

## Internet sites offer caregivers a helping hand

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According to the National Family Caregivers Association, which lobbied to have November declared National Family Caregivers Month, one in four of us is going to be caring for an older relative, spouse or loved one someday.

One of the best places to find information on how to cope with (and in many cases overcome) the physical, emotional, legal, and financial stresses that come with caregiving is the Internet.

The following sites-suggested by doctors, nurses, and geriatric social workers I've worked with over the years-are sources of information, and empowerment. Several include a text-only option (usually a button at the top left), which means easier reading and faster printing.

Administration on Aging's Elderpage

[www.aoa.dhhs.gov/elderpage.html](http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/elderpage.html)

This "page" is, in fact, a whole book of knowledge on caregiving and eldercare issues. Its links list offers health and fitness, legal, and resource information (Web Teacher, Ask Jeeves, Internet Public Library, etc.) not found on other sites.

Alzheimer's Association (local site)

[www.alzclv.org](http://www.alzclv.org)

The programs, links to local and state services, and educational materials found at this easy-to-navigate Cleveland-area site make it a top choice for all caregivers, not just those caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease.

Benjamin Rose

[www.benrose.org](http://www.benrose.org)

Easy-to-read and easy-to-navigate, this local site provides some information on eldercare issues, as well as information on- and off-site counseling and programs; case management services; in-home

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care; and residential, rehabilitative, and respite care services that can help caregivers balance their work, caregiving, and family life.

### Caring for Our Elders

[www.aflcio.org/elders/index.htm](http://www.aflcio.org/elders/index.htm)

This no-nonsense site offers information on support groups; how to find legal and financial help for a loved one; where to look for housing options; and, when you click the "resource guides" button, an excellent list (and description) of books on caring for an aging spouse, parent, or loved one.

### Children of Aging Parents

[www.caps4caregivers.org](http://www.caps4caregivers.org)

The main goal of this extremely easy-to-navigate site, with its fact sheets, research and product information updates, and links to caregiver support groups, is education and empowerment. To obtain a free copy of Aging Parents and Common Sense (an excellent resource/reference guide), click on "literature," then e-mail your order for the book.

### Eldercare Online

[www.ec-online.net](http://www.ec-online.net)

The people managing this site say it's "a beacon for people caring for aging loved ones." With its mix of factsheets, articles written by medical experts, live and archived "chats," up-to-date message boards, and links to caregiver homepages full of real-world caregiving tips and insights, it is.

### Elderweb

[www.elderweb.com](http://www.elderweb.com)

One of the best non-government-operated caregiver sites on the Internet, Elderweb's easy-to-use site map clicks you to a mind-boggling array of articles, factsheets, reports, guides, government documents, organizations, and links. If you go to only one site listed here, this should be the one!

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Family Caregiver Alliance

[www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

National Alliance for Caregiving

[www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org)

Both sites tend to be a bit heavy on public policy reports and news briefs, but make up for that with excellent links to caregiver agencies and organizations and news-you-can-use articles and factsheets covering everything from senior nutrition needs to how to re-hab an existing home so residents can age in place.

Merck Manual of Geriatrics

[www.MerckGeriManual.com](http://www.MerckGeriManual.com)

Written in layman's language, this on-line version of the internationally recognized Merck Manual of Geriatrics is one of the best places on the web to find information on senior health issues and healthy aging.

Ohio Department of Aging

[www.state.oh.us/age](http://www.state.oh.us/age)

This user-friendly site provides a wealth of information on national, state, and local assistance, advocacy, benefits, home care, and service programs.

Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging

[www.psa10.a.org](http://www.psa10.a.org)

Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging

This site is an excellent source of information on agencies, programs, services, and housing options available to caregivers and seniors living in Cuyahoga, Lake, Geauga, Lorain, and Medina Counties. Of special interest is the tremendous list of service providers and agencies that can help caregivers balance work, caregiving, and homelife.

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Sidebar/box: Downloadable directories for caregivers

Caregiver's Manual

[www.caregiverpa.psu.edu/manual/contents.html](http://www.caregiverpa.psu.edu/manual/contents.html)

Don't let the fact that this The Caregiver's Manual is found on the Pennsylvania Department of Aging's site put you off: the PDA "borrowed" it from the New York Department of Aging. And, with it's easy-to-use format and well-written chapters-on everything from the psychological aspects of caregiving to how to interview a home healthcare aid or detect elder abuse-it's definitely worth "borrowing."

Resource Directory for Older People

[www.aoa.dhhs.gov/directory/default.htm](http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/directory/default.htm)

This easily-searched on-line directory, co-published by the National Institute on Aging and the Administration on Aging, contains names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, and URLs (uniform resource locators) for hundreds of organizations that provide information and other resources relating to the needs of older persons.