



Aged care assessment in hospital - what you need to know

Aged care assessment in hospital

Aged care teams work in partnership with carers and families in supporting their family member. Large public hospitals usually have their own internal aged care team, although sometimes slightly different titles are used. Smaller hospitals may involve their local [Aged Care Assessment Team \(ACAT\)](#).

The aged care assessment is an opportunity for you to meet with an aged care specialist who will answer your questions and provide suggestions that might make caring a little easier.

They can also help you to identify when caring at home may no longer be possible and provide information on residential care.

Aged care assessments may be used to:

- ▣ Provide medical advice on issues related to ageing.
- ▣ Assess the patient's suitability for rehabilitation.
- ▣ Assess the need for residential care.
- ▣ Assess the need for a care package and other community services, although this is best assessed at home.

Unfortunately families are not always informed of when an aged care assessment is to occur. If it is mentioned, request to be advised of the day and time so you can attend. If you cannot attend, ask for the contact details of the person who will do the assessment.

Your input is vital to an accurate assessment - you have an important role in advocating for the best care option for your family member.

"Until Dad was assessed by the aged care team, we had no idea about the range of options available."

How to get involved in the aged care assessment

Don't be put off by the speed with which things happen in hospitals. You have every right to be present at assessments, particularly if your family member is unable to give all the information required or represent their own interests. Some employers will allow you to take 'carer leave' for this purpose.

As a carer, you have numerous roles in assessment including:

- ▣ Providing information.
- ▣ Asking questions and gathering information.
- ▣ Speaking up on behalf of your family member.
- ▣ Passing on information to other members of your family.
- ▣ Requesting a re-assessment if you feel this is needed.

Take a support person with you to the assessment - a family member, friend or perhaps a service provider. Another pair of eyes and ears can help. You might like them to take notes for you, or you may just appreciate the chance to talk with them afterwards.

If you are uncomfortable talking about your family member in front of them, ask to speak separately with the aged care team member - or do this discreetly by phoning at a later time. Don't let this be a barrier to giving and getting the information you need.



Remember that your GP may also be helpful in responding to any questions or concerns you have following the assessment. They can guide you to additional information or support services.

The message from aged care teams to carers and families is to treat this as a partnership in supporting your family member. You have valuable information to contribute. Be proactive - ask the difficult questions. Use the information you gather to plan the next steps.

Further information:

- ▣ [Starting to think about residential care](#) - information sheet.
- ▣ [Discharge from hospital - the options](#) - information sheet.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636* if you would like the above information sheets to 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