

# Guide to Home Care

What you need to know to get started with short-term care at home.

When you have a major health event like a surgery or a stroke, you might worry about how you'll manage when you come home from the hospital. Your health care provider might prescribe home care so you can heal safely as you recover at home.

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## What Is Home Care?

Home care, sometimes called home health care, includes a wide range of care that takes place in the home. It can range from help with bathing or getting dressed, to nursing care for feeding tubes and ostomies, to rehab therapy. It can include social work services and visits from behavioral health experts.

Home care is usually short term, for a specific illness or injury, or other event. The people caring for you come to your home. You don't have to do anything to start receiving home care. It's something your health care provider orders, like medical tests or prescriptions.

If you are in the hospital, a discharge planner will work with your provider and you or your caregivers to make sure you'll have the services you need when you go home. If you've been injured or you have a chronic illness that requires additional care, your provider might call us to set up home care for you.

VNS Health will work with your provider to create a care plan. This plan covers all the services you will need as you recover.

Your home care services could include a plan specific for:

- [After-surgery care](#)
- [Care after a heart attack](#)
- [Care after gender affirmation surgery](#)
- [LGBTQ+ support](#)

- [Nursing](#)
- [Rehab therapy](#)
- [Stroke care](#)
- [Wound care](#)

Home care can be a general term for any care provided in the home. This guide is specifically about short-term home care, such as after you come home from the hospital, that includes nursing care.

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## When Is It Time for Home Care?

You may find home care helpful if you or your loved one is returning home after surgery or an injury and needs medical care or supervision, or assistance with bathing and dressing, household tasks, errands, or appointments.

When your health care provider recommends home care, you might still wonder why you need it. Many people underestimate how weak or sick they will be. Even if you have a family member or friend who will be with you, you may need care that they don't know how to do. With home care, a nurse or physical therapist can show your family members how to care for your incisions or help you move safely.

Home care can help you rest, recover fully, and not push yourself too hard. Home care can also limit the number of follow-up appointments by bringing care right to you.

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## In-Home Care Services from VNS Health

Home care makes recovery as easy as possible and provides the right level of attention to help you heal.

Your VNS Health home care team can help with many different aspects of your care.

## Your Medical Needs

After a hospital discharge, you may have a surgical wound or an incision that needs daily attention. Your physicians may have prescribed several medications to help you recover.

You may have feeding tubes or other equipment that require monitoring.

A [home care clinician](#) can:

- Review your medications and make sure you're taking them correctly
- Care for your wound or bed sores
- Monitor your vital signs and let your doctor know about anything out of the ordinary
- Administer feeding tubes or infusion therapy
- Make sure your caregivers know what to do, what to expect, and when to call

## Your Strength and Mobility

Following a hospital stay, you may be nervous about your body healing. Will you be able to do all the things you could before your surgery or injury? Your VNS Health home care team can help you build your strength and mobility back up — while also cheering you on.

Depending on your needs and care plan, your VNS Health care team may include experts who can:

- Help you manage your pain
- Work on any physical therapy exercises and keep track of your progress
- Focus on fine motor skills with you, like putting on your shoes or brushing your teeth
- Help you strengthen the muscles of your mouth, face, and neck (following a stroke, for example)
- Provide motivation and support

## Your Personal Care

If you're recovering from an illness, surgery, or injury, you may have trouble standing long enough to shower. You may need help eating or dressing until you regain use of an arm or a hand.

VNS Health home care may include home health aides, who can help you with:

- Dressing, bathing, shaving, and oral hygiene
- Grocery shopping and cooking meals that follow any diet restrictions or requirements
- Reminders to take medications
- Getting to and from medical appointments

# Your Emotional Needs

When it comes to health and health care, you may have a lot of questions and concerns about recovery, your or your loved one’s future, or the medical equipment that you need. VNS Health is here to offer education and emotional support in addition to physical care.

Your VNS Health home care team can:

- Show caregivers what to do and provide resources and information
- Suggest ways to make your home safer
- Teach you how to use home equipment
- Give supportive care for families of chronically or terminally ill individuals
- Build a real relationship with you and your family

# Get Care That Celebrates YOU

Any care you receive should respect and honor your individual identity and experiences. Our home care options reflect your right to supportive care with special programs both for the LGBTQ+ community and for veterans.

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# What to Expect During Your First Visit

Whether you require skilled medical care or assistance with personal care, you can be sure that your plan of care will include all the services your health care provider prescribes to meet your needs.

|                               | What to expect...                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Before You Leave the Hospital | <p>Prior to your discharge from the hospital, a discharge planner will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine the care you’ll need</li><li>• Explain what home care is</li><li>• Ensure a smooth transition home</li></ul> |

|                                | What to expect...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Before Your First Visit</b> | Someone from VNS Health will call to schedule your first visit. Your first visit may be from a nurse or a physical therapist, depending on your needs. This clinician will <i>not</i> visit you on your first day home from the hospital.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>During Your First Visit</b> | <p>During your first visit, a home care clinician (nurse or physical therapist) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain your care plan, including all the services your health care provider has ordered</li> <li>• Work with you and your caregivers to schedule the other services, tell you about the other members of your care team, and explain what they will be doing</li> <li>• Review any discharge instructions you received before leaving the hospital</li> <li>• Make sure you and your caregivers know how to use any medical tools or equipment</li> <li>• Answer any questions you may have</li> </ul> <p>They will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your vital signs</li> <li>• Monitor any wound or incision sites</li> <li>• Administer any medications</li> </ul> <p>Depending on your needs, your first visit may last up to 3 hours.</p> |
| <b>Throughout Your Care</b>    | <p>Your VNS Health team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help you understand what to expect regarding your medical condition and recovery</li> <li>• Teach you how to manage and monitor your condition</li> <li>• Support you through your recovery</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

The best way to make at-home care successful is to ask questions and raise any concerns you have. It's okay to admit that you are overwhelmed or unsure about something.

Whether you are receiving care or are someone else's caregiver, being open about your feelings and needs can help your VNS Health team provide the best care possible.

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## Paying for Home Care

At VNS Health, we'll work with you to understand your care needs and coverage. We accept a variety of payment options and even offer health plans.

Source: <https://www.vnshealth.org/patient-family-support/guides/guide-to-home-care/>

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