

March 2025

HomeTimes

America's Choice In Home Care®

Your resource for an at home senior lifestyle.



Why Every Family Needs a Respite Care Plan

As a primary caregiver for a senior loved one, you may sometimes feel drained and exhausted. Like most family members, you probably never expected to be a caregiver for an older loved one and did not imagine the challenges.



Caregiving responsibilities can be demanding on your physical and emotional well-being. Carving out time for yourself can seem impossible, especially with the added demands of family and work.

Fortunately, professional respite care is an excellent resource for times when you need a much-needed break or a breather.

Why is a Respite Care Plan Important?

Respite care is temporary, short-term assistance to support your loved one at home while you work, travel, manage other responsibilities, or handle personal tasks. Respite care can provide essential relief from the stresses of caregiving—so you can focus on yourself.

A respite care plan can continue your senior's desire to age in place at home when you need coverage for an unexpected event, a vacation or out-of-town work trip, or even just a pause from your regular caregiving routine.

A plan can give you time to relax, refresh, and attend to your personal needs before you experience caregiver burnout. Routine respite care can improve your resilience, energy levels, and balance between various aspects of your life—so you can continue to support your loved one.

Unfortunately, many primary caregivers wait until they are exhausted and overwhelmed to investigate respite care options. The best time to establish a respite care plan is before these feelings begin.

The Advantages of In-Home Respite Care

In-home respite care can be a fantastic option for older adults who want to age in familiar surroundings.

While adult day care and assisted living facilities provide on-site respite care, they entail your senior to leave home. Unfamiliar surroundings can be stressful and tiring for seniors. In addition, some centers do not provide transportation and may require seniors to attend a certain number of days or hours per week on an ongoing basis.

When you choose in-home care from Visiting Angels, a professional caregiver will come to your loved one's home and provide compassionate care tailored to their unique needs.

Visiting Angels offers flexible scheduling options that range from a few hours to 24/7 support. Building a relationship with a respite care professional ensures seamless adjustments in case of emergencies or schedule changes.

Contact your nearest Visiting Angels office today to learn more about our helpful respite home care services at **800-365-4189**.

6 Legal Documents Seniors Should Have

As we navigate the complexities of aging, having a solid legal foundation becomes increasingly important. For seniors, a comprehensive set of legal documents can ensure their wishes are well-respected.



Organizing your senior loved one's legal affairs can protect and streamline their assets, finances, healthcare, and estate planning while giving you peace of mind that critical documents are in place when needed during a health emergency or at the end of life.

Honor Your Senior's Wishes

Talking about legal documents with an older loved one can be difficult and uncomfortable. However, delaying this conversation may cause uncertainty and stress if they suddenly need help making financial or medical decisions.

Consult with an attorney and execute any legal documents before health, financial, or legal issues arise. Common legal documents may include the following:

Last Will and Testament

A will outlines the distribution of your loved one's property, money, and possessions after death. A will also names the person overseeing the distribution of their estate and outlines final wishes about funeral arrangements. If an older adult does not have a will, state laws determine how to distribute the estate.

Advanced Healthcare Directives or Living Will

Many older adults also elect to prepare a living will that specifies the types of medical treatments they do and do not want if they can't make their own healthcare decisions. Seniors may choose to

include a do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order in their living will if they do not wish healthcare professionals to revive them after their heart stops.

Revocable Living Trust

A revocable living trust enables seniors to transfer ownership of their assets to a trust while maintaining control over their possessions during their lifetime. A revocable living trust offers privacy protection and probate avoidance. It also allows the transfer of assets to beneficiaries after the senior's death.

Power of Attorney (POA) for Financial and Health Care

Older adults should complete two separate power of attorney documents: One to designate a person to handle their finances and a second to assign a person to make health care decisions if they cannot decide on their own. Older adults can choose the same person for their financial and healthcare decisions or a different person for each. This person, called a proxy, should be familiar with their healthcare and financial wishes.

Beneficiary Forms

If your loved one has a life insurance policy, pension, or retirement account, they should complete a beneficiary form to designate who will receive any remaining funds after they die. Make sure all beneficiary forms are complete and up to date.

HIPAA Forms

Your loved one may choose to complete HIPAA forms to permit their doctors to share health information with designated individuals, such as family members or caregivers. Unlike a power of attorney, HIPAA forms allow health care providers to share information with selected individuals even when your loved one can still make health care decisions.

Honor Your Senior's Wishes

After your loved one completes their legal paperwork assisted by an attorney, it can be challenging to keep everything organized and easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

Gathering and organizing your loved one's legal and estate documents in one place is a great start, but the effort will be in vain if no one knows or remembers where the information is stored. Your loved one should tell a trusted family member, friend, or attorney where they can locate their important papers.

Remember, legal documents and requirements may vary according to state, jurisdiction, and other circumstances. Discuss your loved one's legal affairs as soon as possible with an experienced attorney specializing in "elder law."

Beyond legal documents, your loved one should also compile other essential information to help family members manage their estate smoothly and with peace of mind. These should be stored in an easily accessible box where executors or those handling the estate know they can be found.