulty managing at home, Case Managers can also help you consider other housing options and coordinate admissions to respite services or long-term care homes.

### **Ottawa Community Support Coalition (OCSC)**

**<http://communitysupportottawa.ca>**

- OCSC consists of 19 organizations mandated to provide home-based community support services to seniors and adults with physical disabilities.
  - The range of services offered by these agencies includes: Information and Referral, Adult Day Programs, Attendant Care, Meals on Wheels, Diners Club, Transportation, Friendly Home Visiting, Caregiver Support, Foot Care, Personal and Home Support, Respite Service, Telephone Assurance, Home Maintenance and Home Help.
- \* Many of these community support agencies serve specific geographic areas, so you will have to locate the one(s) serving your area.

*If you need help finding available community, government, social and health service information:*

**2-1-1**

**<http://www.211ontario.org>**

- 2-1-1 is free, confidential, multilingual (150 languages) and available in many areas of Ontario. Bilingual and certified information and referral specialists answer calls 7 days a week.

**Senior Citizens Council (of Ottawa) at 613-234-8044**

**<http://www.seniorcouncil.org/>**

- The Senior Citizens Council (SCC) offers an Information and Referral service to community resources dedicated to the needs of seniors.
- The SCC publishes a *Directory of Resources* for Senior Citizens of Ottawa that lists community resources and services; it is updated annually.
- The SCC also manages the City's Snow Go programs, and runs monthly educational/information sessions for seniors in retirement homes across Ottawa.

### **Specialized Geriatric Services**

**Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario**

Telephone: **613-761-4458**

<http://www.rgpeo.com/>

**Geriatric Psychiatry Community Services of Ottawa**

Telephone: **613-562-9777**

*If you need assistance with transportation you may be eligible for:*

**Para Transpo at 613-244-1289**

**[http://www.octranspo.com/new\\_menu.htm](http://www.octranspo.com/new_menu.htm)**

- Para Transpo is a door-to-door transportation service for persons with disabilities who are unable to use conventional transit services.
- You can register by obtaining an application form available from Para Transpo and online. The form must be signed by an appropriate health care professional, such as: a physician, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist or a chiropractor.
  - The social worker can help you to fill in the form but cannot sign it.
- Service is available to registered clients seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. to 12:00 midnight.
- There is a fee for this service; however, there is a special rate for seniors.

**Copies of “In and Out of Hospital” are available at:**

The Council on Aging of Ottawa:  
Tel.: 613-789-3577 x 0, Fax: 613-789-4406,  
Email: [coa@coaottawa.ca](mailto:coa@coaottawa.ca). Web Site: [www.coaottawa.ca](http://www.coaottawa.ca)

Charitable Registration No.: 13134 4889 RR0001

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le vieillissement  
d'Ottawa**

**The Council on Aging of Ottawa  
Revised: March 2012 ISBN: 1-895 495-19-9**