



TIPS

from the Consumer Health Action Network

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Are you a caregiver?

Helping someone with a disability

Most people who provide care for a friend or family member don't think of themselves as a caregiver.

Caregivers provide support to someone who needs help. It doesn't matter how many hours per week are spent providing support. Caregivers may live with the person they are caring for, providing assistance with daily needs, or may visit the person or call regularly.

Being a caregiver involves an investment in time and energy. Be sure to take care of yourself so that you stay healthy. Caregivers need breaks, exercise, and socializing. Support groups exist for almost every situation and are an excellent way to share information, find help, and deal with difficult situations with people who understand. Your loved one's health care provider or institution may know of a support group you could join.

Helping a loved one with a disability:

People with disabilities sometimes delay seeking necessary healthcare and it may be helpful for you to accompany your loved one to a doctor's office or hospital. Healthcare facilities may be difficult to access or do not have the equipment to help people with disabilities. Also, people with disabilities may be embarrassed to go to these facilities if they need extra help from the staff. But it is critical for people with disabilities to take care of their health to prevent more serious problems.

If you are helping a loved one with a disability visit a healthcare facility, it is important for you to know about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against, or segregation of, people with disabilities in activities, programs, or services. The ADA is similar to other civil rights laws, but it has a major impact on the design, construction, and operation of buildings and facilities, transportation vehicles, and many of the products that go into them. Facilities providing healthcare are held to even higher standards than other businesses because healthcare is very important in people's lives.

If you have a problem with a healthcare facility while you are helping your loved one, you can file complaints for non-compliance with owners, managers, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Call the Consumer Health Action Network at 203-772-2817 or toll-free in CT at 888-873-4585 for more information.