

**Caring For a Loved One**

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Many of us will find ourselves caring for a family member or friend at some point in our lives. Some of us have already been there, some are there now. Most of us want to help our family members stay independent, happy, and healthy for as long as possible. And we’ll do what it takes to make that happen.

Opening our homes and hearts to those we love, or even becoming part of their household for a time, can be challenging but rewarding. Many of the tasks we need to help with can be time-consuming but relatively easy to navigate. Making sure there are healthy meals. Keeping the house clean. Finding transportation to activities they enjoy. These are things we’ve done for ourselves and our families most of our lives, so they feel familiar.

But what about becoming partially (or completely) responsible for your loved one’s healthcare? Often they were previously independent with that aspect of their life, and like most of us, only shared parts of it. Suddenly you find yourself going to doctor appointments, helping your loved one make healthcare decisions. And one aspect of healthcare that often causes a fair amount of stress is managing medications.

Caregivers I’ve worked with in the past report common concerns. They wonder if their loved one is remembering to take their medications, or maybe forgetting they already took them and taking them again. Is their declining health or independence a result of side effects or drug interactions? Are they taking too many medications, maybe some they no longer need? Which of their doctors is looking over the list and making sure each medication is necessary and safe? Even the responsibility for filling medication organizers can be overwhelming when a loved one is taking a large number of meds.

Research has shown clearly that [medication errors of all sorts](https://gtmr.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/GetTheMedicationsRight.v22final-5.20.pdf) are a major cause of unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations. It makes sense that as a caregiver, you want to be minimize the possibility for an error. But how can you do that?

***THERE IS HELP!***

A pharmacist specializing in medication management can help. Pharmacists are medication experts who will work with you, your loved one, and their doctors to lower the risk of medication-related problems. We’ll take a hard look at the medication list and identify those that may not be adding a benefit, or may be causing worrisome side effects. We can also help you and your loved one to better understand why certain medications are necessary, and how they work.

If your loved one sees a doctor who employs a Medication Management pharmacist, ask for an appointment! Or if your trusted community pharmacist can provide Medication Management services by appointment, don’t hesitate to call and set one up. But unfortunately, not all doctors work with pharmacists. And the majority of community pharmacists don’t have flexibility in their schedule to make an appointment for a thorough discussion.

***Better My Meds*** is dedicated to providing the kind of support and information you need as a caregiver. We’ll make an appointment to meet face-to-face, by video, or by phone if necessary. Our pharmacist will talk with you about each medication, listen to your concerns, and help you make a plan to resolve problems. We’ll suggest ways for you to communicate effectively with your loved one’s doctors and other providers. Or we’ll contact them for you at your request. And we’ll continue to work with you until you find yourself more comfortable in your caregiving role.

A comment I often hear when speaking in the community is, “I wish I’d known about ***Better My Meds*** back when I was caring for my loved one!” Please don’t let that happen to you. If you're struggling with the responsibility of your loved one’s health care, or know someone who is, [contact us](https://bettermymeds.com/contact-us-2) at ***BetterMyMeds*** for more information..



Betty Chaffee, PharmD, is owner and sole proprietor of BetterMyMeds, a Medication Management service devoted to helping people get the maximum benefit from their medications.