



IN-HOME PERSONAL CARE
BELIZE HOME CAREGIVERS ASSOCIATION

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Aging at Home, Supported

Practical guidance on staying safe and independent at home,
from the Belize Home Caregivers Association.

Belize Home Caregivers Association

In partnership with the Active Living Club

You Want to Stay Home. Here's How.

Most of us want the same thing as we grow older: to stay in the home and community we love, surrounded by the people and routines that matter to us. Aging at home is possible for far longer than many families realize, with the right awareness, the right support, and a few thoughtful changes to the home itself.

This guide brings together three things every family should know:

- **How to recognize when more support is needed**, and when it isn't yet.
- **What in-home caregivers actually do**, and how to find the right one.
- **Simple home changes** that make everyday life safer and easier.

As Belize's largest and longest-standing caregiver network, the Belize Home Caregivers Association (BHCA) has spent over a decade helping families navigate exactly these questions. This guide reflects what we've learned.

Whether you're planning ahead for yourself or supporting an aging parent, this guide is a starting point, not a replacement for a real conversation with someone who knows your specific situation. We're always happy to talk it through.

A note before you read on: This guide is for general informational purposes only and is not medical, legal, or professional care advice. Every family's situation is different - please consult a qualified doctor, occupational therapist, or contractor before making care or home-modification decisions, and reach out to BHCA directly for guidance specific to your circumstances.

Aging in Place, Done Right

Aging in place simply means staying in your own home as you get older, rather than moving to a residential care facility. For most families, it's the preferred option, but it works best when support is added gradually, before a crisis forces the decision.

Signs It May Be Time for Extra Support

- Difficulty with daily tasks - bathing, dressing, cooking, or cleaning
- A recent fall, or a growing fear of falling
- Missed medications or appointments
- Increasing isolation, or withdrawal from friends and activities
- Noticeable changes in home tidiness or personal hygiene
- The family member currently helping is feeling stretched thin or burnt out

Why Staying Home Matters

- Familiar surroundings support emotional wellbeing
- Keeps independence and dignity intact
- Often more affordable than residential care
- Maintains ties to community, faith, and routine

When to Look Beyond In-Home Support

It may be time to discuss higher-level care with a doctor or a BHCA coordinator if:

- Round-the-clock medical supervision is needed
- There are safety risks a home simply can't be modified to solve (e.g., advanced memory loss with wandering risk)

There's no single right answer here - only the right answer for your family, right now. If you're unsure which stage you're in, that's exactly the kind of question BHCA can help you think through.

Finding the Right In-Home Caregiver

An in-home caregiver isn't just an extra set of hands - they become part of daily life. Getting the match right matters as much as getting the help at all.

| What In-Home Caregivers Typically Help With

- Companionship and social engagement
- Personal care (bathing, dressing, grooming)
- Medication reminders
- Mobility support and fall prevention
- Light housekeeping and meal preparation
- Transportation to appointments
- Respite care, so family caregivers can rest
- Daily check-ins and routine support

| Questions Worth Asking Before You Start

- ☐ How are caregivers screened, trained, and matched to a family?
- ☐ What happens if the first match isn't the right fit?
- ☐ Can the schedule flex between part-time, live-in, or overnight care?
- ☐ What is outside a caregiver's scope, and when would a nurse or doctor be needed instead?
- ☐ How is communication handled between the caregiver and the family?

BHCA caregivers are matched based on the needs of your household, not a one-size-fits-all package. Reach out and we'll walk you through exactly how it works for your situation.

Designing a Home That Ages With You

Small changes to a home can prevent big problems later. None of these require a full renovation - most can be done room by room, as needed.

Bathroom

- Grab bars near the toilet and inside the shower
- Walk-in or curbless shower where possible
- Non-slip mats or flooring
- Raised toilet seat and handheld showerhead

Flooring & Mobility

- Non-slip flooring throughout, especially over tile, common in Belizean homes
- Removing loose rugs and other trip hazards
- A ramp in place of stairs where possible, or sturdy rails on both sides of any stairs
- Wide, clear doorways and hallways for walkers or wheelchairs

Lighting & Visibility

- Bright, even lighting in hallways, stairs, and entryways
- Nightlights along the path from bedroom to bathroom
- Light switches placed at both ends of long hallways

Kitchen & Daily Living

- Storing everyday items within easy reach
- Lever-style faucet and door handles, easier on the hands
- Covered walkways for shade and rain protection
- A simple emergency call system or a regular check-in routine

You don't need to do everything at once. Start with whichever room presents the most immediate risk, and build from there.



We're Here When You're Ready

Whether you're just starting to ask these questions or ready to bring in support today, the Belize Home Caregivers Association is here to help you think it through, no pressure, just honest guidance.

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