



National Senior Games Association

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Humana®

5 Tips to Avoid Hospital Readmissions

Patients are anxious to get home after spending time in the hospital but, unfortunately, unplanned readmissions can and do occur. These readmissions, which cost \$17 billion a year, result in huge financial implications for hospitals and health care providers.

Readmission is even more problematic for seniors since they are often readmitted for a medical condition different from the one leading to the initial hospitalization. In fact, about one in five Medicare members who are hospitalized ends up back in the hospital within 30 days. This can slow recovery and result in additional complications, added costs for medications and longer hospital stays.

Some simple steps can dramatically reduce hospital readmission rates. For example, Humana, through its national chronic care program, provides increased communications, on-site follow-up care, nutritional guidance and caregiver support to more than 225,000 Medicare Advantage members across the country after discharge.

The Humana Chronic Care Program has resulted in 34 percent fewer hospitalizations for members living with chronic conditions who receive this personalized, integrated care. Whether a patient or caregiver, there are specific things people can do to help themselves or their family members stay out of the hospital and on the road to recovery. To help people proactively avoid re-hospitalization, Humana is offering the following simple tips:

- **Manage Your Meds:** Pay attention to your daily dose of medications throughout your hospital stay. Have your doctor or nurse explain what each pill is used for, the dosage, how often and when it should be taken, what food or drink it can be taken with, what the pill looks like, and possible interactions with other drugs. Also, have your doctor make sure there are no duplications of brand-name and generic drugs. If possible, have a caregiver present so they can also understand your medications, and write everything down.
- **Coordinate Contact Info:** Have a list of names and emergency phone numbers in case something goes wrong when you leave the hospital, including the doctors you saw, your primary care physician, local pharmacist, and transportation services for your follow-up appointments. You should also have contact information for your caregivers and home health aide services available through your insurance company. For example, if you are a Humana Medicare Advantage member you are eligible for telephonic care-management, in-home care management and in-home caregiving through the Humana Chronic Care Program.
- **Be Detailed at Discharge:** Before getting released from the hospital make sure you and a caregiver have a list of questions and understand specific discharge instructions, including any warning signs to watch out for and who to contact for questions. It's also vital to have a follow-up appointment scheduled with your primary care physician and ensure they are up to speed about your condition and recent procedures.



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- **Ensure Safe Surroundings:** Before you arrive home, have caregivers make sure your house is safe so you can avoid a fall, a leading cause of injury death according to the Centers for Disease Control and Preventionⁱⁱ. With one in every three adults age 65 and older falling each year, this problem can easily be prevented by having durable medical equipment, such as a walker or shower seat, available; making sure area rugs aren't a hazard to trip over; determining ways to avoid stairs; and, having any necessities within reach of your recovery area.
- **Don't Neglect Nutrition:** According to a recent study, one-fifth of hospitalized patients 65 years of age or older had an average nutrient intake of less than 50 percentⁱⁱⁱ. Since malnutrition can affect every system in the body^{iv}, it's important to get back to a regular healthy meal plan as soon as possible. Work with your caregiver or health aid to plan your meals, or contact your benefits provider to see if they offer a delivery service. For example, Humana Cares offers a meal benefit called Well Dine, which provides 10 precooked meals to a member after each inpatient stay.

NSGA thanks Humana for sharing this article. For more information on a wide range of related topics, please visit [Health and Well Being](#) in the Learning Center at www.Humana.com.

i <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1212324?viewType=Print&viewClass=Print&>

ii <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/adultfalls.html>

iii <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1212324?viewType=Print&viewClass=Print&>

iv <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1212324?viewType=Print&viewClass=Print&>



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