

A Guide to Short-Term Rehab *For Seniors*

*A Pathway to Recovery After
a Hospitalization, Illness or Injury*



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Bethesda Rehab & Senior Care

The Future of Senior Care Built on 100 Years of Expertise

SHORT-TERM REHAB • LONG-TERM CARE • ADULT DAY CLUB

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Not too long ago, older adults recovering from surgery, accident or illness remained in the hospital until they were well enough to go home. Today, that pattern has changed. Patients whose conditions have stabilized but still require further rehabilitation or clinical services generally must turn to specialized programs and settings to achieve maximum recovery.

This guide was designed to help you understand and select the short-term rehab option that's right for you... the fastest, safest, most efficient means of bridging the gap between hospital and home or alternate level of care.



What is post-acute care?

Post-acute care, also referred to as short-term rehabilitation or post-hospital care, is an intensive level of care one step down from the acute care provided by a hospital. Care is provided on an inpatient basis immediately after hospitalization. The ultimate goal is to help patients heal, both physically and emotionally, in a therapeutic environment, until they are well enough to be discharged to a lower level of care or, preferably, to their homes.

What are the settings for post-acute care?

The great majority of post-acute patients receive care in specially designed wings or units of skilled nursing facilities, separate from the long-term care population. Nursing facilities are ideal sites, since they already have the capabilities, staff and expertise needed to handle a wide range of health care needs. Other venues where post-acute care and short-term rehabilitation are offered include freestanding facilities and specialty units within certain hospitals.

What conditions qualify for post-acute care?

Anyone who requires 24-hour/7-day-a-week supervised care, but whose medical condition is stable, may be eligible for post-acute care. Most short-term rehabilitation facilities require a physician referral for a patient to be admitted. Some of the conditions that qualify for this level of care include –

- ▶ Orthopedic trauma, such as broken hips or complex fractures
- ▶ Joint replacement for hips or knees
- ▶ Post-surgical recovery
- ▶ Head and spinal cord injuries
- ▶ Neuromuscular disorders
- ▶ Slow healing wounds
- ▶ Motor vehicle and other traumatic accidents
- ▶ Stroke or heart attack
- ▶ Chronic or progressive illnesses, cancer, heart disease, renal failure and diabetes complications



What services are typically provided?

The most comprehensive skilled nursing care facilities provide customized rehabilitation plans designed for each patient based on his or her individual needs and diagnosis. Services may include, but are not limited to –

- ▶ Skilled nursing
- ▶ Physical and occupational therapy
- ▶ Speech and language pathology, including therapy for swallowing disorders
- ▶ Gait and balance training
- ▶ Cognitive strategies
- ▶ Intravenous therapy
- ▶ Enteral nutrition
- ▶ Respiratory therapy
- ▶ Wound care
- ▶ Pain management

How long will post-acute care continue?

Patients generally remain in treatment until the interdisciplinary team along with the doctor determines that they are well enough to be discharged. If a patient returns home, he or she may continue to receive care through home care services or the services of the post-acute facility on an outpatient basis.

What is a typical course of treatment during a short-term rehab stay?

Each short-term rehabilitation program and length of stay will vary from patient to patient. Some may be as short as 11 to 14 days, others as long as three weeks or more. The following example reflects what may be considered a “typical” three-week treatment pathway for a patient recovering from orthopedic surgery.

Week 1:

- Evaluations - physical, occupational and speech therapy, and social work
- Precautionary instruction
- Exercise instruction - supine and sitting
- Transfer training
- Gait and balance training
- Grooming and hygiene
- Dressing training, including adaptive equipment instruction
- Speech evaluation, cognition and diet
- Patient and family education

Week 2:

- Continued precautionary instruction
- Exercise instruction - supine, sitting and standing
- Transfer training - bed and toilet chair
- Gait and balance training
- Patient and family education - grooming, hygiene, bathing
- Dressing training

Week 3:

- Exercise instruction - sitting and standing
- Transfer training - bed, toilet chair, tub and shower, car
- Gait and balance training on level and uneven surfaces
- Grooming, hygiene, bathing training
- Dressing training
- Post discharge planning
- Patient and family education



Who pays for post-acute care?

Since post-acute care is typically prescribed by a physician, services are usually covered by major funding sources, including Medicare (following a three night hospital stay), Worker's Compensation, automobile no-fault plans, private health insurance, HMOs and other managed

care plans. Of course, patients without insurance coverage can pay for their care from private funds. Check with each facility you may be considering about coverage details.

What steps should patients take if their doctor recommends post-acute care?

Do your homework and compare the skilled nursing facilities in your area. Do their skilled nursing services meet your specific needs? What is their reputation in the community? Will your insurance cover your stay? Is the facility located near your personal physician? Is it close to the support of family and friends? Ask your doctor or hospital discharge planner for recommendations.



Remember, when it comes to your health, an informed choice is a smart choice.

We're Here For You

For over 100 years, Bethesda Rehab & Senior Care has been a community leader in senior health and wellness. Our care extends beyond the walls of our building, which is why we began this senior education initiative. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Please call **773-622-6144**.

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