

“As I Have Loved You”: Our Aging Parents Helpful Hints and Websites

<http://www.lds.org>

This website has articles that give practical and spiritual information about taking care of the elderly and becoming elderly. It includes links to wonderful resources.

www.aging-parents-and-elder-care.com/

This is a very helpful website that has comprehensive information for elder care including links to other great websites. Has a comprehensive safety checklist.

<http://www.alz.org/index.asp>

The Alzheimers Association has included information about the [Alzheimers Safe Return](#) program, the only nationwide system that helps police and private citizens identify, locate and return to safety, people who are memory impaired due to this disease or related forms of dementia.

<http://www.myoptumhealth.com/portal/DrugGuide/FindADrug>

Drug information

<http://www.webmd.com/>

Drug and health information

<http://www.aarp.org/>

AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) is the largest non-profit membership organization for adults age 50 and older. It offers its members a wide range of information about life transitions, independent living, care giving and many other topics, including Alzheimers.

<http://www.careguide.com/>

A comprehensive, nationwide database of more than 75,000 care providers, assisted living facilities, nursing homes and other care giving services, with helpful information to help evaluate them.

<http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/publications.jsp?nodeid=345>

Includes excellent fact sheets for various diseases, disorders and care giving issues (many fact sheets are also available in Spanish and Chinese), and a list of recommended reading.

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/>

This web site provides access to reliable online healthcare information for consumers of all ages.

<http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Search/SearchCriteria.asp>

Medicare has more than 40 very informative publications that cover virtually all aspects of its health care programs for people age 65 and older. Many are also available in Spanish.

<http://www.makoa.org/caregiver.htm>

Resources for caregivers

Laurie's Helpful Hints:

Legal Papers: It's almost impossible to get someone else's medical information without medical power of attorney. This is very helpful when you need to get test results or medical information over the phone; pick up medications and/or fix health insurance problems.

Questions to ask Rehab Centers or Care Facilities:

- How do they handle special diets (diabetes, allergies, and preferences)?
- What are the visiting hours?
- Can young children visit?
- How many are on staff?
- How frequently does the nurse check the patient?
- How often does the doctor see the patients?
- Are the rooms single or double? (Check what's covered by insurance)
- Are personal belongings or photos allowed?
- How is laundry handled (use a permanent marker to mark clothes if they do them)?

Doctors:

- Provide a list of medications; symptoms; allergic reactions; history, etc...
- Provide several copies of health summary to distribute to all nurses & aids.
 - Great example: 2008 Julene Butler's Living with Chronic Illness
BYU Women's Conf Website:
<http://ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/archive/handouts.cfm>
- Don't hesitate to ask questions!!!
 - Ask about different options.
 - Do I understand this correctly?
 - Is surgery necessary?
 - What is the recovery time?
 - Are there side effects?
- Take notes.
- Get a second opinion, even a third (Listen to the spirit!)
- Did your parent hear everything?
- If the Doc gets an attitude – Get a new doctor!!!

Research: Everything! Illnesses, medications, procedures, surgeries, etc... I listed some websites but you may find better ones. Make sure they are reliable resources – there are a lot of quacks out there!

Safety and cleanliness:

- Make sure they're using the correct walker, cane, wheelchair, etc...
- Tennis balls on the back legs of a two-wheel walker can make it smoother.
- Bed cane: this helps them keep from falling out of bed and gives them something to hold and push themselves up from the bed.
- Rugs and runners: you can use double stick tape but we found that the walkers could still catch on them so we removed them. My mother refused to remove her oriental rugs so we moved them to areas she didn't go.

- Baby Monitor: At first Mom had a portable phone so she could call my cell; I put my number on a sticker and put it right on it so she could call me even when she was tired and forgetful. When her hearing got worse we rigged a doorbell that we got at Home Depot for about \$15. When she got really weak I got a baby monitor...I wish I had thought of this before because I could hear her coughing, any changes in her breathing, or if she was having any other problems.
- Showers: Mom couldn't bathe so we used a sturdy shower seat and me...yes, I donned my bathing suit and got right in the shower with her. It helped her feel safe and I was able to control the water temperature better.
- Baby Wipes: For when she couldn't shower or to clean up after accidents.
- Pull-ups: A lot of people feel uncomfortable wearing these because they think you can see them through their clothing, which is just not the case.
- Medications: Put a checklist on the fridge and mark it when you give shots or other meds. Watch them take their medication because sometimes pills may get lost or they may just forget to take them.
- Under pads (nurses call these chucks): These can save your life! They not only protect bedding but chairs, floors, your car, this list can go on and on.
- The Throne: This term really became applicable when we attached an elevated seat with arms to the toilet. It is detachable for cleaning but very sturdy so they can use the arms for balance. The height makes it easier for them to get up.