

Lifeline



Complete Guide To Caring For An Aging Parent

Here are tips to make caring for an aging loved one easier. Read about recognizing the signs that more help is needed, the kinds of help available and how to access it.

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional consultation, diagnosis or treatment.



Caring For Aging Parents in Their Own Home

We all want our aging parents to feel more safe and enjoy living in their own home. Caring for seniors, especially those who wish to remain in their homes, may require precautions or additional services that family caregivers should know.

Top 10 caring tips you can use for aging parents at home

- 1.** Create a care circle — a group of family, friends and professionals — who help you support your loved one
- 2.** Ask your loved one to sign a release so you can speak to their healthcare team and have the contact information for their physician, specialists, and local hospital
- 3.** Get up-to-date information on your family member's prescription and over the counter medications
- 4.** Secure your own copies of legal documents like advance directives, living wills, etc.
- 5.** Assess home safety on your next visit to eliminate fall hazards and check the fire extinguishers, smoke and CO2 detectors
- 6.** Investigate local organizations that specialize in home modifications or improvements for seniors
- 7.** Consider a medical emergency response system with automatic fall detection that calls for help even if your loved one can't
- 8.** Check out options for transportation, including ride-hailing apps
- 9.** Support good nutrition by signing up for meal or online grocery delivery services
- 10.** Equip your loved one's cell phone with apps for easy video communication with family and friends to reduce isolation and schedule regular phone calls

Home Care to Support Your Loved One's Independence

If it's time for your loved one to benefit from extra personal care support while living independently, there are many private organizations available (search online for "home care services" in your community) as well as free help for eligible seniors through each province's healthcare system.

The in-home services available through the provincial health ministries vary, but include services such as:

- ✓ Personal care support
- ✓ Home care nursing
- ✓ Home risk assessments
- ✓ Housekeeping
- ✓ Meal programs
- ✓ Behavioural support programs
- ✓ Respite care
- ✓ Enhanced support options

Services To Make Aging in Place Easier For Seniors

As one gets older, some activities become harder to accomplish. To make life easier for a senior aging in place, consider looking into and implementing one or more of the following helpful services:



Lawn Care Services

Lawn maintenance can be difficult for seniors, especially those with mobility issues. Hiring someone to cut their lawn and keep their yard looking well-maintained can reduce stress.



Grocery Delivery

Driving to the store, pushing the shopping cart, or unloading bags, can be tiring and stressful for aging adults. Having groceries delivered right to their door eliminates much of that worry and can put your mind at ease.



Online Shopping Platforms & Services

Help aging parents set up online accounts for their favourite stores to have what they need delivered right to their doorstep.



In-Home Personal Care

Seniors can also benefit from services that come to the house to help with personal care like bathing, clipping their nails, giving them haircuts, and many other services. In 2024, the national average hourly rate for in-home care was \$15.55 – \$30. (source: care.com).



Meal Preparation Program

Part of independent living involves preparing meals but it could be beneficial to have ready-made healthy meals delivered.

Home Modifications to Keep Your Loved One Safer

Independent living for a senior may require adjustments in the home. These include:



Widening doorways

For those who use a walker, cane or wheelchair for mobility, it may be necessary to widen the doorways.



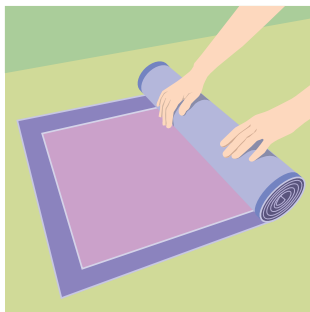
Installing indoor/outdoor ramps

Stairs are a challenge for those who use wheelchairs so indoor/outdoor ramps can make movement easier.



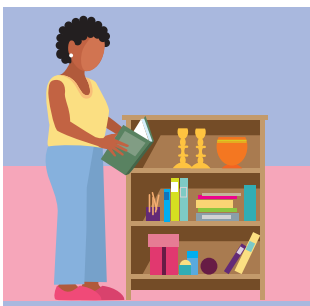
Installing doorway transfer ramps

When an aging senior is in a wheelchair or power scooter, it may be tough to roll over short rises at the threshold of doors. Installing doorway transfer ramps allows for ease of movement over the rise.



Removing rugs

Removing tripping hazards and items such as rugs will help avoid unnecessary falls and injuries.



Keeping items on lower shelves

Reaching for items on high shelves can put a strain on muscles, and possibly cause a fall.



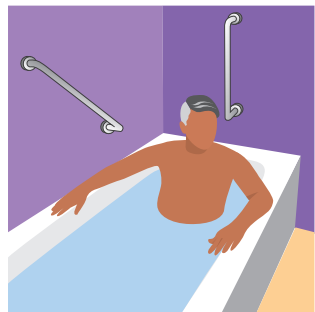
Installing a walk-in bath

Bathing can be challenging if one has to enter a shower or bath that has a high wall. Installing a walk-in bathtub eases that challenge.



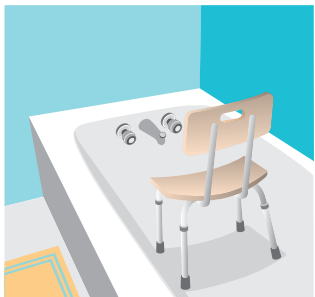
Installing safety strips

Textured, non-slip safety strips in the shower can help prevent falls when the shower floor gets slippery.



Installing a safety bar in the shower

Safety bars in the shower can add stability.



Installing bathtub chairs

A bathtub chair will eliminate the need to lower or raise themselves from a bathtub.

Transitioning from Home to Independent Senior Living

It can be overwhelming to find a new living arrangement for older adults, especially for those who want full control over their own lives.

What is Independent Senior Living?

Independent senior living communities are designed for seniors 55 and older.

The independent living category encompasses a wide range of housing arrangements, from apartment-style communities to housing co-ops. These accommodations are often times called retirement communities.

Residents of independent living communities continue to live the same lifestyle they did at home. The one benefit here is to allow a person to maintain independence while giving them full control of their own lives.



Benefits of Independent Living Communities:

- ✓ Safe and social environment
- ✓ Provides some support from staff
- ✓ Maintenance-free living options
- ✓ Programs and activities to stay active
- ✓ Meal packages available
- ✓ Some individual units may or may not be equipped with full kitchens
- ✓ Few restrictions or time-sensitive rules
- ✓ Easy transition between independent living to assisted living when the retirement facility do offer all levels of senior care on the same premises

When your loved one decides to move into an independent living community:

List their needs

Which tasks are getting too hard for your aging loved one to solve and what are their needs.

Determine your budget

How much money you are able and willing to spend. The majority of independent living communities require upfront fees and recurring monthly fees.

Visit several independent living communities

It will be beneficial to visit to assess their cleanliness, quality of the community and friendliness of staff.

Study the contract

Read over the contract while you are at the facility and in the presence of an administrator. Be sure to ask for clarification, if needed.

When Is It Time to Consider Assisted Living as an Option for My Aging Parent?

If caring for an aging parent has become overwhelming due to their physical needs, it may be time to consider assisted living.

Assisted Living Assessment Checklist

The following is a checklist you can use to determine whether assisted living may be right for the needs of your aging loved one:



Hygiene: Are they unable to take care of themselves independently eg bathing/showering, brushing and flossing teeth, going to the bathroom?



Meals preparation: Do they eat enough and can they prepare healthy meals?



Home maintenance: Is their home in good repair and generally clean?



Decision making and memory: Have they been making unusual decisions or becoming forgetful?



Mobility issues: Do you have concerns about their mobility in and around their home?



Fall risk: Are they at risk for a fall?



Is it Time to Consider Personal Support Services or a Senior Living Community?

It's a natural part of life: everyone eventually reaches a point where they need help doing some of the things they used to take for granted. Your answers to the following questions will help you assess whether your loved one needs help in their home or needs to move.



1. Has your loved one lost weight, perhaps indicating difficulty with cooking and preparing meals? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Does their kitchen seem inadequately stocked with food, perhaps because they are having trouble keeping up with grocery shopping or making healthy choices? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Have you noticed any bruises that might indicate your loved one is falling? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Have you noticed any changes in their appearance or hygiene that might suggest they are having trouble with personal grooming, bathing and dressing? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Is your loved one's home clean and tidy? If so, it may indicate that they need help with housekeeping tasks. ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Have you noticed any pots with burn markings that might indicate your loved one left something cooking unattended on the stove? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Are there signs that your loved one may not be taking their medications as directed, such as excess pills at the end of a prescription period? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Have you noticed any behavioural changes in your loved one that might indicate they are stressed looking after themselves and their home on their own? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Has your loved one demonstrated a tendency to get lost or wander, perhaps indicating memory or cognitive issues? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Does your loved one need a fast, easy and reliable way to summon help if they have a bad fall or medical emergency, without having to rely on getting themselves to a telephone? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Each “Yes” indicates a need for some kind of personal support service for your loved one. The more Yes’s you have, the more support is needed. Discuss your loved one’s needs with their healthcare provider and use the information in this Guide to help you arrange for the help they need.

Dealing with Caregiver Stress and Fatigue

Caregivers may be overwhelmed by the pressures of caring for aging parents, family and themselves. Don't be afraid to ask for help or reach out for further support.



Online Support Groups: Online support groups don't give you the face-to-face support, but you'll be able to talk to and get information from thousands of caregivers just like you. You can search for specialized caregiver support networks on the websites for the Canadian Cancer Society, Alzheimer Society of Canada, Parkinson Canada, and Heart & Stroke.

Local Caregiver Support Groups: For the in-person support that online groups lack, you can seek out local caregiver support groups. Sit and chat with other caregivers and get real-time solutions, information, and help. To find these groups you can contact local places of worship, nearby senior community centres, or your local governments website.

Telephone Hotlines: There are many caregiver hotlines you can call and talk to someone about a challenge you are facing or an issue you're not sure how to solve.

Social Media: Outlets like Facebook have groups and pages for anything you can think of, including senior care. Simply search for a group focused on caring for aging adults, and you can connect with people in the group, ask questions, and get recommendations.

Long-Distance Caregiving and Getting the Right Help

There will be cases when being closely located to your aged loved-ones is just not possible.

Here are three ways to best manage long-distance caregiving:

Manage your loved-one's finance

Helping with the finances of an elderly loved one can provide peace of mind for everyone involved. Learn the best routes to take and the legal documents in play.

Arrange for professional non-medical caregivers

In-home support and care is a highly personalised form of support ranging from maintaining the cleanliness of homes to arranging transportation.

Consider a medical alert service

Lifeline medical alert systems may be able to help with a variety of services to make long-distance caregiving less stressful.

The Lifeline difference

Lifeline is the leading provider of medical alert services in Canada today¹. Lifeline helps empower older adults to feel safer, confident, and independent both at home or on the go.

Fall detection

Our fall detection technology can automatically place a call for help if it detects a fall – even if subscribers are unable or reluctant to press their help button².

Easy to use

Subscribers can press their help button at any time to request the assistance they need – anytime, anywhere.

Responsive

Canadian round-the-clock monitoring with Lifeline's specially trained Response Associates respond in 240+ languages, 24/7, 365 days a year. Each subscriber decides how they would like to be helped – by a neighbour, family member, or emergency services.



There's a Lifeline solution for you

Lifeline can help you stay independent with peace of mind

At home

Help at the press of a button in and around the home.

Ideal Candidate: For people who spend much of their time at home and want to be able to access emergency help at any time, day or night.

Optional fall detection can automatically call for help if it detects a fall, even if you can't push your button².



On the Go

It's the mobile medical alert solution that gives you the freedom to go where you want, when you want³.

Ideal Candidate: Those who want to remain active and independent with confidence and peace of mind – at home or on the go.



On the Go with Wandering

Caregivers can track their loved one's general location on their smartphone when they leave their home⁴. Also includes the other benefits of On the Go.

Ideal Candidate: Caregivers with a loved one who lives independently but has a tendency to wander, gets lost easily or gets confused in crowds.



MedReady Medication Dispenser

It's a simple, affordable and automated way to manage multiple medications with 24/7 monitoring.

Ideal Candidate: Those with complicated medication regimens, take multiple medications or have a tendency to forget to take their medications.



1. Claim based on the number of subscribers.

2. Equipment may not detect all falls. If able, users should always push their button when they need help.

3. On the Go coverage outside the home and wireless service in the home provided with sufficient access to/coverage by the applicable third party wireless network. Certain limitations subject to third party cellular provider availability and coverage. Signal range may vary.

4. Coverage inside and outside the home provided where wireless network coverage is available. Recharging of the mobile pendant is done by the subscriber as needed by connecting it to its charger.

Call today to learn if Lifeline can keep your
loved one safer at home

1-800-LIFELINE
(1-800-543-3546)

Lifeline

www.lifeline.ca