

Tips for caregivers



It takes a very special person to provide care for an ailing or elderly loved one. Often you make significant sacrifices to do what's best for them. Here are some tips to assist you and make your caregiving experience more rewarding.

What you can do if you're providing care for a loved one

- 1 Know you're doing your best.** Be patient and feel appreciated. Having a good attitude makes it better for you and your loved one.
- 2 Be willing to let others give you a hand.** Make a list and allow them to choose tasks, such as doing the laundry, grocery shopping, or taking over for you when they can.
- 3 Join a support group.** You'll meet others who understand what you're going through and can give you encouragement and ideas for solving some of the difficulties you may be facing.
- 4 Show how much you care.** Try to be aware of how much you love your ailing parent, spouse, relative or friend. Remember to show them your affection.
- 5 Help your loved one be independent.** If they can, encourage your loved one to do some things for themselves.
- 6 Talk about how you feel.** Caregiving can be stressful. It's good to share your feelings with a friend or family member, or even seek counseling from a therapist or social worker.
- 7 Take a break.** Carve out some time for yourself to take a walk or do some reading during your day. At least once a week, take a more extended period of time to do the things you want.
- 8 Be healthy.** Eat a well-balanced diet, get enough rest and exercise. Also stay in touch with your emotional well-being, and get professional help if you're feeling anxious, frustrated or depressed.
- 9 Have a sense of humor.** Laughter is a great stress reliever and can help you maintain a positive outlook on life.
- 10 Seek out caregiving resources.** Many communities offer services, such as meal delivery, transportation, in-home respite care and adult daycare.

See reverse side for sources and a list of caregiver resources. ►

Caregiver resources

The following organizations offer support for caregivers and their loved ones.

The National Council on Aging

Visit www.ncoa.org for online tools and tips for family caregivers.

The CARE (Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable) Act

This is a new state law enacted by more than 30 states around the country because often unpaid caregivers don't have the knowledge needed to change bandages, put on a sling, or administer medication. The law is designed to provide support for family caregivers from the time their loved ones are hospitalized until they return home. To learn more and to download a CARE Act Wallet Card, visit <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/info-2016/care-act-aarp-wallet-card.html>.

Military caregivers

If you're caring for a wounded veteran at home, visit hiddenheroes.org. You'll find an abundance of resources and can connect with fellow caregivers.

Social Security

Even though Social Security does not provide financial assistance to caregivers, your parent may qualify for additional income benefits. So if you're providing care for a parent, age 65 or older, who has limited resources or is blind or disabled, visit the Social Security site at www.ssa.gov.

Sources:

Mayo Clinic, "Caregiver Stress: Tips for taking care of yourself," <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/caregiver-stress/art-20044784>, March 2015.

HelpGuide.org, "Family Caregiving," <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/family-caregiving.htm>, April 2017.

AARP, "Home and Family Caregiving," <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/>, July 2017.

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