

Specialized Services for Seniors and Caregivers: Respite Care & Short-Term Rehab

As adults reach their senior years, it is normal to rely on an extra hand for their medical care. Fortunately, seniors have choices for how, when and from whom they receive assistance. Some seniors prefer receiving care at home from a caregiver (often an adult child), while others rely on health professionals in clinical settings.

Caregivers who provide care in the home can provide wonderful hands-on attention, but the work is very taxing, not to mention seniors' health conditions can change at a moment's notice. Although home care may be "Plan A", there may come a time when a loved one's healthcare demands temporarily surpass a caregiver's ability. Perhaps the primary caregiver may simply need a break to rest and recharge. Leaders in senior care respond to the growing need for temporary stays by expanding their services, including respite care and short-term rehabilitation.

What is Respite Care?

Respite care means a qualified healthcare provider temporarily tends to a loved one's medical needs within a licensed skilled nursing facility, allowing caregivers a chance to step away for a break. Caregivers may labor at length without relief. Respite care allows caregivers time to mind their own health, recharge emotionally, and manage long-ignored personal items knowing their loved one is sufficiently cared for and safe. Caregivers may struggle to justify a break; however, it is essential caregivers recuperate physically and emotionally to protect themselves from burnout. If they are exhausted, caregivers may not be able to continue to provide quality care.

When is Short-Term Rehabilitation appropriate?

Another service leading senior care providers offer is **short-term rehabilitation**. Short-term rehabilitation stays at skilled nursing facilities are ideal for seniors who have sustained a major health event, such as a stroke or joint replacement surgery, who require specialized therapy prior to returning home. Some skilled nursing facilities have separate rehab units that offer top-of-the-line therapy equipment and fully-furnished gyms to complement certified speech, physical and occupational therapy care. Short-term rehabilitation stays allow seniors to temporarily live where they receive therapy, reducing disruption to their lives and simplifying the process. Not only do seniors appreciate less commotion, but temporary stays can alleviate logistical stress on the caregiver.

Where should I start?

Elderly loved ones deserve the best. Choosing the best senior care starts with researching local options. Not every skilled nursing facility or senior center offers respite care or short-term rehabilitation, so it is important to ask—preferably before the need arises. Hospitals know which

senior care facilities have the best reputation; consult a physician or hospital social worker for recommendations. It is also wise to consult social connections to gather information about friends' and family's senior care experiences.

What should I look for?

Caregivers should look for skilled nursing facilities that offer a continuum of care and diverse services, ensuring seniors receive the care they desire throughout their stay. While looking into local senior care providers, inquire about the amenities they offer, such as luxurious private suites, senior-centered technology, specialized therapy gyms and outdoor recreation. Other premium services to explore are certified Alzheimer's and dementia memory care, as well as onsite speech, occupational and physical therapy. Caregivers should also explore services like personalized meal plans, WI-FI connection, or anything else their loved ones consider an important aspect of their stay.

Senior care is constantly adapting to seniors and families' expectations. Discover how senior care providers may support or enhance caregiving to elderly loved ones.