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Why the family care conversation matters

51 million

Americans are caregivers[1]

Future care may feel far away. For millions of families, it isn't.

Understanding the potential impacts of caregiving can help put future planning conversations in context. These numbers offer a glimpse into the time, responsibilities and realities caregivers may navigate when someone they love needs help.

Unless otherwise noted, the following statistics reflect Americans providing care to an adult age 50 or older.

26 hours

per week is the average amount of time caregivers spend providing care[1]

5 years

That's how long caregivers have been providing care, on average[1]

74%

of caregivers live with or within 20 minutes of the person they care for[1]

44% of caregivers

provide high-intensity care[1]

Nearly 1 in 4

caregivers are helping someone with a memory issue or form of dementia[1]

29%

of people

caring for an adult are also raising children under 18. That's nearly **17 million Americans** caring for two generations at once.[2]

49.5

billion

hours of care were provided by family caregivers in 2024 with an estimated economic value of **$1.01 trillion**[3]

The numbers are big. The conversation can start small.

You don't need to know exactly what the future will look like to start talking with the people you love about their future care plans.

1. Family Caregiving for Adults Age 50+ in the United States. AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, AARP Public Policy Institute. July 1, 2026. https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/ltss/family-caregiving/family-caregiving-in-us-2025/

2. Caught in the Middle: The Crucial Role of Sandwich Generation Caregivers. AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, AARP Public Policy Institute. September 15, 2026. https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/ltss/family-caregiving/caregiving-in-the-us-sandwich-generation/. Note: this statistic reflects caregivers of adults age 18 or older.

3. The Economic Value of Family Caregiving. Ari Houser, Selena Caldera, Brendan Flinn and Rita Choula, AARP Public Policy Institute. March 26, 2026. https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/ltss/family-caregiving/valuing-the-invaluable-2026-update/. Note: this statistic reflects family caregivers providing care to adults.

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