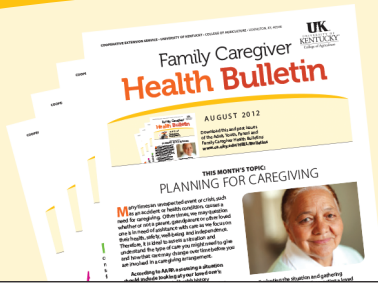


Family Caregiver Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: RESPITE CARE

For family members who care for a child with a disability, a loved one who falls victim to a chronic illness, a military family member who lives with a traumatic brain injury or an older adult who has special health care needs, lifestyle changes and adjustments are made. For some, the adjustments are continuous and lifelong. Regardless of the caregiving path, many family caregivers experience common stressors and emotions including grief, frustration, anger, isolation, loss, uncertainty and defeat. In addition, added pressures can include financial and health concerns and challenges with balancing caregiving with other commitments such as family, work and community and social responsibilities.

Despite the burdens, caregiving also brings joy and a sense of reward. But all caregivers need a break from their duties from time to time. Both the emotional and physical separation from a care recipient—whether it is for an hour or two weeks, will help prevent burn-out and family disintegration. Such a break can come from respite care.



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Respite Care

Respite care is a short-term, temporary support service designed to provide family or other unpaid caregivers a break from the daily demands of caregiving. Such a break provides caregivers with time to do what they need, such as shopping, tending to family or work, spending time with friends or taking time for themselves and their own health needs. Respite is not only healthy for the caregiver's physical and mental well-being, but the care recipient and other family members benefit as well. **There are many choices for respite care:**

- **In-home respite care** may be provided by a friend, relative or paid caregiver, such as a home health aide. This model is helpful because it does not disrupt the routine or environment of the care recipient and there is no transportation need.
- **Licensed facilities** in the community, such as a foster care, group home, nursing home or rehabilitation facility will keep care recipients for a few days up to a few weeks under the watch of professionals.
- **Day Care Services**, such as "adult day care" is a non-residential facility that specializes in providing activities and general supervision to meet social, health and nutrition and basic well-being needs. Adult day services are available approximately 10-12 hours a day to provide caregivers a break.
- **Companion Services** are provided in some communities by local civic groups, faith-based communities and other community organizations. This service is often a more social versus medical service as companions may not be trained in cases of emergency.

Have an Emergency Respite Plan

It is always a good idea to have an emergency respite plan as one can rarely predict a crisis. To create an emergency respite plan, it is important to identify and make arrangements with a model of service that will best meet your needs so that you

can count on respite services when emergency care is needed.

Respite Funding

Funding and eligibility for respite care vary from state to state and situation to situation. Family, friends and various community services may not charge for respite care. Other respite services may require payments that vary in cost. Some caregivers and receivers are eligible for respite services. For more information on respite funding and eligibility, visit the Access to Respite Care and Help (ARCH) National Respite Network and Resource Center at <http://archrespite.org/respite-locator-service-state-information/149-kentucky-info>.

Conclusion

Leaving a loved one in the care of someone else either in or outside your home can be scary. It is not uncommon to sense a loss of control or feel a mix of emotions such as guilt, hesitation or anxiety. You will likely feel that no one will provide care as good as you can. But it is important to not fall prey to believing that respite care is not worth it. Therefore, you need to be comfortable with your respite decision and this begins by making a respite plan including how you and your family will benefit from the service.

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