



Pharmaceutical
Society of Australia



Carer Support

A carer is a person who provides support to someone who has a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or is frail aged. Special government and community support services are available for carers and some carers are eligible for financial help from the Australian Government.

One in eight Australians is a carer providing unpaid, informal care to someone else.

A carer can be a parent, spouse, child, other relative or friend. Being a carer can be challenging – emotionally, physically and financially. A range of government and community services are available to help carers with their caring role.

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres

These are operated by Carers Associations in each state and territory of Australia and provide a range of free information and services including:

- Practical written information about support services, home help, financial entitlements, legal matters, respite care, health and well-being and dealing with grief
- Counselling, through the National Carer Counselling Program
- Referrals to community and government services
- Emotional support
- Educational and training opportunities.

A free *Carer Support Kit* is available in English and 13 other languages. In addition to general information, it includes information on 'taking care of the carer', 'managing health care and medicines' and 'emergency care'. An *Indigenous Kit* is also available.

Commonwealth Carelink Centres

Provide free information about community aged care, disability and other support services in the region and how to contact them, eligibility, entry point information and costs.

They provide a link to many services including:



- Social support for carers
- Household help, home modification and maintenance
- Personal nursing and respite care
- Transport and meal services
- Day care and therapy centres.

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres

Help carers to arrange respite (a break) from their caring role.

These centres can provide:

- Information and advice about respite options
- Help with organising respite, including emergency respite
- Financial assistance with respite.

Centrelink payments

Centrelink can arrange financial help for carers. It needs a report from a doctor or health professional to help decide who is eligible for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance benefits.

Carer Payment

This is a payment for carers who, because of their caring role, are unable to financially support themselves through work. A carer may get Carer Payment if providing constant care, in the home of the person receiving care, to:

- A person aged 16 years or over with a disability, severe medical condition or who is frail-aged; or
- An adult with moderate care needs and supervision of their dependent child if this child is under six years of age or 6-16 years of age and attracts payment of Carer Allowance; or
- A child under 16 years of age with a profound disability or medical condition who has extremely high care needs; or
- Two or more children under 16 years of age with severe disabilities or medical conditions.

Carer Payments are income and asset-tested and the carer and person receiving care must be Australian residents.

Carer Allowance

Carer Allowance is a payment for carers. A carer may be eligible for Carer Allowance if:

- Providing daily care and attention for a child or adult with a disability or severe medical condition, or for an adult who is frail-aged
- Living with the child being cared for or providing care for an adult, either in that adult's home or the carer's home
- Carer and person receiving care are Australian residents.

Carer Allowance is not income, or asset-tested and may be paid in addition to Carer Payment or another benefit or pension such as the Aged Pension.

Pharmacies

Pharmacists offer a range of medicine and health related information and home health care services.

Medicines

A carer is often responsible for the medicines of the person receiving care. A pharmacist can:

- Advise about medicines – what they are for, how they work, how to give them
- Advise on possible adverse effects and what to do about them

Your **Self Care** Pharmacist

- Help the carer keep a record of all medicines
- Provide dosing aids – (e.g., Webster packs) Dosing aids are especially helpful if someone takes many tablets or has memory problems
- Undertake a 'Home Medicines Review', at a doctor's request.

Home health care aids

The person receiving care may require specialised aids to help with daily living (e.g., continence pads, toilet aids, walking frames, pressure-relief cushions). Pharmacies carry a range of these home health care aids for hire or purchase.

Self Care

If you are a carer, it is important to care for yourself by:

- Using support services
- Getting regular time out
- Getting enough rest and relaxation
- Eating a healthy diet
- Exercising regularly
- Having an emergency care plan.

Related fact cards

- *Exercise and the Heart*
- *First Aid in the Home*
- *Help with Medicine Costs*
- *Relaxation Techniques*

For more information

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre – phone 1800 242 636 or website www.carersaustralia.com.au

Commonwealth Carelink Centre – phone 1800 052 222* or website www.commcarelink.health.gov.au

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres – phone 1800 059 059.*

Centrelink – phone 132 717 or website www.centrelink.gov.au

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – phone 13 14 50.

Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) leaflets – your pharmacist can advise on availability.

NPS Medicines Line – phone 1300 888 763 Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm EST.

The Poisons Information Centre – in case of poisoning phone 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

Pharmacists are medicines experts. Ask a pharmacist for advice when choosing a medicine.

** An Australian Government Initiative. Freecall except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.*