

# Respite Care



## What is Respite Care?

Respite Care is a service that pays for a person to come to a Veteran's home or for a Veteran to go to a program while their family caregiver takes a break. While a Veteran gets Respite Care, the family caregiver can run errands or go out of town for a few days without worrying about leaving the Veteran alone at home.

Respite Care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages, and their caregiver. Veterans can receive Respite Care in an inpatient, outpatient or home setting.

The program is for Veterans who need skilled services, case management and help with activities of daily living. Examples include help with bathing, dressing, fixing meals or taking medicines. This program is also for Veterans who are isolated or their caregiver is experiencing burden. Respite Care can be used in combination with other Home and Community Based Services.

Respite Care can help lower the stress the Veterans and their family caregiver may feel when managing a Veteran's long term care needs at home.

## Am I eligible for Respite Care?

Since **Respite Care** is part of the VHA Standard Medical Benefits Package, all *enrolled Veterans* are eligible **IF they meet the clinical need for the service and it is available.**

A copay for Respite Care may be charged based on your VA service-connected disability status and financial information. Contact your VA social worker/case manager to complete the *Application for Extended Care Benefits* (VA Form 10-10EC) to learn the amount of your copay.

Find out more by visiting the Paying for Long Term Care section at [www.va.gov/Geriatrics](http://www.va.gov/Geriatrics).

## What services can I get?

You may be able to get Respite Care in a number of ways:

- A paid Home Health Aide could come to your home
- You could attend an Adult Day Health Care center
- You could go to a Community Living Center (VA Nursing Home) or a VA medical center for a short inpatient stay

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Depending on the Respite Care services in your area, you can choose which options are best for you and your family caregiver.

For example: If your caregiver has lots of errands to run or appointments, you could have a Home Health Aide come to your home while your caregiver is out of the house. If your caregiver needs time at your home alone, you could attend an Adult Day Health Care center for the day. Or, if your caregiver is out of town for a few days, you could stay at a Community Living Center (VA Nursing Home) during the time they are away.

No matter which option you use, trained staff will help you with your care needs.

Respite Care services may be available up to 30 days each calendar year. These 30 days may be used in different ways. For example:

- You might stay in a Community Living Center (VA Nursing Home) for 1 visit of 30 days, or have 10 short stays of 3 days each during the year.
- You might have a Home Health Aide come to your home to stay with you for up to 6 hours in a row, day or night. Each visit (even if it is less than the 6-hour maximum) counts as 1 day of Respite Care.

You may also be able to divide your 30 days among the 3 different types of Respite Care.

## How do I decide if it is right for me?

You can use a **Shared Decision Making Worksheet** to help you figure out what long term care services or settings may best meet your needs now or in the future.

There's also a **Caregiver Self-Assessment**. It can help your caregiver identify their own needs and decide how much support they can offer to you. Having this information from your caregiver, along with the involvement of your care team and social worker, will help you reach good long term care decisions.

Ask your social worker for these Worksheets or download copies from the **Shared Decision Making** section at [www.va.gov/Geriatrics](http://www.va.gov/Geriatrics).

Your physician or other primary care provider can answer questions about your medical needs. Some important questions to talk about with your social worker and family include:

- How much assistance do I need for my activities of daily living (e.g., bathing and getting dressed)?
- What are my caregiver's needs?
- What type of Respite Care does my family caregiver prefer?

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- What mix of Respite Care options will work best?
- What is the best way to use the 30 days per year?

If Respite Care seems right for you, your VA social worker can help you locate VA Respite Care services and assist with making arrangements.



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