

Discharge Instructions

UNIVERSAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED A COMPLETE MEDICAL EVALUATION. SEE A PHYSICIAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
- IF AT ANY TIME AFTER YOU HAVE TAKEN ANY MEDICATION, YOU HAVE TROUBLE BREATHING, START WHEEZING, GET HIVES OR A RASH, OR HAVE ANY UNEXPECTED REACTION, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.
- IF YOUR SYMPTOMS WORSEN AT ANY TIME, YOU SHOULD SEE YOUR DOCTOR, GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR CALL 911.

ABDOMINAL PAIN:

- Abdominal pain is also called belly pain. Many illnesses can cause abdominal pain and it is very difficult for EMS to identify the cause.
- Take your temperature every 4 hours.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- Your pain gets worse or is now only in 1 area
- You vomit (throw up) blood or find blood in your bowel movement
- You become dizzy or faint
- Your abdomen becomes distended or swollen
- You have a temperature over 100° F
- You have trouble passing urine
- You have trouble breathing

BACK PAIN:

- Apply heat to the painful area to help relieve pain. You may use a warm heating pad, whirlpool bath, or warm, moist towels for 10 to 20 minutes every hour.
- Stay in bed as much as possible the first 24 hours.
- Begin normal activities when you can do them without causing pain.
- When picking things up, bend at the hips and knees. Never bend from the waist only.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- You have shooting pains into your buttocks, groin, legs, or arms or the pain increases.
- You have trouble urinating or lose control of your stools or urine.
- You have numbness or weakness in your legs, feet, arms, or hands.

FEVER:

- Always take medications as directed. Tylenol and Ibuprofen can be taken at the same time.
- If you are taking antibiotics, take them until they are gone, not until you are feeling better.
- Drink extra liquids (1 glass of water, soft drink or gatorade per hour of fever for an adult)
- If the temperature is above 103° F, it can be brought down by a sponge bath with room temperature water. Do not use cold water, a fan, or an alcohol bath.
- Temperature should be taken every 4 hours.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- Temperature is greater than 101° F for 24 hours
- A child becomes less active or alert.
- The Temperature does not come down with Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen with the appropriate dose.

HEAD INJURY:

- Immediately after a blow to the head, nausea, and vomiting may occur.
- Individuals who have sustained a head injury must be checked, and if necessary awakened, every 2 hours for the first 24 hours.
- Ice may be placed on the injured area to decrease pain and swelling.
- Only drink clear liquids such as juices, soft drinks, or water the first 12 hours after injury..
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen only may be used for pain.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- The injured person has persistent vomiting, is not able to be awakened, has trouble walking or using an arm or leg, has a seizure, develops unequal pupils, has a clear or bloody fluid coming from the ears or nose, or has strange behavior.

INSECT BITE/STING:

- A bite or sting typically is a red lump which may have a hole in the center. You may have pain, swelling and a rash. Severe stings may cause a headache and an upset stomach (vomiting).
- Some individuals will have an allergic reaction to a bite or sting. Difficulty breathing or chest pain is an emergency requiring medical care.
- Elevation of the injured area and ice (applied to the area 10 to 20 minutes each hour) will decrease pain and swelling.
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) may be used as directed to control itching and hives.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- You develop any chest pain or difficulty breathing.
- The area becomes red, warm, tender, and swollen beyond the area of the bite or sting.
- You develop a temperature above 101° F.

RESPIRATORY DISTRESS:

- Respiratory Distress is also known as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Causes of Respiratory Distress include reactions to pollen, dust, animals, molds, foods, drugs, infections, smoke, and respiratory conditions such as Asthma and COPD. If possible avoid any causes which produce respiratory distress.
- If you have seen a physician for this problem, take all medication's as directed.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- Temperature is greater than 101° F.
- The cough, wheezing, or breathing difficulty becomes worse or does not improve even when taking medications.
- You have Chest Pain.
- Sputum (spit) changes from clear to yellow, green, grey, or becomes bloody.
- You are not able to perform normal activities.

EXTREMITY INJURY:

- Extremity Injuries may consist of cuts, scrapes, bruises, sprains, or broken bones (fractures).
- Apply ice on the injury for 15 to 20 minutes each hour for the first 1 to 2 days.
- Elevate the extremity above the heart as possible for the first 48 hours to decrease pain and swelling.
- Use the extremity as pain allows.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- Temperature is greater than 101° F.
- The bruising, swelling, or pain gets worse despite the treatment listed above.
- Any problems listed on the **Wound Care instructions** are noted.
- You are unable to move the extremity or if numbness or tingling is noted.
- You are not improved in 24 to 48 hours or you are not normal in 7 to 10 days.

VOMITING/DIARRHEA:

- Vomiting (throwing up) can be caused by many things. It is common in children, but should be watched closely.
- Diarrhea is most often caused by either a food reaction or infection.
- Dehydration is the most serious problem associated with vomiting or diarrhea.
- Drink clear liquids such as water, apple juice, soft drinks, or gatorade for the first 12 hours or until things improve. Adults should drink 8 to 12 glasses of fluids per day with diarrhea. Children should drink 1 cup of fluid for each loose bowel movement.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- Temperature is greater than 101° F.
- Vomiting or Diarrhea lasts longer than 24 hours, gets worse, or blood is noted.
- You cannot keep fluids down or no urination is noted in 8 hours.

WOUND CARE:

- Wounds include cuts, scrapes, bites, abrasions, or puncture wounds.
- If the wound begins to bleed, apply pressure over the wound with a clean bandage and elevate the wound above the heart for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Unless instructed otherwise, clean the wound twice daily with soapy water, and keep the wound dry. It is safe to take a shower but do not place the wound in bath or dish water.
- See a physician for a tetanus shot if it has been 10 years or more since your last one.

Call or see a physician, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately if:

- See the **Extremity Injury instructions**.
- Temperature is greater than 101° F.
- Bruising, swelling, or pain gets worse or bleeding is not controlled as directed above.
- Any signs of infection, such as redness, drainage of yellow fluid or pus, red streaks extending from the wound, or a bad smell is noted.



North Carolina College of Emergency Physician's
Discharge Instruction Form



Instructions

The EMS Patient Discharge Information (PDI) form has been designed to be used by EMS personnel to legally document a variety of situations. This duplicate form consists of a single page. The front of the page is used to describe the situation and the back lists a variety of specific patient instructions by complaint.

The form should be used to document any refusal of care by a patient (complete refusal or refusal of specific aspects of care) and to document the patient / guardian's understanding of medical instructions.

To understand the intent of this form, it is probably simplest to walk through several common patient encounter situations.

1. Complete refusal of EMS care or transport: The first box "Patient Refusal" should be marked. In the first section, the appropriate blocks for "paramedic recommendation" should also be marked. This section should be explained to the patient or guardian, who should understand that their refusal may result in complications up to and including death. The patient or guardian should be asked to sign the form, indicating that he/she understands the seriousness of the situation and the information provided. If the situation warrants, the paramedic should explain the risks of the refusal using the patient instructions section and the back of the form for assistance. If the instructions section is used, the appropriate blocks should also be checked.
2. Refusal of a specific procedure (IV therapy, for example): The first box "Patient Refusal" should be marked. In the first section, the specific refused procedure should be marked. The first section should be explained to the patient or guardian, who should understand the potential consequences of their refusal. The patient or guardian should be asked to sign the form, indicating that he/she understands the seriousness of the situation.
3. The box "Patient Instructions" and the appropriate blocks in that section should be marked. This section and the specific instructions (on the back) should all be carefully explained to the patient and/or guardian, who must understand them. The patient or guardian should be asked to sign the form, indicating that he/she understands the instructions and the seriousness of the situation.

In all situations, the top part of the form should be completed, and as much of the signature portion as necessary. It is preferable to have witnesses, particularly if the patient or guardian refuses to sign. The original form should be kept on file, while a duplicate copy should be provided for the patient or guardian.