



Geriatrics

22 Atwood Drive
Northampton, Ma 01060

Tel: 413-585-0755
Fax: 413-341-2261
cooleydickinson.org

Rebecca Starr, MD
Board Certified Geriatrics

Introducing In-Home Care When Your Loved One Says ‘No’

Desperate though caregivers may be for a temporary respite from their care responsibilities, many care recipients are resistant to strangers coming into their home to help. The help may be perceived as an invasion of privacy, a loss of independence, or a waste of money. Yet in-home assistance is often critical in offering caregivers a break and time to relax and rejuvenate.

There are ways to make this transition easier. Here are some tips for making your loved one feel more comfortable with in-home help:

1. *Start gradually.*

Begin by having the aide come only a couple of hours each week, then add hours as your loved one builds a relationship with the helper. If you feel comfortable with the attendant running errands or preparing meals that can be brought to the house, you can start with those services, which can be done outside the home.

2. *Listen to your loved one’s fears and reasons for not wanting in-home care.*

Express your understanding of those feelings. If possible, get your loved one involved in choosing the aide. He or she will feel more invested and comfortable with the decision.

3. *“This is for me. I know you don’t need help.”*

Expressing the need as yours, rather than the your loved one’s, helps maintain her sense of dignity and independence. You can also add that having someone stay at home allows you not to worry while you are gone. Make it clear that you will be coming back.

4. *“This is prescribed by the doctor.”*

Doctors are often seen as authority figures and your loved one may be more willing to accept help if she feels that she is required to do so.

5. *“I need someone to help clean.”*

Even if this is not the real reason, often people will allow someone in to clean when they “don’t need” care for themselves.

6. *“This is a free service.”*

This strategy may work if other family members are paying for the home care or if it is, in fact, provided without charge. Your loved one may be more open to using the service since she does not feel that she is spending money for it.

7. *“This is my friend.”*

By pretending that the attendant is a friend of yours you are relating the home care worker to the family. This can help with establishing trust and rapport. You can also say that your “friend” is the one who needs company and that by having him or her over your loved one is helping him out.

8. *“This is only temporary.”*

This strategy depends on the condition of your loved one’s memory. If she often forgets what you say, then she may also forget that you said this. By presenting the situation as short-term, you will give some time for your loved one to form a relationship or become comfortable with home care as part of her daily routine, and give you a chance for a well-deserved break.

For more detailed information about employing someone in your home, see the FCA fact sheet [Hiring In-Home Help](#).

This tip sheet was prepared by Family Caregiver Alliance. ©2012 Family Caregiver Alliance. All rights reserved.