

The Essential Hospital Visit Checklist: Lodging & Logistics

Use this guide to manage the practical side of a hospital visit so you can focus on your loved one.

Section 1: Finding Your Lodging

- **Call First:** Call the hospital's Social Work or Patient Relations department (find the number on the hospital website).
- **Ask the Right Questions:**
 - "Do you have a list of 'hospital hotels' or hotels that offer a 'medical rate'?"
 - "Do you partner with any hospitality houses (like Ronald McDonald House or a Hope Lodge)?"
 - "What are the eligibility requirements for these programs (distance, patient status)?"
 - "Can you put me on the waitlist for patient lodging near hospital?"
- **Call Hotels Directly (Local Number, not 800-number):**
 - "Do you offer a 'hospital rate' or 'medical compassion rate'?"
 - "Do you have a free shuttle to [Hospital Name]?"
 - "What are the shuttle hours?"
 - "What is your cancellation policy for medical situations?"
- **Check Amenities:** Prioritize places with:
 - Free Wi-Fi
 - Kitchenette or mini-fridge
 - On-site laundry
 - Free breakfast

Section 2: Planning Transport & Parking

- **Get Specific Directions:**
 - Call the patient's unit/department.
 - Ask: "What is the *best address* for the *closest parking garage* to this building?"
 - Use this specific name (e.g., "West Patient Tower Garage") in your GPS, not the main hospital address.
- **Parking Strategy:**
 - Go to the hospital parking office on Day 1.
 - Ask: "Do you sell multi-day or weekly passes?"
 - Ask: "Is this pass transferable (can my family share it)?"
 - Ask: "Do any departments validate parking?"
- **Transport Plan:**
 - If driving: Factor the weekly pass cost into your budget.
 - If using hotel shuttle: Confirm the first and last pickup times.
 - If using Uber/Lyft: Budget ~\$20-40 per day (round trip).

Section 3: Financial & Daily Needs

- **Contact & Aid:**
 - Contact: Hospital Social Worker (Your main resource).
 - Ask: "Are there any travel or gas grants I qualify for?"
 - Ask: "Do you provide cafeteria vouchers or parking validation?"
 - Search: [Patient's Illness] + "financial assistance" (e.g., "American Cancer Society travel grant").
- **Packing Smart (For You, the Caregiver):**
 - Comfortable shoes
 - Sweater/layers (hospitals are cold)
 - Refillable water bottle & snacks
 - Notebook and pen (for doctor's notes)
 - Phone charger (and a portable power bank)
 - Earplugs and eye mask
 - All personal medications