

# HomeTimes®

**America's Choice In Home Care**

Your resource for an at home senior lifestyle.



## 6 Benefits of Choosing a Home Care Agency

When someone you love needs professional assistance to stay safely and comfortably at home, you may become overwhelmed finding the right caregiver.

For most people, there are two options: Hire a private independent caregiver or choose a reputable home care agency, such as Visiting Angels®.

Independent caregivers may seem more affordable at first glance, but may lack the training, experience, and flexibility of an agency-affiliated care provider. Plus, you have to consider employment laws, regulations, and taxes.

### **Why is a Home Care Agency the Best Option?**

A reputable home care agency can offer peace of mind for families and provide the following advantages:

#### **1. Many Caregivers to Choose From**

Visiting Angels employs numerous caregivers, which means it is easier to choose someone who fits well with your schedule — and your loved one's personality, needs, and preferences.

#### **2. Backup Caregiving Capabilities**

If an independent caregiver gets sick, goes on vacation, or needs time off to attend personal or family responsibilities — or if you have a sudden change in your schedule — a temporary caregiver can be challenging to find. However,

Visiting Angels can send a replacement caregiver so your loved one won't be left alone — and you won't need to make other arrangements.

#### **3. Stringent Screening Requirements**

Visiting Angels' caregivers undergo extensive background checks to ensure they are the best fit for clients. Further, Visiting Angels is licensed, bonded, and insured. When hiring an independent caregiver, it can be costly, difficult, and time-consuming to conduct an in-depth background check that meets agency standards.

#### **4. Access to Training and Continuing Education**

Visiting Angels' caregivers have access to training on important topics such as end-of-life care, fall prevention, and disease-specific personal care, enabling them to provide enhanced support. Some independent caregivers may pursue certifications or accreditations, but don't have access to agency-provided educational resources developed by industry experts.

#### **5. Agency Supervision and Periodic Check-ins**

When you hire an independent caregiver, you are the employer — which means you have limited recourse if a problem arises. Visiting Angels provides essential support and resources— including a local care coordinator and a 24/7 hotline that you can call to report urgent issues or problems. Visiting Angels' coordinators will also check in with you and your loved one periodically to make sure you are satisfied.

#### **6. Professional Care Plans and Consultations**

When you choose a home care agency like Visiting Angels, you will receive a:

- Free in-home consultation where you can discuss your loved one's care needs with an experienced care coordinator.
- Home care assessment to identify household safety concerns and care needs.
- Professional care plan developed by your care coordinator that outlines your caregiver's responsibilities.

***If you feel that hiring a professional home care provider might be the right choice, contact your nearest Visiting Angels office today by calling 800-365-4189.***



## Help Seniors Avoid Accidents and Falls on Stairs

Did you know that falls are the number-one cause of injuries and trauma-related hospital admissions among seniors? Accidents while walking up or down the stairs are common places for seniors to suffer debilitating injuries in the home.

Unfortunately, as seniors advance in age, the risks increase as they begin losing their balance more frequently. They also lose strength and muscle mass, experience decreased vision and mobility, and become more disoriented or confused. And when they fall, conditions like osteoporosis can make an accident more harmful.

### **Stair Safety Tips to Prevent Falls**

Most falls occur inside the home, and the primary culprit – the stairway. Here are some tips and suggestions to help senior loved ones avoid fall hazards on the stairs:

#### **Stair Maintenance**

Steps that are damaged, wobbly, or rotten can be a risk. Regularly inspect stairs closely for any signs of disrepair. Prompt maintenance can go a long way in reducing fall risks.

#### **Good Lighting**

When the elderly cannot see the stairs properly due to poor lighting, they may slip or stumble. Make sure the entire length of the stairs is well lit, the light switch is in an easy-to-reach location, and lightbulbs are in working order.

#### **Proper Footwear**

Suitable shoes can help reduce trips and falls. Encourage your loved one to wear shoes or slippers that have a strong grip and to avoid using socks or older and worn-out footwear.

#### **Stair Coverings**

Avoid bare wooden stairs that can be very slippery. Remove old, worn-out carpeting and replace it with a new, non-slip tread. Install rubber or vinyl matting for older adults who dislike carpeted stairs. Consider highlighting the edge of the

stairs with bright tape for your loved one to know where to step.

#### **Handrails**

Install handrails on stairs if your loved one doesn't have them. Handrails should be easy to grip and support your loved one's weight.

#### **Hazard Elimination**

Remove any tripping hazards, including rugs at the top or bottom of the staircase and other clutter.

#### **Stair Aids**

Numerous aids are available that can help seniors safely navigate at home. Some stair aids include stair lifts, wheelchair lifts, stair-climbing canes, and moving handlebars to assist older adults while going up or down the stairs.

No matter how safe you make your loved one's stairs, these tips won't help if they don't follow them. Make sure to check up on them regularly and remind them to keep practicing stair safety.

### **How Visiting Angels Assists with Fall Prevention**

Our caregivers tend to the cognitive, emotional, and physical needs of our clients to help them live as independently as possible in the homes they love. Our dedicated home care professionals can support your loved one each day and ensure they practice safe habits on the stairs and around the house.

Through our Fall Prevention Program, we can conduct a comprehensive assessment and provide personalized guidance to help prevent falls and other accidents to keep your senior safe.

***Want to learn more about the advantages of hiring Visiting Angels to support your loved one as they age in place? Contact your local home care office to schedule a no-cost, no-obligation home care consultation at 800-365-4189.***