



Tips for easing the transition from hospital to home

When you return home after a hospital stay, it's common to have mixed emotions. You may be happy to be home. But you might also feel anxious about what lies ahead. To move forward in your recovery, the following tips may be helpful:

Attend your post-discharge appointments. Continuing your prescribed care is key to maintaining the gains you made in the hospital. And it's key to staying on the road to recovery. Use the first appointments to:

- Make sure you are clear on any post-discharge instructions you received.
- Talk about concerns you may have now that you are back home.
- Obtain support and encouragement.

It may be useful to ask a family member or friend you trust to go with you. They can help you understand what your doctor tells you.

Learn as much as you can about your condition or illness. Knowing the symptoms may help you identify them early. This will help you address them before they become worse.

If you plan to return to work:

- You don't have to tell your co-workers why you were out. Only share what you want to share. And you don't have to be specific. Use words such as illness or medical condition. The reason for your absence is no different than if you were having surgery.
- Let your co-workers know that if they have questions, you would prefer they ask you instead of others.
- Don't feel uncomfortable taking time off for appointments. Just let your co-workers know you received approval from your boss. Try to make up the missed time so it does not bother others.

Make it a point to be around other people. This will help your life return to normal.

Make it a point to relax and unwind when you start to feel stressed. It is easier to cope with stress when it starts to set in. Don't wait until it gets out of hand.

Avoid using alcohol or drugs to cope with stress. Alcohol and drug use make it hard to follow your treatment plan and to make good decisions.

Divide your major tasks into small pieces and take frequent breaks. This will keep you from getting stressed.

Avoid doing hard tasks or making tough decisions. Don't take on any challenges until you are feeling better.

Develop a daily routine. Avoid big life changes until you are back into your routine.

Don't forget to check in with your medical doctor. Take care of your physical as well as your emotional health. It may improve your well-being. It may help you enjoy life more.

Accept that minor set-backs are common. Develop plans for dealing with potential problems so you are better prepared should they arise.

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