



Elder
INDEPENDENCE
HOME CARE



**A HELPFUL GUIDE TO
HOME CARE PLANNING**

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Many families don't know where to turn when a loved one seems to be struggling with day-to-day tasks. This could be a subtle change which causes you to question whether your spouse, parent or family member would benefit from having additional help in the home. Or it may be a significant event such as a stroke which immediately changes the level of independence and leaves no question that additional help is needed.

We have created this guide to help you find the best solution for your loved one's home care needs. We know that there are many decisions to be made. We also know that the hardest part can be taking that first step toward a solution that will honor the ones who once cared for you.

WHAT IS HOME CARE?

In-home care services are support services that allow a person to live safely in their home. In-home care services can help someone who is aging and needs assistance to live independently. There are two types of home care: home health care and non-medical home care.

TYPES OF HOME CARE		
Type	Provider	Services
Home Health Care	Nurse or medically trained personnel	Occupational therapy, physical therapy, administration of Rx medications or shots, wound care, skilled nursing.
Non-Medical Home Care	Caregiver	Meal preparation, medication reminders, laundry, light housekeeping, errands, shopping, transportation, companionship.



SIGNS THAT HOME CARE IS NEEDED

Most people, given the opportunity to decide, want to remain in their home and independent. How do you decide if a parent, friend or other family member situation requires in home assistance?

A place to start is by assessing their current level of independence. Note that you may not be able to answer some of these questions without talking to other family members, close friends of theirs, clergy, etc.



QUESTIONS TO ASK: SECTION 1

Yes	No	
		Are they able to go to grocery shopping, bring the groceries in, and put them away?
		Can they plan and prepare healthy meals?
		Are they able to manage finances and pay bills on time?
		Are they attending routine and scheduled appointments such as doctor appointments?
		Do they take their medications as prescribed?
		Is their home in the usual working order? Light bulbs changed, garbage taken out, food stored properly, lawn mowed, etc.
		Are they attending family gatherings, church, bridge or other activities they normally look forward to?
		Are they taking care of themselves in the usual manner? Makeup, clean clothes, wearing different outfits each time you see them, etc.

If the answer to any of these questions is “No”, it may be time to consider companion care.

QUESTIONS TO ASK: SECTION 2

Yes	No	
		Are they having incontinence or difficulty cleaning themselves after using the toilet?
		Have they experienced weight loss, appetite changes, difficulty swallowing or dehydration?
		Have they been unable to walk or otherwise get around independently?
		Do they have any burns or bruises?
		Do they have hearing loss?
		Have they started to spill or drop things?
		Are they sleeping too much or too little?
		Do they have lack of interests in friendships, hobbies or activities? Are the curtains drawn day and night?
		Have they had a change in attitude? Sadness or feelings of depression and despair? Abuse of alcohol or drugs? Paranoia? Refusal to communicate? Unusual argumentativeness or verbal abuse?
		Have they had diminished cognitive abilities? Forgetfulness about where things are? Wandering or getting lost walking or driving? Confusion or loss of reasoning skills? Difficulty answering questions? Inability to find the right word or complete a sentence? Using repetitive words or phrases? Loss of sense of time or season? Forgetting how to use ordinary things? Consistently forgetting to turn off the stove, close windows or lock doors?

If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes”, it may be time to consider companion care. In the case where you answered “Yes” to several of these questions, a skilled caregiver can assist with activities of daily living.



RISKS FOR FALLING

Another area to assess in determining if home assistance is required is to look at your loved one's risk of falling. According to the CDC, each year millions of elderly people age 65 and older fall. Each year 1 in 4 elderly people have a fall and less than half of these falls are reported to their doctor. Having a fall increases their chance of falling again and is an indication that in-home care would be beneficial.

CHECK RISKS FOR FALLING			
Yes	No	Risk	Why It Matters
		Fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
		Been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
		Sometimes feel unsteady when walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
		Steady self by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
		Worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
		Need to push with hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
		Have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
		Have to rush to the toilet often.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
		Have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
		Take medicine that sometimes leads to feeling light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
		Take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
		Often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.

If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes”, it may be time to consider companion care. In the case where you answered “Yes” to several of these questions, a skilled caregiver can assist with activities of daily living.



FINDING THE RIGHT HOME CARE OPTION

Once you have determined that additional care is needed, you will need to define the areas where assistance is needed, identify on type of home care service needed, and then decide who is going to provide the home care.

AREAS NEEDING ASSISTANCE

Basic self-care is categorized as ADLs (Activities of Daily Living) while the more advanced self-care activities are known as Instrumental ADLs. Reviewing the following tasks and activities related to independent living will help you identify the areas where your loved one needs assistance.

BASIC ADLS NEEDING ASSISTANCE		
Yes	No	Self-Care Task
		Personal hygiene: bathing, grooming, nail care and oral care.
		Dressing: choosing appropriate clothing and being able to physically dress and undress oneself.
		Transferring: being able to move from one body position or location to another.
		Toileting: the ability to get on and off the toilet and cleaning oneself.
		Eating: the ability to feed oneself.
		Ambulating: walking or otherwise being able to get around independently (for example with a wheelchair).

INSTRUMENTAL ADLS NEEDING ASSISTANCE		
Yes	No	More Advanced Activities
		Managing personal finances.
		Transportation either by driving or by organizing other means of transport.
		Shopping for food, clothing and other necessities.
		Meal preparation including cooking and safely using kitchen equipment and utensils.
		Housework and home maintenance required to keep a tidy and hygienic place of residence.
		Managing communication such as the telephone and mail.
		Taking medications in accurate doses and at appropriate times.



TYPES OF HOME CARE SERVICES

There are many types of home care services available for senior care, disabled care and those who find themselves in a temporary situation where additional home care is needed.

HOME CARE SERVICES	
Companion Care	Just as the name states, companion care offers seniors comfort or companionship. The primary focus of this type of care is to provide emotional support and companionship for seniors who are healthy, generally speaking, but would prefer to remain independent at home. It can include a wide range of non-medical services, aimed to help make a senior's life more manageable. The most common companion care services include medication reminders, assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), light housekeeping, cooking and meal prep, transportation, and help with planning, scheduling and keeping appointments. In addition, companion care often includes encouraging exercise and planning social activities.
Personal Care	Personal care services essentially provide assistance in completing everyday tasks such as eating, bathing, dressing, grooming and oral hygiene. Furthermore, this type of care generally entails performing home safety evaluations to prevent avoidable accidents.
Transitional Care	Transitional care refers to the care provided following hospitalization or a stay in a rehabilitation facility. This type of care plays a key role in optimizing the health and well-being of the individual, all while significantly reducing the risk of hospital readmission. Once released from the hospital, a caregiver will tend to the recovering loved one, relieving them of many day-to-day responsibilities. Your loved one can rest and recuperate, while having peace-of-mind knowing household chores, medication management and fresh meals are being taken care of.
Short Term Disability of Illness	Short term care is provided to individuals in situations such as a difficult pregnancy or after a complicated childbirth.
Home Care for Chronic Conditions	Home care is provided for individuals with chronic conditions or illnesses such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer • Alzheimer's & Dementia • Parkinson's • Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) • Heart Disease • Diabetes • Multiple Sclerosis • Osteoporosis



SELECTING YOUR CARE PARTNER

Deciding on who is going to provide home care for your loved one is not always easy and straightforward. You may want to provide assistance yourself but are finding that you do not have enough hours in the week to help as much as needed. Due to your loved one having issues trusting an “outsider”, you may know someone in your community who could help out a few hours per week.

If you find that you need a caregiver with greater a skill level or need more hours of care, you may need to look for a caregiver outside your family or circle of friends. There are many factors to consider such as hiring on your own or going through an Agency.

HIRING DIRECTLY	
Pros	Cons
You have total control in the process.	You are responsible for finding some one.
Less expensive usually.	You have to fill in if they do not show up.
Flexibility of care they can provide.	You need to make sure your insurance will cover an accident of theft.

HIRING THROUGH AN AGENCY	
Pros	Cons
Payroll taxes and insurance are taken care of.	May charge more.
Back up help is provided if Caregiver is sick, etc.	Caregiver can't perform skilled services such as wound care.
Caregivers are vetted thoroughly and trained.	If you request variable hours you may not have the same caregiver.

When looking to hire through an agency, we recommend asking the following questions:

1. How do you recruit your Home Care aides?
2. Do you do background checks and drug screening?
3. Are your aides your employees?
4. Can we change aides if the one you send is not a good fit for our family?
5. Do you have an RN on staff to evaluate and determine a care plan?
6. Do you have 24 hour support if we have an emergency after hours?
7. Are the aides licensed, bonded and insured?
8. Do you have aides that have special training in areas like Dementia Care, Parkinson's Disease, etc.?
9. How long has your company been in business?



ELDER INDEPENDENCE HOME CARE CAN HELP

At Elder Independence Home Care, we're all about delivering a higher standard of home care — one that people know they can trust when they want quality care for their mother, father, sibling, spouse or other loved one. Elder Independence Home Care is available to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

At Elder Independence Home Care, a nurse and/or care manager will come to your home to get to know you and your loved one, discuss their care needs and answer any questions. The nurse or care manager will conduct a health and wellness evaluation and begin building a personalized plan of care based on your input and your loved one's needs.

**Schedule a complimentary in-home assessment
with an Elder Independence Home Care specialist today.**

(501) 847-6102
ElderIndependence.com

Thank you for your interest in Elder Independence Home Care. We hope this guide helps you and your family think about ways home care can help your loved one live in a safe, healthy and happy manner. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and others in the community who are looking for a higher standard of care.

Elder Independence Home Care is independently owned and operated.

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