

### What is home health care?

Home health care is medical care that you need at home, but may not be able to do yourself. Your doctor may order this type of care to help you get better after an illness, injury or surgery.

Some people may feel a little uneasy about having someone come into their house to care for them. But, just like in the hospital, the people who will be caring for you are professional and trained. With home health care, you may feel better and recover sooner in the comfort of your own home.

Home health care can include:

- Nursing care, such as wound care and help with medical equipment or medicines.
- Vital signs and blood tests.
- Physiotherapy. This may include exercises to help with healing and pain.
- Education, such as how to care for yourself or what foods you should eat or avoid.

### How is it done?

Just like with medicine, your doctor may prescribe home health care for you. Or you may hear your doctor call it "ordering."

After the care is ordered, someone from the agency will meet with you. They'll talk to you about your health, find out about your needs and let you know when to expect them.

Then nurses or other professionals will come to your home and care for you. The staff will also teach you or your caregiver how to do some or all of your care.

Care can include checking your blood pressure or getting blood samples for lab work. It can also include help with medicines or wound care. You may need help with medical equipment, like caring for a catheter.

While you're getting care at home, the staff will let your doctor know about your care and how you're doing.

### How can you prepare for it?

You don't have to do much to prepare yourself or your home, but talking with the home health agency may help you feel more comfortable about their services and staff. You can also discuss any concerns you may have about your care.

Here are a few things you can do to prepare.

- Check with your provincial or private health plan, or the agency itself, about your options, what's covered and how much you'll have to pay.
- Ask the agency if the staff is trained and licensed to give the type of care you'll need.
- Ask them who you should call if you're worried about the care you're getting.
- Have emergency numbers near a phone, including numbers for the doctor and family members.

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