

Helpful Tips for Caregivers

How to care for yourself when you're caring for someone else.



Eat right



Exercise



Sleep



Schedule

When facing a serious illness like cancer or heart attack, it's not only difficult for the patient but also for family and loved ones. Patients recovering from a serious illness often need a helping hand. While it is rewarding to know that your care is making a positive difference on a patient's recovery and state-of-mind, it can also take a toll on you and your family. Here are some helpful ideas and resources to consider:

Take care of the caregiver

Oftentimes, caregivers give so much of themselves, they forget to take care of themselves. If your health is compromised, it's hard for you to care for anyone else. Make sure to take care of yourself by eating right, exercising and getting enough sleep, so that you have energy and enthusiasm to continue to help others.

Schedule time off for yourself

When you take on the responsibility of caregiving, you often find it requires a substantial time commitment. Make sure to take time out to meet your own basic personal needs, including activities you enjoy. You need to have fun and stay connected with friends and family. By taking better care of yourself, you'll be a more upbeat and positive caregiver.

Independence can be the best medicine

A common mistake for caregivers is to provide too much care. Encourage the recovering patient to do certain things for themselves if they can. As a caregiver, it is your goal to help your loved one recover to his/her normal self. The best way to help them is to empower them to become independent.

Team up with others and share responsibilities

You don't have to go at it alone. Make a list of the jobs and responsibilities you need help with. They could include household chores, home repair, driving to doctors appointments, paying bills, finding information or services. Or maybe it's simply giving you a break by staying with your loved one when you get away.

Support for Caregivers: suggested web sites and books

www.caregiver.com

<http://www.caringinfo.org>

<https://www.thefamilycaregiver.org>

If Only I'd Had This Caregiving Book
by Maya Hennessey

**American Medical Association
Guide to Home Caregiving**
by the American Medical Association

**To Survive Caregiving: A Daughter's
Experience, A Doctor's Advice on
Finding Hope, Help and Health**
by Cheryl E. Woodson, MD, FACP, AGSF
(Paperback - Feb 8, 2007)

Caregiving, Revised Edition
by Peter S. Houts and Julia A. Bucher
(Paperback - Jun 1, 2003).

