

PATIENT INFORMATION

Carers Information

Are you caring for a relative or friend?

In all Torbay and South Devon Trust areas, we know that carers have an important role in the effective and safe treatment and care of patients, be they relatives or friends.

Whilst they are in hospital we would like to support you if you wish, to continue to care for your relative.

We appreciate that this is a stressful time for you as a carer and you may not want to do more than visit your relative or friend. However, if you wish to continue to care whilst your relative or friend is in hospital please do talk to the staff on the ward.

How you can help:

If you are a carer or relative then please identify yourself either at Outpatient department, at the pre-assessment appointment or in the case of emergency, on admission.

Talk to the staff on the ward about whether or not you would like to support the patient by staying with them. Familiar faces and people often help to settle the person in a strange environment.

You may be asked to fill in a 'This is Me' document. This will assist with the development of a personalised care plan for the patient. In this document you can tell staff what you normally do to assist the patient and what they can do for themselves.

Other vital information includes: Does the patient have any communication difficulties? Are they visually or hearing impaired? Can they express themselves, answer simple questions appropriately, or follow instructions?

Does the person show any behaviours such as 'wandering' or verbal aggression? What are the trigger factors and how would you usually manage this?

Information about the patient's usual routines and preferences that we can support.

You can bring in familiar objects if you wish to help the person to settle, such as favourite toiletries, nightwear, cuddly toy, books, music, photographs or even favourite slippers (if supportive and non-slip).

You may also wish to help with the following:

- Giving support and encouragement at mealtimes.
- Helping them to keep up their fluid intake.
- Assisting with personal care such as their hair, nails or makeup.
- Supporting them to exercise if they are well enough (subject to review by physio).
- Checking on hearing aids and cleaning glasses.
- Talking about hobbies, friends and family memories.

Helpful Things to Know

You are not obliged to care for your relative in hospital, you may wish to use this opportunity to take a break, however if you wish, this information may be useful.

Please remember that you are responsible for your own actions whilst helping to care for your relative in hospital.

Some care must be led by the nursing staff, for example care that involves monitoring the patient's skin, moving the patient and infection control.

The staff remain responsible for the overall care and treatment of the person while in hospital.

Remember to take care of yourself, and take time out if you need.

If you feel able to help, please see the nurse or the person in charge of the ward. They will welcome your offer and will give you advice and guidance.

If you have concerns about continuing your caring role at home and/or need extra support to maintain your caring role, please talk to a nurse on admission so that staff can factor your concerns into discharge planning.

If you have not done so, please register as a carer. Your carer card will enable you to claim free parking in a pay on exit car park (please take ticket and carer card to main entrance reception to validate prior to leaving car park).

Help and Support is also available from:

- Signpost Information Officer - 01803 666620
- Devon Carers – Tel: 03456 434 435
Monday – Friday 08.00-18.00 Saturday 09.00-13.00

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact tsdft.dementiaeducation@nhs.net, who created this leaflet.