



Caring for Our Caregivers:

Remember to take some time to prioritize your health and well-being!

"I learned a long time ago,
the wisest thing I can do is
be on my own side,
be an advocate for myself.

If I do that well enough,
then I can look after someone
else,
but I have to look at myself
first...

I think this is being *self-full*."

- Maya Angelou

Keep up with your preventative screenings & see your primary care provider.

One of the greatest risks for caregivers is becoming ill themselves - there's a higher rate of insomnia and depression, and a lower rate of engaging in preventative screenings. In times of increased stress, it is even more important to make time for your own wellness.

Half of all caregivers report that declines in their own health compromise their ability to care for their loved one. Caring for you is key in caring for others — You can't pour from an empty cup.

What can burn-out look like?

- Withdrawal from friends, family, and other loved ones
- Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- Feeling blue, irritable, hopeless, and helpless
- Changes in appetite, weight, or sleep patterns
- Getting sick more often
- Emotional and physical exhaustion and irritability

This is common in caregivers and is not a sign of weakness or something to be ashamed of. Here are some changes you can make to help prevent the development of caregiver burnout and depression:

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- o Lean on your support network of family and friends
- o Take time for social activities, such as sharing a meal with a friend
- o Join support groups for patients and families affected by illness

SELF-CARE

- o Try to follow an exercise routine and eat a healthy diet
- o Try to get enough rest and maintain a regular sleep schedule
- o Spiritual support - religious activity or journaling/meditation
- o Take breaks and have time to yourself
- o Find activities that give you a sense of accomplishment, like going for a bike ride or completing a project
- o Do things that help you relax, like watching a favorite movie or going for a walk

SEEK HELP

- o Get professional help if you think you may need it
- o Respite care: this is a form of care that’s intended to give caregivers temporary, short term relief. This can include sitter-companion care or home care for short periods of time.



Recommended Caregiver Resources	
“Caregivers and Family” from American Cancer Society: https://www.cancer.org/treatment/caregivers.html	Resources on mental health, self care; videos on stress management and coping, meditation, and patient advocacy
“Caring for the Caregiver” from National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship: https://www.canceradvocacy.org	Information on communication, finding information, making decisions, problem solving, and negotiating
“Resources for Caregivers” from National Cancer Institute: https://www.cancer.gov/resources-for/caregivers	Resources on cancer basics, advanced cancer, treatment, more coping resources
“Cancer Survivors Network (CSN)”: http://csn.cancer.org	Online community of patients and caregivers

Source: American Cancer Society, Cleveland Clinic