Looking after someone at home

A practical guide for carers: getting support, moving safely, falls, medicines and an emergency plan, with local help in Wiltshire

For adults who look after a partner, relative, friend or neighbour who is ill, older or disabled. This edition adds a list of local help in Wiltshire.

Their own care plan comes first. If the person you look after has advice from a hospital, GP, physiotherapist or care team, follow that. This guide is general information. It is not a care plan.

Help for you as a carer

- You can ask for a carer's assessment. It is free. Contact adult social services at your local council.
- It looks at how caring affects you: your health, work, free time and relationships. You can ask for it at the same time as the assessment for the person you look after.
- Help that may follow includes breaks from caring, training in moving and handling, local support groups and advice on benefits.
- If you care for someone for at least 35 hours a week, you may be able to get Carer's Allowance. The person you look after must get certain benefits. Check on GOV.UK. In Scotland it is called Carer Support Payment.

- Breaks help stop you becoming worn out. Options include a sitting service, where a trained volunteer keeps the person company for a few hours, a day centre, or a short stay in a care home. The council only pays for a break when it has assessed that one is needed.

Moving and helping them safely

Helping someone stand, walk, or get in and out of bed can hurt you both if it is done the wrong way. Back injuries are the most common injury for carers.

- If you help someone move often, get training, or ask a health professional to show you how.
- Ask the council for an occupational therapy assessment. It can show you the right way to help, and what equipment would make it safer.
- The council may provide equipment free, such as a hoist, stand aid, transfer board or slide sheet.
- Do not buy lifting equipment until an occupational therapist, physiotherapist or social worker has advised you. Try equipment before you buy it.
- Your council may run free moving and handling courses.

Helping to prevent falls

- Keep floors clear of clutter, loose wires and rugs.
- Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower.
- Encourage regular eye tests and hearing checks. Ear problems can affect balance.
- If you think a medicine is affecting their balance, speak to their GP or pharmacist.

- Help them stay active every day. Activities that improve strength and balance, done at least twice a week, help too. Our free sheet of simple exercises is at mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/balance-exercises.

If they fall

- Keep them comfortable and warm.
- If they can get up, help them carefully. Do not try to lift them yourself.
- Call 999 if they cannot get up, or they may have hurt their head, neck, back or hip.
- Call NHS 111 if they may be in pain, hurt or unwell.

Tell their GP about any fall, even if they were not hurt.

Medicines

- Give medicines at the right time of day. Check whether each one should be taken with food or between meals.
- A pharmacist may be able to give you a pill box with a section for each time of day.
- If they take several medicines, their GP surgery may offer a free review with a pharmacist. Try to go with them, if they would like you there.
- Keep all medicines in one place, ideally locked away. Order repeat prescriptions in good time.
- Never give a double dose to make up for a missed one. Check with a pharmacist before giving a medicine you have bought.
- Never give medicine without their agreement. Check with their doctor or pharmacist before you crush tablets.

Plan for an emergency

If you were ill, or could not get to them, who would step in? Make a plan now, while things are calm.

- Ask a relative, friend or neighbour who could help at short notice. Make sure they have a key or the key safe code, and know what care is needed.
- Write down the care they need, with their medicines and any dos and don'ts. Keep it somewhere easy to find, and tell people where it is.
- Look at the plan again now and then, and keep it up to date.
- Some areas have a carers emergency card scheme. Ask your local carers service.

My emergency plan

Name and address of the person I look after:

Who can step in (name and phone):

Their GP surgery and pharmacy:

Their medicines, and where they are kept:

Allergies:

Care and support they get, and who provides it:

Walking aids and other equipment:

Anything else people need to know:

Local help in Wiltshire

Wiltshire has two councils. Wiltshire Council covers most of the county, including Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge. Swindon Borough Council covers Swindon and Highworth. Each line says which area it is for. Some NHS and charity services cover both.

Help for carers. Wiltshire Council area: Carers Together Wiltshire gives advice, breaks, training and support, and can arrange a carer's assessment. Call 01380 710300. Swindon Borough Council area: Swindon Carers Together supports unpaid carers. Call 01793 531133, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. In Swindon there is no charge for a carer's assessment or for a Carer's Emergency Card.

Wiltshire Council adult social care. For people in the Wiltshire Council area, outside Swindon. Call the Advice and Contact Team on 0300 456 0111, Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm, Friday 8.30am to 4pm. You can also ask for help online. Out of hours, for emergencies: 0300 456 0100. adults.wiltshire.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council adult social care. For people in the Swindon Borough Council area. Call 01793 445500 during office hours. There is a charge for social care, so ask about it when you call. swindon.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Equipment. Wiltshire Council area: ask for an assessment on 0300 456 0111. There is no charge for equipment and small changes such as rails from the council. Medequip lends the equipment. When you no longer need it, call Medequip on 01249 815052, Monday to Friday 8.45am to 5pm, for a free collection. Swindon Borough Council area: call 01793 445500. The assessment is free, and equipment is usually lent free from the council's own store.

Falls. Wiltshire Council area: falls prevention classes run across the county, for people who have had a fall or feel less steady. Call 07799 074312 to sign up. Swindon Borough Council area: Live Well Swindon runs a 16-week strength and balance course, mainly for people aged 65 or over. There is a charge. Call 01793 465513. In both areas you can make your own falls plan online. bsw.steadyonyourfeet.org

Personal alarms. Wiltshire Council area: Medequip Connect provides the council's alarms, watched 24 hours a day. You may have to pay a weekly charge. Ask the council on 0300 456 0111, or call Medequip Connect on 01249 472980. Swindon Borough Council area: the council's Homeline alarm service is not taking new users at the moment. Its web page lists other alarm services.

Local contacts checked 9 November 2026. Services can change, so check before you rely on one.

Coming home from hospital?

Our free hospital checklist covers what to sort before they leave, home safety, when to get medical help, and a 14-day diary: mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/after-hospital-checklist/wiltshire.

General information, not a care plan. Prepared by Mobile Physiotherapist UK from NHS, GOV.UK and Carers UK guidance. Sources checked 2 November 2026. Free to print, copy and share. Local contacts checked 9 November 2026.