Nationwide®

Nationwide Retirement Institute®

Nationwide® caregiving resource guide

Resources to help you care for your loved ones — and take care of yourself

Caring for loved ones who need help with daily activities such as eating and bathing can be hard, especially if you have other responsibilities such as a job or children that require your time and attention.

An estimated 38 million people, about 11.5% of the population, are taking care of loved ones.[1] Caregiving can strengthen the ties between family members across different ages. But taking on long-term responsibility for the care of a loved one can have a huge impact on your financial, physical and mental well-being in the long run.

This resource guide is broken down into 3 sections:

1 Getting help with day-to-day duties

2 Looking after yourself so you can look after others

3 Emotional and practical resources for end-of-life care

[1] "Valuing the Invaluable: 2023 Update", AARP (March 2023).

Did you know?

Financial burden[3]

Nearly half of caregivers report having out-of-pocket financial impact as a result of caregiving.

- $7,242 average annual family caregiver spend
- 22% used up short-term savings
- 12% went through all their long-term savings

Time commitment[3]

Family caregivers who live with their senior relative spend an average of 37 hours a week on care giving duties. People who don't live with their relatives spend an average of 24 hours a week.

Health impact

More than 56%, of caregivers find it difficult to care for their own mental health and 40% state emotional stress as their biggest challenge.[2]

Nearly half of all caregivers (48%) who provide help to older adults do so for someone with Alzheimer's or another dementia.[4]

53% of caregivers have been diagnosed with two or more chronic conditions.[3]

More than

56%

of caregivers find it difficult for them to care for their own mental health.

[2] Raimondi, Alessandra. A Look At U.S. Caregivers' Mental Health. Washington, DC: AARP Research, August 2023.
[3] "Caregiver Statistics: A Data Portrait of Family Caregiving," Claire Samuels, aplaceformom.com (Dec. 2, 2022).
[4] Alzheimer's Facts and Figures 2023, Alzheimer's Association.

1 Getting help with day-to-day duties

Depending on your loved one's capabilities, you may be spending a little — or a lot — of time tending to their needs. After living a vital, independent life, they may find it difficult to now rely on others to help them with basic personal care. We know that your focus is to maintain your loved one's quality of life, and that means taking care of both their physical and emotional well-being. Here are some strategies to make the day-in and day-out of caregiving just a little bit easier.

Your home or theirs?
Do you currently care for your loved one at their home or your own? While it's a big decision to have your loved one move in with you and your family, that is sometimes the most beneficial arrangement for everyone concerned.

Your home
Consider:

- What is their preference?
- How would it impact my immediate family if this person moved in?
- How long does it currently take to get to their house and back each day? Is that time that could be spent on another high-priority task?
- If my loved one were to sell their house now, could that offset some of the costs associated with their care?
- Which living space is best suited to their needs? What renovations would be required to ensure their safety and help them get around? What modifications need to be made to facilitate basic care such as bathing? If you live in a two-story house with only a half-bath downstairs, renovations such as a stair lift may be required to accommodate bathing.

Their home
Of course, your loved one may prefer to stay in their own home, and providing family and/or professional caregiving services is another option. The right answer depends on the extent of care needed and the finances available.

Resources:

Use this comprehensive **AARP Checklist** with your family when moving your loved one into your home. **bit.ly/3PWGulh**

Get valuable tips from **AARP's "How to Make a Home Safe for Your Aging Parent." bit.ly/3PEsnS2**

Resources:

Learn more from **AARP** about the types of in-home caregivers and the steps to hire a caregiver who is right for your family. **bit.ly/3Blwtu4**

Resources:

Find out what's covered and what's not when it comes to paying for long-term care. Access resources from the **Department of Health & Human Services. bit.ly/3vjxwXw**

Resources:

Find out more about the benefits and services of senior centers with this information from the **National Council on Aging. bit.ly/3PZDiW4**

Common caregiving tasks

Activities of daily living[5]	Instrumental activities of daily living[6]
• Bathing	• Household chores
• Dressing	• Meal preparation
• Eating	• Managing money/paying bills
• Transferring	• Transportation
• Toileting	• Shopping
• Continence	

That's obviously a lot for one person to handle, so think about ways that you can outsource some of these tasks and/or plan for a respite every few months. For example, can a long-distance family member be in charge of paying bills or perhaps take over your responsibilities for a few days so you can get a regular break?

You may also want to consider hiring an in-home caregiver part- or full-time to help your loved one with their daily living activities. Based on experience and training, there are many types of caregivers available to meet your loved one's needs.

Funding options

Can the federal or state government help offset the cost of in-home caregivers? Programs such as Medicare and Medicaid may be able to help in some cases. Medicare can help pay for short-term acute care, usually for a limited time up to 100 days, and when tied to a specific medical event for which qualifications have been met. However, Medicare does not pay for help with ongoing daily activities such as bathing and dressing.

Medicaid is a program for those with low income and assets and is both a federal and state program. Upon meeting qualifications, nursing home care is covered by Medicaid in all 50 states. However, each state determines to what extent any additional services, such as in-home care, will be covered.

Psychological support

Maintaining your loved one's physical well-being is only part of the responsibility a caregiver takes on. You also need to take steps to keep your loved one feeling mentally alert and to reduce their risk of depression.

Depending on your loved one's capabilities, consider visiting a senior center near you. Studies show that regular senior center participants have better health outcomes and social bonds[7] compared with their peers. Not only are they a great way for your loved one to meet others, senior centers are also a vital way to collect information about community services that can help your loved one retain — or gain — some independence. Also be on the lookout for senior programs offered through your local community or recreation center.

[5] The Internal Revenue Code Section 7702B(c)(1).
[6] "Home health care and the caregiving crisis in America," Shawn Britt, Nationwide Retirement Institute (2019).
[7] "Get the Facts on Senior Centers," National Council on Aging (July 19, 2022).

2 Looking after yourself so you can look after others

Tending to somebody else's constant needs is a lot for one person to manage — especially when you have other responsibilities that demand attention. Constant stress can take a toll on every aspect of your life. It's extremely important to take time to focus on your emotional, physical and financial health.

Emotional health

4 in 10 caregivers say they never or rarely relax.[2]

- Learn how to identify and manage the common feelings associated with being a caregiver.
- Join a support group to interact with other caregivers so you don't feel alone. Do a web search to learn more about the numerous support groups where you can meet other caregivers like you online or in person in your area.
- Socialize in person whenever possible with people you know outside of your caregiver role. Studies show that caregivers who depend on social media for personal connection are 50% more likely to feel alone than caregivers who do not depend on social media.
- Make time on a regular basis for "me time" such as seeing a friend or pursuing a hobby. It will give you something to look forward to outside of your caregiving responsibilities.

Physical health

53% of caregivers have been diagnosed with two or more chronic conditions. That's 14% higher than the general U.S. adult population.[2]

- When was the last time you got a physical? Armed with information about your health, you'll know the reasons why you need to pursue a healthier lifestyle — from losing weight to reducing risk of diabetes and other conditions.
- Work with your doctor or a certified nutritionist to develop healthy eating habits so you are avoiding unhealthy snacks during the day. Track your food intake by using one of the many apps available through your smartphone.
- Research has shown that high-intensity interval training for as little as 7 minutes a day can have positive health impacts, and no special gym equipment is required. Download an app now and set aside a few minutes each day to squat, side plank and lunge.
- In addition to diet and exercise, getting enough sleep is critical to overall physical health.

Resources:

Better understand the emotional side of caregiving with this article from the **Family Caregiver Alliance. bit.ly/3J6BLLT**

The **Working Daughter Facebook group** brings together women who are juggling caregiving and work responsibilities. **bit.ly/3J9vLSs**

Go to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** for guidelines on how many hours of sleep you should be getting per night, as well as tips for good sleep habits. **bit.ly/3z7XZZj**

Resources:

Visit the **State Health Insurance Assistance Program** website **shiphelp.org** to learn more about coverage options.

For tips on how to find a financial professional, read this article from **The Balance. bit.ly/3PHNdjq**

Financial health

Being a caregiver can significantly reduce your earning ability, which impacts your retirement readiness.

48% of respondents said being a caregiver will probably use up the money they had planned for their children or that expenses may keep them from retiring.[8]

To balance the often-conflicting demands of planning for retirement while caring for your loved one, speak to a financial professional about retirement planning. If still working, try to continue contributing to a retirement savings plan such as a 401(k) or IRA, and explore long-term care insurance options so you have the funding and flexibility to help pay for quality care if or when you should need it.

48%

of respondents said being a caregiver will probably use up the money they had planned for their children[8]

[8] Nationwide® Retirement Institute® 2021 Long-term Care Consumer Survey.

3 Emotional and practical resources for end-of-life care

There may come a time when your loved one's care needs are beyond what you can handle. That may mean it's time for your loved one to get expert care at home or from an outside facility or service (e.g., long-term care or hospice). While your head may tell you it's time, in your heart it will be painful to make this decision — in large part due to your loved one's fear of this new situation as they come to terms with a steep decline in their health.

Emotional resources

- Talk to your loved ones ahead of time about plans for when or if you can no longer look after them. If they are suffering from mental decline, they may not remember this conversation when the time comes — but you can rest assured that you had it and came to an agreement.
- To help your loved ones adapt to a new living situation, make the transition easier by committing friends and family to visit or call at specific times. If your loved one is able, start a new project together to help give them purpose and help them feel valued. Perhaps it's scrapbooking that will display memories from happier times.
- Gather your loved one's most treasured possessions, furniture, pictures, etc., and arrange their new living space as similarly as you can to the place they came from. It is important that your loved one feels familiarity and a sense of home in their new living space.

Practical resources

- Comprehensive lists of what to look for and questions to ask during a tour of a long-term care facility can be found online.
- Resources are available to help your loved ones get their affairs in order, and to give to somebody they trust the authority to direct their care and finances when they are no longer able to do so.

As you explore options, remember that you are not alone. Nationwide has developed this guide to help — with all aspects of caregiving — the more than 37 million Americans providing unpaid eldercare.[9]

Resources:

Read **AARP's "When It's Time for a Nursing Home" guide** for a primer on what to expect. **bit.ly/3zyfSlp**

AARP also has recommendations for stimulating activities that are relevant for older adults experiencing mental and/or physical decline. **bit.ly/3BfCtEC**

Access **Medicare's nursing home comparison** tool to compare facilities in your area based on criteria such as health inspection results and ratio of caregivers to residents. **bit.ly/3PZzMLk**

Access resources from the **National Institute on Aging** that will help your loved one get their affairs in order. **bit.ly/3A2d2oY**

This **AARP** article may help you decide whether hospice may be the best option for your loved one. **bit.ly/3Q36NGN**

[9] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Oct. 23, 2023

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To learn more about this offering, call 763-689-9023 or email LifePlan@elsllc.org

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The 2021 Long-term Care Consumer Survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Nationwide from September 20- October 12, 2021, among 1.812 adults ages 25+ (general population sample) including 605 Millennials (age 25-40), 602 Gen Xers (age 41-56), and 605 Boomers+ (age 57+). The data is weighted where necessary by age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, household income, marital status, retirement status, assets, and propensity to be online to bring it in line with the actual proportions in the population.

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