

Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging

Care Plans Help Both Older Adults and Caregivers

Developing and maintaining a care plan will help you balance both your life and that of the person to whom you are providing care!

Are you a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or another chronic health condition? Caregivers are often family members or friends of a person who is in need of care. Caregivers may manage everything from medications and getting dressed in the morning to doctor appointments, social events, and meals.



What is a care plan?

A care plan is a [form](#)  [1.48 MB] that summarizes a person's health conditions and current treatments for their care. The plan should include information about:

- Health conditions
- Medications
- Healthcare providers
- Emergency contacts
- Caregiver resources

You can ask the doctor of the person you care for to help you complete the care plan. At that time, you can also discuss advanced care plan options such as what follow-up care is necessary, end of life care options, and resources that are available to help make things easier for you as a caregiver. Try to update the care plan every year or if the one you care for has a change in health or medications to keep the care plan current, and remember to respect the care recipient's privacy after reviewing their personal information.

How do you develop a care plan?

1. **Start a conversation about care planning with the person you take care of.** You can use the ["My Care Plan"](#)  [1.48 MB] form to help start the conversation. If your care recipient isn't able to provide input, anyone who has significant interaction with the care recipient (a family member or home nurse aide) can help complete the form.
2. **Talk to the doctor of the person you care for or another health care provider.** Use the ["My Care Plan"](#)  [1.48 MB] form as a starting point for your discussion. A physician can review the form you started and help to complete it, especially if there is a conversation about advanced care planning.
3. **Ask about what care options are relevant to the person you care for.** Medicare covers appointments that are scheduled to manage chronic conditions and for discussing advanced care plans. Beginning in January of 2017, Medicare covers care planning appointments specifically for people with [Alzheimer's](#), other dementias, memory problems, or suspected cognitive impairment.
4. **Discuss any needs you have as a caregiver.** 84% of caregivers report they could use more information and help on caregiving topics especially related to safety at home, dealing with stress, and managing their care recipient's challenging behaviors. [Caregivers of people with dementia or Alzheimer's](#) are particularly at greater risk for anxiety, depression, and lower quality of life compared to caregivers of people with other chronic conditions.

What are the benefits of a care plan?

- Care plans can reduce emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and improve overall medical management for people with a chronic health condition, like Alzheimer's disease resulting in better quality of life for all care recipients.

- Care plans can provide supportive resources for you, the caregiver, to continue leading a healthy life of your own.

More Information

- [Healthy Aging: Alzheimer's Disease](#)
- [Healthy Aging: Caregiving](#)
- [Healthy Aging: Caregiving for Person with Alzheimer's Disease or a related Dementia](#)

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