

Quick Guide:

8 Ways to Help Care for Your Parent at Home

Use this resource to help create a practical, realistic approach to providing care to your parent or family member. As you work through this guide, keep in mind that this is not exhaustive and should be used as a starting point for planning and research.

1. Talk about it with your parent

Before you do anything, it's important to sit down and talk with your parent. Be a partner to your parent, not an authority. Transitioning from child to a caregiver role can be complicated for everyone.

Notes and talking points

2. Make home safe

A safe living environment is important, especially as your parent ages. Use this checklist while assessing and modifying the home for safety.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check lighting and be sure light switches are easy to locate and use | <input type="checkbox"/> Install stairlift |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Label hot and cold clearly on all faucets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clear doorways and pathways of clutter, small furniture, electrical cords, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure medication is properly labeled; throw away expired medication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install a raised toilet seat | <input type="checkbox"/> Post emergency information by the phone or on the refrigerator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install grab bars in bathrooms and near closets or beds in bedrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Program the phone with 911 on speed dial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install nonslip mats in the kitchen, bathroom and other areas exposed to moisture | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove or tack down loose rugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install rails along stairs and hallways | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove wobbly, unstable furniture |

Notes:

3. Assess medical needs

Understand your parent's medical needs. What can they do independently and what could they use help with? Discuss topics like appointments, transportation and medication management.

What does my parent need help with?

Medication

Name	Dosage	Instructions
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Medical contacts

Dentist _____ Phone _____

Office address _____ Email _____

Pharmacy _____ Phone _____

Office address _____ Email _____

Physical/occupational therapist _____ Phone _____

Office address _____ Email _____

Primary physician _____ Phone _____

Office address _____ Email _____

Other _____ Phone _____

Office address _____ Email _____

4. Address cognitive health

My parent sometimes forgets

I can help by

Helpful tip:

Low-impact exercises, puzzles like crossword or Sudoku, a balanced diet and a good night's rest will help your parent optimize memory and cognition.

5. Help with daily tasks

Have a conversation with your parent about their abilities. Some tasks may require modifications to allow your parent to do as much as possible independently.

Task	Assistance needed?		When/how I can help
	Yes	No	
Bathing/showering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Dental hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Getting dressed/undressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Getting in and out of bed or chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Grocery shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Hair combing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Housekeeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Meal prep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Meal reminders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Medication assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Moving around the home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Shaving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Using the restroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

6. Encourage engagement and connection

What activities and hobbies bring your parent joy? What are they currently involved in? Has your parent stopped pursuing any interests due to lack of energy or ability? What engaging opportunities can they pursue in the local community?

Activities/hobbies:

Current involvements:

Potential opportunities:

Gentle reminder: If your parent has started to socialize less often, start with activities in the home where it is safe and familiar, and then work up their comfortability to venture out. Modify activities according to their abilities.

7. Handling money matters

Help your parent get an accurate idea of their financial state. They may be eligible for resources and government programs such as Medicaid or veterans benefits.

Assets	Account info	Balance
Checking account	_____	_____
Investment account	_____	_____
Long-term care insurance	_____	_____
Retirement account - IRA, pension	_____	_____
Savings account	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____

Monthly budget*	Estimated cost
Care services	_____
Fitness and social opportunities	_____
Groceries	_____
Home or renters' insurance	_____
Housekeeping and home repairs	_____
Laundry service	_____
Lawn care and landscaping	_____
Mortgage or rent	_____
Personal appearance services (hair, nails, etc.)	_____
Property insurance and taxes	_____
Transportation	_____
Utilities	_____
24-hour security	_____

Future expenses	Estimated cost
Assisted living	_____
Assistive equipment	_____
Home safety modifications	_____
In-home care	_____
Legal/financial fees	_____
Medical bills, co-pays	_____

*Comparing in-home care costs to those associated with a move to an assisted living community is a key consideration.

8. Additional resources available to caregivers

Be aware of caregiver burnout. Research the following resources to see what is available in your area.

Adult day services

Assisted living communities

Companions/visitors

Home care agencies

Senior centers

Short-term stay options

Transportation services
