



Barriers and Solutions to Help Patients Keep their Follow-Up Appointment

Possible barriers to ensuring the follow-up appointment occurs should be identified in advance. Here are common barriers and possible solutions from the H2H Community. Anticipating and addressing barriers to early follow-up can help patients receive the appropriate care they need and potentially prevent them from being unnecessarily readmitted.

Common Barriers	Possible Solutions
System Barriers	
Appointment Access within 7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of block scheduling to restructure appointments • Follow-up by nurse practitioners, physician assistants, or clinical pharmacist instead of a cardiologist or primary care clinician • Follow-up by home health service or visiting nurse association • Development of an outpatient HF clinic or HF discharge clinic • Hospital partnership with community physicians to prioritize discharged patients for appointments
Environmental Barriers	
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide options to patients for a follow-up setting they can most easily access • Identify a family member or friend to transport patient to the follow-up appointment • Provide shuttle service or a taxi voucher to patients
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment in financial assistance program per social work • Determine eligibility for additional financial assistance programs per hospital case managers
Personal Barriers	
Patient forgets about appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an appointment card, wall-calendar, or other visual reminder with appointment time, date, and place • Remind patient of their follow-up appointment with a phone call 24 hrs prior to appointment • Confirm whether patient's primary support (spouse, child, friend) knows of appointment time, date, and place
Patient self-care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the importance of follow-up visit in discharge process patient education • Reinforce importance of follow-up visit within 7 days during reminder phone calls at least once after hospital discharge