

Top 10 Reasons to Plan Now for Financing Long Term Care

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If you have been ignoring or denying the need to plan for the risk of long term care, you are not alone. Too many individuals are avoiding long term care risk protection as part of their overall financial planning. As a result, families are faced with many dilemmas and decisions on how to finance long term care if and when a need arises. Here are ten excellent reasons to plan now, versus waiting for a crisis.

1. **No age group is exempt from facing the risk of needing long term care.** Waiting until you are 65 or older to think about long term care issues can be too late. The population in need of long term care is diverse in age and level of disability. A majority are over age 65 (57%), however 43% are below 65 years of age. As you age, the probability you will need care, either at home or in an institution, increases. At ages 65-74, 12 % of all people need help with care tasks. At age 85 and over, 70% of all people need help with activities of daily living and long term care.
2. **Planning ahead provides peace of mind.** It helps reduce fear and worry. It provides you with the security of knowing that your plans have been made and your wishes will more likely be followed.
3. **More choices and options are typically available when you plan early.** The options and choices available to you tend to decrease with age and increased health risks. Planning early allows you time to research options and gather information about potential choices before making decisions.
4. **Planning early allows you time to determine, clarify and prioritize your goals.** The decisions you make about how to finance long term care should help you achieve your overall financial goals. Planning allows you to identify and share your financial goals with others and to seek their input, if you so choose.
5. **Planning early may help reduce the potential for misunderstandings and conflict.** It allows you to discuss your plans with your spouse, your children, and others. It also allows you to discuss the potential role these people may have in your care and any limitations they may have.

6. **Making plans early will reduce the burden for others.** By making plans while you are mentally competent, you will be able to choose your own direction rather than forcing someone to else make choices for you.
7. **It is easier to make plans when you are physically and mentally fit.** As time passes, your health may deteriorate making it more difficult or even impossible for you to select some options.
8. **Planning early will allow you to seek advice from professionals, such as financial planners, attorneys, and social service employees.** They can provide information to help you maximize your options.
9. **Planning early may allow you to purchase long term care insurance before your health deteriorates making you ineligible.** Waiting to purchase long term care insurance usually increases the premiums and your chances of becoming uninsurable. Take time to carefully evaluate policies and compare how they meet your needs.
10. **Planning early will help you protect your own financial security and that of important others.** Why put your financial security at risk due to long term care costs? It is impossible to predict when any one individual might experience the need for long term care. Protecting against changes in health and independence during your lifetime is an essential part of financial planning and risk protection.

Here's Help

Help is available to jump-start your planning and action regarding financing long term care. Visit a decision-making resource center for families at www.financinglongtermcare.umn.edu. This center provides up-to-date, objective, and user-friendly educational resources, with no products to sell and no gimmicks!

You will find proven planning tools to help:

- Understand the risk of needing long term care;
- Understand the costs and potential financial impact of long term care;
- Learn about financing options and consequences; and
- Create and carry out your decisions.