



Compassionate Discharge

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Changi
General Hospital

SingHealth

Compassionate Discharge at a glance:

- ➔ Everyone at home must be agreeable for compassionate discharge. During this challenging time, family members will have to **cope with the physical (care and symptoms, if any) and emotional stress**.
- ➔ The family should ensure there are carers to provide round-the-clock physical care. Sharing of care duties allows everyone to **rest without compromising the care** that your loved one needs.
- ➔ Every patient's journey during the last days is different. Some may have symptoms that are challenging to manage at home. In this case, compassionate discharge may not be appropriate.

Please speak with our care team to find out more if you are considering compassionate discharge for your loved one.



What is compassionate discharge?

Compassionate discharge is a special arrangement made to allow your loved one to return home to be cared for in the final days (hours to seven days).

What is the purpose of compassionate discharge?

- ➔ To fulfil your loved one's strong wish to pass away at home.
- ➔ To spend the remaining time in the privacy and comfort of your home.
- ➔ To fulfil religious obligations that cannot be carried out in the hospital.

Who is suitable for compassionate discharge?

Patients suitable for compassionate discharge include those with:

- A life-limiting disease or a disease that is not responding to treatment.
- A life expectancy of hours or short days.
- Dedicated carers for nursing care at home.
- The patient is stable enough to make the journey home.

What are the types of compassionate discharge?

Planned compassionate discharge:

Occurs on a scheduled day and time with all the support services as there is a longer runway to arrange for discharge.

Unplanned compassionate discharge:

Takes place when the patient's condition suddenly deteriorates, and the patient is likely to pass away in the next few hours.

Family members will need to learn to care for their loved one and arrange for support services within a short period of time, especially if this happens outside of office hours or on weekends or public holidays.

Will any equipment be needed in compassionate discharge?

The care team will advise and help you with the arrangements for the equipment required, as this is dependent on the needs of your loved one and the expected time of demise.

The most common equipment used is the oxygen concentrator that can be rented from private vendors.

What are the preparations required?

At least two carers should be identified so that they can take turns to care for your loved one.

Carers will be taught:

- Basic nursing care such as diaper changing, and positioning of your loved one.
- Administration of medications such as suppositories and subcutaneous injections (if indicated).

What are the symptoms that you can observe from your loved one?



Pain



Breathlessness



Restlessness



Throat
secretions



Seizures

The doctor will prescribe standby medicines for these symptoms. These medicines can either be given via a feeding tube, as suppository medicines or as subcutaneous injections (injection to be administered by the carers).

How will your family be supported?

The care team will liaise with a home hospice team to visit your loved one and provide medical support as required at your home.

After the initial visit, your family can call the hospice contact number provided for assistance at any time.

Are there any possible issues that can occur following a compassionate discharge?

- Your loved one may pass away while arrangements for terminal discharge are being made.
- Your loved one may pass away in the ambulance on the way home. If this happens, the ambulance will still bring the patient home where the death will be certified by a general practitioner (arranged by the family).
- Your loved one may live beyond the estimated time, and alternative care arrangements may need to be made.

What happens after your loved one has passed away?

- Upon your loved one's demise, you will need to contact a general practitioner to certify death. Alternatively, the undertakers may be able to help in getting a general practitioner to certify the death.
- The home hospice service does not provide certification of death.
- Return all unused medications to the CGH pharmacy.





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