

# Getting Help with Symptoms

When you're not feeling well or symptoms arise, you want to know how to make it better. Sometimes, you can solve problems on your own and, at other times, you may need help. In this section, you'll learn about what you should do if you have different problems or symptoms:

- ▶ The column on the left names a problem you may be having. Find the row that matches what you're feeling best.
- ▶ The second column, "What to try," offers some ideas for what you can do at home to help yourself feel better.

- ▶ The third column explains when you should call Housecall Providers. We can help with many of the issues you face.
- ▶ Sometimes you need care quickly. The final column describes when you should call 911 to get immediate care.

Some of the tips below are for caregivers and/or family members, if a patient is unconscious or can't take care of themselves. Those tips are shown in **blue text**.

What's going on?	What to try:	Call Housecall Providers if...	Call 911 if...
<p><b>I hurt.</b></p> <p><b>I have pain.</b></p> <p><b>I am uncomfortable.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest</li> <li>• Reposition yourself</li> <li>• Apply heat or cold where you have pain</li> <li>• Raise the body part that hurts</li> <li>• Distract yourself,</li> <li>• Take your prescribed medications as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your pain continues after trying the items in column 2</li> <li>• You have new and/or uncontrolled pain</li> <li>• Your medications aren't effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have chest discomfort with sweating/nausea</li> <li>• You have chest pain or pressure and medications don't help</li> <li>• There's severe discomfort in your neck, jaw, back, arms or stomach</li> <li>• You have sudden, severe pain in your eye or head (feels like the worst pain in your life)</li> </ul>
<p><b>I have trouble breathing.</b></p> <p><b>I am short of breath.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the head of the bed</li> <li>• Use a fan in your room</li> <li>• Reposition yourself</li> <li>• Practice calming techniques</li> <li>• Rest</li> <li>• Check to see if your oxygen is on (if applicable)</li> <li>• Take your prescribed inhalers, nebulizers or medications as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You tried the items in column 2 and they didn't work</li> <li>• You have a new cough or your cough is worse than usual</li> <li>• It's harder to breathe when you lie flat or are active</li> <li>• Your spit changes color, thickness or odor</li> <li>• Your medications or inhalers aren't effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have chest pain with sweating/nausea</li> <li>• Your fingers/lips are blue or your skin color looks grey</li> <li>• You can't breathe</li> </ul>

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What's going on?	What to try:	Call Housecall Providers if...	Call 911 if...
<p><b>I haven't pooped in two days.</b></p> <p><b>It hurts to poop.</b></p> <p><b>My poop is very hard.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase water intake</li> <li>• Eat more fiber (like prunes or prune juice)</li> <li>• Change position or walk/move more as able</li> <li>• Take your prescribed and as-needed medications</li> <li>• Drink Smooth Move tea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have new or worse constipation that doesn't go away after trying the items in column 2</li> <li>• You have black/dark or bloody poop</li> <li>• You don't poop in three days</li> <li>• There's no colostomy or ileostomy output in 24 hours (if applicable)</li> <li>• You have unresolved stomach pain</li> </ul>	
<p><b>I'm having loose stools.</b></p> <p><b>I'm pooping too much.</b></p> <p><b>I'm having new bowel accidents.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your prescribed and as-needed medications</li> <li>• Try a BRAT diet: Bananas, rice, applesauce and toast</li> <li>• Stop taking laxatives and stool softeners</li> <li>• Consider whether you ate something (licorice, dried fruit, etc.) that may have caused loose poop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have new or worse loose stools that don't go away after you try the items in column 2</li> <li>• You have black/dark or bloody poop</li> </ul>	
<p><b>I'm having more trouble thinking.</b></p> <p><b>I'm more confused.</b></p> <p><b>I'm feeling more restless.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce distractions</li> <li>• Reposition yourself</li> <li>• Use the toilet</li> <li>• Walk and move more</li> <li>• Practice relaxation techniques</li> <li>• Take your prescribed medications as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have new or worse confusion or agitation that doesn't go away when you try the items in column 2</li> <li>• Your medications aren't effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The patient is unresponsive</b></li> <li>• Your restlessness poses immediate threat to patient or caregiver safety</li> </ul>
<p><b>I feel weak.</b></p> <p><b>I feel dizzy.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit down</li> <li>• Rest</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids</li> <li>• Have a snack</li> <li>• Elevate your legs and feet</li> <li>• Take your prescribed medications as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have new or worse falls or dizziness that doesn't go away when you try the items in column 2</li> <li>• Your medications aren't effective</li> </ul>	

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What's going on?	What to try:	Call Housecall Providers if...	Call 911 if...
<p><b>I feel anxious.</b></p> <p><b>I feel depressed.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your prescribed medications as directed</li> <li>• Rest</li> <li>• Distract yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have new or worse anxiety or depression that doesn't go away when you try the items in column 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have thought about hurting yourself or someone else</li> </ul>
<p><b>I feel sick to my stomach.</b></p> <p><b>I threw up.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest</li> <li>• Reduce your food intake</li> <li>• Drink small sips of a carbonated beverage</li> <li>• Reduce the stimuli around you</li> <li>• Drink herbal tea</li> <li>• Take your prescribed medications as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You throw up twice or more in 24 hours</li> <li>• You can't keep water or medicine down</li> <li>• Your vomit has streaks of blood or looks like coffee grounds</li> <li>• Your medications aren't effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You're vomiting large amounts of blood</li> </ul>
<p><b>It's hard to pee.</b></p> <p><b>I'm having problems with my catheter.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase fluids</li> <li>• Check your catheter for kinks (if applicable)</li> <li>• Walk and/or move more, if it's safe to do so</li> <li>• Follow flush orders (if applicable)</li> <li>• If you have a home health service, reach out to them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You haven't peed in eight hours</li> <li>• There's no urine in your catheter after six hours</li> <li>• You have stomach pain</li> <li>• There's blood in your urine or it's dark</li> <li>• You have pelvic pain, fever, burning when you pee, or notice changes in your thinking or behavior</li> <li>• Your catheter fell out</li> </ul>	
<p><b>I fell.</b></p> <p><b>I've been falling more.</b></p> <p><b>I feel more unsteady.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce trip hazards (area rugs, cords, etc.)</li> <li>• Improve lighting</li> <li>• Wear glasses if you have them</li> <li>• Use your cane or walker</li> <li>• Take your prescribed medicines as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have pain related to a fall</li> <li>• You're taking a blood thinner</li> <li>• You've fallen twice in a short period of time</li> <li>• You don't know why you fell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can't get up</li> <li>• You're taking blood thinners and you hit your head</li> <li>• You have a new wound that is bleeding, won't stop, and you have lost a lot of blood</li> <li>• <b>The patient isn't waking up after a fall</b></li> </ul>

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What's going on?	What to try:	Call Housecall Providers if...	Call 911 if...
<b>I'm bleeding.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply pressure for five to ten minutes and bandage (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your bleeding hasn't stopped after 10 minutes of pressure</li> <li>You're bleeding from your rectum, mouth, surgical site or wound</li> <li>You're throwing up bright red blood or it looks like coffee grounds</li> <li>You have blood in your urine</li> <li>You have unusual bruising or persistent bleeding (off and on for several days)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your bleeding includes confusion, weakness, dizziness or fainting</li> <li>Your bleeding won't stop and you've lost a lot of blood</li> <li>You're vomiting a large amount of blood</li> </ul>
<b>I have a new wound.</b>  <b>I have new sores.</b>  <b>My wound changed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reposition yourself more often</li> <li>Call home health (if they are already involved)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have a fever above 100.0° F</li> <li>There's increased redness or warmth at the wound site</li> <li>You have more pain at the wound site</li> <li>Your wound drainage changes in amount or color</li> <li>You have a new or worse wound or injury</li> </ul>	
<b>I had a seizure.</b>  <b>I'm having more seizures.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow directions for seizure medication (if applicable)</li> <li>Check with your neurologist (if you already have one)</li> <li><b>Try to protect the patient's head during a seizure</b></li> <li><b>Do not put anything in the patient's mouth during seizure</b></li> <li><b>Move any nearby objects</b></li> <li><b>After seizure, have the patient lie on their side if possible</b></li> <li><b>Try to record the length and number of seizures</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You've missed or have other trouble with your medication</li> <li>You've never had a seizure before</li> <li>You've been vomiting with the seizure</li> <li>You have three or more seizures in a 24-hour period</li> <li>You're injured during a seizure</li> <li>Recovery from your seizure is different or takes longer than usual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The patient's seizure lasts more than five minutes</b></li> <li><b>The patient's seizure happens in water</b></li> <li><b>The patient can't be awakened after their movements have stopped</b></li> </ul>

What's going on?	What to try:	Call Housecall Providers if...	Call 911 if...
<b>I need a medication refill.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your pharmacy at least five days before you run out of medicine – they will contact us if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You've changed pharmacies</li> <li>• You're having difficulty with your pharmacy</li> </ul>	
<b>My weight or appetite changed.</b>  <b>My feeding tube isn't working.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure your scale is leveled and zeroed</li> <li>• Recheck your weight</li> <li>• Remove wheelchair weight from calculated weight</li> <li>• Take your prescribed medications as directed</li> <li>• Follow protocol for blocked feeding tube, if appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have new or worse loss of appetite</li> <li>• Your weight changes more than five pounds in one week or more than 10 pounds from your original weight</li> <li>• You have new or worse swelling in your feet, ankles or legs</li> <li>• Your feeding tube is blocked and doesn't resolve with your usual treatment</li> <li>• Your feeding tube falls out</li> </ul>	
<b>I am having fever or chills.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take as-needed Tylenol if you're able</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your temperature is over 100.0° F</li> <li>• You have new shaking chills or can't get warm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your fever is over 103° F even after using fever-reducing medication</li> </ul>
<b>I don't feel right.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your prescribed medications as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have a sudden loss of balance</li> <li>• You're weaker or more tired than usual</li> <li>• You're dizzy, light-headed or shaking</li> <li>• Your heart flutters, skips or races</li> <li>• Your blood pressure is far outside the normal range</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have sudden blurred or loss of vision</li> <li>• You have sudden difficulty speaking/slurred words</li> <li>• You have sudden numbness of your face, arm or leg</li> </ul>
<b>I have questions about or problems with medical equipment.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the equipment vendor if you can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have difficulty with your vendor</li> <li>• You need different medical equipment</li> </ul>	

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What's going on?	What to try:	Call Housecall Providers if...	Call 911 if...
<p><b>I have diabetes and something is not right.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check blood sugar and vitals, if able</li> <li>• Consider whether you've taken your prescribed medications as directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your blood sugar is unusually high or less than 90</li> <li>• You're feeling very shaky, sweaty, tired or confused</li> <li>• You're not getting better with your usual treatments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The patient is unconscious</b></li> <li>• You're having seizures</li> <li>• You can't raise your blood sugar above 100 with treatment</li> </ul>
<p><b>I have general questions.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have home health service, reach out to them for help with issues they're already working with you on</li> <li>• Reach out to specialists for issues they're already working with you on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call us for urgent issues</li> <li>• Call or use the patient portal for help with non-urgent issues</li> </ul>	