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## Disability and aged care

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### Summary

- A wide range of support is available for older people with a disability through the Home and Community Care (HACC) and Home Care Packages programs.
  - Independent Living Centres and private companies offer a range of disability aids and equipment such as raised toilet seats, slip-resistant bathroom mats, dressing and grooming aids, jar openers and special knives and forks.
  - If you need help maintaining your home or modifying it to suit your needs, you can get support through the HACC or Home Care Packages programs.
  - Allied health professionals can help you improve your flexibility, balance and movement and give you advice on things like diet, exercise or the right way to lift, as well as possible home modifications.
  - Residential aged care homes provide both services and accommodation.
  - If you or the person you are caring for needs a break, contact Carers Victoria on 1800 052 222 to get advice and find out about local services.
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As an older person living with a disability, it can be difficult to manage household chores and day-to-day activities without some form help. This help may come from a family member, a local support service through the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program or a Home Care Package. For those people with more severe disabilities, residential aged care homes can offer more support.

You can access a range of disability support services, including:

- mobility aids such as walking frames or wheelchairs
- allied health services, including occupational therapists, dietitians and physiotherapists
- short stays in residential aged care homes and other kinds of respite care.

### Disability care in your home

To continue living independently in your own home for as long as possible, it is worth spending some time making sure that your house is as 'easy' to live in as possible.

There are many disability aids and equipment for daily living that can help you to manage your disability and day-to-day tasks, from raised toilet seats, slip resistant bathroom mats and over-bed trays to food trolleys, jar openers and special knives and forks.

### Practical solutions for people living with a disability

Independent Living Centres and private companies have a range of disability aids and equipment that will make your everyday life easier.

There are products to help with day-to-day living, including:

- cleaning and laundry aids
  - clocks, watches and timers
  - kitchen and laundry fixtures
  - can and jar openers
  - preparing and cooking utensils
  - customised scissors
  - trays and over-bed tables
  - reaching and turning aids
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- walking and standing aids
- dressing and grooming aids
- remote controls and switches
- sitting and sleeping support
- slip resistant mats and grip aids
- scooters and wheelchairs
- intercoms and emergency call systems

For more information and to find your local branch see the [Independent Living Centre](#) website.

### **Home maintenance and modifications**

If you need help maintaining your home or modifying it to suit your disability, you can access HACC services or a Home Care Package.

Home maintenance and modification services can include:

- making minor repairs
- maintaining the garden
- installing hand rails
- installing shower rails
- using easy-to-use tap sets
- building ramps
- modifying the bathroom or kitchen
- setting up and changing emergency alarms (such as a smoke alarm).

For more information see the [My Aged Care](#) website.

### **Allied health services**

If you are an older person living with a disability, getting help from an allied health professional can make a big difference to your everyday life. Allied health professionals can help you improve your flexibility, balance and movement and give you advice on things like diet, exercise or the right way to lift, as well as possible home modifications.

Depending on your age and your condition, you may choose to work with a number of allied health professionals to manage your health and lifestyle. A [dietitian](#) can advise you on food and nutrition to help manage your ongoing conditions, an [occupational therapist](#) can help you recover from a stroke or maintain your physical ability as you age, and a [physiotherapist](#) will give you exercises to increase strength and balance.

Find out more on the [Seeing an allied health professional](#) fact sheet.

### **Disability care in residential aged care homes**

If you are an older person living with a severe disability, or your condition has become worse, you may need to consider moving into a residential aged care home.

Residential aged care homes are already set up to cater for people with limited mobility and have nurses and allied health professionals who can provide you with ongoing care.

For more information see a [Residential aged care services](#) fact sheet.

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**

The NDIS, which is being trialled at various locations around Australia, encourages people with disabilities and their families to take an active role in their treatment and ongoing care. People who enter the NDIS before they turn 65 have the option of continuing their care under the scheme as they get older.

For more information, contact the [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#) on 1800 800 110 or see the [NDIS](#) fact sheet.

## Caring for people with disabilities

Caring for people with disabilities can be a physically tiring and emotional experience so it is a good idea to make time for you to rest and see friends. By staying connected to your own life, you will be able to be a better support for the person you are caring for.

As well as helping with household duties, shopping and personal care, carers also provide friendship, company and emotional support. You might live with the person you are caring for, you might share the responsibility of care with other family members, or you might provide extra care for someone living in shared accommodation or a residential home.

If you or the person you are caring for needs a break, there are short-term and emergency respite care services available. Contact **Carers Victoria** on 1800 052 222 to get advice and find out about services in your area.

For more information see the Being a carer for someone with a disability, Short-term stays and respite care services and **After-hospital and transition care** fact sheets.

### Where to get help

- Your local doctor
- **Aged Care Assessment Services**
- **My Aged Care**, call 1800 200 422
- Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre, call 1800 052 222
- **Independent Living Centre**, call (03) 9362 6111
- Your **local council** (HACC program)
- Your local community health centre or district nursing service (HACC program)
- Your migrant resource centre or ethnic or Koori organisation (HACC program)
- **Carers Victoria**, call 1800 242 636
- **Seniors Rights Victoria**, call 1300 368 82
- **Seniors Information Victoria** - for free information for older Victorians, call 1300 13 50 90
- **Council on the Ageing Victoria**, call (03) 9654 4443
- **Aged Care Complaints Scheme**, call 1800 550 552
- **Personal Alert Victoria**
- **Respite Victoria**

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