



Care for the Caregiver

When someone you love has been treated for a heart attack, you might feel relief. But you may soon be feeling the stress of taking care of someone who can't walk with you the same way as he or she did in the past. Or maybe your loved one has trouble performing tasks that were previously routine. Or you may see your loved one getting depressed by the diagnosis.

Suddenly, you might find yourself taking days off from work to care for your loved one, or taking your loved one to the emergency department or the cardiologist more and more often. You may need to cancel appointments and miss your regular activities because you have to take care of your loved one. This may make you irritable and tired. You might find yourself sad and depressed. In short, you might start feeling burned out.



Remember: You can't take care of anyone else if you don't take care of yourself first.

Check out this list of suggestions. They'll not only give you a sense of well-being, but you'll be a better caregiver, too.

- **Don't neglect your own health.** It's easy to overlook a doctor or dentist appointment when you're busy taking care of someone else. Make sure you are taking your own medicines and keeping any appointments you've made
- **Get enough sleep.** People generally don't function well when they haven't had a good night's sleep
- **Help reduce your stress with yoga, meditation, or a massage.** Some health plans offer discounts for these services
- **Ask for help!** Your friends and family are happy to do something for you if it'll make you feel better. Food shopping. Walking the dog. Going to the dry cleaner. These little things might not seem like much to them, but having someone else do them can give you a much-needed break
- **Make some "me" time.** It doesn't have to be a big night out. You can watch a TV show or go to a movie. Take a nap. Read a few pages of a book. Do something that is just for you
- **Be on the lookout for any signs of physical and emotional stress.*** Are you feeling tired? Experiencing lower back or neck pain? Are you gaining or losing too much weight? Are you worrying too much or feeling overwhelmed and alone? If any of these symptoms sound familiar, talk to your health care professional

***This information is provided as general knowledge only and is not medical advice. If you have questions or concerns, you should talk to your health care professional.**