



Complete Guide To Caring For An Elderly Parent

These helpful tips will make caring for an aging loved one easier with information about how to recognize the signs that more help is needed, the kinds of help available and how to access it.

Complete Guide To Caring For An Elderly Parent

Getting older can be a challenge. Aging in place can become stressful when home or health needs become too overwhelming.

At Lifeline, we understand the anxieties associated with aging in place as well as caring for aging parents.

Caring For Elderly Parents in Their Own Home

We all want our elderly 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 elderly parents at home

- 1.** 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
- 2.** Get up-to-date information on your family member's prescription and OTC medications
- 3.** Secure your own copies of legal documents like advance directives, livingwills, etc.
- 4.** Assess home safety on your next visit to eliminate fall hazards and check the fire extinguishers, smoke and CO2 detectors
- 5.** Investigate local organizations that specialize in home modifications or improvements for seniors
- 6.** Consider a medical emergency response system with automatic fall detection that calls for help even if your loved one can't
- 7.** Check out options for transportation, including ride-hailing apps
- 8.** Support good nutrition by signing up for meal or online grocery delivery services
- 9.** Create a care circle — a group of family, friends and professionals — who help you support your loved one
- 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

Don't disregard professional medical advice, or delay seeking it, because of what you read here. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional consultation, diagnosis or treatment; it is provided "as is" without any representations or warranties, express or implied. Always consult a healthcare provider if you have specific questions about any medical matter, and seek professional attention immediately if you think you or someone in your care may be suffering from a healthcare condition.

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 2018, the national average hourly rate for in-home care when hiring independently was \$13.50 – \$21.13 (source: care.com).

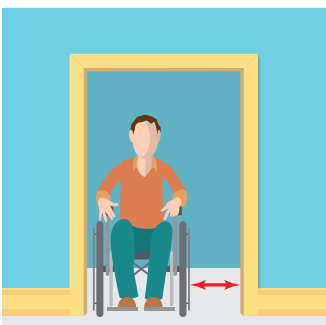


Meal Preparation Program

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 Safe

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.



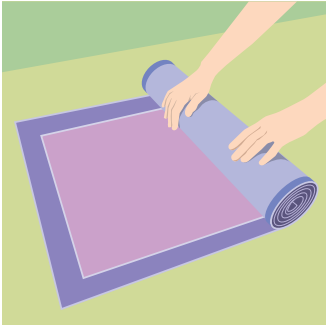
Installing indoor/outdoor ramps

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



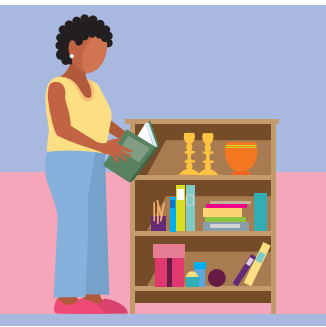
Installing doorway transfer ramps

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.



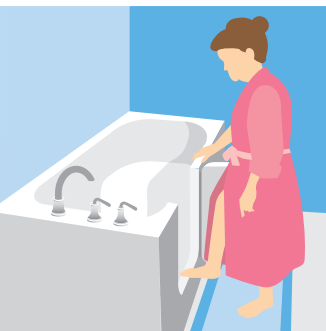
Removing rugs

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.



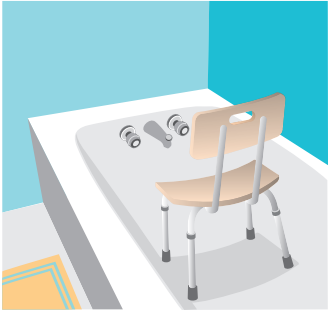
Installing safety strips

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 Living

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

What is Independent Senior Living?

Independent senior living communities are housing 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 supervision from staff members
- ✓ Maintenance-free living options
- ✓ Offer programs and activities to stay active
- ✓ Meal packages available
- ✓ Some individual units may or may not be equipped with full kitchens
- ✓ Very little 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

Tips on Selling Your Home and Moving to a New Space (Downsizing)

One of the tasks associated with moving to a different living situation is downsizing. Here are a few tips to help you in the process:

When your aging loved-one has decided to move into a smaller home:

Start earlier to reduce stress

Careful pre-planning and discussions are crucial to eliminate the stress of a loved-one having to get rid of their assets. It will also reduce the high-expectancy set on real-estate agents of having to find the ideal house.

Consider shared accommodation

There are many seniors-only apartment buildings across Canada to give your loved-one the freedom from property taxes and maintenance. Another good option is garden suites that are located on the same property as a main house.

Consider renting vs. buying

Renting holds many benefits over buying and it's crucial to consider the potential tax wins when selling their home, money that can be reinvested back into their retirement fund and being able to easily move from independent living to assisted living.

Location, location, location

Being closer to your aging loved-one will make it easier to visit them as frequently as needed. When your loved-one is showing bad driving behaviour, it's a sure sign that they need to be located closer to facilities and local shops.

When your aging loved-one has decided to move into a retirement community:

List their needs

Decide what problems are getting too hard for your aging loved-ones to solve and what are their needs. E.g. support staff, activity centres, etc.

Determine your budget

It is important to decide how much money you are able and willing to spend before you shop around for a community. The majority of retirement communities require upfront fees and recurring monthly fees.

Visit retirement communities in the desired area

It will be beneficial to visit retirement communities to judge 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?



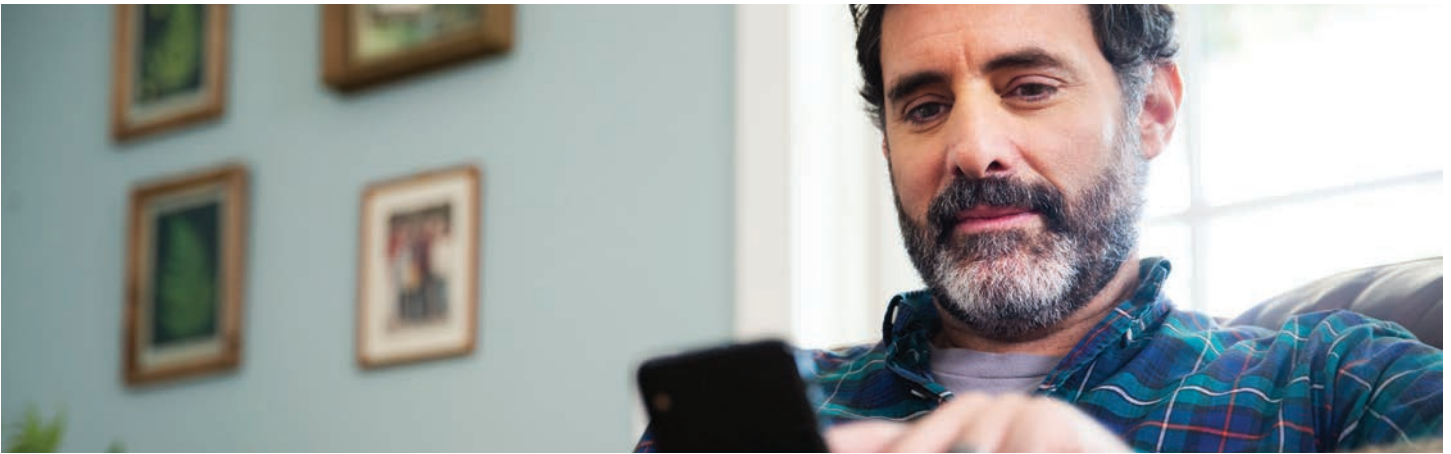
Decision making and memory: Have they been making unusual decisions or becoming forgetful?



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



Fall risk: Are they at risk for a fall?



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.

Everyone needs someone to talk to and find support with when things get tough. Caring for aging parents can be trying at times, but there are many ways to get support when you need it the most, including:

Online Support Groups: Being able to talk to people all over the world who may be facing the same challenges you are facing is a great way to find support and answers for difficult situations. Online support groups don't give you the face-to-face support you may want, 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. Right at Home Canada is an in-home care service for everyone offering a full range of exceptional support and care services for those with physical, medical, or memory impairment.

Hiring or investing in home caregiving medical systems

Lifeline medical alert systems may be able to help with a variety of services to make long-distance caregiving less stressful (see our various options below).

How to Access Home Care to Enable Your Loved One's Independent Living

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 or www.yip.ca) 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

Provincial and Territorial Government Home Care Programs

- Alberta Health Services Home Care
 - British Columbia Home and Community Care
 - Manitoba Home Care Services
 - New Brunswick Home First Program
 - Newfoundland and Labrador Home Support Program
 - Nova Scotia Home Care
 - Ontario Home and Community Care
 - Prince Edward Island COACH Program (Caring for Older Adults in the Community and at Home)
 - Quebec CLSC (Les centres locaux de services communautaires/Local community services centres)
 - Saskatchewan Personal Care Home Benefit
 - Northwest Territories Home and Community Care
 - Nunavut Home and Continuing Care
 - Yukon Home Care
-

Lifeline



Your best call for safety, independence and peace of mind

There is a Lifeline medical alert solution for every need, every budget.

HomeSafe Standard



Access fast, friendly, expert help at the press of a button in and around the home. Designed 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.

HomeSafe with AutoAlert



The FIRST medical alert pendant that can call for help even when you can't.¹ Automatic fall detection makes this an excellent choice for those with a history, risk or fear of falling.

GoSafe Mobile



GoSafe is the mobile solution that gives you the freedom to go out and still have access to Lifeline's quick, expert, friendly help.² It also includes AutoAlert fall protection.¹ Ideal for older adults who want to remain active with peace of mind – at home or on the go.

All services are available with a special Wireless Communicator for customers without a landline telephone.

Call today to learn more:

1-866-463-2351

www.lifeline.ca

-
1. Equipment may not detect all falls. Undetectable falls can include slow falls, falls from low heights and slides from seated positions. If able, users should always push their button when they need help.
 2. GoSafe 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.