



CAREGIVER RENEWAL INSTITUTE

Empowering Caregivers. Renewing Hope.

PREPARING THE HOME

for the care of a bed bound or seriously ill loved one

Each person's circumstances and medical plan of care is unique. Your loved one's care situation may include durable medical equipment (*i.e.*, hospital bed, oxygen, etc.), home medical supplies, medications, visit schedules and caregiver training. A few key points to keep in mind when caring for a loved one in the home.

COMPLETE AN IN-HOME CARE ASSESSMENT.

Before you can begin to prepare your home, it is recommended to complete a full assessment of what changes and services you need or will need to make. This will ensure the home will be safe and comfortable for your family member, and that they have the support they need. It is also, however, extremely important that you seek expert help and guidance to ensure you have taken every step necessary to create a safe and healthy living environment for your terminally ill loved one.

An in-home care assessment will involve a thorough examination of the home and facilities within it, including, but not limited to:

- Accessibility of the home
- Hygiene facilities, fittings, and fixtures
- Electrical outing, wirings, and fixtures
- Furnishing and space for additional equipment (*i.e.*, lifter, bedside commode)
- Emergency requirements (*i.e.*, phones, exits, disaster plans, emergency call buttons)
- Additional services and requirements

MAKE NECESSARY HOME MODIFICATIONS.

After an in-home care assessment, you will have a better understanding of what home modifications you will need to have in place.

If your family member requires assistance with their mobility (*i.e.*, a wheelchair), some of the considerations to think about but not limited to include:

- Adjusting the height and width of your doorways
- Ensure shower recess is free of hobs and that a non-slip surfacing is applied to the tiled area to prevent slips and falls.
- Ensure grab rails are available for holding on to and that they are safe and fit for purpose and at the correct height
- Ensuring internal and external doors allow for safe transfer using a wheelchair, 4 wheeled walker or commode chair
- Ensuring bed height allows for safe transfer and care for when your loved one cannot leave his/her bed
- Relocating light switches and appliances to a lower level
- Installing a ramp to the entrance of the home or to the courtyard for fresh air and sunlight

Essentially these home modifications and or equipment will allow your family member to live as independently as possible while also ensuring that you and other carers are also free of injury and risk to your own health.

There are many other home modifications and equipment that should be considered and will be discussed with you should you need assistance with your in-home assessment.

CREATE NEW DISASTER PLANS.

In the case of a power outage, it is important to have a back-up plan especially if your family member is dependent on electrically powered machines and/or medical equipment. Especially if your loved one is on home oxygen.

Many energy providers offer options for example, where you can register as a 'life support customer', this will ensure your energy company keeps you updated with any planned energy cuts. Registering your home for priority assistance also ensures that they get quick assistance to reconnect power or phone lines in the case of an outage. It is also a good idea to keep all your emergency equipment always charged and ready.

CLEANLINESS IS KEY.

When your loved one is sick, it's important to guard them from unwelcome germs. When guests come into the home, have hand sanitizer by the door for them to use, and if necessary, rubber gloves and surgical masks. Keep surfaces wiped down and change your loved one's bedding and clothing often.

SUPPLYING THE HOME.

In addition, you may need general supplies to care for your loved one. Having supplies on hand helps you and your team provide care.

The following home care supplies may be helpful to you:

- Disposable gloves
- Two sets of twin sheets for hospital bed
- Under-pads: disposable or made of cloth.
- Extra pillow or wedge pillow for comfort and positioning
- Baby or adult personal cleansing wipes
- No-wash body washes, moisturizers.
- Baby monitor or small bell for the patient to alert others when they need help.
- Bendable straws if no swallowing issues
- Cups with tops-easy to hold.
- Bendable straws if no swallowing issues
- Night lights for the room and hallways
- Small wastebasket with trash liners for the bedside
- Nightgown or night shirt, ideally loose, comfortable, made of cotton and without pant legs



HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN OR SYSTEM.

Emergencies happen, and it is important to be prepared for events like locking yourself outside or leaving a stove on. It is a good measure to make sure you are prepared for any situation by creating an emergency care system.

This could involve leaving a key with a neighbor, arranging for a key padlock to be installed or asking a friend to be on standby to help with your childcare and having important numbers, such as your loved one's doctor, saved on your phone.

**Remember, the Caregiver Renewal Institute is here to support you.
Call your CRI team if you have any questions or concerns at (850) 353-0280.**

