

How Caregivers Can Facilitate Adoption & Acceptance of a Medical Alert System

Often signing up for a medical alert is the easiest part. Getting the user to actually use it (and use it correctly) is more challenging. Here are some tips for caregivers:

1. Involve the end user in the process

From feature benefit versus cost research till the service sign up, make sure to involve the user as much as possible throughout the process. Solicit their feedback and listen carefully – be mindful of what they say. Identify misconceptions or an unfounded fear regarding a feature or service. Take the time to explain and provide accurate information and assurance.

2. Ensuring user is comfortable with final choice

Sometimes the obvious choice is not chosen. A device that is fully loaded, affordable and from a reputable service provider is not the user's choice, but something far lesser is. The reason could be as simple as color, thickness of lanyard or something trivial. Still, as caregiver, make sure the final choice is entirely up to the user. Nothing could be worse than convincing the user of the choice you think is best, only to learn later that they are not using the medical alert at all.

3. Assure the user that it's really okay to change their mind

Users may sometimes experience purchase remorse after having some usage experience with the device or service. They may discover that the customer service or tech support did not live up to its promise or it's simply not as comfortable to wear as they anticipated. As a caregiver, assure the user right from the start that it's okay to change your mind and that you would be more than willing to help them change to another device or service provider. This is why it is really important to sign up with service providers that have flexible cancellation and return policies.

4. Ensure the user is able to use the device on their own

It's a good idea for the caregiver to run through the device features and functions with the user again after the device is received/installed. Some time may have lapsed since signing up and what was easy before may now seem unusual and confusing. Take the time to slowly and carefully run through all the functions and features. Ask questions to be certain that they understand and are confident using the device on their own. Assure them that they can ask you questions anytime they are uncertain.

5. Test the device together

Many users try their best not to trigger an alert or press the help button to test because they don't want to inconvenience anyone or incur an additional cost. A good way to encourage the user to do both is to test the device with them. Get the user to press the help button, wait for a response and inform the monitoring center that it's a test and that all is well. At the end of the test, assure the user that no one was inconvenienced and there are no additional charges (unless you signed up with one that does) for testing or accidentally triggering an alert. Encourage them to test the button at least once a month. This will build their confidence and comfort level with the device and the system.

6. Help with device and service adjustments

Help the user call the service provider to make modification to the device such as increasing or decreasing ring or voice volume, reschedule reminders, etc. Do this together with them and show them the ease of making changes. This would greatly help the user begin using the device actively. Let them know you are there when they need help with adjustments.