



# Respite care - get the break you need

## What is respite?

Respite is essentially a break - for you and the person you care for. It can restore energy and help you to keep on caring.

Respite comes in many forms including day respite (at a day or activity centre perhaps), in-home respite (when a respite worker comes into the home, allowing you to go out), or residential respite care in a facility (ranging from overnight to a few weeks).

*"I said 'no' to respite so many times - and struggled on.  
I never realised that there were so many options.  
Now Mum and I both look forward to it."*

## Combine respite options to meet your needs

Respite means different things to different people - and what works for one may not work for another. Choose a combination of respite options to help meet your needs as well as the needs of your family member - then you can both enjoy the break. Consider some of the following respite options available:

### In-home respite

Usually provided by a personal care worker in the home, allowing you to take a break for a few hours at a time.

### Day respite

May be provided at an adult day centre, day club or at some residential care facilities. Day respite often runs from 10am - 3pm and may include transportation. It involves activities and sometimes outings of interest to older people.

### Overnight or weekend respite

This is becoming more readily available in community respite houses that accommodate a small number of people at a time. It can provide a short break.

### Residential respite

Provided at some (but not all) residential care facilities, usually in blocks of one to two weeks. This allows carers a longer break and time to recuperate. For more details read the information sheet 'Why consider respite in a residential care facility?'

### Emergency respite

This is sometimes available to carers in genuine emergencies, which for example may be if you were suddenly admitted to hospital and could not support your family member.

### Carer retreats

This is time away for carers, spent with other carers in a supportive and fun atmosphere where much information is shared. Respite care for your family member forms part of this.

### Holiday respite

For those who would like to spend time away with the person they care for - on their own or with a group of others.

Respite options will vary in each region. Your nearest [Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre](#) (ph: 1800 059 059\*) will be able to discuss the options available with you and tailor respite to your needs. They can often assist with the cost of respite where this is needed.



## How to get the most from planned, regular respite

Planned, regular respite is very important at any stage of caring. However, when caring at home is becoming increasingly difficult, this is essential - for your own health and wellbeing and that of the person you care for.

The first step is to see respite as something that will help you with caring - rather than interrupting it. Respite is your right.

*"Respite is really just a part of caring - it's a necessity.  
Give it a try and reap the benefits."*

Some helpful tips:

- ▣ If it's difficult to discuss respite with the person you care for ask someone to help you do this - perhaps a service provider.
- ▣ Use a combination of respite options to meet your needs.
- ▣ Plan ahead and book respite in advance - some days it can be nice to know that there is a break ahead.
- ▣ Ask family and friends to provide additional respite - perhaps they could stay with the person you care for while you go out.
- ▣ Use your respite time for enjoyable as well as practical things - e.g. an art class or visiting a friend, as well as the shopping.
- ▣ If you need more respite, don't be afraid to speak up. It won't always be possible but you won't know if you don't ask.

### Further information:

- ▣ [Why consider respite in a residential care facility?](#) - information sheet.
- ▣ [More information for veterans and their carers about respite](#) - ph: 133 254.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636\* to request the above information sheets be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

\*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at [website@carersvic.org.au](mailto:website@carersvic.org.au)