

**National Centre
for Healthy Ageing**

A partnership between



**MONASH
University**



**Peninsula
Health**

GOING HOME FROM HOSPITAL

A Guide for Italian Australian Carers,
Family and Older Persons

Written by Italian Australian carers





Carers supporting older persons going home from hospital

Going home from hospital can be an anxious time for older persons, carers and other family members because of the unknown. Carers provide support for older persons and are unpaid. Being prepared and knowing how to get information about how to care for the older person at home can help carers. Carers and older persons can ask for information and support from health practitioners about the older person going home from hospital.

You can ask for an interpreter

If needed, you can ask the health practitioners in the hospital for an interpreter. Older people may feel embarrassed to ask for an interpreter. Carers and other family members might need to remind the health practitioners that the older person needs an interpreter to communicate. The interpreter will speak Italian, but it might be difficult for people to follow because Italian Australians have a dialect. The family or someone from the Italian community who shares the same dialect with the older person may need to be involved with communication as well as the interpreter.

Older persons and carers may need to explain the importance of dialects for Italian Australians to health practitioners in hospital.

Sharing information with health practitioners in hospital

Sharing information with health practitioners in hospital can help with planning and preparing to go home. Carers and older persons should speak up about their life at home:

- How is the older person's memory?
- What services already visit the older person at home?
- Does the older person experience falls or injuries at home?
- What medicines does the older person take at home?
- Do the carers, other family members, or the older person have any other concerns about going home?



Preparing to go home

When preparing to go home, the older person and carer can ask:

- The social worker or health practitioner if they are eligible for an aged care assessment in hospital or at home.
- The occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker or nurse about accessing equipment at home.

The older person and carer can ask health practitioners in hospital about the discharge plan, including:

- A discharge letter for your family doctor (General Practitioner / GP).
- Any medications and side effects.
- Any test results and if the tests need to be repeated.
- Any follow-up medical appointments such as with the family doctor, medical specialist or outpatient clinics.
- A key contact name and telephone number such as the social worker or the nurse in charge.

Ask to have communication again if you do not understand. Keep asking questions until you understand the discharge plan.



“The valuable information that they gave us were the options, this is what we can do for you. We’ll organise all the paperwork to take dad to respite care or to discharge him to home. And when I said to the doctor, well we would like to take him home. What can you do for us? And he said we’ll organise the community aged care for you. They gave me some peace of mind, and my mum as well.”



Carers need to care for themselves

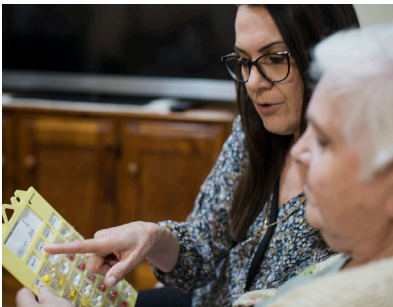
Carers have often given up what they were doing in their own lives to look after older persons. Carers also need to care for themselves. Support is available. The Carer Gateway has useful advice and information including about emotional, practical, and financial support for carers and connecting with others caring for older persons. Carers Australia has useful information for carers including about the Carers organisation local to your state or territory (Please see the final page for contact details).

Getting more information about support at home

Older persons and carers should know that the medical team in hospital and the family doctor (General Practitioner / GP) work together with the community pharmacist and aged care home providers. Older persons and carers can ask community aged care providers and the family doctor questions such as:

- What government funded support is available for older persons in the community?
- How can older persons and carers access it?
- Is funding available for equipment or respite care?
- What supports are available for carers?

There are many places that older persons and carers can find information about getting support at home. The internet and the library are good places to start. Talking to other older persons and carers can also help.



Tips

- You can ask the social worker or health practitioner and My Aged Care about respite services including respite in the home to help carers to go out and do something for themselves.
- You can access a Home Medicines Review from the community pharmacy and the family doctor. You can access a medication pack from a community pharmacist. These can help you to better understand and manage your medicines.

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

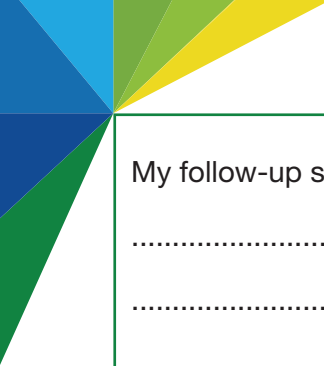
At home

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

Aged Care Packages (Home Care Packages)	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.
Carer Gateway	Australian Government funded practical services and support for carers including counselling.
Discharge	Preparing to go home from hospital, going home from hospital, and being at home after hospital.
Medication Pack	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.
My Aged Care	Australian Government service to help older people access help at home or information about aged care homes.
Outpatient Services	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.
Respite Care	Temporary care provided to carers of older people so that carers can take a short break.

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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 Italian 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.