
Managing commitments and hospital

Summary

- Before you go into hospital, find someone to take care of your family tasks such as caring for your children or other family members, such as elderly parents.
 - Try and find someone to do jobs for you around your home, like collect your mail, put your bins out, look after your pets and water your garden.
 - You do not have to tell your employer why you are going into hospital, but it's a good idea to tell them that you will be in hospital so they can support you during your illness and recovery.
 - If you run your own business, get some extra help while you are in hospital. This can give you peace of mind so you can focus on your recovery.
 - If you are a student, speak with teachers at your school or university and ask about your workload, if you can do work from home, or if your deadlines can change until you are feeling better.
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Making sure your regular commitments are taken care of during a hospital stay will help give you peace of mind and allow you to concentrate on your recovery. This may include making sure your family commitments are taken care of, speaking to your school or employer about modifying your workload, or getting support to run your own business.

Managing home commitments

Before you go to hospital, make sure you have taken care of any household commitments that you cannot delay.

If you have family members who rely on your care, such as children or elderly parents, make alternative arrangements for them. Arranging for someone else to take on these tasks ahead of time will give you peace of mind while you are in hospital so you can concentrate on your recovery.

Depending on the planned length of your hospital stay, you might need to ask a friend, relative or neighbour to:

- collect your mail
- pay bills on your behalf
- water your garden and indoor plants
- look after your pets.

Managing work with an employer

How much you tell your employer about your condition or upcoming surgery is up to you. You do not have to give details about your illness or treatment, but you must let them know if your condition could be a health and safety risk to you or others, or if it will affect the way you do your job.

Good reasons for talking about your illness

Telling your employer about your situation can be a way of building trust and understanding, and allow you to ask for any extra support you might need. This will also explain any changes to the way you work because of your condition, which may otherwise be misinterpreted as poor performance

Your employer is required by law to make 'reasonable adjustments' to your role to accommodate your health issue. These are changes that will not cause 'unjustifiable hardship' to the business. Some financial help from the government to make these adjustments to your role or workspace is available to your employer.

Your right to privacy

Telling your employer about your medical situation does not mean that your work colleagues will find out. Your

employer is not allowed to share this information unless you give your permission or unless your condition poses a health and safety risk to others.

How your employer can support you

Your employer can support you through your illness and recovery by changing your work duties to suit your needs. As long as these changes do not cause undue hardship for the business, you can ask for things like extra breaks, adjustments to your workspace (such as a different chair or computer) and opportunities to work fewer hours, have days off or to work from home. Your doctor can provide advice on what some of these adjustments might be.

Managing your own business while in hospital

If you run your own business, and particularly if it is a small business, it is understandable that you may be anxious about who will run it while you are in hospital.

Being realistic about what you can do during your treatment and recovery is important. You need to concentrate on getting well, so worrying about what is happening at work could make this more difficult.

Start by prioritising your essential commitments and then work out how they will be met. If you feel comfortable, speak to your clients or customers about your situation. They can support you by postponing appointments or being more flexible about orders.

Options for managing your business in your absence include:

- asking for help from family and friends
- handing over some of your duties to an employee
- hiring temporary staff
- contacting a professional association for advice
- accessing income protection policies or other financial assistance (this includes no-interest loan schemes and hardship assistance programs).

Managing study commitments

Coping with interrupted schooling can be difficult for any child or young adult. Having to manage a health condition at the same time can make this worse. Achieving the best results often requires coordinated support from the person's school, family and medical team.

When a child or young person is away from study for a long time, they may find it hard to maintain their school friendships and to stay confident, positive and motivated about school. Missing out on school excursions, classroom activities and exams can have an extended impact.

Working closely with the school or higher education facility is the first step. Speak to the school principal or faculty advisor about how best to manage the required work while in hospital or when recovering at home. For university students, lectures and class-related material are often available online or you can ask a classmate to pass on study notes.

It is up to you how much you reveal about your illness. A child might need extra support at school, but they also have a right to privacy. Create a work plan and then keep the school updated about how your child is coping.

For children with longer term illnesses who need ongoing care, the Royal Children's Hospital offers support from qualified teachers through its Education Institute.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Your employer
- Patient liaison officer
- Social worker.

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