THREE STEPS

TO A SAFER HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

AN INFOGRAPHIC FOR OPTIMAL PATIENT OUTCOMES

DID YOU KNOW?

1 IN 11

patients are readmitted within a month of leaving the hospital.[1]

$2.1B

is spent annually in Canada as a result of discharge delays and readmissions.[1] A standardized, evidence-based process is critical for safe and effective person and family-centred discharge that starts on admission to hospital.[2,3]

CALL TO ACTION

Point-of-care nurses can lead improvements that standardize the discharge process by implementing evidence-based strategies.

These include:

- An IDEAL discharge,[2]
- A standardized process[3]
- A patient-oriented discharge summary (PODS).[4]

THE NURSING SOLUTION

Plan the IDEAL discharge[2] with the interdisciplinary care team.

STEP 1

I D E A L

Include the patient and family as partners in their discharge planning process.

Discuss five key areas:

1. *Describe what life at home will be like.*
2. *Review medications.*
3. *Highlight warning signs and problems.*
4. *Explain medical condition and test results.*
5. *Arrange follow-up appointments.*

Educate your patient about their condition, plan of care and discharge process throughout their hospital stay.

Assess your patient's understanding of their diagnosis, condition, medications and care by using the teach-back method.

Listen and honour the patient and family's goals, preferences, observations and concerns.

> **"Discharge planning should be an ongoing process…not a one-time event."[2]**

STEP 2

Standardize the process.

- Advocate for the development of a policy to identify the roles and responsibilities of each member of the interdisciplinary care team.
- Determine the estimated discharge date on admission.[5]
- Use the whiteboard in the patient's room to communicate with the patient and family.[2,5,6]
- Develop a checklist to guide the process from admission to discharge for your organization and use it to guide daily interdisciplinary rounds.[3]

Develop a population-specific patient-oriented discharge summary (PODS)[4]

STEP 3

- ☑ Medication instructions
- ☑ Follow-up appointments with phone numbers
- ☑ Expected symptoms, danger signs and what to do
- ☑ Lifestyle changes and when to resume activities
- ☑ Information and resources to have handy

Karlee Boersma, RN, BScN, MN

Acknowledgment to Michelle Freeman, RN, PhD, CPPS, associate professor, University of Windsor.

A literature review of evidence-based practices, guidelines and scholarly resources from 2010 to 2020 was conducted to inform this infographic. References are available at https://www.canadian-nurse.com/en/articles/issues/2021/july-2021/three-steps-to-a-safer-hospital-discharge-an-infographic-for-optimal-patient-outcomes