

Caregiver Decisions

You may choose to become a caregiver, or the role and tasks may fall into your lap. Caregiving can be divided into two responsibilities: making decisions, and carrying out tasks. Sometimes, making decisions is harder than doing the caregiving tasks which may follow those decisions. This guide is intended to prepare you for some of the decisions you may have to make if you become the caregiver to aging parents or others. Are you ready, willing and able to make these decisions? Consider the following:

1. Who else will need to be involved in making decisions?
2. What information, authority or other factors will I need to take into account when making decisions?
3. What process will I use in making the decisions?
4. How will Mum or Dad (or the person in care) feel about my making them?
5. What resources can I call upon (family, professionals, etc.) to help me make these decisions?

Here is a list of questions that might help to identify some of the typical decisions that caregivers make on behalf of the person in their care:

	Question
1	Housing: When will they have to move and where will they go
2	Finances: When will I start making financial decisions for them
3	Personal and Practical Care: When will I have to involve paid caregivers or the care system
4	How will I determine when and what sort of care is needed?
5	If the care they are receiving from the health care system is not adequate, what am I willing to do to make it better
6	Safety: When will I have to get them a cane, walker, wheelchair?
7	Medical: When will I have to make more detailed decisions about their health care?
8	End of life: How will I decide when to let them go?
9	Family: When and how do I ask siblings/others to help out with caregiving or contribute to decision-making?
10	Driving: What will I do when I sense that it is no longer safe for them to be driving?
11	How will I know when I cannot continue caregiving, how will I set those limits
12	What will I do if caregiving for my parents starts taking away from the time and energy I have for my spouse, children, or grandchildren?
13	When and how do I talk to them about these things?
14	How will I decide that they cannot make competent decisions anymore?
15	What will I do when I think they cannot make competent decisions?

Many of the decisions that result from these questions are difficult. Answering them can bring on feelings of guilt, sadness, and confusion and require information about aging and decline.

Diamond Geriatrics has the information and experience you may need to help you with these questions and the caregiving tasks which result from them. Call us for more information at 604-874-7764

See Diamond Geriatrics' "How Prepared Are You to be a Caregiver" and Diamond Geriatrics' "Caregiver Tasks List."