

EMPOWERED PATIENT[®]

“Ten Things Patients Should Know” Series

TRANSFER TO SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES (SNF)

1. **DISCHARGE TIMELINE:** When is the patient expected to be transferred to the SNF? Ask about the possibility of nursing home care as soon as the patient is hospitalized to have time to research SNF's and to prepare for this transition.
2. **SNF CHOICES:** Which facilities are available to the patient and do they have an open bed? Can the patient request a single room, and is there an extra fee?
3. **TRANSPORTATION TO THE SNF:** How will the patient be transferred to the SNF? If transportation by ambulance is needed, are the charges covered by insurance?
4. **SNF REVIEWS:** Consult Medicare.gov Nursing Home Compare for SNF information. Google the name of the SNF and read any online reviews or comments. Contact your state Department Of Health and ask for the most recent inspection results.
5. **SPECIAL NEEDS:** Ask the hospital discharge planner or case manager if the patient has special needs that the SNF will need to provide, such as a special diet or onsite physical therapy (PT) or occupational therapy (OT) services.
6. **VISITING THE SNF:** The patient's advocate should try to visit the SNF choices in person. Check the toilet and shower facilities, cleanliness, patient activities and food selections. What is the caregiver to patient ratio – especially during evenings and weekends?
7. **PATIENT RISKS:** Nursing home patients may be at an increased risk of infection, overuse of antibiotics leading to “superbug” infections that may not be curable, falls, malnutrition, dehydration, medication interactions and side-effects, pneumonia and depression. Report any unusual symptoms you may observe in your loved one.
8. **COORDINATION OF CARE:** Which staff member is responsible for coordinating the patient's care? Who is the physician in charge and how can he/she be contacted if there is a concern? Will the patient's regular doctor visit the SNF? How are emergencies handled?
9. **VISITING POLICIES:** Does the SNF have a written visiting policy? If so, ask for a copy. Can approved visitors stay all night? Is there a policy for bringing food or other comfort items from home?
10. **INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SNF's:** Are there any needed services that are not covered by insurance? Is there supplemental Medicare coverage that needs to be billed? What is the protocol if the patient meets or exceeds their insurance maximum?