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Getting Help With Alzheimer's Caregiving

[Español](#)

Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease takes a lot of time and effort, and it often exceeds what one person can provide on their own. Some caregivers need help when the person is in the early stages of [Alzheimer's](#). Other caregivers look for help when the person is in the [later stages of the disease](#). It's okay to [seek help whenever you need it](#).

While there are [medicines](#) available to treat [symptoms](#) and slow the disease in some people, there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's. This means that symptoms, such as memory loss and confusion, will get worse over time, leading to the person with Alzheimer's needing more care.

Should the person move in with me?

In some cases, it may make sense for a person with Alzheimer's to move into your home so you can take care of them. If you're considering whether that's the right arrangement for you, check out the worksheet, [Questions To Consider Before Moving an Older Adult Into Your Home](#).

You may feel that asking for help shows weakness or a lack of caring, but the opposite is true. Asking for help shows your strength. It means you know your limits and when to seek support.

According to many caregivers, building a local support system is a key way to get help. Your support system might include a caregiver support group, nonprofit and community organizations, family, friends, and faith groups.

The following is a list of services that can help you care for the person with Alzheimer's at home, including ways to find out if these services are offered in your area.

Home care services

Home care services — not to be confused with home health care services — send an aide to your home to help you care for a person with Alzheimer's. These aides provide personal care and/or company for the person. They assist with daily activities such as bathing and dressing and may help with light housekeeping, transportation, and errands. They do not provide skilled medical care, and aides are usually not medical professionals. Home care aides may come for a few hours or stay for a full day and overnight.

What to know about costs:

- Home care services generally charge by the hour. Some services charge a flat rate for staying overnight.

- Medicare and private health insurance may cover some home care costs, though nonmedical care is generally not covered. Check with your health care provider.
- Long-term care insurance may cover [personal care and housekeeping services](#).

How to find these services:

- Ask the person's doctor or another health care professional, family, or friends to recommend home care services in your area.
- Use an online tool such as the [Home Care/Hospice Agency Locator tool](#) from the National Association for Home Care & Hospice.

Home health care services

These are typically part-time medical services ordered by a physician for a specific condition. These may include in-home nursing care to help a person recover from surgery, an accident, or an illness. Home health care may also include physical, occupational, or speech therapy. The provider may come for a few hours each day or stay 24/7.

What to know about costs:

- Home health services charge by the hour.
- Medicare provides limited coverage of home health service costs. The services must be short-term and provided by agencies certified by Medicare.
- Medicaid also provides coverage for home health service costs, but these benefits vary by state.
- Most private health insurance plans do not cover these costs.

You must pay all costs not covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or insurance.

How to find these services:

- Ask the person's doctor or another health care professional for a list of agencies that serve your area.
- Use the [Home Health Compare tool](#) from Medicare.gov.
- Search the [Eldercare Locator](#) or call 800-677-1116.

Tips for finding and hiring in-home care services

Some care services are very good; others are not. Ask providers for references from people who have used their services. If possible, check for any complaints filed against a service. You can also check with community, county, or state agencies that regulate health services or contact the Better Business Bureau in your area.

Before signing an agreement for a care provider, gather as much information as you can about services, fees, terms, and

restrictions. It may help to use the worksheet, [***Questions To Ask Before Hiring a Care Provider***](#)

If you are a veteran or caring for one, the Veterans Administration might be of help to you. To learn more, visit their [caregiver website](#) or call their toll-free support line at 855-260-3274.

Meal services

Meal services deliver healthy, nutritious meals to a person's home on a daily or weekly basis. Many of these services offer options for special diets and can handle dietary restrictions. However, the delivery staff do not assist with making meals at home or feeding the person.

What to know about costs:

- In some cases, a person must qualify for the service based on certain guidelines. These can include age, mobility, and economic need.
- Medicare does not generally cover meal delivery services, although under certain circumstances, it will provide this benefit for a short time. Medicaid may pay for some meal delivery services if the person is eligible.
- Some meal delivery services do not require payment. Others charge a fee or accept donations.

How to find these services:

- Use the [Eldercare Locator](#) or call 800-677-1116.
- Visit the [Meals on Wheels America](#) website or call 888-998-6325.
- Some local governments provide low- or no-cost meals to older adults. Call or check their websites for details.
- Your health care provider or local senior center may also be able to recommend a service.
- There are many subscription services that deliver ready-to-eat meals and meal kits. These can be arranged online and generally involve a regular weekly or monthly charge.

Adult day care services

Adult day care services can provide a much-needed break for caregivers at home. These programs provide a safe environment for older adults with trained staff in a nearby facility. An adult day care center may offer social activities, exercise, meals, personal care, and basic health care services. Some will provide transportation — facility staff or contractors may pick up the person, take them to day care, and then return the person home.

What to know about costs:

- Adult day care tends to be less expensive than in-home or nursing home care.
- Charges can be hourly or by the day.
- Medicare will not pay for adult day care, but Medicaid and other government programs may provide coverage.
- Most private health insurance plans don't cover the costs of adult day care. Some long-term care insurance plans pay a portion of the costs.

You must pay all costs not covered by a government program or insurance.

How to find these services:

- Call the [National Adult Day Services Association](#) at 877-745-1440.
- Use the [Eldercare Locator](#) or call 800-677-1116.

Respite care

[Respite services](#) provide short-term care for an older adult at home, in a health care facility, or at an adult day care center. The care may last anywhere from a few hours to several weeks at a time. These services provide regular caregivers with a break to rest, travel, or spend time with other family and friends.

What to know about costs:

- Respite services charge by the hour or by the number of days or weeks that services are provided.
- For a person receiving hospice care, Medicare will cover most of the cost for up to five consecutive days of respite care in a hospital or skilled nursing facility. Medicaid also may provide payment assistance.
- Most private health insurance plans do not cover these costs.
- Some long-term care insurance plans may help pay for respite care.

You must pay all costs not covered by insurance or government programs.

How to find these services:

- Visit the [ARCH National Respite Locator](#) website.
- Use the [Eldercare Locator](#) or call 800-677-1116.

Geriatric care managers

A geriatric care manager, also called an aging life care expert, is usually a licensed nurse or social worker who specializes in geriatrics, which is health care for older adults. Geriatric care managers work with older adults and their families to identify needs, make a care plan, and find services in the community. They can be especially helpful when a caregiver lives far away.

What to know about costs:

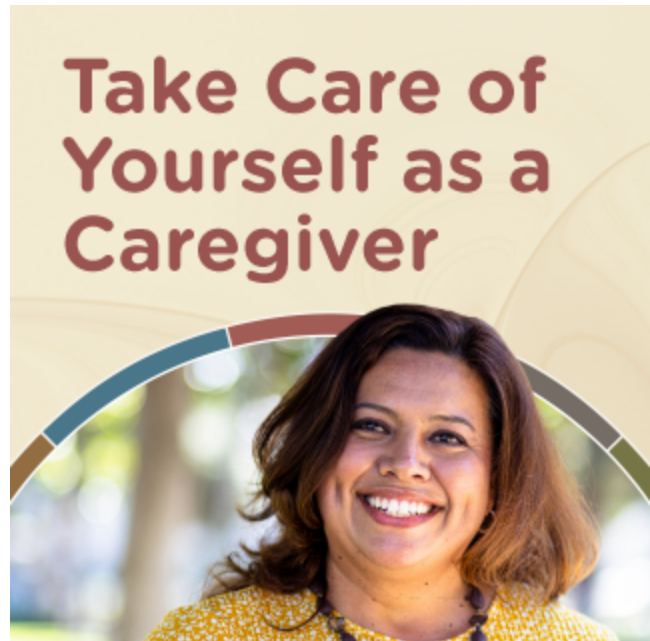
- The cost of an initial evaluation varies and may be expensive.
- Geriatric care managers charge by the hour.
- Medicare and Medicaid do not pay for this service.
- Most private health insurance plans don't cover these costs. Long-term care insurance may pay for some of the costs; check the plan to see if it includes coverage.
- Most people must pay for some or all of this service themselves.

How to find these services:

- Call the [Aging Life Care Association](#) at 520-881-8008.

Hospice services

[Hospice services](#) provide care for a person who is near the [end of life](#) and is no longer receiving treatment to cure their serious illness. Hospice services keep the person who is dying as comfortable and pain-free as possible in the person's home or a hospice facility. They also support the family by providing [end-of-life care](#). A person can stop hospice services at any time if they wish to receive life-prolonging treatments again.



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What to know about costs:

- [Medicare](#), [Medicaid](#), the [Veterans Health Administration](#), or private insurance plans may cover hospice costs.
- If you receive hospice services in an assisted living facility or nursing home, you may need to pay for room and board. You must pay all costs not covered by insurance.
- Some nonprofit organizations and hospice providers help cover hospice costs on a sliding scale for low-income patients.
- Once you've chosen to receive hospice services, any medicines intended to treat Alzheimer's will not be covered.

How to find these services:

- Visit the [National Association for Home Care & Hospice](#) website or call 202-547-7424.
- Call the [Hospice Foundation of America](#) at 800-854-3402.
- Visit the [National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#) website or call 800-658-8898.

You may also be interested in

- Learning about home-based [long-term care](#)
- Exploring ways to [take care of yourself as a caregiver](#)
- Reading about [care in the last stages of Alzheimer's](#)

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For more information

National Institute on Aging Information Center

800-222-2225

niaic@nia.nih.gov

www.nia.nih.gov

NIA Alzheimer's and related Dementias Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center

800-438-4380

adear@nia.nih.gov

www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers

The NIA ADEAR Center offers information and free print publications about Alzheimer's and related dementias for families, caregivers, and health professionals. ADEAR Center staff answer telephone, email, and written requests and make referrals to local and national resources.

Alzheimers.gov

www.alzheimers.gov

Explore the Alzheimers.gov website for information and resources on Alzheimer's and related dementias from across the federal government.

Eldercare Locator

800-677-1116

eldercarelocator@USAging.org<https://eldercare.acl.gov>**Alzheimer's Association**

800-272-3900

866-403-3073 (TTY)

info@alz.orgwww.alz.org**Alzheimer's Foundation of America**

866-232-8484

info@alzfdn.org<https://alzfdn.org>

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