



Adult Children and the Cost of Caring for a Parent

There are about 10 million adults over the age of 50 in the United States who provide care for their aging parents. This group must also be planning for their own retirement, and the task of being a primary caregiver can negatively affect saving efforts. A recent study from MetLife looked at the impact of caregiving on adult children and their future financial status.

Over the past 15 years, the number of adult children providing primary financial or personal care for their parents has tripled. About 25 percent of all adult children in the country today are the primary care providers for their parents.

According to MetLife's survey, the level of care adult children provide to their parents is about the same between males and females. However, men are more likely to provide financial assistance, while women tend to provide more personal care. The cumulative amount of lost Social Security Benefits, pensions, and wages among these adult caregivers is around \$3 trillion.

The total amount of money lost from reduced hours at work or from leaving the workforce early to care for an aging parent is about \$143,000 for the average American woman. For men, lost wages from leaving the workforce early or from reduced hours is about \$89,000 on average. The estimated loss of becoming a caregiver is about \$131,000 in Social Security benefits and \$50,000 in pension funds for women, and \$144,000 and \$50,000, respectively, for men.

As a result of the increased stress associated with caring for an aging parent, adult children who are the primary caregivers are more prone to serious chronic illness. They should strive to lessen the physical, emotional, and financial burdens of caring for a parent. Here are some helpful tips:

- If other family members are willing to help, set up a plan to divide expenses.
- Use coupons, prescription discount cards, and other saving aids when making purchases.

- Research local community services and outreach programs for seniors.
- Look for faith-based services and aid programs.
- Buy any supplies that are used in large quantities in bulk.

Adult caregivers can save hundreds of dollars every year by employing these tips. AARP also recommends making individual care a top priority. Adults who care for their parents should eat well, get plenty of sleep, and exercise regularly. Mental health services and yoga or meditation classes are helpful in reducing stress. Joining a support group for other adult caregivers can also help. To learn more about this topic, and your options for providing long-term care for your aging parents, contact one of our insurance advisors today.