



Prevent Senior

HospitalisationsSM

IRELAND RESEARCH REPORT



 Home
Instead
SENIOR CARE[®]

To us, it's personal[®]

Introduction

Research conducted by Home Instead Franchising Ltd. indicates that the problem of preventable hospitalisation of seniors is viewed as very to extremely serious by 81.5% of the Irish nurses surveyed.

Those same nurses estimate that nearly half of senior hospitalisations (48.5%) can be prevented with early detection and intervention. In addition, the study indicates that families play a critical role in keeping their ageing loved ones out of the hospital – with 96.6% of nurses saying that the role family plays is as important as the role played by health care professionals.

Delaying or avoiding medical care is the most common action by seniors that puts them at risk of needing hospitalisation. In addition, not following medical orders can be a clear predictor of potential risk.

Survey results, overall, indicated that unnecessary hospitalisation of older people puts them at great risk. Involvement of families is key to minimising these events.

To provide families with resources to minimise the major risk factors and to play an active role in hospitalisation prevention, Home Instead Franchising Ltd. has created the Five Ways to Prevent Senior Hospitalisations guide. The guide focuses on the following five key actions to keep seniors safe at home, and out of the hospital through proactive and preventative measures:



Follow doctor's orders



Don't ignore symptoms



Reduce risks of falls and accidents



Stay active physically and mentally



Maintain a healthy diet

Each section of the guide outlines warning signs and risk factors, as well as specific preventative steps and resources. The goal of this guide is to strengthen the role families can play in hospitalisation prevention, and to help them feel more confident about actions to keep their older loved ones safe at home.

In addition, a web-based "Hospitalisation Risk Meter" will help family caregivers tune into the habits of their older loved ones in an effort to help them avoid the risks of hospitalisations.

The guide and online resources can be accessed at HomeInstead.ie.



FAMILIES

play a critical role in keeping
their ageing loved ones
OUT OF THE HOSPITAL.

96.6%

of nurses say that the role family plays is
AS IMPORTANT
as the role played by **HEALTH CARE**
PROFESSIONALS.

Key Findings

Prevention is Possible

A survey of 205 nurses in Ireland confirmed that nearly half of senior hospitalisations (48.5%) are avoidable if preventative steps are taken.

81.5% ranked the issue of preventable hospitalisation as a very to extremely serious problem.

- **Nurses say the most important reasons to keep seniors out of the hospital are:**

- They are at risk of hospital-acquired infections
- Seniors who have been hospitalised have a hard time getting back into their routine
- Hospitalisation can cause more serious health declines
- Hospitalisation leads to confusion for seniors
- Once hospitalised, seniors often do not regain full function
- Immobility in the hospital puts seniors at risk

- **The following are preventative measures that can help seniors avoid hospitalisation:**

(The percent refers to nurses who said each preventative measure is very to extremely important.)

- Manage chronic conditions – **99%**
 - Follow doctor's orders – **98%**
 - Fix safety hazards at home – **98%**
 - Keep doctor's appointments – **96%**
 - Preventative healthcare – **92.6%**
- Winter is the highest risk time of year for senior hospitalisation, according to **92.6%** of nurses, because of vulnerability to colds, the flu, pneumonia and other respiratory infections, and weather-related falls and accidents.

Family is Key

99% of nurses agree that the family's role in keeping seniors healthy and out of the hospital is as important as that of the medical community.

Survey results show that less than half of seniors (48.6%) have a medical advocate.

The most important actions that families can take to help keep their older parents out of the hospital are: (The percent refers to nurses who said each action is very to extremely important.)

- Make seniors home free of hazards – **98.5%**
- Ensure senior takes preventative health measures – **94%**
- Encourage them to use assistive equipment – **98%**
- Check in on them – **98.5%**
- Monitor medications – **97.5%**
- Attend doctor's visits – **92.1%**
- Assess their balance – **93.5%**
- Make sure they are safe to drive – **95%**
- Encourage seniors to stay physically active – **97%**
- Share meals with older people – **91%**
- Keep seniors engaged mentally and socially – **98%**

Top Risk Factors and Warning Signs

- The most common actions by seniors that can put them at risk of hospitalisation are:

- Waiting too long to see doctors
- Mismanaging medications
- Not following doctor's orders
- Aren't socially or mentally active

- The top lifestyle factors that could place seniors significantly more at risk of hospitalisation are:

(The percent refers to nurses who said each factor puts seniors significantly more at risk.)

- No one checking in on senior – **90%**
- Being physically inactive/frail – **87.1%**
- Living alone/isolation – **83.3%**
- Skipping health maintenance – **76.7%**

- The top health factors that can place seniors significantly more at risk of hospitalisation are:

(The percent refers to nurses who said each factor puts seniors significantly more at risk.)

- Having 3 or more chronic health conditions - **84.7%**
- Mobility issues - **73.8%**
- History of hospitalisations - **69.9%**
- Exhibiting signs of depression - **66.3%**

- The most serious warning signs that could indicate that a senior is at risk of hospitalisation are:

(The percent refers to nurses who said each warning sign is very to extremely serious.)

- They don't track medications – **96.5%**
- They show a major change in behavior – **93.1%**
- They don't follow doctor's orders – **92.6%**
- They experienced a previous fall or accident – **81.7%**

28%

of nurses surveyed said the easiest step that seniors can take to prevent hospitalisation to stay physically active.

14.5%

of nurses surveyed said that the easiest step seniors can take to prevent hospitalisation is to maintain chronic conditions.



Research Methodology

- The nurses surveyed held the following qualifications:
 - RGN (85%)
 - RPN (9.9%)
 - RMHN (2.9%)
- Telephone interviews were conducted between 12 August and 03 October 2016.



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