

Codesigning an Improved Surgical Discharge Experience

Partnering with consumers and clinicians to create clearer information, increase confidence and improve patient flow.

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BACKGROUND

Patient feedback and hospital data identified discharge as a low-performing PREMs domain.

- Patients often confused or unclear about medications, recovery, follow-up and when to seek help.
- Discharge delays and confusion contribute to reduced bed flow and increased operational pressure.
- Information was inconsistent across teams and not always aligned with what matters most to patients.

AIM

To codesign and implement a Surgical Discharge Guide that improves understanding, confidence and preparedness for patients and carers, while supporting clinicians and improving patient flow.

METHODS

- Consumer Advisory Group partnership
- Multidisciplinary clinician involvement (surgery, nursing, allied health, pharmacy, anaesthetics, patient flow)
- Co-design workshops with patients, carers and clinicians
- Iterative Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles and feedback
- Pilot testing on surgical wards

THE INTERVENTION

Surgical Discharge Guide

A plain language, easy-to-read guide that explains:

- What to expect
- Medications at home
- When to seek help
- Follow-up and contacts
- Recovery at home

THE GUIDE

IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Codesigned with consumers to ensure the information is relevant, easy to understand and meets real needs.

- Engage: Consumers and clinicians identify needs and priorities
- Design: Co-design content, format and visuals
- Test: Pilot on wards and gather feedback
- Refine: Improve content through PDSA cycles
- Implement: Widespread rollout and integration into practice

WHAT PATIENTS AND CLINICIANS SAID

- "It's clear, simple and gives me confidence about going home." — Patient
- "It answers the questions patients always ask." — Clinician
- "Having this information in one place is so helpful." — Carer

RESULTS (EARLY FINDINGS)

Patient survey results

- 92% Found the guide easy to understand
- 89% Felt adequately prepared for discharge
- >85% Reported increased confidence managing recovery at home

CLINICIAN FEEDBACK THEMES

- Improved consistency of discharge information
- Saves time answering repeat questions
- Supports patient safety and reduces anxiety
- Easy to use and fits into workflow

IMPACT

- Better informed, more confident patients and carers
- Improved discharge efficiency and reduced delays
- Enhanced safety and continuity of care
- Positive impact on patient flow and hospital capacity

NEXT STEPS

- Formal evaluation of patient experience (PREMs)
- Monitor readmissions and ED representations
- Assess workflow efficiency and staff experience
- Expand to other surgical specialties and wards
- Ongoing consumer partnership and refinement



KEY TAKEAWAY

Codesigning with consumers and clinicians created a practical, easy-to-understand Surgical Discharge Guide that improves understanding and confidence for patients while supporting clinicians and improving operational outcomes.

Better information. Better experience. Better flow.

QR code for your copy of the Discharge Guide for Surgical Wards booklet

Also available from the RBWH internet site:
<https://www.metrnorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/patients-and-visitors/coming-in-for-surgery>

