

Why you should follow up with your doctor after a hospital stay or ER visit

Always make a follow-up appointment with your primary care doctor (PCP) within 5 days of going home from the hospital or ER.

Here are 5 reasons why:

- 1. Your PCP needs to know what happened and why.** There was a reason for the hospital or ER visit. Maybe you had a bad reaction to a new medicine. Or maybe you started a new meal or exercise plan. Your doctor also needs to know what happened in the hospital.
- 2. It's an excellent way to see what you need to do next.** You'll need to follow your doctor's directions carefully once you leave the hospital. If you have a question about your follow-up care, call your doctor's office. If you're worried, reach out with questions. This can help stop problems from getting worse.
- 3. You'll go over any medicine changes.** You may get new or extra medicines when you're released from the hospital. Some of them may need to be watched carefully for your safety. Like blood thinners. Be sure to bring any new medicine bottles to your follow-up appointment. Your doctor needs to go over the list of current medicines you're taking. They'll make sure the list is complete and you're taking the right amount. That's called **medication reconciliation**.
- 4. You'll get a checkup to see how you're doing.** Your doctor will make sure you don't have any new problems. You may be asked to get more blood work. Your doctor will also check on your vital signs, like blood pressure and how well you're breathing. People with diabetes will have their blood sugar checked. If you had a bleeding problem, your doctor will check if your blood counts are stable.
- 5. It's focused time just for you and your doctor.** You can talk to your doctor about anything else or ask questions. Especially if it's been a while since your last appointment.



Schedule a follow-up appointment with your doctor today.

What should I do before my follow-up visit?

Make sure to ask the hospital or ER team when they'll reach out to your PCP about:

- The care you got in the hospital
- Your current care needs

Your doctor needs this information before your first follow-up visit. That way they can give you the care you need.

You should make an appointment or call for an appointment within 5 days of being seen in the hospital or ER.

What should I expect at my follow-up visit?

Be sure to keep all your follow-up appointments. When you go:

- Be ready to tell your doctor about how you've been feeling.
- Bring copies of any test results.
- Ask questions about any part of your recovery or care.
- Let your doctor know about any care steps you're taking. During your hospital stay, you may have been given steps to follow. Like weighing yourself every day. Or exercises to speed your recovery. Be sure to let your doctor know about these things.

What else should I do?

Let family or friends be a part of your recovery. They may be able to help you by:

- Picking up medicine
- Taking you to appointments
- Remembering things you forgot, like:
 - Symptoms
 - Problems
 - What questions to ask

They can help you have a smoother recovery after you're released from the hospital.

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