

**National Centre  
for Healthy Ageing**

A partnership between



**MONASH  
University**



**Peninsula  
Health**

# GOING HOME FROM HOSPITAL

A Guide for Greek Australian Carers,  
Family and Older Persons

Written by Greek Australian carers and older persons



# Older persons need support when they come home from hospital

Carers may not know what to do after an older person comes home from hospital. A carer is unpaid and may be a spouse, family member or friend who cares for an older person in need. Carers and older persons need information about where to get help and who to ask for help if needed. The older person may be in pain, and the carer may be stressed and not able to think clearly. Carers providing support may need others to help.



# Carers care from the heart



Carers are part of a chain keeping the older person at home safely. Carers provide care with everyday things such as helping older persons with their medicines. A carer may need assistance from others in the family or from community supports to keep the older person at home safely.

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*“As Greeks, we don’t think of being a carer. We feel in our hearts that someone in the family needs caring. We just do it.”*

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# Carers need information and care

When everyone does their bit, it works like a circle of support with many helping hands. It is not easy for carers to say what is best for a sick person. Carers might need to talk with a health practitioner such as a doctor, a nurse, or an allied health practitioner.



# In hospital, you can ask the doctor and health practitioners for an interpreter

All hospitals provide qualified interpreters for communication in Greek and English. Carers and older persons can ask health practitioners for access to an interpreter to help them to communicate.



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*“It is important that you ask for an interpreter even if you feel that you can’t understand a lot in the condition that you are in. Ask for an interpreter, they will help you.”*

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# You can ask questions about going home from hospital

Carers of older persons preparing to go home from hospital can ask the doctor and health practitioners for advice. The doctor and health practitioners can provide information and also help get other health practitioners involved if needed. Information from carers and from older persons about what they need at home helps doctors and health practitioners to make a better plan to go home from hospital.

Do not be embarrassed to say 'I don't understand'. Carers and older persons can ask to have the communication again.



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*“Express what you need to ask, the main thing is to ask questions.”*

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# Taking medications correctly

Taking medications after hospital discharge is important. Carers and the older person can request assistance from a pharmacist in hospital and in the community who can prepare the medications in a medication pack. This pack is sealed to prevent any mix-ups and allows the carer and older person to easily double-check for any errors. Alternatively, the carer and older person can prepare a medication organiser box themselves following their doctors' instructions.



# You may be eligible for care at home

The older person's care needs might change after coming home from hospital. Carers and older persons can ask the social worker or health practitioner in hospital if they are eligible for a family meeting to help prepare to go home from hospital. Carers and older persons may be eligible to have health practitioners and community aged care workers visit at home. Ask the social worker or health practitioner in hospital or the family doctor (general practitioner / GP) any questions about care at home.



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*“We got good information from the hospital about how to look after my husband. They told me that they can help me with shopping and cleaning the house.”*

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# You need to be confident to care

Carers need to be confident that they are able to care. If carers do not think they can care for the person, they should look for other people to help. Older persons may need more help at home than when they were in hospital or before they went into hospital.

# Checklist

## In hospital

- Ask as many questions as you would like
- Talk with health practitioners about discharge planning early in the older person's hospital stay
- Ask the health practitioners to book an interpreter if needed

The names of my hospital doctors are: .....

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My key hospital contacts (i.e., nurse in charge, social worker) and phone numbers:

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The older person's health conditions are: .....

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## Preparing to go home

### Before you leave the hospital, ask the health practitioners about:

- The older person's ongoing care needs:

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- Information and education about how to take care of the older person at home after discharge
- Discharge medication, how to use the medication, and a medication pack to help with ongoing medications at home
- A discharge letter/summary to take to the general practitioner
- Any follow-up appointments at the hospital (outpatient appointments)

### Before you leave the hospital, ask the social worker or health practitioner about your eligibility for:

- A nurse or allied health practitioner to visit at home
- An aged care assessment in hospital or at home
- An aged care package at home
- How to access My Aged Care

## At home

### Talk to your GP about:

- What you need at home after hospital discharge
- Accessing the community pharmacy for ongoing assistance with medications at home including a medication pack
- Accessing My Aged Care or Carer Gateway
- Carers can also talk to their GP about their concerns including about their own mental health and wellbeing

## Tips

- If needed, the carer and older person can write instructions in your own language about taking medication
- If needed, remember to restart community aged care services
- When accessing My Aged Care and Carer Gateway on the internet, remember that you can choose your own language from the drop down menu
- When accessing My Aged Care and Carer Gateway, you can use the telephone interpreter service
- Carer Gateway is a valuable service and support for carers. Carers can call Carer Gateway for assistance, support, and counselling



My follow-up services at home are: .....

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My key community contacts (i.e., relevant community aged care organisation): .....

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Other community contacts (i.e., community pharmacy): .....

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## My follow-up plan at home

Outpatient appointments: .....

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My care plan at home:.....

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## A list of key words and services in aged care

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<b>Aged Care Packages (Home Care Packages)</b>	Provided by the Australian Government to pay for coordinated care and services at home for older people with complex care needs. Aged care packages support older people to be independent at home. Access to aged care packages is through My Aged Care.
<b>Carer Gateway</b>	Australian Government funded practical services and support for carers including counselling.
<b>Discharge</b>	Preparing to go home from hospital, going home from hospital, and being at home after hospital.
<b>Medication Pack</b>	A pack to organise all medications that are in tablet form. Medication packs can be dispensed by hospital and community pharmacists. Some examples of medication packs are Webster packs and doset boxes.
<b>My Aged Care</b>	Australian Government service to help older people access help at home or information about aged care homes.
<b>Outpatient Services</b>	Services where patients access their specialist hospital doctors. Outpatient services are provided in clinics based at relevant hospitals. Appointments are required to access outpatient services.
<b>Respite Care</b>	Temporary care provided to carers of older people so that carers can take a short break.

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Project funding was received through the National Centre for Healthy Ageing (NCHA) Living Labs program. The NCHA acknowledges the support provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care via the Community Health and Hospitals Program.

This project was supported by PRONIA and Monash University Nursing and Midwifery, in partnership with Australian Nursing Home Foundation, MyVista, Carers WA, Monash Health, Deakin University, National Ageing Research Institute, RMIT University, and the University of Manitoba Canada. We acknowledge additional support from the Carer Advisory Group.



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# Getting help and information after discharge home



## My Aged Care

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>  
1800 200 422

*For access to aged care at home including care for Greek Australians.*



## Family doctor (General Practitioner)

*For advice and support about health and community aged care.*



## Carer Gateway

<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>  
1800 422 737

*For advice and support for carers including counselling support.*



## After hours help

Ambulance and urgent medical care, 000  
Health Direct 1800 022 222 for health advice from a Registered Nurse.



## Prepare to Care Hospital Program

<https://carerswa.asn.au/our-services/prepare-to-carehospital-program/>

*For advice and information about discharge care and support.*



## Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing

<https://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/>

*For other resources about health and support for multicultural communities.*



## Older Persons Advocacy Network

<https://opan.org.au/>  
1800 700 600

*For advocacy support about aged care rights for older persons and carers.*