

home health FAQ

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WHAT IS HOME HEALTH CARE?

Home health care is skilled medical care delivered in a patient's home. It is typically prescribed by a doctor and provided by licensed professionals such as nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and home health aides.

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WHO QUALIFIES FOR HOME HEALTH?

To qualify, a patient must:

- Be under the care of a physician.
- Have a medical need for skilled services (e.g., nursing, PT, OT, speech therapy).
- Be considered "homebound" (i.e., leaving home requires considerable effort or assistance).
- Have a recent illness, surgery, or chronic condition requiring follow-up care.

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WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED THROUGH HOME HEALTH

Services may include:

- Skilled nursing (wound care, medication management, injections)
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech-language therapy
- Medical social work
- Home health aide support (e.g., bathing, grooming assistance)

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HOW DOES HOME HEALTH CARE DIFFER FROM PERSONAL OR HOME CARE SERVICES?

Home health care involves medical services provided by licensed professionals and must be ordered by a physician.

Personal care or non-medical home care (e.g., help with bathing, dressing, housekeeping) does not require a doctor's order and is typically paid out-of-pocket or by Medicaid.

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WHO PAYS FOR HOME HEALTH SERVICES?

Home health care is typically covered by:

- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Private insurance
- Veterans Affairs (VA)

Coverage varies, so it's important to verify with your provider.

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HOW OFTEN WILL THE NURSE OR THERAPIST VISIT?

Visit frequency depends on your care plan, which is developed based on your medical needs. For example:

- Nursing: 1–3 times/week
- Therapy: 2–3 times/week initially, then taper as you improve

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HOW LONG DOES HOME HEALTH CARE LAST?

Home health care is short-term and goal-oriented. Depending on the patient's recovery and progress, it typically lasts from a few weeks to several months.

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CAN I CHOOSE MY HOME HEALTH AGENCY?

Yes. As a patient, you have the right to choose the home health agency you prefer, based on your physician's referral and your insurance network.

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WILL MY DOCTOR BE INVOLVED IN MY CARE?

Yes. Your physician oversees your care plan, reviews reports from the home health team, and adjusts treatment as needed.

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CAN I STILL ATTEND DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENTS OR THERAPY WHILE RECEIVING HOME HEALTH CARE?

Yes, but if you're receiving home health under Medicare, you must meet the "homebound" criteria – meaning you can leave home only for medical appointments or short outings.

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WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CONDITION WORSENS AT HOME?

The home health nurse will notify your doctor, and the care plan may be adjusted. The nurse may recommend emergency care or a hospital visit in urgent cases.

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HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH HOME HEALTH CARE?

Talk to your physician, who can assess your needs and submit a referral to a certified home health agency. The agency will contact you to schedule an evaluation.