



# Helping your family member to remain living at home

## Should your family member continue living at home?

It's natural for you to be concerned about your older family member continuing to live in their own home - particularly when the care and support they need is increasing and you feel they may be at risk.

However, it is usually the choice of older people to stay at home - with or without the help of others. This might be because they:

- ▣ are familiar with the neighbourhood;
- ▣ feel safe and comfortable there;
- ▣ have support networks - helpful friends and neighbours, shopkeepers and church members; and
- ▣ have treasured memories there.

*"Dad built that house - the memories have tied Mum there."*

Familiar people and places can help your family member to maintain their independence. For example, knowing the neighbourhood well and having set routines may enable them to continue their own shopping, bill paying and social visits. Helpful neighbours may mean they can manage the garden without having to ask family for help.

## What about the risks?

Your family member has been taking risks their whole life. Just crossing the road can be a risk! It's important to take the time to talk to your family member about your concerns and not to over-react by focusing on your fears about their safety.

As long as your family member is capable of making decisions for themselves, they have the right to choose where they would like to live and the type of support they will accept. If you are unsure about your family member's ability to make these sorts of decisions, speak to their GP who will be able to assess this for you.

When helping your family member to make decisions about where to live and the support they need, always consider what is in their best interests - but don't forget to factor in what it might mean for you too.

## What you can do to help your family member

If your family member is to continue living in their own home, consider the type of support they will need and how this could be provided. Think about:

- ▣ regular care and support of family and friends;
- ▣ informal support of neighbours;
- ▣ community support services;
- ▣ privately purchased services; and
- ▣ aids and equipment.



For more information and advice contact:

- ☒ The local council about services available in the area.
- ☒ The Carer Line on 1800 242 636\*
- ☒ The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222\*
- ☒ The [local Aged Care Assessment Service](#) (ACAS) - ph: 1800 500 853 for contact details.
- ☒ The [Veterans' Home Care program](#) - ph: 133 254.

## It's time to get others involved

If your family member continues to live in their own home, the care and support they require is likely to increase over time. However, this does not mean that the responsibility rests solely with you.

While one person in the family usually takes a lead role in providing the care, the best arrangement is when a number of family members and perhaps friends share the tasks involved. This can increase the support available to your family member and help to reduce the pressure and stress that the main carer might feel.

Having said this, getting others involved can sometimes be hard work. They may think you have it all under control and that they will be interfering if they offer to help. They may also have busy lives and be quite happy for you to take on this new role.

*"My sister didn't want to listen at first.  
She said, 'I have a job and a house to look after!'"*

Advice from carers on how to get family involved:

- ☒ Talk to your family about your concerns as well as the care and support your family member needs.
- ☒ Be upfront and ask for their help.
- ☒ Organise a family meeting if you think this would be useful.
- ☒ Find out who's available to help with particular tasks, when and how regularly. Consider each person's strengths.
- ☒ Work out the level of commitment that each family member can make. Can this be increased in the future if the need arises?

Some carers say that in hindsight the more they took on, the harder it was to pull back. By talking with your family and perhaps friends early on, you may be able to divide up some of the tasks and share the care of your family member.

## Further information:

- ☒ [Aged Care Assessment](#) - information sheet.
- ☒ [How and why to organise support services](#) - information sheet.
- ☒ [Aids and equipment](#) - information sheet.
- ☒ [How and why to hold a family meeting](#) - information sheet.

Contact the **Carer Line on 1800 242 636\*** to request the above information sheets be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

\*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at [website@carersvic.org.au](mailto:website@carersvic.org.au)