

Caring for family *from afar*

Anyone, anywhere can help care for a loved one. You don't have to live in the same town, or even the same state.

If you live far away from an older relative, you may wonder how you can help. Long-distance caregiving is possible.



BEFORE YOU START

Does your loved one already have a primary caregiver? Talk to that person about how you can help. It's usually best to coordinate your efforts with the person who sees your loved one most often.

If they don't yet have a caregiver but need one, you can help with that too. Talk to other family members and discuss the options. You may be able to help with finding and hiring a nurse or aide if family members can't do it.

Even if you can't visit often, know that your visits are valuable. It's time to not only catch up, but to take on some caregiving duties. Maybe you can give the primary caregiver a break while you are there. You can also find out what kinds of things you can do to help when you're away.



OPTIONS FOR HELPING OUT

Some ideas for helping your long-distance loved one include:

- Helping them manage their finances or bill paying, which often can be done online
- Arranging for in-home care such as home health or nursing aides
- Ordering medical equipment that they need
- Making calls to the pharmacy for medication when they need it
- Researching skilled nursing or assisted living facilities
- Calling them often to check in and provide emotional support
- Contacting their insurance company if there are questions about coverage
- Keeping other family members informed about their health and needs
- Creating paperwork for an emergency that lists their health conditions and medicines they take

FINDING LOCAL RESOURCES



There may be many resources close to home that can help your relative. You can get started online with these websites:

- Eldercare Locator: www.eldercare.acl.gov
- National Institute on Aging: www.nia.nih.gov
- Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

Source: National Institute on Aging