



Long Distance Caregiving: Apps and Technology That Can Help

Attempting to care for, and keep up with, aging parents that live miles – or states – away, can be nothing short of heroic. It takes organization, determination, and the right questions to ask in order to stay in the know of how a loved one is *really* doing. Since you are already strained with work and other family obligations, knowing where to look for a little extra help can be a life saver and a sanity saver. Fortunately, technology can help out where you fall a bit short. Here are a few of our favorite apps and technology that can make long distance caregiving a bit easier on both of you.



Video Calling (Skype, FaceTime)

Staying in contact with your aging loved one is paramount when you are living far away from one another. Since you can't stop by after work with a meal to check if they have gotten in the shower today or to see if they are still limping after their fall last week, you need to harness technology to take a regularly scheduled phone call to the next level.

Using video calling technology, such as Skype or FaceTime, is a great way to not only talk to your loved one, but to also see them face to face. While on the call, you can hear how they are doing while also seeing how they look (are they too thin?) and how their home looks (is there the same pile of dirty dishes in the sink for the fifth day in a row?).

If you loved one isn't tech savvy enough to jump on a Skype or FaceTime call, coordinate a regular time when another family member, loved one, or [Visiting Angels caregiver](#) can swing by to assist with set up. Beyond chatting with one another, you can even use video calling to do tasks or activities together. Look through a scrapbook, ask questions about a favorite recipe, or even have coffee together thanks to this technology.

Online Patient Portals (and TeleHealth)

If you are your loved one's Health Care Power of Attorney, and if your loved one consents, you can likely gain access to your their medical information and chart via an online patient portal. Most doctor offices are switching over to online medical records, and offering patient access to notes, follow up recommendations, prescriptions, and more on their password protected portal. Gone are the days of not knowing what exactly the doctor said to your loved one at their appointment – the online portal will give you the information you need to know to keep their care on task.

Beyond online patient portals, some doctor offices and insurance companies are offering TeleHealth services. By calling into the doctor office during a set appointment time, medical professionals can connect with patients to answer follow up questions or check in after a procedure. You may be able to dial in for those as well, giving you another glimpse into the medical situation of your loved one.

Shared Calendars

If you are the organizer of your loved one's doctor appointments, meal drop offs, transportation, and everything in between, you cannot do it alone from afar. In order to keep you organized and all of the nearby help (paid caregivers and trusted friends), using a shared calendar can keep everyone on the same page. Consider using Google Drive or the free calendar program through LotsaHelpingHands.com to schedule appointments, volunteers, and caregiver schedules. You can even give scheduling access to another family member or friend.

Our Online Family Resource Center

Finally, the internet can give you lots of information about any senior related condition or question. However, you should be wary of what you are reading. Be sure that you only read articles or educational materials from a trusted source. Check out our very own [Family Resource Center](#). It's free and you can find plenty of insightful articles, caregiver tips and other important resources to guide you with reliable information.

Long distance caregiving is nearly impossible without these pieces of technology, and without the help of our [Visiting Angels office](#). We pride ourselves on working with family members who live near and far, focusing our efforts on the senior's health and everyday life. Give us a call to find out how we can best help you.

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