

The care you need after surgery will depend on what surgery you had, your recovery, and your treatment plan. *Making arrangements prior to your surgery is important.* Please ask your surgeon or a member of our health care team about recommendations for your unique situation. You may need to consider some, or all of the following:

Learn self-care. You will need to learn to care for yourself before discharging home. This may include new medications, wound care, feeding tube care, drain care, tracheostomy care, or laryngectomy care. Staff in the hospital will be available to teach you what you need to know.

Establish a caregiver. If you have complicated wound care, a feeding tube, a tracheostomy, or a laryngectomy, you will likely need someone available to help you and stay with you until you feel comfortable caring for yourself. Your caregiver should be available to come to the hospital to learn care from staff before discharge. It is helpful to have someone that can work with staff to arrange delivery of equipment you may need.

Consider skilled Nursing. If you do not feel comfortable taking care of yourself at home, or your care requires more assistance than is available to you, skilled nursing may be an option. Home health nurses check on you and answer questions two to three times a week, for about an hour at a time. Insurance and the location of your home can be limiting factors. More extensive help requires hiring private assistance, or considering a temporary stay at a skilled nursing facility.

Stay Active. Staying active after surgery is important to advancing towards a safe discharge home. Sitting in a chair and walking can prevent complications leading to a longer hospital stay and more complex aftercare. Physical therapists and nursing staff will help you out of bed as early as the first day after surgery. Always call for help.

Transportation. Consider what help you will need with driving to and from appointments. You will have at least one post-op follow up appointment with your surgeon, and likely more. If you need chemotherapy or radiation treatment you may have a series of appointments scheduled. If you live far away this can be challenging, so consider your options in advance. UC Davis may be able to provide options for assistance if needed.

Online Resources:

Family Caregiver Alliance website: <https://www.caregiver.org/hospital-discharge-planning-guide-families-and-caregivers>