

Respite care for older people

Respite care is short-term care provided in a rest home. It is usually to give the person caring for you a break. In some circumstances, you can use it to have a break if you live alone.

Respite care can have positive benefits as it gives you a break from your usual environment. It may recharge your batteries, and enable you to stay in your home for longer, rather than having to go into long-term care. Respite care can also have positive benefits for your carer.



There are different levels of respite care depending on what you need, such as a rest home, hospital care, dementia care, and specialist hospital.

If you're eligible for respite, you will be allocated a certain number of respite care days. These will be between a few days to 28 days each year.

You won't have to pay the rest home for your respite care. You will need to bring all your medications, incontinence products and medical equipment with you. If you need to see your doctor, then you will need to pay for this consultation as usual.

Eligibility for respite care

A combination of needs are required to be eligible for respite care. They include needing support from your carer to manage at night, supervision with getting around your home, needing to be reminded to carry out the day to day tasks of life, and needing significant help with toileting.

To receive respite care, you need to be assessed by a health professional from Canterbury DHB's Older Persons' Health and Rehabilitation team. Speak to your GP or practice nurse about arranging an assessment for you.

A health professional will assess you and will:

- explain what will happen during your assessment
- answer any questions you may have
- regularly review your situation and your need for respite care
- explain how to use your planned respite care days and what rest home level of care you will need
- send you a Home Service Plan letter, with your respite care allocation. This tells you how much respite care you can use in a year (your GP will also get a copy of this form).



Using planned respite care days

You'll be able to choose to stay at a rest home that has a contract with Canterbury DHB to provide respite care. Rest homes are happy for you to visit and have a look at their facility to see if you will enjoy staying there.

You may wish to divide your allocated respite days into short breaks, or you may wish to use it all in one stay. Try to book respite care well in advance of the days when you want to take it.

Booking respite care

Once respite has been approved, you, your carer, practice nurse or Community Support can make bookings.

Make sure you have your respite allocation letter ready, as you will need some of the information on it.

Phone an approved residential care facility to check if they have suitable care available at the time you want it.

To find an approved facility, go to www.eldernet.co.nz/vacancies. Then you can refine your search results by setting your location to "Canterbury".

Once the facility makes the booking, it will confirm your booking in writing. If your chosen facility doesn't have a vacancy, phone Older Person Health Specialist Service on **(03) 337-7765** and ask for help.

Written by Older Person Health Specialist Service, Canterbury DHB. Adapted by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Last reviewed July 2019. Last updated January 2020.