



Five Tips for New Caregivers

Whether you're just beginning to anticipate a need or taking care of a family member full-time, these tips from the American Association of Retired People can help you get organized and find support on your caregiving journey.

- 1. Start the conversation.** The right time to talk about the future is now, even if it's uncomfortable. Ask your loved one about their preferences, values and wishes for things that matter, from health to finances. If you wait until an accident, fall or serious diagnosis, when everyone's stress levels are sky high, your choices may be more limited and more difficult to evaluate.
- 2. Form a team.** Trying to handle the responsibilities of caregiving by yourself can lead to burnout and stress-related health problems. Don't go about it alone.
- 3. Make a plan.** Now work with your team to develop a plan, thinking both short term — such as determining who will be responsible for each caregiving task — and long term.
- 4. Care for your loved one.** A wide range of resources and tools can make your job easier, whether you're caring for a parent who lives in another state, a spouse with a long-term illness or a sibling with dementia. In any caregiving situation, find out in advance where to get information and assistance.
- 5. Care for yourself.** Family caregivers find it easy to forget about their own needs, which is why caregivers often experience high stress levels, depression and other health problems. Don't neglect exercise, healthy eating and sleep. And take time for activities you enjoy. You'll need to keep up your energy and stay well to care for others.



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