

# SENIORS LIVING

## Home Instead Senior Care launches Returning Home education campaign

An alarmingly high number of patients are readmitted to hospital soon after being discharged, and it is a growing concern for older adults and their families. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 1 in 12 patients is re-admitted to hospital within 30 days of being discharged.

Home Instead Senior Care is launching Returning Home, a public education program to help families prepare for a loved one's homecoming and avoid a return to the hospital. The program includes resources, strategies and educational videos to help families navigate a loved one's return home.

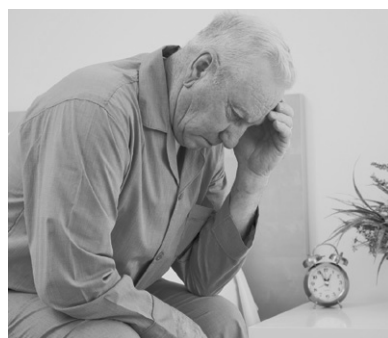
A guidebook, called *Returning Home: A Guide to Your Senior Loved One's Safe Transition Home in Canada*, has also been developed and is available free of charge by contacting Home Instead Senior Care at 905-847-8433

or [www.returninghome.com](http://www.returninghome.com).

It includes questions to ask a medical professional before discharge, checklists to ensure a safe home environment, and warning signs to watch for within the first 30 days of being home.

Common conditions with a high occurrence of rehospitalisation include heart attack, congestive heart failure, pneumonia, diabetes, comorbidity (multiple conditions), and arthritis.

"Families can become extremely overwhelmed when a loved one is transitioning from a hospital stay to home," says Scott Johnson, of Home Instead Senior Care in Halton Region. "These challenges can be a matter of logistics – such as the time of discharge, whether their loved one is prepared to leave the hospital, understanding medication and other health-related requirements, and the next steps of their recovery plan. It can be very con-



fusing and there can easily be a breakdown in communication."

Joan, who lives in Halton, is all too familiar with the issues families face having experienced the challenges of transitioning home. Joan, who is in her early 80s and lives alone, was sent home from the hospital four days after having a significantly intrusive surgery.

"I remember feeling panicked and as if the room was closing in on me when the nurse told me I'd be going home," says Joan. "I knew I would have difficulty with

simple things like preparing my meals and walking to the washroom. I wasn't ready to be alone and I was scared."

Home Instead Senior Care has prepared important recommendations for family caregivers to consider before a loved one's discharge, which include:

- Determine who will pick-up your loved one and get them settled in at home, and whether a special mode of transportation is required. Consider length of travel, parking, stairs, etc.
- Select a family representative to complete the forms required before leaving the hospital
- Prepare the home to accommodate a safe return – assistive devices, needs and resources
- Understand the next steps in recovery – follow-up appointment(s), rehab, who to contact in case of a relapse
- Make sure you know how and when new medication(s)

should be taken

- Understand the care requirements for your loved one to recover at home safely

- Determine who will be the primary family caregiver. Who will be the back-up caregiver?

"It is important that families are aware of the post-discharge care options available in order to make a well-informed decision that will help ensure a loved one's successful recovery," adds Johnson. "An older adult can benefit from a third party advocate who knows the details of their health condition and medications, and can act as a second set of ears or ask for clarification as required."

Home Instead Senior Care can support the needs of a senior, and his/her family, with discharge coordination and execution, medication management, nutrition management, assistance with follow up appointments and monitoring for potential warning signs.

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**April is Stress Awareness Month Stress and Seniors**  
5 Common Signs of Stress in Seniors  
While everyone experiences some levels of stress, for seniors, stress has the potential to be overwhelming. Along with contributing factors such as the loss of spouse or friends, living alone can increase the sense of isolation. The effects of stress can sometimes exacerbate health conditions from which some seniors suffer, causing additional worry. So, how can you tell if your older loved one is showing signs of suffering from stress?  
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