

Home Care: The Key to Aging in Place?

According to a 2018 AARP survey, more than 75 percent of adults 50 or older want to remain in their own residence as they age. Less than 50 percent, however, actually believe that they will be able to.

While long-lived communities provide a social network and support system by which you can benefit, oftentimes physical ailments and age-related limitations can rob you of the ability to live independently.

Common reasons older adults end up moving out of their homes:

- Cannot accommodate needs
- Diminished mobility, coordination and flexibility
- Reduced eyesight or hearing abilities
- Frequent falling
- Increased risk of accidents
- Loss of strength and endurance
- Cognitive decline and memory problems
- Hospitalization and rehab
- Medication mix-ups

Instead of moving to an assisted living facility or sharing a home with a family caregiver, more and more older adults are turning to home care services, especially if they themselves don't require extensive medical monitoring.

WHAT IS HOME CARE?

It's all in the name – home care is literally care services that are provided in the home in which you reside.

Skilled or home health care covers services that are typically doctor-ordered, like physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and wound care. Non-medical home



care, on the other hand, covers services that assist with daily activities.

Activities of daily living (ADLs) can be sorted into basic and instrumental categories. Basic ADLs include:

- Eating
- Dressing
- Grooming
- Toileting
- Maintaining personal hygiene
- Transferring safely
- Maintaining continence

Instrumental ADLs involve more thought-processing at times, however, are not necessarily required on a daily basis:

- Sorting through mail
- Medication management
- Transportation
- Preparing food
- Tending to housework, like laundry and cleaning
- Shopping

Personal care aides are caregivers who assist with both types of

activities that help keep older adults safely living in their own homes. Home care services also provide family caregivers peace of mind, helping offload some of the care burden, as well as address potential problems, like an aging parent who is more and more socially isolated or seems to be struggling to manage their personal hygiene.

Not only does successful, safe and independent living promote longevity in older adults but so does engaging in meaningful activities and sharing conversation with other individuals, both of which a good caregiver can provide.

HOW DO I PAY FOR HOME CARE?

While home health care is mostly covered by Medicare or Medicaid, general home care services are not

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typically covered by insurance.

What does this mean for aging adults and their families? It means paying out of pocket, using Long-Term Care Insurance or veteran benefits to hire care providers to supplement the family caregiving tasks that help you or your loved one age in place.

You can tackle your search either with formal queries to local licensed home care agencies, you can look online, or get personal referrals from friends and family.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A HOME CARE AGENCY

If you and your family have decided that a home care agency would be beneficial to help you age in place, don't forget these important tips during your search:

- Consult your doctor, friends, faith community and local aging organizations for referrals to top-rated home care agencies
- Check trusted reviews online for home care agencies or visit the Better Business Bureau website
- Calculate how much you can afford and set a budget
- Clarify the job description and include every task or duty you expect to be completed
- Be picky – interview the agency, confirm it is licensed, bonded and insured, and that it verifies background checks
- Check caregiver's ability to transport herself to/from work, as well as having the agency provide a back-up in the event the caregiver cannot make it
- Confirm service fee per hour, sign contract and establish a schedule

When it comes to inviting a home care agency into you or your loved one's home, you want to pull out all the stops to make sure you reap the most benefit from your investment. Be cautious, smart and safe in making your final choice!

5 Ways to Introduce Home Care to Seniors

As a family caregiver, you desperately need regular breaks, but your older adult absolutely refuses an in-home caregiver. What can you do?

Seniors often won't admit they need help, even if they're struggling with everyday tasks. Home care can be a sensitive subject that leads to arguments or an immediate shutdown when you bring it up. Your older adult might see it as a waste of money, an insult to their abilities, or an invasion of privacy.

Check out these five helpful tips to make the transition easier – even if your aging loved one initially says “no.”

1. **Start slowly and allow time for them to get used to the idea.** Your older adult might need time to adjust to the idea of having someone new in their house. To ease the transition, start off slowly. Have the caregiver only come a few hours each week and focus on less personal tasks. Then, add hours and additional tasks as your older adult becomes more comfortable with the idea and that person.
2. **Help them retain dignity by saying it's for you, not them.** If you present the idea of in-home care as something that helps you rather than them, your loved one might be more receptive. That way they're less likely to feel that they're losing independence or aren't capable.
3. **Use the doctor's authority and say that it's a prescribed service.** Many older adults respect authority figures like doctors and may be more willing to accept home care if they think the doctor has prescribed it. Tell them that's what the doctor said, create a fake “prescription,” or ask the doctor's office for an “official” note on their stationery – whatever works best.
4. **Listen to your older adult's fears and reasons they don't want in-home care.** Instead of shutting down objections right away, let your older adult express their feelings. They're more likely to cooperate when they've been heard and know that their opinion matters. Understanding their concerns also helps you address those fears. Even better, involve them in the hiring process so they can help choose the person who will be caring for them.
5. **Tell them it's a temporary arrangement.** It may be more acceptable to start using home care if your older adult thinks it's only temporary. Once the caregiver becomes a part of their routine and they adjust to the idea, it'll be easier to continue using the services.



Need more ideas? **Give us a call at 501-725-CARE (2273)** and let us help. Our experienced team is here to help you get the rest you need so you can become the daughter, son, friend, etc., you were before you took on the role as caregiver, too!

10 Reasons to Choose Home Care

Many people prefer home care before any other option, and for good reason. Home is familiar, comfortable and where many of our best memories are. So why give that all up?

Although many people can be happy in assisted living facilities, retirement communities or nursing homes — and for many people these are better options — for some people, leaving their home can be disruptive and depressing. Check out these 10 reasons for choosing home care:

- 1. ONE-ON-ONE CARE:** Home care provides meaningful, one-on-one companionship for older adults. At an assisted living facility, staff members are spread across residents, meaning that there is very little individual attention
- 2. FLEXIBILITY:** Our schedule adjusts to you, rather than you having to adjust to someone else's schedule. When you want to eat dinner, you can. When you want to go shopping, you can. At assisted living facilities, there is little flexibility and variety in the daily routine
- 3. CUSTOMIZED FOR YOU:** You can customize your care. Most caregivers do light housekeeping, prepare meals, run errands, or give medication reminders. But the specific activities your caregiver does are up to you, as are the number of hours your caregiver spends with you. You can also change your level of service anytime.
- 4. INDEPENDENCE:** Who doesn't want independence? This is, perhaps, the greatest plus for receiving care in your own home.
- 5. COMFORT:** Being at home is simply more comfortable for most people than being in an unfamiliar place. They have their photographs, books, bed, bath, kitchen, telephone, television; everything is in its place, which in studies has proven to be an effective emotional healer.
- 6. FAMILY AND FRIENDS:** Unlike the restricted visiting hours at hospitals and nursing homes, home provides a place where family and friends can be close to the person at all hours, whenever needed.
- 7. MORALE:** Patients tend to have a greater sense of well-being and overall morale when they are in the comfortable surroundings of their own home.
- 8. CHOICES:** You choose your caregiver. Finding someone you enjoy spending time with is extremely important for your own well-being and peace of mind. We look for caregivers we think would be a good fit with your interests and lifestyle, but ultimately, the choice is up to you.
- 9. COST:** Depending on the hours needed, home care can be much more affordable than nursing homes or other institutions.
- 10. PROMOTES HEALING:** Patients enjoy a much better quality of life which many families have said helped to extend the lives, health & happiness of their loved ones. They are in a familiar environment around their family in both their home and community in which they've lived for many years. This is particularly true with individuals suffering from dementia.

