



SIA CARE PLANS - HAVE YOU GOT YOURS?

Our SCI Nurse Advisor, Helen Pettman-Tideswell, explains how our two different care plans – developed in conjunction with our members – can reduce frustration, stress and discomfort, and ensure you get the best possible care for your specific needs whatever the situation or setting.



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Care plans are important for several reasons. They put you at the heart of the decision-making process regarding your care needs; they can eliminate the frustration of having to repeat the same information to different care

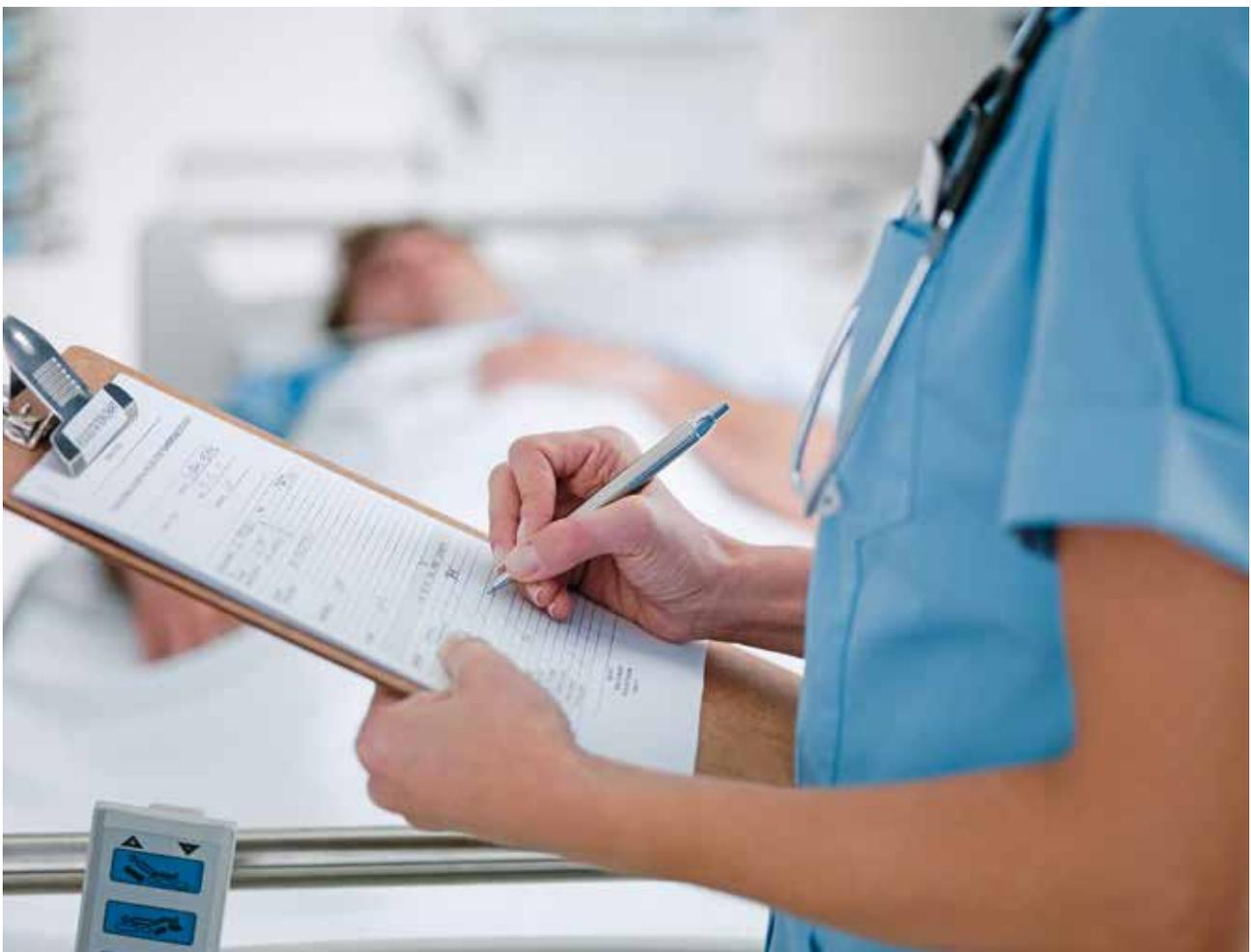
providers and they ensure that everyone involved in your care has access to the same, up-to-date information specific to your needs. In times of emergency or illness, they can literally be a lifesaver. Even if you generally manage your own care needs, do read on to see how an individual care plan could help you.

Our own experience as SCI Nurse Specialists supporting people being treated outside of SCI Centres has shown us just how important a care plan can be. The knowledge gap in SCI care in healthcare settings such as GP surgeries, district hospitals, care agencies and non-specialist clinics is a serious concern

and key priority for us. In the meantime, an individual care plan is a good tool for you to ensure you get the best and most appropriate care wherever you're receiving it.

In response to our members' feedback, we've developed two different care plans, designed for use in different circumstances.

They can be logged with your GP, on your hospital records and shared with anyone involved in your care such as a care agency. If you have a planned elective admission or procedure, then take them with you to your appointments and share them with the



team. Having them to hand and ready to go in an obvious place when needed is key; your care folder or other designated place that you and a PA/friend/relative know of. We would also suggest you always inform your spinal consultant of any hospital admissions. Some SCI Centres offer an Outreach Service whereby the outpatient nurses can liaise with the local hospital and provide supporting documentation and advice to assist with their care of you.

The first is our **personal care plan**. This is a more in-depth plan that you can download from our website and complete yourself or with your PA. This document outlines your usual routine and individual needs on a day-to-day basis. It includes the following sections:

- Your injury level and what this means for you in terms of motor function and sensation.
- Any medications you take.
- Autonomic Dysreflexia – it lists whether you have had this, typical symptoms and triggers, your usual baseline blood pressure, what medication you use should you have an episode.
- Bowel management – your usual routine, including how you undertake it and medications used.
- Bladder management – what bladder management you use including any products.
- Pressure care – repositioning, what equipment you use, any previous pressure area issues such as pressure ulcers.
- Spasms – if these affect you and the medication you use.
- Respiratory care – how you manage this, including cough assist devices.
- General equipment and communications you may need.

To download this care plan please go to www.spinal.co.uk/SIA-Personal-Care-Plan

The **emergency care plan** is for use in emergency admissions. This plan needs to consider how your care needs may change if you're admitted to hospital. For example, you might never need an air mattress at home but, if you're unwell and not moving about as much, then this will be essential to prevent pressure damage in hospital. Your usual

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL TESTIMONY

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"Following the implementation of the personal care plan at the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro, it's clear to see the difference it has made to the patient experience. I have heard first-hand how the patient care and their experience of being in a district general hospital has improved. Staff are more aware of the patients' care needs and how to manage them.

"I have used a version of the personal care plan for the admission of one of our patients in Bristol Royal Infirmary. A document outlining the patient's care needs and advice about who can be contacted for further information proved to be a valuable resource for both the patient and the staff. The patient felt that their request for their care needs to be met was taken note of due to having a professional document endorsed by their local SCI Centre. The staff were more receptive and appreciative that the care needs were clearly outlined. They also had clear contact details for the SCI Centre to seek advice if they needed to."

bladder management routine might rely on intermittent self-catheterisation (SIC); but if you need to be on fluids administered via a drip then an indwelling catheter might be a better option to prevent bladder distension and related complications.

Our nurses can complete this form with you in a conversation over the phone at a mutually convenient time and then send a copy to you. If you need it updating, then we can do that for you too. This care plan is a shorter, more concise version because it only requires information pertinent to emergency situations. The plan and routines may differ from your usual routine. Each section contains prompts and suggestions for healthcare professionals as per the examples below:

- Your personal details including your GP and next of kin.
- History – level of your injury and any major health conditions.
- Autonomic Dysreflexia – what you take for this and your baseline blood pressure. We remind healthcare professionals that this is a medical emergency requiring immediate intervention and refer them to your emergency medical card.

- Neurogenic skin – we explain the high risk of sustaining pressure damage, the importance of a specialist mattress to mitigate this and give information on how to transfer and reposition you safely, as well as helping you to thermoregulate.
- Respiratory care – we explain the importance of this to reduce the risk of chest infection, covering sputum clearance, positioning and assisted cough devices.
- Neurogenic bladder – this highlights the need for close monitoring and management because of the risks of Autonomic Dysreflexia, UTI and incontinence. It also covers catheter use, including which type you might currently use and how fitting one can avoid other problems if you are put on intravenous fluids (i.e. a drip).
- Neurogenic bowel – this section gives brief advice on digital check and evacuation of bowel and refers healthcare professionals to RCN and MASCIIP guidelines. It notes your emergency routine if different to your usual routine, recommends incontinence sheets over pads and encourages healthcare providers to help with transfers and personal care if appropriate.

For further information or assistance with your personal care plan – or to put together your emergency care plan – please contact our SCI Nurse Specialist service by emailing SCINurseSpecialists@spinal.co.uk or phoning 01908 604191 ext. 218. We are always happy to help.