

When you no longer need acute care on 7 South

Your doctor has determined that you no longer need acute care on 7 South. This means that your condition has stabilized and you do not need to stay at the Hamilton General Hospital to receive medical treatments and procedures. At this time, the care and services that you need can be provided in another location.

However, sometimes patients have to continue to stay on 7 South for a period of time and wait until their next destination is ready. This can vary from 2 days to many days.

This handout lets you know what you can expect now that the acute care portion of your stay has finished.

The role of the family

Family and friends have an important role in giving you emotional support. This role becomes even more important if you are adjusting to lifestyle changes. Family and friends can take part in some parts of your care. We also encourage your family to attend meetings about your progress and help with your transition to the community.

Communication

The team recognizes the importance of answering you and your family's questions about your care and progress. As such we will be scheduling a meeting with you and your family soon to talk about the next steps. The team will meet at least once a week to review and discuss your status. In addition, the doctors will come around and see you every Thursday. It would be helpful for you and your family to have questions for the doctors during this time.

Mobility

The team's goal is to have you out of bed in an appropriate seating system 3 to 5 times a week, or as tolerated by you.

The team will complete range of motion exercises, 2 times a week, if needed. We encourage families to talk to the team about learning these exercises to also help with this part of care.

The team will teach you exercises to help you improve your mobility if needed which can be done by you or your caregiver. We encourage your family to talk to the team and to be involved with your care.

Your status will be reassessed every 2 weeks by the team and updates will be written in the Weekly Update page, located in your Stroke Care Binder.

Skin care

Lying in bed puts pressure on your skin. This pressure may lead to wounds or sores.

The pressure may cause burning, redness or pain especially around your:

- ears
- shoulders
- elbows
- buttocks
- ankles
- heels

If you have any of these signs, please tell your nurse or other health team member right away. The best way to prevent skin problems is to change positions often and avoid lying down in bed for long periods of time. Members of your health team will encourage you to move as much as possible. Eating and drinking well also supports healthy skin.

For more information on skin care, please ask for a copy of the handout, "Keeping your skin healthy and free of pressure ulcers" or visit the Patient Education Library on our website: www.hamiltonhealthsciences.

Nutrition

Many people have trouble swallowing after a stroke. For this reason all stroke patients are screened or assessed for their swallowing when they arrive on the stroke unit. This allows the team to select food and fluids that are safe for you. Some patients cannot tolerate any food or fluid safely. In this case, the team suggests an alternate form of nutrition.

If you can eat safely, you will receive food that is designed to meet your needs. If your family would like to bring in additional food, please check with the team to make sure it is right for you. You will be expected to sit in an upright position before you have anything to eat or drink. This reduces your risk of choking.

Many families find it helpful to be with their loved one to offer companionship during meals. We encourage your family to visit at mealtimes and give help when needed. This also gives you a chance to feel connected with your family.

Eating right and getting enough nutrition in the hospital may be a challenge as you may:

- have a decreased appetite
- find the foods different from what you normally eat at home.

Getting enough nutrition helps to reduce complications such as pressure ulcers and infections and it helps to maintain your muscles. Please tell the staff if you have any special diet needs such as food allergies or intolerances, or think you may need a nutritional supplement drink.

We will weigh you once a week to make sure that you are not losing weight during your stay in the hospital. We encourage you and your family to tell us what might help keep you interested in eating.

Mouth care

Mouth care is very important, especially in the hospital. Mouth care becomes even more important when you are not able to eat or drink. The team will help you with mouth care 2 times a day. This includes denture care if needed. Your family is encouraged to get involved in this type of care. It can help you feel more comfortable during your stay.

Bowel routine

When someone becomes less mobile their bowels do not work as well as they did before. This is also caused by changes in diets from hospital stays. Maintaining a regular bowel routine is very important for healing. The team may recommend a laxative to help with regular bowel movements. The team will also be tracking your bowel movements to make sure they are regular.

Family involvement

Being in the hospital can be very stressful. The team will keep you as comfortable as possible. We encourage your family to spend as much time as possible with you. Recognizing that there are times when your family may not be available and in this case a volunteer may be asked to visit with you. We find interacting with others, like family and/or volunteers beneficial as it helps keep you aware and responsive to your surroundings and active with conversation.

A note to families and visitors

We understand that families feel a lot of stress when a loved one is in the hospital. We will do our best to help you to cope. To help us focus on patient care, we trust that families, visitors and staff will treat each other with respect.

Respect is important when challenges are experienced. Our staff follow a Code of Conduct based on values such as caring and respect. A mutual respect booklet is available for patients and families. If you would like a copy, please ask a staff member. Reading this booklet will help you know how you and your family can communicate effectively with the team.



The 7 South Manager or Clinical Leader are available Monday to Friday, during working hours at 905-521-2100, ext. 46858.