

Finding & choosing respite care services

Caring for someone you love can bring you closer, teach you to deal with difficult situations and even make you more confident about your abilities.

That said, there may be times when you need respite because you have other responsibilities to attend to, you're going on vacation or you simply need to relieve your stress and restore your energy. Caring for yourself is one of the most important things you can do as a caregiver so that you can effectively care for others.

Types of respite care

In-Home	Out-of-Home
Informal support: family & friends	Adult day programs
Companionship: volunteer or paid	Residential programs
Personal care providers	
Skilled health care	
Caregiver support groups: in-person & online	

Find the right type of support to meet your needs

- **Informal support**—Family and friends are a great first resource to help you take short breaks. Make sure they're aware of your loved ones needs and condition(s) and what you're dealing with on a day-to-day basis. Open communication creates clearer understanding and allows everyone to fully appreciate the situation when you ask for help.
- **Companionship**—Your loved one can remain in the home and benefit from volunteer or paid help, occasionally or on a regular basis. Many different community programs, such as senior centers, churches and other non-profits can provide relief. There are also a number of home-care businesses that provide trained staff for in-home respite care.
- **Personal care**—This type of provider helps with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, feeding or toileting. Homemaker services support meal preparation, shopping and housekeeping.



“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” ~Aesop

- **Skilled health care**—When your loved one has specific medical needs professionals with specialized training and experience are available to provide treatment in the home.
- **Adult day programs**—Available during daytime hours, programs are designed for older adults who can no longer manage independently. Planned activities are available in a safe, supportive and positive environment.
- **Residential programs**—Group homes, hospitals, nursing homes and other specialized facilities offer temporary care for both emergency and planned overnight services.
- **Caregiver support groups**—Available locally or online, support groups offer safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges and rewards of providing care for a loved one.
- Request several work and personal references, and check them carefully. Verify the information provided, and ask all references about reliability, trustworthiness, punctuality, and the care provider's ability to handle stress.
- If possible, consider a background check. In the U.S., professional services cost between \$100-\$150 and can alert you to potentially serious problems. Check with your local police department, legal aid service, or attorney for referrals to reputable investigators.

Additional resources

- **Elder Care Locator**—A U.S. Department on Aging website that includes a search-by-zip code directory of elder care services, planning resources, benefits planners, and links to state agencies.
www.eldercare.gov
- **ARCH National Respite Network**—This National Respite Locator service helps parents, family caregivers, and professionals find respite services in their state and local area to match their specific needs.
www.archrespite.org/respitelocator

Choose wisely

Taking the time to find a provider you trust is essential for your peace of mind. And it's important to include your loved one in the decision, if possible, so that each of your needs is met and you're both comfortable with the decision.

- Conduct an in-depth, personal interview with individual candidates and/or agencies.
- Be specific about all of the tasks, skills, and schedules involved.
- Discuss compensation and payment schedules. Do not pay for services in advance.