

RESPIRE CARE



Respite care - ways to be a healthier caregiver

Are you so overwhelmed by taking care of someone else that you have neglected your own physical, mental and emotional well-being? If you find yourself without the time to take care of your own needs, you may be putting yourself and your health at risk.

10 symptoms of caregiver stress

1. Denial about the disease and its effect on the person who's been diagnosed.
2. Anger at the person or anger that no cure exists or that people don't understand what's happening.
3. Social withdrawal from friends and activities that once brought pleasure.
4. Anxiety facing another day and about the future.
5. Depression that begins to break your spirit and affects your ability to cope.
6. Exhaustion that makes it nearly impossible to complete necessary daily tasks.
7. Sleeplessness caused by a never-ending list of concerns.
8. Irritability that leads to moodiness and triggers negative responses and actions.
9. Lack of concentration that makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks.
10. Health problems that begin to take a mental and physical toll.

If you experience any of these signs of stress on a regular basis, make time to talk to your doctor.

Ways to be a healthier caregiver

1. Understand what's happening as early as possible
Consult a doctor when you see changes in memory, mood or behavior. Don't delay; some symptoms are treatable.
2. Know what community resources are available
3. Get help. Trying to do everything by yourself will leave you exhausted. Seek the support of family, friends and community resources.
4. Take care of yourself. Watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. Making sure that you stay healthy will help you be a better caregiver. Visit your doctor regularly. Take time to get regular checkups, and be aware of what your body is telling you. Pay attention to any exhaustion, stress, sleeplessness or changes in appetite or behavior. Ignoring symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to decline.
5. Manage your level of stress. Stress can cause physical problems (blurred vision, stomach irritation, high blood pressure) and changes in behavior (irritability, lack of concentration, change in appetite). Note your symptoms. Use relaxation techniques that work for you, and talk to your doctor.
6. Accept changes as they occur
7. Make legal and financial plans



8. Give yourself credit, not guilt. Know that the care you provide does make a difference and you are doing the best you can.

Who needs Respite Care?

Anyone with hands-on responsibility for a frail or disabled loved one. The decision to seek help is not always an easy task; some believe that seeking the help of others is a sign of weakness or giving up on their loved one. You might even believe you are the only one who can oversee your loved ones care. Respite Care is something you will need before you even know it. A lot of caregivers

ignore the signs of being overwhelmed and do not realize they are jeopardizing their health as well. You may worry, you may not like it, but you need to do it. Care giving is a demanding, difficult job and no one is equipped to do it alone.

Respite care can give a caregiver the time and assistance required to meet these personal needs. Respite Care is an essential part of the overall support that families may need to keep their loved one with a chronic illness or disability at home.

Respite care can provide the caregiver with:

1. A chance to spend time with other friends and family, or to just relax
2. Time to take care of errands such as shopping, exercising, getting a haircut or going to the doctor
3. Comfort or peace of mind knowing that the person with dementia is spending time with another caring individual

In-home and Adult day cares are the most common types of Respite care.

In home respite care

In-home aides can be employed privately, through an agency or as part of a government program. Be sure the aide and services are appropriate for your specific needs. Cost, level of training and specific services provided will vary among workers and agencies. Generally, Medicare does not pay for this type of help, but financial assistance may be available.

These respite care services are provided in the home to assist the caregiver and the person with disease. Services vary in type and can include among many others:

Companion services

Help with supervision, recreational activities and visiting

Personal care services

Help with bathing, dressing, toileting, exercising and other daily activities

Homemaker services

Help with housekeeping, shopping and meal preparation

Skilled care services

Help with certain medical services or care

Some respite care aides receive specific training about specific diseases and the unique needs of a person with that disease. It is important that the in-home aide is knowledgeable – or at least willing to learn.



Overcoming concerns about respite care

It's normal to be apprehensive about trying something new. Some concerns you may have about using respite services:

Cost

You may be concerned about how to pay for services. Our services are customized to fit your need so you pay only what is absolutely necessary. But know this, that your health and well-being is essential.

Reliability

You may be concerned about the dependability of the aide or service.

Those who work for an agency or facility should be reliable and well trained, and are often certified. Ask each individual and facility about training and qualifications.

Guilt

You may believe that you should be able to “do it all.”

Seeking help does not make you a failure. It's important to remember that respite services

benefit the person with the disease as well as the caregiver.

