

Respite Care



What is Respite Care?

Respite care is a program that pays for care for a short time when family caregivers need a break, need to run errands, or need to go out of town for a few days. Respite Care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages, and their caregiver.

There are two types of respite:

Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a person to come to a Veteran's home or for a Veteran to go to an adult day care program while their family caregiver takes a break or runs errands. Home respite is available for 6 hours at a time.

Nursing Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a person to go to a nursing home while the family goes out of town for a few days without worrying about leaving the Veteran alone at home. Nursing home respite may take place in a VA Community Living Center or a community nursing home and is available for 30 days each calendar year. This type of respite should be scheduled in advance. Services may vary by location.

The program is for Veterans who need help with activities of daily living. Examples include help with bathing, dressing, or fixing meals. 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 Services.

Respite Care can help lower the stress the Veterans and their family caregiver may feel when managing a Veteran's short-term or 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. Services vary by location.**

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.

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



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- You could go to a Community Living Center (VA Nursing Home) or a VA medical center for a short inpatient stay

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 appointments or errands to run, you could have a Home Health Aide come to your home while your caregiver is away. If your caregiver needs time at 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) while they are away.

No matter which option you use, trained staff will help you with your care needs. Respite Care services are available at a minimum of 30 days each calendar year. These days may be used in different ways – 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. Or, 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 different types of Respite Care.

How do I decide if it is right for me?

You can use a [Veteran Decision Aid for Care at Home or in the Community](#) to help you figure out what home care services or long term care services 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 short-term and long-term care decisions.

Ask your social worker for these resources or download copies from the [Making Decisions and Advance Care Planning](#) section at www.va.gov/Geriatrics.

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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