



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

# Coming Into Hospital

**5** Key Things

Making sure nobody faces dementia alone.

# Getting ready for your hospital stay

Coming into hospital can be a worrying time for anyone. If you have dementia, you may be particularly worried and anxious about staying in an unfamiliar place. You may also be unsure about what will happen during your hospital stay.

The information in this booklet is designed to help answer some of the questions you may have about preparing to come into hospital and about what to expect during your stay.



# 1

## What do I need to bring to hospital with me?

The hospital will send you information on what you need to bring with you. You may wish to consider bringing:

- Power of Attorney Certificate (if you have this in place)
- Your prescribed medications/medi-box
- Hearing aids or spectacles. It's helpful to label your spectacles with your name or initials and what you use them for i.e. reading or distance
- Comfortable clothing, nightwear, shoes and slippers
- Toiletries
- Small familiar items that will help you to feel settled. For example, a family photograph
- A small clock and calendar to help you keep track of the date and time.

**It is very helpful for staff to have written information** about the things that are important to you. If you have a completed '*getting to know me*' document please bring this into hospital with you. If you don't have one, you will be able to get one by visiting [www.alzscot.org/gettingtoknowme](http://www.alzscot.org/gettingtoknowme) or you can ask a member of hospital staff to provide you with this.

# What to expect during your hospital stay

People often don't know what will happen when they come into hospital and this can be particularly frightening for someone with dementia. Knowing what to expect, who people are and how to get the help you need can help to alleviate those fears.

The following sections set out what you can expect to see in hospitals and from the staff who provide your care.



## 2

# How will I know who people are and how to find my way around?

The team of staff looking after you should introduce themselves to you when you come into hospital.

- A staff member will show you around the ward and orientate you to your bedroom area on admission
- Every staff member has a name badge. This can help to act as a memory aid of who they are
- Clear signs will be in use to help you find your way around
- Ideally, you will not be moved to a different bed or ward area unless this is discussed with you, is needed as a result of your condition and is for your benefit.

If you would like to **meet the staff or see the ward or unit** before a planned hospital stay, you or a friend or family member can telephone and ask if this can be arranged. It may be helpful to **write down anything you would like to ask** (or request someone does this for you) and bring this with you during any arranged visit.

### 3

## Will staff know I have dementia and how to help support my individual needs?

Staff may not always be aware you have dementia. Telling staff you have dementia and what areas you have difficulty with, will enable them to better meet your specific needs.

- All staff have access to national dementia training programmes and resources. There are also staff who have specialist training in dementia care e.g. Dementia Champions and Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Nurse Consultants, who can help to provide any additional help and advice
- A personal plan of care suited to your individual needs should be developed in partnership with you
- Your '*getting to know me*' document can also help inform your plan of care and enable staff to understand your likes and dislikes, your normal routines, what may be upsetting for you and how staff can help to make you feel at ease
- Staff will work with you to get the right plan in place for you, in preparation for your return home. They will arrange for you to go home in the daytime rather than in the evening.

**It is very important that you feel safe** when you are in hospital. Staff will try to make your hospital stay as comfortable as possible but if you are worried about anything please **let someone know**.

## 4 Will my family and friends be able to visit?

Staff recognise that maintaining contact with close friends and family is often important to people whilst they are in hospital.

- Visiting times should be flexible to your needs and those of your close friends and family members
- Please discuss with staff who you would like to visit with you, your visiting preferences and how these can be accommodated.

**Family members and/or close friends should be welcome** to help you during your hospital stay if this is something you would both like e.g. **help at mealtimes, with personal care or supporting you in discussions** about your care.

## 5 What should I do if I have any concerns about my care?

There are standards that support and drive quality care for people with dementia in general hospitals but if you have any concerns please:

- Speak to a member of staff as soon as possible. If you don't feel comfortable doing so, ask a friend or relative if they can help or ask to be put in touch with advocacy services
- Use the Care Opinion hospital feedback system to let people know what was good or not so good about your stay and how you think things can be made better.

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**24 HOUR**

Dementia



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

# Helpline

Freephone 0808 808 3000  
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