



## TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH AFTER A HOSPITAL STAY

Steps to avoid going back to the hospital

After a hospital stay, there's a lot to do to recover and get your health back on track. Here are some tips to help you return to your home safely and smoothly.

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

- Be sure your primary care physician (doctor) knows you were hospitalized, and understands your post-discharge follow-up plan
- Have a loved one or the hospital staff help you schedule your follow-up appointments within 1 – 2 weeks of discharge
- Ask for your post-discharge plan in writing. Make sure it lists what medicines you need to take, what exercises to do, and what foods to eat or avoid.
- Ask questions about your follow-up care for when you leave the hospital if you do not understand the treatment plan

### AVOID A REPEAT VISIT

- Follow the instructions in your post-discharge plan
- If you do not understand your discharge plan, call your doctor
- If your symptoms get worse, call your doctor
- If you have questions about your medications, call your pharmacist or doctor
- Talk with your doctor or pharmacist before stopping any prescribed medications



**About 1 out of every 5  
Medicare patients sent  
to the hospital ends up  
returning within a month.\***

\* U.S. News & World Report.  
Half of U.S. Hospitals Face  
Medicare's Readmission  
Penalties. [health.usnews.com](http://health.usnews.com).  
Accessed August 23, 2016.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Avoid a repeat hospital visit by taking an active role in your health care
- Have a primary care physician (doctor)
- Make regular visits to your doctor
- Follow the care plan recommended by your doctor
- Ask questions and share information with your doctor



## TAKE CHARGE

- Ask a friend or family member to help organize your care before, during and after your hospital stay
- Ask for written instructions about your follow-up care plan from your doctor before you leave the hospital
- Ask for a list of the medications you started taking in the hospital and will continue to take after you leave. Request instructions and information about side effects from the nurse or doctor who prescribes them.
- Ask to have your medication list reviewed by your doctor to review medications that have been added, discontinued, or changed since your admission to the hospital
- Ask for copies of test results that were done in the hospital so you can give them to your primary doctor



### DID YOU KNOW?

There are people who can help with your recovery. Ask your care coordinator or call the Senior LinkAge® Line at **1-800-333-2433**. They can put in you in touch with local resources to help you work toward a full recovery and avoid a repeat hospital visit.

