If you are caring for an older, ill or disabled friend or family member, you know that caregiving is a hard job. All caregivers need a break at times. Respite care can help.

What is respite care?
✓ Respite care is temporary care. It gives caregivers rest and relief.
✓ Respite care can be at home or outside the home. It can be for a few hours or all day. It can be occasional or ongoing.
✓ Respite care can be provided through community or private organizations. Or it can be arranged through family or friends.

Respite care relieves burnout.
✓ Caregivers can become weary and tired – in other words, burned out.
✓ Being burned out can be bad for your health. Your eating and sleeping may suffer. You may become depressed. You may drink too much.
✓ Caregivers can become so tired or stressed that they cannot provide enough care (neglect) or cause harm (abuse).

Respite care will help you – and the person you are caring for.
✓ When caregivers are rested, they are able to provide better care.
✓ Respite care can help you feel better. You will be protecting your health.
✓ Even a few hours or an occasional break can make a big difference.
**Who can provide respite care for your loved one so that you can get a break?**

**Home care**
Home care aides can help with personal care, housework and cooking. They also offer companionship. Home care can be one time only, one or more times a week, or daily.

**Adult day care**
Adult day care offers your loved one activities, meals, exercise and the chance to be with others. You can take your loved one to day care one or more times a week.

**Overnight stays**
Assisted living and other facilities may offer overnight respite care for a few days or weeks. This gives you a longer break. You may, for example, be able to take a vacation or recover from a health problem.

**Caregiver support programs**
Many caregiver support programs offer respite care. Help may be provided for a few hours, a few days, or a weekend.

**Informal respite care – family and friends**
Friends and family members can provide respite care by staying with the person for a few hours or a weekend. Community organizations such as churches may also have people that volunteer for respite care.

**If you are concerned about leaving your loved one ...**
- Get referrals from people you trust. Check references.
- Find out about low-cost options. Check with your local senior center or Area Agency on Aging.
- If the person you are caring for is worried about you leaving, try it for a short time. Remind the person that you will both be better off if you get a break.

**How can you find respite care?**
- Check with your local senior center, Alzheimer's Association, Area Agency on Aging, or look in the yellow pages of your phone book.
- Call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116. Or visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov). This agency provides referrals in every area.

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