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What's home health care?

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Home health care is a wide range of health care services that can be given in your home for an illness or injury. Home health care is usually less expensive, more convenient, and just as effective as care you get in a hospital or skilled nursing facility (SNF).

Examples of skilled home health services include:

- Wound care for pressure sores or a surgical wound
- Patient and caregiver education
- Intravenous or nutrition therapy
- Injections
- Monitoring serious illness and unstable health status

In general, the goal of home health care is to treat an illness or injury. Home health care helps you:

- Get better
- Regain your independence
- Become as self-sufficient as possible

- Maintain your current condition or level of function
- Slow decline

If you get your Medicare benefits through a Medicare health plan, check with your plan to find out how it gives your Medicare-covered home health benefits.

If you have a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy or other health insurance coverage, tell your doctor or other health care provider so your bills get paid correctly.

If your doctor or referring health care provider decides you need home health care, they should give you a list of agencies that serve your area. They must tell you whether their organization has a financial interest in any agency listed.

What should I expect from my home health care?

- Doctor's orders are needed to start care. Once your doctor refers you for home health services, the home health agency will schedule an appointment and come to your home to talk to you about your needs and ask you some questions about your health.
- The home health agency staff will also talk to your doctor about your care and keep your doctor updated about your progress.
- It's important that home health staff see you as often as the doctor ordered.

Examples of what the home health staff should do:

- Check what you're eating and drinking.

- Check your blood pressure, temperature, heart rate, and breathing.
- Check that you're taking your prescription and other drugs and any treatments correctly.
- Ask if you're having pain.
- Check your safety in the home.
- Teach you about your care so you can take care of yourself.
- Coordinate your care. This means they must communicate regularly with you, your doctor, and anyone else who gives you care.

Related Resources

[Medicare & You: home health care](#)

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