

COVID-19 CAREGIVER CHECKLIST #4 – HELPING OLDER ADULTS

Caregivers often take on the responsibilities of the person they care for while still providing for themselves and other family members. Caregiving is difficult under the best of circumstances and can be significantly more challenging during a pandemic. Caregivers need to consider many things in their unique and critical role.

- Check in on older loved ones regularly by phone, email, and text to combat social isolation. Help loved ones reschedule non-medically necessary doctor's and other health professional appointments.
- Caregivers should know the symptoms how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and what to do if they or their care recipient is experiencing symptoms. The CDC has information on symptoms and testing at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/index.html>
- Monitor the health of your loved one and keep in touch with their medical team. Many health care plans and practices have their own guidelines for how and when they should be contacted about possible COVID-19 exposure or symptoms. If care is needed, call your loved one's primary care doctor and ask how they want you to proceed. You can also help loved ones reschedule non-medically necessary appointments.
- Caregivers should practice extra precaution themselves. It is very important that caregivers think twice about having friends and family members visit them, especially if anyone in the family might be sick. Clean all surfaces that are touched often including counters, tabletops, faucets, light switches, and doorknobs. Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.
- Know what medications your loved one is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand. If you have problem getting refills, talk to your pharmacist about what can be done. Many insurance companies are easing limitations on refills during this crisis and allowing 3-months' supply for many medications, except pain medication in some cases. Use mail order pharmacies if that is an option for you. If you need helping getting medications go to GoodRX or NeedyMeds. Discounted prescriptions information for Ohio residents 60 and over can be found at Ohio's Best RX.
- Monitor food and other medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan. Makes sure to have a care plan for who will care for your loved one, if you become sick and communicate your plan to family and friends who can help. If your loved one needs assistance contact your local Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-258-7277.

Caregiver Action Network, Link: <https://caregiveraction.org/covid-19>

National Council on Aging, Link: <https://www.ncoa.org/covid-19/covid-19-resources-for-older-adults/faqs-for-older-adults-caregivers/>