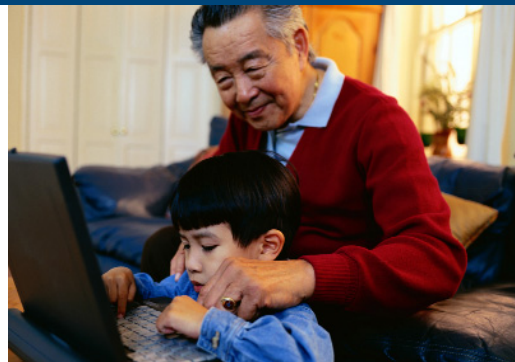


# ask Medicare

Information to Help You Care for Others



## In this edition:

Spring Cleaning & Advance Directives

Help Paying for Drug Coverage

Investing in Good Health

Personal Health Records

Leaving the Hospital

Preventing Colon Cancer

Working to Eliminate Cancer

National Caregivers Library

Get Medicare's eHandbook!

Remember to visit [medicare.gov/caregivers](http://medicare.gov/caregivers) for the latest news and updates.

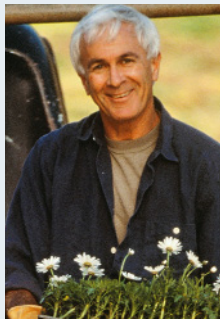
## Coming next edition:

*Preparing for a Doctor's Appointment*

*Medicare-Covered Bone Density Screenings*



## Spring Cleaning? Start Here!



Spring is a great time to make sure important documents like **advance directives** are in place and up-to-date.

Advance directives often include:

- A **living will** (states which medical treatments your loved one would accept or refuse if their life is threatened)
- A **health care proxy**, also called a “durable power of attorney” (the person who makes decisions for your loved one if they aren't able)
- **After-death wishes** (such as organ and tissue donation)

Make sure you know where these documents are, and give copies to your loved one's doctors and proxy. Visit the **Eldercare Locator** for help, or contact your local office on aging, your state health department, or an attorney.



## Get Help Paying for Drug Coverage

Your loved one may **qualify for extra help paying Medicare drug costs** if they have a yearly income below \$16,245 (\$21,855 for a married couple living together) AND resources less than \$12,510 (\$25,010 for a married couple living together).

People who don't meet these amounts may still qualify — the **best way to find out is to apply**. Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY users call 1-800-325-0778). Or, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp).



## Investing in Good Health

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in February to invest now for more affordable, high-quality health care in the future. The Recovery Act targets billions of dollars in two important areas for those you care for: **improving the quality of health care** by increasing the use of health information technology, and **focusing on prevention issues**, like obesity.

Visit [www.Recovery.gov](http://www.Recovery.gov) for more details and the latest news.

**Tell us what you care about!**  
**Email us at [caregiver\\_comments@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:caregiver_comments@cms.hhs.gov).**



## Medical History at Your Fingertips

When was the last time your dad had a cholesterol test? Does your mom's medication interact with ibuprofen? When was your daughter's surgery?

A web-based **personal health record (PHR)** lets you answer these questions anytime and anywhere you have Internet access. You can also print your PHR and take it with you to the doctor.

Visit [www.medicare.gov/phr](http://www.medicare.gov/phr) to learn more about PHRs and get details on special PHR projects Medicare is sponsoring in certain states.



## Preparing to Leave the Hospital

While your loved one is in a hospital or skilled nursing facility, the staff is planning for the day they go home or to another facility. **You're an important member of the planning team.**

Ask to see the plan of care, talk about treatment options, and be aware of Medicare's discharge appeal rights. Most importantly, **make sure your loved one's wishes are known.**

Medicare's **Discharge Planning Checklist** can help you plan for a safe discharge. Get a copy at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).



## Colon Cancer: Preventable, Treatable, and Beatable!

If you're 50 or older, talk to your doctor about getting tested for colon cancer. Certain screening tests can **prevent colon cancer** by allowing doctors to find and remove growths (called polyps) before they become cancerous. Doctors can also find colorectal cancer early, when treatment is most effective.

**Medicare Part B covers a variety of colorectal cancer screenings** and other preventive services — get details at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).



## Working to Eliminate Cancer for Good

The **American Cancer Society** is working to prevent cancer, save lives, and reduce suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service.

Call 1-800-227-2345 to talk with a cancer information specialist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can also help people who speak Spanish or other languages. Or, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).



## CAREGIVER TIP

**Do you need help...**

- Choosing a financial planner?
- Deciding if your loved one should still be driving?
- Keeping track of your loved one's important records?

The **National Caregivers Library** can help.

Visit [www.caregiverslibrary.org](http://www.caregiverslibrary.org) for checklists and forms to help you make decisions and stay organized.

**Save tax dollars.  
Save trees.  
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eHandbook.**

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