



Supporting you

A resource
for caregivers



Start the conversation

Conversations about your loved one's care needs can be hard.



Being a caregiver for a loved one is rewarding, but it is not without challenges. In this booklet, we discuss topics ranging from long-distance caregiving to self-care. And we provide a number of helpful checklists to help you keep track of things like medications, contact information for your care team and tips for home safety. You can find more helpful information at the Medicare Support Center.

Here are some tips on how to start the conversation:

- Plan your discussion for a quiet, calm place.
- Avoid interruptions and distractions.
- Think about what you want to say ahead of time.
- Talk from the perspective of concern and care.
- Listen to their concerns and don't be critical or confrontational.
- Reassure your loved one you'll work together to solve their challenges.



Home safety checklist



Everyone has unique safety needs as part of their personal health journey, but there are a few things to keep in mind as you help get everything ready at home.

Questions to ask your loved one

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | Where do you spend the most time when you are at home? |
| <input type="radio"/> | How do you usually move from room to room? |
| <input type="radio"/> | Is there anything that you feel is unsafe in your home? |
| <input type="radio"/> | Do you need anything to be updated or fixed? |



Long-distance caregivers

If you live a long distance from a relative or friend who becomes ill, you may not be able to help out with day-to-day care and decisions. Long-distance caregiving is common, but it presents its own set of challenges, including:

- **Expenses for travel to visit the loved one**
- **Time off work for visits and long-distance medical or estate planning**
- **Frustration due to not being able to see your loved one in person as often as you'd like**
- **Difficulty recognizing changes in your loved one's health, especially if there are no other close caregivers, which can make care decisions harder**

What you can do to help

There are plenty of things you can do to make your role easier, even at a distance. Here are just a few suggestions:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | Create an informal care team nearby your loved one if you're the sole caregiver. This can include neighbors, family, friends, church and other community members. |
| <input type="radio"/> | Ask your loved one to grant you access to their health information. You can talk directly with their doctor to help coordinate their care. |
| <input type="radio"/> | Have a formal team of paid help if your relative or friend needs more regular care. You may also consider a geriatric care manager who functions as a "surrogate you" to coordinate care and keep you informed of what's happening. |
| <input type="radio"/> | Plan regular trips to see your loved one. Enjoy your time with them and use the visits to talk with doctors, lawyers and financial advisors. |
| <input type="radio"/> | Plan family meetings if there are other caregivers involved. Try to divide up tasks and talk about any issues or tensions. |



Emergency contacts

This contact sheet can be used to quickly find important information.

Emergency contacts

PRIMARY CONTACT:

Relationship:

Address/phone number/email:

OTHER CONTACT:

Relationship:

Address/phone number/email:

OTHER CONTACT:

Relationship:

Address/phone number/email:

Emergency departments

In the event of a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

URGENT CARE:

PRIMARY HOSPITAL:

PCP:

OTHER CONTACTS:



Keep track of medicines

We've created a handy sheet for you or your loved one to record all the medicines and prescriptions they may have. Make sure to list the dose and frequency of each one, along with any notes either you or your loved one may need to remember.

MEDICINES / PRESCRIPTIONS	DOSE	FREQUENCY	NOTES

PHARMACY:



Care team

These are the medical professionals you should contact for health advice or to coordinate medical care.

Care team members

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN (PCP):

Phone:

Email:

NURSE:

Phone:

Email:

PHARMACY:

Phone:

Email:

HOSPITAL / EMERGENCY CARE:

Phone:

Email:

Other support

	PHONE	EMAIL
Doctor		
Doctor		
Dentist		
Eye doctor		
Friend		
Neighbor		
Religious contact		

Remember to update your loved one's medical and emergency contact information every year to keep it current.



Taking care of you



Practicing self-care is important, and connecting with others can be a great way to relieve tension and stress. Even a simple conversation with friend or family member can make all the difference. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Research adult day care centers in your area. These could give you some time off to spend with friends, family or others.**
- **Remember to recognize your accomplishments as a caregiver instead of dwelling on your challenges. A counselor or life coach can help you deal with difficult emotions and find new ways to tackle any troubles you face.**
- **Join a support group that's run by a qualified professional. These groups allow caregivers to talk about common feelings and challenges, and you might even make some new friends.**

Remember:

If you have any symptoms of depression — extreme sadness, trouble concentrating, apathy, hopelessness or thoughts about death — see a doctor right away.

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