

Leaving hospital? Heed care tips or you may return

By Lauran Neergaard

AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — Michael Lee knew he was still in bad shape when he left the hospital five days after emergency heart surgery. But he was so eager to escape the constant prodding and the roommate's loud TV that he tuned out the nurses' care instructions.

"I was really tired of Jerry Springer," the New York man says ruefully. "I was so anxious to get out that it sort of overrode everything else that was going on around me."

He's far from alone: Missing out on critical information about what to do at home to get better is one of the main risks for preventable rehospitalizations.

"There couldn't be a worse time, a less receptive time, to offer people information than the 11 minutes before they leave the building," said readmissions expert Dr. Eric Coleman of the University of Colorado in Denver.

Hospital readmissions are miserable for patients, and a huge cost — more than \$17 billion a year in avoidable Medicare bills alone — for a nation struggling with the price of health care.

Now, with Medicare fining facilities that don't reduce readmissions enough, the nation is at a crossroads as hospitals begin to take action.

"Patients leave the hospital not necessarily when they're well but when

they're on the road to recovery," said Dr. David Goodman, who led a new study from the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care that shows different parts of the country do a better job at keeping those people at home.

The Dartmouth study was commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which then invited the AP as a partner to explore through focus groups it organized what happens at the hospital level that makes readmissions so difficult to solve.

In Portland, Ore., nurses at Oregon Health & Science University start teaching heart failure patients what they'll need to do at home on their first day in the hospital, instead of just on their last day.

In Salt Lake City, a nurse acts as a navigator, connecting high-risk University of Utah patients with community doctors for follow-up treatment and ensuring both sides know exactly what's supposed to happen when they leave the hospital.

Some techniques are emerging as key, Coleman said: Having patients prove they understand by teaching back to the nurse. Role-playing how they'd handle problems. Finding a patient goal to target, like the grandmother who wants her heart failure controlled enough that her feet don't swell out of her Sunday shoes.

Work Out Tip of the Week

Minardi Yoga: The 'work-in' complement to your workout

By Jimmy Minardi



specific muscles and muscle groups — to maneuver through any physical activity without injury; increased flexibility, stability and mobility, allowing for a greater range of motion; greater mental control and concentration through relaxed breathing techniques; and enhanced alignment and posture to correct muscle imbalances or body mechanic problems.

Though most of us know about the considerable benefits yoga brings to the body and mind, athletes and sports enthusiasts are often unaware of the incredible value it can bring to any fitness endeavor. No, it's not just for the fabulously fit and flexible.

As a former professional athlete, I began studying yoga over 20 years ago as a way to complement my rigorous athletic training. Yoga made an immense difference in my level of fitness that I couldn't get with any other sport, piece of gym equipment or class.

Minardi Yoga was born out of a need for a class that could encapsulate everything that I've learned as a professional athlete, coach and teacher.

There's a reason that so many pro sports teams, Olympians and triathletes are now incorporating yoga into their training. The benefits are limitless. Practicing Minardi Yoga brings improved core strength, giving you the overall body strength — in very

Minardi Yoga is the "work-in" phase of body conditioning — a cross-training balance to any outdoor workout. I want my students to keep snowboarding, surfing or whatever sport they enjoy without being injured. This is a program that irrigates the body and mind while reinforcing core strength — something that leads to better balance and stability, whether on the slopes or in our daily activities.

Jimmy Minardi is founder of Minardi Training. He is a certified personal trainer and yoga instructor, former professional cyclist, competitive triathlete, avid surfer, snowboarder and swimmer with a black belt in jujitsu, who has been working closely with athletes as a coach, trainer and yoga teacher for over 25 years. He and his wife, Jenna Minardi, certified integral yoga instructor, both teach at O2 Aspen, and offer yoga workshops and retreats in Costa Rica.

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