

Aging people may need extra help at home or may need to move to a place that provides care. As a family member or caregiver, you can help your loved one in the decision process and during the transition.

How do you know when your loved one can no longer live independently?

- ✓ Sometimes an illness, injury or changing health will determine when a person needs to make a change.
- ✓ The need for change may also happen gradually over time. Signs that can indicate the need for a change include:
 - Having difficulty eating, dressing, bathing or using the toilet.
 - Forgetting to take medications or taking too many.
 - Behaving in ways that could be hurtful to themselves or to others, such as forgetting to turn off appliances.
 - Wandering from home or other signs of memory loss.

How do you talk about making a change?

- ✓ Accepting change can be hard. Try being open and honest about what you see.
- ✓ Clearly state why you think independent living is no longer a good idea.
- ✓ Listen to the person's concerns. Reassure him or her that you will do what you can to address those concerns.
- ✓ Include your loved one in making the decision about where to live, if possible. If a person cannot make decisions for himself or herself, a legally designated person must do it instead.

Where should your loved one live?

When a person can no longer live alone, help him or her decide what type of living situation is best. Some options include:

- Staying at home with additional assistance. Hiring a home care company to provide professional caregivers can help make this a good option.
- Moving in with family or friends. Care can be provided by family members, friends or home care aids.
- Assisted living communities. These offer independent living with some assistance with housekeeping, meals, personal care and social activities.



- Residential care facilities. These usually have around-the-clock care for people who need help with personal care or walking. Nursing care is available, but not 24 hours a day.
- Skilled nursing facilities. A nursing facility is a good option if a person is bed-bound or needs medical care such as injections, blood pressure monitoring, tube feeding, or ventilator care.

How can you pay for long term care?

The cost varies widely depending on the options you choose and where you live. For help in determining how to best pay for care, you can consult with a care manager or look to these agencies and services:

- Eldercare Locator can help you find local services such as health insurance counseling and low-cost or free legal services. Visit www.eldercare.gov or call 1-800-677-1116.
- Medicare will help pay for skilled nursing or home health care if certain conditions are met. Visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-633-4227.
- BenefitsCheckUp is a service provided by the National Council on the Aging, which helps you locate services and benefits. Visit www.benefitscheckup.org on the Internet.

What if your loved one resists making a change?

- ✓ Give the person time to get used to the idea.
- ✓ Encourage the person to talk about how he or she feels.
- ✓ Listen to concerns. He or she may be worried about not liking the new place, about finances or about what will happen to the family home and belongings.
- ✓ Provide clear, honest answers. Try to find solutions to concerns together.
- ✓ Ask for help from friends, family, a doctor or another respected person.
- ✓ Ask the person to agree on a trial period.
- ✓ If the person continues to refuse care and his or her safety is at risk, consider contacting Adult Protective Services.

What can you do to help make it a positive move?

- ✓ After a move, ask friends and family to visit often, call, or send cards and letters.
- ✓ Reassure the person. Talk about the positive reasons for the move, such as security, comfort, companionship or professional care.
- ✓ Allow the person time to adjust.

Are you concerned about a loved one who lives alone? Are you wondering what you can do? Hiring a home care company to provide professional caregivers preserves your loved one's independence and dignity in the comfort of his or her own home.