



Tipsheet: Help for Caregivers

If you are a caregiver, you are one of 2.2 million Americans who spend all or part of their day assisting older individuals who need help to remain at home.

If you are caring for a spouse with siblings and/or adult children, make your needs known to them as well as other relatives. Neighbors and friends may also be willing to help with respite care, shopping, transportation, household chores and other daily tasks. If you decide you need the help of a professional and seek a home care worker, you'll need to determine how much help is needed. You will also need to decide what type of worker fits your situation.

Help Options

1. **Housekeeper or chore worker**
Supervised by you or by a hiring agency, and performs basic household tasks and light cleaning.
2. **Homemaker or personal care worker**
Supervised by an agency or you and may assist with meals, household tasks and medication reminders.
3. **Companion or live-in**
Supervised by an agency or you and may provide light housework, exercise, companionship and medication reminders. They also provide valuable social interaction: talking, listening, reading and letter writing.
4. **Home health care worker**
Supervised by home health care agencies, which can provide licensed nurses, therapists and home health aides. Nurses and physical therapists focus on the medical aspects of care, including assistance with medications, basic medical care and physical therapy in the home. Home health aides provide other types of assistance needed, such as helping with bathing or dressing, light housecleaning and meal preparation. Home health care services may be paid for by insurance or Medicare.

Questions to Ask

1. What type of employee screening is done?
2. Is the employee paid by the agency or the employer?
3. Is the service provider licensed and bonded/insured?
4. Who supervises the worker?
5. What types of general and specialized training have workers received?
6. Whom do you call if the worker does not show up?
7. What are the fees and what do they cover?
8. Are the fees higher for weekends and holidays?
9. Is there a sliding fee scale?
10. What are the minimum and maximum hours of service?
11. Are there any limitations for specific tasks performed or work hours?

Source: Administration Aging/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.aoa.dhhs.gov

Resources: [United Way 2-1-1™](http://UnitedWay2-1-1.com) is a free and confidential, 24-hour information/referral line that can connect you to helpful programs and resources in our community. Just dial 2-1-1 or 651-291-0211.