



VNA
& Hospice
of the Southwest Region
Serving Bennington and Rutland Counties

Caregiving Guide



Information and Advice in Caring for Someone You Love

A Guide for Caregivers

The caregiving role may be something you've done most of your life or it may be a new experience. Regardless of your experience, providing care for a loved one can be highly stressful, whether your family member lives with you, next door or thousands of miles away.

As a person begins to age, family members often feel the need to help with everyday tasks that are now challenging. Your new role may include activities like meal preparation, laundry and some yard work or housekeeping. Eventually, many family members find themselves assisting in ways they never expected like hygiene or grooming. Other caregivers face dealing with a loved one with an unexpected disease or disorder.

Remember, you are not alone. The Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of the Southwest Region has been assisting families and supporting them in their role as caregiver since 1946. We are here to help you learn how to care for your loved one, support you with information and resources and help you work through any caregiving challenges.

In this guide, you'll find advice and expertise that will help you improve the care you provide for a loved one – and provide direction in finding the most appropriate care for them.

If you have questions, please call us at 800.244.0568.

About Us

The Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice (VNAHSR) is a non-profit, Medicare-certified home health and hospice agency delivering a wide-range of advanced medical care with compassion, dependability and expertise to people of all ages.

With locations in Bennington and Rutland Counties, we have over 350 trusted health professionals and caregivers committed to providing exceptional care to patients and families.

Proud of our national reputation for quality care, VNAHSR is highly rated for Quality of Patient Care

and Patient Satisfaction from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and is recognized as one of the nation's top 100 performing home health agencies, by HomeCare Elite, a market-leading review that identifies top Medicare-certified agencies.

Our Mission

To enhance the quality of life of all we serve through comprehensive home and community health services.



The Caregiving Guide is published by the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of the Southwest Region. All materials have been prepared for general information purposes only to permit you to learn more about home health care services, our organization and the experience of our staff. The information presented is not legal advice and is not to be acted on as such.

“There are four kinds of people in the world: Those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers.”

—*Rosalynn Carter*

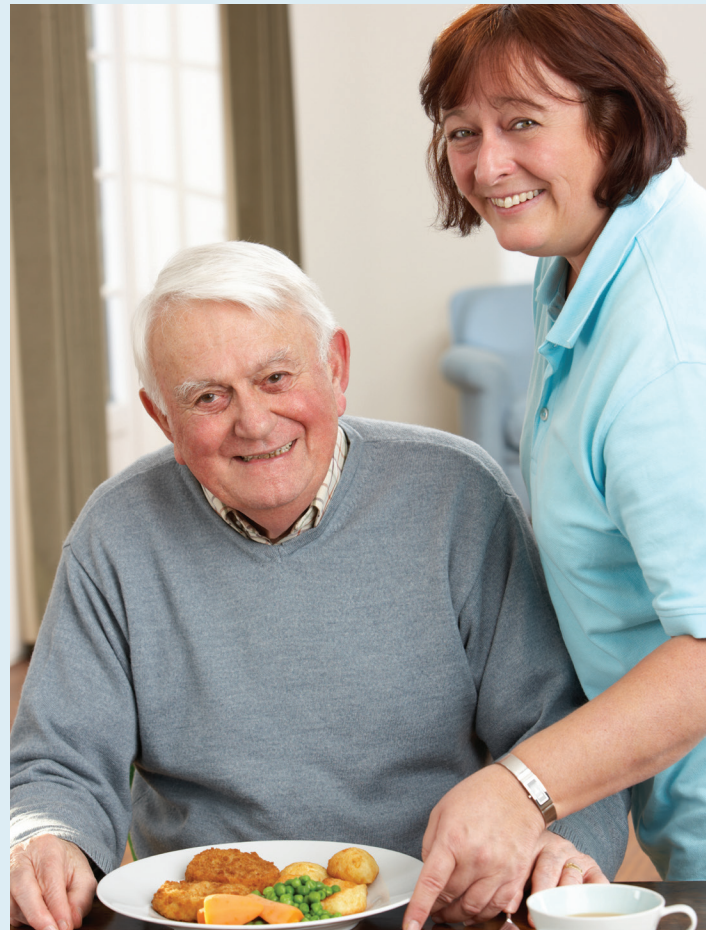
How Can I Tell if A Loved One Needs Help?

While it can be difficult to tell when aging is affecting a family member, don't ignore the warning signs. Small things can add up very quickly.

If you notice changes in someone you love, it may be time to seek outside help.

- Changes in relationships with others
- Withdrawals from social interactions
- Unusual behavior, this could include a lack of inhibition, increased agitation, speaking loudly, or withdrawing from others.
- Neglecting personal care. Poor hygiene or nutrition.
- Misplacing or forgetting things. Look for piles of unopened mail, dirty or scorched dishes and pans, unwashed laundry.
- Mismanagement of finances. Check to see that they're paying their bills and not making unusual purchases.

To help you understand the potential limitations of your loved one, please review the Needs and Environmental Assessment Checklists on the following pages. These assessments can help you determine if it is time to contact a home health agency. The checklists can also help caregivers understand the challenges and daily needs of your loved one.



Caring for a loved one is a journey. We're here to serve as your trusted local partner and guide.

Needs Assessment for Your Loved One

This worksheet can help you and other family members determine what assistance your loved one needs

Activities of Daily Living

| | NEEDS | | |
|------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| | No help | Some help | Much help |
| Bathing | | | |
| Dressing | | | |
| Grooming | | | |
| Toileting | | | |
| Eating a good diet | | | |
| Getting out of bed | | | |
| Getting out of a chair | | | |
| Walking | | | |

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Using the phone | | | |
| Shopping for personal items | | | |
| Transportation | | | |
| Managing money | | | |
| Doing laundry | | | |
| Light housework | | | |
| Meal preparation | | | |

Conditional/Functional Status (How do the following effect your loved one's ability to function?)

| | EFFECT | | |
|-----------------------|--------|------|-------|
| | None | Some | Major |
| Hearing | | | |
| Vision | | | |
| Perception | | | |
| Orientation | | | |
| Thinking | | | |
| Memory | | | |
| Decision making | | | |
| Judgement | | | |
| Physical dexterity | | | |
| Balance | | | |
| Strength | | | |
| Energy | | | |
| Bladder/bowel control | | | |
| Arthritis | | | |
| Hypertension | | | |
| Heart disease | | | |
| Diabetes | | | |
| Physical deformity | | | |
| Depression | | | |

Environmental Assessment

What challenges is your loved one facing at home? Which can be removed, changed or fixed?

Environmental Safety

| | NEEDS | |
|---|--------------|---------------------|
| | Not an issue | Needs to be changed |
| Neighborhood | | |
| Is the neighborhood safe? | | |
| Is it conveniently located? | | |
| Do friends or relatives live nearby? | | |
| Living Quarters | | |
| Roof is in good repair | | |
| Windows are in good shape | | |
| Looks maintained | | |
| Dead bolt locks on outside doors | | |
| Peephole in front door | | |
| Smoke alarms installed and tested | | |
| Carbon monoxide alarms installed and tested | | |
| Visible from road (no debris, bushes, trees block view of the home) | | |
| Steps | | |
| Handrails on both sides and not loose | | |
| Non-skid surface on steps | | |
| Floors | | |
| No loose rugs | | |
| No clutter on floors or paths of debris | | |
| Furnishings | | |
| Couch and chairs easy to use and get in and out of | | |
| Bed easy to use and get in and out of | | |
| Lighting | | |
| Important areas are well lit | | |
| Light switches are easy to reach | | |
| Passageways have night lights | | |
| Kitchen | | |
| Items used often are accessible | | |
| Storage is easy to get to | | |
| No objects are stored over the stove | | |
| Bathroom | | |
| Grab bars are attached to studs by the toilet and tub or shower | | |
| Non-skid strips in the tub or shower | | |
| Non-slip bath mat or rug | | |

If your loved one needs help at home, give us a call. 1.800.244.0568

VNAHSR serving Bennington and Rutland Counties



The right option can provide you with peace of mind that your loved one is in good hands.

What Next?

After reviewing the needs assessment, what are the next steps?

First, arrange for a family meeting to discuss care options. Be sure to include your loved one who needs care in the discussion. Use the Needs and Environmental Checklists as a guide for your discussion.

Secondly, have a family member accompany your loved one on as many medical appointments as possible. This allows them to advocate for the patient if necessary and can help the physician better understand your loved ones needs at home.

What type of care is available?

Home Health

Generally, two types of care in the home are available. If your loved one requires regular assistance with health care needs, home health agencies may be the best choice.

Home health agencies provide a full range of medical services from medication management, skilled nursing, rehabilitation therapies, social work, behavioral health services and care coordination amongst other health care providers.

Medicare, Medicaid and some private insurance policies pay for some home health care services. Medicare will cover home health care for home-bound beneficiaries who may need skilled nursing or therapy services, but these services must be prescribed by a physician.

In-Home Private Duty

If your loved one needs help with daily activities such as household help, meal preparation, grooming, or in need of companionship, in-home, private duty services might be your best option. The cost for these services vary and often, you will have to pay out of pocket.

Some insurance policies do have coverage for private duty care. A call to your insurance agency will help you determine if your loved one has this coverage in their policy. While Medicare will not pay for these services, Medicaid (government health insurance for low-income or disabled individuals) may programs available for those who qualify.

Accepting help from a paid care provider can be a major change for your loved one, but a skilled, loving and dedicated helper can help make a difference and can delay placement in a long-term care facility.

Questions You Should Ask a Home Health Provider

Now, that you have determined that someone you love could benefit from help, whether skilled nursing or assistance with daily activities, you should determine what agency best suits your needs. You and your loved one have a choice when it comes to home health care agencies.

There are several questions you should ask the home care agency to ensure your family and loved one remain safe, healthy and happy:

- How long have they been serving the community?
- Are they a private company or a non-profit organization?
- Are employees trustworthy, knowledgeable and certified?
- What types of screening and training is required for employees?
- What are their patient satisfaction ratings?
- Is the provider licensed and/or accredited?
- Do they clearly explain the services provided and how much it will cost?
- Are services covered by insurance, Medicare and Medicaid?
- Are behavioral health or mental health services available?
- Are hospice services offered?
- Can hospice services be provided outside the home?
- Can I get assistance with specific support tasks including housekeeping, medication management, grooming
- Does the agency have strong community partnerships for supplemental support as needed?
- Can they help make suggestions on how to modify my home to accommodate changing needs?
- Is there 24/7 support available if needed?
- Can I speak with someone today?

Why Choose the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of the Southwest Region

Local physicians have entrusted their patients' care to the VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region (VNAHSR) since 1946.

Founded in Rutland, Vermont, the VNAHSR has grown to include locations throughout Bennington and Rutland Counties. Our strength is the ability and resources to deliver a full-range of home health, hospice and community services to patients of all ages and health care needs.

Redefining the way care is delivered in the home by incorporating technology and advanced clinical care practices, VNAHSR works to meet the needs of today's home care patient.

Home care clinicians are able to assist patients recovering from knee surgery who opt not to recover in a rehab facility, enable children with complex care needs to remain with their families, help elderly patients remain

healthy and independent at home and supports patients facing a terminal illness with the care and support needed.

Our skilled staff make hundreds of home care visits every month. Our experienced nurses, physical, occupational and speech therapists and other health care professionals bring the care you need right to your home.

With the VNAHSR, your or a loved one will receive the skilled care your doctor orders, plus, we'll make sure you have the information and tools you need to monitor and stay on top of your health.

Ensuring the best possible outcome for patients in our local communities is at the center of what we do and drives our clinically excellent patient outcomes and, above all, our nationally recognized patient satisfaction.

VNA & HOSPICE

of the Southwest Region
Serving Bennington and Rutland Counties

**Your health.
Your choice.**

Whether you or a loved one are recovering from major surgery, needing long-term management of a chronic illness or are facing a life-limiting illness you have choices when it comes to your care.

**Ask your healthcare provider
if home healthcare is right for you,
then give us a call.**

1.800.244.0568