

Tips on Caring for Aging Parents

Preparing Yourself and Your Parents

It's important that you gently talk with your parents about boundaries, expectations, and needs before stepping in as a caregiver.



- ✓ Understand your parents' care goals.
- ✓ Collectively decide on responsibilities you can take on for them (e.g. you can buy their groceries but would prefer an at-home caregiver for medical needs).
- ✓ Ask your parents who their power of attorney is.
- ✓ Ensure your parents have filled out an advanced directive.
- ✓ Discuss living arrangements based on your parents' needs. Options you might consider include:
 - Your parents' home
 - Your home
 - An assisted living community
 - An independent living community
 - A nursing home

Caring For Your Parents

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs):

Depending on your parents' mental and physical needs, they may need help with ADLs, such as:

- ✓ Feeding themselves.
- ✓ Overall mobility and functionality (getting in and out of bed, sitting down, drinking water, etc.).
- ✓ Getting dressed.
- ✓ Routinely bathing or showering.
- ✓ Maintaining personal hygiene habits (brushing hair, brushing teeth, shaving, etc.).

Financial Assistance:

As parents age, they may need you to step in and guide them on handling their finances in ways like:

- ✓ Coordinating and paying bills.
- ✓ Handling medical appointments.
- ✓ Ensuring insurance plans are up-to-date.
- ✓ Reaching out to government or local resources for care coordination.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs):

IADLs are activities that serve as important facets of independent functioning. Ensure your parents have the help they need to:

- ✓ Cook and prepare meals daily.
- ✓ Routinely clean or maintain their home.
- ✓ Run errands (shopping, getting mail, etc.)
- ✓ Pay bills on time.
- ✓ Communicate with others via telephone or other forms of technology.
- ✓ Keep up with their prescription medications.

Safety:

Ensure your parents' home is safe and accessible as they grow older with additions or fixes like:

- ✓ Clearing all cords, rugs, and other obstacles out of common walkways.
- ✓ Putting grab bars into bathrooms or along stairs for additional support.
- ✓ Adding brighter lights into each room with accessible switches.
- ✓ Making sure appliances are functional and within reach.
- ✓ Reducing the need for step stools or to bend down low.
- ✓ Acquiring Life Alert® or a similar emergency contact service.

Caring For Yourself

Becoming a caregiver can be stressful and exhausting. You may experience wavering moods, burnout, and ongoing feelings of physical and emotional exhaustion, which is why it's crucial that you:



- ✓ **Research and understand your resources:** check government resources, local programs, funding, and more to ensure you are covered where needed.
- ✓ **Practice self-care and self-compassion:** be patient with yourself and return some energy to your own body through breaks and rest.
- ✓ **Maintain your physical wellbeing:** eat a well-rounded diet, exercise regularly, and socialize with loved ones to ensure you're at your best.
- ✓ **Ask for help:**
 - Ask a nurse to step in for medical treatment.
 - Rearrange the current living situation.
 - Speak with a counselor, therapist, or certified senior care specialist to cope and process your caregiving role.