

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.

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.

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

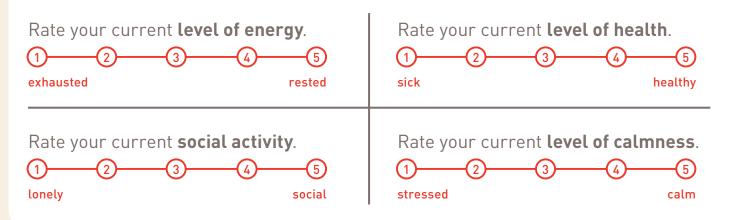


- Getting sick more often
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Feelings of wanting to hurt yourself or the person for whom you are caring



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.



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.

V	Meet my friends every Saturday		
	for lunch.		
0		0	
0			
0			



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?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Felt that you couldn't leave your loved one with someone else?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Had difficulty making decisions?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Felt lonely?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Felt a loss of privacy and/or personal time?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Been edgy or irritable?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Had sleep disrupted because of caring for your loved one?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Felt strained between work and family duties?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Felt sick (such as with headaches, stomach problems, or cold)?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Felt useless?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Wanted your family to help out more?	☐ Yes ☐ No



Additional resources

A variety of tips and support: medicare.gov/blog/help-for-caregivers-2019

Caregiver support services in your area: eldercare.acl.gov | 1-800-633-4227

