

## **Should I Cancel Mom or Dad's Home Care Service During the Corona Virus Covid-19 Pandemic?**

Here are 15 ideas that might work for you but there is no one answer as everyone has needs that are unique to them. You might find some of these ideas helpful and give you some peace of mind. Also be easy on yourself. It is near impossible to expect you can fully protect you or your loved one from a pandemic virus but following a good health regimen always helps. Today just, be vigilant for yourself and while caring for others. Wash your hands and don't touch your face!!

- A. If your parent needs support with activities of daily living such as bathing, toileting, dressing and mobility, they will most likely need help with instrumental activities of daily living such as, taking out garbage and perhaps meal preparation and shopping etc. Designate one trusted person to attend to your mom or dad's needs, a family member or professional. Knowing they are taking all precautions possible. Ensure they can and will do everything that's needed.
1. Cancel all other personal care visitors such as podiatrist, physiotherapists as well as housekeepers and any others who may come into the home. As long as you or the designated caregiver removes the garbage its ok if a little dust gathers and things don't remain as clean as usual. see more below
- B. If your parent needs companion care to help with grocery shopping, meal preparation, housework and socialization we have many options. These will support the person in situation A. as well. Remember these may not work for everyone but are ideas to help you strategize a new normal routine through this pandemic.
1. Stop the companion care or reduce to once a week. Ensure they are taking all precautions or you personally take on this role.
  2. Exercise may be reduced but encourage walking around the house more or taking a 10 minute walk outside if they are safe to do so. ie using a walker if necessary.
  3. Make sure the TV and/or radio works well and is manageable, adapt the remote to make unnecessary buttons inaccessible. Set the TV to favorite channels block unnecessary channels.
  4. Have favorite music or podcasts handy or books to read (large print if necessary) this may not work for everyone but it's a start.
  5. Create a book of how to's and reminders ie: to manage phone calls/scams, to wash all things that come into the house and how to do that, a schedule for medications, meals and anything else relevant to that person.
  6. Create a phone tree for families and friends to check in.
  7. For low income people search community resources for charities creating popups of volunteers providing groceries, and other household items (delivered to the door only check next time to see they have been put away) Also there may be long time services already in your community. Call local churches, senior centres, large non-government organizations such as the Alzheimers Society for help and resources, local information

lines and smaller local charities can help you find local services. Check the local papers as well.

8. If possible arrange all deliveries on the day you or the companion are there.
9. For those who can afford it, order already prepared meals. Think beyond the old prepared meal delivery systems that put older people off from accepting prepared foods. There are many meal delivery companies now providing weekly delivery of prepared meals that would be appetizing to anyone.
10. Some of my clients have asked for a wine run. I've checked around and some of the private liquor stores will help out with a delivery. I would use that before I would use a cab company however either way I would make contact with the delivery person yourself to ensure safe practices are being used or bring it yourself when making your visit.
11. Ask all deliveries to be left at the door. Wash everything as you bring it into your house. Either do this for you mom or dad or show them how to do it. I have saved a video created by a doctor who seems to have a pretty good technique for washing everything without contaminating other things.
12. Medication management- there are many systems, you can go on line to check them out. My favorite for clients who can manage a blister pack has a little electronic bar across the top. This is programmed by the pharmacy to chime at the scheduled time to take the pills. If the pills have not been taken it will chime a number of times as a reminder. I will also receive a text message that the pills have not been taken so I can call my client to ask if they have taken it and to remind them while we are on the phone. It tells me or you as a family member signed up to receive alerts if the pills were taken early or late or missed altogether, or if they have taken the wrong ones. This gives the family members great peace of mind. The pharmacy can also see these messages and may call depending on the arrangement. This is currently a free service.
13. If a more hands on medication management is needed I also work with a virtual pharmacy as prearranged with the doctor, their focus is mainly to administer medications to clients in their own homes. They will come several times a day as needed just to provide the medications and this is a free service here as it is covered by our provincial medical plan. Their services are provided throughout the Vancouver lower mainland in B.C. there are other pharmacies offering this service now as well. Check with the company to ensure proper precautions are taken during this time of pandemic.
14. There are life line or fall alert systems that can be activated by pressing a pendant worn around the neck or on the wrist. Or the system can be set for automatic alerts should your loved one fall and not be able to press the pendant. They are a reasonable price for peace of mind.
15. The last system that I absolutely love for clients with or without family is a monitoring system set up throughout the home. It operates on air movement. With this, I or the family can unobtrusively follow movements through an app on their cell phone providing great peace of mind. You know when your loved one gets out of bed in the morning on their regular routine and similar with going to bed at night. You will know how many times they got up during the night going into the bathroom. If routines change it gives you an opportunity to explore what is going on for mom or dad health wise. It helps provide insight if mom or dad are eating regularly and managing meal times by showing us when the fridge is opened and closed and when the stove elements are turned on and

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for how long as well as when the stove is left unattended. If the stove is left on too long you will be alerted. You can monitor the front door to see how long your loved one is outside, if they like to get fresh air. You will see if there are visitors coming into the home; as well as length of time spent in selected favorite rooms.

This may sound very much like big brother is watching but in fact it is providing the person with greater independence if they want to age in place (at home) and remain independent for as long as possible and it's giving you peace of mind. There are no cameras or microphones. There is a very reasonable installation charge first month free then a monthly fee of less than \$100.

These are just a few ideas and most require research, planning and strategizing what will work best for you and your parent or you if you are alone and having unique needs.

I haven't given brand or company names because they will vary with region and there is often more than one. If you would like more specific information about the topics I've discussed here give me a call. I'm here in Vancouver BC to offer my free support over the phone as I too am self-isolating as much as possible while maintaining a healthy contact with only the clients who have no family or service provider. Go to my website at [seniorsadvocate.ca](http://seniorsadvocate.ca) or call at 604-767-4994. Stay Safe!

....with care, integrity and heart in mind for you.

Barb Kirby