

Self-Care

It's up to you

In this section:

- *Good Habits*
- *Planning Your Day*
- *Managing Fatigue*
- *Getting Help*
- *Supplies*
- *Staying Current*

I learned that you have to ask for what you want. You are in a new role, one you haven't been in before. Speak up and ask for good care. Make sure you take good care of you.

~ Patient Advisor

Good Habits

- It is important to take good care of yourself. Attend to all aspects of your well-being – your physical, spiritual, and emotional health.
- The basics stay the same – eat right, exercise, and get plenty of rest. Avoid smoking. If you drink, do so in moderation.
- Keep up as many of your old friendships as you can. You are still you, even sick or injured.



It is important to do as much as you can do for yourself and to stay active.

- Do as much as you can do for yourself and stay active.
- Learn good communication skills, or improve the ones you already have. These skills will help you take good care of yourself.
- Assess whether you will need any new health care providers. Get regular check-ups.
- If there are personal tasks you used to do that you are no longer able to do, such as trimming your nails or shaving, arrange to have them done.

Planning Your Day

- You may need to learn a new level of patience. Expect that many things will take longer to do than before.
- Ask your caregiver to come at specific and regular times. This will help you plan your day.
- Learn how to prepare people to spend time with you. Share information about your lifestyle and schedule so they can work *with* you.
- Be flexible. You may wake up with a “to do” list in your head, or even written down. Keep yourself open to changing your priorities. For example, if you have 2 tasks to do, you may need to ask yourself if you have enough energy to do both, or if you should choose to do just one.
- Know yourself. Are you a morning person or a night person? Do you have more energy and are you more alert in the morning or later in the day? Plan your day to match your energy levels.
- Be realistic. How long does it take you to get ready to go out? Do you need a caregiver to help you get ready? Observe how much time it really takes you to get ready to go out, and schedule your appointments and outings based on that.
- It may be hard to be spontaneous in planning outings with friends. Make a point to plan some activities in advance.

Managing Fatigue

- Try taking a shower or being bathed right before bed, especially if it wears you out. If you must bathe early in the day, plan to take a short rest right afterward.
- Use a *mediset* (a plastic box used to hold up to a week's worth of pills) for your medicines. You might even consider buying 2 and filling them with medicines for 2 weeks at a time. This can be a real timesaver. If you do not live with young children or have them over to your home, you may also want to try “easy-open” caps for your medicines.
- Try online grocery shopping to save your energy. Many businesses offer free delivery if you spend a certain amount.
- Use online shopping and catalog shopping for buying gifts.
- You can pay bills and do your personal bookkeeping online:
 - Many banks now have online bill pay, where you can set up automatic payments for your monthly bills.
 - A software program such as “Quicken” is easy to learn. It can also create a tax summary report, which you can use for deducting allowed medical expenses.

Getting Help

- Ask friends for help if you need extra emotional support.
- Take time out to recognize all of the changes that have happened. This may involve some grieving. Give yourself time to adjust to the changes.
- If you need help handling the emotions that come up, ask your doctor about possible referrals for counseling. It may be very helpful to talk with a rehab psychologist or other mental health provider who has experience working with individuals with health changes.

Supplies

- Plan ahead before you shop. Create a list of supplies so you get what you need. The first choice you find might not be the best item or it may not be the best price.

- Ask yourself how fast you need the item. This may affect where you buy it or how much you will spend.
- Be a savvy consumer, especially on the Internet. The first results that come up in a search may be sponsors who pay to be listed. This means their prices may be higher.
- Is the item you need covered by insurance? Do you have a choice of vendor, or are you limited by insurance?
- Find out about delivery options for supplies you need. Some delivery options are faster than others. Sometimes a vendor closer to where you live may be able to deliver more quickly.

Staying Current

- Stay up to date with research related to your injury or illness.
- Stay current with technology, especially in ways it may help you. Keep in mind that UWMC has an Assistive Technology Clinic.
- Find good resources. Talk with other people. Find out what they know and what resources they suggest.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Talk to your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

While you are a patient on Inpatient Rehab, call:
206-598-4800

After discharge, call your primary care provider or UWMC's Rehabilitation Clinic: 206-598-4295