

Caring for Older Family Members

Caring for an aging parent or other relative presents a number of challenges. It often is up to you to manage your loved one's medications, get test results, and drive to doctor appointments.

There is a lot you can do to help your loved one, especially where medications are concerned.

- Create a medicine chart to keep track of the medications, doses, and times for taking them. (And bring the chart with you to medical appointments.)
- Keep a list handy of all healthcare professionals and specialists who provide care for your loved one.
- Be sure every healthcare professional involved in your relative's care knows the complete list of medications he or she is taking.
- Make sure a healthcare professional reviews your relative's medications on a regular basis, perhaps yearly.
- Watch for side effects and signs of drug interactions.

If you are providing care from a distance, there are still a number of helpful things you can do.

Set up a regular schedule to call your loved one to discuss and review medications, medical appointments, and any unusual side effects or symptoms he or she might be having. Be sure to talk about additional subjects that might concern you, such as proper diet, alcohol consumption, and social issues.