

Mary's story

Learn how getting aged care services at home help Mary spend her time living the life she wants.

Mary is in her late 70s and autistic. She has found aged care help that works for her – from help with cleaning, gardening and meals to home modifications and autism-specific support.

Read Mary's story or [watch](#) her video story.



'The help I'm getting from aged care has given me a sense of wellbeing and it's been really special. It takes a little bit of pride to ask for help but it's really worth it.'

Mary lives in regional South Australia, is autistic and hard of hearing. She cherishes time with her family and six grandchildren – whether they're enjoying time at the local library, going on a bushwalk or drawing together. Mary is also an avid gardener, sketches every day in her nature journals and lovingly knits teddy bears for kids impacted by trauma.

Much of Mary's time used to be taken up with housework and cleaning. The lasting effects of a previous cancer diagnosis made physical tasks painful, turning once-simple chores into slow and exhausting efforts. Mary found herself cooking meals that lacked variety and had become difficult to prepare. She now has assistance with meal delivery and preparation.

Being autistic, Mary can find some situations and environments overwhelming. As a result, Mary had little energy left for the things she truly enjoyed.

Finding out about aged care

Mary learned her neighbour was getting cleaning help through My Aged Care. This got her thinking about how some extra support could make a difference for her too. Mary spoke with her neighbour and family to help her understand her options. She was able to get support from her network to apply for an assessment and choose a local provider that suited her needs.

'I didn't have a clue how to do the paperwork. They [a friend] helped me fill in all the forms while they were on the phone to the aged care people, so I didn't have to write anything, I just had to sign something at the end.'

Mary applied for some aged care help at home like cooking, cleaning, gardening and transport to appointments.

Mary wanted an aged care provider that was local and prepared to be neurodivergent-friendly. She also wanted someone who provided other services, including residential aged care if she needed it in the future.

Mary is very positive about the support she's received through her aged care package, especially the allied health supports. She is now able to access allied health services that specialise in autism and attend neurodivergent-friendly activities. Mary has found this a great source of comfort and support after years of masking her autism and misdiagnosis.

'Aged care has supported me with equipment and services for chronic health conditions. I have also recently received support with access to autism-specific services. The help I'm getting from aged care has given me a sense of wellbeing and it's been really special. The quality of my life has improved, and I feel confident this will enable me to stay in my own home for longer.'

Mary also gets support with food preparation through her package and enjoys the variety of healthy meals. This has contributed to better health outcomes for her, and she is now able to do more of the things she loves.

'I like to grow my own food but it's physically demanding nowadays, and so every six weeks, somebody comes to help me with the vegetable garden, to do the weeding and make the pathways safe.'

Mary's aged care provider works closely with her to make sure her aged care package works for her. They have a great relationship, and Mary appreciates not having to explain herself or retell her story or her needs. She feels that her needs are understood and at the heart of the care she receives.

Her package manager encouraged her to have an occupational therapist assessment which resulted in Mary getting some home modifications that have made a big difference to her physical health. These include a kettle that can pour without needing to be lifted, reducing the risk of burns and wrist pain, and a motorised recliner chair and bed that make getting in and out pain-free and safer.

Mary says a little help now through aged care supports can keep you doing the things you love, your way, for longer.

'Accessing aged care services enables you to do more things. It's better to set these things up to cater for now and the future, rather than waiting for something to happen and then try and sort it out from there,' says Mary.

As you get older, it's normal to need help with everyday tasks. Getting the right support can help you stay living at home for longer, like Mary.

For more information visit [MyAgedCare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) or free call **1800 200 422**.