

# Resource of the Month

## Tips for Caregivers

### Respite Care



**Respite is a period of rest or a break from caregiving. Whether it's for a few hours or a few days, respite can help caregivers take time for themselves. The Caregiver Support Program encourages every caregiver to incorporate respite into their lives.**

### Types of Respite:

There are two types of respite, informal and formal.

#### • Informal respite includes:

- Non-paid help from friends or loved ones. For example:
  - A Veteran's longtime friend - who might visit them once a week to talk and play cards.
  - An adult child – who might provide the Veteran's care while you attend your own medical appointment.
  - A neighbor - who helps you with grocery shopping or mowing your lawn.
- Self-guided respite.
  - Self-guided respite is the practice of building a self-focused activity into your normal day. An example of this could be waking up before the Veteran you provide care for, to engage in an activity that attends to your spiritual or physical health. It could be as simple as taking a few moments to meditate or pray, do yoga, take a walk, or read a book.

#### • Formal respite care:

Formal respite care is short-term paid assistance from a professional. Respite care can be used to take a break, run errands, or take a vacation. Respite care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages, and their caregivers. Please note, this tip sheet primarily focuses on formal respite care.



### How Formal Respite Care Works:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers caregivers two formal respite care options through the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC).

1. Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a person to come to a Veteran's home or for a Veteran to go to an adult day health care program for a short period of time.
2. Nursing Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a Veteran to go to a nursing home while you take time for yourself. Nursing home respite may take place in a VA Community Living Center or a community nursing home and is available for a maximum of 30 days each calendar year. This type of respite should be scheduled in advance.

Call VA's Caregiver Support Line at **1-855-260-3274**

**Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. ET,  
Saturday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. ET**

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## Benefits of Respite

- Helps to prevent burn-out.
- Supports self-care for caregivers.

## Advantages of Respite

- Allows caregivers to take a break and recharge.
- The Veteran you care for is in a safe and caring environment.



## Learn more information about Respite:

- Watch this video to learn more about respite: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZcmDRcxu6o&t=5s>
- Explore your respite goals using this tool: [https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/docs/Respite\\_OnlineCaregiverRespiteTool.pdf#](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/docs/Respite_OnlineCaregiverRespiteTool.pdf#)
- Take the respite self-assessment: <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/Respite.asp>
- Visit GEC's website for more information on respite: [www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/](http://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/)
- Call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 for additional help connecting to respite and other resources available.



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