



Your hospital stay

A guide to preparing for your hospital stay

Whether it's for a routine procedure or something more serious, a spell in hospital can be worrying. But if your visit is planned, there are some things you can do to make your stay easier.

If you're staying overnight, you'll usually have a private room, and the hospital's dedicated nursing staff will be with you throughout your stay so try not to worry. Our guide will help you prepare.

Check your hospital admission letter

This'll tell you what you need to know about your visit, including the date and what time to turn up, and where to go inside the hospital.

If you need to go in for a few tests first, the details of your appointment may be in this letter, too. If they're not, don't worry – someone will contact you.

Your letter will also tell you whether you need to stop eating or drinking for a time before your visit, and whether you need to bring any medication or samples with you.

Bring a few details with you

Write down your PHC membership number and treatment authorisation number. Pop these on the back of your admission letter, in a notebook, or make a note of them on your phone.

It's also a good idea to bring your GP's contact details, as well as phone numbers or email addresses for any friends and family.

You should also bring some ID such as a driving licence.

Pack some comfy clothes

If you're staying at least one night, pack some comfortable, warm and loose clothing. Short-sleeved tops are a good choice in case you need a drip in your arm or monitoring of any kind. Layers that you can take on or off easily are good.

If you're having treatment or surgery on your legs, bring shorts, a skirt or loose loungewear. Slippers and comfortable shoes will also come in handy.

Bring a dressing gown for getting up and walking around. And don't forget to pack your nightshirt or pyjamas.

Toiletries to remember include: your toothbrush and toothpaste, or denture sterilising tablets and sterilising pot; a small hand towel; sanitary products; contact lens equipment.

Other bits and bobs to bring

- Entertainment such as books, magazines or tablet (don't forget your headphones).¹
- Your mobile phone and charger. Check your hospital's policy on electronic equipment.¹
- Any medication you normally take and a list of dosages for these.
- A few snacks.
- Some money if you want to use a vending machine or buy a newspaper.
- A credit/debit card (sometimes used as a guarantee, you won't be charged without being notified).
- A notebook and pen for writing down any instructions that the hospital staff give you.

Things to do when you get back

You might be prescribed some medication and have a follow up appointment booked for you.

If you need any help with your medication or you have any questions about your physical or mental health, call our 24/7 health support line team on **0800 003 004**.

The hospital will get in touch with us about payment. We'll let you know if there's any excess for you to pay. Above all, make sure you rest and follow recommendations given by the hospital staff.

Things to do before you go

Remove any nail polish, acrylic nails, hair extensions and jewellery.

If you have any dietary needs, let the hospital know before your stay.

Get a taxi or arrange for someone to collect you after your visit, as your ability to drive might be affected by medication or anaesthetics.

If you can, get your home ready for when you come back to make moving around as easy as possible. You can stock up on food and drinks you may feel like treating yourself to as you recuperate.

Checklist

- ☐ Have you got your admission letter? You'll need to bring it with you.
- ☐ Have you gathered all relevant details together? Keep them with you in one place.
- ☐ Have you packed the clothes and toiletries you'll need?
- ☐ Have you prepared yourself and your home for your hospital visit?

1. Some hospitals may ask you not to use electronic equipment in the building because of the risk of interference with clinical equipment. If you can't easily use your mobile phone, tell your family and friends and give them the hospital's contact details.