

The role of informal caregivers in post-surgery care for older patients

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In a study of older adults who underwent surgery and had comparable rates of loss of independence, those who lived at home with family and friends were more likely to be discharged home than those who lived alone. These discharges may be giving family and friends unexpected, informal caregiver roles.

Of 18,494 patients in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study, 25% lived alone prior to surgery. Twice as many patients who lived alone were discharged to a non-home location (10.2% versus 5.1%). Patients who lived alone and were discharged home with new informal caregivers had a 1.4-times higher odds of readmission.

"These findings indicate the importance of including [family](#) and friends in conversations about post-operative care for older adult surgical [patients](#)," said lead author Claire M. Sokas, MD, MPH, of Brigham and Women's Hospital.

More information: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2021). DOI: [10.1111/jgs.17507](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.17507)

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