

# Occupations and Workplaces

## Caregiver/Housekeeper

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## What does a caregiver/housekeeper do?

Caregivers, housekeepers, domestic workers and babysitters have similar functions in the workplace. Their general tasks may include the following:

- Kitchen work, including shopping for food, cooking and meal preparation.
- House cleaning, housekeeping, and washing dishes.
- Laundry.
- Childcare, which may involve diaper changing, bathing and supervision.
- Elder care, which may involve bathing, companionship, and assistance with doctor visits.

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## What are some health and safety issues for caregivers and housekeepers?

There are several potential health and safety hazards associated with caregiving and housekeeping duties, including:

- Risk of illness or infection due to exposure to blood or bodily fluids when changing diapers, performing first aid, etc.
- Risk of exposure [infectious diseases](#) if working in close contact with infected individuals or in areas where infected individuals live or visit.
- Exposure to [chemicals](#) in household cleaning products.

- Exposure to soiled linen.
  - Working in [awkward postures or performing repetitive tasks](#).
  - Risk of pain or injury from [lifting](#) or carrying heavy loads.
  - [Slips, trips and falls](#).
  - Working with sharp knives or other potentially hazardous tools.
  - Risk of burns from ovens, deep fryers, and steam from pots.
  - [Stress](#).
  - [Fatigue](#) and other health problems from [shift work](#) or [long hours of work](#).
  - [Working alone](#).
  - [Workplace violence](#).
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## What are some preventive measures for a caregiver or housekeeper?

- Know the potential hazards of your workplace and the activities you perform.
  - Learn safe lifting techniques.
  - Frequent [hand washing](#), [routine practices](#) and other measures are extremely important for the reduction of infections. Be sure to use moisturizers and other precautions to prevent your skin from drying and [dermatitis](#).
  - Always wear appropriate [personal protective equipment](#) for the task.
  - Wear shoes with non-skid soles.
  - Know emergency contact numbers and keep them immediately available.
  - Review your employer's violence prevention program, and if they do not have one encourage them to develop one (required in many jurisdictions).
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## What are some good general safe work practices?

- Practice safe [lifting techniques](#).
- Follow or establish safety procedures for [working alone](#), [working alone with patients](#), or for avoiding working alone wherever possible.
- Get current training on chemical hazards, [WHMIS](#) and [SDSs](#).
- Know basic and emergency first aid.

- Follow company safety rules.
  - Know how to [report hazards](#).
  - Practice good [housekeeping](#) procedures.
  - Practice [safe patient handling](#).
  - Understand the risks associated with [blood-borne diseases](#) (e.g., hepatitis B).
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Fact sheet last revised: 2020-05-21

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