

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 and some carers are eligible for financial help from the Australian Government.

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

Carer Advisory and Counselling Service

Each state and territory of Australia has a Carers Association, which represents the needs and interests of carers and provides advice and counselling for carers.

The Carer Advisory Service provides free services including:



- Practical written information on topics such as support services, home help, financial entitlements, legal matters, respite care, health and well-being and dealing with grief
- Referrals to community and government services
- Emotional support (telephone support)
- Educational and training opportunities.

A free *Carer Support Kit* is available in English and 13 other languages. In addition to general information, it includes information on 'taking care of the carer', 'managing health care and medicines' and 'emergency care'.

The National Carer Counselling Service provides short-term counselling from qualified counsellors on issues that are specific to carers' needs.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres are information centres that provide free and confidential information on community aged care, disability and other support services available locally or anywhere within Australia. They are a link to many services including:

- Social support for carers
- Household help, home modification and maintenance
- 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 to organise respite, including emergency respite
- Arrange financial assistance with respite.

Centrelink

Centrelink provides financial help for carers. 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 payment for carers who provide daily care and attention in a private home to a person who has a disability or 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 health care 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 – (e.g., Webster packs) Medicine organisers are especially helpful if someone takes many tablets or has memory problems
- Do a ‘Home Medicines Review’ of the person’s medicines, at a doctor’s request.

Home health care aids

The person receiving care may require 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 health care aids for hire or purchase.

Self care

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

- Using support services
- Having regular time out (respite)
- Getting enough rest and relaxation
- Eating a healthy diet
- Exercising regularly
- Having an emergency care plan.

For more information

Carer Advisory and Counselling Service –

Phone: 1800 242 636*

Website: www.carersaustralia.com.au

Young Carers

Website: www.youngcarers.net.au

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres

Phone 1800 052 222*

Website:

www.commcarelink.health.gov.au

For emergency respite support outside of standard business hours phone 1800 059 059.*

Centrelink

Phone: 13 27 17

Website: www.centrelink.gov.au

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

Phone: 13 14 50.

Healthdirect Australia

Phone: 1800 022 222

Website: www.healthinsite.gov.au

Consumer Medicine Information (CMI)

Your pharmacist can advise on CMI leaflets.

National Prescribing Service (NPS) Medicines Information

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.

** An Australian Government Initiative. Freecall except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.*

Related fact cards

- » *First Aid in the Home*
- » *Help with Medicine Costs*
- » *Relaxation Techniques*

Your Self Care Pharmacy: