Packing for a hospital stay in Waterford

Start with the things your loved one uses to see, hear and communicate. A pair of glasses or a familiar communication aid may be more useful at the bedside than a suitcase of extras.

When you're caring for a loved one who is very ill for the first time, it's hard to determine the questions to ask on how to best prepare for inpatient stays. By reaching out to a network of caregivers, you can find experienced advisors on how to prepare and provide the best care for your loved ones.

If your loved one is in need of a longer inpatient stay to recover from an injury or illness, use these valuable tips to prepare for creating the most therapeutic environment possible in a healthcare facility.

Research before you go. By asking for a description of the room and its contents, you can understand the basic items you may want to take to make life more comfortable during your stay. For example, ask questions like:

- What kind of storage is available for food and clothing?
- Is there adjustable lighting if the overhead lights are too bright for my loved one?
- Is there additional bedding and supplies should I wish to stay overnight with my loved one?
- Are there laundry facilities or family restrooms?
- What items may I bring and what are prohibited?

Create a personalized environment for your loved one. Once you know what items you are allowed to bring and what is provided, try to think of things that could make the stay more comfortable for your loved one. Perhaps try bringing their favorite household items like a blanket or slippers. While many facilities provide televisions in patient rooms, a portable speaker can help your loved one listen to favorite music or books on tape. Even bringing in drawings or cards from friends or families can brighten the walls.

Keep your medical documents organized. During inpatient stays, your medical team will give you many documents updating you on the status of your loved one's condition, treatment plan and medications. Bring a folder or three-ring binder for these documents, as well as pens and a permanent marker. You may find it helpful to keep a running list of questions for your doctors or nurses to ask next time you see them, or write down names and descriptions of everyone in your care team so you are able to remember all of the new faces. This can help you build rapport with the people providing care for your loved one. Planning to organize during the inpatient stay helps you have an easier transition when your loved one is able to leave, as you can focus completely on his or her recovery rather than reviewing older documents.

Some household items may be necessary. If your loved one is mobile enough to use the toilet or shower, he/she may like to have flushable toilet wipes to feel cleaner between showers, and non-slip sandals to wear in the shower. The facility may provide basic toiletries, but if there is a lotion, soap or shampoo your loved one typically uses, ask your medical team if it would be OK to use.

Snacks and food. The hospital provides daily meals for patients, but not caregivers. Learn the nearest restaurants that may provide carry out or delivery, and keep some snacks on hand for times when you may not be able to get away. Again, ask your nursing staff where you may store food and how it should be labeled.

Schedule relief visits from friends or family so you can take a break. Your loved one values your presence with them, and there is no doubt you never want to leave their side. But it is also important to ask for a break so you can take time to shower, get a meal outside the hospital, go for a walk or spend time with other family. This time away can help ease the stress and anxiety that often come with medical conditions, and can allow you to be rested to provide the best care for your loved one.

You never have to handle caregiving alone. There are many resources that can help you find valuable information about your loved one's treatment. Whether you simply keep open lines of communication with your healthcare team, ask friends or family about their experiences or research caregiving advice online, there is a wealth of information available to you—you just have to ask.

If you need support, tell the bedside nurse or case manager what is most difficult right now. Ask who can help with a family meeting, caregiver teaching or arrangements for the next setting.

Talk with Lakeview

For questions about a possible stay, call Lakeview Admissions at (262) 534-8509. During a stay, ask the bedside nurse who can help with your question.

https://www.lakeviewsystem.com/resources

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