



Top 10 Tips for Family Caregiving A Checklist for the COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond

Are you caring for loved one at home during the COVID-19 outbreak?
Here are the latest links from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help you.

Caring for Someone at Home:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>

Caring for Yourself at Home:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/caring-for-yourself-at-home.html>

Crisis or not, caregiving never stops. These tips will help you create a safe and secure caregiving home environment for a loved one (or for yourself).

1. Create a Secure Home

Have a safety assessment done by [a certified aging in place specialist](#). They are trained to install rails, ramps or other supportive structures that can help those with mobility challenges maintain their balance. Remove anything on the floor that people can get caught up or trip on, especially area rugs. Pay attention to uneven floor transitions between rooms.

2. Install Monitoring Systems

Many easy-to-install remote home monitoring options are available. These provide families peace of mind, knowing that everything is OK with a family member. Some offer immediate connection to first responders who can quickly get to the family member's home in case of emergency.

3. Support Mobility and Prevent Falls

It's proven that practice with balance can help prevent falls as we age. Taking your loved one to a falls prevention class can do wonders for their balance and prevent life-threatening injury.

4. Give the Right Medications at the Right Times

If your loved one is forgetful, you'll need to pre-load their medications and either call or visit them to make sure they take them. If you can't be around to give your loved one their meds, and you know they will not remember consistently, you will need to retain a home care agency or licensed professional to come to the home to make sure they are taking them as prescribed.

5. Support Overall Fitness and Well-Being. Minimize loneliness and depression.

Activity is good for our muscles, hearts and minds. Walking or gentle exercise will do more than help prevent falls. Encourage your loved one to move as much as they are able. If possible, arrange for them to attend seniors exercise classes. They can also participate in exercise shows on TV or online.

6. Monitor (and Support) Hygiene

Is your loved one's body odor becoming more pronounced when you visit? Are they keeping their home as clean as they once did? If you notice significant changes, it's time to gently introduce support. It may start with doing the laundry or housework or hiring an aide to help with these chores.

7. Assess Driving Skills. Coordinate Transportation.

If your elderly loved one is still behind the wheel, make sure he or she is still a capable driver. Taking away a parent's keys is tough but necessary if they're no longer able to safely navigate the road. If they no longer drive, help them find a senior transportation program or bus that serves the places they want to go. Get to know the routes and the drivers. Ask your loved one to tell you when they are going out, and where. Ask them to call you when they get home.

8. Support Medical Needs

Get to know your elderly parents' or relatives' primary care physicians. Accompany them on visits and talk to their doctors. If your loved one is not capable of understanding their doctors or making decisions, engage an attorney and get your loved one's written approval to become their health care proxy. This will enable you to make medical decisions on your loved ones' behalf, choose or change doctors, or select health care facilities.

9. Keep Communication Open

Whether you have a professional home caregiver helping out or whether you're going it alone, caregiving for an elderly loved one is stressful. You may be dealing with siblings who disagree with how things should be done. One sibling may feel like they're doing all the work and aren't getting support. Others may not want to bring in professional home care. These are very common scenarios, and there is no one right answer. Keeping the lines of communication open, no matter how stressed we are or how "taboo" the subject may seem, is in the end the best course of action.

10. Check Vision Regularly

Loss of vision can lead to accidents. Not being able to see correctly can also lead to feelings of anxiety or depression. Make sure your loved one sees an eye doctor yearly and gets re-fitted for glasses every time their prescription changes. Make sure they get checked for glaucoma and macular degeneration every year. If they already have these eye diseases, it's critical that they take prescribed medications and get injections on a regular basis to prevent their vision from deteriorating further.



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