

SEEKING URGENT AND EMERGENCY CARE

Need to Knows provide older adults and their families with important information to enhance their hospital or nursing home stays. Communication and teamwork are important aspects of high-quality healthcare. The individual, family, and caregivers are vital members of the team.

Why is it important?

Older adults with sudden health problems often require care by urgent or emergency care centers. However, they can be challenging places if you are not well equipped, informed, and prepared. You and your family should be active participants in your care to ensure a positive experience.

What you and your family can do:

Describe what brought you to the emergency department or urgent care.

Share your medications, your healthcare providers' names, and your medical and surgical history.

Ask the names and roles of staff taking care of you. If they don't tell you or you don't recall – ask again.

Ask questions about your care, such as:

- What procedure or test is this and why do I need it?
- Can you tell me what is happening?

Let staff know immediately if your symptoms change or if you have new symptoms.

Take notes on what happened during your visit and what information was provided.

Ask if all of your healthcare providers will receive information about your visit; obtain copies to take with you.

Ask for your diagnosis and add it to your medical history, whether this is a new or recurrent problem.

Make sure you understand your discharge instructions, what you have to do when you get home, and whom you should call with any questions or concerns.

If you are being admitted to the hospital, ask for the diagnosis and to which unit you will be sent.

When leaving, find out when to call your healthcare provider or seek additional care for worsening symptoms, new symptoms, or other changes.

Request an interpreter to communicate with the care team, if needed.

