



FALL 2022: Volume 46

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[Visit COFA Website](#)

## **In Support of Caregivers**

A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and  
Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office  
for the Aging



**Thank you to every caregiver, for all that you do!**

# Caregiver Resources

## Local Caregiver Support Services

### ***Tompkins County Office for the Aging***

Caregiver's Resource Center: Amy Jackson 607-274-5486

Project Care Services: Dawn Sprague 607-274-5499

***The Caregiver's Resource Center & Alzheimer's Support Unit*** offers family caregivers information, consultation services, workshops, this newsletter, packets of information that are helpful to caregivers, and a lending library of books on family caregiving topics. Stop by or call Amy for an appointment.

***The Tompkins County Long-Term Care Unit*** may be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call 607-274-5278 to discuss your needs.

## Caregiver Counseling

*Family and Children's Services - 607-273-7494*

A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers monthly to help them work through complex caregiving issues or provide emotional support. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. Call to complete an intake.

## Individual Counseling and Support

Individual counselors can provide clinical and therapeutic counseling and support for you and/or your loved one.

*Ann Dolan, LCSW (counseling for ages 60+ or caregiver for 60+)*  
(607) 708-0808

*Buttermilk Falls Therapy Services (Lisa Luciano, LCSW-R, ACSW)*  
(607) 591-2763

## Adult Day Program

*Longview Adult Day Community*

Monday through Friday, 9am-3pm; contact Pamela Nardi at 607-375-6323 for more information.

Adult day programs offer older adults companionship along with planned social and recreational activities. It often provides a break from caregiving and time for other matters. Fee: \$75/day includes lunch and snack; minimum 2 days per week, and must be fully Covid vaccinated with booster.



## SUPPORT GROUPS

***Note: Some Support Groups are still meeting virtually.***

### **Family Caregiver Supportive Group Discussion**

**Every Other Tuesday at 11 am** in-person or online via Zoom, offered by the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. To register or for more information call Amy at 607-274-5486.

### **Brookdale Caregiver Support Group**

This group is currently on hold, and should be re-starting shortly.

### **Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups**

**1st Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm** online at Lifelong, 119 W. Court Street, Ithaca. For information, call the Alzheimer's Association at 315-472-4201.

**3rd Wednesday of the month at 12:30 pm** online via Zoom through Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 607-756-8101 for information.

### **Cancer Caregiver Group**

**2nd Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00pm** online via Zoom through the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes. For family, friends and caregivers of individuals with Cancer. For information call 607-277-0960.

### **Parkinson's Caregivers Group**

For more information, call Carol Grove at 607-279-8257



## **Funding for Family Caregiver Respite**

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging has a limited amount of funding to help family caregivers afford to hire substitute care that enables them to take a break from caregiving, usually a few hours a week. We have some uncommitted funds available if you know a family caregiver who might want to take advantage of this opportunity.

**Title III E Respite:** This is federal funding that pays for respite service for family caregivers who are caring for an older adult (60 or older) who needs assistance with 2 or more ADL's (dressing, bathing, incontinence, transferring, toileting, eating) **OR** needs substantial supervision due to cognitive impairment (e.g., Alzheimer's or other dementia).

**Alzheimer's Respite Scholarships:** This is New York State funding granted to Tompkins County through the CNY Alzheimer's Association. This funding pays for respite service (at home or in a licensed care facility) to give a break to family caregivers of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementia.

Although neither program is means-tested, we do try to target these funds to those who find it difficult to privately hire enough substitute care.

### **To Apply or Inquire:**

Please encourage family caregivers to contact **Joanne Wilcox** or **Terry McCann** at **Tompkins County Adult and Long Term Care Services (607-274-5278)**. Due to the overall shortage of aides, or if clients prefer it, they may be able to use this funding to privately hire friends or relatives through the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP).

# Caregiver Articles

## The Beginner's Guide to Meal Prep for Seniors

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Meal prep for seniors is a way to make mealtime easier for both the elderly and their caregivers. Meal prepping can help prevent mealtime meltdowns, improve diet quality, and reduce the amount of food wasted in your house. It is important to know that meal prepping isn't just about making sure that you prepare enough food for the week. It's also about preparing healthy meals with balanced nutrients.

Learn how to meal prep for seniors and why it's advantageous for you.

### What Is Meal Prep?

Meal prep is the process of planning and preparing your meals in advance. This usually involves cooking a large batch of food. Or you can search for delivery like the [meal prep delivery in Miami](#) that is a life-saver. Meals can be divided up into individual portions and refrigerated or frozen for later use. Meal prepping has become increasingly popular in recent years. Because more and more people are realizing the benefits of cooking ahead.

## **The Benefits of Meal Prepping for Seniors**

There are a number of reasons why meal prepping can be beneficial, especially for seniors. Here are some of the top benefits:

- meal prep prevents mealtime meltdowns;
- meal prep leads to healthier eating habits;
- meal prep reduces food waste;
- meal prep makes it easier to stick to a budget;
- meal prep saves time during the week.

## **How to Start Meal Prepping for Seniors**

If you're just starting out, it can be a little daunting. But don't worry, we've got you covered. Here are some tips on how to meal prep for elderly parents:

- start small and gradually add more recipes to your repertoire;
- find recipes that are simple and easy to follow;
- choose ingredients that are versatile and can be used in multiple dishes;
- plan ahead and map out your meals for the week;
- prep as much as possible ahead of time, such as chopping vegetables or cooking grains;
- use leftovers wisely by incorporating them into new dishes.

## **What Food to Add for Meal Prepping for Seniors?**

There are many meal ideas that you can meal prep for your elderly parents. But here are some meal ideas to get started:

- Breakfast meal prep recipes like overnight oats, breakfast burritos, and muffins.
- Lunch meal preps such as salads in glass jars or bento box lunches.
- Dinners with easy one-pot meals or slow cooker dishes.

When meal prepping for seniors, it's important to make sure that you are adding in foods that are [highly nutritious](#). Such foods will give the elderly sustained energy throughout the day. Some great food items to add into your meal preps include:

- Fruits like berries, bananas, and apples.
- Vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots.
- Healthy proteins such as grilled chicken or fish, hard-boiled eggs, and lentils.
- Whole grains like quinoa or brown rice.
- Packaged snacks like granola bars or trail mix.

Including these nutrient-rich foods when meal prepping for seniors will help ensure that they are getting the [nourishment they need](#).

Another important thing to keep in mind when meal prepping for seniors is portion size. It is crucial that you are not overfeeding them. This can lead to weight gain and other health problems. Instead, aim to stick to smaller portions that are still satisfying. This will help prevent any digestive issues and ensure that they are getting the most out of their meal preps.

If you're starting out with meal prep for seniors, it can be helpful to look for recipes online. Or in cookbooks specifically designed for elderly diets. There are many different options available, so you're sure to find something that suits your needs and preferences.

## Conclusion

Meal prepping can help make cooking less stressful for both caregivers and seniors alike. By taking the time to meal prep, you'll be able to provide your loved ones with nutritious and delicious meals. So why not give it a try? The benefits are definitely worth it.



# Meal Planning for an Older Adult at Home

How to make sure your loved ones get the nourishment they need

By Selene Yeager, October 15, 2021, [www.aarp.com](http://www.aarp.com)



Nourishment is essential to life. We turn to food for our basic dietary needs like protein, vitamins, minerals and more. But it's also a source of pleasure and comfort. That can change during our older years when taste buds change, [dental health is more challenging](#), arthritis can make food prep painful, and medications and mood disorders can steal our appetite. And well, we're often alone and just don't feel like cooking.

Sound like a loved one you know? All these elements can make [food planning](#) for an older loved one feel impossible. But with a little creativity, it can be done and done simply, says Leslie Bonci, owner of Active Eating Advice nutrition consulting company and former spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

"I'm doing this right now for my own mother who will be 90 in February," Bonci says. "When my father was alive there was a meal on the table every night. For herself? She doesn't care if there's dinner. She's had depression that left her without an appetite. We don't really want her cooking on the stove because she may forget to turn it off. So, there's a lot! But we've found ways to work through it, and she's eating well."

Here's what Bonci recommends.

### **Stock up on cereal**

Older adults still need the basic essential vitamins and minerals, but they can be harder to get when tastes and eating habits change. It's tempting to turn to supplements, but food is always better — and supplements can make things worse, Bonci says.

"Zinc is a great example. It's essential for supporting a healthy immune system and it plays a role in maintaining our sense of taste and smell — so it's important here. It's primarily found in animal foods that many older adults just aren't eating a lot of. But too much zinc, like [what you get] through supplements can interfere with the absorption of other essential nutrients like iron," she says.

The easiest way to get all those essential micronutrients: a bowl of cereal, Bonci says. "Fortified cereals are great foods to have around. There are dozens of options to choose from. You don't have to open a can or wrestle with a jar; just open a box. You add milk, so you get fluid, too. And it's a great snack."

### **Opt for soups and smoothies**

These types of food check a lot of boxes: They're nutrient dense. They are rich in fiber. They're easy to eat. And they provide fluids, which is important because our sense of thirst dims in our older years so it can be harder to stay hydrated. Plus, you need both fluids and fiber [to maintain healthy digestion](#), which also can be more challenging with age.

"They can also be made to suit everyone's taste. You just blend what they like!" Bonci says.

### **Prioritize protein**

#### **BONCI'S BLENDER GO-TOS**

##### **Tropical Smoothie**

- 2 cups frozen baby spinach
- 1/4 avocado
- A small frozen banana
- 6 oz. pineapple juice

Blend until mixed.

## Pumpkin Soup

- 1 1/2 cups canned pumpkin puree
- 1 can cannellini beans
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock

Blend until mixed. Warm to taste and then season with salt, pepper or other spices, if desired.

Older adults should get 0.5 to 0.6 grams of protein per pound of body weight, or at least 20 grams every time they eat. Older adults often fall short for numerous reasons: Animal foods can be harder to cut and chew; changing taste buds (and some medications) can make meat seem bitter and, if they cook for themselves, they may not be inclined to make a chicken breast for one, Bonci says.

Stock up on high-protein foods that are accessible, easy to eat, versatile and flavorful. Bonci recommends cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, nut butters, eggs, frozen meatballs, chopped chicken, tuna pouches (which come in many flavors) and baked tofu (also available in many flavors).

"These foods are easily mixed with other simple staples like rice, pasta, whole-grain bread and simple fruits and vegetables for easy meals that provide the protein you need throughout the day," Bonci says.

## Try aromatherapy

If appetite is waning, you can perk it up by playing to other senses, especially smell, Bonci says. "For instance, just heating some minced garlic, which you can buy ready-made in a tube, in some oil fills the house with a wonderful aroma and stimulates appetite. When you add the meatballs and sauce, everyone wants to eat."

Adding a pop of color helps too "Red sauce and maybe a little spinach with those meatballs makes the plate more enticing," she says, suggesting "adding pumpkin to oatmeal, so it's not just beige. Too often the foods older adults are presented with just don't look that enticing. Color helps."



## Be mindful of taste changes

It can feel like our loved ones have just become pickier with age, but if they seem to turn up their nose at foods they used to love it's because their tastes have literally changed. "You lose taste buds, and tastes change overtime," Bonci says. "Typically, sour and bitter tastes become more pronounced. Foods you might not think of as particularly bitter, like chicken, may seem bitter to your older loved one. Adding sweet, salty or savory flavors can mask that, as can some fat (that's why cream makes coffee less bitter).

## Fill the freezer

Meal services are popular right now, but many still involve a lot of preparation, so they're not necessarily easier. If you're looking for ready-made convenience, Bonci recommends the old-fashioned route: frozen foods. "Frozen meatballs. Frozen fish filets. Frozen peas. Individual meals. There are many frozen options that are simple and taste good and take no more work than putting in the microwave," she says.

*Selene Yeager is a freelance journalist specializing in health and fitness. Her work has appeared in Shape, Women's Health, Details, Better Homes & Gardens and Runner's World.*

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## Top 10 Cooking Tips for Caregivers

By American Heart Association staff, October 25, 2021, [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)



Maintaining good nutrition habits is tough for anyone, but it can be particularly difficult for a caregiver.

Your loved one might be on a special diet or only have an appetite for certain things. There may be other family members to feed as well. And, of course, the time and energy you have available are limited. But you should still strive to eat well, because good nutrition is a habit that's worth cultivating every day.

Begin at the grocery store. Learn to read labels. Start buying foods that benefit your body and mind, and leave the junk food behind. Choose vegetables, fruits and whole grains. They are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber, and they're often low in calories.

Eating a variety of healthy foods may help you control your weight and reduce your risk for heart disease by lowering your blood pressure and cholesterol.

Use these tips to inspire healthy habits in the kitchen:

1. Prepare a quick meal by steaming or stir-frying vegetables.
2. Use herbs, vinegar, tomatoes, onions and non-tropical vegetable oils instead of salt or high-sodium seasonings, especially if you have high blood pressure.
3. Use your time — and your freezer — wisely. When you find time to cook, think about preparing enough food for several meals. Freeze those extra dishes so meal prep is a snap the next time you're too tired to cook.
4. Throw a peeled banana into your blender along with frozen berries, kiwi or whatever fruit you have handy. Then add fat-free milk or water, some unsweetened fat-free or low-fat yogurt, and blend. You'll have a cool, refreshing and healthy treat. A smoothie can be a quick and delicious way to get more fruit in your diet.
5. Replace salt with herbs and spices, or consider salt-free seasonings. Use lemon juice, citrus zest or hot chilies to add extra flavor.
6. Look for "low-sodium" canned veggies or try the frozen varieties. Compare the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label of similar products (for example, different brands of tomato sauce) and choose the ones with less sodium. If you buy canned vegetables, rinse them under cold water before cooking to reduce the sodium.
7. Prepare muffins and quick breads with less saturated fat and fewer calories. Try swapping the oil for applesauce in your favorite recipe.
8. Choose whole-grain ingredients instead of highly refined products. Use whole-wheat flour, oatmeal and whole cornmeal.

9. Aim for recipes that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, skinless poultry, fish, lean meats, legumes and nuts when making your meal plan for the week.
10. Keep chopped fruit and veggies ready to go in the refrigerator for a quick snack. Looking for something savory? Grab some unsalted nuts. Craving something sweet? Keep some unsweetened, low-fat yogurt on hand. With some planning, you'll be prepared when hunger strikes.

Written by American Heart Association editorial staff and reviewed by science and medicine advisers



## Personal Emergency Response Systems

"Help! I've fallen and I can't get up!" is an unfortunate reality for many older Americans. This predicament can cause older adults to feel uneasy about living alone. Thankfully, Tompkins County has several programs and agencies that assist in making the home a safe option for an aging adult!

One such program is the Personal Emergency Response System program (PERS). The Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) partners with Doyle Medical Monitoring to help bring safer options and peace of mind into a client's home. Doyle supplies COFA with units that can connect to a responder within minutes. The PERS unit can connect to either a landline phone or work off cell phone towers. The unit also has a two-way speaker system, allowing you to speak directly with someone from the Doyle call center. The pendant that is wirelessly connected to the unit can be worn around either the neck or on the wrist. Wherever you are in/around your home, this PERS unit will notify a responder with the push of the button on your pendant.

Here's how it works:

- If you have a fall or a medical emergency, press the button on your pendant.
- An alarm will sound on the unit and Doyle will answer within minutes.
- If you need assistance, Doyle will call a responder to come and assist you.

Standard pricing starts at \$25 a month. Please call our office at 607-274-5482 for more information or to speak with an Outreach Worker who can assist you.





***“I define connection as the energy that exists between two people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.” Dr. Brene Brown***

## ***Project CARE Friendly Visiting Program***

Project CARE is a friendly visitor program free to Tompkins County residents age 60 and over, where a volunteer and Senior are matched together and enjoy weekly visits with each other. Volunteers provide companionship, especially to Seniors who are experiencing social isolation or loneliness. Weekly visits are a wonderful opportunity for volunteers and seniors alike to form a caring bond.

### **What does a friendly weekly visit mean...?**

- Comfort to ease the loneliness or social isolation
- Conversation to break the silence
- Laughter to lighten your mood
- Friendship to fill your heart

Please **contact Dawn Sprague, Project CARE Coordinator** at **607-274-5499** or by email at [dsprague@tompkins-co.org](mailto:dsprague@tompkins-co.org), if you would like to discuss this opportunity further, would like to sign up for a weekly friendly visitor, or if you are interested in becoming a Project CARE volunteer.

Are you looking for an incredible  
volunteer opportunity?

Become a certified Long-Term Care Ombudsman!



Office of the State  
Long Term Care  
Ombudsman

**Do you have:**

- excellent communication skills?
- the ability to problem solve?
- a commitment to dignity and respect?
- two hours a week?
- a desire to make a *REAL* difference?

The New York State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in Chemung, Schuyler and Tompkins Counties is looking for volunteers to serve as **advocates** for residents in long-term care communities.

Volunteers conduct regular facility visits, help identify and resolve concerns and act as an advocate for residents. *Get involved today!*

Contact your local  
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:  
P: 607-274-5498  
E: [pchevallard@tompkins-co.org](mailto:pchevallard@tompkins-co.org)

Do you live in  
**Chemung,  
Schuyler  
or  
Tompkins  
County?**



## The Registry at FLIC

The Registry is a compiled list of private pay aides who have been screened through a face to face interview with the Registry Coordinator at FLIC. References are provided and verified to make sure the aide has the necessary skills and compassion that are important for someone to have when taking care of people in their homes. The Registry also contains a list of skilled nurses varying from pediatrics to palliative care.

For more information **contact Teressa Sivers at 272-2433.**

*The Registry program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and the New York State Office for the Aging.*



## Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

As summertime comes to an end, the time to resume using our heating equipment is quickly approaching. Did you know that through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), you can get your heating equipment cleaned and tuned up so that it is ready for the upcoming heating season? The Clean and Tune program is a once-a-year benefit to applicants who receive HEAP and are the homeowner. Making sure that your heating equipment is cleaned and tuned regularly is a great way to ensure its longevity.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) also assists with heating bills during the winter months. Applicants can receive a one-time benefit to supplement their heating costs during the colder months. The 2022-2023 HEAP season is expected to start November 1<sup>st</sup>. New and returning applicants can pick up HEAP applications from our office during regular business hours once HEAP is open. For more information about these programs, or to apply, please call our office at 607-274-5482. Stay warm!

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## New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) promotes two new partnerships to support caregivers:

[Trualta](#) -The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) and Association on Aging in New York (AgingNY) have partnered with Trualta to offer Trualta's web-based caregiver education and support platform at no cost to any unpaid caregiver in New York State.

[ARCHANGELS](#) -ARCHANGELS is a national movement and a platform that is reframing how caregivers are seen, honored, and supported using a combination of data and stories.

For more information contact Amy Jackson, Caregiver Coordinator at 607-274-5486 or [ajackson@tompkins-co.org](mailto:ajackson@tompkins-co.org)



Office for  
the Aging

New York  
**Caregiving Portal**  
Powered by Truista

Provided in Partnership With:  
**Association on Aging  
in New York**

## Access free training and resources to help you build skills and confidence to provide care at home.

New York's new online Caregiver Portal is designed for families. Articles, videos, tip-sheets, and professional level training offers something for everyone. Our learning portal helps family caregivers reduce stress, find local resources, and provide better care for their loved ones.



**"This was wonderful. My husband and I danced and we had a good time singing these oldies but goodies. I will highly recommend these to anyone who's husband or wife has Alzheimer's."**

- Pat from "Alzheimer's Music Connect"

Thousands of family caregivers across North America need support. Every caregiver has a custom learning journey, so you can choose the topics that interest you and learn any time of day.



Sign up for FREE today!  
[NewYork-Caregivers.com](https://NewYork-Caregivers.com)

Scan me with  
your camera  
to visit!



## FAMILY CAREGIVERS MAY RECEIVE UP TO \$600 FOR RESPITE CARE

Are you a Kinship Caregiver OR caring for a relative in your household who has a disability or chronic condition? Learn how to apply for up to \$600 in reimbursement for respite services.

The New York State Caregiving and Respite Coalition, managed by Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc. offering up to \$600 in reimbursement per care receiver for respite services. Kinship Caregivers and caregivers of persons with disabilities or chronic conditions who are not receiving respite from another organization are eligible for this funding. An estimated 250 families could be helped by the voucher program. This round of funding ends August 31, 2022

Examples of respite services for which families can apply for reimbursement include:

- An in-home program, where services are provided in the family's home or a care provider's home
- A center-based program, where family caregivers bring the care recipient to a facility to receive respite care
- A child or adult care center, a summer or weekend camp
- Assisted living or nursing home respite programs
- Emergency Respite will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- You must be a New York State resident and Primary Caregiver of a child, or an adult.
- The Primary Caregiver for the person receiving care must apply for the funds, and be referred to by an agency

You may not use voucher funds to reimburse household expenses. Examples include rent, utilities, medical supplies, and food. Funds cannot be used so the applicant can go to work.



For more information and how to apply, visit [www.nyscrc.org](http://www.nyscrc.org), call (585) 287-6391 or send an email to [kwilson@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:kwilson@lifespan-roch.org)



Are you seeing more hazards in your home? Do you worry about the safety of your living space, or the likelihood of a fall? The Office for the Aging provides Falls Home Safety Assessments at no cost to you. Our Outreach Workers can take a tour of your home, noting potential hazards, and giving recommendations on how to remediate the noted hazards. Our Outreach Workers can also leave you with information on the different agencies that may be able to help with remediating those hazards. For more information, or to set up a Falls Home Safety Assessment, please call the Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482.

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## **The Caregiver Resource Center at the Office for the Aging**

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes**—stay tuned for upcoming classes in the Spring!

**Caregiver Workshops**—Monthly workshops on topics of interest to caregivers.

**Caregiver Supportive Group Discussion**—We currently have a caregiver supportive group discussion every other week on Tuesdays, and welcome any family caregiver to join us. Contact us to discuss!

**Caregiver Library** - We loan out books on caregiving. We can mail you a book from our library, or you can pick it up! Reach out for the list of available books, or stop in. We also have two kinds of valuable caregiver packets available free in our library: Dementia: When Memory Fades and Caregivers: When Loves Ones Age.

**Caregiver Resource Counseling** - We are available to help caregivers navigate services available in our community.

**For more information about these services please contact the Caregiver Resource Center at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. We'll be glad to help you!**

**Phone:** 607-274-5486

**Email:** [ajackson@tompkins-co.org](mailto:ajackson@tompkins-co.org)

## Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging: [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa)

- Click on "Local Resources for Older Adults" on the left side to access our Tompkins County Resource guides and links to other helpful information.

Family Caregiver Alliance: [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

CaringBridge: [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)

Caregiver Action Network: [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org)

AARP Caregiver Resource Center: [www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving](http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving)

Next Step in Care: [www.nextstepincare.org](http://www.nextstepincare.org)

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**[Contact the Caregiver Resource Center](#)**