

# Frequently Asked Questions About Home Health Answered

## What is home health?

A team of medical professionals including nurses, therapists, aides, and medical social workers that provide patient care in their home using a unique care plan based on the medical needs of the patient.

## Who can get home health?

Any individual going home from the hospital, recovering from an extended illness, or needing medical assistance may receive home health.

Medical assistance may include total patient care or simply monitoring medication changes.

These patients are under the care of a physician who orders skilled, intermittent services and are homebound due to illness or injury and cannot leave their home

without a considerable taxing effort.

## How do I pay for home health?

Home health services are 100 percent covered by Medicare and Medicaid. Private insurance may also pay for all or a percentage of visits depending on the policy.

Patients may also privately pay for services.

## How does home health work?

A referral is made (from a physician, hospital, family, or patient) and an initial nursing visit is made for assessment of the patient and their needs.

The nurse, in cooperation with the physician determines a plan of care.

The nurse works with the patient and the family to fit the patient's

needs on a case by case basis.

The nurse will then refer the patient to therapy, home health aide, or medical social worker as needed.

The nurse can also assist with acquiring medical equipment from the supplier of the patient's choice and provide teaching for a diagnosis, medication, or many other medical needs.

How can home health help me?

Nurses can monitor your adjustment to new or changed medications, teach and monitor oxygen in the home, perform and teach wound care, colostomy care, foley catheter maintenance, diabetic needs, infusion therapy and many other medical services.

Physical therapy can assist with strengthening, building endurance, teaching patients how to effectively use assistive devices, and assessing your home for assistive needs such as ramps, grab bars, and elevated toilet seats.

Occupational therapy can assist patients in increasing their independence with preparing meals, bathing, dressing, toileting, and other activities of daily living.

Speech Therapy can help patients learn techniques to improve their memory, speech, and ability to swallow.

Home Health Aides can assist a patient with personal hygiene while they are recovering, including baths, light housework, shaving, dressing, and skin care.

Medical social workers can assist with the financial needs and eligibility for community programs and medication bill assistance and well as the provider program.

Can I choose which home health agency I want?

According to Medicare service guidelines, a patient has a right to choose any home health agency just like they are able to choose their own physician.

How long will I be on home health?

The length of time that a patient needs home health depends on their medical needs.

Patients having knee surgery may only need a few weeks of therapy before they feel they are able to make trips for outpatient physical therapy.

Other patients may need continuous nursing care for maintenance of a foley catheter or infusion therapy.

The patient can work with the home health team and decide how short or how long their service will last.

The main goal of home health is to preserve your quality of life by helping you enjoy a healthier, more independent lifestyle at home.

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## Defend Yourself From Cold And Flu This Season

Hoping to avoid the sniffles, sneezes, watery eyes and sleepless nights this winter? One way to do so is by building up a strong immune system.

It will go a long way in fending off colds and the flu. The natural way to fortify your body is with antioxidants.

According to Richard Podell, M.D., clinical professor at New Jersey's Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, recent research indicates that taking a nutritional supplement may help cut winter flu outbreaks in half.

Italian medical researchers gave 130 men and women an immune-stimulating nutrient, N-acetyl cysteine (NAC).

That winter, those volunteers

fared considerably better against Mother Nature, exhibiting only half the amount of serious flu symptoms and other viral illnesses compared to men and women who took a placebo.

This is thanks to NAC increasing the body's reserves of glutathione, an important immune-system stimulant and antioxidant.

## Handy Fruit Picking Advice

Bruised fruit may not look too pretty, but it won't harm you if you eat it.

According to the Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, it is safe to eat bruised fruit.

However, it's best to cut away the bruised part. If the fruit's skin is broken, refrigerate it before eating to prevent the fruit from becoming infected with bacteria (refrigeration stops or slows the growth of bacteria).

If you see mold on the fruit, it's best to throw it away, because it will compromise the texture, odor and possibly the safety of eating the fruit.



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