



Caring



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Aetna Better Health® of New Jersey

Heed the warning signs of elder abuse.

Every year hundreds of thousands of seniors are victims of some type of abuse.

Sometimes the abuse is physical. Sometimes it's emotional. In some cases it's a matter of outright neglect, according to the National Institute on Aging.

The older person being abused is often in a caregiving situation, so it can be hard for

him or her to get help. There are red flags you can look for.

An older person who is being abused may:

- Seem depressed.
- Lose weight for no reason.
- Rock back and forth — a sign of trauma.

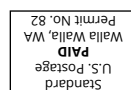
- Act violent.
- Stop doing things he or she enjoys.
- Have unexplained bruises, burns or scars.
- Look messy.
- Get bedsores.

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**Elderly and Disabled
Newsletter
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Help older loved ones stay independent.

Home. That's where most of us want to stay for as long as we can.

Do you care for an aging parent or loved one who feels that way too? If so, you can help your loved one be independent for as long as possible.

Here are some steps you can take:



Make the home safe.

This depends on your



loved one's needs. Here are some things you might do:

- Install grab bars in the tub, and remove throw rugs (to prevent falls).
- Add a wheelchair ramp to enter the house.
- Install faucet or door handles that are easier to use.



Check in on your loved one. Ask other family members if they could help. You might offer to:

- Help with chores, such as laundry or cleaning.
- Bring over a hot meal a few times a week.
- Take your loved one grocery shopping and on other errands.



See about services. Some local programs may help seniors who live on their own. For instance, they may bring hot meals or check in on them.



Be prepared with lists. Make a list of emergency contacts. Include phone numbers and email addresses for family, friends, caregivers, neighbors and doctors. Also list medications, allergies and

medical treatments, or include them on a medical ID band if necessary.



Have a plan for emergencies. Ask your loved one for permission to talk to his or her provider about health care issues. Your loved one may want to give you power of attorney to make medical decisions in an emergency.

Prepare an emergency supply kit too. Include things like water, cellphone, weather radio, flashlight, first aid kit, extra batteries, dry food, whistle, mask, medical supplies like portable oxygen, comfortable slip-on shoes and assistive devices.

Visit [ElderCare.ACL.gov](https://www.eldercare.acl.gov) to find out about services for seniors. You can also call **1-800-677-1116**.

Sources: National Institute on Aging; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Heed the warning signs of elder abuse.

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What you can do

Find some alone time with the person you think is being abused. Ask him or her what's going on. Be clear that you want to help.

Call **911** if you think the person is in urgent danger. Otherwise, call your area Adult Protective Services agency. You can get the number by calling the Eldercare Locator at **1-800-677-1116**.

If you're a victim of abuse, tell someone you trust as soon as you can. You can also call the Eldercare Locator number. It's active Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 8 PM Eastern time.

New Jersey state resources for individuals and caregivers.

The Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving Program (JACC)

The JACC provides in-home services to enable an individual, at risk of placement in a nursing facility and who meets income and resource requirements, to remain in his or her community home. By providing a uniquely designed package of supports for the individual, the JACC delays or prevents placement in a nursing facility.

Call toll-free at **1-800-792-8820 (TTY: 711)** or visit State.NJ.US/humanservices/doas/services/jacc.

Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers

It is a nine-week program that consists of weekly, 90-minute sessions with a small group of caregivers. Caregivers learn many new skills, including information about the disease process, stress management techniques and a variety of other content. It is designed to improve the quality of life of family caregivers who provide care for persons with chronic diseases and to help caregivers manage their stress and cope better with their lives.

For Medicare counseling and general aging services questions, call **1-800-792-8820**. For NJ Save (PAAD, Senior Gold, Medicare Saving Programs, Lifeline and more), call **1-800-792-9745**. For access to aging services in your county, call **1-877-222-3737**. You can also visit CaregiverStressBusters.org.

Statewide Respite Care Program

This program provides respite care services for elderly and functionally impaired persons age 18 and older to relieve their unpaid caregivers of stress arising from the responsibility of providing daily care. A secondary goal of the program is to provide the support necessary to help families avoid making nursing home placement of their relatives.

To reach the Statewide Respite Care Program in your county, call toll-free at **1-800-792-8820 (TTY: 711)** or visit ADRCNJ.org.



Project Healthy Bones

This 24-week exercise and education program for people with, or at risk of, osteoporosis includes exercises that target the body's larger muscle groups to improve strength, balance and flexibility.

For Medicare counseling and general aging services questions, call **1-800-792-8820**. For NJ Save (PAAD, Senior Gold, Medicare Saving Programs, Lifeline and more), call **1-800-792-9745**. For access to aging services in your county, call **1-877-222-3737**. You can also visit State.NJ.US/humanservices/doas/services/phb/index.html.

Move Today

Move Today is a 30-minute to 45-minute non-aerobic exercise class designed to improve flexibility, balance and stamina. Participants assess their health, physical well-being and intent to make behavior changes before and upon completion of the program. The exercises and guidelines are based on current nationally recognized standards and science.

Please visit State.NJ.US/humanservices/doas/services/move/index.html.



Live well with a disability.

When you're living with a disability, you may have some unique health challenges.

In some ways, taking good care of yourself is no different for you than for anyone else. The same things that help keep most people healthy are likely to help you stay healthy as well.

Here are nine tips that can help:

1. Get check-ups. Be sure you talk with your health care provider about when to get screenings.
2. Always be honest with your health care team.
3. If you have questions or concerns about your health, let your provider know.
4. Make sure you know how to take your medicines.
5. Eat healthy foods in the right amounts. Be active each day. Follow your provider's guidance.
6. Don't smoke or use drugs.
7. Know the risks of alcohol.
8. Don't get too much sun.
9. Stay in touch with family and friends.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*



Been to the hospital? See your provider soon.

After you've been in the hospital or emergency room (ER), it can feel great to get home. Before you get back to your normal routine, though, there's at least one important thing to do. Let your primary care provider know about the visit.

Seeing your provider soon can help keep you from ending up back in the hospital or ER.

Your provider can make sure you get the tests and treatment you still need. You can ask questions about your illness. Your provider can even point you toward other resources that can help you get better. That might come in handy if you were treated for a mental health or substance use issue, for instance.

Before you leave

Ask the hospital or ER staff if they can set up your provider visit for you before you go home. If not, call your provider's office as soon as you can. Let them know you just left the hospital.

When you see your provider

You might want to ask:

- What can you tell me about my condition?
- Do I need to take any medicines?
- How often should I come back to see you?

Sources: *American College of Family Physicians; UpToDate*

Is it simply aging or is it Alzheimer's?

You've misplaced your car keys — again — or you can't remember a word you've used many times, yet it's right there on the tip of your tongue. The older you get, the more likely you're apt to wonder: Are memory slips like these early signs of Alzheimer's disease?

The first thing to know is that mild forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging. The concern is when memory problems become serious — you can't retrace your steps and find those car keys, for instance, or you don't eventually come up with the right word.

Know the signs

Alzheimer's is a disorder of the brain that affects memory, thinking and reasoning. It gets worse over time. Most people display their first signs and symptoms when they're in their mid-60s. Those signs and symptoms can include:

- ✓ Getting lost in familiar places.
- ✓ Having trouble paying bills or managing money.
- ✓ Misplacing things in odd places. For example, putting mail in the freezer.
- ✓ Repeating questions.
- ✓ Taking longer to complete normal daily tasks.

- ✓ Losing track of the day or year.
- ✓ Having trouble following a conversation or recognizing familiar people.
- ✓ Having difficulties carrying out multistep tasks, such as getting dressed.

- ✓ Engaging in impulsive behavior, such as undressing at inappropriate times or places or using vulgar language.

Sources: Alzheimer's Association; National Institute on Aging



Get help.

If you or a loved one has memory problems, or you're concerned about changes in memory and behavior, your first step is to talk to your provider. It's important to know that these signs and symptoms may be caused by problems other than Alzheimer's, and the right care could improve or reverse them.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's. However, there are medications that might delay progression of the disease. Acting quickly is to your advantage.

6 ways to head off falls.

Falls are the No. 1 cause of injury for older Americans. That doesn't mean falling is a normal part of growing old, though. Here are six things you can do to prevent falls.

1



Work on your balance and lower body strength.

Tai chi is a good activity that combines those goals.

2



Get your sight and hearing checked once a year.

New glasses or a hearing aid may improve your awareness of your surroundings.

3



Review your medicines with your provider.

Ask if any of them put you at risk for falls.

4



Make your home safer.

Get rid of tripping hazards. If needed, install grab bars next to your toilet and outside your shower or tub. Non-slip mats may help too.

5



Get a good grip.

Always hold onto handrails when using stairs.

6



Talk to your provider about your risk for falling.

Tell your provider about any falls you've had — even if you weren't injured.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Council on Aging; National Institutes of Health



Advance directives: Make your wishes known.

Do you know what kind of medical care you'd want if you were unconscious or unable to say?

You can plan your care ahead of time by creating an advance directive.

Advance directives are a good idea no matter your age or health. They can help you have control over your health care, whatever happens to you.

Four steps to start with

Here are four ways to get started on your advance directive:

1. **Think about the kinds of care you'd want if you were:**

- Dying.
- Unable to wake up.
- Unable to speak for yourself.

Would you want CPR to restart your heart? A feeding tube? A breathing machine?

2. **Download an advance directive form from [AetnaBetterHealth.com/NewJersey](https://www.aetna.com/betterhealth/newjersey).** Take it with you to your next provider visit. You can ask questions and decide which treatments you would and would not want. Your provider can help you fill out the form.
3. **Decide on a health care proxy.** A proxy is someone you trust to make medical decisions for you when you can't. You don't have to be dying for this person to step in. They can take charge anytime you're unconscious and medical decisions need to be made. Your proxy should be someone you trust who shares your values. You don't have to name a proxy if you don't want to.
4. **Tell your family about your choices.** Talk about the kinds of care you'd want in different situations. Have your forms certified by a notary. Then give copies to your proxy, your family members and your provider.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; National Institute on Aging





Do you need these tests?


Maybe you've heard it before: If you smoke, eat poorly or don't exercise much, you could be at risk for health problems down the road. Those include heart disease and diabetes. That's why it's important to make healthy choices and see your provider for preventive care.


Preventive care includes talking with your provider about ways to stay healthy. It also includes screening tests. Screening tests may help find problems early, when they're easier to treat. Most are based on your age. Other risk factors (like whether you smoke or carry excess weight) may come into play.


Here are some tests your provider may order and how they help you safeguard your health:


 **Blood pressure checks.** High blood pressure can harm your heart and other organs. You'll probably have it checked at each provider visit.

 **Cholesterol.** Too much of this fat can clog arteries and cause heart disease.

 **Body mass index.** This can help show if you're at a healthy weight or if you should slim down.

 **Blood glucose tests.** These tests check for high blood sugar, which can be a sign of diabetes. You may especially need this test if you're 40 or older and overweight.

 **Lung cancer screening.** If you're a current or former heavy smoker and 55 or older, your provider may suggest this test.

 **Osteoporosis screening.** This x-ray test checks for bones that have become brittle and may break easily. Older women usually need this test; however, men and younger people can be at risk too.

Remember: If you don't know why your provider orders a test, it's OK to ask. Staying informed can help you stay healthy.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

Vaccines are important too. Right now it is important to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can, especially if you are 65 or older. Visit [COVID19.NJ.gov/Pages/Vaccine](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/Pages/Vaccine) to learn more.

Caring for an aging parent?

How to reduce your risk of caregiving burnout.

Stepping into the role of caregiver for your older parent can be very rewarding. It's heartfelt work — and it's also often stressful work.

Over time, too much stress can wear anyone down. If the stress becomes overwhelming, you could begin to experience a sense of exhaustion and hopelessness that experts call caregiver burnout. At that point, you can't properly take care of your own health, much less tend to your parent's health and needs.

Am I burned out?

The symptoms of caregiver burnout can include:

- Eating too much or too little or drinking or smoking more.
- Feeling tired or run down a lot.
- Having trouble concentrating.
- Feeling irritable or resentful toward your parent.
- Neglecting your own needs.

Caregiver stress and burnout can also contribute to mental health problems, like depression, and can even harm your physical health.

Take action

Burnout often happens when caregivers don't take time to care for their own physical and emotional health. Here are some tips from experts that can help reduce your risk for burnout and make you a better, happier caregiver.



Ask for caregiving help. Other family members or even friends may be willing to help with some daily tasks — like driving your parent to medical appointments or running errands.



Nourish your health. Eat a healthy, balanced diet and get enough exercise and sleep. If you can, take your parent on short walks.



Make time for hobbies or other activities you enjoy. Try to take at least a few minutes each day to unwind and recharge.



Get relief. Ask a relative or close friend to stay with your parent, or consider using a respite service (such as an adult day center) so you can enjoy a break.



Stay connected. It's important to keep up your friendships. If you can't leave the house, invite a friend over for coffee or lunch.



Join a support group in person or online. Share your feelings with other people who may know what you're going through and who can offer encouragement and possible solutions to ongoing problems.



Schedule checkups with your provider. Speak up if you feel sad, hopeless or overwhelmed.

Sources: American Heart Association; Family Caregiver Alliance; HelpGuide

AETNA BETTER HEALTH® OF NEW JERSEY

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If you need a qualified interpreter, written information in other formats, translation or other services, call the number on your ID card or **1-800-385-4104**.

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Telephone: **1-888-234-7358 (TTY 711)**
Email: MedicaidCRCoordinator@aetna.com

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD).

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

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Multi-language Interpreter Services

ENGLISH: ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call the number on the back of your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

SPANISH: ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número que aparece en el reverso de su tarjeta de identificación o al **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

CHINESE: 注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電您的 ID 卡背面的電話號碼或 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**。

KOREAN: 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 귀하의 ID 카드 뒷면에 있는 번호로나 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** 번으로 연락해 주십시오.

PORTUGUESE: ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para o número que se encontra na parte de trás do seu cartão de identificação ou **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

GUJARATI: ધ્યાન આપો: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાયતા સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. તમારા આઈડી કાર્ડની પાછળ આપેલા નંબર પર અથવા **1-800-385-4104** પર કોલ કરો (TTY: 711).

POLISH: UWAGA: Jeśli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer podany na odwrocie Twojego identyfikatora lub pod number **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

ITALIAN: ATTENZIONE: Nel caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuita. Chiamare il numero sul retro della tessera oppure il numero **1-800-385-4104 (utenti TTY: 711)**.

ARABIC: ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث باللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل على الرقم الموجود خلف بطاقتك الشخصية أو على **1-800-385-4104 (للصم والبكم: 711)**.

TAGALOG: PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng wikang Tagalog, mayroon kang magagamit na mga libreng serbisyo para sa tulong sa wika. Tumawag sa numero na nasa likod ng iyong ID card o sa **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

RUSSIAN: ВНИМАНИЕ: если вы говорите на русском языке, вам могут предоставить бесплатные услуги перевода. Позвоните по номеру, указанному на обратной стороне вашей идентификационной карточки, или по номеру **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

FRENCH CREOLE: ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd nan lang ou pale a ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele nan nimewo ki sou do kat Idantifikasyon (ID) w la oswa rele nan **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

HINDI: ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी भाषा बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए भाषा सहायता सेवाएं नि:शुल्क उपलब्ध हैं। अपने आईडी कार्ड के पृष्ठ भाग में दिए गए नम्बर अथवा **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** पर कॉल करें।

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Take control of your health.


Do you feel like a chronic illness has taken over your life?


You don't have to feel that way.


You can take control. It's called self-management.

The first step is to meet with your provider. Work with him or her on a plan for managing your illness. The plan may include:

 **Lifestyle changes.** For example, your provider might suggest you stop smoking or make changes to your diet.

 **Medicine.** If your provider has prescribed medicine, it's your job to take it as directed. Let your provider know if you have trouble taking any medicine given to you. Also let your provider know if you are having side effects.


 **Follow-up visits.** Your provider will want to check on your progress. Ask him or her when you should come back for your next appointment.

 **Emergencies.** Would you recognize an emergency if you had one? The plan you create with your provider should list signs and symptoms to look for if your illness is worsening.

Your plan should tell you what steps to take if that occurs. If you have frequent emergencies, it could be a sign that your treatment plan isn't working or it might suggest that you aren't following your plan as closely as you should. Be honest with your provider so that you can work on a plan that puts you back in control of your health.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians



Contact us  Member Services
1-855-232-3596
24 hours a day,
7 days a week
TTY: 711
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(Access Link — initial approval may
take up to 30 days)
1-800-955-2321 (TTY: 1-800-955-6765)

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