



## Care Transitions

You are an important part of the health-care team. Speaking with members of the health-care team will help you get the information you need to understand any changes in your health and what it means for your situation. These changes are known as **care transitions**. Do not be afraid to ask questions so you know what to expect.

### What are care transitions?

Put simply, they are changes in your care needs and can include the following:

- When you get sick and have to go to the hospital or need to receive a new health service in another location;
- When there are changes in the members of the health-care team, for example, nurses, doctors or other members of the team who have normally cared for you; or
- When your health changes and you need help or must change where you live to receive that help, for example you need to move in with your family or into a seniors' residence or nursing home where someone is available to assist you.

Care transitions can occur with any change in your health throughout your lifetime. These changes can be sudden and upsetting, especially if you do not know what is happening or they can be a good thing. It is important for you and your family or caregivers to ask the following questions of your health-care team:

- *What is my main problem?*
- *What do I need to do?*
- *Why is it important for me to do this?*

### Who may be involved in my care transition?

Many people can be involved in planning your care transition. Each time your health changes, information about you is communicated from one health-care professional to another. It is important to talk about what needs to be done so your health-care team as well you and your family or caregivers make sure you are safe and receive the right care at the right time and in the right place. One way to do this is through a planning meeting.

Each person is unique, so each transition planning meeting is unique. The health-care team will work with you to ensure all the right people are at the meeting. You and your family or caregivers can also ask for a planning meeting. Sometimes other people or services may be brought in to support you such as:

- New members joining your health-care team such as nurse practitioners, family doctors, dietitians, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, and social workers;
- Support services in the community when you need more help or special care; or
- Family members of your choice to support you or a legal representative such as a substitute decision-maker when you are unable to make decisions for yourself.

### **How can I be actively involved in my care transition?**

- Learn as much as you can about your health condition and care needs.
- Ask for regular updates from your health-care team and ask questions often so you have the most current information about your health and know what care and treatment your health-care team is considering.
- Do not be afraid to ask for meetings with your health-care team to get information and plan the transition so it meets your goals. Consider involving your family or caregivers to provide support. Talk openly and speak up, ask questions and participate fully.
- Ask for a copy of your health record so you can keep track of: your current health condition and what has happened or changed such as all medications; any special treatments and tests you must have and appointments you must go to. If it's not possible to get a copy of your health record, ask for a printed summary of what has happened to share with other health-care providers who take care of you.

### **What questions should I be asking about my care transition?**

- When and why is this happening?
- What are the next steps?
- Can I help the health-care team plan what I need for my life?
- Are there resources available?
- Is there someone I can ask questions to get the information I need so I can be ready for the care transition?
- Will my nurse practitioner or family doctor receive a note about what has happened to me?
- If I need a next appointment or any new services or medication will this all be explained to me so I understand what I need to do next?
- What things do I need to know to keep me safe after my care transition such as:
  - What are the side effects of the medication I am taking that I should watch for?
  - What are the warning signs that I need to immediately tell my nurse practitioner or doctor about? and
  - Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns about my health?