



Home Healthcare vs. Home Care: What's The Difference?

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Aging—it's a topic no one really likes to think about. However, sooner or later, we'll all experience certain side effects associated with growing older.

Declining health and a diminishing ability to perform daily tasks are common among the elderly. And unfortunately, at some point, you or someone you love may also develop a chronic health condition or need surgery that requires skilled medical attention and follow-up care. For all of these situations, home care and home healthcare services provide the necessary support and oversight needed for you or a loved one to **age safely in place.**

And although home care and home healthcare sound very similar, the services offered through each are actually quite different.

So how do you know which in-home care services are best for you or a loved one?

Understanding the differences between home care and home health care is important for anyone considering these services. Having a clear understanding of the benefits and goals of each type of in-home will help you prepare to make an informed decision regarding which option is best for your situation.

Home Care and Home Healthcare: Understanding The Difference

Home care and home healthcare are two terms that are often used interchangeably. However, each of them offers very different types of services and goals. They can also vary in cost, as well. But before we dive in to discuss all the ways home care and home healthcare differ, it's important to first understand what they have in common.


We'll give you a hint...there's no place like home.

The objective for both home care and home healthcare is to help individuals remain safely in their own homes for as long as possible. That's why both types of care—home care and home healthcare—are performed inside an individual's home or in a homelike setting like a nursing home or assisted living facility.

What is home care?

Home care is a general term that refers to a wide range of non-medical services provided to individuals who need extra support to accomplish certain tasks in their homes. Though most commonly utilized by seniors who need assistance with daily activities, there isn't a standard age for those who may benefit from services offered through home care. However, home care has proven to be very beneficial for older individuals that choose to age in place as opposed to moving into a nursing home or other facility, especially when they don't need around-the-clock medical care, oversight and support.

Put simply, if you or a family member could use some assistance with certain tasks but don't need medical services in your home, you would be in need of home care services.



Think it might be time to consider home care services for your aging loved one?

Download our Senior Care Decisions Guide

What non-medical services are available through a home care agency

Home care services are designed to help clients maintain their independence and quality of life while they remain at home. Home care services provide assistance with the following common activities of daily living (ADLs):

- **Bathing**
- **Dressing**
- **Grooming**
- **Toileting**
- **Transferring from the bed to a wheelchair, chair, toilet, or bathtub**

Additionally, home care services can be helpful for individuals who need extra assistance with instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), including the following:

- **Grocery shopping**
- **Meal preparation**
- **Light housekeeping and cooking**
- **Transportation**
- **Running errands**
- **Companionship**



Who can benefit from home care services

Commonly referred to as personal care and support services or private duty care, home care services are typically beneficial for elderly people, disabled individuals, and others who require assistance with daily activities but don't need skilled medical care services in their home.

Home care services can be incredibly helpful for people who wish to maintain their independence and stay in their own homes as long as possible. It provides individuals with the support needed to remain safely in their familiar surroundings while also staving off a move to an assisted living facility or nursing home. Additionally, home care services can provide companionship and socialization, which can be particularly beneficial for seniors who may be at risk of isolation or loneliness.

How does someone qualify for home care services?

The qualifications for home care can vary depending on the provider and the state or region where the services are offered. However, most home care services are available to individuals who can safely receive care in their own homes and need assistance with ADLs or IADLs.

How much does home care cost? Will my insurance cover home care?

Overall, home care services can be an affordable and effective way to provide assistance and support to individuals at home. The cost of home care services can vary depending on the agency you choose, the level of care needed, and the region in which the services are offered. Some **home care services are covered by Medicare**, Medicaid, or private insurance, while others may be paid out-of-pocket by the client or their family members. Some home care providers may even offer a sliding fee scale based on income and ability to pay other financial assistance programs that help people access the services they need.

What is home healthcare?

Not to be confused with senior care or home care, home healthcare extends to many facets of clinical care that are performed in an individual's home by licensed nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and other licensed, skilled practitioners.

Home healthcare services are typically prescribed by a physician and are designed to help individuals manage a chronic health condition or recover from illness, injuries, or surgery while receiving skilled medical care in the comfort of their own home.

What medical services are available through a home healthcare agency?

Maybe you need in-home medical care for an acute illness like COVID-19. Or perhaps your loved one requires physical therapy after orthopedic surgery or specialized care to treat a chronic disease like cancer, heart failure, or dementia. The good news is virtually all of the technology and clinical excellence of the hospital is now available to you in your home through home healthcare.

Home Healthcare Nursing Services

When receiving medical care in your home from a reputable home health agency, the **nursing services** will be provided by licensed Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), or Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs).

Home health nurses provide skilled, in-home medical care and often administer the following healthcare services:

- Health assessments including the monitoring of blood pressure, glucose, postoperative recovery, and other vital signs
- Educate the patient and family on diseases and treatments
- Wound care
- Dressing changes
- Ostomy/colostomy education and management
- IV management
- Medication reconciliation and reporting to the physician and pharmacist
- Medication administration
- Injections
- Heparin flushes
- Foot care
- Management of urinary catheters
- Management of tubes, drains and bags

At Home Therapies

Therapy plays an important role in helping individuals restore form and function so they can live independently and safely in their homes. Whether recovering from an accident, orthopedic surgery, or an illness like a stroke, **home health rehabilitation and therapy** can help you prevent loss of mobility, gain strength, and improve the skills required so you may return to the activities you enjoy.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Home health physical therapy services are rendered by **licensed physical therapists** and physical therapy assistants. Using prescribed movement and exercises, home health physical therapists and therapy assistants treat people of all ages who have experienced the following common conditions that could be limiting their physical abilities:

- **Loss of balance**
- **A fall**
- **Difficulty walking**
- **Joint or back pain**
- **Hip, knee, or other joint replacement surgery**
- **Heart failure**
- **Stroke**
- **Noticeable decline in function**

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Home health offers **occupational therapy** services that focus specifically on improving an individual's ability to perform various everyday activities. Licensed occupational therapists and therapy assistants treat patients in their homes using techniques that help them focus on improving the skills required to perform these activities independently. OT professionals also teach alternative ways to accomplish activities of daily living, which can be extremely helpful for certain individuals that may no longer be able to function the same way they have their entire lives.

Speech and Language Therapy (SLP)

Speech and language therapy helps individuals improve breathing, speaking, or swallowing functions. **Speech therapy** also focuses on the ability to understand and use words.

Licensed home health speech therapists often help individuals who are recovering from the following health conditions:

- **A stroke**
- **A heart attack**
- **Difficulty swallowing**
- **Difficulty speaking**

Transitional Care

Transitional care services are available for home healthcare patients as they begin transitioning from the hospital to their home or a post-acute care facility. These unique services help keep patients and their families informed about the care process going forward. Transitional care services also prepare families to effectively manage their loved one's condition at home, which can help reduce the risk of hospital readmission.

Transitional care often helps expedite the referral process for all types of post-acute care, including the following:

- **Home healthcare services**
- **Hospice care**
- **Palliative care**
- **Personal care and support services**
- **Skilled nursing facilities and rehabilitation**
- **Specialized discharge planning (durable medical equipment, at-home infusion treatments, etc)**

Post-Surgical Care

When you have an extensive surgical procedure, your physician will likely recommend additional **post-operative care and rehabilitative services**, most of which can be provided in your own home. Depending on the patient's personal care plan, one or more of the following home healthcare or home care services may be ordered or recommended by your physician:

- Skilled nursing services
- Wound care management
- Post-operative physical therapy
- Post-operative occupational therapy
- Post-operative speech therapy
- Management of drains or IVs left in place after surgery
- Assistance with bathing, using the restroom and getting dressed
- Medication management
- Meal preparation and planning
- Companionship
- Light housekeeping and assistance with laundry
- Assistance with grooming

Specialized Home Healthcare Services

If you or a loved one is dealing with a chronic, long-term health condition, your physician will likely recommend a customized home healthcare regimen that meets your clinical and personal needs.

Interim HealthCare offers **specialized home care services** for the following conditions:

- Arthritis
- Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)
- Home care for Huntington's Disease
- Hypertension/High Blood Pressure
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Diabetes
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Home care for total joint replacement
- Mental health and depression
- Home care support for Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- Palliative care
- Home care for paraplegia and quadriplegia
- Parkinson's disease
- Pediatric home care
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Ventilator Care
- Wound care
- Home care services for veterans



Who can benefit from home healthcare services?

Home healthcare services can be incredibly helpful for **individuals of all ages** who are recovering from surgery, managing chronic conditions, or facing other medical challenges that make it difficult to leave their homes. The clinical services offered through home healthcare provide individuals with the support they need to recover, manage their symptoms, and stay healthy in the comfort of their own homes.

How does someone qualify for home healthcare services?

If you need medical care in your home, your physician will likely recommend home healthcare. In general, the goal of home healthcare is to help a patient recover from an illness or injury or to provide in-home medical oversight and ongoing care for patients with complex or chronic medical conditions.

To qualify for home healthcare services, an individual typically needs to be homebound and have a health condition that could be improved with skilled medical care. The qualifications for home health care services can vary depending on the provider and the state or region in which the services are offered. Certain eligibility requirements typically need to be met for Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance coverage.

How much does home healthcare cost? Will my insurance cover home health?

Overall, home healthcare services can be an affordable and effective way to receive skilled medical care in the comfort of your own home. In fact, home healthcare services are often a more cost-effective alternative to hospitalization or other forms of inpatient care.

The total cost of home healthcare services can vary depending on the level of care needed and the region in which the services are offered. However, many home healthcare services are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance as long as certain eligibility requirements are met. Some home healthcare agencies may also offer a sliding fee scale based on income and ability to pay, as well as financial assistance programs to help individuals access the services they need.

Home healthcare services are often a more cost-effective alternative to hospitalization or other forms of inpatient care.



Want to learn about financial resources that help cover the cost of home care services

Download our guide: How to Pay for Home Care Services

How To Choose The Right Home Care Company

1 How long has the agency been in business?

If the agency has been in business for more than **50 years, like Interim HealthCare**, you know you are dealing with a reputable organization. If they are a newer agency, you may want to dig a little deeper to make sure they are a valid, quality home care company.

2 Does the agency have certifications and accreditations?

Many different organizations can certify a home care agency, however, if the agency has certification from the National Association of Home Care and Hospice or the National Board for Certification of Hospice & Palliative Nurses, you can feel confident in the fact they met rigorous certification criteria based on the quality of care they provide.

3 What is the reputation of the home care agency?

One of the best ways to validate the quality of care a home care and home healthcare agency provides is to ask others about their experience with the agency. You may also want to check online reviews from past clients.

4 What does the agency's approach to care look like?

HomeLife Enrichment® (HLE) is Interim HealthCare's philosophy of care. It's the way we approach caring for your loved one in their home, and it's what sets us apart from other home care agencies. HLE cares for the whole individual, engaging their mind, body, spirit and family to provide the most comprehensive and personalized form of care.

5 Does the agency offer a full scope of home care services?

The level of care that's available will be dependent upon the scope of services your home care agency is qualified to provide. For example, some agencies only provide non-medical, personal care services, while certain agencies may focus only on medical services. When you choose to work with an agency that specializes in a limited scope of services, you could find yourself needing to bring in a second or even third agency to ensure your loved one has access to the level of care they need to be safe at home. This is especially true if your loved one is in the early stages of a disease like dementia or **Alzheimer's**, and their medical needs could become more demanding over time.



Interim HealthCare:

A Home Care and Home Healthcare Agency That Meets All Your Needs

If your family or physician has decided it's time to enlist the help of a home care provider, consider reaching out to Interim HealthCare. From personal care and support services to home healthcare and **hospice**, we offer a unique continuum of care that is beneficial for the person receiving the services, as well as the family members that love them. Interim HealthCare offers a full scope of home care services delivered by the same people your family has trusted for years throughout your loved one's journey.

- **Personal Care and Support Services** (also called senior care, non-medical or private-duty)
- **Home Health Nursing Services**
- **Home Health Therapies** (physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy)
- **Respite Care** (for family members or caregivers who need support and assistance)
- **Specialized Home Care**
- **Palliative Care**
- **Hospice Care**

At Interim HealthCare, we believe the best care happens at home where life is lived and care is personal. Our five decades of experience in the business and our full scope of home care and home healthcare services are what distinguish us as a **leader in our industry**. But it's our **Standard of Care**—the way we approach caring for people in their homes—that's positioned Interim HealthCare as the first choice in home care for families across the country.



Considering home care or home healthcare for your loved one? Not sure where to start?

Download our guide: Choosing The Right Home Care Agency

