

# PODS

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PATIENT ORIENTED DISCHARGE SUMMARY



# What is PODS?

The patient-oriented discharge summary (PODS) is a simple tool that arms patients with 5 key pieces of information they need to know in order to effectively manage their health after a hospital discharge:

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**S**igns and symptoms to watch out for

**M**edication instructions

**A**ppointments

**R**outine and lifestyle changes

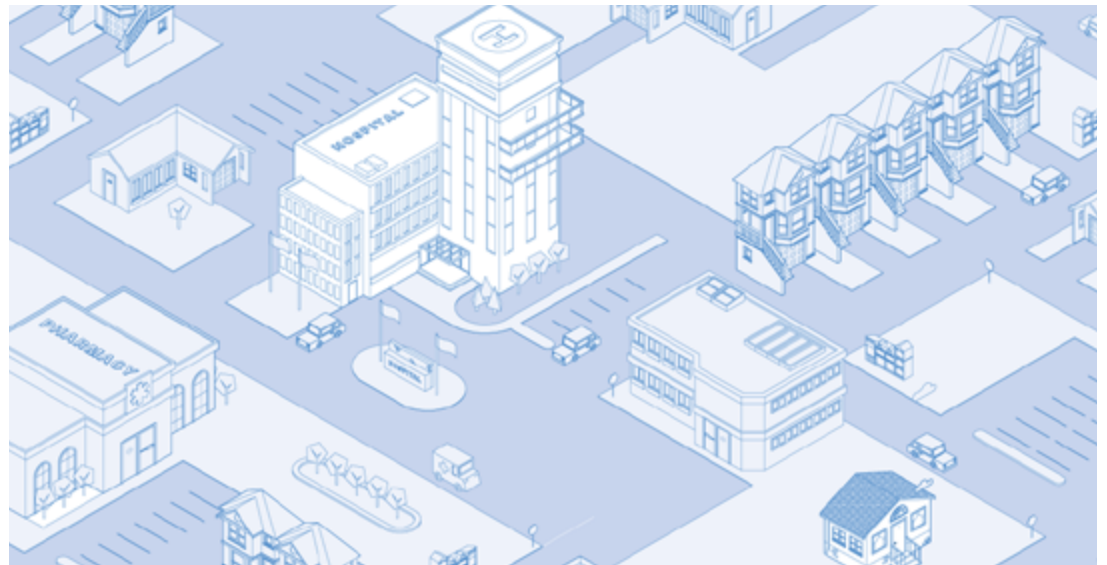
**T**elephone numbers and info to have handy

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PODS was designed with the help of many patients and is being adopted in 8 Toronto-area hospitals.

# Why do this?

Despite discharge from hospital being a vulnerable transition for patients, many health-care institutions do not use patient-centered discharge summaries which are written in a way that is easy for patients to understand or act on. A PODS is needed for that purpose.



# Evidence behind it

**Many patients, caregivers, and providers were involved in the design and development of the PODS.**

In particular, hard-to-reach patient groups such as those with language barriers, mental health issues, and limited health literacy were recruited.



# Evidence behind it

The PODS is also designed according to **best practices in patient education** and the design for limited health literacy.

The PODS also gives consideration to the **cognitive processes** involved in information processing and retention by including white space in the margin for patients to jot down their own notes, which has been found to improve information recall.



## How will PODS benefit patients

Patients and caregivers will consistently receive information they need to know in order to effectively manage their health the moment they leave the hospital. PODS contains information most relevant and actionable for patients, presented in an easily understandable and usable form.

## How will PODS benefit providers

PODS will help structure the conversation with patients, making it efficient to get most critical information across. PODS is also a communication aid that could be used as part of a teach-back process.


# The PODS

## DESIGN ELEMENTS:

- 1 Large fonts
- 2 Clear language
- 3 Directed to the patient
- 4 Distinct & easy to follow headings
- 5 Point form
- 6 White space for note taking

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Care Guide **1**

**3** I came to hospital on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ and left on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
I came in because I have \_\_\_\_\_

 my own notes

**6**

### Medications I need to take

Name	What it is for	morning	noon	afternoon	night
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### How I might feel and what to do

I might feel	What to do	Go to Emergency if:

### Changes to my routine

Activity (i.e. dietary, physical)	Instruction

### Appointments I have to go to

Go see \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ at \_\_\_:\_\_\_ am/pm

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ \_\_\_\_\_  booked

### Where to go for more information

For medication instructions call/go to pharmacist ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

For \_\_\_\_\_ call/go to \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

# Language Barriers

## **Language Barriers impact care in hospital for many patients in Toronto**

They impact medication compliance and can lead to adverse events

Discharge is a time of high risk for patients with language barriers

Language barriers are not always obvious. Ask all patients for their language preference.

If there is a language barrier, use a medical interpreter whenever possible, avoiding the use of family and friends.

Tip – ask one question at a time and speak slowly



# Health Literacy

**TIP //** Teach Back is a useful strategy

Health literacy includes more than the ability to read and impacts a patient's ability to manage their care independently. Over 60% of Canadians have limited health literacy when not in a crisis (such as a hospital visit).

## **How do I screen for limited health literacy?**

Asking a patient 'how confident are you in filling out medical forms by yourself?' If answers 'somewhat', 'a little' or 'not at all' vs. 'Very Comfortable' or 'Quite a bit' => limited health literacy

“We were given verbal instructions about what we should do in certain situations... If something is important enough to mention at discharge, it really should also be written down.”

- CAREGIVER -

“This is a great piece... This would have saved me so much anxiety and fear of doing something wrong when I was discharged. I didn't want to bother my doctors and went on a hope and prayer... Great work. Thanks for caring!”

- PATIENT -

# Filling out the PODS

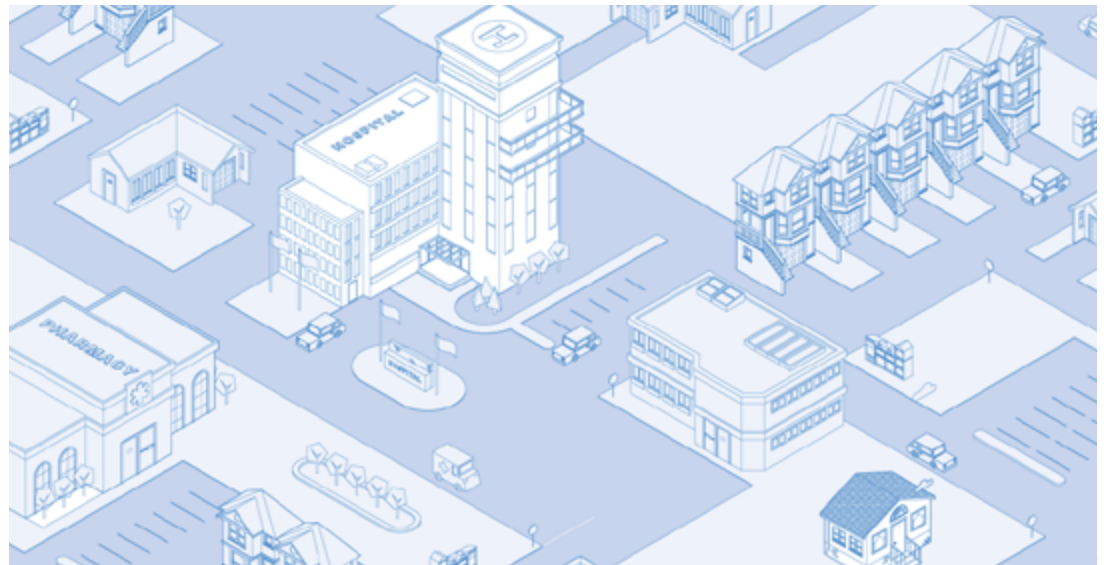
**Use Common Words.** Refer to the Tip Sheet Titled “How to fill in PODS with content that patients can understand”

**In the symptoms section,** include expected symptoms in addition to worrisome ones. For example, if patients know they can expect to experience pain for up to 2 weeks post-discharge, they will have less anxiety.

# Filling out the PODS

## **Be creative when including resources.**

If you know of a good resource online or in the community, include it. Link the patient to the patient education department of the hospital. Always include the contact information of a “go-to-person”.



# Delivering the PODS

**The delivery of the PODS will be more successful when patient-centered discharge processes are observed. See the tip sheet “How to deliver PODS in a way that patients understand”**



# Delivering the PODS

- Deliver the PODS in the presence of family or caregiver.
- Use teach back
- Encourage questions.
  - **Solicit** questions: “What questions do you still have?”, “That was a lot of information. What do I need to go over again?”, “Did you get a chance to ask all your questions?”
  - **Avoid** asking, “Do you Understand?” or “Do you have any questions?” This often leads to a quick “no,” even if they do have questions.

# Common instructions translated

**FOR MORE EXAMPLES  
SEE THE TIP SHEET  
“COMMON DISCHARGE  
INSTRUCTIONS  
TRANSLATED”**

## **COMMON INSTRUCTION**

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Take this  
medication 4 times  
a day

## **PLAIN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION**

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Take this pill with  
breakfast, lunch,  
and dinner, and at  
bedtime

Go see your  
primary caregiver  
within the next  
seven days

You need to have  
an appointment  
with a doctor who  
knows you by next  
Monday



All set to pilot your  
own PODS!

**Remember to share your learnings with the team at  
[www.pods-toolkit.uhnopenlab.ca/](http://www.pods-toolkit.uhnopenlab.ca/)**