

How to find a caregiver: A guide

March 23 2023, by Kirstie Ganobsik



Choosing a caregiver for a loved one is a decision no one takes lightly.

Figuring out the level of care your loved one needs can help make the

process go more smoothly. That's why it's a great place to start your journey.

"The goal is to pick up clues early, before they start to impact day-to-day life in a significant way, so we can do something about them," Cleveland Clinic's Dr. Ardeshir Hashmi said in a recent [article](#).

Here's how to find a [caregiver](#), including what websites to use, what questions to ask a potential caregiver, and how to research qualifications.

Know what level of care is needed

According to John Hopkins Medicine, caregiver services may include:

- Doctor care to diagnose and treat diseases
- Nursing care to create and deliver a [health plan](#) in consultation with a doctor, such as dressing wounds and administering medication
- Therapist care to help with recovery from an injury or other [health](#) issue
- Social work to assist with finding community resources
- Mental health care to assist with receiving counseling
- Home health aide care to assist with [personal hygiene](#), such as showers, baths and dressing
- Personal care to take care of chores, transportation, cooking and other non-medical activities
- Companionship care to provide social and emotional support
- Dietician care for nutritional guidance

Once you have decided on the type of care your loved one needs, you can start to ask more detailed questions. For instance, will they need a nurse around the clock, or just during the day? If they need [personal care](#), is it for both the morning and evening, or just for food prep?

To help answer these questions, the AARP suggests writing down your loved one's requirements and desires so you can match them with the best caregiving services.

If you have Medicare and Medicaid insurance, a level of care assessment must also be conducted by a doctor to show the need for in-[home care](#).

Research caregiver qualifications

The term caregiver is very broad. It can range from someone who just makes food or assists your loved one to and from the bathroom to someone who's a registered nurse or other certified medical professional.

AARP offers some basic certification, licensing and training guidelines to look out for:

- Personal care aides are generally not licensed or certified, and training may vary [by state](#)
- Home health aides have to have at least 75 hours of federally mandated training
- Licensed practical nurses must be licensed by the state, and some may be speech, occupational or physical therapists
- Registered nurses must have a [college degree](#), meet their state's nursing board licensing requirements and pass the National Council Licensure Examination

What to ask potential caregivers

United Disabilities Services recommends covering your bases with several categories of questions, such as:

- What's your length of time in business and do you have

references?

- Do you have current liability insurance, and are you properly licensed and certified to provide care in the state?
- What are your billing procedures and fees? Is a contract required?
- What forms of insurance do you accept?
- How do we communicate, and what's your typical turnaround time for responding to my inquiries?
- What's your policy on [background checks](#)?
- Can I expect the same caregiver each time?

5 websites for finding caregivers

To help you get started on finding a caregiver, here are five useful websites:

- [Community Resource Finder](#) is a partnership between AARP Family Caregiving and the Alzheimer's Association. It offers information on programs and services that help you find caregiving in your area, such as adult day care, transportation, [home health care](#) and support services.
- [Long Term Care](#) is a government website that connects you with local caregiving services. These include an eldercare locator and Medicare-certified home health agencies.
- [The National Association for Homecare and Hospice](#) offers some tips on hiring the right provider and a comprehensive agency locator of more than 33,000 home care and hospice providers.
- [The Caregiver Action Network](#) breaks down caregiving organizations and resources into helpful categories. It provides several websites that can help you in your caregiver search.
- [CareNav](#) is a free, personalized and secure caregiver resource portal. It pulls together caregiver resources into one dashboard for optimal organization to make finding a caregiver easier.

Ask your health care provider for suggestions

Your doctor or [health care provider](#) may also be able to offer a wealth of information on finding a caregiver for your loved one. According to AARP, this can give you peace of mind knowing that the agency or individual you hire is reputable and trustworthy.

More information: For more on finding a caregiver, take a look at the Family Caregiver Alliance's [Hiring In-Home Help Guide](#).

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Citation: How to find a caregiver: A guide (2023, March 23) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-03-caregiver.html>

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