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How to tip those who take care of the people you love

'Tis the season to show your appreciation

[Beth Braverman \(https://considerable.com/contributor/beth-braverman/\)](https://considerable.com/contributor/beth-braverman/) | December 5, 2018

You probably have a rough idea of what to tip the mailman, your hairdresser and the handyman. But how are you going to show appreciation for the folks who take care of your elderly loved ones?

Home health aides and senior companions perform valuable, often under-appreciated work. The average home health aide makes just [\\$10.40 per hour](https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Home_Health_Aide/Hourly_Rate) (https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Home_Health_Aide/Hourly_Rate) according to PayScale, and companions make only the tiniest bit more.

That means any form of a holiday bonus will be hugely appreciated by these folks, who are utterly critical to your life. Here's how to show them the love.

If the caregiver works for an agency

Most agencies have official policies around tipping and gifts. "It's usually discouraged to accept any gifts or financial reimbursements on the side," says Jennifer Voorlas, M.S.G., C.M.C., a former caregiver and president of Geriatric Care Consultants.

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Nursing homes and assisted living facilities typically don't allow individual workers to accept monetary gifts either.

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That said, it's almost always acceptable to give a small present—especially food.

If you've hired on your own

If you have hired the caregiver directly, it's common to give a gift, or a gift card.

In some areas of the country, it's also common to give a tip or bonus in the form of cash—anywhere from \$100 to up to a week's pay, depending on how many hours the caregiver works, and how long they've been with your family.

But since these positions tend to turnover frequently, it's okay to reserve tips for those who've been working with your family for at least 60 days, says Joy Loverde author of [Who Will Take Care of Me When I'm Old?](https://amzn.to/2SuNUhQ)

Decide who gives the gift

If your siblings are closely involved in the day-to-day decisions around your

If your siblings are closely involved in the day-to-day decisions around your parent's care, make sure they're on the same page about the size of the gift and who will provide it to the caregiver.

It's okay to reserve tips for those who've been working with your family for at least 60 days.

And while you should let your parent know that you're planning to give her aide a gift, you should be the one to hand it out.

That way, any potential misunderstandings or altered expectations will be between the caregiver and the tipper, not the caregiver and the recipient.

Make it personal

Whether you're giving a monetary gift or not, writing a 'thank you' card to let the caregiver know that you value their work is always welcome this time of year.

"Hand-written notes are so rare that they really stand out when you get them," says Loverde. "You really want to let these folks know how much you appreciate them."

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