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Getting moving again after a hospital stay

Leaving hospital and the first 14 days at home, with local help in Bedfordshire

For adults in Bedfordshire, their families, carers and anyone helping them at home. This edition adds a list of local help in Bedfordshire.

Your own care plan comes first. Follow the advice your hospital or care team gave you, including anything you must not do, and any advice about walking, exercise, eating or drinking. Use any equipment and help you were advised to use.

This is a checklist and a diary. It is not an exercise programme, and it is not a deadline for getting better.

When to get medical help: page 8. My 14-day record: page 10.

Before you leave hospital

Tick each one when it is sorted. Ask the ward team about anything you are unsure of.

- [ ] My journey home is arranged, and I can get into my home.
- [ ] Anyone helping me knows when I am coming home. Any care visits are confirmed.
- [ ] I have my discharge letter or care plan, and I understand the next steps.

- [ ] I know which of my medicines have changed, and how and when to take each one.
- [ ] I have the medicines I need, and I know how to get more before they run out.
- [ ] Any equipment I need is ready, and I have practised using it.
- [ ] I know what help I need with my bed, chair, toilet and any stairs.
- [ ] Any exercises, and anything I must not do, have been explained and written down.
- [ ] Food and drinks are sorted for when I get home.
- [ ] If I have been in hospital for a while, someone will put the heating on before I get home, so the house is warm when I arrive.
- [ ] If I have a personal alarm or falls sensor, it is charged and working.
- [ ] I know about any follow-up appointments, and who to call if there is a problem.
- [ ] I have talked about my worries, and asked whether short-term help at home would be useful.

My useful contacts

Hospital ward or discharge team, and phone:

GP surgery and phone:

Community or home care team and phone, if arranged:

Equipment contact and phone:

Follow-up appointment: date, time and place:

At home: little and often

Follow the advice from your own healthcare team first.
Some of the points below may not be right for you, or may need changing. This is a general guide. If you are not sure something is safe for you, check with your healthcare team before you try it.

- Take it easy on your first day home. Getting home from hospital can be very tiring.
- Get dressed and sit out of bed for meals when you can, with help if you need it.
- Try not to sit or lie still for long spells. Move about in the way your care team advised, and walk only when it is safe, with your walking aid and any help you need.
- Do the exercises you were given, the way you were shown.
- Spread things out through the day and rest in between. Build up gradually. You do not have to do more every day.
- Have regular meals and drinks, following any advice you were given about diet, swallowing or how much to drink.
- If something new starts, or something gets worse, do not push through it. Ask for advice, and use the “When to get medical help” page.

Things I must not do, or help I need:

Something I would like to work towards, with my care team:

Making home safer

- Keep the places you walk clear of clutter, cables and loose rugs.
- Light the way to the toilet at night.
- Wear shoes or slippers that stay on securely and grip the floor.
- Put your personal alarm or falls sensor back on when you get home, and keep it charged. Keep your phone within reach.
- Use your walking aid as you were shown, and take your time getting up.
- Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower, and any equipment recommended for you.
- Get help with lifting, reaching and heavy jobs.

Ask your GP or pharmacist whether any of your medicines could affect your balance. Do not change or stop a medicine without advice.

Where to get help in England and Wales

Short-term help at home. Ask the ward before you leave, or your GP surgery or council once you are home. You may be assessed for short-term care, often called reablement or intermediate care. When it is offered it is free, and it usually lasts no more than 6 weeks, depending on your needs.

Equipment and changes to your home. Your council's adult social care team can tell you how to ask for an assessment.

Worried about how you left hospital. Speak to the hospital team, or its patient advice service (PALS in England, the concerns team in Wales). For an urgent medical problem, use the "When to get medical help" page instead.

Local help in Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire has three councils: Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. Use the number for the council where you live. Each line says which area it is for. Some services may charge.

Adult social care: your council. Advice about care at home, and how to ask for an assessment. Bedford Borough: 01234 276168, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4pm. Central Bedfordshire: 0300 300 8000, Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. Luton: 01582 547 659.

Out of hours, emergencies only. The Emergency Duty Team covers all three councils in the evenings, at weekends and on bank holidays. Call 0300 300 8123. If someone is in danger, call 999.

Short-term help to get back on your feet. Each council has a reablement team. It helps you do everyday things for yourself again after an illness, a fall or a hospital stay. Ask the ward staff before you leave, or call your council. In Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire it usually lasts up to six weeks, and in Bedford Borough it is free for up to six weeks. In Luton, a short stay in a step-down flat is free for up to six weeks.

Age Concern Luton: help after a hospital stay. For older people in Luton. A free service for up to 28 days to help you settle back in at home. Staff can move furniture to make space for equipment, fit a key safe and give benefits advice. **01582 456812** · ageconcernluton.org.uk

Equipment. The Community Equipment Loan Service lends equipment free of charge to people who are assessed as needing it. Medequip delivers, repairs and collects it:

0333 091 7763. Central Bedfordshire: for equipment and small changes to your home, call 0345 602 4064. Bedford Borough: see equipment and get free advice at the Centre for Independent Living, by appointment, 01234 276102. Luton: ask for an occupational therapy assessment through the council's Adult Care Portal.

Falls. If you have fallen, or are scared of falling, ask your GP about NHS falls help. Luton: Age Concern Luton's Falls Prevention team can fit grab rails and fix trip hazards at home. The service is free, but you pay for materials. Call 01582 456812.

Personal alarms. A pendant you press to call for help, day or night. Bedford Borough: ask for a telecare assessment on 01234 276168. It can be free, but some people pay a weekly charge. Central Bedfordshire: ask for a care assessment on 0300 300 8000. Luton: Assistive Technology Solutions, 01582 720703.

Help for carers. Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire: Blue Sky Carers Support, 01234 673810. Carers in Bedfordshire, 0300 111 1919, Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm. A carer's assessment from your council is free. Luton: Carers in Luton, or ask Luton Council for a carer's assessment online.

Home Fire Safety Visit. A free visit from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for people who may be at risk, for example if you are over 65, live alone or have care needs. The team can also give advice about falls. **0800 043 5042** · bedsfire.gov.uk/home-fire-safety-visits

Advice for older people. Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire: Age UK Bedfordshire gives free advice about benefits and forms. Call 01234 360510, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Luton: Age Concern Luton, 01582 456 812.

Healthwatch. Help finding health and care services, and a place to tell someone about your care. Central Bedfordshire: 0300 303 8554. Luton: 01582 817 060, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Bedford Borough: healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk.

Hospital patient advice (PALS). Free help if you have a worry about hospital care. Bedford Hospital: 01234 795814. Luton and Dunstable University Hospital: 01582 497990. The office is open 8am to 4pm.

Local contacts checked 9 November 2026. Services can change, so check before you rely on one.

When to get medical help

This is not a full list. Follow any extra advice in your discharge paperwork.

Call 999 now if you have

- Sudden chest pain or discomfort that does not go away, pain that spreads to your arm, neck, jaw or back, or chest pain with sweating, feeling sick, light-headed or short of breath.
- Severe difficulty breathing: gasping, choking or not able to get your words out.
- Pain and swelling in a leg together with chest pain or breathlessness. This can be a blood clot.
- Your face droops on one side, you cannot lift both arms, or your speech is slurred or muddled. These can be signs of a stroke. Call even if they stop.
- You have fallen and cannot get up, or you may have hurt your head, neck, back or hip.
- Bleeding that you cannot stop, for example from a wound or where you had stitches.

Do not drive yourself to A&E.

Call NHS 111, or get an urgent GP appointment, if you have

- New pain and swelling in one leg, sometimes with red or darker skin. This can be a blood clot.
- Breathlessness that comes on suddenly, or being more short of breath than usual.
- Coughing up blood.
- A wound or stitches that open up, or a wound that is bleeding, red, swollen, more painful or has pus coming out of it.
- You have fallen and are in pain, hurt or feeling unwell, but none of the 999 signs apply.

If any 999 sign applies, call 999 first.

Contact your GP or care team if

- You are worried about your walking or balance.
- You have had a fall, even if you were not hurt.
- Everyday things are getting harder to manage. Ask early. Do not wait for the diary to finish.

If you fall and cannot get up

- Call 999, or use your personal alarm. If you cannot reach either, shout or bang on the wall or floor.
- Keep warm. Cover yourself with anything within reach.
- Do not force yourself to get up. Follow the call handler’s advice about moving while you wait.
- Anyone with you should not try to lift you.

My 14-day record

Start on your first day at home. Tick the things that were right for you and that you managed, with help if needed. Write “n/a” where something does not apply. This is a record, not a test.

The days do not have to look the same. If something new starts or you are clearly getting worse, use the “When to get medical help” page rather than waiting for the diary to finish.

Keep this record and take it to any follow-up appointments.

Day	Date	Got dressed	Sat out for meals	Movement as advised	Exercises as advised	How I felt, or things to ask about
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

My 14-day record (continued)

Day	Date	Got dressed	Sat out for meals	Movement as advised	Exercises as advised	How I felt, or things to ask about
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						

General information, not a personal treatment plan. Follow your own discharge advice. Prepared by Mobile Physiotherapist UK from NHS guidance. Sources checked 20 October 2026. General guidance checked by Claire Williamson, Chartered Physiotherapist, 27 October 2026. Bedfordshire contacts checked 9 November 2026. Free to print, copy and share.