



HELP-AT-HOME[®]

A practical and personalized guide to helping your parent or relative live a more independent and satisfying life at home.



Visiting Homemaker Service

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Your parents have given you so much and we know how important it is for you to be able to give back to them. You want to make the right choices to help them stay at home and get the most enjoyment out of life — today and in the future. We'd like to help you do just that.

Visiting Homemaker Service of Hudson County is a not-for-profit organization that has been helping families in Hudson County since 1959. We offer professional home care services which may range from housekeeping and help with activities of daily life to nursing care. Our caregivers are warm and nurturing and they love what they do. In fact, most of them have been working with us for more than ten years!

We've used our years of trusted, caring experience to create this Help-At-Home[®] assessment and guide which will help you determine what type of home care service is right for your family. The assessment is easy and quick to do. And, you can choose to review all four steps or focus on the steps that are most appropriate to your situation.

- In **Step 1**, you'll identify signs that point to a need for home care services. Of course, if you've already identified the need, you may want to begin with the next step.
- **Step 2** features a short questionnaire to help you determine the type of home care services you might need.
- In **Step 3**, you'll learn how to break through common barriers that may be holding your loved one back from seeking professional support.
- Then, in **Step 4**, we work with you to produce a personalized plan that matches your needs and your budget, including finding financial aide to help pay for services, if you're eligible.

You'll be pleasantly surprised by how affordable home care can be and how flexible we'll be in working with you. But perhaps the most satisfying surprise is how effective our home care is in maintaining the health and quality of life of your relative. In fact, a recent study by researchers at Purdue University found that home care services can prolong their independence and quality of life. The study also found that, in many cases, these services postpone or eliminate the need for more permanent alternatives, such as a nursing home.

So please take a few minutes to go through this guide. Then call us. We'll answer your questions, help develop your personalized home care plan, and work with you to put it into action.

We look forward to getting to know you!

Visiting Homemaker Service of Hudson County

Step 1: Recognize signs that indicate a need for help.

How do you know if your parent or relative needs help? Chances are, they won't tell you because they're afraid of losing their independence or becoming a burden to you. But you can learn how to recognize signs that mean your family member could be a lot healthier and happier with some outside assistance.

Simply answer "yes" or "no" to each statement below. Each represents a quality of life issue.

Health and Nutrition

- Yes No Forgets to take medicine
- Yes No Misses doctor's appointments or forgets to make them
- Yes No Has a markedly decreased appetite
- Yes No Appears to be losing weight
- Yes No Skips meals or eats unbalanced meals
- Yes No Has uneaten or outdated food in the refrigerator or on the counter

Personal Dignity and Comfort

- Yes No Pays little attention to personal hygiene (e.g., skips baths or showers)
- Yes No Looks unkempt or unshaven
- Yes No Clothes are soiled, torn, mismatched, inappropriate
- Yes No Bedding has not been changed

Emotional Well-being

- Yes No Expresses feelings of anxiety or nervousness
- Yes No Appears to be depressed, sad, or despondent
- Yes No Spends most of his/her time alone and unengaged
- Yes No Rarely goes outside or meets with friends
- Yes No Consistently expresses negative or pessimistic feelings
- Yes No Is forgetful or exhibiting signs of memory loss

Safe and Independent at Home

- Yes No Mail and bills are piling up
- Yes No The house is cluttered or disorderly
- Yes No Can't easily get around the home by him/herself
- Yes No Can't find keys or other important items
- Yes No Bottoms of pots and pans are scorched

If you answered "yes" to four or more of the statements above, it's likely that your parent or relative would benefit from some home care support. To find out what type of home care provider would be most appropriate, please continue to **Step 2**.

Step 2: Identify your specific home care needs.

The questionnaire below will help you determine which types of services and what level of home care would benefit you most. Services fall into four general categories:

- **Tasks to maintain or improve health and nutrition:** Medication reminders; assistance with exercises; escorting to appointments; preparing meals, including special diets; food shopping
- **Tasks to help preserve personal dignity and comfort:** Help with bathing, skin care, personal grooming, dressing; assisting with care in bed
- **Tasks to enhance emotional well-being:** Companionship to reduce a sense of loneliness and depression; accompanying outdoors to social occasions or appointments to reduce the anxiety of going out alone
- **Tasks to maintain a home that is safe and fosters independent living:** Assistance with moving around the home; housekeeping, doing laundry, changing the bed; running essential errands

By answering the following questions, you'll be well on your way to evaluating which type of services are best suited to your needs.

1. How would you describe the general health of the person needing help?

- Good (0) Fair (1) Poor (2) Frail (3)

2. If the person needing help has a medical condition, what is the primary diagnosis?

- Alzheimer's (10) Arthritis (1) Diabetes (2) Heart Disease (2)
 Stroke (3) Physical Disabilities (3) Fractures (2)
 Other: _____

3. What is the person's age?

- 86 or older (5) 85-71 (2) 70-60 (1) 59 or younger (0)

4. Please select the statement that best describes the person's current living arrangement.

- Alone without help (15) With someone who can't help (10)
 Alone with help (2) With someone who can help (1)
 Self-sufficient (0)

5. How often does the person needing help have difficulty remembering?

- Frequently/always (3) Often (2) Sometimes (1) Seldom/never (0)

6. How difficult is it for the person needing help to perform the following activities of daily life:

- | | Very | Moderately | No difficulty |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Personal care and grooming | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> (0) |
| Ability to get around in the house | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> (0) |
| Manage the household tasks such as cleaning | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> (0) |
| Prepare meals | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> (0) |
| Get out of the house to shop, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> (0) |
| Socialize with others | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> (0) |
| Take medication | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> (0) |

7. Does the person needing help rely on others for any of these tasks?

No (0) Yes (3) Which ones _____

8. When was the last time the person needing help discussed their medications with the doctor?

Within the last two months (0) Six to twelve months (2)
 Three to five months (1) More than one year ago (3)

9. Has there been deterioration in the physical or mental health of the person needing help or in their ability to manage activities of daily life in the last six months?

Yes (3) No (0)

10. Is the person in need of help able to manage emergencies in the home?

Yes (0) No (5)

11. During the past 30 days, for about how many days did stress, sadness or loneliness keep this person from doing their usual activities?

0-3 days (0) 4-8 days (1) 9-11 days (2) 12 or more days (3)

12. During the past 30 days, about how many days did pain or poor health keep this person from doing their usual activities?

0-3 days (0) 4-8 days (1) 9-11 days (2) 12 or more days (3)

13. How often does this person eat alone?

Frequently/always (3) Often (2) Sometimes (1) Seldom/never (0)

14. How often does he/she have no desire to eat?

Frequently/always (3) Often (2) Sometimes (1) Seldom/never (0)

15. If something does not change, will it be difficult for this person to stay at home?

Yes (5) No (0)

16. Does the current situation create worry or stress for the family?

Yes (3) No (0)

Determine your total score for Step 2 by adding up the numbers to the right of each box you checked for the 16 questions you answered.

Write your total score here: _____

Step 3: Break through the barriers.

If you've put off seeking professional home care services, you're not alone. Sometimes people don't ask for help because of fears or misconceptions. Taking control of your parent's health and happiness may seem like a big responsibility and you're not sure if it's the right step to take. That's why Visiting Homemaker Service has compiled a list of the most common concerns, which we call barriers.

For each barrier statement below, circle that number that best describes your loved one's feelings about this statement. If you circled a "3" or above, then the barrier may be strong enough to prevent them from accepting home care services. In this case, read the "Barrier Buster" explanation that follows the statement. It should help eliminate their concern.

"I don't (or shouldn't) need help."

1	2	3	4	5
Do not agree		Somewhat agree		Agree

Barrier Buster: Sometimes, as a natural part of aging, tasks that were once done easily or even automatically, can become more of a physical and emotional effort. This is nothing to be ashamed of. Rather, it should be accepted and, ideally, supported. With some extra help from a professional home care provider, stress and frustration are eased and many older adults go back to feeling like themselves. Caregivers and family members also find it easier to resume their daily lives knowing that mom or dad is getting the help he or she needs.

"I don't want a stranger in the home."

1	2	3	4	5
Do not agree		Somewhat agree		Agree

Barrier Buster: A reputable home care service, like Visiting Homemaker Service, thoroughly screens caregivers, including background checks. Most caregivers who work at Visiting Homemaker Service have been working here for at least 10 years. They are trained to meet initial resistance and to respect boundaries in order to establish trust, which is an essential component of caring for someone at home. In almost every case, they become a trusted member of the family's support network and a caring, interested professional friend to the person in their care.

“Home care is the first step to a nursing home. I don’t want my mom or dad to lose their independence.”

1	2	3	4	5
Do not agree		Somewhat agree		Agree

Barrier Buster: On the contrary, the goal of a caring home care provider like Visiting Homemaker Service is to help the person in need regain independence and improve well-being. In-home services such as housekeeping, personal assistance and help with activities of daily life are actually preventative measures, which can delay the need for a nursing home. And they help older adults live fuller, more independent lives.

“I can’t afford home care.”

1	2	3	4	5
Do not agree		Somewhat agree		Agree

Barrier Buster: Understandably, cost is a concern. But people are often surprised to learn that home care services are more affordable than they thought. And, they offer a safe, economical way for older adults to remain at home. A trusted home care provider like Visiting Homemaker Service will develop a budget that is within your means and help find financial assistance through Medicaid, grant programs or private insurance. Older adults who qualify for Medicaid may be eligible for free services.

“I’m not sure what type of home care services would be most appropriate for my mom or dad, and it seems like a very big effort to try to find out.”

1	2	3	4	5
Do not agree		Somewhat agree		Agree

If you are still having difficulty figuring out what type of help you need, Visiting Homemaker Service can assign a nurse to talk with you on the phone or in-person at your home. This service is absolutely free of charge because we know how important it is for you to understand and feel comfortable with any decisions you make about the care of your loved one. Please call us at (201) 602-9012 if you want to know more.

Step 4: Fine-tune and activate your personalized plan.

Now that you've identified signs, filled out the questionnaire and figured out how to overcome barriers, let's pinpoint which type of home care services are right for you.

Add your total score from Step 2 here: _____

Find the level in which your score is located below. Then, read the description, which will give you an idea of the type of home care services you might consider.

Level 1 — Score 0-14: You have no critical need for professional home care services. You may consider the services of a trained and supervised Home Care Aide to provide companionship or routine light housekeeping. This type of support would typically include one two-hour visit each week.

Level 2 — Score 15-19: You could use a small amount of care in the home. If you need help with personal care, we recommend a Certified Home Health Aide. If you don't need assistance with personal care, we recommend a trained and supervised Home Care Aide who can help with housekeeping, preparing meals, running errands or companionship. The schedule for this support might be two one-hour-long visits each week.

Level 3 — Score 20-24: There appears to be a need for some routine help in the home and a consistent level of personal care. A Certified Home Health Aide can provide personal care and support, which will help protect the dignity, reduce anxiety and improve the comfort of the person being cared for. The Aide would make two visits a week, each lasting at least two hours.

Level 4 — Score 25-29: A moderate level of care in the home appears to be your optimal choice. A Certified Home Health Aide will provide a range of care to ease the burdens of the activities of daily life, restore peace of mind and increase quality of life. This type of support would generally include three visits of three hours each.

Level 5 — Score 30-44: A more extensive level of care in the home is indicated. We recommend a Certified Home Health Aide to provide a complete set of tasks to maintain the health and well-being of the person at home. For this care, we recommend five four-hour-long visits each week.

Level 6 – Score 45 and Above: You should consider more comprehensive home care services. You can request a free nursing visit by Visiting Homemaker Service so you can discuss with the nurse exactly what is needed and determine the best course of action.

We hope this assessment helped you determine if there is a sufficient number of signs pointing to a need for home health care (in Step 1) and identify your specific home care needs (in Step 2). Now, if you'd like to pursue this option further, please call Visiting Homemaker Services. We'll be happy to answer your questions and discuss your situation. We can also schedule a free in-home visit, where a Visiting Homemaker Services nurse will meet with you to help you develop a personalized service plan that fits your family's needs and budget.

Please also visit our website at www.vhshc.org where you'll find more information and can register to receive updates about upcoming events and new resources designed to make your job taking care of your loved one easier and more effective.

