

My Journey Through Rehabilitation

Musculoskeletal, Amputee, and Neurology Program

My name: _____

Planned discharge date: _____

My Journey Through Rehabilitation

This pamphlet will help you as you make your way through rehabilitation (rehab). Please use the checklist below to help you get ready for your discharge from the hospital. Check off the tasks as you do them. Some of the tasks may not apply to you.

Your health care team is here to help you. Please talk with them if you have any questions or concerns.

When you are admitted

Within the first few days of arriving at the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation and Arthritis Centre:

- ☐ **Contact information:** Make sure we have your correct address and contact information. If you will be going somewhere other than home when you are discharged, it is important that we know.
- ☐ **Support person(s):** Tell your health care team if you have a support person(s) who will be helping you at home. It will help to include your support person(s) in your care from the start.

Name of support person: _____

Address: _____

- ☐ **Health care team:** Meet with each of your health care team members to talk about your plan of care.
- ☐ **Set goals:** Talk with your health care team about your goals for your stay. You can talk to each team member directly or to all of them as a group.
- ☐ **Personal belongings:** You or your support person(s) may have to bring items like footwear, clothes, or a swimsuit to take part in your therapy.
- ☐ **Planned discharge date:** As soon as you are admitted, your health care team will work with you to plan how long you will stay and when you will be discharged. You should have any equipment you need or changes to your home done before your planned discharge date.

- ❑ **Equipment and funding:** Talk with your health care team about ways you can manage the cost of equipment (like a ramp, a wheelchair, footwear, orthotics, bracing) or renovations to your home you may need when you are discharged.
- ❑ **Renovations:** You are responsible for any renovations or other changes you may need to your home. It is important to have these done as soon as possible so that your home is ready for your planned discharge date.

Your health care team

Your health care team is a group of people who work with you and your support person to help with your recovery. Depending on your need, members of your care team may include:

- **Physiatrist:** This is a doctor with special training in rehabilitation. They will help manage your rehabilitation treatment.
- **Hospitalist:** This is a doctor who is similar to your primary health care provider. They are responsible for your overall medical care during your hospital stay.
- **Residents:** These are doctors who are training to become rehabilitation specialists. They work closely with the physiatrist and help plan your rehabilitation care.
- **Nurses:** Registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and certified therapy assistants (CTAs) will care for you during your hospital stay.
- **Occupational therapist:** The occupational therapist (OT) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) help you keep up and improve your independence with daily tasks. They can also give guidance on how to use a wheelchair and other equipment.
- **Physiotherapist:** The physiotherapist (PT) and physiotherapy assistants (PTAs) help you keep up and improve your physical function and movement through exercises and therapies.
- **Social worker:** The social worker gives counselling and support for emotional and practical issues. They can help you adjust to your injury or illness. They can also help with any financial (money) concerns you may have.
- **Recreation therapist:** The recreation therapist (RT) and recreation therapy associate (RTA) will help you explore new activities, hobbies, and social programs.

- **Continuing care coordinator:** The continuing care coordinator helps plan the home care and nursing support you will need once you are discharged from the hospital.
- **Speech language pathologist:** The speech language pathologist (SLP) checks for and treats any communication disorders you may have.
- **Prosthetist:** The prosthetist makes, fits, and adjusts your prosthesis (artificial limb) to make sure it fits properly and meets your needs.
- **Psychologist:** The psychologist gives emotional support and counselling during your recovery.
- **Spiritual Care:** Spiritual Care providers offer support and counselling to help with your emotional well-being.
- **Dietitian:** The dietitian checks your nutritional needs, teaches you about nutrition, and creates a nutritional care plan to meet your needs.
- **Orthotist and pedorthist:** The orthotist and pedorthist help to fit and adjust footwear, insoles, and/or braces to help with your comfort and mobility.

During your stay

Your health care team will talk to you about:

- ☐ **Education:** Your health care team will give you information and guidance about your condition and recovery. We encourage you to take part in group education sessions. Sessions take place every Wednesday at 3 p.m. in the dining room on the 8th floor. We will help you choose the sessions that are right for you.
- ☐ **Medications:** It is important to know why you are taking each of your medications. Your health care team will teach you and your support person about your medications, and give you information to take home.
 - › You may start a self-medication program, where you will learn how to take your own medications. This will help you learn how to manage your medications when you go home.

- **Nutrition:** You will learn about:
 - › Healthy eating
 - › Your nutrition plan and any supplements you are taking
 - › How to prepare your food
 - › Swallowing risks
 - › Any feeding tubes or pumps you are using

You and/or your support person(s) must understand how to manage your nutrition needs. If there are any concerns about managing your nutrition plan, please tell a member of your health care team.
- **Bowel and bladder care (using the bathroom):** You may need to learn how to manage your bowels and bladder. We will show you how to do this on your own or with supports.
- **Skin care and dressing changes:** Skin care includes:
 - Turning
 - Positioning
 - Pressure relief (making sure your skin does not get injured from being in the same position for too long)
 - Wound care
 - › You will learn about the supplies you need and how to manage your skin care needs on your own or with supports.
 - › If you are using a brace or a prosthesis, make sure you have been taught how to prevent skin injuries.
- **Falls risk:** It is important to learn about your risk for falls. For more information, see the falls risk pamphlet you were given when you were admitted. Talk to your health care team about ways to lower your risk for falls after you are discharged.
- **Coping:** Recovering from an injury or illness is not always easy. Your health care team can help you learn new coping strategies to manage the changes in your life. Remember, you are not alone in this journey.
- **Leisure activities:** Going back to leisure activities you used to enjoy and trying new activities can help you recover. While you are in the hospital, you may take part in recreation therapy programs, one-on-one leisure activities, and community outings.

- ☐ **Self-care and activities of daily living:** Your health care team will help you with any issues related to your self-care and activities of daily living (like washing, dressing, showering, and going to the bathroom).
- ☐ **Important activities of daily living:** Your health care team will help you with any issues related to managing your activities at home and in the community (like cooking, laundry, housekeeping, grocery shopping, banking).
- ☐ **Transfers and mobility (movement):** It is important that you and your support person learn how to do all transfers (like bedside, bathroom, and vehicle. Your physiotherapy and occupational therapy teams will teach you about walking and wheelchair training. You may also need equipment at home to help you with safe mobility.
- ☐ **Equipment needs:** Talk with your health care team about what equipment you will need after you are discharged and how it will be paid for. Make sure you arrange for any equipment you will need before you are discharged.

Recommended equipment may include:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| › Wheelchair | › Walker |
| › Ramp | › Crutches |
| › Commode | › Toilet arms |
| › Scooter | › Grab bars |
| › Reacher | › Tub transfer bench |
| › Cane | › Hand-held shower head |
| › Shower chair | › Cup holder |
| › Transfer board | › Other: _____ |
| › Transfer belt | |

- ☐ **Supplies:** Ask your health care team what supplies you will need, how much they will cost, and how you will get them when you are discharged.
- ☐ **Private insurance coverage:** If you have private insurance coverage, ask your insurance company what items are covered.
- ☐ **Home modifications (renovations):** Talk with your health care team before you buy equipment or start modifying (changing) your home. You may have a home visit with your therapist(s) and support person(s). Once you and your health care team have decided what modifications your home will need (like a ramp, grab bars in the bathroom, wider doorways), make sure they are completed by your discharge date.

- ☐ **Home care:** It is important to meet with the home care coordinator to talk about your home care options (like Victorian Order of Nurses [VON]) once you are discharged.
- ☐ **Travel:** There are accessible taxis and bus services available. Please talk with your health care team about which options may be right for you.
- ☐ **Driving:** Please talk with your rehabilitation doctor about driving after discharge. You may learn about accessible driving.
- ☐ **Sexual health:** If you have questions or concerns about your sexual health after injury or illness, please ask a member of your health care team.

Before discharge

About 1 to 2 weeks before you are discharged:

- ☐ **Contact information:** Make sure we have your correct address and contact information. If you will be going somewhere other than home when you are discharged, it is important that we know.
- ☐ **Home pass:** Ask your health care team about scheduling a day, overnight, or weekend pass. This will give you an opportunity to practice the skills you have been learning during your stay.
- ☐ **Leisure activities:** Talk with your recreation therapy team about leisure activities in your community.
- ☐ **Travel:** Make sure you have discharge travel arranged.
- ☐ **Equipment and supplies:** Make sure the personal equipment and supplies you will need after discharge have been ordered. Your health care team can help you with this.
- ☐ **Home therapy:** Review any home therapy program(s) with your therapists to make sure you understand how to do them. Follow these programs after you are discharged.
- ☐ **Home care:** Make sure that you have arranged for any home care supports you may need.
- ☐ **Personal belongings:** Send your personal belongings home with your support person(s) before your discharge date, if possible.

Day of discharge

Discharge time is 11 a.m. or earlier. Please pack your belongings and be ready to go by 11 a.m. on your discharge day. If you are going by ambulance, you can only bring one suitcase. Please tell your nurse when you are leaving.

- ☐ **Discharge instructions:** Review your discharge instructions (like follow-up with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner), medical appointments, outpatient therapy plans) with your health care team.
- ☐ **Equipment:** Make sure you have returned all hospital equipment used during your stay. Make sure you have arranged for all recommended equipment to be delivered to your discharge location.
- ☐ **Medication(s):** It is important that you keep taking any medication(s) you were taking during your stay. If you brought in any medications from home, be sure to ask for them before you are discharged. It is also important that you have prescriptions for any new medications you will be taking after you are discharged.
- ☐ **Home supports:** If you need VON and/or home care support after you are discharged, ask a member of your health care team for the confirmation form.
- ☐ **Patient Satisfaction Survey:** Your feedback is important to us. Please complete our survey and leave it at the nursing station. This will help us improve the care we provide.

What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.

After discharge

- We wish you the best in the next phase of your rehabilitation journey. If you have questions or concerns, please refer to the pamphlets you have been given.
- We will call you or send you information in the mail about any follow-up appointments.

My appointments

Appointments and tests	Date	Phone

Follow-up

Primary health care provider

- ☐ Please book an appointment to see your primary health care provider within 2 weeks of your discharge date.

Outpatient physiotherapy

- ☐ We will call you with an appointment time, if needed.

Outpatient occupational therapy

- ☐ We will call you with your an appointment time, if needed.

Nova Scotia Rehabilitation and Arthritis Centre

- ☐ We will send you a follow-up appointment date by mail. If you do not hear from the clinic within 3 months, please call 902-473-1303.

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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