Discharge Summary

An information guide

Discharge Summary

Key message

When you leave hospital, you should have a discharge summary given to you.

What is a discharge summary?

A discharge summary is a letter written by the doctor caring for you in hospital.

It contains important information about your hospital visit, including:

- why you came into hospital
- the results of any tests you had
- the treatment you received
- any changes to your medication
- what follow-up you need

Who receives a copy of the discharge summary?

- A paper and electronic copy of the letter is sent to your GP
- A paper copy is put in your hospital notes
- A paper copy is given to you, before you leave hospital
- The discharge summary is also stored electronically, but can only be accessed by staff involved in your care.

Why is a discharge summary important?

The main aim of the discharge summary is to inform your GP about what happened during your hospital visit. This means that your GP can change your prescription(s) according to the advice of the hospital doctors, chase any test results which weren’t available whilst you were in hospital, and arrange further investigations or referrals as necessary.

If you require further medical attention then the electronic version of the discharge summary can be vital if you come to Accident and Emergency as there is not enough time to get your paper notes, which can sometimes be stored in a different Pennine Acute Trust Hospital.

Ultimately, a discharge summary helps doctors provide the best possible care for you.
Why is it beneficial to have my own copy of the discharge summary?

During a visit to hospital, you will be given a lot of information which can be difficult to take in, especially if you are unwell. By having your own copy of the discharge summary it means that you can look over what happened.

It is also a good reminder of any changes to your medications that the hospital doctors made.

Sometimes GPs have not yet received a copy of your discharge summary before you see them after your discharge from hospital. By having your own copy and taking it with you to your GP appointment, it ensures that your GP is aware of what has happened. For example they could go over what has happened and answer any questions you may have thought of since your discharge.

What if I don’t receive one?

Then you must ask for it.

What if I don’t want one?

If, for whatever reason, you don’t want a copy of your discharge summary just let the doctor know, as you don’t have to have one. Your GP will still receive a copy, but it is kept strictly confidential.

When will I get a copy of my discharge summary?

You will receive a copy BEFORE you leave hospital.

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Ethnic Health Team on 0161 627 8770

¿Si no habla español y necesita ayuda, póngase en contacto con la Equipo de Salud Étnica en 0161 627 8770.

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Ethnic Health Team on 0161 627 8770

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service.

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