

CAREGIVER STRESS



As a caregiver, it's also important to remember your own needs. Ask for help when you need it and pay attention to warning signs of caregiver stress.

SIGNS of CAREGIVER STRESS

As a caregiver, you may be so focused on your loved one that you don't realize that your own health and well-being are suffering. Watch for these signs of caregiver stress

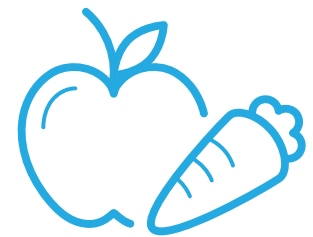
- Constant worry
- Often tired
- Too much or too little sleep
- Weight changes
- Moody
- Lost interest in activities you enjoyed before
- Sadness
- Frequent headaches or aches and pains
- Alcohol or drug abuse, including prescriptions



TAKE CARE of YOURSELF

Remember, if you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to care for anyone else.

1. Find time every day to do something you enjoy.
2. Stop and breathe when you need to.
3. Eat healthy by planning for meals and keeping healthy snacks on hand.
4. Avoid stress eating.
5. Stay active. Take mini activity breaks.
6. Get enough (7-8 hours) of sleep each night.
7. Get outside for at least 10 minutes every day.
8. Make time for hobbies you enjoy.
9. Ask for help from your village and/or professionals.
10. Set boundaries.
11. Say no.



STRATEGIES for CAREGIVER STRESS

Accept help. Be prepared with a list of ways that others can help you and let the helper choose what he or she would like to do.

Focus on what you are able to provide. It's normal to feel guilty sometimes but understand that no one is a "perfect" caregiver.

Set realistic goals. Break large tasks into smaller steps that you can do one at a time.

Get connected. Find out about caregiving resources in your community.

Join a support group. A support group can provide validation and encouragement.

Seek social support. Make an effort to stay well-connected with family and friends who can offer nonjudgmental emotional support.

Set personal health goals. For example, set goals to establish a good sleep routine, find time to be physically active on most days of the week, eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of water.

See your doctor. Get recommended vaccinations and screenings. Make sure to tell your doctor that you're a caregiver.

RESPITE CARE

It may be hard to imagine leaving your loved one in someone else's care, but taking a break can be one of the best things you do for yourself — as well as the person you're caring for. Most communities have some type of respite care available, such as:

- **In-home respite.** Health care aides come to your home to provide companionship, nursing services or both.
- **Adult care centers and programs.** Some centers provide care for both older adults and young children, and the two groups may spend time together.
- **Short-term nursing homes.** Some assisted living homes, memory care homes and nursing homes accept people needing care for short stays while caregivers are away.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Here are additional options for care/local agencies in your area:

you
ARE
enough