



## Handling the stress of caregiving



# Is caregiving wearing you out?

As a caregiver, you may be so busy caring for your parent, spouse, or child that you neglect your own health. This can lead to stress, anxiety, exhaustion, and depression.

The demands on you may feel like too much to handle. Some days, you may feel worn out and tired of caring. You may even feel guilty if you take time for yourself.



## Why you might not be taking care of yourself

### Demand too much of yourself

You may be on call at all times, with no relief and no time for yourself. You may see providing care as your duty.

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### Do not have enough resources

You may become frustrated by the lack of money, help, time, and skills it takes to manage your loved one's care.

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### Lose yourself in the caregiver role

You may let caregiving totally take over how you see your relationship with your loved one. It may be hard to focus on other roles of being a spouse, parent, child, or friend.



# Signs you may have too much to handle

Do you want to sleep all of the time? Are you “too tired” to see friends or do activities you used to enjoy? You may be overwhelmed.

**Seek help if you experience these or other signs:**

- **Feeling** sad, irritable, and hopeless
- **Changes** in appetite, weight, or both
- **Loss** of interest in activities you used to enjoy
- **Getting sick** more often
- **Changes** in sleep patterns
- **Feelings** of wanting to hurt yourself or the person for whom you are caring



## Does caregiving affect your health?

Fill in the circles below that best describe how you feel. **The higher the number, the better you are feeling.** If your answers are “3” or lower, talk to your healthcare provider about your health risk.

Rate your current **level of energy.**



Rate your current **level of health.**



Rate your current **social activity.**



Rate your current **level of calmness.**



# How can I manage burnout?

Here are ways you can help manage and avoid caregiver burnout:

- Meet friends or family for lunch or a movie
- Make goals you can achieve
- Ask about healthcare services that can give you a temporary break
- Set aside time for yourself to watch TV or take a walk
- Join a caregiver support group
- Be aware of your feelings and accept them



**Write down your own ideas for lowering stress.** Think about ways to refresh your spirit, so you can take care of yourself and your loved one.

*Meet my friends every Saturday for lunch.*

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## Take a moment for yourself to answer these questions

As a caregiver, you may find yourself feeling sad or even crying. Other signs that you're taking on too much may be less clear. **Check Yes or No for each question. Then, share the answers with your healthcare provider.**

### In the past few months, have you:

Had trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Felt that you couldn't leave your loved one with someone else?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Had difficulty making decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Felt lonely?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Felt a loss of privacy and/or personal time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Been edgy or irritable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Had sleep disrupted because of caring for your loved one?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Felt strained between work and family duties?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Felt sick (such as with headaches, stomach problems, or cold)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Felt useless?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Wanted your family to help out more?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



## Additional resources

A variety of tips and support:  
[medicare.gov/blog/help-for-caregivers-2019](https://www.medicare.gov/blog/help-for-caregivers-2019)

Caregiver support  
services in your area:  
[eldercare.acl.gov](https://www.eldercare.acl.gov) | 1-800-633-4227