

## CARING FOR A PARENT OR LOVED ONE

### Topic #7: Long Distance Care Giving

It's pretty common for families to live hundreds of miles from a parent. Maybe your job took you to another state, or perhaps your parents decided to retire in a city with a much warmer climate.

What would you do if you received a call that a loved one just had a bad fall and broke a hip or has just been diagnosed with a serious illness? Most likely you would make a trip to insure your loved one is OK. But what happens after you leave? Who will take care of your loved one? Or maybe you are in a situation where it is impossible for you to make the trip. What do you do then?

At Meridian At Home, we would like to offer the following tips to help make long distance care giving easier:

- **First, Be Prepared:** Gather important information before you need it! Find out where your loved one keeps important papers like medical, financial, and legal information. Who is their physician? What medications do they take? What type of insurance do they have? When possible, keep a copy of this information handy should you need it.

(Based on the importance of “being prepared as a caregiver”, later in the library we’ve dedicated an entire module focused on “[Preparing For The Unexpected](#)”, plus we’ve also included a checklist of information to have handy in our [Resources and Tips section](#) of the website.)

- **Next, Determine Needs:** If you’re in a position to make the trip then it’s a perfect time to assess the needs of your loved one. But if you can’t, then get a list of local resources, hospital social service departments, or talk to a physician for recommendations on assessing the needs of your loved one.

*(For more information, visit the [“Recognizing The Signs That A Loved One Needs Help” module](#))*

- **Keep Lists:** Fumbling with phone numbers and contact information during a crisis is very stressful so try to gather as much of this information before you need it. List the names and phone numbers of family members, friends, church members, or others who live close by and are in a position to assist you and your loved one. Being able to talk to someone when you can't reach your loved one can help ease concerns during this difficult time.
- **Include Your Loved Ones in Decision Making:** Be respectful and always include your loved ones in making decisions as long as they are physically and mentally able to do so. *(For more information, visit [the “Approaching A Loved One about Home Care” module](#).*
- **Take Care Of Yourself:** Remember, you can't do it all yourself! Prioritize what needs to be done. Don't let guilt cause you to take on more than you can handle. Ask for help. *(Again, for more information on this topic, visit the [“Looking after Yourself” module](#))*

If you have any questions about your health, or the continued health of your loved ones, contact us. Meridian At Home Advisors specialize in listening to your health care concerns and identifying the services and technologies that will allow you or a person close to you to continue to lead a healthy, independent life at home. Our advisors will gladly arrange for a registered nurse to conduct a free, in-home consultative assessment. Call us toll-free at 1-800-894-6885. You can also click on [Connect with Meridian At Home](#) to have one of our advisors contact you at a convenient time. Meridian At Home, Where you want to be.