Hospital discharge in 72 hours

What to ask, what to order and what to fix at home, in the order that actually works.

Use it when: The ward has said your parent is medically ready to go home.

Before you agree to a date

- [ ] Ask for the discharge summary in writing
- [ ] Ask for the medication list, including anything stopped
- [ ] Get the name and number of the discharge coordinator
- [ ] Ask which care tasks are needed, in their words
  Wound care, injections and catheters mean a nurse. Everything else is usually a care worker.
- [ ] Ask whether Medicare home health has been ordered, if your parent qualifies
  It needs a doctor's order and covers skilled care, not daily personal care.
- [ ] Confirm your parent was admitted as an inpatient, not kept under observation
  It decides whether Medicare covers a skilled nursing stay afterwards.

Equipment — the usual bottleneck

- [ ] Raised toilet seat or commode
- [ ] Walker or wheelchair, correctly sized
- [ ] Transfer belt, and a lift if two people are needed
- [ ] Hospital bed, if stairs or bed height are a problem
- [ ] Confirm the delivery date before the discharge date
  Equipment routinely takes longer to arrive than care does.

Care for the first ten days

- [ ] Book paid care from day one
- [ ] Ask the home health agency for its start date in writing
- [ ] Ask each provider to confirm they can start on your date
  'We should be able to' is not a yes.
- [ ] Agree who is on call overnight for the first three nights

The house, before they arrive

- [ ] Clear the route from bed to bathroom
- [ ] Take up loose rugs and trailing cables
- [ ] Put a light and a phone within reach of the bed
- [ ] Move daily items to waist height
- [ ] Fill the prescriptions — do not leave it until the drive home

- [ ] Put emergency numbers somewhere visible
  Emergency services: 911.

In an emergency, call 911.

Free to print and share. Nothing on this checklist was sent to SeniorCareZ or anyone else.