

Table 22-3: Assessment of the Home Environment

1. Who in the home can assume primary responsibility as caregiver?
2. What is the patient's level of ability in activities of daily living?
3. Are family members or caregiver able to read and understand medication labels?
4. What is the family and patient's understanding of, and adjustment to, the illness?
5. What is the potential impact of disclosure by the patient of HIV status to family members and other people?
6. Are there physical and mental health issues among other family members and caregivers? (i.e., Is this patient's partner or spouse also HIV-infected, addicted to drugs or alcohol, or physically or psychologically unable to meet the demands that will be placed upon him/her?)
7. Are medications, especially pain medications, safe from theft or abuse by others in the home?
8. Do the family and caregiver have the capacity to maintain a stable home environment?
9. Will the patient be able to access outpatient care from home? Will the patient and family be able to obtain medications and supplies at home?
10. If the patient is bedridden, is someone available to answer the door, or can a key be provided to the home care providers?
11. How safe is the home for patient, caregiver, and visiting health personnel?
12. Is durable medical equipment such as hospital bed, commode chair, wheelchair, or oxygen needed in the home, and should they be in place prior to discharge?
13. Is the home setting appropriate for the patient's stage of illness?
(See also Table 22-5.)
14. What are the financial resources of the patient and family, and have those resources changed dramatically since prior hospitalizations?
15. Have legal issues such as guardianship, living wills, health care proxies been addressed and are they current? (See Chapter 18: Legal and Financial Issues.)
16. What care options are there for children during illness and after death of the parent?