AARP®

THRIVE GUIDE



CAREGIVING

Find practical solutions to caregiving and simplify daily responsibilities.

When caregiving for family members and friends, there are many types of tools, equipment and products that can be helpful to keep them safe and comfortable, protect your physical health, and make caregiving easier.

This guide provides tips on how to assess their needs, choose tools and equipment, and where to get more help.

Whether you are new to caregiving, reacting to new needs, or planning ahead — this guide will help you navigate what will help most.

AARP Thrive Guide for Caregiving supported by Walmart.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN YOUR GUIDE

1 **General Needs Assessment**
Identify hazards in every room and choose the right tools for a safe home

2 **Home Safety Essentials**
Prevent accidents in every room

3 **Medication Organization Tools**
The right organizers and technology can reduce errors and reduce caregiver stress

4 **Incontinence Supplies**
Choosing the right products protects skin health and preserves dignity

5 **Health Monitoring Devices**
Home vitals tracking helps monitor changes early and may reduce unnecessary trips to the doctor's office

6 **Mobility Support**
Improve stability and build independence

8 **Personal Care Support (Bathing, Toileting, Grooming, Dressing)**
Basic hygiene tasks are essential yet can be challenging for caregivers and care recipients alike.

9 **Daily Living**
Make everyday tasks easier, safer and more independent

10 **Comfort and Positioning**
Improve comfort, reduce pain, prevent pressure sores, and support better sleep

11 **Meal Prep, Nutrition Support & Mealtime Aids**
Help loved ones maintain independence at the table

12 **Cleaning and Household Aids**
The right tools make the job less time-consuming and physically demanding.

13 **First Aid, Wound Care and Pain Management**
Pain management, simple first aid and wound care

14 **Care for the Caregiver**
You matter too — and taking care of yourself makes you a better caregiver



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GENERAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Answer "Yes" or "No" to each question below. A "Yes" response indicates that the corresponding section will be most helpful. Re-assess every few months as needs change.

Question	Yes	No
Are you worried about your loved one falling or getting hurt at home? (e.g., slippery floors, poor lighting, unsafe stairs) → SHOP Home Safety Essentials	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does your loved one take multiple medications, or do you struggle to keep track of doses and schedules? → SHOP Medication Organization Tools	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is bladder or bowel control a challenge for your loved one? → SHOP Incontinence Supplies	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do you need to track blood pressure, blood sugar, oxygen levels, or other health numbers at home? → SHOP Health Monitoring Devices	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does your loved one have difficulty walking, getting up from a chair, or moving around safely? → SHOP Mobility Support	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does your loved one need help with bathing, using the toilet, grooming, or getting dressed? → SHOP Personal Care Support	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does your loved one struggle with everyday tasks like writing, opening containers, or using the phone? → SHOP Daily Living	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does your loved one spend a lot of time in bed or a chair, or have trouble getting comfortable? → SHOP Comfort and Positioning	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does your loved one have difficulty cooking, swallowing, or eating independently and/or safely? → SHOP Meal Prep, Nutrition & Mealtime Aids	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is keeping up with household chores becoming difficult due to physical limitations? → SHOP Cleaning and Household Aids	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does your loved one have wounds, skin breakdown, chronic pain, or frequent minor injuries? → SHOP First Aid, Wound Care & Pain Management	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are YOU — their caregiver — feeling overwhelmed, burnt out, or in need of support for yourself? → SHOP Care for the Caregiver	☐ Yes	☐ No

HOME SAFETY ESSENTIALS

WHY IT MATTERS: Safety risks — especially falls — are a top concern for caregivers. Preventing accidents at home starts with identifying hazards in every room and choosing the right tools.

Bathroom Safety

- Grab bars (suction cup and permanent)
- Anti-slip bath mats
- Shower chairs and benches
- Toilet seat risers with arms
- Handheld showerheads

General Home Safety

- Bright lighting throughout
- Motion-sensor and night lights in hallways, stairs, bedrooms, bathrooms
- Video home monitoring cameras
- Digital door locks
- Door alarms and floor mat alarms

PRODUCTS



Bedroom Safety

- Bed rails
- Bedside assist rails
- Pull-up straps
- Bed and chair pad alarms
- Transfer slide board
- Car/automotive door handle

Personal Safety

- Medical alert systems
- Medical ID bracelets



How to Choose & Use

- Evaluate every room for fall hazards — bedroom, bathroom, hallways, stairs, entryways, kitchen, living areas.
- Think about current AND future needs. Try to anticipate safety issues before a crisis occurs.
- Choose weight-rated grab bars and shower chairs.
- Have permanent grab bars installed properly by a qualified professional.
- Install motion-sensor night lights along nighttime paths.
- A PT, OT, or Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) can do a home safety assessment.

ROOM-BY-ROOM HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Walk through each room and check for the hazards below. Items you check off are your shopping list.

ROOM / AREA	HAZARDS TO CHECK	PRODUCTS THAT HELP
Bathroom	☐ Slippery tub or shower floor ☐ Nothing to grab near toilet ☐ No place to sit while bathing ☐ Hard-to-reach showerhead	Anti-slip mat; grab bars (suction or permanent); shower chair or bench; handheld showerhead; toilet seat riser with arms
Bedroom	☐ Getting in/out of bed is difficult ☐ No light at night ☐ Cords or clutter on the floor ☐ No way to call for help	Bed rail or assist rail; motion-sensor night light; bed pad alarm; medical alert system or personal emergency device
Hallways & Stairs	☐ Dim lighting ☐ No handrails, or only on one side ☐ Loose rugs or uneven flooring	Motion-sensor night lights; handrail on both sides of stairs; remove or secure all area rugs; non-slip stair treads
Kitchen	☐ Reaching into high cabinets ☐ Bending to low cabinets or floor ☐ Standing for long periods at the stove	Reacher / grabber tool; reorganize frequently used items to counter height; anti-fatigue mat; roll stool or sit-stand stool
Living Room / Common Areas	☐ Low, soft furniture hard to get up from ☐ Cords across walking paths ☐ Poor lighting for reading or walking	Chair lift cushion or raised seat; secure or reroute all cords; bright floor or table lamps; motion-sensor lights
Entryways & Outdoors	☐ Step or threshold the door ☐ Slippery porch or walk way in rain/ice ☐ Door hard to unlock	Threshold ramp; non-slip outdoor mat; lever door handle; key turner; motion-sensor porch light

MEDICATION ORGANIZATION TOOLS

WHY IT MATTERS: Managing prescriptions is often a daily caregiver responsibility. The right organizers and technology can reduce errors and reduce caregiver stress.

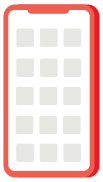
PRODUCTS



Pill Organizers

- Weekly, monthly, or daily pill organizers
- Locking pill cases
- Pill organizers with built-in alarms and notifications
- Automatic pill dispensers with remote monitoring
- Pill cutters
- Zipper seal pill bags (for travel)

Smartphone Apps



- Medisafe — set reminders, track history
- Dosecast — reminders and refill alerts
- mango CARE — medication reminders plus healthy habit tracker
- Apple Health app — simple medication reminders
- Calendar app — recurring reminders for doses and refills

Smart Devices

- Smart watches — sync with health app, deliver reminders directly
- Smart pill dispensers — dispense correct dose at set times
- Automatic pill dispensers with caregiver alerts



RED FLAGS:
Is Your Current System Working?

1. Organizer is too hard to open with arthritic hands
2. Wrong pill taken because compartments look the same
3. Caregiver unsure whether today's doses were taken
4. Travel is disrupting the medication routine
5. 5 or more daily medications to manage

How to Choose & Use

- Match organizer size to number and size of pills.
- Consider ease of use and fine motor, cognitive, and technology skills of the user.
- Think about who will fill the organizer And who will take pills out — they may have different needs.
- Use color-coded compartments for clarity.
- Use lock boxes if there is concern about overuse of medications.
- Evaluate technology options (smart dispensers, apps) if caregiver notifications would be helpful.

WHICH ORGANIZER FITS YOUR SITUATION?

SITUATION	OPTION	WHY IT WORKS
Loved one manages own pills; no memory concerns	Weekly or daily pill organizer	Color-coded, large labels, easy-open lids. Choose size based on number of pills.
Caregiver fills organizer; no memory concerns	Monthly pharmacy blister pack	Pharmacist pre-fills by day and dose. Easy to check at a glance.
Memory loss or confusion is a concern	Automatic smart dispenser	Dispenses correct dose at set time. Sends caregiver alert if dose is missed.
Remote caregiving; caregiver alerts needed	Smart dispenser + caregiver app	Caregiver gets notified remotely. Best for solo living with oversight needed.

INCONTINENCE SUPPLIES

WHY IT MATTERS: Caregivers often assist with toileting, hygiene, and management of incontinence supplies. Choosing the right products protects skin health and preserves dignity.

Products

Daily Protection

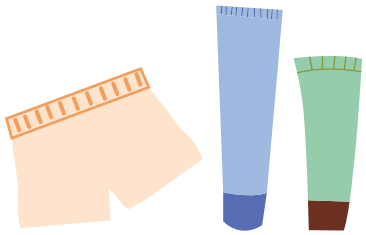
- Disposable briefs (range of absorbency levels)
- Disposable incontinence pads (light to heavy)
- Incontinence supplies designed for nighttime use
- External catheters

Surface Protection

- Disposable bed and chair pads
- Washable/reusable bed and chair pads
- Waterproof mattress covers
- Wipeable chair covers

Skin Care & Hygiene

- Gentle, moisturizing wipes (fragrance-free)
- Barrier creams (prevent skin irritation and breakdown)
- Anti-fungal powders
- Sensitive-skin cleansers



How to Choose & Use

- Choose absorbency levels based on mobility and frequency of toileting.
- Use nighttime-specific products for overnight hours.
- Consider function, form, size, and fit — and how when products will be used.
- Select fragrance-free and sensitive skin products.
- Use barrier creams consistently to prevent skin irritation, breakdown, and wounds.
- Consult with a doctor or wound care nurse for the best wound-prevention supplies.

CHOOSING BY ABSORBENCY LEVEL

LIGHT	MODERATE	HEAVY / OVERNIGHT
Occasional leaks; stays mobile	Frequent leaks; some mobility	Full incontinence; limited mobility
Thin pads or liners Pull-up style briefs	Moderate-absorbency pads Tab-style or pull-up briefs	Heavy tab-style briefs Overnight / max absorbency If pull-ups are desired, line with additional pads
Washable underwear inserts	Washable chair/bed pads	Waterproof mattress cover, washable bed pads, disposable chair/bed pads, barrier cream — essential

THRIVE GUIDE
PRO TIPS

Many companies offer free samples of incontinence products — try before committing to a bulk purchase. Auto-ship subscriptions or big box retailers can save time and money. Ask other family caregivers what works best for their loved ones.

AARP Resources

Incontinence Care Guide for Family Caregivers

AARP Family Caregiving How-To Video Series

HEALTH MONITORING DEVICES

WHY IT MATTERS: Home vitals tracking helps monitor changes early and may reduce unnecessary trips to the doctor's office. Choose devices that fit your loved one's abilities and health needs.

Products

Vital Signs Devices

- Blood pressure cuffs (wrist or upper arm)
- Pulse oximeters
- Glucose meters
- Thermometers (digital, forehead, ear)
- Heart rate monitors
- EKG/ECG devices (portable)

Smart Wearables

- Smart watches (Apple Watch, Garmin, Samsung, etc.)
- Smart rings (Oura, etc.)
- Devices that track heart rate, O_2, sleep, and activity
- Sync with health apps for caregiver visibility

How to Choose & Use

- Determine which health factors to track (heart rate, O_2, glucose, temperature, activity).
- Choose devices based on fine motor skills, cognitive abilities, and technology comfort.
- Use digital displays for easier readability.
- Keep all devices together in a designated "health station."
- Log data for patterns — by hand in a notebook or through device apps.
- Share data with the doctor via patient portal or at appointments.
- Take readings at the same time each day, in the same position, for the most useful comparison.

LEARN WHAT HEALTH MONITOR READINGS MEAN

Not sure what your numbers mean? These AARP articles explain it — sourced and reviewed by health experts.

AARP RESOURCE	WHAT IT COVERS
Your Guide to Understanding High Blood Pressure	Normal ranges, stages, and when to call the doctor
Best Pulse Oximeters of 2026	What O_2 levels mean; top devices for home use
Best Blood Pressure Monitors of 2026	AARP-tested picks for accuracy and ease of use



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PRO TIPS

Consistency is key: readings taken at the same time of day, in the same position, give the most useful picture. Bring a log of recent readings to doctor appointments — patterns are more valuable than a single reading.

AARP Resources

Smartwatches Keep Tabs on Your Overall Health

Best Blood Pressure Monitors for 2026

AARP Family Caregiving How-To Video Series

MOBILITY SUPPORT

WHY IT MATTERS: Basic mobility aids improve stability and independence and help prevent falls. Choosing the right device — and using it correctly — makes all the difference.

Products

Walking Aids
- Canes (standard single-point)
- Quad canes (four-point base)
- Standard walkers (pick-up)
- Rollators (wheeled walkers with seat and brakes)

Wheeled Mobility
- Manual wheelchairs
- Transport chairs (pushed by caregiver)
- Power wheelchairs
- Power scooters

Transfer & Access
- Gait belts (caregiver safety during transfers)
- Transfer assists and slide boards
- Portable and permanent ramps
- Threshold ramps for doorways
- Stair lifts

How to Choose & Use
- Always consult a physical therapist (PT) or occupational therapist (OT) before selecting a mobility device.
- Adjust all devices for proper fit — height and width.
- A rollator seat is for stationary rest only — never be pushed while sitting in it.
- Use gait belts and transfer assists to prevent falls.
- Medicare and some insurance plans may cover mobility equipment with a doctor's prescription.





THRIVE GUIDE PRO TIPS

The wrong mobility device — or an improperly fitted one — can increase fall risk rather than reduce it. It's always best to get a physical therapy evaluation to determine the best mobility aids.

WHICH MOBILITY AID FITS YOUR SITUATION?

SITUATION	RECOMMENDED AID	KEY NOTES
Mild balance issues; short distances; no need to rest	Standard cane or quad cane	Quad cane has wider base for extra stability
Needs full upper-body support; moderate distances	Standard walker (pick-up)	Must lift walker with each step; good for indoor use
Needs support; walks longer distances; needs to sit and rest	Rollator (wheeled walker)	Has seat and hand brakes; never ride while being pushed
Limited weight-bearing on one or both legs	Rollator or manual wheelchair	PT evaluation essential; depends on strength and environment
Cannot bear weight; longer distances; powered movement	Power wheelchair or scooter	PT and doctor prescription usually required

A little more support can go a long way.



Whether you're caring for someone you love or looking for more ways to live well, AARP connects you with practical resources, information and member benefits.

Caregiving help, all in one place

Find practical tools and information to help with care planning, home safety, health, finances and more - for your loved one and for you.

Go to aarp.org/caregiving to learn more.

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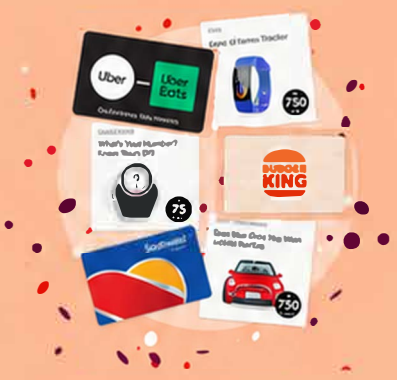
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PERSONAL CARE SUPPORT
(Bathing, Toileting, Grooming, Dressing)

WHY IT MATTERS: Basic hygiene tasks are essential yet can be challenging for caregivers and care recipients alike. The right tools encourage independence and protect dignity.

Products

Bathing & Grooming
- Long-handled sponges and brushes
- No-rinse shampoo and leave-in conditioner
- Body cleaning wipes
- Electric toothbrushes
- Electric razors
- Moisturizing creams
- Nail clippers

Toileting & Hygiene
- Long-handled or folding toilet aids for wiping
- Bidet toilet seats
- Toilet seat risers
- Toilet safety handles or grab bars
- Sensitive skin wipes
- Barrier creams

Dressing Aids
- Sock aids
- Button aids and zipper pulls
- Long-handled shoehorns
- Dressing sticks and reacher tools
- Adaptive clothing (open back, magnetic closures)
- Adult bibs / clothing protectors

Environment & Comfort
- Portable or ceiling space heater (warmth during bathing/dressing)
- Towel warmers
- Exhaust fan/heater combination

How to Choose & Use
- Evaluate how much help your loved one needs with each personal care task.
- Encourage independence for as long as possible; gradually increase support as needed.
- Safety matters, but self-esteem does too — helping manage personal care preserves dignity.
- On low-energy days, use no-rinse products (shampoo, leave-in conditioner, cleansing wipes).
- If your loved one resists bathing, determine why — safety, comfort, temperature, or privacy.

WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE REFUSES PERSONAL CARE

Resistance to bathing, dressing, or grooming is common — and usually has a reason. Understanding the "why" makes it easier to respond calmly and effectively.

THEY MAY BE RESISTING BECAUSE...	SIGNS TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO TRY
They feel cold	Shivering, reluctance to undress, complaints about temperature	Warm the bathroom first (warmer than you would likely want it will be just right for them); use a towel warmer; offer a heated robe; keep bathing brief
They are in pain	Flinching, guarding certain areas, verbal complaints during care	Ask where it hurts; adjust positioning; use gentle techniques; consult their doctor
They feel embarrassed or exposed	Pulling away, covering themselves, becoming quiet or withdrawn	Use draping techniques; explain each step before doing it; give as much privacy as possible
They are confused about what is happening	Anxiety, fear, not recognizing you or the situation	Use calm, simple language; approach from the front; explain slowly and repeatedly prior to touching them or doing anything; go slowly, try calming music
They want to feel in control	Saying "no," insisting on doing it themselves, becoming argumentative	Offer choices ("Do you want to shower now or after breakfast?"); let them do what they can independently
They are fatigued or having a hard day	Low energy, emotional, less cooperative than usual	Use no-rinse products instead of a full bath; break care into shorter steps; reschedule non-urgent tasks

DAILY LIVING

WHY IT MATTERS: The right tools can make everyday tasks easier, safer, and more independent — helping your loved one stay active and engaged for as long as possible.

Products

Reach & Grip Aids
- Reachers / grabbers
- Non-slip floor mats
- Dycem non-slip material
- Jar openers and bottle openers
- Built-up handle utensils for arthritis grip

Home Adaptations
- Lever door handles (replace round knobs)
- Key turners and card holders
- Large-button phones and remote controls
- Page turner

Dressing Independence
- Button aids and zipper pulls
- Sock and stocking aids
- Long-handled shoehorns
- Adaptive clothing
- Dressing stick

How to Choose & Use
- Consult with an occupational therapist (OT) to evaluate and choose tools and adapt daily routines.
- Use reachers to reduce bending, reaching overhead, or using step stools — all major fall risks.
- Start with the tasks your loved one finds most frustrating or dangerous.



DAILY TASK INDEPENDENCE CHECK

Rate each task to identify where adaptive tools can help. Use to track changes over time.

TASK	DOES INDEPENDENTLY	NEEDS A TOOL	NEEDS ASSISTANCE
Getting dressed	☐	☐	☐
Opening containers / jars	☐	☐	☐
Reaching items on shelves or floor	☐	☐	☐
Using phone or remote control	☐	☐	☐
Writing / holding a pen	☐	☐	☐
Preparing a simple meal	☐	☐	☐

THRIVE GUIDE
PRO TIPS

Occupational therapists (OTs) specialize in helping people adapt daily routines when abilities change. An OT can evaluate your loved one's home, suggest tools, and train both caregiver and care recipient. Ask the doctor for a referral.

COMFORT & POSITIONING

WHY IT MATTERS: Positioning tools can increase comfort, reduce pain, prevent pressure sores, and support better sleep — for both the care recipient and the caregiver.

Products

Pillows & Supports

- Support wedges (back, leg, positioning)
- Knee pillows
- Leg elevation pillows
- Bolster pillows
- Bed wedges (for reflux, respiratory support)
- Bed positioning and turning pillows

Chair & Seat Cushions

- Chair and wheelchair seat cushions
- Coccyx (tailbone) cushions
- Donut cushions
- Lumbar supports
- Air cushions with adjustable air pockets

How to Choose & Use

- Consult a physical therapist (PT) and/or occupational therapist (OT) about the best tools for your loved one's specific situation.
- Reposition someone who is bed- or chair-bound at least every two hours to prevent pressure injuries.
- Use pillows for alignment, respiratory support, pressure relief, and turning assistance.
- Ask the doctor or home health nurse for a proper turning and positioning schedule.

THRIVE GUIDE
PRO TIPS

Pressure sores (bed sores) are serious and preventable. Use positioning pillows to relieve pressure on bony areas (heels, tailbone, elbows). Ask the doctor, home health nurse, wound care nurse, physical therapist or occupational therapist about a turning schedule and the right support surfaces and equipment.

KEY PRESSURE POINTS — PRODUCTS THAT HELP

For loved ones who are bed-bound or chair-bound, focus protection on these areas:

PRESSURE POINT	RISK	RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS
Sacrum / Tailbone	Highest risk — constant sitting/lying pressure	Anti-pressure cushion; alternating pressure mattress
Heels	Common in bed-bound individuals	Heel cushions / protectors; elevate heels off mattress with knee wedge or pillows
Toes	Pressure from blankets and tight shoes	Blanket lifter to keep blanket off feet
Elbows	Friction and pressure when repositioning	Gel elbow pads; padded armrests on chair or wheelchair
Shoulder blades	Pressure when lying flat for extended time	Repositioning every 2 hrs; turning and positioning pillows
Hips / trochanters	Risk when lying on side for extended time	Bolster pillow between knees when side-lying

MEAL PREP, NUTRITION SUPPORT & MEALTIME AIDS

WHY IT MATTERS: Meal prep takes time and directly affects health. Adaptive tools help loved ones maintain independence at the table, while smart preparation strategies reduce caregiver burden.

Products

Adaptive Utensils & Dishware

- Adaptive cups and glasses (weighted, two-handled, lidded)
- Adaptive plates and bowls (scoop edges, suction base)
- Adaptive eating utensils (built-up handles, bent, swivel)
- Non-slip placemats and cup holders
- Adult bibs / clothing protectors
- Insulated mugs
- Overbed tables

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Nutrition & Special Diet Support

- Thickening agents (for swallowing difficulties — use on advice of speech therapist)
- Meal prep containers (for batch cooking and portioning)
- High-protein and high-calorie supplement drinks

How to Choose & Use

- Consult a dietitian and doctor to determine the best types of food and texture.
- Consult a speech therapist if swallowing is a concern before using thickening agents.
- Consult an occupational therapist to evaluate and choose adaptive tools.
- Prepare and portion meals ahead of time to save daily effort.
- Make sure their favorite foods are always in rotation — food is also joy.

ADAPTIVE MEALTIME EQUIPMENT SELECTOR

If your loved one has trouble with a specific mealtime task, the right adaptive tool can help them eat more safely and independently.

IF YOUR LOVED ONE HAS TROUBLE WITH...	TRY THIS TOOL	WHY IT HELPS
Gripping standard utensils (arthritis, weakness)	Built-up handle utensils; weighted utensils	Wider, cushioned handles require less grip strength; weighted utensils reduce tremor effect
Scooping food off a standard plate	Scoop plate or plate with inner lip/ guard	The raised edge lets them push food against it for easier scooping
Plate sliding on the table	Non-slip placemat or suction-base bowl	Keeps dish stable so they can eat one-handed or with limited coordination
Drinking from a standard cup (spills, tipping)	Two-handled cup; weighted cup; lidded cup with cutout	Reduces spills; cutout lid allows drinking without tilting head back
Swallowing thin liquids (coughing, choking)	Thickening agent added to drinks (use on speech therapist advice)	Thicker consistency is easier and safer to control when swallowing is impaired
Cutting food independently	Rocker knife; pre-cut or pureed foods	Rocking motion requires less fine motor control; eliminates need to stab and cut simultaneously
Keeping clothing clean during meals	Adult clothing protector / bib	Waterproof or absorbent coverage protects clothing and preserves dignity
Staying at the right height at the table	Overbed table or adjustable tray table	Brings food to the right height when sitting in a wheelchair, recliner, or hospital bed

CLEANING & HOUSEHOLD AIDS

WHY IT MATTERS: Caregivers manage general housekeeping and clean up after meals and personal care. The right tools make the job less time-consuming and physically demanding.

Products

Cleaning Tools
- Lightweight vacuum cleaners (robot vacuums)
- Wipeable/waterproof chair and furniture covers
- Easy-open lidded trash bins
- Long-handled cleaning brushes and mops
- Disposable toilet bowl cleaners

Infection Control
- Sanitizing wipes and sprays
- Disposable gloves (nitrile, latex-free)
- Hand sanitizer (keep at key locations)
- Disposable face masks

Laundry & Odor
- High-efficiency laundry detergent (sensitive skin options)
- Laundry sanitizing products for linens
- Odor-removal sprays and detergents
- Washable bed and chair pads





How to Choose & Use
- Select lightweight tools to reduce strain on the caregiver.
- Use waterproof covers for easier cleanup of furniture and bedding.
- Keep sanitizing wipes and sprays stocked for infection control.
- Disposable products can reduce laundering burden on high-demand days.
- Consider professional house cleaning services — even periodically — to reduce caregiver burden.

THRIVE GUIDE
PRO TIPS

A robot vacuum running daily is one of the best investments a caregiver can make — it handles the most frequent cleaning task automatically. Stock sanitizing wipes and disposable gloves in every room for quick cleanups. Vinegar and/or an oxygen-based stain remover/laundry-booster can help remove odors from clothing soiled from incontinence.

CAREGIVER CLEANING TASK SCHEDULE

DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY
Wipe bathroom surfaces	Wash bed linens & pads (more often if needed)	Deep clean bathroom
Empty trash cans	Vacuum	Wash furniture covers
Sanitize high-touch surfaces	Mop hard floors	Check & restock supplies
Wash/sanitize incontinence laundry and dispose of soiled supplies	Clean out fridge	Sanitize wheelchair / walker
Sweep and mop high traffic areas, like kitchen	Restock gloves & wipes	Schedule professional cleaning



FIRST AID, WOUND CARE & PAIN MANAGEMENT

WHY IT MATTERS: Caregivers often help with pain management, simple first aid, and wound care related to skin tears, incontinence-related skin breakdown, or pressure wounds.

Products

First Aid Basics

- Bandages, gauze, tapes, and wraps
- Antibiotic ointments
- Alcohol and hydrogen peroxide
- Cotton pads and swabs
- Thermometer
- Disposable gloves and face masks
- Hand sanitizer

Wound Care

- Silver antimicrobial gels or ointments
- Wound dressings (foam, hydrogel, hydrocolloid)
- Barrier creams for wound prevention
- Epsom salts (soaks)

Pain Management

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) — safe for most adults
- Naproxen sodium and other OTC pain relievers
- Heating pads (moist and dry heat)
- Ice packs and gel packs
- Braces (back, wrist, knee, ankle)
- TENS units

Additional Supplies

- Hemorrhoid care products
- Constipation care (fiber supplements, stool softeners)
- Compression socks and stockings
- Skin tear treatment kits

How to Choose & Use

- Maintain supplies based on your loved one's specific health needs.
- Discuss the best treatments and products with their healthcare practitioners.
- For wound care, consult a doctor or nurse — best treatments vary by wound type and location.
- Wound care nurses and home health agencies can make home visits for complex wound management.

HOME MEDICAL KIT CHECKLIST

Build your kit around your loved one's specific needs. Check items regularly — replace what's expired or low.

ITEM	HAVE	NEED	EXP. DATE
Assorted bandages & gauze	☐	☐	
Antibiotic, hydrocortisone, healing & other first aid ointments/creams	☐	☐	
Digital thermometer	☐	☐	
Disposable gloves (nitrile, latex-free)	☐	☐	
Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, Naproxen Sodium (according to doctor's orders or preferences)	☐	☐	
Heating pad	☐	☐	
Ice packs / gel packs	☐	☐	
Wound dressings (foam / hydrocolloid)	☐	☐	
Barrier cream (skin protection)	☐	☐	
Silver antimicrobial gel / ointment	☐	☐	

CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER

WHY IT MATTERS: Caregivers often struggle with their own emotional, mental, physical, and financial health. You matter too — and taking care of yourself makes you a better caregiver.

Products

Stress Relief

- Aromatherapy diffusers and essential oils
- Meditation and yoga tools (mats, apps like Calm or Headspace)
- Coloring books and markers
- Stress balls and fidget tools
- Herbal teas
- Journaling supplies

Physical Self-Care

- Heating pads and ice packs (for caregiver aches)
- Bath salts and bath bombs
- Massage tools (back rollers, massage guns)
- Resistance bands and light exercise equipment
- Comfortable, supportive shoes
- Ergonomic back support belt for lifting

How to Choose & Use

- Choose tools you can use while caregiving — an aromatherapy diffuser benefits both of you.
- Schedule self-care time and protect it, except in genuine emergencies.
- Divide caregiving responsibilities among family members to give everyone a break.
- Learn to delegate — asking for help is strength, not weakness.
- Consider counseling or a caregiver support group.
- Look into respite care services for planned breaks.





CAREGIVER CHECK-IN: HOW ARE YOU DOING?

Rate each statement: 1 = Rarely | 2 = Sometimes | 3 = Often or always

STATEMENT	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Often
I feel exhausted, even after sleeping	☐	☐	☐
I feel resentful or overwhelmed by caregiving	☐	☐	☐
I have little or no time for myself	☐	☐	☐
I have skipped my own medical appointments	☐	☐	☐
My moods change rapidly; I anger easily, I have no patience	☐	☐	☐
I feel increasingly anxious and/or depressed	☐	☐	☐
I feel isolated or unsupported	☐	☐	☐

Scoring guide:

7–10 = Doing well. Keep protecting your routines.

11–16 = Building strain. Look at what you can delegate or reduce. Seek a caregiver support group to connect with other caregivers. Consider increasing self-care actions.

17–21 = High burnout risk. Please reach out to your doctor, consider counseling, and AARP's caregiver support resources.