

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

When tending to a loved one's needs, caregivers must make sure to safeguard their own health and finances. Keep these key steps in mind to balance caregiving duties with self-care.



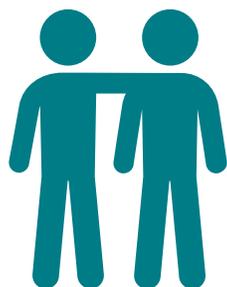
Checklist for self-care

- Take care of your body
- Set yourself up for success
- Protect your mental health
- Manage your professional life
- Stay on top of your finances



TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

- **Exercise, eat healthy, and get adequate sleep** — Maintain the energy you need and reduce stress by exercising at least once a day. Consider a 20-minute walk, a short run or a yoga class.
- **See your doctor for regular checkups** — Discuss any changes in your health with your primary care provider.



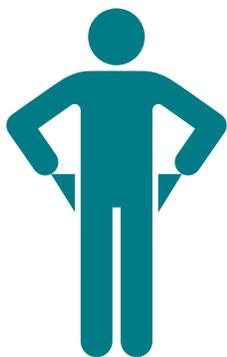
PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

- **Maintain your life outside of caregiving** — Allow yourself a personal life. Socializing with friends can perk you up and keep you from feeling isolated.
- **Recognize symptoms of caregiver burnout** — Watch out for sleep deprivation, poor eating habits, getting sick easily, mood changes, becoming easily irritated, excessive use of alcohol, or trouble concentrating.
- **Understand the symptoms of depression** — If you're experiencing depression, seek help by first talking with your primary care physician. Medication, a referral for talk therapy, or both may help.



MANAGE YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE

- **Communicate with your employer** — Caregivers typically require adjustments to their jobs because of caregiving duties. Work with your employer to create a job situation that is right for you and check on work-related benefits that might be available for caregivers.
- **Learn more out about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** — The FMLA can allow you unpaid time off rather than resigning from a job for caregiving. Consider all options before quitting a job or reducing work duties because re-entering the workforce later can be difficult.



STAY ON TOP OF YOUR FINANCES

- **Keep a close watch on out-of-pocket spending for caregiving** — A recent survey found that caregivers spent a median of \$150 per month to cover expenses for the recipient, and nine percent of caregivers spent \$1,000 or more per month.¹
- **Continue to fund your retirement accounts** — Save through your employer's 401(k) or an IRA. Avoid taking loans or early withdrawals from your retirement savings.



SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

- **Treat caregiving as a team effort, not a one-person job** — Family members and friends can help with caregiving responsibilities to give the main caregiver a much-needed break.
- **Learn what you can about your loved one's medical condition** — Doing so will help you feel more confident in your caregiver role. Just make sure that your online research comes from a reliable source like websites of universities, reputable non-profits, and government agencies.
- **Communicate with other caregivers** — Find a support group or other caregiver resources through organizations such as AARP and the American Heart Association. Remember, you aren't alone.

¹"10 Alarming Facts About Family Caregivers and Seven Ways to Address Them," Transamerica Institute, 2017.

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