



Caring for Caregivers

Adapted from "Self-Care for the Caregiver" by the Oncology Nursing Society 2001

Sickness not only affects the patient, it also affects the caregiver. Caregiver fatigue, or even burnout, can be brought on by the physical and emotional demands of caring for a loved one with any lengthy or life-threatening illness.

Below is a list of tips to help combat the fatigue you may face as a caregiver. *It is important to maintain your health and well-being* so that you can provide the best possible care to your loved one.

- Take time for yourself and your own needs. Spend time with other friends and family members.
- Watch for signs of stress, such as impatience, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, or difficulty concentrating or remembering.
- Be aware of any changes in your mood, decreased interest in usual activities or inability to accomplish usual tasks.
- Eat a well-balanced diet. Drink plenty of water and juice every day.
- Exercise by taking short walks daily, or at least three times a week.
- Listen to relaxing music to help reduce stress.
- Space your activities with short rest periods. Get a good night's sleep.
- Set limits with your loved one. Determine what self-care tasks he can perform.
- Don't overload your daily "things to do" list. Be realistic.
- Find time several times a week for activities that are meaningful and pleasurable to you.
- Let family members and friends help. Delegate household chores, such as meal preparation, childcare or shopping. Find referrals for respite care and other community resources to allow yourself some time to rejuvenate.
- Keep the lines of communication open between your loved one, your family and friends, and your medical teams.
- Share your feelings with family members, other caregivers, or a support group.
- Give yourself credit...*the care you give does make a difference.*

*This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical guidance.
Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to making decisions about your medical care.*