
Planning for future aged care needs

Summary

- Make future health, accommodation and legal decisions now, to ensure you get the support you need if you can no longer care for yourself and decisions can be made on your behalf.
 - Write down your wishes for future care in an advance care directive as this will help the person you choose to make decisions for you knowing that they are your choices.
 - If you are having trouble with daily life at home you may consider organising a carer or talking to your GP about local support services.
 - While you are thinking about your future aged care needs it is a good idea to make (or update) your will and consider who will make important decisions for you if you are not able to do so yourself.
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If you are getting older or looking after someone who is older, you may be thinking about getting home help, getting your legal and financial affairs in order or applying for aged care homes (also known as 'residential aged care services').

By making future health, accommodation and legal decisions now, you can make sure that:

- you get the support you need if you can no longer care for yourself
- your family knows how you want to be cared for in the event of serious illness
- your will outlines what to do with your estate.

It is a good idea to put plans in place ahead of time to cover you in case you get seriously ill or injured and you are not able to make decisions about your care.

If you have a condition that may require a high level of support in the future, talk to your family about it. If they know what to expect, they can plan their response and make sure they have the resources to help support you when the time comes.

Advance care planning

Advance care planning is a process that can help those supporting you know what level of healthcare and the quality of life you would want if, for some reason, you are unable to join in the discussions.

Having the conversation and writing down your wishes for future care will help the person you choose to make decisions for you feel more comfortable about the decisions they make on your behalf.

While advance care planning can be informal, it can also include the creation of a legally binding advance care directive, the legal appointment of a medical treatment decision maker, or both.

For more information see the section on [advance care plans](#).

Balancing independence and support

Most people prefer to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. Some people may do so with the assistance of a partner, family, friend or volunteer support, while others may access home support services. Others may move into an aged care home for help with day-to-day tasks and ongoing care. Whatever your situation, your needs may change as you get older.

If you are having trouble looking after yourself and keeping up with all of the things that need to be done around the house you may be able to access support from family members, friends or neighbours.

You may also want to consider accessing some volunteer support through a local community organisation (for

example, local government, religious or cultural organisation, Rotary or lions club).

Aged care services are operated by a range of organisations including not-for-profit private, and state government providers. These providers all offer different types of support, including home support services that enable you to stay at home longer, respite care and residential aged care.

There is a wide range of support options available to carers, from **financial support** and **respite care** to **health education** and **crisis support**.

Getting home help

There are many home care services available that allow you to keep living independently while still feeling secure and on top of your day-to-day tasks.

Help in the home can be as simple as getting help with meals and transport, or it can involve a higher level of home care such as bathing, dressing or home nursing.

Home care services may include:

- personal care such as bathing and dressing
- housework
- social activities
- meals and food preparation
- transport
- physical exercise
- mobility aids and other products
- nursing care
- allied health services, including occupational therapy, physiotherapy and podiatry
- gardening, home maintenance and modifications
- counselling.

Talk to your doctor about local support services available through the **HACC program PYP**. To access a higher level of support through a Home Care Package, call **My Aged Care** on 1800 200 422 to arrange an appointment with the **Aged Care Assessment Service** (ACAS).

Mobility aids and equipment

Using mobility **aids and equipment** at home to help with your day-to-day chores can be a good and simple way of making things easier around your house.

You can also access equipment through the **Statewide Equipment Program** of the Department of Health & Human Services.

Talk to your GP about what might be helpful to you or read our factsheet: **aids and equipment at home**.

Thinking about moving into an aged care home

If you need more help with day-to-day tasks or healthcare, you may need to consider other options such as moving into an aged care home where regular supported care is available. This may be a decision that you make on your own, with your family or your support network. Deciding to move into an aged care home is often an emotional time where there may be some uncertainty about the future.

All aged care homes are different and, whichever home you choose, it will take some time to get used to a new way of life. Although you may be getting more help than you did at home, you will still need to get used to a new environment, new people and different routines. If you are nervous about how you might cope, talk to your family or doctor ahead of time about getting extra support while you make the transition

Visit the **My Aged Care** website to find useful information **about aged care homes** to help you in your decision-making. You can also call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

Services in residential aged care homes include help with:

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- day-to-day tasks such as meals, cleaning, and laundry
- personal care such as dressing, grooming, going to the toilet and taking your medicines
- nursing care such as wound care and catheter care

For more information see the [Residential aged care homes](#) fact sheet.

Accessing residential aged care services

Before you can enter an aged care home you will need to contact the Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS). Your local ACAS assessor will be a nurse, social worker, occupational therapist or other healthcare professional. They will visit you in your home or in hospital to ask you about how you are managing day-to-day and about your overall health situation.

At the visit, ACAS assessors will give you information about the types of services that are available. You need an ACAS assessment to find out if you are eligible for a Commonwealth Home Care Package, Transition Care or Residential Care.

ACAS is known as the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) in states other than Victoria.

Visit [My Aged Care](#) or call 1800 200 422 for information about residential aged care homes in your area.

Getting your affairs in order

While you are thinking about your future aged care needs, it is a good idea to make (or update) your will and also consider who you want to make important decisions for you if you are not able to do it yourself.

Making or updating your will

Making a will ensures that your finances and matters relating to your estate are taken care of in the way you would like and that your family are not left with a confusing legal situation.

Give the name of the executor of your will to your family and residential aged care home (if you are living in one) so they have it on hand when they need it. The executor of your will can be a member of your family, a trusted friend or a legal professional. They will work through the legal process when the time comes and can finalise any aged care or medical bills and organise repayments to your estate.

Power of attorney

The legal way of assigning the right for someone to make decisions on your behalf is through an enduring power of attorney. An enduring power of attorney gives a trusted partner, family member, lawyer or friend the power to make decisions relating to your lifestyle and accommodation, your legal and financial affairs and what kind of medical treatment you should get.

For more information see the [Medical treatment decision makers](#) fact sheet.

Where to get help

- Your doctor (GP)
- [My Aged Care](#)
- Department of Social Services, call 1300 653 227
- [Carers Victoria](#), call 1800 242 636
- [Council on the Ageing Victoria](#), call (03) 9654 4443
- [Aged Care Complaints Commissioner](#), call 1800 550 552
- [Personal Alert Victoria](#)

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