

Carer Support

A carer is a person who provides support to someone who has a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or is frail aged. Special government and community support services are available for carers. Some carers can get financial help from the Australian Government.

One in eight Australians is a carer providing unpaid care to someone else. A carer can be a parent, husband, wife, partner, child, other relative or friend. Being a carer can be hard – emotionally, physically and financially. A range of government and community services are available to help carers with their caring role.

Carers Australia

Carers Australia provides programs across Australia that aim to support carers. Programs include:

- Carer Advisory Service – provides emotional support, advice, information and referrals for carers.



- National Carer Counselling Program – provides short-term counselling, and emotional and psychological support services for carers.
- Young Carers Program – provides support for people up to 25 years of age who care for a family member who has an illness, a disability or an alcohol or other drug problem.

Each state and territory of Australia has a carers' association. These associations represent the needs and interests of carers in that state, and provide advice and counselling for carers.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres provide free and private information on community aged care, disability and other support services available anywhere within Australia. They can link carers to many support services including:

- household help, home modification and maintenance
- social support for carers
- transport and meal services
- day care and therapy centres.

They also help carers to have respite (a break) from their caring role. They can:

- give information and advice about respite options
- help organise respite, including emergency respite
- arrange financial help with respite.

Department of Human Services (Carers)

The Department of Human Services provides financial help for carers (a Centrelink service). A report from a doctor or health professional is needed to help decide who is eligible for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance benefits.

Carer Payment

Carer Payment is an income support payment for carers who, because of their caring role, are unable to earn enough money to support themselves through work. It has an income and assets test, and is paid at the same rate as other social security pensions.

A carer cannot receive Carer Payment and another income support payment, such as the Aged Pension, at the same time.

Carer Allowance

Carer Allowance is a supplementary (extra) payment for carers who provide daily care in a private home to a person who has a disability, a severe medical condition or is frail aged. It is not taxable or income and assets tested, and may be paid in addition to wages and income support payments such as Carer Payment or the Aged Pension.

Pharmacies

Pharmacists offer a range of medicine- and health-related information and home healthcare services.

Medicines

A carer is often responsible for the medicines of the person receiving care. A pharmacist can:

- advise about medicines – what they are for, how they work, how to give them
- advise on possible side effects and what to do about them
- help the carer keep a record of all medicines

- provide medicine organisers – which are very helpful if someone takes many tablets or has memory problems (e.g. *Webster pak*)
- provide a MedsCheck or Diabetes MedsCheck – a review of your medicines at the pharmacy
- provide a Home Medicines Review – a review of your medicines in your home, at the doctor's request.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit alcohol to no more than two standard drinks per day.
- Have an emergency care plan.

Home healthcare aids

The person receiving care may need special aids to help with daily living (e.g. continence pads, toilet aids, walking frames, pressure-relief cushions). Pharmacies carry a range of these home healthcare aids for hire or purchase.

Self care

If you are a carer, it is important to care for yourself.

- Use support services.
- Have regular time out (respite).
- Get enough rest and relaxation.
- Learn and use relaxation techniques to relax your body and mind.
- Eat regular, healthy meals, including plenty of fruit, vegetables and wholegrain foods. Limit foods high in fat, sugar or salt.
- Exercise at a moderate level for at least 30 minutes on all or most days of the week.
- Drink enough water every day to satisfy your thirst and to keep your urine 'light-coloured' (unless a doctor advises not to).

For more information

Carers Australia

Phone: 1800 242 636

Website: www.carersaustralia.com.au

Young Carers

Phone: 1800 242 636

Website www.youngcarers.net.au

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres

Phone: 1800 052 222

For emergency respite support

Phone: 1800 059 059

Website: www.commcarelink.health.gov.au

Department of Human Services (Carers)

Phone: 132 717

Website: www.humanservices.gov.au

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

Phone 13 14 50.

Healthdirect Australia

Phone: 1800 022 222

Website: www.healthdirect.org.au

Consumer Medicine Information (CMI)

Your pharmacist can advise on CMI leaflets.

NPS Medicine Wise Medicines Information Line

Phone: 1300 MEDICINE (1300 633 424)

Website: www.nps.org.au

The Poisons Information Centre

In case of poisoning phone 13 11 26 from anywhere in Australia.

***Pharmacists are medicines experts.
Ask a pharmacist for advice when
choosing a medicine.***

Related fact cards

- » *First Aid in the Home*
- » *Help with Medicine Costs*
- » *Relaxation Techniques*
- » *Wise Use of Medicines*
- » *Weight and Health*

Your Self Care Pharmacy: