



Family Caregiver Support

Practical guidance for families providing care at home during recovery or chronic illness



Caregiving is a team effort. A clear plan, safe routines, medication organization, and early communication with the healthcare team can make home care safer for both the patient and caregiver.

Start With a Clear Care Plan

Before providing care, make sure you understand the patient's diagnoses, medications, mobility needs, diet or fluid instructions, wound-care plan, follow-up appointments, and symptoms that should be reported. Keep important information in one place so another caregiver can safely step in if needed.

- Keep an updated medication list and allergy list.
- Write down provider names, phone numbers, pharmacy information, and upcoming appointments.
- Keep hospital discharge instructions and current treatment orders accessible.
- Ask the healthcare team to demonstrate unfamiliar tasks and use teach-back to confirm understanding.

Medication Safety

Medication errors can occur when several people are helping with care. Use a consistent system and avoid guessing when instructions are unclear.

- Keep medications in their original labeled containers unless using an organized pill system.
- Confirm the medication name, dose, route, and timing before administration.
- Do not share medications or use another person's prescription.
- Track refills and report side effects, missed doses, or difficulty affording medications.
- Ask before crushing pills, opening capsules, or changing how a medication is given.

Home Safety & Fall Prevention



- Keep walking paths clear and remove loose rugs or clutter when possible.
- Use adequate lighting, especially between the bedroom and bathroom.
- Make sure prescribed walkers, canes, wheelchairs, or transfer devices are within reach and used correctly.
- Encourage slow position changes if the patient becomes dizzy when standing.
- Do not attempt a transfer that is unsafe for you to perform alone; ask for training or additional assistance.

Skin, Wounds & Pressure Prevention

Patients with limited mobility are at higher risk for skin breakdown. Check vulnerable areas as instructed, keep skin clean and dry, follow the wound-care plan, and use pressure-relieving or offloading equipment when prescribed. Report new redness, open areas, increased drainage, odor, swelling, or worsening pain.

Nutrition, Hydration & Daily Routine

Support regular meals, appropriate fluids, sleep, activity, hygiene, and toileting according to the patient's medical plan. Some conditions require fluid, sodium, carbohydrate, or other dietary restrictions, so follow individualized recommendations rather than making major changes without guidance.

Watch for Changes

Caregivers often notice subtle changes before anyone else. Contact the healthcare team for a significant or persistent change from the patient's usual condition.

- New or worsening confusion, unusual sleepiness, or behavior change
- Increasing shortness of breath, cough, swelling, or rapid weight change
- Persistent fever, vomiting, diarrhea, poor intake, or signs of dehydration
- Repeated abnormal blood pressure, glucose, or oxygen readings when monitoring has been prescribed
- New weakness, falls, reduced mobility, or inability to perform usual activities
- New or worsening wound, skin breakdown, drainage, redness, odor, or pain
- Medication reaction or a concerning change after starting a new treatment

WHEN TO CALL 911

Seek emergency help for severe difficulty breathing, severe or persistent chest pain or pressure, sudden one-sided weakness or numbness, new difficulty speaking, loss of consciousness, severe allergic reaction, uncontrolled bleeding, or another potentially life-threatening emergency. BRT Clinical is not a substitute for emergency medical services.

Care for the Caregiver, Too

Caregiving can be physically and emotionally demanding. Ask family or friends to share specific tasks, schedule breaks when possible, and tell the healthcare team if caregiving demands are becoming unsafe or unmanageable. Needing additional support is important information for the care plan.

How BRT Clinical Can Support Families

BRT Clinical can help patients and caregivers understand treatment plans, reconcile medications, monitor chronic conditions, provide advanced wound care, support post-hospital recovery, coordinate services, and identify when additional home health, therapy, equipment, specialist, or higher-level care may be appropriate.

Questions about caring for your loved one at home?
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This guide provides general education and does not replace individualized medical advice, professional caregiver training, treatment orders, or emergency care. Follow the patient-specific instructions provided by the treating healthcare team.