



What is community aged care?

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When people refer to aged care they often talk about residential facilities or 'nursing homes'. However, aged care is much broader than this and community aged care is a large and growing system of support for older people to assist them, and their family carer, to remain living at home. This home support is usually referred to as 'community care' and is not well known or understood by the general population. Information on community care is available, often via the internet, but the diversity of programs and services can be confusing when you explore your options. A large number of not-for-profit aged care organisations and many local councils provide community care.

Funding for community care comes from different government sources and there are different eligibility requirements, usually related to the level of support required by the older person. Some examples of community care programs are:

- Home and Community Care (HACC) - provides some basic support with everyday activities such as home and garden maintenance, meal preparation, cleaning, social support, respite care and personal care.
- Veterans Home Care (VHC) - provides low level home care services to eligible veterans and war widows and widowers.
- Packages of care provide a bundle of support designed for older people with more complex care needs, and are coordinated by a service provider. To be

eligible, an older person requires an assessment by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). There are three different types of packages for different levels of support needs: Community Aged Care Packages (CACP), Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) and Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD).

- A variety of respite programs enable carers to take a break. Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres provide advice and support to family carers seeking respite. For information, phone 1800 052 222 or 1800 059 059.

There are some factors to be aware of when you are looking for support to remain living at home. Fees are generally charged but will vary according to services provided and can be discussed with the provider. Community care is in demand and in some areas this demand exceeds the supply of services so, even if you are eligible, be prepared for a delay in receiving the services.

Community care offers great support to those older people who choose to stay at home, retain their independence and lead full lives. A wide variety of supports can be provided, depending on the needs of the older person and their carer, and are not limited to the programs referred to above. Further information is available from Seniors Information Service on 8168 8776 or via their website at www.seniors.asn.au or from your local council.