

## Preparing for Your Surgery:

Illness, injury, or surgery can cause changes in your life. Even if your hospital stay is short, things that can be affected during your recovery can include your ability to:

- Bathe or dress
- Cook
- Wash clothes
- Stand or bend
- Do hobbies
- Care for pets
- Care for your children and/or an older parent or spouse
- Grocery shop / do errands
- Clean
- Climb up and down stairs
- Drive your car
- Play sports

Careful planning will help you prepare for these changes and will help make your recovery smoother. The more you prepare **before** you enter the hospital, the easier it will be after your surgery. We depend on what you tell us about your health, home and interests to help you and your family plan for your discharge. Consider these questions:

1. Can you care for yourself at home?
2. Will you need help with any of the following?

- Bathing / dressing
- Emotional support
- Getting around your home
- Finances
- Transportation
- Washing clothes
- Preparing meals
- Medications

**It's OK to ask for help if you feel any of these items will be a problem for you and your family.**

**Smoking** can have a dramatic effect on the outcome of your surgery. You are encouraged to stop smoking as soon as possible, or at least one week before your operation.

## **Get Your Home Ready!**

One of our goals is to lower the chances of accidents in your home. Here are some simple changes you can make to prevent falls or injuries. Making these changes **before** your surgery will help make your recovery smoother.

### **Keep your walkway paths clear:**

- Arrange furniture so you can walk around easily.
- Watch for small pets and objects on the floor.
- Wrap up/tape down long electric and telephone cords.
- Remove throw rugs.
- Check areas of your home for uneven or loose flooring.
- Arrange to have outside paths and walkways cleared of snow and ice.

### **Place items that you use often within easy reach**

- A cordless or portable phone.
- Store food and supplies that you use often in cupboards or on counters that are at waist to shoulder level.
- Place clothing that you use often in drawers and closets at waist to shoulder level.

### **Keep your floor and counter surfaces dry, especially after bathing.**

- Get a non-slip mat for the bottom of your bathtub to prevent slipping.
- Make sure spills get cleaned up quickly.

### **Climbing stairs (Entering home and inside your home).**

- Limit climbing stairs to 1-2 times each day if possible.

### **Furniture in your home.**

- To conserve your strength, place a supportive chair in your kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and on stair landing to complete tasks while sitting.
- If you have a waterbed, please let us know, as you cannot use a waterbed after surgery.

## Planning Ahead for Your Discharge

### Practice what we taught you during your pre-operative visit

- If you were instructed by physical therapy and/or occupational therapy, please practice what the therapist taught you.
- Practice using any adaptive equipment we give you.

### Prevent Constipation

- Bowel movements are important and having one before you enter the hospital will benefit you. Three days before your scheduled admission date, if you find you cannot go on your own, a mild laxative can be taken, such as Milk of Magnesia or Senokot. Call your doctor if these methods do not work.

### Bring the following to the hospital with you

- Review **this book** and bring it with you!!!
- A pair of non-skid flat shoes, such as oxford or athletic shoes, to use in physical therapy and for walking.
- Loose comfortable lightweight clothing (such as shorts and tee shirt) so you can practice dressing skills before you are discharged.
- If you receive adaptive equipment before your surgery, please bring it with you to the hospital so that you can practice using it.
- Your walker or wheelchair. Please have a friend or family member bring to the hospital once you are settled into your hospital bed after surgery.

### Prepare before you are admitted to the hospital

- You will need a thermometer to take your temperature twice daily after you go home.
- If you have any medical equipment at home, such as a walker, crutches, shower bench, please let us know.
- If you receive home care services, such as a nurse, aide or therapist, we need to know the name of the agency.

**Arrange to have someone:**

- take you home from the hospital.
- stay with you for at least a week after you are discharged from the hospital.
- help with errands and groceries.
- take you to your doctor's office.
- care for a child, spouse, pet or parent while you are in the hospital and once you are discharged from the hospital.

**Plan for meals and groceries after your hospital discharge.**

- Many patients find preparing and freezing meals ahead of time helpful.
- Stock up on frozen foods, canned goods, paper products, and personal hygiene products to decrease the need for errands during your recovery period.

**Medications**

- Make sure you have an adequate supply of any medications you currently take. This will prevent additional trips to the pharmacy when you return home from the hospital.

## Preparing for your discharge from University Hospital

Our goal is to create a safe discharge plan for you. The health care team will arrange for any services or care you may need once you leave the hospital. Many patients benefit from a short stay at University Hospital's acute rehabilitation center or another less intense rehabilitation facility.

If you would like to speak with someone about your discharge plan before you come into the hospital, please call our Continuum of Care Department (464-6161).

Please remember that our relationship with you does not end when you leave the hospital. If any problems occur with any special service we arrange for you after your discharge, please call the Case Management/Continuum of Care Department.

### Other Resources:

#### **Health Connections:** (315) 464-8668

Hours of Operation: 24 hours/day

Services: University Hospital's free and confidential health information, advice and referral service

**Web site:** [www.universityhospital.org](http://www.universityhospital.org)

#### **Health Information Center:** (315) 464-4410 • (315) 464-7208 TTY

Health Sciences Library, 750 East Adams St

Syracuse, New York 13210

Services: Free and confidential medical information services. Lending collection of health materials including books, videos, multimedia CD ROMS, etc. Provides copies of journal articles, pamphlets and newsletters.

**e-mail:** [HIC@upstate.edu](mailto:HIC@upstate.edu)

**Web site:** [www.upstate.edu/library/hic/](http://www.upstate.edu/library/hic/)