

Home Care vs. Home Health

Choosing the right care for yourself or a loved one can be confusing, especially when terms like "home care" and "home health" get used interchangeably. While both options allow individuals to receive support in the comfort of their own homes, their focus and care types differ significantly.



Home Care

Focuses on non-medical assistance with daily Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) including:

- Bathing, dressing, and toileting
- Meal preparation and light housekeeping
- Transportation and errands
- Medication reminders
- Companionship and socialization

These services are provided by home care aides or personal care attendants, who are not required to have medical training. This service is also not covered by Medicare but may be funded through long-term care insurance or private pay and, in some cases, by Medi-Cal and the Veteran's Administration.



Home Health

Provides skilled medical care ordered by a doctor including:

- Wound care
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Pain management
- Skilled nursing care

These medical services are provided by licensed healthcare professionals, such as nurses, therapists, and social workers and are often covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance.

Feature	Home Care	Home Health
Focus	Activities of Daily Living and companionship	Skilled medical care
Type of care	Non-medical	Medical
Licensing Agency	California Department of Social Services	California Department of Public Health
Eligibility	No doctor's referral required. Open to anyone needing ADL or IADL assistance.	Requires a doctor's referral and specific medical needs necessitating care.
Benefits	Enables independent living at home, reduces burden on families, may delay institutionalization.	Promotes recovery from illness or surgery, manages chronic conditions, and prevents complications.
Caregivers	Home care aides/personal care attendants	Licensed healthcare professionals
Insurance coverage	Primarily private pay and long-term care insurance. Limited programs from VA and Medi-Cal.	Medicare, Medi-Cal, private insurance

Choosing the right type of care depends on the individual's needs. Oftentimes, home care and home health agencies will work together, especially after surgeries when both medical and non-medical support is necessary.



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