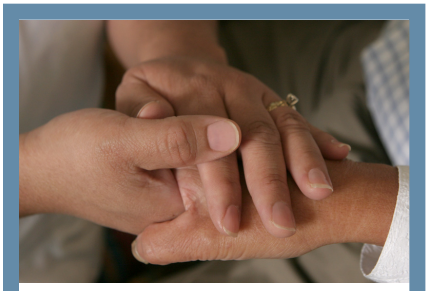
ask Medicare

Information to Help You Care for Others



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Stay Updated!

Visit **medicare.gov/caregivers** for the latest caregiver news and broadcasts

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CMS
CENTERS for MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

March Is Kidney Month

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is dedicated to preventing kidney diseases, improving the lives of people affected by these diseases, and increasing the availability of all organs for transplantation.

With local offices nationwide, NKF provides **early detection screenings**, conducts public and professional education, **advocates for patients through legislative action**, promotes **organ donation**, and supports **kidney research** to identify new treatments. Visit NKF at **www.kidney.org**.

National Kidney Foundation® Celebrating 60 years!

Kidney Disease Education for YOU

If you have Stage IV chronic kidney disease, Medicare Part B covers up to six disease education sessions customized to meet your specific needs, including information on:

- Maintaining your kidney function
- Managing related diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure
- Preventing complications
- Understanding your treatment options if your kidney disease gets worse

Ask your doctor if you're eligible for these sessions.

Own Your Future: Long-Term Care

At least 70 percent of people over 65 will need long-term care services at some point. And, contrary to what many people believe, Medicare and private health insurance programs don't pay for the majority of long-term care services that most people need - like help with dressing or bathing.

Start planning now to be sure you can get the care you may need in the future. Visit **www.longtermcare.gov** for a wide range of information and options to help.

Tell us what you care about!
Email us at caregiver_comments@cms.hhs.gov.

Don't Forget the H1N1 Shot! H1N1 flu shots are still widely available — protect yourself in case there's a third round of the virus this spring. Visit **www.flu.gov** to learn where you can get your shot.

4 Steps to Manage Stress

Being a caregiver can be stressful — these tips from the **Family Caregiver Alliance** can help.

1. Recognize warning signs of stress early, including irritability, sleep problems, and forgetfulness. Don't wait until you're overwhelmed to make changes.
2. Identify sources of stress, like having too much to do, family disagreements, feelings of inadequacy, or an inability to say no.
3. Identify what you can and can't change. Ask yourself, "What do I have some control over?" Even a small change can make a big difference.
4. Take action to get back a sense of control. Stress reducers can be simple activities like walking, gardening, or having coffee with a friend.

VIDEOS: Hospital to Home

Medicare has two new videos to help caregivers and loved ones move from hospital to home smoothly:

Planning for Your Discharge outlines the questions you should ask and preparations you should make before your loved one leaves the hospital.

Tips for Making a Hospital to Home Transition gives guidance on what to plan for once you're back at home. It offers advice on talking with health care providers, preparing the home for new equipment needs, planning for additional expenses, and more.

Watch both videos online at **www.medicare.gov/caregivers**.

CHIP Insurance for Kids

The **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)** offers free or low-cost health insurance to working families with uninsured kids. In most states, a family can earn up to $44,000 a year and still be eligible.

CHIP insurance pays for check-ups, dental care, prescriptions, and more. It's easy and free to apply: make a free, confidential call to 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669), or visit **insurekidsnow.gov**.

CAREGIVER TIP: Log onto **MyMedicare.gov** to get notified electronically when the latest "Medicare & You" handbook is available.

Getting Help with Addiction

Does addiction affect someone you love?

Addiction to prescription pain medicines, alcohol, or other drugs is a serious problem that affects almost every family in some way.

But addiction to drugs or alcohol can be successfully treated.

Medicare helps cover certain substance abuse services, if you're eligible.

Talk to your doctor to find out more.

Medicare also helps cover other inpatient and outpatient mental health services.

Get details in the free publication **"Medicare and Your Mental Health Benefits."**