

## Tips for Getting Care at Home

- Make a list of all the tasks you'll need help with and the hours you'll need someone present. Identify issues that are important or unacceptable to you (eg, smoking, watching tv, making personal phone calls, gender of caregiver).
- Will the caregiver need a car, driver's license and insurance?
- Will the caregiver need experience with medical equipment or wound care?
- Talk with others who have arranged care at home to learn about their experience and recommendations.
- If your care needs are relatively simple, it may be possible to rely on family and friends. If you decide to do so, make sure they are comfortable with the tasks you will ask them to perform and plan for a backup if they are suddenly unavailable.
- Hiring a caregiver involves either 1) paying a home care agency to provide a caregiver for you or 2) privately hiring a caregiver yourself. There are pros and cons to each approach.

Home care agencies take care of screening, hiring/firing and payroll taxes for the caregiver, who is their employee. Agencies generally provide coverage if the original caregiver is unavailable. Agencies are not of equal quality and you may have less choice and less consistency in caregivers.

Private hiring allows you to select the caregiver that seem the best fit for you. You can get recommendations through word-of-mouth, adult day care centers and community centers. You may need to arrange for backup coverage and you will be responsible for screening, hiring/firing, and payroll taxes for the caregiver.

- If possible, interview more than one applicant and have a friend or family member present so you can compare impressions.
- Always contact an applicant's references
- Questions to ask a potential caregiver:

What is your experience?

What commitment can you make to this job? Are there any factors that may prevent you from staying as long as you are needed?



This guide is not intended to replace medical or other professional advice, and any use of this information is at the reader's discretion.

Do you have a working phone, a driver's license, insurance, and reliable transportation?  
What back-up will there be if you can't come to work?  
Are you willing to consider an initial trial period?  
Is there anything in the job description that you're unfamiliar or uncomfortable with?

- Before you hire, consider:
  - Did the applicant arrive on time?
  - Were you comfortable with the applicant's attitude?
  - If you are hiring privately, prepare a written job contract stating duties to be performed, wages, hour, what constitutes unacceptable behavior, and reasons for termination.
- Questions to ask a home care agency:
  - What services and level of care does the agency provide?
  - Are services available 24/7? Is a private room for sleep required?
  - Are caregivers insured and bonded?
  - Does the agency perform background checks and consult references before hiring?
  - Does the agency provide training to caregivers?
  - Is a back-up provided if the original caregiver cannot come?
  - Can I request another caregiver if I am unhappy with the worker the agency sent?
  - Does the agency pay payroll taxes and workers' comp?

### **Additional Resources for Home Care**

Family Caregiver Alliance [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)  
AARP [www.aarp.org/families/caregiving](http://www.aarp.org/families/caregiving)  
National Association of Geriatric Care Managers [www.caremanager.org](http://www.caremanager.org)  
Eldercare Locator [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)



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