



Care Partner Information

Tips for Providing Older Adult Care

Caregiver Respite

Respite is a break from caregiving while someone else cares for the older adult. Respite is an important part of caregiving. This break gives the caregiver a chance to visit with friends, run errands, sleep, see their own doctor, or other types of self care.

Types of Respite

Private Duty Caregivers

Private duty caregivers come to the home. They can help watch the person so the caregiver can do other tasks in the home. Private duty caregivers can help with things such as dressing or bathing the person. They cannot give medications or help with other medical care. They are usually paid “out-of-pocket” by the family, and are not paid by health insurance.

Adult Day Health Programs

Adult day health programs provide supervision, activities, personal care, and meals. They can also give medications and help with other basic health needs in a group setting. Some programs provide transportation. Programs in health centers usually have a nurse, but programs at recreation centers usually do not.

Assisted Living Centers, Memory Care, or Rehab-Skilled Care Facilities

Some of these places offer respite for one day only. Others can provide respite for up to 2 weeks. Staff are available throughout the day and night. They can provide personal help, medical help, meals, and some recreational activities.

Volunteer Visits

Volunteers can be a “friendly visitor” that can sit with and talk to the person. Some volunteers can help with shopping or paying bills. They cannot provide any personal care, such as dressing or bathing. They also cannot provide medical care, such as giving medications.

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on older adult caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for older adults. Available in English and Spanish at www.aging.arizona.edu

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Finding Services

Respite services are not “health care,” so they are not covered by Medicare or other health insurance. But, if the older adult has long-term care insurance, Veterans Aid & Attendance benefit, or Medicaid long-term care, respite might be paid. If families have to pay “out of pocket,” there are vouchers that can reduce the cost, or free volunteers are sometimes available.

Area Agencies on Aging

Every region in the U.S. has an Area Agency on Aging that can provide a list of adult day health programs, caregiving agencies, and volunteer organizations that visit seniors. Many Area Agencies on Aging also offer classes to support caregivers, and vouchers to reduce the cost of respite services.

Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association’s “Community Resource Finder” is an online tool to find services in the local community (see resources below). The Alzheimer’s Association also has tip sheets, family care consult services, a 24/7 helpline, and respite vouchers.

Caregiver Coalitions

State or regional caregiver coalitions raise awareness about caregiver needs, and provide education for caregivers. Some also have programs that can help pay for the cost of caregiving.

Other organizations

Each state or region has different services available from different places. The Eldercare Locator (see resources below) can help people find local volunteer organizations, hospice providers, social services and in-home care associations.

Resources:

Alzheimer’s Association: www.alz.org; 1-800-272-3900

Community Resource Finder: www.communityresourcefinder.org

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging: www.n4a.org

Eldercare Locator: <https://eldercare.acl.gov>

Family Caregiver Alliance National Center on Caregiving: www.caregiver.org

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