

Learn how to maintain your own health and well-being.

Stay healthy. Eat a healthy and balanced diet, keep in contact with friends and family, exercise regularly, get enough sleep and make time for activities you enjoy.

Learn the signs of caregiver stress. Be aware of times when you are feeling anxious, having trouble sleeping, not eating properly or feeling unwell.

 Responding to Stressful Events: Self-Care for Caregivers (Canada.ca > search: Self-Care for Caregivers)

Ask for help. Reach out to friends, family and support services when you need them.

 **Resources.** Get information on federal, provincial and territorial resources for caregivers by visiting Canada.ca/Caregivers, by calling 1 800 0-Canada or TTY 1-800-926-9105, or by contacting your provincial or territorial government.

Caregiving can be a positive experience. Being prepared helps!

 Many caregivers find caring for someone to be rewarding and empowering. Positive experiences include a sense of pride for being able to give back, building deeper relationships, discovering new skills and finding increased meaning and purpose in your life.

 Don't be afraid to ask for help. Remember, you're not alone.

This document has been jointly prepared by the Forum of Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers Responsible for Seniors. The Forum is an intergovernmental body established to share information, discuss new and emerging issues related to seniors, and work collaboratively on key projects.

Québec contributes to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Seniors Forum by sharing expertise, information and best practices. However, it does not subscribe to, or take part in, integrated federal, provincial, and territorial approaches to seniors. The Government of Québec intends to fully assume its responsibilities for seniors in Québec.

You can download this publication by going online: publiccentre.esdc.gc.ca This document is available on demand in multiple formats by contacting 1 800 0-Canada (1-800-622-6232), teletypewriter (TTY), 1-800-926-9105.

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In Alberta, to access an electronic version of this document or to order print copies please visit the *Caring for caregivers* page at www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca. Other information about supports and services for seniors in Alberta is also available on the site.

CARE OPTIONS

Choosing the best plan for you and the person you care for.



At some point in your life, you may need to provide support to someone you know.

Over 8 million Canadians currently care for someone they know and this number is expected to increase as a result of Canada's aging population. You will likely need to support someone you know who has a physical disability, a mental health challenge, a long-term illness or a degenerative disease. Caring for someone else often means juggling personal commitments, work, family time and care responsibilities.

It is never too early to start planning for your role as a caregiver. You may need to help a parent, child, partner, sibling, friend, neighbour or co-worker. This person will count on your presence and support as they face health and living challenges.

Learn about your options, plan your actions and get ready!

Here is what you need to think about.



Learn how to support their health care.

Understand their health condition and care options. Help the person choose the best care plan to meet their needs by learning as much as you can about their physical and mental health, medical and treatment options and support needs.

 Know how to have a Care Conversation (Canada.ca/caregivers)

Provide encouragement. Living with a chronic or long-term condition can be a daily challenge. Help the person you care for eat healthy, be physically active, stay socially connected and follow their treatment plan.

 The Safe Living Guide—A Guide to Home Safety for Seniors (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca > search: safe living guide)

Know their care providers. Make a list of all care providers—name, contact information and caring role. Communicate and work with them.

 Note that there may be multiple health care professionals involved in the person's care.

 Don't forget the personalized services provided by home and community care providers.

Manage medications. Make a medication list and review it with a pharmacist to learn about each drug, their side effects and any counter-indications, how to store them and when to take them.

 Remember to include not only prescribed medications, but also over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbs and minerals.

 Instructions for the safe use of medications (Canada.ca > search: use of medications)

 Medication safety checklist (Canada.ca > search: medication safety)

Plan for care transitions. Care transitions from home to hospital, to a rehabilitation facility, a nursing home or long-term care home are critical to the person's recovery and quality of life. Know the discharge plan and care options.

 Is the person's home safe? If not, contact home care for an in-home assessment.

Be prepared for emergencies. Know who to contact and what to do in case of medical emergencies or unplanned events.

 Keep a list of emergency contacts and their information within reach.

 Your Emergency Preparedness Guide (Canada.ca > search: Emergency Preparedness Guide)

Learn how to improve their quality of life.

Explore home and community support options. Home care services may allow a person with special needs to stay at home as independently and as long as possible.

 Consider seniors centres, support groups and programs of disease-specific organizations.

 Consider day programs, meal delivery, transportation services and in-home supports.

 Government of Canada benefits finder (Canada.ca/BenefitsFinder)

 Provincial and territorial ministries/departments of health (Canada.ca > search: departments of health)

Maintain social contacts. Keeping in touch with friends and family and being socially connected can make a difference in how well the person copes with their health and living challenges.

 Consider smartphones, computer software (*e.g. Skype*) and social networking sites.

 Seniors: Active, engaged, informed (Canada.ca > search: Active Seniors)

Investigate housing options. Start to consider modifications to the person's or caregiver's existing home, assisted living and long-term care facilities.

 Is the person's home safe? If not, contact home care for an in-home assessment.

 Keep in mind that many housing options have waitlists and only some are publicly funded.

 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation programs (www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)

 What every older Canadian should know about planning for their future housing needs (Canada.ca > search: planning for their future housing needs)

Explore financial options. Assess the person's financial situation, revenues and expenses, to understand how their budget can best meet their needs.

 Speak to a financial advisor about retirement saving plans, a registered disability savings plan, high interest accounts, life insurance, caregiving insurance, employee benefits and government tax credits or income supplements.

 Tips for working with a financial advisor (Canada.ca > search: financial advisor)

 The benefits of being a senior (Canada.ca > search: benefits of being a senior)

 Compassionate Care Benefit (Canada.ca > search: Compassionate Care Benefit)

 Family Caregiver Amount tax credit (Canada.ca > search: family caregiver amount)