A caregiver is a paid (formal) or unpaid (informal) person who helps another person with activities of daily living (for example, grocery shopping, doing laundry, meal preparation, assisting with bathing.) Nearly 17 percent of Americans have been caregivers for an older adult or a person with disabilities within the past year, according to the American Association of Retired Persons organization. There is a good chance you will be a caregiver to an older adult at some point in your life. To help you become a better caregiver, it’s important to discuss caregiving and your loved one’s personal preferences. Topics to discuss include:

**Living Choices**

- How does your loved one feel about living with family members? Which family members would they prefer to live with?
- How do they feel about home health and can they afford it?
- How does your loved one feel about attending a day activity center (known as Day Activity Health Service centers) during the day while you are at work?
- How do they feel about assisted living facilities or nursing homes? Are there any specific facilities they are interested in?
- Do they have long-term care insurance? To learn about long-term care insurance, visit [http://ownyourfuturetexas.org/](http://ownyourfuturetexas.org/).

**Food Choice**

- What types of food does your loved one like to eat?
- Are there food items they must avoid?
- What times of the day do they like to eat?

**Daily Routines and Activities**

- What time do they like to wake up and go to sleep?
- Are there medications they need to take? If so, what time of day, do they need to avoid (or eat) foods before or after taking their medication?
- What's important to them in their daily routine (in order of preference)? Why?
- What types of games do they like and not like to play?
Do they like watching TV? What types of TV programming do they like and dislike?

Caregiving can provide positive, rewarding experiences. However, it can also be demanding on the caregiver and lead to caregiver burnout — a state of exhaustion by a caregiver that can lead to depression, stress and fatigue. Fortunately, there are resources that provide a planned or emergency break for informal caregivers. Some of the programs, organizations, resources and topics available to help caregivers include:

**Aging and Disability Resource Center**

The Aging and Disability Resource Center provides free key points of entrance to long term services and supports. Trained information, referral and assistance operators provide quality customer assistance to help you find funding sources for long-term services and supports, intake systems and eligibility processes. The center can help you assess the situation, identify what supports are available and navigate how to get services. To learn more, call 855-YES-ADRC (855-937-2372) or visit [https://hhs.texas.gov/services/aging/long-term-care/aging-disability-resource-center](https://hhs.texas.gov/services/aging/long-term-care/aging-disability-resource-center).

**Area Agencies on Aging**

Area Agencies on Aging provide services to help people age 60 and older, and ensures their family members and caregivers get the information and assistance they need locating community services. Their services include:

- Information, referral and assistance
- Benefits counseling and legal assistance
- Care coordination
- Caregiver support services
- In-home support services
- Legal awareness
- Nutrition services
- Ombudsman Program

To learn more about your local Area Agency on Aging, call 800-252-9240 or visit [https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/contact/aaa.cfm](https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/contact/aaa.cfm).
**Day Activity Health Services**

Day Activity Health Services provide care to adults in a community-based group setting. It can provide caregivers with respite from caregiver responsibility for the day, allowing them to go to work, run errand, or take a break. Access the state directory at [https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/providers/directories/DAHS.PDF](https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/providers/directories/DAHS.PDF).

**Take Time Texas**

Take Time Texas is an online database that lists the available respite resources and types of respite resources throughout Texas. It also provides information to people who might be new to caregiver.