



Care Partner Guide for Daily Care

When You Can No Longer Care for Your Loved One on Your Own: Understanding Care Options & Next Steps

There may come a time when love, commitment, and effort are no longer enough to safely meet your loved one's needs on your own. This moment is often accompanied by guilt, grief, fear, and uncertainty—but it is also a point where **additional care can improve safety, dignity, and quality of life for everyone involved.**

This guide is designed to help care partners recognize when it's time to consider more support, understand available care options, and take thoughtful, informed steps forward.

Recognizing When More Help Is Needed

Needing additional care does **not** mean you have failed. It means care needs have changed.

Common signs that extra support is needed include:

- Frequent falls or near-falls
- Increasing difficulty with transfers or mobility
- Worsening cognitive changes, hallucinations, or unsafe behaviors
- Caregiver exhaustion, injury, or burnout
- Missed medications or meals
- Safety concerns when left alone

Care partners often adapt gradually—doing more, sleeping less, and carrying increasing responsibility. When caregiving begins to threaten safety, health, or emotional well-being, it is a signal to pause and reassess. Accepting help can protect your relationship and allow you to return to being a spouse, child, or partner—not just a caregiver.

Understanding Care Options

There is no single “right” option. Care should match current needs and be flexible as those needs change.

In-Home Care

Best for: Individuals who want to remain at home but need help with daily tasks.

Services may include:

- Assistance with bathing, dressing, and toileting
- Meal preparation and light housekeeping
- Medication reminders
- Supervision and companionship

In-home care can start small—just a few hours a week—and increase over time. It often helps extend safe living at home while easing caregiver strain.

Adult Day Centers

Best for: Individuals who need daytime supervision, structure, or social engagement.

Benefits include:

- Structured activities and social interaction
- Meals and medication support
- Supervision during work hours
- Respite for caregivers

Adult day programs provide meaningful engagement for individuals with Parkinson’s while offering caregivers predictable time to rest, work, or attend to personal needs.

Assisted Living

Best for: Individuals who need daily assistance but do not require skilled nursing care.

Typically includes:

- Help with personal care
- Meals and medication management
- Social activities and transportation
- Private or semi-private apartments

Assisted living supports independence while providing a safety net. It is often most successful when introduced *before* a crisis.

Memory Care

Best for: Individuals with significant cognitive impairment, hallucinations, or safety risks.

Specialized supports include:

- Secure environments
- Staff trained in cognitive and behavioral care
- Structured routines
- Increased supervision

Memory care is not just about memory—it is about safety, structure, and skilled response to behavioral and perceptual changes common in Parkinson's.

Long-Term Care / Skilled Nursing

Best for: Individuals with advanced medical needs or high physical care requirements.

Services include:

- 24-hour nursing care
- Complex medication management
- Rehabilitation services
- Assistance with all activities of daily living

Long-term care may be needed temporarily (after hospitalization) or permanently as care needs increase. Choosing a facility thoughtfully is essential.

Palliative Care

Best for: Individuals at any stage of Parkinson's with complex symptoms or stress.

Focuses on:

- Symptom management
- Quality of life
- Emotional and caregiver support
- Coordination of care

Palliative care is **not hospice** and does not mean giving up treatment. It can be introduced early and alongside ongoing Parkinson's care.

Hospice Care

Best for: Individuals with advanced disease nearing end of life.

Provides:

- Comfort-focused care
- Symptom relief
- Emotional and spiritual support
- Support for family caregivers

Hospice focuses on comfort, dignity, and presence. Many families wish they had involved hospice sooner.

Choosing a Facility or Care Provider

Key questions to ask when evaluating care options:

- Is staff trained in Parkinson's-specific care?
- How are medications timed and administered?
- How are cognitive and behavioral symptoms managed?
- What is the staff-to-resident ratio?
- How are families included in care planning?

Tour facilities at different times of day, ask to observe routines, and trust your instincts. Good care environments feel calm, respectful, and attentive.

Checklists & Planning Tools

Helpful preparation tools include:

- Care needs assessment checklist
- Facility comparison worksheets
- Medication and safety requirement lists
- Emergency contact and medical summaries
- Questions to bring on tours

Having written criteria helps reduce emotional decision-making during stressful moments. WPA can help guide families to trusted tools and local resources.

Insurance, Financial & Legal Considerations

Important considerations include:

- Medicare vs. Medicaid coverage
- Long-term care insurance policies
- Private pay options
- Veterans benefits (if applicable)
- Asset protection and eligibility planning

Coverage varies widely. Understanding benefits early can prevent rushed or costly decisions later.

The Role of Attorneys & Elder Planning Services

Consider consulting:

- An elder law attorney
- A financial planner with aging expertise
- Care managers or aging life care professionals

They can help with:

- Advance directives and powers of attorney
- Medicaid planning
- Asset protection
- Care coordination

Professional guidance can reduce stress and protect both the individual with Parkinson's and the caregiver. This is not about losing control—it is about gaining clarity.

When to Ask for Help

Seek guidance if:

- Decisions feel overwhelming
- Safety is at risk
- You feel emotionally or physically depleted
- Family disagreements arise

WPA can help connect you to education, resources, and support.

A Final Thought for Care Partners

Letting others help care for your loved one is not an ending—it is a transition. It reflects love, responsibility, and courage. The care you have already given matters deeply, and choosing additional support is often the most compassionate step forward.

You do not have to navigate this alone.

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