



The day of admission - what to expect

Expect that you'll need as much support as your family member

When the day of admission arrives the emotions you've been experiencing will be at their peak. This is natural. Expect uneasiness.

Carers who have been through this suggest you have at least one other person with you for support. Family or friends could:

- ▣ Help you to deal with any unexpected hiccups on the day.
- ▣ Drive you to the facility.
- ▣ Relocate furniture and other items.
- ▣ Offer emotional support and help to decrease the stress.
- ▣ Help you to make introductions.
- ▣ Be there for you to talk to or have dinner with afterwards.

If family or friends are not available, consider asking a health professional or service provider to support you. It's important to plan for yourself too, when you plan for the day of admission.

"My thoughts were so clouded on the day - I relied heavily on Marco."

Your role in meeting and greeting

An important role for carers on admission day is introducing yourself and your family member to staff, other residents and their families. Remind yourself that each resident and their carer and family has been through this too. They will understand your grief and your pain.

It sometimes takes longer for a carer to settle in than it does for their family member. Three months is a common estimate so don't expect things to fall into place straight away. Be content with the small things like finding a friendly face or two.

Carers suggest:

- ▣ Stay for lunch or dinner - use this for introductions.
- ▣ Walk around the facility together to orient yourselves - use this as an opportunity for meeting and greeting.
- ▣ Have some photos handy - they can be conversation starters.

Helping to set up the room

Your family member may not feel like the room is their own until they see it take shape with their personal belongings. This is a chance to get involved in something practical. Chatting about the room set-up can be a nice change from the tension of earlier in the day.

Don't forget to bring photos, keepsakes, pictures, a calendar and perhaps a wall clock - anything that holds a special memory or some significance to your family member. Organising an outing to shop for needed items may also be appreciated.



The necessary admission paperwork

Another important role for carers on this day is contributing to the admission form. Staff use this to gather detailed information on your family member's needs and preferences, likes and dislikes, as well as important carer and family contact details.

Staff see this paperwork as a normal part of the admission process. For carers it can symbolise the signing in of your family member. This can be very confronting and heart-wrenching all at once. Having the support of family or friends is important.

How the care plan will be developed

A care plan is a plan developed to address the care needs of your family member. An initial care plan will be put into place on the day of admission. Over the first 21 days staff will complete an assessment to develop a more comprehensive care plan, which will be trialled for two to three months. Your feedback will help to identify changes required.

The senior staff at the facility will ensure the care plan is reviewed every 6-12 months. This will also be done upon return from hospital or if there is a major change in your family member's care needs. You can request a care plan review at any time if you feel this is needed.

The GP and other health professionals involved may have input into the care plan. So may carers. Usually carers who consider themselves experienced in caring for their family member will want greater input than those new to caring and perhaps still learning.

Some suggestions for how to contribute to the care plan:

- ▣ Ask for you and the GP to be part of the care plan meeting.
- ▣ Make some notes about how you managed the care at home:
 - ▣ what worked well and what didn't;
 - ▣ any strategies you found useful; and
 - ▣ any preferences your family member has.
- ▣ Suggest some ways that you could assist with your family member's ongoing care if you would like to do this.
- ▣ Be aware that the nursing staff will see the development of the care plan as their responsibility. Instead of directing them on the best way to do things for your family member, look for opportunities to contribute your knowledge.

Some facilities will be more responsive than others to carer input. For important issues talk to your family member's GP who may assist.

Further information:

- ▣ [How to feel comfortable at the facility](#) - information sheet.
- ▣ [How to find your new carer role in residential care](#) - information sheet.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636* to request the above information sheets be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at website@carersvic.org.au